

A CRITICAL SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE LANGUAGE  
EXPERIENCE APPROACH (LEAP), AS EXEMPLIFIED BY  
BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY, AS A METHOD OF TEACHING  
BEGINNING READING IN RECEPTION CLASSES

by

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*To my parents,  
Mr and Mrs N C Naidoo*

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SUMMARY

This investigation, into the efficacy of LEAP, as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*, as the main strand in a mixed method for the teaching of beginning reading, was motivated by the following considerations:

1. Breakthrough to Literacy has been and is being used with tremendous success not only in Great Britain, where it was launched, but also in Canada and Australia, and increasingly in South Africa.
2. A pilot investigation by Professor P T Pienaar revealed that the incidence of reading retardation among the South African Indian pupils at all levels in Primary Schools was high.
3. Reading is a very important, if not the most important, aspect of language learning and, in turn, language plays a dominant role in the total curriculum of Junior Primary pupils.
4. The Department of Indian Education is introducing the "mixed Breakthrough method" referred to above on an increasing scale. If the present trend is maintained LEAP will become the sole method for the teaching of beginning reading.

The investigation comprised the following:

1. The use of Experimental and Control classes at two different schools. LEAP as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*, was used in Experimental classes while the Look-and-Say Method, as exemplified by the *Let's Learn to Read Series*, was used in the Control Classes.
2. The use of questionnaires to obtain information on the pupils and their families.
3. Personal observations of the work of the teachers and pupils in the Experimental and Control classes.



4. The use of questionnaires to elicit the opinions of various teachers who had experience of LEAP and the Look-and-Say Method used by the classes in the study.
5. Tests of the reading and creative writing abilities of pupils in the Experimental and Control classes.

The overall results show:

1. That pupils taught by LEAP, as exemplified by BL, got a better start to reading than pupils on the "Look-and-Say" method, as exemplified by LLR. Breakthrough pupils also performed better in reading "new" material.
2. That "Breakthrough" pupils not only wrote more but also wrote better in respect of both content and style.

CHAPTER 11. INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding to discuss the reason for this study, it is necessary to elaborate the title.

The major objective of a summative evaluation is to get a quantitative assessment of the efficacy of a method or programme of instruction; thus:

*"The aim of the more traditional experimental... design is to produce a quantified statement about merit in terms of results.... (whereas) the aim of evaluation in Bruner's terms has always been corrective feedback. Recently the two types of evaluation as defined by aim have come to be known as summative and formative, and the methods associated with each have tended to be seen as polarised into two sharply contrasted types."*

(Reid, 1974, p. 3).

The Language Experience Approach (LEAP), as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*, utilises the child's own spoken language, and therefore does not impose unfamiliar language patterns on him. From the earliest stages his written language, that is the first sentences he composes in his Sentence Maker, and which either he or his teacher subsequently transcribe, come to constitute his first "reader". This reader is his very own in every sense of the word. LEAP is essentially an eclectic approach since it subsumes both the Sentence and Phonic Methods.

The reception class is the first organised instructional group to which the pupil is assigned on enrolment in the Junior Primary School. These reception classes are given such names as grade, sub (standard), and class, but in this study the term Class i will be used throughout.

In South African Indian schools, a child is admitted to Year One of the educational programme and entry is governed by the following regulation:

*"No child shall be admitted to any school before the year in which he attains the age of six years:  
Provided that such child does not attain the said age later than 30 June of the year of admission to such school."*  
(Handbook of Principals, 1978, p. E3)

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

It was found from sample testing in three representative Indian primary schools that "the incidence of reading retardation in most Indian primary schools is gross and widespread". (Pienaar, 1974, p. 9). The reading retardation obviously started in the infant classes and by the time the children reached Std. 5 they were often 3 or 4 years retarded in reading. After minimally successful intervention in Years 6 and 7 in the form of developmental reading programmes, Pienaar concluded that such intervention was too little too late, and that the problem was more likely to be resolved at source:

*"We have to attack the problem of diminished reading standards in our school at source, in the infant classes where formal instruction in the mechanics of reading begins, and where techniques, strategies and styles are evolved. In other words the problem has to be prevented rather than ameliorated at source."*

(Pienaar, 1974, (1), p. 11-12)

In 1973 Pienaar attacked this massive incidence of reading retardation by initiating *Breakthrough to Literacy* on a pilot experimental basis in one of the four Class i's at Natest Primary School, Mount Edgecombe. This was an Indian school drawing from the same depressed working class catchment area which he used in his initial 1970 survey of reading standards in Indian primary schools. The other three Class i's acted as Controls. The three Control classes worked on the prescribed beginning reading scheme, which, in this case, was based on the *Let's Learn to Read* series. After the first term, one of the three Control classes was also moved on to *Breakthrough to Literacy*, so that there were now two Control classes and two Experimental classes. The teachers in the four classes all had more or less equal qualifications and experience. The result of this experiment showed that

"...both Experimental classes gained significantly over both Control classes, and all sub-groups within Experimental classes also gained significantly over comparable sub-groups in Control classes."

(Pienaar, 1974 (1), p. 15)

To date, therefore, there has been only one local evaluation of LEAP, as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*. There is thus a need for further evaluation in view of the fact that *Breakthrough to Literacy* is being increasingly adopted in Indian schools all over South Africa.

The purpose of this study is thus to assess the effect of *Breakthrough to Literacy* on the ability of pupils to use the spoken and written code. This will be reflected in the size of their vocabulary, the fluency of their reading, and the standard of their creative writing.

## 1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF READING IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Many subjects can be regarded as being important in the school curriculum, but none can rival reading. One can appreciate the basis of this claim if one realises that reading is an inextricable part of every subject with a linguistic component, and that there are very few subjects which are not dominated by language. Even a subject like mathematics cannot dispense with reading, albeit of a different kind. Indeed, a mathematical expression is analogous to a sentence in which symbols replace numbers.

Reading ability determines a pupil's level of success in almost all school subjects. It is hard to conceive of a pupil being extremely good at History but very poor in reading. Needless to say this refers to the pupil's understanding of the subject, as opposed to mere rote learning of unrelated facts. A pupil's inability to read does not only affect his performance in other subjects, but also leads to general behaviour problems:

"Juvenile delinquents as a group have been found to include many whose reading ability is far below their mental ability. Although many poor readers avoid delinquency, the frustrations caused by years of

*unsuccessful effort are practically certain to create inferiority feelings which interfere with normal personality development."*

(Harris, 1947, p. 2).

On the other hand, sympathetic attempts by the teacher to improve a pupil's reading efficiency will generally help to eliminate personal behaviour problems. After all, pupils relish "positive" attention.

*"It stands to reason that, if a child's inability to read is exposed to the view of his more skilled classmates day after day and year after year, something will happen to his attitude. Failure in reading is difficult to gloss over and it must not be underestimated. Truly, reading is the first R."*

(Gray, 1963, p. 15)

Historically the principal function of a school has always been the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. These were, and still are, regarded as basic educational skills and are referred to as the three Rs. Until recently the other aspects of language, or language arts as they are now called, did not receive much emphasis. This is well illustrated by the fact that secondary school pupils of a few generations ago were capable of using far more words in a reading setting than in normal conversation. However, it was realized that the development of vocabulary in speaking and listening is of supreme importance for reading with insight and understanding. Hence arose the greater emphasis on reading with comprehension.

Reading serves many purposes:

*"an aid in meeting every day needs,  
a tool of citizenship,  
a pursuit for leisure time,  
a tool of vocation,  
a source of spiritual refreshment,  
an aid to enrichment of experience."*

(Gray, 1963, p. 4)

The elements of reading are formally taught in the junior primary phase. It is during this period that teachers take positive steps to show pupils the fundamental steps in reading. As Mackay (1970, p. 6) points out, "many children arrive at school with very little idea of what written language is". Pupils have to be taught that pictures, pictures with words, or words alone are all visual patterns and communicate something.

*"Until he reaches school, the child has been free to scan objects, people, scenes, pictures, even books, in any direction that he chose, and he has not been required to limit this pattern of search in any way. Immediately he becomes a candidate for reading, he must learn that in the printed text situation there is only one appropriate direction in which he can proceed. That is, he must learn to go from a top left position across to the right and then return to the next top left position and go again across to the right."*

(Clay, 1972, p. 9).

It is not only the mechanics of reading that need to be taught to pupils in the junior primary classes. The meanings of "letter", "word" and "sentence" have to be communicated to the pupils by using them in contexts which enable them to grasp the precise meaning of these terms.

In getting pupils to learn these concepts the teachers cannot expect much help from parents or other educational agents in the home environment. The majority of parents who make some efforts to assist their children in developing language skills tend to assume that their children are aware of the differences between the terms mentioned above. Since potential educational agents such as radio, television and newspapers concentrate on disseminating information on selected topics, or providing a variety of entertaining items, the teaching of language concepts by these media is done in a very incidental way. Furthermore, many families seem to be addicted to viewing television programmes with the result that parents find little time to read to their children during the evenings. In homes where both parents work this is a serious problem. It thus happens that children in many homes do very little reading and have very little read to them.



*"The tasks of teaching the child both how to read and what to read fall increasingly to the lot of the school."*

(Goddard, 1958, p. 8)

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. THE TEACHING OF BEGINNING READING

Teaching beginning reading requires a choice of media, methods and materials. The choice is influenced by the following factors:

- (a) The overall needs of the pupils.
- (b) The availability of funds for the purchase of equipment and materials.
- (c) The amount of time available for instruction.

Most recently the phrase, "approach to reading", has been used in a variety of ways without acquiring any accepted definition. The phrase is used to imply a combination of media, methods and materials. The word "materials" is used to mean the basic reading scheme with all its supporting supplementary books, apparatus, games, pictures, charts, stories, labels and every form of language to be read. Thus for convenience, details of materials used will be given in the discussion of media and methods.

#### 2.1 MEDIA AND MATERIALS

Media is the term employed for the actual forms of written or printed symbols used to represent the spoken language. Media suitable for beginning reading may be divided into five broad categories:

##### 2.1.1 Traditional Orthography (t.o.)

t.o. is the accepted abbreviation for Traditional Orthography, "that is, the ordinary English spelling system using a twenty-six-letter alphabet" (Southgate, Roberts, 1970, p. 44). It is the medium used in most publications. Shown below are the twenty six letters in the upper and lower cases.



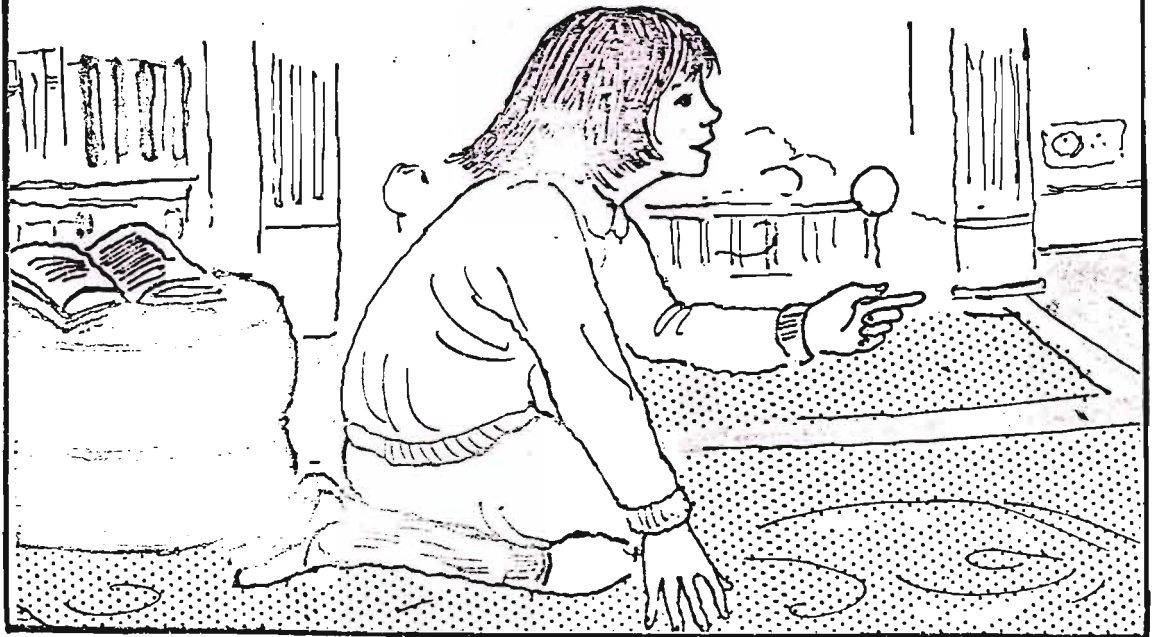
## Traditional Orthography

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo  
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

At least fourteen of the letters have a different character in the upper cases. *a* and *g* are two letters which have two different forms in the lower case. Therefore the total number of written symbols in t.o. is actually more than twenty-six.

## An illustration of the use of Traditional Orthography

Let your budgie out of its cage regularly to exercise its wings. Before you open the cage, see that there are no other pets in the room. Then close all windows and doors and block the fireplace. It is best to put the light on and draw the curtains so that the bird won't try to fly through the clear glass.



(From *Cage Birds*, Cameron, 1978, p. 13)

### 2.1.2 Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.)

A major difficulty which confronts those who embark on writing English is the presence of phonically regular and irregular words. To overcome this problem Sir James Pitman devised the i.t.a. in 1959. This consisted of forty four symbols which are shown below.

#### The Initial Teaching Alphabet

a apple	ɑ arm	æ angel	au author	b bed
c cat	ch chair	d doll	ee eel	e egg
f finger	g girl	h hat	ie tie	i ink
j jam	k kitten	l lion	m man	n nest
ŋ king	œ toe	o on	ω book	ω food
ou out	oi oil	p pig	r red	r bird
s soap	sh ship	z treasure	t tree	th three
th mother	ue due	u up	v van	w window
wh wheel	y yellow	z zoo	is is	

(From *In Spite of the Alphabet*, Diack, H., 1965, p. 157)

Pitman wanted to achieve, as far as possible, a consistency between sounds and their respective symbols. Twenty three of the t.o. letters are used in i.t.a. They are:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	
l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u	v	w	z

The remaining twenty one symbols are used to represent the rest of the sounds which make up English speech. These symbols and the letters of the alphabet are always printed in the same form, which corresponds to the lower case form of the traditional alphabet. Where capital letters are required, the symbol is simply printed larger than usual.

When reading skill has been established with i.t.a., children are transferred to t.o. It appears that children find this transfer to t.o. easy as one of the i.t.a. symbols for a given sound closely resembles or is identical to the corresponding t.o. symbol. Transfer from i.t.a. to t.o. is also made easier as the former retains the double letters -- although these are not strictly necessary -- in a consistent simplified alphabet.

*"The two written forms for the identical sound of the 'k' and the hard 'c' are also retained... either 'cot' or 'kot' is accepted from the child when he writes in i.t.a., but the teacher always uses the symbol required in t.o. to establish the association which the child must ultimately make."*

(Taylor, 1973, p. 67)

Research suggests that some children have great difficulty in making the transition and most children receive a temporary setback (Downing, 1969, p. 10). Chall, (1967, pp. 120-121) suggests that the reason for this could be that children, having worked in a largely regular medium for so long, find it harder to work in an irregular medium than if they had been faced with irregularities from the very beginning of reading instruction. In effect, they have to unlearn something with which they have become very familiar.

i.t.a. is not a new method of teaching. In fact it is merely a simplified medium of instruction, and as such it can be used with Phonic or Look-and-Say Methods, or both. Although the sound for a given visual pattern in different words does not remain constant, there is a great deal of agreement between a given pattern and the sound associated with it. Therefore i.t.a. affords the child a much better chance of decoding new words than t.o.

*"Early evidence appeared fully to justify claims made by Pitman that spelling, comprehension and free written work may ultimately be helped by the medium. Later researchers have not demonstrated such overall superiority for i.t.a. that Washburton and Southgate (1969) consider that though children using i.t.a. master reading more quickly in the early stages than do those working in t.o., there appear to be no significant differences between the two groups after three years when all the children work in t.o. Longer follow-up of children needs to be undertaken for it to be ascertained that this commencement upon reading might result in better attitudes and an increased independence in language work which could influence progress significantly further on in school life."*

(Moyle, D. and Moyle, L., 1974, p. 27)


About ten per cent of primary schools in Britain and North America are now making some use of i.t.a. Teachers can draw from a fund of experience when making a personal decision concerning the value of the approach to their own situation. There are now 1 000 titles in i.t.a. Schools using i.t.a. can draw from public libraries as the latter carry the majority of these books.

An illustration of the use of i.t.a.

**the three bærs**

Wuns upon a tiem thær wer  
three bærs. thær wox a father bær,  
hœ had a big gruff vois,  
a muther bær,  
hœ had a kiend soft vois,  
and a bæby bær,  
hœ had a very skweeky vois.  
thæ livd in a hous  
in the woods.

Wun dæ muther bær sed,  
"the porridz is redy.  
get up, father bær.  
get up, bæby bær."



1

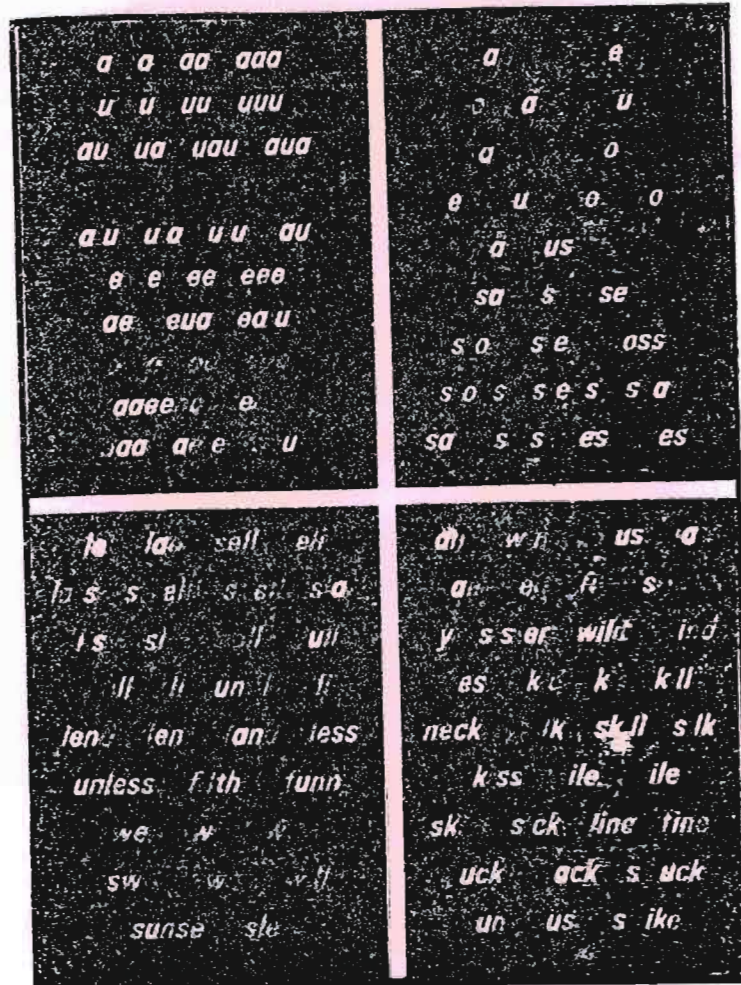
From *A Walk in the Woods*, The Downing Readers, Initial Teaching Publishing Company.

### 2.1.3 Words in Colour

This is a reading approach which was devised by C. Gattegno in 1962. He provides a regular code for the sounds of English by using colour with ordinary spelling to make the sound/symbol relationship consistent. Each of the forty eight sounds found in English is represented by a colour, which makes its pronunciation clear to the reader. A letter "a", when coloured white, will be pronounced as in "rat", while when coloured blue-green it will be pronounced as in "made". The sound "a" as in "paid" will also be coloured blue-green, thus the "a" as in "made" sound always appears in the same colours, irrespective of which letters are used for the sound. In "they" for example the "ey" will be blue-green, and in "play" the "ay" will also be blue green.



# An illustration of the use of words in colour



(From *Reading - Which Approach*, 1970, p. 152)

The colours are for use only when a new sound is introduced. Once the children know the sound, the colour is no longer used no matter what the variants in spelling. In their own writing, the children only use one colour, having established from the colour code the letters that they need.

*Words in Colour* is an accelerated approach to mastery of the mechanics of reading. The learning situations for the child are systematically structured in very small stages so that failure is almost impossible. Gattegno assumes that once the child has made a start with this approach, success will lead to increased motivation. His approach regards learning to read and write as two separate activities, each requiring much concentration. For materials, there is a set of twenty one wall charts printed in colour, on black backgrounds, in an italic

type similar to cursive script. The first chart shows combinations of vowel sounds. The remaining twenty have unrelated words as far as meaning is concerned, but related as far as the spelling is concerned. Three basic readers and fourteen worksheets are related to the twenty one wall charts. Eight additional wall charts are intended for permanent display. Pupils are also given a Word Building Book.

The only continuous reading material is a *"Book of Stories"*. This book contains 40 stories which describe events in the daily life of a typical family. Word games comprising packs of Work Cards are also available to the pupils.

*"As far as colour-blindness is concerned it is taken care of by the shapes and shades and other clues that colour-blind people develop spontaneously with their existing sensitivity to colour. Colour-blindness has never been reported as an obstacle to learning with Words in Colour."*  
(Gattegno, 1969, p. 81)

The effectiveness of *Words in Colour* has not been thoroughly investigated. However, it appears to have the potential to help novices in teaching through its systematic and highly structured approach.

#### 2.1.4 Colour Story Reading

This method, which also uses a colour code as a signalling system, was devised in 1967 by J.K. Jones, in an attempt to overcome the difficulty of an inadequate alphabet and irregular spelling. Jones uses colours and shapes to help the pupils to read the printed word.

*"The code has 53 colour symbols which are sub-divided into 35 individual coloured letters; 9 digraphs - two letters making one sound - in each case both letters forming the digraph have the same colour; and 9 backgrounds formed by a matrix of 3 colours - red, blue and green - and three shapes - a circle, a square and a triangle."*  
(Horner, P., 1972, pp.34-35)

The traditional spelling of English words, the use of upper case letters (where necessary) and punctuation marks are retained.

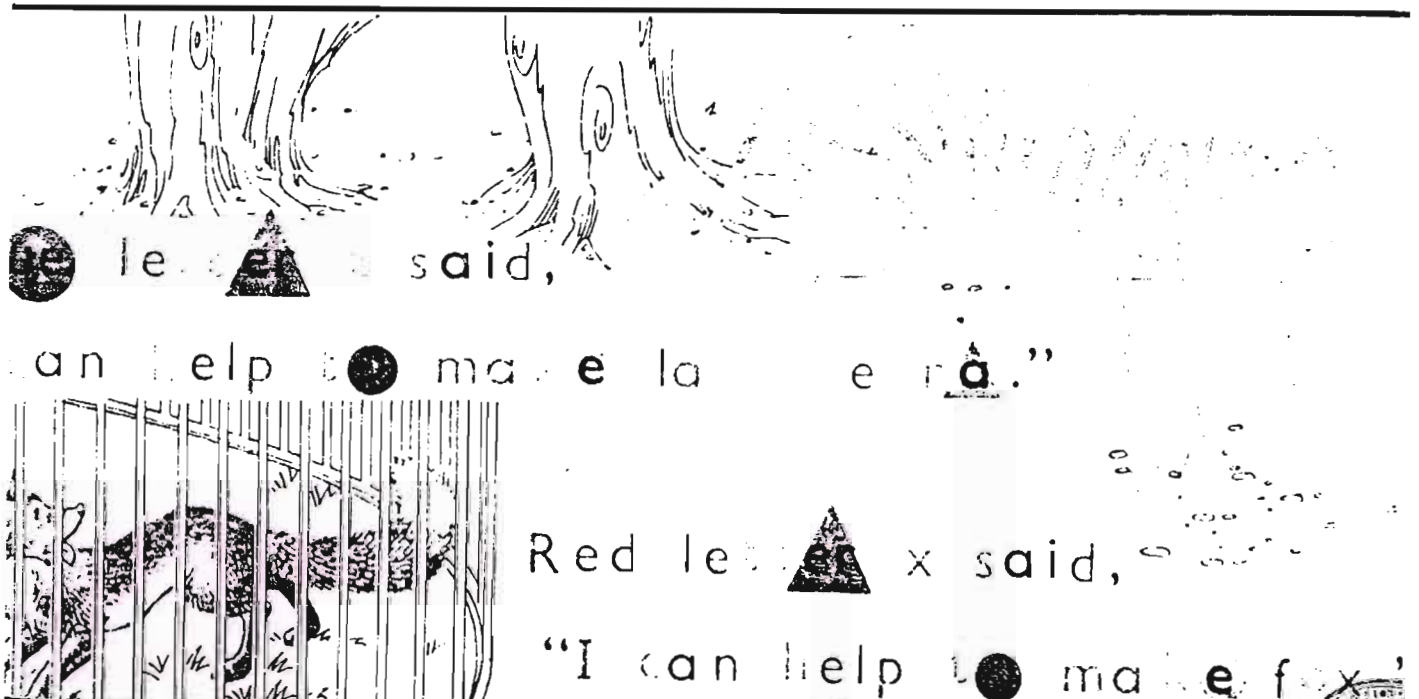
A notable feature of *Colour Story Reading* is that it combines the advantages of Look-and-Say and Phonic methods. However, the range of materials available for use in *Colour Story Reading* is rather limited. There are three children's books, a wall chart and a kit of illustrations and games. The stories from the three books have been recorded on three long-playing discs. One of the wall charts is in fact a reference chart. It comprises coloured letters and symbols which teachers need to know in order to use the scheme for reading and writing.

*"In contrast to Words in Colour, it provides only a brief introductory course to beginning reading: it allows the teacher freedom to utilize it as either supplementary or basic materials and to choose other reading materials for use alongside it, and it presents the child with colourful books."*

(Southgate, 1972, p. 191)

An illustration of *Colour Story Reading*

(regrettably reproduced here in black and white)





The salient points regarding *Colour Story Reading* are:

- (a) *"It is a partial rather than a complete code.*
- (b) *The colour code incorporates two different kinds of clues, one of which demands that both letter and colour should be considered, and the second of which only requires that attention should be paid to the shape and colour of the background while letter shape may be ignored.*
- (c) *In many cases this colour code gives children clues to the pronunciation of words, but in other cases it merely gives a danger signal.*
- (d) *In certain cases the code detracts from fairly common digraphs and phonic rules.*
- (e) *As a decoding device, Colour Story Reading is not equipped to provide adequate clues to the pronunciation of many common irregular words."*

(Southgate, V. and Roberts, G.R., 1970, p. 169)

#### 2.1.5 Diacritical Marking System

In this system, a set of symbols is used in conjunction with those of t.o. to enable the reader to select the correct sound associated with a letter in given words. In all, this system comprises seventy three symbols compared to forty three symbols used by i.t.a. The Diacritical Marking System does help to simplify reading, but it cannot claim to assist free writing very much as the multiplicity of spelling forms for a single sound still remains. (See page 17).

This system has not yet received general support. In addition, published reading materials for this system are not readily available. Therefore any teacher who is enamoured of this signalling system may have to prepare materials by reproducing those available or resort to ordinary t.o. reading books.

An illustration of Fry's Diacritical Marking System

Traditionally one of the first tasks of the infant school was to teach children to read. It is still, quite rightly, a major preoccupation, since reading is a key to much of the learning that will come later and to the possibility of independent study. In many infant schools, reading and writing are treated as extensions of spoken language. Those children who have not had the opportunity at home to grasp the part that they play are introduced to them by the everyday events and environment of the classroom. Messages to go home, letters to sick children, labels to ensure that materials and tools are returned to their proper place; all call for reading and writing. Many children first glimpse the pleasures of reading from listening to stories read to them at school.

(From *Medium Modification and Cueing Techniques*, 1974, p. 22)

There are other media but the above five are probably most widely used today.

## 2.2 METHODS AND MATERIALS

In the literature on the teaching of reading and likewise in practice, the word "method" has tended to be used, in the narrower but professionally accepted sense, to refer to the Look-and-Say and Phonic Method or a combination of both.

### 2.2.1 The Alphabetic Method

This method was most widely used during the eighteenth century. This was a spelling method whereby children learned the names of the letters, and then spelt out and learnt the word, i.e., c-a-t spells cat. The basis of this method was that the pupil was obliged to scrutinise the word carefully. In this method reading and spelling efficiency were developed side by side. The most common material was the Bible.

Not surprisingly this method is no longer in use.

### 2.2.2 The Traditional Phonic Method

The Phonic Method is used in the following variations:

#### (a) The Global Method

In the common parlance of teachers and administrators, this is usually referred to as the Look-and-Say Sentence Method or the Look-and-Say Word Method. The term used will depend upon whether separate words or complete sentences are considered as the initial teaching units.

#### (b) The Synthetic Method

In this variation, individual sounds and letters are combined to form words.

#### (c) The Analytic Method

Here regular words amenable to the phonic method are split into their component sounds.

The Traditional Phonic Method is based on word building according to the sounds of the letters and letter combinations. It supplanted the Alphabetic Method, but did not maintain its initial popularity. However, it formed the basis of other approaches which use phonic analysis. The Traditional Phonic Method has the following disadvantages:

- (a) An exclusively phonic method cannot be used to decode words which are phonically irregular and according to Fries (1962, pp. 169-185) some 15% of all English words are phonically irregular.
- (b) If the pupils are restricted to reading words containing only the sounds they have learnt, the boredom of reading very similar material repeatedly is bound to have an adverse effect on the pupils' interest in reading.
- (c) The method could result in over-emphasis on letter and word recognition at the expense of reading for comprehension.
- (d) The method restricts the pupils' scope for using words familiar to them.

### 2.2.3 The Whole Word or Look-and-Say Method

During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Comenius suggested a whole word, or Look-and-Say Method for teaching reading. The rationale of the method was that children recognise words as wholes and thereafter identify the component parts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century this was well supported by the Gestalt psychologists who propagated the theory that perception of the whole preceded perception of the parts of the whole. It was therefore natural that the whole word method, or Look-and-Say method, gained in popularity. However, it was not until the late 1940's that this method firmly took root. The gain in momentum for the use of this method could be ascribed to a swing to child-centred education which occurred in that period.

But Look-and-Say soon attracted its detractors. The assault on it began with the release in the United States of the book *"Why Johnny Can't Read"* by Rudolph Flesch, in 1955. Flesch challenged the prevailing views on beginning reading instruction and his book attracted wide publicity and support from the press. He campaigned strongly for a return to a phonic approach - early teaching of correspondence between letters and sounds - as the one best method to use in teaching beginning reading, and secured support for this view from studies which compared the efficacy of Look-and-Say and Phonic Methods.

The reaction against Look-and-Say gained ground in England with the publication of the report of J.C. Daniels and Hunter Diack in 1956. They concluded that their newly devised approach, which they called the phonic word method, produced better results than the prevailing Look-and-Say, or the mixed method of whole-word recognition followed by phonics.

The whole word method relies on the configuration of the word to aid memorization of the word. This method functions well during the early stages of reading when pupils have not yet learnt the letters of the alphabet. In later stages, the knowledge of the alphabet seems to interfere with this memorisation process. It is clear from this, that Look-and-Say should be supplemented or replaced by other methods at the appropriate time.

Look-and-Say makes relatively heavier demands on the teacher than the Phonic Method. Whereas the pupils taught by the Phonic Method depend on the teacher only for the sounds associated with the symbols and the phonic rules, pupils instructed through Look-and-Say depend on their teacher to learn the pronunciation of each new word that appears in their readers. The former pupils can read independently of the teacher as soon as they grasp the phonic rules. For the latter pupils, the teacher cannot confidently use pictorial clues as a guide to the meaning of the words, since these pupils are likely to be misled by the pictures. This is because a number of words may be associated with a single picture.

The Look-and-Say Method has been propagated through a number of schemes, viz.,

- (a) *The Pilot Reading Scheme*
- (b) *The Happy Trio*
- (c) *Let's Learn to Read*
- (d) *The McKee Readers*
- (e) *Key Words Reading Scheme*
- (f) *Queensway Reading*
- (g) *Ready to Read*
- (h) *Time for Reading*

I shall discuss three of these schemes briefly, namely, the *Queensway Reading Scheme*, *Keyword Reading Scheme* and *Time for Reading*, since their philosophy and thrust are representative of most such schemes.

In the *Queensway Reading Scheme*, the emphasis is on incidental learning rather than on the isolation and specific teaching of the skill of reading. The authors Brearly and Nelson regard reading as part of communication and language development. They state that

*"A child learns to speak by being with people who are speaking: and who include him in their communication...."*

The authors stress that they wish the books

*"...to be instruments of thinking and feeling,"*

as

*"...too often children's early reading material is devoid of feeling."*

(Southgate and Roberts, 1970, p. 102)

The *Queensway Reading Scheme* places great emphasis on a story approach. According to Brearly and Nelson:

*"...the highest degree of spontaneity and appeal has been aimed at in the reading materials. Necessary repetition has been carefully controlled so that it does not become obtrusive and kill the story."*

(Southgate and Roberts, p. 105)

These claims are not exaggerated in any way. Even the first book contains a story which moves forward from the introduction of the characters, through a lively little narrative, to a satisfactory conclusion.

The materials comprising the *Queensway Reading Scheme* are a teacher's manual, a book of stories for the teacher to read to the children, a children's picture dictionary, nine main reading books, twenty supplementary books, wall pictures and cards with sentences and words.



In the *Key Words Reading Scheme* W. Murray places emphasis on the script mastery of the words most frequently encountered in the early stages of reading. However, this scheme also subscribes to the philosophy of incidental learning. It starts with fewer words than most reading schemes. This is intended to give the pupils a rapid and confident start.

The scheme is based primarily on the global method, making use of both words and sentences in the early stages but some phonic work is also included. The materials for this scheme consist of a set of notes for the teacher, thirty six children's reading books, large and small flashcards, outline picture pads, picture word matching cards, picture sentence cards, large wall pictures with sentence strips and two picture dictionaries.

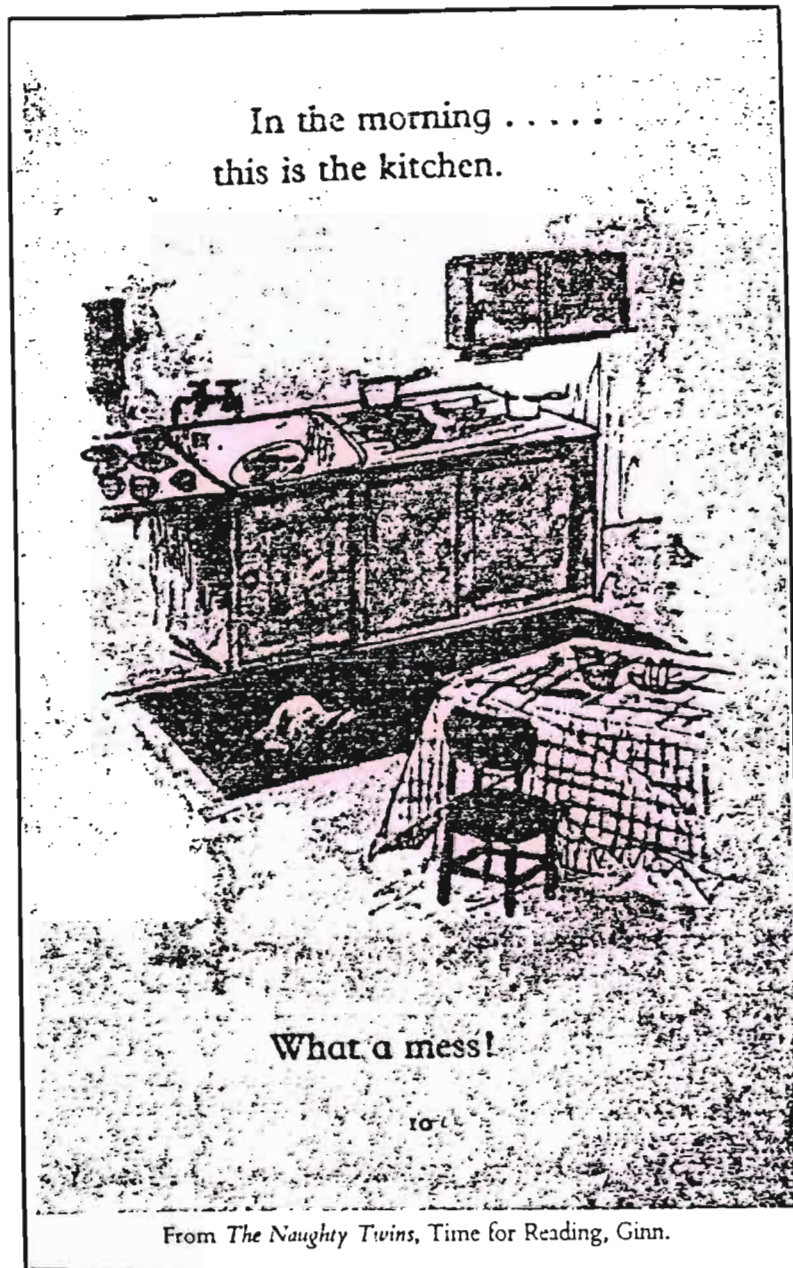
The *Time for Reading Series* was compiled by C. Obrist and P. Pickard. This scheme is based on the authors' belief that a pupil's interest is of fundamental importance in motivating a pupil to learn. For this reason, pupil-activity and informal teaching are emphasised through the suggestions for a conducive classroom atmosphere and pupil-teacher interaction. In fact, *Time for Reading* uses a combination of Look-and-Say and Sentence Methods together with incidental phonic work (see page 23).

The scheme consists of a manual and a book of stories for the teacher's use. A sequence of apparatus, books and games is also included.

#### 2.2.4 The Sentence Method

The Sentence Method also has its basis and support in the Gestalt theory of learning. In the Gestalt view, pupils should have no difficulty in learning whole ideas as expressed in sentences. Decroly even regarded the Sentence Method as a good way of building up a basic vocabulary. He suggested that sentences contributed by pupils should be fully exploited for this purpose, and also for compiling reading material. Since pupils would, in general, give expression to thoughts arising from their own experiences, this method is pupil-centred and takes account of the individual progress of the pupils. The Sentence

Illustration of - Time for Reading



Method is seen to provide the pupil with reading material which is both vital and enjoyable and is not a set of totally unrelated exercises.

However, the method does not receive much commendation in studies of teaching reading. The lack of general support for this method is attributed to the problems that arise from the pupils' making up their own reading material. Some of these problems are:

- (a) There can be no control over the vocabulary.



- (b) The repetition rate necessary for memorization may not be realized.
- (c) The teacher cannot ensure that there is steady progress in pupil attainment.

The Sentence Method may seem, on cursory inspection, to have much in common with LEAP but as described in Section 2.2.8 hereunder, LEAP includes other facets, e.g., corewords and a variety of materials, in addition to sentence making.

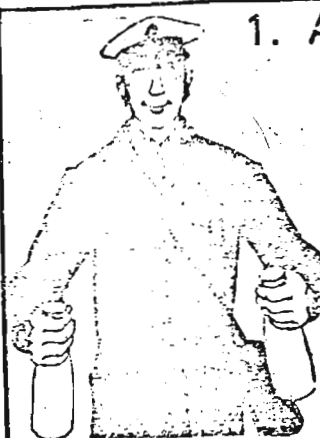


#### 2.2.5 The Phonic Word Method

This method was first introduced by Daniels and Diack in the *Royal Road Readers* in 1954. Whereas Look-and-Say controls the size of the vocabulary by limiting the number of new words and the total number of words in each book of a graded series, Daniels and Diack set out to control the number of phonic elements used in each book. This is well illustrated by the fact that nearly four hundred words in the second part of *Book One of the Bird Series* use a very small number of phonic elements. Quite clearly a pupil can decode a large number of words once he/she has mastered a few phonic rules. It should be noted that in addition to regular phonic words, forty-seven phonically irregular words are included in the series.

As expected the Phonic Word Method incorporates the teaching of the sounds of letters. Pupils are trained to identify letters and letter combinations through being taught the chosen sounds in words met in running material. This is done by getting the pupils, from the beginning, to distinguish between pairs of words such as "cap" and "cab", "bin" and "tin" and "bed" and "bud". The teacher helps the pupils by introducing the words in the most suitable contexts and by using illustrations to reinforce the pupils' grasp of the meaning of the word.

The materials of this method are the *Royal Road Readers* and the *Royal Road Reading Apparatus*.

An illustration of *Royal Road Readers*

	<p>1. A milkman brings ■■■■</p>	<p>stamps milk lemons</p>
	<p>2. Tom-tits are fond of ■■■■</p>	<p>cats visiting fat</p>
	<p>3. Robins and tom-tits have ■■■■■■</p>	<p>twigs steps nests</p>

From *Ned and Sinbad*, Royal Road Readers, Chatto & Windus.

Another phonic method is incorporated in the *Programmed Reading Kit* devised by Stott in 1962. This is essentially a remedial reading kit. It was devised as an aid for illiterates and non-readers in secondary schools, but a redesigned form has been used in junior primary schools with considerable success. Stott considered the following in the design of his scheme:

- (a) That pupils can learn at their own rates if the sounds and skills for their use are introduced in a programmed way.

- (b) That restricting the vocabulary in readers to phonically graded work leads to "too steep a gradation of difficulty or in text lacking in interest and motivation." (Moyle, 1976, p. 110)

In the light of the above, Stott compiled a set of materials which could be used to develop skills in using phonics without recourse to conventional readers. A predominant part of the materials consists of individual and group games which have built-in correcting mechanisms. The "games" aspect is meant to catch the pupils' interest, in the same way as the "story element" does in a reader.

The kit does not replace reading books but can be used in conjunction with them. As a compendium of reading games, the Kit is more extensive and better graded than the majority of such kits. In addition to the games, the kit has sentences and stories and a set of two books -- *The Days of the Week Books* (Stott, 1961) and *The Milky Books* (Stott, 1960).

A noteworthy feature of Stott's scheme is that he includes the analysis and synthesis of a word. Stott deems it important that pupils should be taught to link the first consonant with the vowel in three letter words such as "bat".

M. Reis compiled *Fun with Phonics* on the basis that a systematic approach was essential to the teaching of reading. This system "makes provision for the mechanics of reading to be learnt with enthusiasm through a variety of games and activities which have a play element." (Moyle, 1976). It uses phonics in a synthetic mode (see Section 2.2.2). Pupils are expected to construct words using the various letter sounds. The scheme relies on the proper use of the following apparatus: word and picture cards, post boxes, snap cards, templates and a twirler (a simple tachiscope).

#### 2.2.6 The Individualized Reading Method

This is really an organisational variation rather than a teaching method. In this method, attention is given to variables such as classroom organisation, motivation and subject matter of reading.

The flexibility associated with this method has given rise to several variations in approach. The "pursuits" tend to use pupil-teacher conferences lasting two to ten minutes depending on size of the class. Other means include:

- (a) Use of books selected by the teacher.
- (b) Use of group instruction in skills from basal readers and work books.
- (c) Use of daily basal instruction in groups followed by reading of books by the pupils on their own (they read books which they have selected).

#### 2.2.7 The Language Experience Approach (LEAP)

This pupil-centred approach to the teaching of reading was initiated by the Schools' Council in London. This approach, primarily exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*, rests on the tenet that reading and writing must be founded on a sound theory of literacy. The approach uses the language known to the pupil but does not rely solely on it. It provides a suitable framework in the form of a selected list of 119 core-words. These core words have been very carefully selected on the basis of their usefulness to pupils and their spelling complexity. The success of the method hinges on the proper use of the Word and Sentence Maker. The Breakthrough readers serve a good supporting function. However, these readers are not rigidly graded reading books, but what they lack in grading they make up in style and appeal.

An Example of pupils' language and experience used in the *Breakthrough Reader*



(From *Things I can Do, Breakthrough to Literacy*, Longmans.)

Initially the approach requires the teacher to show pupils that the ideas that they offer through the sentences which they themselves construct can be put into written form. The teacher does this through the use of a large Sentence Maker, a smaller version of which is available to pupils at a later stage. The teacher's own injection of words and sentences is needed to help pupils develop their skills in language usage. As soon as pupils show that they can handle sentences on their own, they are given their own Sentence Makers. Pupils thus get an opportunity to experiment with sentence construction.

The Word Maker is introduced as an aid to pupils to distinguish between component phonemes. The pupils are made to feel that words, acting in meaningful conjunction, are means to an enjoyable end. Through the use of the Word Maker, new words are learnt with little or no conscious effort on the part of the pupil.

In contrast to other pupil-centred schemes, LEAP is holistic, organic and versatile. The core words help the teacher tremendously in guiding and controlling the work of the pupils. Yet it is flexible enough to allow a reasonable measure of freedom to both teacher and pupils. The approach allows a pupil to learn at a pace commensurate with his/her abilities.

*"Breakthrough helps the teacher to avoid cutting him off from his natural linguistic resources; but it also offers a firm foundation of structured learning based on clearly defined linguistic principles, while retaining the liveliness and originality of children's own language in the material with which they learn to read and write."*

(Taylor, J., 1973, p. 84)

#### 2.2.8 The Mixed or Eclectic Method

The term eclectic or mixed method refers to approaches in which a variety of techniques for teaching word recognition are used. This is achieved in one of two ways:

- (a) The teacher uses the same materials in different ways.
- (b) The teacher uses a number of different materials.

The mixing involves, in the main, the whole word and phonic methods with varying amounts of LEAP being added to taste. The onus of deciding on which methods to use at any given time, and what proportion of the total time should be allowed for each method, falls on the teacher. For the pupils, the mixture may create some pitfalls. For instance a pupil may be confused about using his memory or spelling pattern to work out a word. However, this can be avoided if the mixing is well planned and programmed.



### 2.3 THE MEDIA, METHODS AND MATERIALS USED IN INDIAN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

While traditional orthography is the only medium used in Indian schools in South Africa, a mixture of methods is employed. The need for such an eclectic approach is highlighted in the following quote:

*"Durrel (1956) states 'without attention to meaning reading becomes word-calling; without a background of phonics reading becomes a guessing game. With phonics alone, however, reading becomes a nonsense syllable analysis'."*

(Moyle, 1976, p. 55)

The term "eclectic" describes the practice whereby the actual method used consists of compatible parts of many different methods. The basis for using a mixture of ingredients from various approaches is that one or more of these ingredients is bound to provide the learning mode needed by a particular pupil. The various methods used in obtaining the eclectic approach are described below. However, it should be noted that the mixed method is used in one of the two forms. In one, the dominant component is *Breakthrough to Literacy*, while in the other, the Look-and-Say using the *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way Series* predominates. In subsequent chapters, the abbreviations BL and LLR will be used to refer to these two forms respectively.

#### 2.3.1 The Sentence Method

In the course of the Discussion period, of which the Daily News session is an important part, the emphasis is on the connection between written and spoken words. Pupils contribute items for the Daily News verbally. The teacher selects the most topical or most interesting contribution and composes a simple sentence to describe it:

e.g., "I have a new bag."

The teacher illustrates this on a flipchart, or on the chalkboard, or displays a suitable picture. Below the picture or drawing, the teacher

writes, "I have a new bag," explaining that, "We have written the words down and we can see the words. The picture tells us a story and these words tell us the same story."

The Sentence Method is useful in describing items in the classroom and for giving general information. These sentences are displayed on charts mounted on the walls of the classroom.

e.g.

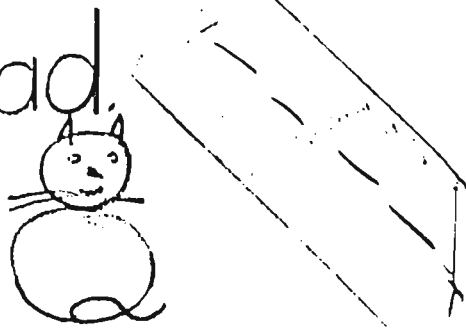
This is our classroom.

The chalkboard is green.

The teachers get pupils to read these sentences from time to time during the Discussion period.

A sentence written on the daily news flip chart

1 June  
Monday  
The cat ran  
across the  
road

A simple line drawing of a cat sitting next to a road. The cat is facing forward, and the road is depicted with dashed lines receding into the distance.

The Sentence Method is also used for conveying the teacher's instruction which is written on card board (held up for display by the teacher). The instructions may also be written on the chalkboard, on a worksheet, or on a workchart. Initially the teacher "reads" the instruction and the pupils follow in chorus.

An example of a sentence in the form of an instruction

Go quietly to your place.

In the Sentence Method, the stress is on a series of words acting in a meaningful conjunction when written and read from left to right, i.e., the sentence and not on isolated words. The accent therefore is on reading as a thought-getting process. In order to prevent pupils from reading word by word, the teacher does not point to each word. She uses a slow sweeping movement of her arm starting at the first word of the sentence, and proceeds from left to right. The Sentence Method is a valuable part of the reading readiness programme in that, used correctly, it:

- (a) *"Helps the child to understand the relationship between the spoken word and the written symbol.*
- (b) *Helps the child to develop left to right eye-movements so essential to reading.*
- (c) *Extends the child's vocabulary (through discussion) for sentences used should be from child-orientated discussion."*  
(Johnston and van der Merwe, 1979, p. 10)

However, this method is not used exclusively as it has its limitations. These are described in Section 2.2.4.

### 2.3.2 The Look-and-Say Method

This is also known as the flash method. The teacher shows the word written on a flashcard and tells the pupil the word. The pupil is expected to remember what it is and to recognise it again at first sight. The mechanism by which the child learns the word has not been established. It is reasonable to assume that the shape of the word, the arrangement of letters, and the repeated act of seeing and sounding the word are partly involved in helping the child to remember the word.

A teacher flashing a set of words on cards to a group



The flash vocabulary consists of words taken from the readers of *Let's Learn to Read* and the *Gay Way Series*. (See Appendix 1). The principle of teaching flash words remains the same throughout, that is, the whole word is shown, and the pupil memorizes the word but the method of presentation changes. (See Section 2.3.2.1)

This flashing of words is an exercise in speech development through the pronunciation of words. The pupils are taught the meaning of the word, and the word is used in sentences. The pupil must subsequently be able to recognise the flashed target word in a meaningful cluster. The new words are tested, then consolidated by being incorporated into written work in the form of graded occupational work.

### 2.3.2.1 The Teaching of Flash Words

As a class unit the pupils have flash drill during the Main Language lesson and when there are the odd few minutes left from lessons such as Right Living, Health Education and Study of the Environment. During this time, if the class response is good, a new word is introduced. More than one flash word may be introduced but not at the same time. Plenty of revision takes place because of the short periods of distributed practice.

#### Example:

In Set 7 the teacher aims to consolidate the words "she", "helps", "him", "big", "bed", "got", "for", and "doll". The new word to be taught for the day will be "lovely" or "what". After pupils have been tested (see Section 2.3.2.2) they are placed in ability groups.

After ability groups have been formed, only 20 words are flashed in any one session. The 20 words belong to 2 sets. One set is for revision, while the other set contains words that will be taught over the next few days. The new set takes about 5-10 days to teach and test. When the response from the group to the set being taught is good, the pupils are tested. This testing is done individually and is the only individual work done in flash-drilling.

The flashwords for the *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way Readers* have been selected by experts in the Junior Primary Division of the Department of Indian Affairs, and included in the *Guide to the Teaching of English as a Main Language* (1976, pp.177-179). This means that the flash sets taught in all the schools are uniform.

### 2.3.2.2 The Testing of Flash Words

The teacher may teach 20, 25 or 30 words before testing for ability grouping. Throughout the junior primary phase the pupil is tested on his knowledge of the flash words with the same basic principles applying:

- (a) *"The child is put at ease.*
  - (b) *The child is not helped or prompted in any way.*
  - (c) *If a word is given incorrectly, it is wrong - there is no second attempt. (A second attempt is usually a guess).*
  - (d) *The testing must be done at a good speed. The child is not allowed to ponder over a word."*
- (Johnston and van der Merwe, 1979, p. 19).

The pupil's responses may be either prompt and correct, or marked by a long pause during which time the pupil is making attempts to say a word. In the latter case, the teacher should go on to the next card.

This first testing in Class i is done with the whole class over as short a period as possible. In order to get a fair result from the test, the condition that all the children were taught the same number of words in the same time-span must be fully met. On the basis of the scores obtained the teacher places pupils into ability groups. A typical division scheme based on test scores, with a maximum of thirty words, is shown in Table I.

Table I : Basis for Ability Groups

Group	Score
A	25-30
B	20-24
C	15-19
D	0-14



The ability groups indicate the pupil's rate of learning the words and the following classification may be used:

- A - very fast learners
- B - fast learners
- C - slow learners
- D - very slow learners

#### 2.3.2.3 Reading Materials

Before readers are given to them, the pupils are required to read reading cards (prepared by the teacher) containing words from the readers to be issued to them.

An example of a reading card

I love mum.  
mum loves baby.  
baby loves mum  
and dad.  
brother loves  
sister and brother.  
I love dad.

Pupils also read news written for Daily News in their Daily News Books. Sometimes pupils are asked to read what they have written for Creative Writing.

### 2.3.3 The Phonic Approach

Recognition of a word by its size and shape is the device by which a pupil builds up a reading vocabulary fairly quickly. However, it is decidedly uneconomical and confusing to have to learn all words by whole word methods. By teaching simple phonics the teacher enables the pupils to break down and build up words for himself. This helps the pupil to acquire a measure of self-confidence, independence and understanding, regarding the phonic construction of words.

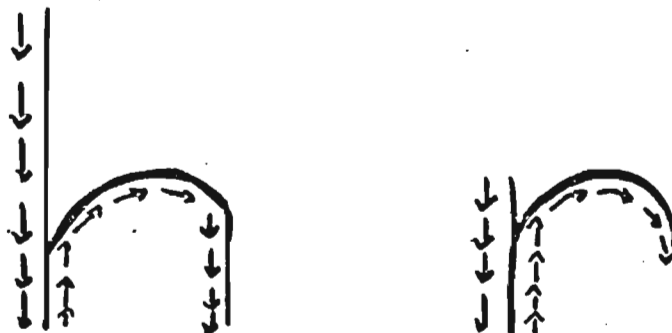
#### 2.3.3.1 The Teaching of the Alphabet

The sound of each letter is taught with the aid of an illustration and a word.

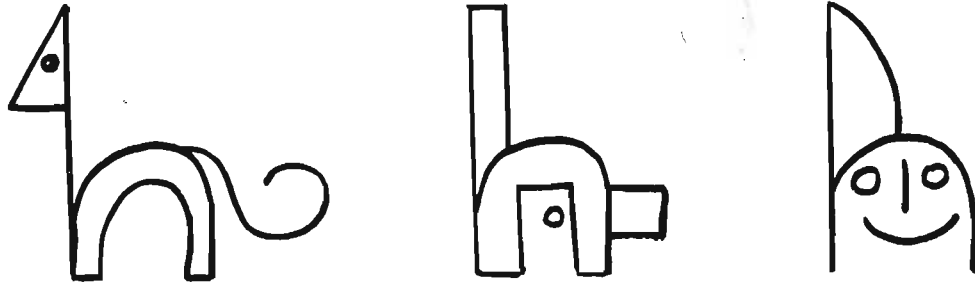


The sounding and writing of the letters are consolidated by:

- (a) Writing the letter during the handwriting period where the starting point and direction of movement for the formation of the letter is demonstrated by the teacher, e.g.,

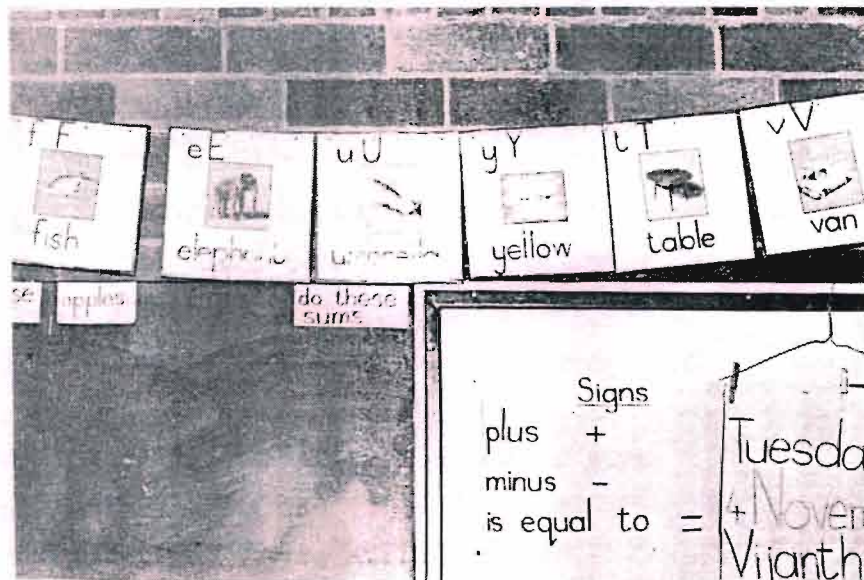


- (b) Drawing the letter in the form of a pattern for occupational work in handwriting.



- (c) Displaying the letters in the form of a frieze in the classroom. The capital letters are also written immediately on the frieze so that children become familiar with them and eventually learn them.

Part of the frieze displayed in the classroom



This frieze is built up as the sounds are taught and is revised thoroughly everyday. All the sounds are given equal value. Initially the emphasis is on teaching the sounds of the letters. Gradually the stress shifts to the writing of the letters.

### 2.3.3.2 Testing of the Alphabet

Cards with a single letter and nothing else written on it, are used in testing knowledge of the letters. Since there are no illustrations or words on the card, pupils are not helped in any way. This testing indicates to the teacher whether the children are ready for word-building. Word-building only begins when pupils are able to sound all the letters of the alphabet.

### 2.3.3.3 Teaching of the Blended Sounds

Although word building has begun, revision of the 26 letters is still done daily. An example of a word-building lesson, using the "et" sound, follows. The teacher writes "e" on the chalkboard.

Teacher : "What sound is this?"

Children : "e", (pupils give the sound)

The teacher then writes "t" on the chalkboard next to the "e"

Teacher : "What sound is this?" (pointing to the letter "t")

The children answer "t", again giving the sound.

Teacher : "Now say the two sounds quickly, one after the other."

Children : "e ...t", (et)

Teacher : "What do they say together?"

Pupils should be able to answer "et".

For pupils finding difficulty the teacher says:

"Listen carefully. "e...t, e...t, et, et"

Children : "e...t, et"

The teacher writes "et" on the board four or five times.

Example:

et

et

et

et

et

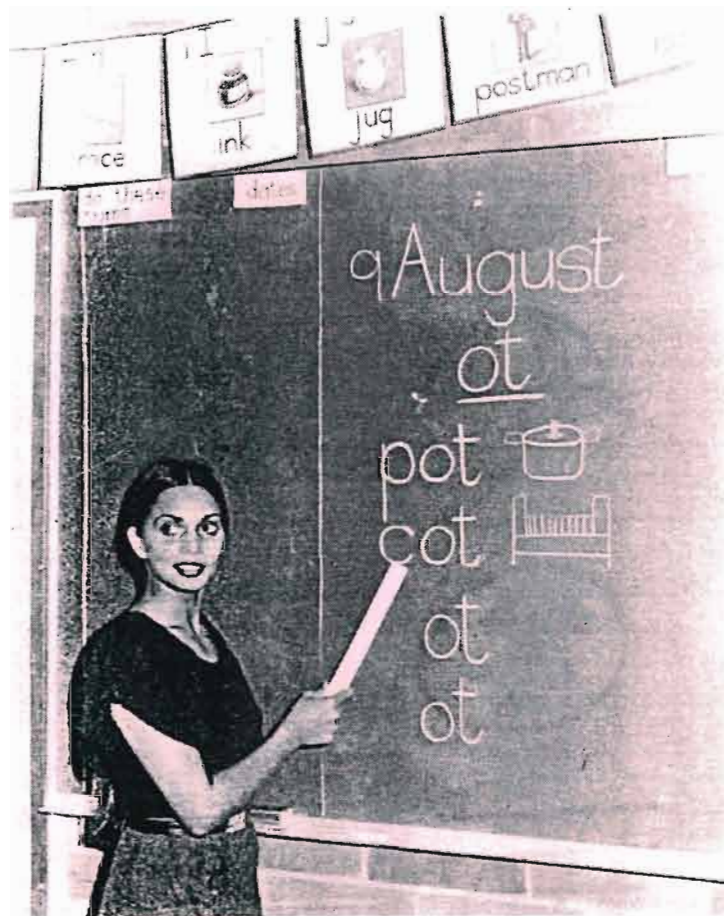
In front of the first et the teacher writes "n"

Children : n...et, net.

If pupils find difficulty in sounding n...et net the teacher helps by sayin "n...et, net."

The whole word is said as an entity after the breaking of the word into its phonemic parts. The same procedure is followed for set, bet, get, jet.

### A phonic lesson in progress



Words are also built by blending the first two, instead of the last two letters. The first two sounds in this method are constant as could be seen in the following example:

bi ... t

bi ... n

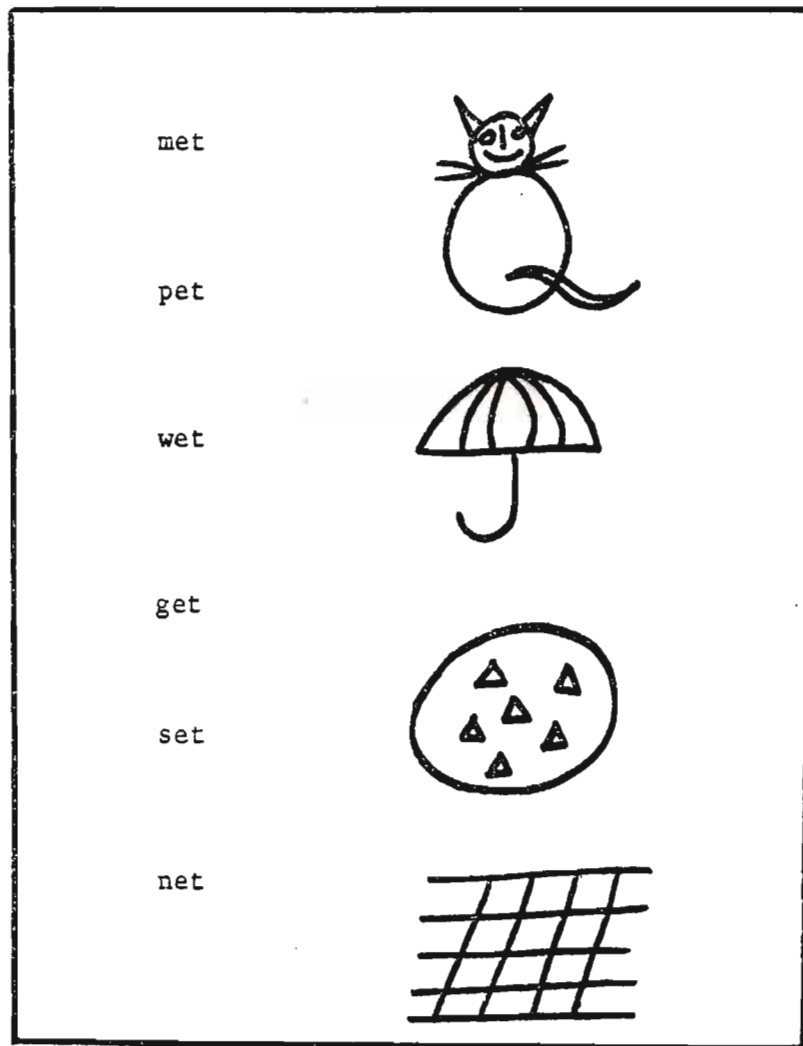
bi ... g

bi ... d

Up to this point word-building is done on the chalkboard, with the children participating, and sometimes building the words themselves. A chart of the words is thus displayed on the wall. This chart is used for revision and also for occupational work.

An example of a phonic chart with a blended sound "et"

et





The following list of blended sounds are taught to the pupils in Class i:

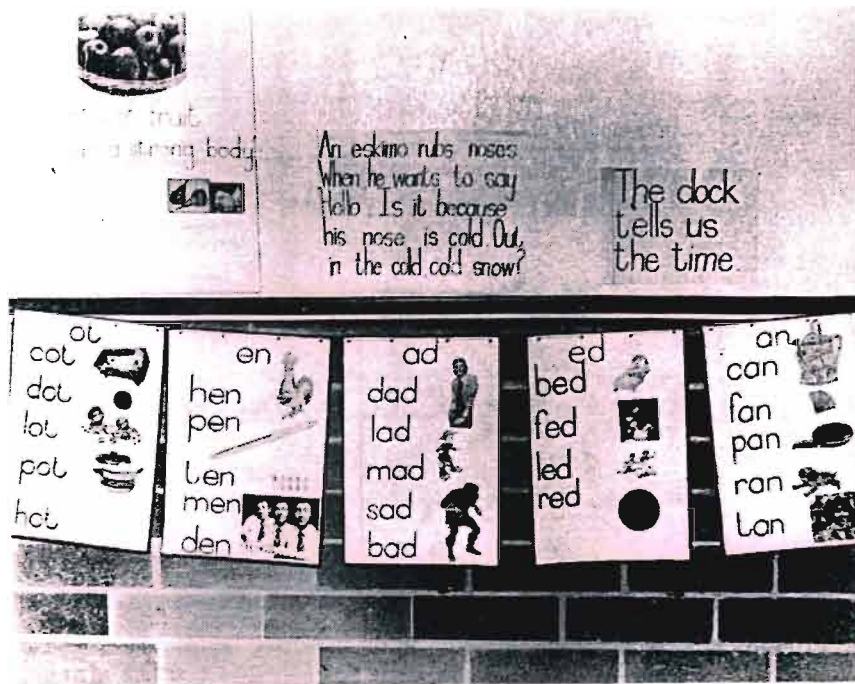
ac	cat	rat	fat	hat
et	jet	wet	get	pet
it	hit	sit	bit	pit
ot	cot	hot	pot	dot
ut	cut	hut	nut	but
ad	bad	sad	pad	mad
an	pan	can	ran	fan
in	pin	bin	fin	tin
un	run	bun	fun	gun
ig	pig	wig	big	jig
ug	hug	mug	jug	bug
ip	lip	tip	dip	hip
op	top	mop	hop	pop
up	cup	pup		
am	jam	ram	dam	ham
en	hen	pen	men	ten
ed	bed	fed	led	red
eg	beg	leg	peg	
og	dog	log	log	
ill	hill	bill	till	will
ell	bell	sell	tell	tell
st	stop	best	still	nest
mp	jump	lamp	lamp	camp
nt	ant	tent	bent	hint
nd	and	end	fund	hand
sw	swim	swop	swam	

(From: *Teaching English with a Purpose*, 1979, p. 42)

The daily pattern for the phonic lesson in Class i is as follows:

- (a) Revision of the frieze with the basic sounds, that is, the letters of the alphabet.
- (b) Revision of the word list on the charts. These charts should not exceed five, and should consist of the last five blended sounds that were taught.

A typical set of five sounds used for revision



(c) The teaching of a new blended sound on the chalkboard.

The teacher sets occupational work aimed at consolidating the learning of the phonics. Suggested exercises are:

(a) Draw and write.

pen  
top  
jet  
bin

(b) Write the word next to the picture.



(c) Write a sentence for each word.

mop  
hen  
bit  
bad  
rag

(d) Fill in the correct word from the "at" chart.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is pretty.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is on the bed.

She plays with a \_\_\_\_\_ and a ball.

(e) Ring the words that end in "it".

hit	rat	nit	mat
let	sit	sat	cot
bit	bag	pit	ban

(f) In each line ring the word that does not belong.

ant	bin	tent	lint	bent
till	bell	sell	tell	fell
hog	bug	fog	dog	
run	bun	ad	fun	gun

(g) Put in a first letter to make a word.

\_\_in,    \_\_an,    \_\_un,    \_\_en.

(h) Put in the last letter to make a word.

cu\_\_,    ra\_\_,    bu\_\_,    si\_\_.

(i) Put in the middle letter to make a word.

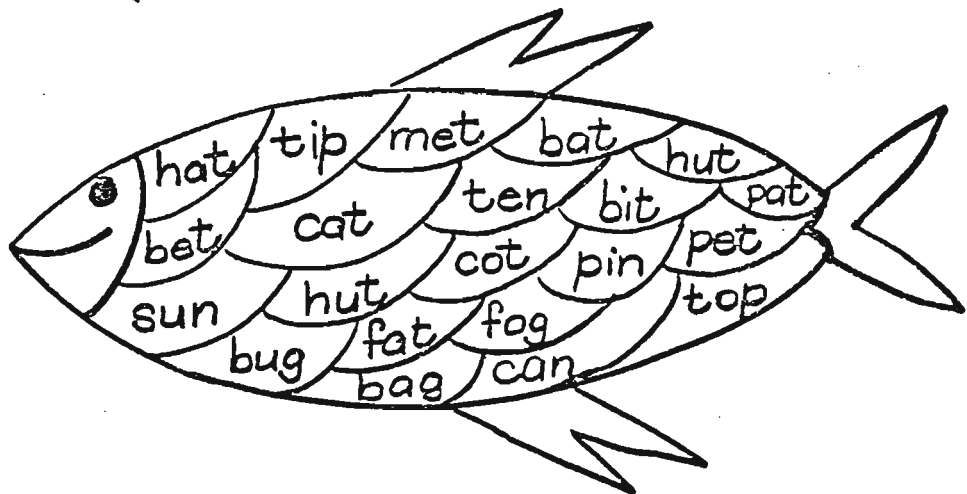
p\_\_n,    h\_\_t,    b\_\_n,    c\_\_t,    h\_\_p.

(j) Write these words in the correct box.

jet,      kit,      pen,      top,      rot,      let,  
pop,      ten,      sit,      men,      fit,      met,      hop.

et	op	ot	it	en

(k) Colour the scales which have words with the "at" sound.



#### 2.3.3.4 Testing of the Phonic Blended Sounds

The teacher has to check that pupils know the phonics involved in a reader, before they are given that particular reader. This is done so that pupils are not unduly frustrated by their inability to pronounce new words. In conducting phonic tests the teacher should give attention to the fact that:

- (a) The words must test the phonic skills taught.
- (b) The words must not appear on the phonic charts.
- (c) At least five phonic sounds should be tested at one session. The test is either given in the form of a number of words, a sentence, or sentences.

An example of a phonic test using words

(This card is used to test the at, uɜ, it, op and en blended sounds)

mat

dug

bit

top

ten

mug

hen

An example of a phonic test using sentences

The dog and the big cat met the hen.

The cards prepared by the teacher for testing are used only for that purpose, so that the pupil's performance is not contaminated by practice.

2.3.4 LEAP as exemplified by Breakthrough to Literacy (BL)

The fundamental axioms underlying Breakthrough to Literacy are:

- (a) *"Reading matter for children should from the beginning, be linked to their own spoken language. The child's neighbourhood dialect may well be the only resource he brings to learning to read and write, and to present him with written language unrelated to his spoken language is to cut him off from this."*
- (b) *The material that children are asked to read should be closely linked to their own interests and should include forms of imaginative writing.*

- (c) *The teacher should be an active participant in the child's learning process, constantly offering the child guidance and help."*

(Mackay, Thompson, Schaub, 1970, pp.3-4)

BL "...integrates the production (writing) and the reception (reading).... When he comes to learn to read and write he is introduced to the receptive skill, reading, before the productive skill, writing. This is because it is difficult for him to produce written language unaided. The Sentence Maker is designed to allow him to do this." (Ibid; pp. 3-4).

It therefore overcomes two major difficulties that face pupils when they try to write, viz., the lack of manual dexterity (in handling a writing instrument), and the inability to spell. The Sentence Maker has cards with words printed on them. The pupil learns to arrange the cards, in sequence from left to right, to compose sentences. This does not mean that handwriting and spelling are neglected. The latter are taught as skills separately. Thus, using the Sentence Maker the pupil is able to communicate through the written and spoken word.

This is a pupil-orientated approach where the pupil actively participates by handling the words and building sentences, even before he has learnt how to write.

#### 2.3.4.1 Materials used in BL

The original BL materials arose out of the efforts of the "Initial Literary Project", which was launched by the University College of London. The original materials, and the additions which have been made thereto, are described in the sections which follow. We should note here that some of the materials have been designed for the teacher's use (the Magnet Board Pack), some for the pupil's use (Project Folder, Word Store, Letter Store, Adventure Store, My First Word Book, Breakthrough readers and nursery rhymes), while the rest are for the use of the teacher and the pupils (Sentence Maker, Sentence Stand, the First Word Maker, and the Second Word Maker).



#### 2.3.4.1.1 Sentence Maker

This consists of a triptych and word cards. The first and second sides have core words printed on them with slots to hold the matching insert cards. The third side has pockets but no labels on them. The "personal" words, requested by pupils, are placed in these pockets. In the words of the BL workers,

*"...the choice of the core words was found in the work of 5-6 year old children who had used the materials. We modified this to include a range of grammatical words such as who, what, were, there, by, not all of which are easily used by some children. Inevitably there was a small number of words, (about 20) which had to be chosen arbitrarily from a large number children had in fact used. Before finalising this group we asked the advice of teachers about those that they thought it most useful to include. We were concerned that the final selection should also represent as many as possible of the major spelling patterns."*

(Mackay, Thompson, Shaub, 1970, p. 95)

The 119 core words, 4 affixes, 1 contraction, and 2 punctuation marks are as follows:

#### Words on the first side/fold of the Sentence Maker

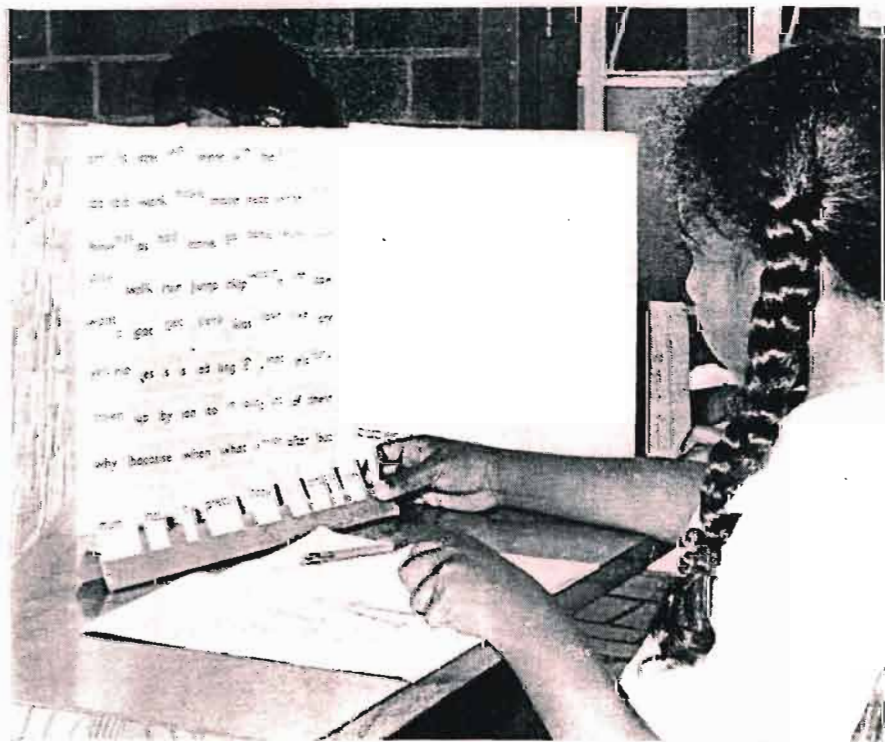
home mum dad television bed baby  
 brother sister boy girl children friend  
 teacher school picture story book house  
 morning night day time birthday party  
 cat dog shop car a a the and very  
 pretty big little good bad naughty some  
 happy new all lot this I my they  
 you me it we our he him his she her

### Words in the middle flap of the Sentence Maker

am is are was were will be been can  
do did work make read write paint  
have has had come go came went said  
play walk run jump skip watch see saw  
want got get sleep kiss love like cry  
yes no es s ed ing? . not n't  
for down up by on to in out at  
of there why because when what with  
after but

Supplied with the Sentence Maker are the word cards. These are cardboard strips which have the core words printed on them. Blank cards are also provided. These are for personal words and for preparing replacements for lost or damaged core-word cards.

### A pupil building a sentence on the Sentence Stand using the word cards from the Sentence Maker



### 2.3.4.1.2 Sentence Stand

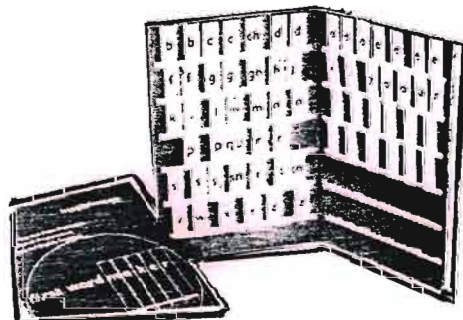
This is used together with the Sentence Maker. It is a plastic stand with slots for holding the word card in an upright position. Whereas each pupil must use the Sentence Maker assigned to them, because the core-words and personal-words cards differ from one pupil to another, the Sentence Stands are interchangeable.

#### A Teacher using a Sentence Stand

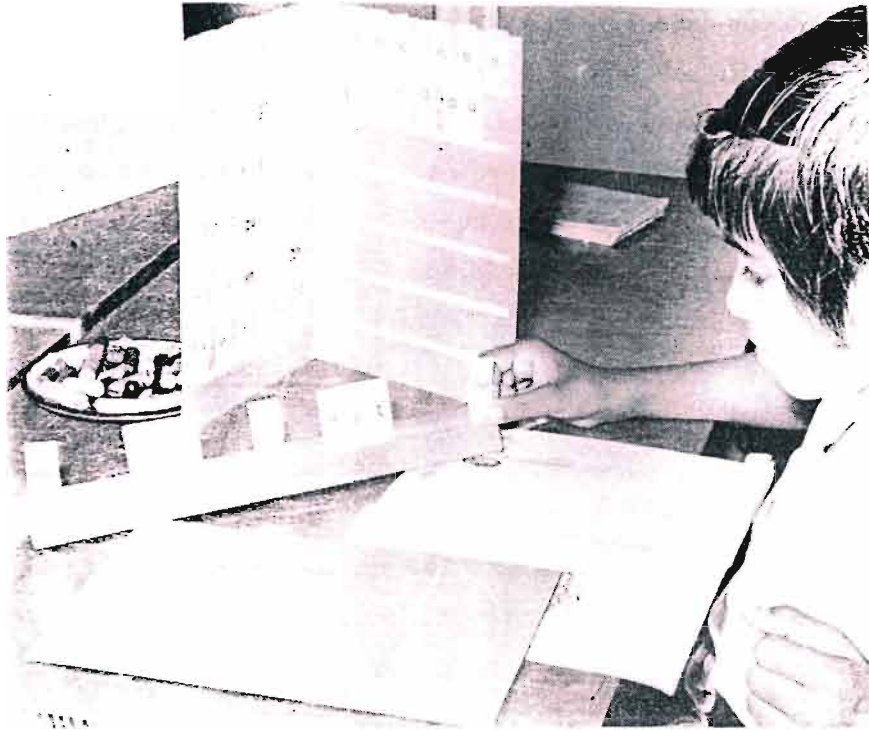


### 2.3.4.1.3 The First Word Maker

This is a diptych which has all the consonants and five letter-combinations (ch, gh, qu, sh and th) printed on the left hand side, and the vowels on the right-hand side. The cards with the letter and letter-combinations printed on them are supplied with the diptych.



A Pupil who has built "fat" and "hit" using the Word Maker

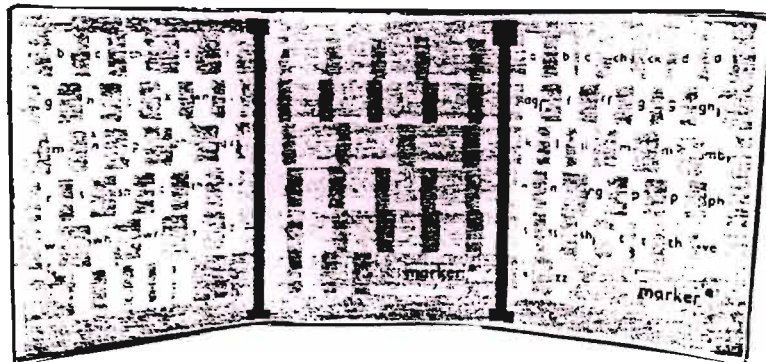


2.3.4.1.4 Second Word Maker

This is a triptych in which the initial consonants and the blends are on the extreme left portion, the vowel symbols in the middle section and the final consonants on the extreme right. This arrangement is based on the structure of the written word.

<u>Extreme Left</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Extreme Right</u>
m	ea	t
sp	oi	l

The Second Word Maker



(From *Breakthrough to Literacy*, Johnston, 1979, p. 10)



The Second Word Maker is for the pupil who has mastered the simple word building skills, and is ready to use the consonant blends and the long vowel sounds, e.g., ae, ey, oi. The Second Word Maker caters for the pupil who is making good progress in learning to spell and who is ready to extend this skill. A booklet of suggestions is supplied for the use of the Second Word Maker.

#### 2.3.4.1.5 Magnet Board Pack

This Magnet Board Pack contains a magnet board 560 mm x 690 mm and four sheets of selected cardboards cutouts, comprising figures and pictures which enable the teacher to illustrate practically all the conversation topics of small children, which often revolve around the home and the school.

One of the many ways in which the magnet board can be used is for displaying pictures which highlight meanings of pupils' verbal contributions. The build up of the picture shows how ideas can be brought together round a control topic to form a story.

Another good use for the magnet board is to illustrate the meaning of words or phrases like "under", "over", "on top of", "underneath", "each", so that children know how, and when, to use these words when speaking, building, or writing sentences. The magnet board is also used to complement and extend the Teacher's Sentence Maker.

It is thus seen that the magnet board is similar to the flannel board, as both help to "actualise" the story pupils get a quick grasp of what is being communicated.

#### The Magnet Board Pack



(From *Breakthrough to Literacy*, 1979. p. 6)

#### 2.3.4.1.6 Project Folder

This is an item which was added to the original BL materials. The project folder is a triptych, with unlabelled slots in all three sections. It comes complete with six perforated sheets of blank insert cards. It has been found useful when used in conjunction with project themes, viz., "My Family", "A Picnic", "Our Classroom", "Shopping", "Our Garden" and "My Teacher". The Project Folder belongs to the class and is kept in the "library corner". The teacher and the pupils, working jointly on a project, select the words to be placed in the folder. Only words associated with a particular topic are included in one folder. By using these folders pupils become aware that there are special vocabularies associated with particular events and places.

An alternative some teachers use a project word chart on which the words for a particular project or theme are listed.

#### A Teacher's Improvised Project Folder and Project Chart





#### 2.3.4.1.7 The Word Store

This has to be made by the teacher since it is not commercially available. It is usually made from strong calico or denim material with small labelled pockets for the words. A wooden dowel is threaded through the hem at the top. The word store is suspended along a wall at a height suitable for the shortest pupil to dip into.

Two or three core word cards are put into each pocket of the word store. These cards are for pupils who are making good progress and acquiring vocabulary very quickly. They can get the word they need without the help of the teacher.

#### Pupils using the Word Store



The Word Store is an important part of BL apparatus. It is singularly helpful in promoting the learning of the core words, especially when the Word Store is used as a "lost word store". The most important benefits of the Word Store are:

- (i) *"Word cards that are dropped are picked up by whoever finds them.*
- (ii) *Every pupil is responsible for lost words, thus creating a positive attitude towards communal property.*
- (iii) *The teacher is not disturbed unnecessarily.*
- (iv) *The finder does not go around disturbing other pupils to ask, "Is this yours?"*
- (v) *The finder gains valuable matching experience when looking for the correct pocket in which to place the words he has found."*  
(Johnston, 1979, p. 40)
- (vi) If a pupil has lost a word he can go to the Word Store and look for another one.
- (vii) Pupils in the class help the finder if he is not able to find a pocket.

From time to time groups are involved in sorting the word cards in the Word Store into their correct pockets. A further way of getting pupils to use the Word Store involves setting occupational work using words from the Word Store.

#### An Example of an Instruction on the Chalkboard

##### Butterflies

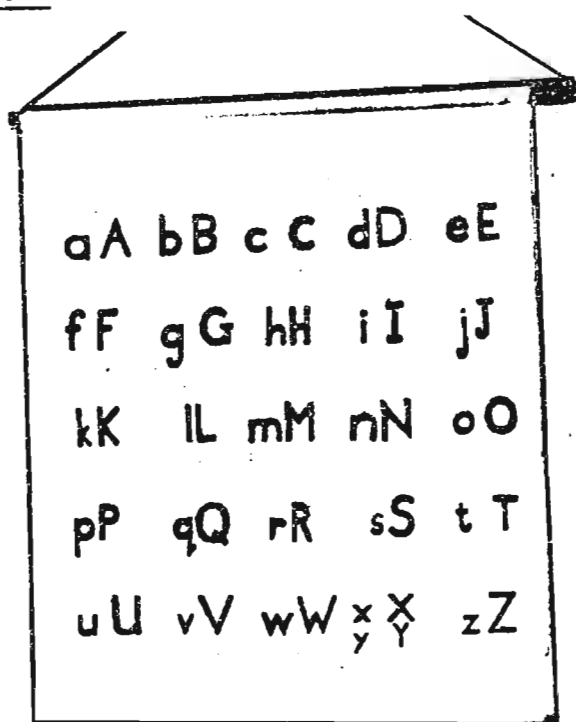
Check the words in the word store and put them in the right pockets

Adesh	Mum	happy	but
Thanusha	dad	book	go
Kementhree	bed	story	come
Sayuree	baby	school	run
Yavani	the	house	play
Shevani	a	when	walk
Avanthi	I	birthday	jump
Venesan	and	party	slap
Kieran	new	television	was
Yeshveen	car	children	were

### 2.3.4.1.8 Letter Store

This store is used only for extra letter cards which are needed in words more than once, or as replacements for lost cards. Initially only cards containing lower case letters are placed in the store, but as the pupils begin to learn upper cases these are also included. This item, for which canvas or denim could be used, is also made by the teacher.

#### A Letter Store



(From *Breakthrough to Literacy*, Johnston, 1979, p. 42)

### 2.3.4.1.9 Adventure Word Store

This could be just like the Letter Store or it could be made in the form of a box. In the latter case it is divided into compartments marked alphabetically. Personal words that are discarded, or are no longer needed, are placed into the pockets or compartments. When a pupil needs a personal word he is encouraged to look through the relevant pockets or compartments. The help of the other pupils is also enlisted in this activity. Personal words which are not known by the pupil, when checked, are also placed in the Adventure Store.

Pupils can also construct a word with their Word Makers, and then check the Adventure Store for this word. This helps pupils to develop word analysis skills. Examples of words in the Adventure Store are picnic, supermarket, town, hospital and granny.

#### 2.3.4.1.10 My First Word Book

This is another addition to the original BL materials. It is an important part of the BL scheme since it is a link between the Sentence Maker and the pupil's first dictionary. It has all the words that appear in the Sentence Maker, together with the basic number and colour words. The book is organised alphabetically. Space is left in the book so that pupils can add their personal words after they have been approved by the teacher. This book is retained and is used by the pupil in Class ii and Std. 1. The teacher gives the Word Book to the pupils as soon as the latter have dispensed with the need for the Sentence Maker. The handing of the Word Book to the pupil marks the stage of the pupil's progress from the concrete to the abstract level.

#### 2.3.4.1.11 Reading Materials

In the initial stages of using BL pupils are not prepared to read a prescribed reader, but are trained to read the sentences which they construct in the Sentence Stand and write into their "Story Book". This "Story Book" is their first reader. The term "Story Book" is favoured to "Sentence Book" or "Composition Book" as pupils' familiarity with stories makes it easier for them to appreciate the purpose of the book.

In the beginning the teacher records the sentences for the pupils in these "Story Books". Pupils are required to read these sentences to the teacher. The pupils read their own sentences as well as sentences from the "Story Books" of other pupils in their class. In addition pupils read sentences written on the flip charts by the teacher. These sentences are either those composed by the teacher, using words known to the pupil, or those selected by the teacher from the pupils' Story Books.

A pupil reading to the teacher from her Sentence Stand



A pupil reading from his "Story Book"





The remaining reading materials are optional. They are:

(i) The little Breakthrough Books

Table II shows the original number of books in each graded series, the readership and the titles of additions published in 1980, to mark the tenth anniversary of the launching of *Breakthrough to Literacy* in England.

Table II : The "little" Breakthrough Books

Colour Code	No.	Readership	1980 Additions*
Yellow	20	1st year of Junior Primary phase used as supplementary core readers	<i>my little sister</i> <i>all round the year</i> <i>when I go to school</i> <i>my dad</i>
Red	24	1st year of Junior Primary phase used as supplementary core readers	<i>Signs</i> <i>Hamlet the hamster</i> <i>Going to the pictures</i> <i>Whatever next</i>
Blue	8	Further reading in the Junior Primary phase	<i>Spider webs</i> <i>The button hole</i> <i>The son</i> <i>The moon</i>
Green	12	Slow readers	<i>The bridesmaid</i> <i>My island</i> <i>Going to London</i> <i>In hospital</i>

\*Mentor: *Journal of the Natal Teachers' Society*. Vol. 62. No. 5, 1980, Durban.



(ii) The "big" Breakthrough books.

They are "*Abc for hungry boys and girls*" and "*About the house*". The illustrations in these books are used during the discussion period by the teacher, while pupils use the books for reading or reference purposes.

(iii) The 4 Breakthrough "Poetry Lollipops"

The titles of these are "*People*", "*Weather*", "*Animals*" and "*Birds*".

The 48 nursery rhymes called "*Sally-go-round-the-sun*" are available on cards. These cards are particularly useful for individual work, while the book version is a useful addition to the library corner.

*Sally-go-round-the-sun* is available on cassette tapes and record.

Here the advantage is that the whole class participates in a listening activity. Learning skill is developed as the pupils are exposed to perceived pronunciation. Listening to a rhyme from the record or cassette can be an effective way of rounding off a lesson on the work for the day by involving the whole class in a single activity.

#### 2.3.4.2 Teaching the meaning of words, spaces, sounds and symbols

Oral communication is an important part of any language programme, and this applies to *Breakthrough to Literacy* as well. "For the Breakthrough method to be successful the children must speak and be given stimulating lessons which will give them something to talk about. This in turn gives the child something to write about which results in the child having something to read about." (*Guide to the Teaching of Main Languages*, Department of Indian Affairs, 1976, p. 71).

In the course of the oral work the pupils' attention is drawn to:

- (a) The difference between letters and words.
- (b) The correspondence between sounds and symbols.
- (c) The fact that a word should be written as a string of symbols.
- (d) The spaces between words.
- (e) The difference between telling and reading a story.

### 2.3.4.3 Introduction of the first twenty words

The first twenty words which the teacher introduces to the pupils are from the first two sets of core words. The words in the sets are selected by the teacher, who then uses suitable opportunities during the discussion period to bring in the new word. The following actual description shows how the word "mum" was taught.

Pupil : (giving an item for Daily News)

"Mum went to the shop."

Teacher: "Children, Adesh told us that his mum went to the shop."

(Teacher looking at Adesh)

"Why did mum go to the shop, Adesh?"

Adesh : "She went to buy the groceries."

Teacher: "Good. How many of you go to the shop?"

(Most of the pupils raise their hands in answer).

Teacher: "This is what the word 'mum' looks like."

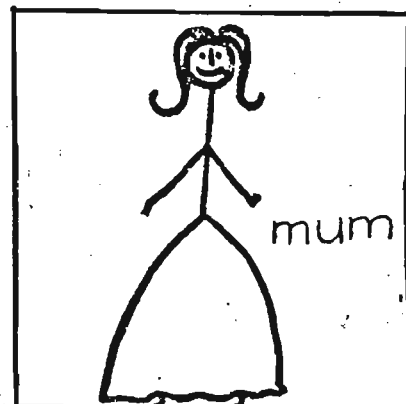
(Teacher shows the core word, from the teacher's Sentence Maker.)

Coreword "mum"



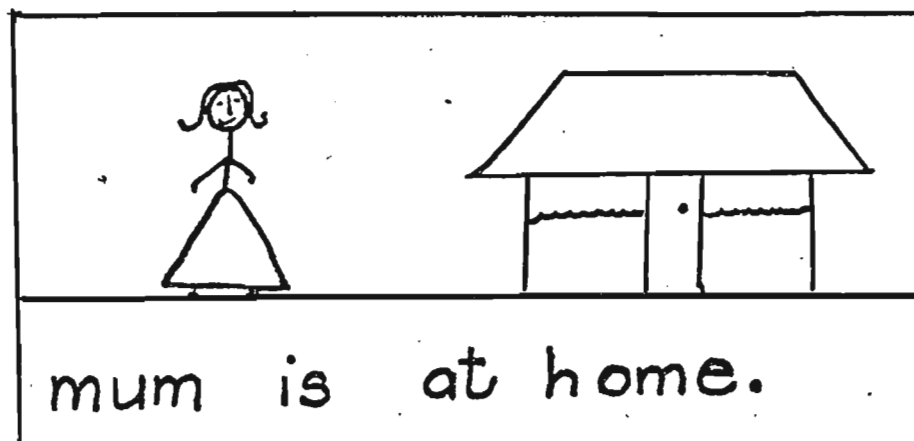
The teacher then displays a picture, which helps the pupils to grasp the meaning of the word which is written underneath the illustration.

Picture and word



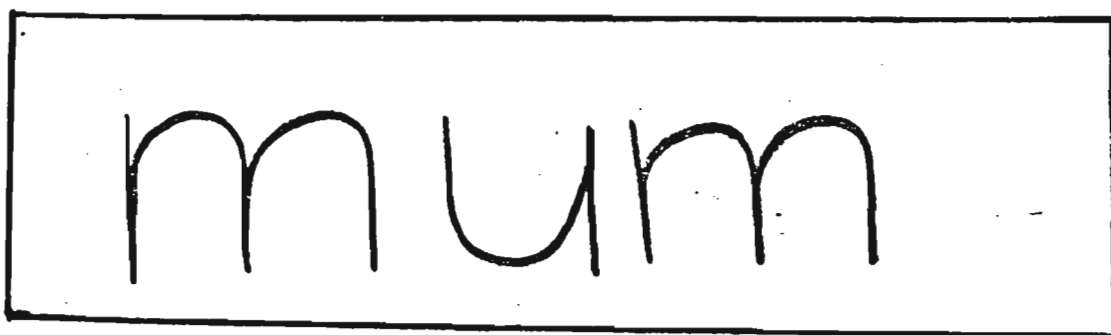
If the word "mum" is the first word taught, the teacher has to introduce other core words which are needed to make a sentence involving the word "mum". This is done by displaying the appropriate word cards. The teacher then points to a suitable illustration on the prepared chart and gets pupils to follow in reading the sentence.

The word "mum" in a sentence



The lesson ends with the teacher holding up a flashcard with the word "mum", and the pupils calling out the word in chorus.

The word "mum" on a flashcard



The first 20 core words are introduced in like manner. Daily revision follows in the use of these 20 words. The teacher displays charts with sentences and pictures.

An example of the first twenty words on charts with pictures



2.3.4.4 Use of the Sentence Maker and the Sentence Stand

As soon as the pupils understand what words are, and can recognise about 20 words, the teacher uses her Sentence Stand to demonstrate the construction of simple sentences. Pupils are then tested on their ability to construct sentences on the Teacher's Sentence Stand. Pupils who succeed in this task are given their own Sentence Makers and Sentence Stands which they are required to use in subsequent lessons. This procedure is repeated until all the pupils get their own Sentence Makers and Sentence Stands.

However, pupils who want to write, and can write, invariably write the sentences themselves. Those who are unable to write, draw the illustration for the sentence. The teacher writes the sentence for these pupils until such time they are able to write the sentences themselves.

2.3.4.5 Use of Personal Words

After acquiring a measure of confidence in using the core words in sentences, pupils express a desire to use some of the words which they know from a listening context. The teacher writes these "personal" words on blank insert cards which the pupil stores in the "personal

word flap" of the Sentence Maker triptych after he has used them in sentences.

#### 2.3.4.6 Introduction of the pupils to "My First Word Book"

When a pupil is able to compose sentences and write them without recourse to the use of a Sentence Maker and Sentence Stand, he is given his own Word Book in which he enters all his personal words from the triptych, in alphabetical order. Thus the pupil proceeds from the concrete to the abstract and progressively learns to internalize language.

#### 2.3.4.7 Phonic Work in Breakthrough to Literacy

Classes taught beginning reading using BL follow a method identical to that described in Section 2.3.3. However, Breakthrough classes do have an additional advantage in that the Word Maker helps them work at their own pace as well as helping them in:

- (a) *"Listening to speech sounds ..."*
- (b) *Learning how to think about the rules of orthography and their exemplification.*
- (c) *Learning the rules by proposing spelling patterns and noting how these may differ from conventional spelling.*
- (d) *Learning spelling patterns as a reader.*
- (e) *Learning spelling patterns as a writer.*
- (f) *Learning that letter shapes are not just geometric. They also have the special property derived from their position in space. Letter n is not letter n when it is upside down."*

(Mackay, Thompson, Schaub, 1970, pp.103-104).

#### 2.4 CONCLUSION

As far as our schools are concerned the choice of reading schemes at present lies between LLR and BL. I therefore summarise (briefly by pointing out) the main differences between them. Whereas in LLR the emphasis is on preparing pupils to read the prescribed readers, BL enables pupils to read any elementary reader in addition to providing the words which help pupils to communicate their thoughts. Further the simple but effective apparatus make BL a very practical approach.

### CHAPTER 3

## 3. THE SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND PUPILS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

### 3.1 THE SCHOOLS

The two schools chosen for the study were the Shree Ramayan Sabha School, hereafter referred to as SRS, and Clayton Junior Primary, hereafter referred to as CJP. It should be noted that the Clayton Junior Primary School is a newly established school which took in pupils for the first time at the beginning of the third school term of 1978. Junior Primary pupils were transferred to this school from the St. Aidan's Primary School and other neighbourhood schools.

This move to the new school about 200 metres away had no effect on the pupils' performance as the teachers, with all their teaching aids and apparatus, moved with their classes. For convenience we make reference to CJP but in actual fact these Class I pupils spent the first half of the school year at St. Aidan's Primary School.

The first leg of Experimental and Control classes was drawn from CJP, while the second leg comprised classes from the SRS School.

The Experimental classes were taught through BL whereas the Control classes used LLR. The meaning and scope of BL and LLR have been discussed in Section 2.3

The following factors had a bearing on the choice of schools:

- (a) The Experimental and Control classes had to be in schools which were in the same vicinity and drew from the same socio-economic catchment area.
- (b) The chosen schools had to have teachers who were professionally qualified and who had experience in teaching through BL and LLR.

#### 3.1.1 The Platoon System at SRS

On account of the acute shortage of accommodation the platoon system was introduced at this school in 1952. This system was still in



operation in 1978 during the course of this study.

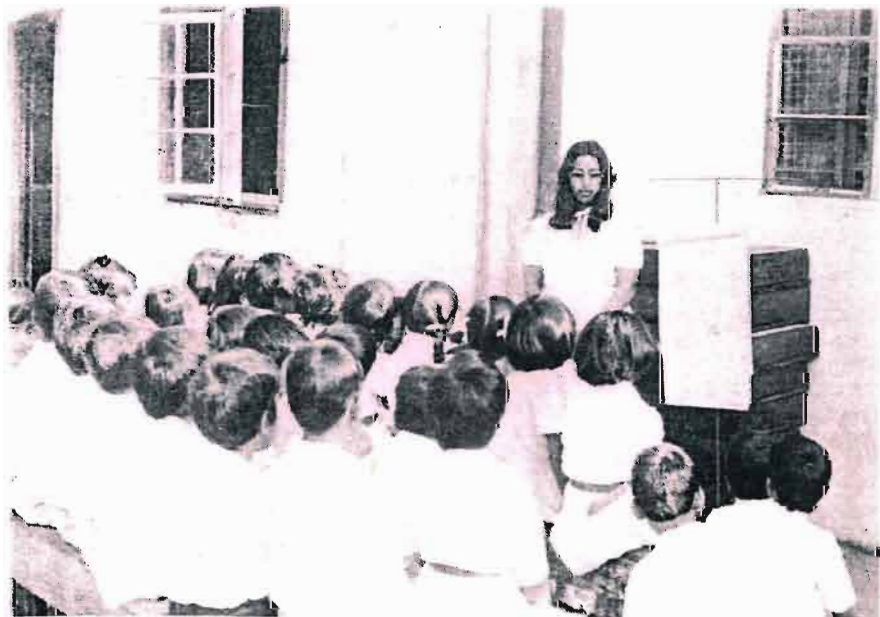
*"This accommodation arrangement enables the school to cope with a larger pupil enrolment than that for which it was designed. To facilitate the accommodation of outdoor classes, benches, movable-type chalkboard and chalkboard easels are provided."*

(Nair, *Fiat Lux*, 1974, p. 19)

SRS was, at the time of this study, the only school catering for primary school education in that populous area. Therefore it meant that the platoon system had to be adopted. In this system some classes are taught indoors while the other classes are given instruction out of doors.

Generally lessons demanding written work are dealt with indoors, while some lessons such as Right Living, Health Education, Guidance and Study of the Environment lend themselves to outdoor instruction.

#### Instruction Given Out of Doors at SRS

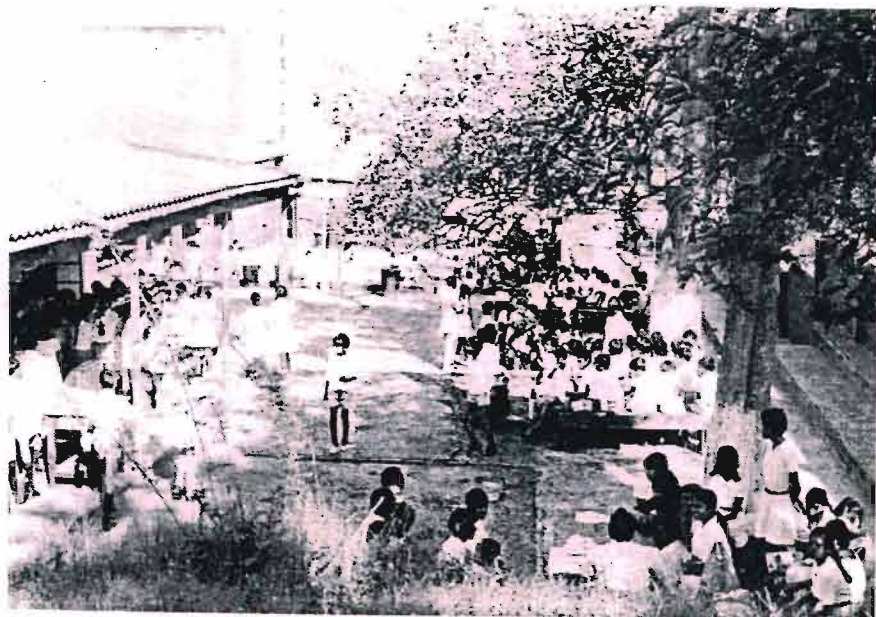


### 3.1.2 The facilities offered by the schools

Of the two schools the facilities offered by SRS were the poorer.

- (a) The school, in general, is in such a poor state of repair that the Department of Indian Education decided to demolish the building at the end of 1979 and build a new school on the same site.
- (b) The playgrounds are inadequate for the number of pupils in the school.
- (c) *"The pupils outside the classroom are subject to the vicissitudes of the weather because there is no shelter. On rainy days, for example, the pupils converge onto the verandahs and often such classes are disbanded before scheduled times.*
- (d) *The noise element is a disturbing factor to pupils in both sessions because class groups are in close proximity to one another. Distractions are not conducive to learning.*

#### Classes in Close Proximity



- (e) *Pupils accompanied by their siblings in a different session spend longer hours at school.*
- (f) *Maintaining the discipline and tone of a school makes further demands on the principal and the staff."*  
(Nair, *Fiat Lux*, 1974, p. 20-21).

Although SRS is in a poor condition, it serves as a religious and cultural as well as educational centre.

By comparison to both St. Aidan's Primary and SRS, CJP is specially designed to cater for pupils in the junior primary phase. It has all the facilities needed by both the teachers and the pupils. Each large and well-ventilated classroom is equipped with built-in cupboards, pigeon-holes for pupils' books, a sink and an eye-level chalkboard. Infant toilets and ablution facilities are provided in each block. Clearly, the facilities at CJP are vastly superior to those at SRS.

#### Adequate Playing Facilities at CJP



3.2 THE TEACHERS

Information pertaining to the qualifications and experience of the teachers in the experiment is given in Table III.

Table III : The Qualifications and Teaching Experience of the Teachers in the Experimental and Control Classes

	LEG 1		LEG 2	
1. School	CJP	CJP	SRS	SRS
2. Class	Experimental	Control	Experimental	Control
3. Name	Mrs T Moodley	Mrs D Govender	Miss K A Naicken	Mrs R Bassudev
4. <u>Qualification</u>				
Academic	Junior Certificate	Natal Senior Certificate	Natal Senior Certificate	Junior Certificate
Professional	Natal Teachers Senior Certificate	Junior Primary Education Diploma	Junior Primary Education Diploma	Natal Teachers Senior Certificate
5. Number of years of experience in teaching Class i using BL	3	-	1	1
6. Number of years of experience in teaching Class i using LLR	12	5	4	5
7. Number of years spent teaching Class i	15	5	5	5

continued./.....



Table III continued.....

8. Other classes taught	Std 2 - 1 yr Std 4 - 1 yr	-		Std 2 - 1 yr Std 3 - 2 yr Std 4 - 2 yr Std 5 - 1 yr
9. Total number of years of teaching experience as at January 1978 (i.e., beginning of the study)	18	6	6	16
10. Number of years of teaching experience in Junior Primary Classes (i.e., Class i, Class ii and Std. 1)	16	6	6	10

### 3.2.2 Other factors which had a bearing on the study

- (a) Pupils were not subjected to differing teaching styles arising from the use of relief teachers because teacher-absence was very low.
- (b) All the teachers in the study co-operated enthusiastically.
- (c) All the teachers participating in the study had taught Class i the preceding year (1977) and they had used the same method that they were using in 1978. The last point implies that:



- (i) There was neither novelty in teaching Class i nor were they using a new method.
- (ii) Little or no time was required for the preparation of apparatus and other aids so vital for effective teaching. This means that in theory at least, they should have had more time and energy to plan their daily teaching.
- (iii) The BL teachers would be aware of the importance of the order of introduction of the core words. Pupils tend to learn to recognise some words much faster than others. For instance they find little difficulty in recognising words like "television", "mum", "dad", "baby", "sister", "cat" and "dog", whereas they take a long time to recognise words such as "our", "the", "there" and "this". This is probably because pupils are highly motivated to remember content words which they can associate with concrete examples found in their environment, rather than functional words which have no concrete correlatives.
- (d) The experience required to schedule the work properly, especially in the Main Language period when pupils engage in a variety of activities, would have been acquired by the BL teachers in preceding years.

### 3.3 THE PUPILS

Table IV gives the information concerning the pupils in the four classes involved in the study.



Table IV : Pupils involved in the study

School	LEG 1		LEG 2	
	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
1. No. of pupils who enrolled on the first day of the new school year 1978.	34	30	31	30
2. No. of pupils who were repeating Class i.	-	2	4	4
3. No. of pupils who left on transfer to another class or another school.	-	2	9	2
4. No. of pupils who enrolled during the course of the year.	2	6	5	3
5. No. of pupils who participated in experiment.	34	28	24	28
6. No. of pupils on the roll at the end of the school year (1978).	36	36	31	35

The following pupils were excluded from the study:

- (a) Pupils who joined the classes involved in the study, from another class, or another school, during the course of the year.
- (b) Pupils who were repeating Class i.
- (c) Pupils who were transferred to another class or another school.

It should be noted that pupils chosen for the study were:

- (a) Pupils who were admitted on the first day of the new school year as new pupils and remained in a particular class till the end of the year.
- (b) Pupils who had not been taught to read, prior to their admission, by any method whatsoever and were therefore absolute beginners in reading.

#### 3.4 CONCLUSION

While every effort was made to equate all the variables in the Experimental and Control Classes, some compromises had to be accepted. Moreover, even if it had been possible to equate all variables, the

CHAPTER 4THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE4.1 THE TEACHERS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this study a questionnaire (see Appendix <sup>2</sup>3) was used to obtain from the selected teachers their assessment of the efficacy of the various methods and materials which comprise the Look-and-Say Method, as exemplified by LLR, and the LEAP Approach, as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*.

Questionnaires were posted to the teachers in September 1978, together with the request that the completed questionnaires should be returned by 15 November 1978. Questionnaires were sent to every school where there were teachers considered suitable for this study. A letter of request accompanying the questionnaire clearly stated that only those teachers who satisfied both the following conditions were to complete the questionnaire:

- (a) The teacher must have taught beginning reading using the Look-and-Say Method as exemplified in *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way Series*, prior to 1978.
- (b) The teacher must be teaching beginning reading using the Language Experience Approach as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*.

This survey was confined to the Province of Natal where the vast majority of the Indian population resides.

From the total of 160 questionnaires that were sent out 97 were completed and returned. Ten of these could not be used as respondents misread the criteria for selection and did not in fact meet these criteria.

#### 4.2 THE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS TO THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The information regarding the academic and professional qualifications and years of teaching experience of the 87 teachers involved in the study is shown in Table V (see page 75).

With regard to academic achievement the table shows that 80 of the 87 teachers had Junior Certificate Std. 8) as a minimum qualification. Junior Certificate was in fact the entrance qualification to the Springfield College of Education which was instituted in 1951. Later, in 1963, the minimum entrance qualification was raised to a matriculation pass of a Senior Certificate level. Since Junior Certificate was accepted as an adequate entrance requirement for a considerable period, it is fair to assume that this level of education was good enough to enable these teachers to cope adequately with primary school work. Thus I believe, that the majority of the teachers can be taken to be sufficiently qualified to use a teaching method properly and assess its relative worth.

Although 9 out of the 87 teachers had no professional qualifications, all except one of these untrained teachers had more than 2 years experience in Junior Primary work. However, the one teacher who had only 2 years experience had used LLR for 1 year and had taught through BL for the other year.

Overall the information in Table V shows that the majority of the teachers possessed adequate academic and professional qualifications and had more than adequate teaching experience.

#### 4.3 THE INITIAL REACTION OF THE TEACHERS TO TEACHING BEGINNING READING THROUGH BL

The initial reaction of the 87 teachers to the prospect of teaching beginning reading through BL during the following academic year was obtained by requesting the teachers to choose one of the four given descriptions that came closest to their own feelings about BL. The given descriptions and the responses obtained are shown in Table VI.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Academic Level	Below Std. 6	Std. 6	Std. 7	Std. 8	Std. 9	Std. 10	Degree
No. of Teachers	1	4	1	33	4	43	1 - Bachelor of Science

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

Professional Qualification	Nil	Teaching Licence	Teacher Certificate Std 6 + 1 year	Natal Senior Teachers' Diploma (Matric + 1 year)	Natal Teachers' Diploma (Matric + 2 years)	Pre-school or Junior Primary Diploma )Matric + 3 years)	De
Numbers of Teachers	9	2	13	17	21	25	

EXPERIENCE

Experience in years	0-2	3-5	6-10	11-20	20-30	30-40	
Number of Teachers	2	7	33	35	9	1	

Table VI : The Initial reaction of the Teachers to Teaching Beginning Reading through BL

Reaction	Number of Teachers
Enthusiastic	41
Interested	42
Reluctant	3
Neutral	1
Total	87

The qualifications and other pertinent information regarding the four teachers who gave a neutral or negative reply are given in Table VII.

Table VII : Particulars of Teachers not keen on BL

No.	Neutral	Reluctant	Teaching Experience in (years)	Academic Qualifications	Has improved Qualification
1	✓		15	Teachers' Certificate	No
2	✓		10	Natal Teachers' Diploma	Yes - M2 to M3
3	✓		15	Teachers' Certificate	No
4		✓	12	Natal Teachers' Senior Certificate	No

As all 4 teachers have 10 years or more teaching experience it is probable that their indifference or negative attitude arises from their unwillingness to depart from well-tried methods. The fear of the unknown is a very real problem for conservative teachers. It could also be due to these teachers having become too set in their ways to try something as new and challenging as BL.

#### 4.4 THE REASONS FOR PUPIL FAILURE AS IDENTIFIED BY THE TEACHERS

An analysis of the reasons, given by the teachers, for not promoting certain pupils to Class ii, shows that the great majority of the pupils failed on account of reading ability. A closer examination of the various reasons given by the teachers for such failure shows that these can be grouped into 2 categories, namely parental shortcomings and pupils' handicaps.

The shortcomings of the parents and of the pupils have been treated separately although they are not mutually exclusive. The shortcomings for which parents are thought to be responsible are listed below.

(The numbers of pupils affected by each shortcoming is shown on the right hand side):

Poor home conditions	18
Separated parents	2
Unemployed father	1
Exclusive use of vernacular at home	4
Limited supply of reading material	1
General neglect of children	3
Malnutrition	1
Alcoholic father	1
Indifferent parents	2
Discord between parents	5

It must be obvious that parents play a crucial role in determining the range of experiences which come within the reach of their children. The language used by the parents will have a marked effect on their children's language. The excessive use of the vernacular, slang or bad language is bound to have a detrimental effect on the child's learning of an elaborated code.

The reading habits of parents and their attitudes to the acquisition of new knowledge can have a profound influence on the pupils' language experience. If the parents are keen to improve their own general education they will acquire much reading material and make frequent use of radio and television, if the last mentioned are within their means. The children from such homes are at a definite advantage over other children whose parents do not bother to buy books or other reading





matter. Of course those parents whose poverty is beyond their control cannot be held responsible if their children have no reading matter, or mass media, or suffer from malnutrition. But parents cannot escape culpability if problems such as malnutrition arise from poor use of available funds, for example spending too much on items such as fancy clothes or entertainment.

The teachers listed the following handicaps of pupils as the causes of their poor progress. (The numbers of pupils affected by each shortcoming is shown on the right.)

Poor retention	12
Mentally retarded	12
Slow in learning	10
Irregular Attendance due to ill health	10
Immaturity	8
Short attention-span	5
Speech defects	5
Fear of school	4
Physical defects	3
Lack of interest	3
Poor self-discipline	3
Late admission to school	2
Truancy	2
Inability to blend sounds	2
Poor manual dexterity	1

No normal method taught to large groups can help pupils who are handicapped physically and/or mentally, although special methods can overcome some problems. However, irregular attendance, through force of circumstances or through truancy, is likely to have a greater adverse impact on pupils who are being taught by a method in which every step in a sequence affects the next step, than on those who are learning through a relatively unstructured method. Since pupils taught by LLR use graded readers in which the vocabulary is built up in steps, missed school days can affect pupils' reading ability quite seriously. On the other hand pupils on BL may suffer relatively less in terms of reading fluency, as much of the reading material is produced by the pupils themselves.

#### 4.5 THE CHOICE OF METHOD OR APPROACH

Although every one of the 87 teachers who responded to the questionnaire concurred that BL contained powerful features, 9 of them indicated a preference for the Look-and-Say Method. Detailed information on these 9 teachers, their classes and their comments on the two approaches is given in Table VIII. The table shows that only 3 of the 9 teachers had matriculation plus a 3-year teaching diploma; the rest had not proceeded beyond Junior Certificate. Two of them did not have any professional qualifications.

The main arguments in favour of the Look-and-Say Method, namely class size and the use of prescribed readers, are discussed below.

##### 4.5.1 The Effect of Class Size

Three of the 9 teachers (Nos. 1, 5, and 8 in Table VIII) who claimed that their pupils would have benefited more by using LLR than if they had been taught by BL, had classes with more than 40 pupils. While it had to be conceded that, in general, large numbers are inimical to the success of BL it does not mean that BL cannot be used in large classes. It requires greater organisational effort for the teacher and the use of bright pupils as teacher aides to enable a BL teacher to cope successfully with a large class.

As pointed out by one of the teachers (No. 6 in Table VIII), the physical size of the classroom also has a bearing on the teacher's choice of approach. The BL materials demand relatively more storage space than those of LLR. Teachers who are obliged to share a classroom on account of the platoon system have very limited storage space in a classroom of normal size. The problem is greatly compounded if the teachers have to share cupboards as well. Thus teachers in such circumstances may well prefer LLR for survival reasons.

##### 4.5.2 The Role of Prescribed Readers

Six of the nine teachers (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 in Table VIII) felt that there was an advantage in getting pupils to read a published

Table VIII : Information pertaining to the nine teachers who preferred LLR

NO	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	NO. OF FAILURES	NO. IN CLASS	QUALIFICATIONS	LOOK-AND-SAY METHOD: SOME COMMENTS	LEAP APPROACH : SOME COMMENTS
1	6	2	41	(Matric) Junior Primary Education	Children are introduced to readers from the beginning. Children read well because they know the words. They learn difficult words before they read the readers. It is ideal for a big class.	Vocabulary is not restricted. A child learns to build sentences from the beginning.
2	12	4	31	(Junior Certificate) Natal Teachers' Senior Certificate	Pupils read from the beginning of the year, although the stories are unfamiliar and unsuitable.	Pupils learn to recognise and spell words easily. Pupils write freely and easily. Too large numbers are unsuitable for Breakthrough.
3	4	2	31	(Matric) Junior Primary Education	Pupils read books under the supervision of the teacher. Pupils motivated to complete the books because of the illustrations.	Pupils work individually. Pupils are able to correct their own sentences. They write more and more. Teacher does not listen to the children read.
4	8	4	31	(Junior Certificate) Natal Teachers' Senior Certificate	Readers are written for our environment. Children read a reader from the beginning. The series is interesting.	Pupils recognise words easily. Pupils spell words quicker. They write freely and easily on a given topic.
5	8	4	48	(Std 9) Nil	Children learn to read books at an early stage. Reading is fast because the flash words are in the book. The pupils' vocabulary is limited.	Children write and compose sentences at an early stage. The method enriches pupil's vocabulary. Large numbers make it difficult for the teacher to give individual attention. Pupils mix words on the Ser Stand - therefore the sentence is meaningless.
6	9	1	36	(Matric) Junior Primary Education		Because of the large number there is a platoon system in school. Thus there is limited storage space. Pupils write and read quickly and independently. They speak in complete sentences. They express their thoughts freely with the aid of pictures. Words. Sentences are more individual.
7	16	-	32	(Junior Certificate) Natal Teachers' Senior Certificate	Teacher has better control over the class.	Extensive vocabulary is acquired by the pupil. Pupils learn words all the time. Pupil build and read sentences at the same time.
8	12	-	32	(Junior Certificate) Nil	Pupils apply flash word experience more diligently during the reading situation.	Pupils benefit more if the load was about 30. Pupils originally and creatively. helps in Maths, Daily News Phonics and Writing because reading ability has increased.
9	6	4	32	(Junior Certificate) Natal Teachers' Senior Certificate	The Method helps very weak pupils. More oral work is done followed by written work. Pupils make sentences orally and do not have to write them.	A good Method for fast and intelligent readers. Oral becomes meaningful.

reader from the very first stages of reading. They argued that this enabled pupils to get through relatively more reading material than in the case where the pupils created their own reading material (as they do initially with BL). Quite clearly, these teachers believed that the quantity of material read was crucial to the success of any teaching scheme designed for beginners.

#### 4.6 THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BL AND LLR

The majority of the teachers gave full and well-considered responses in completing the questionnaires. I present their points in tabular form. To avoid repeating identical or very similar points I have used a "tally" system whereby the number of teachers who made the same point is shown under "N". Where necessary I have added my own comments which are set apart from the teachers' points through the use of blank spaces and the heading "Comment".

##### 4.6.1 Types and Relevance of Reading Materials

##### 4.6.1.1 Advantages of Differential Reading Materials

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils recognise many words in published readers after the core words have been taught.	2	Pupils enjoy reading stories based on familiar topics such as the home, pets, toys, etc.	5
Pupils quickly learn to read more difficult books.	2	More books are read.	8
Pupils are able to read any reader within their range as soon as they have learnt the core words and once they start reading they do not want to stop.	9	Pupils read a published reader relatively early in the year.	3
		Pupils read the reader well because the words from the reader are taught beforehand.	5
		Even weak pupils get the satisfaction of "reading" a reader.	2

BL	N	LLR	N
<p><u>Comment</u> The reading fluency of the pupils may be due to the fact that words which comprise the core-word list occur repeatedly in readers written for beginners. In addition the core-words have been constantly handled and written when making sentences, with the result that when the words are seen in readers they are not only easily read but also readily understood.</p> <p>Pupils are proud to read from readers which they themselves have compiled.</p> <p>Helps pupils in rural areas by providing reading material which is very often lacking in homes of pupils from such areas.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The lack of suitable reading material is not confined to rural areas. It is also a problem in urban areas as shown in section 5.3.3.</p> <p>Readers are meaningful as they consist of sentences which describe situations familiar to the pupil.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The readers referred to above are the readers written by the pupils themselves. But the same remark would apply to the little Breakthrough books. "Some of the books are based upon situations common to all small children of Infant School age. Children should be able to identify or compare themselves with the child in <i>The Loose Tooth</i> or to discuss</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Pupils complete the books quickly.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The observations above point to the importance of the quantity of material read in a given time span, that is superficial fluency. There can be no argument about the encouragement to read which is engendered by the acquisition of superficial mastery. However, in achieving good reading speed, the equally important aspect of comprehension of the material read is very often sacrificed.</p> <p>The readers in the LLR series are simple.</p> <p>Pupils achieve success in reading from the beginning of the year.</p> <p>Reading cards, using the flash-words taught, are used. The use of flash-words and reading cards prepares pupils to read the readers.</p> <p>Pupils remember the words from the readers better than BL pupils remember the core-words.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The last point is debatable but cannot be settled without a proper study of the aspect mentioned viz., memory for words from different contexts.</p> <p>Readers in the LLR series have beautiful pictures which assist comprehension.</p> <p>Pictures in the LLR readers are bold and colourful and appeal to the pupils.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1</p> <p>5</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p>



BL	N	LLR	N
<p>their opinions about the home and school in books such as <i>Dressing up</i> or <i>My Mum</i> (Mackay, Thompson, Schaub, 1970, p. 41)."</p> <p>None of the teachers in the present study mentioned the value of these Breakthrough books.</p>		<p>Pictures in the LLR readers are suitable for picture talks.</p>	1
<p>Pupils read what they have written.</p>	2	<p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>There is no doubt about the value of bright and bold pictures, provided the pictures conjure up situations which the pupils are likely to encounter. If, however, the pictures relate to completely foreign environments and situations then the worth of such pictures is diminished.</p>	
<p>Pupils become "authors".</p>	6		
<p>Pupils read charts from the outset.</p>	1		
<p>Pupils get training in the use of a dictionary.</p>	1		
<p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>In building the list of core-words the pupils are in effect preparing a dictionary with a limited number of words. Regular and repeated use of the dictionary helps in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) increasing the pupils' familiarity with the alphabet.</li> <li>(ii) freeing the class-teacher from the time-consuming task of spelling words which the pupils have already used and can read.</li> <li>(iii) providing a very useful kind of "busy" work for pupils.</li> </ul>			
<p>Even the weak pupils get the opportunity to read.</p>	3		
<p>Pupils attack new books on their own and therefore tend to read more.</p>	4		
<p>Pupils read fluently from other sources beside the reader.</p>	3		
<p>There is more variety in the reading material.</p>	1		



BL	N	LLR	N
<u>Comment</u> Since success in initial efforts stimulates further efforts it is understandable that pupils who can read well will seek further material to read. In this way a love of reading is established very early in a pupil's career.			
	45		42

#### 4.6.1.2 Disadvantages of Differential Reading Materials

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils in the C and D groups do not manage to complete reading all the books prescribed for the year.	1	Pupils merely read from prescribed readers.	1
Not many readers are read.	1	Supervised reading is limited to the prescribed books.	3
The initial readers in the LLR series are not read by pupils on BL.	1	Readers used in LLR have been written for children of a country with a different cultural heritage.	4
<u>Comment</u> The practice of omitting the LLR elementary published readers ( <i>Roy's Toys</i> , <i>Carol's Toys</i> and <i>The House</i> ) need not give rise to concern that pupils using BL are being deprived in any way. The readers compiled by the pupils themselves give the BL pupils more than adequate preparation to read <i>Carol's Toys</i> , etc., on their own with good comprehension. Furthermore, since pupils using BL are generally keen readers, they will read these books even if they are just left in the library corner.  There are no specific readers in the initial stages of BL.	1	<u>Comment</u> In general, prescribed readers written for one set of cultural and sociological conditions may present problems for those using them in another country. This raises the question of "foreign" reading material for our pupils. Topics such as the <i>Tin Pot House</i> and <i>Shoe House</i> can have very little, if any, meaning for our pupils. Some of the practices described in these readers are completely foreign to our pupils; for example, the English custom referred to as "High Tea" is unknown here. If we take this further we will soon appreciate that no	

#### 4.6.2 Language and the Understanding of Concepts

##### 4.6.2.1 Advantages for Learning Language

All the responses in this sub-section refer to BL only.

None of the respondents cited any advantages for LLR.

BL	N
The method involves more work in grammar.	3
The method affords the teacher much opportunity to teach language.	2
The pupil learns language concepts such as phoneme, word, sentence and full-stop right from initial stages of instruction.	9
Correlation between the standard of written and oral work is evident.	1
<u>Comment</u> BL enables pupils to learn grammar in an incidental fashion as illustrated in the following case: The pupil has constructed the sentence, "We was playing" on the Sentence Stand. The teacher then helps the pupil to see the error by substituting words for "We" and "was" to give sentences such as <div style="margin-left: 40px;">             "He was playing"              "She was playing"              "I was playing"              "They were playing"              "We were playing"           </div> While the Sentence Maker is useful for correcting sentences the Word Maker provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to combine sounds to make words. Through repeated use of the Word-Maker the pupils learn the difference between phonemes and words. Pupils quickly appreciate that a word is a combination of phonemes.	
The method improves the pupil's spoken language.	9
Pupils participate freely in discussion.	6
Pupils are able to say a number of things about a given topic during discussion.	2
Pupils speak freely and confidently and this indicates that they are not struggling to find words to use.	3
The method promotes comprehension of the material being learnt.	3
The method gives pupils ample scope for creativity in their written work.	7
More oral work, followed by related written work, is done.	3
Pupils tend to respond orally in complete sentences possibly as a result of practice in writing and reading full sentences in their readers.	5
Pupils find little difficulty in "story sums" because language comprehension helps them.	2
Pupils see the spoken words translated into symbols.	1
The oral work is meaningful as it is illustrated, recorded and read.	1

BL	N
<p><u>Comment</u> Pupils retain what they learn during oral work because it is illustrated, recorded and read by them to their teacher who corrects the work when necessary.</p>	
	57

#### 4.6.2.2 Disadvantages for Learning Language

All the responses in this sub-section refer to LLR only.

None of the respondents cited any disadvantages for BL.

LLR	N
<p>The method does not give enough scope for a full language enrichment programme.</p>	3
<p><u>Comment</u> This remark is probably occasioned by the fact that in LLR the pupil's own language is not expanded to the same extent as in BL. The latter enables a teacher to give individual attention to a pupil in his effort to express his thoughts in writing.</p>	
<p>Pupils do not have very good comprehension of the material they read.</p>	2
<p>The level of correlation between language which pupils read in the readers and the language which the pupils speak is low.</p>	2
<p><u>Comment</u> This point emphasises once again the problem of using readers written for a particular set of conditions in a completely different environment.</p>	
<p>Not enough emphasis is placed on the importance of correlating work done during the Discussion Period and the Main Language period.</p>	1
<p>Pupils are not very enthusiastic about describing their experiences in the Daily News and Creative Writing sessions.</p>	4
<p><u>Comment</u> This lack of enthusiasm could be due to a number of factors, but it is very likely that pupils are constrained by a limited vocabulary (in which most of the words do not find ready use in the language required for communication).</p>	
	12

4.6.3 The Effects of the Methods on Pupils from Different Backgrounds4.6.3.1 Advantages for Pupils

BL	N	LLR	N
The progress made by bright but educationally and socially deprived children is outstanding.	1	The method allows weak pupils to learn at their own rate.	1
Every pupil is actively involved.	6	Most pupils are able to finish a set task.	1
The approach allows pupils to explore, experiment and discover for themselves.	8	<u>Comment</u> The fact that most pupils are able to finish a task in the time allocated indicates that the method is realistic in the demands it makes on the pupils. The achievement of goals set by the teacher would tend to boost the confidence of weaker pupils in particular.	
<u>Comment</u> There is no doubt that the aids such as the Sentence Maker cause the pupils to be actively involved in the learning process. The BL components give pupils ample scope to experiment with words to make sentences and with letters to make words. Furthermore, the use of word and letter cards represents a concrete approach to learning spelling and sentence-building. Piaget postulated "that children pass through definite successive stages in their cognitive development. These he lists as: Sensory-Motor, 0 - 2 years Pre-occupational, 2 - 7 years Concrete operations, 7 - 11 years It should be emphasised that Piaget's ages relate more to mental age than to actual age and to him the stages of development are more important than the ages at which they occur." (Horner, 1972, pp. 12-13).		However, it could also be argued that the method does not really stretch pupils since even weak pupils are able to complete the allotted work.	
		The method facilitates the use of bright pupils as teacher aides.	1
		The method accommodates slow learners.	2
		The method has advantages for bright pupils.	1
Pupils derive enjoyment and satisfaction from using the BL materials.	1		
The method tends to inculcate a sense of responsibility in pupils as they are expected to look after their own learning materials.	2		
	17		7

BL	N
Pupils learn to persevere as the joy of success in learning more than compensates for the effort made.	1
Pupils tend to help other pupils who have difficulties.	1
<u>Comment</u> The above comment suggests that the approach inculcates team spirit in pupils in spite of the unhealthy competition which the method is reputed to engender.	
The method enables every pupil to develop to his fullest potential.	4
The method builds up the confidence of pupils.	5
The method gets pupils to work independently at an early stage.	11
<u>Comment</u> The observation that pupils using BL learn to work on their own relatively early is a very strong recommendation for the approach. This claim is based on the assumption that a great deal of knowledge can be acquired outside the confines of the classroom and that pupils who have developed self-learning techniques are well-equipped to get the maximum benefit from such extra-curricular education. The training which is built into BL also boosts pupils' confidence. There can be little doubt that the recognition given to the "Readers" written by the pupils boosts their morale markedly.	
The method helps pupils to overcome their inhibitions.	5
The interests and ideas of individual pupils are catered for in BL.	1
<u>Comment</u> In general BL gives pupils unlimited scope for free expression; in particular the Sentence Maker allows pupils to experiment with words and the order of words, and hence affords them ample scope for composition. The pupils learn how words behave in meaningful collocation by actually handling the language.	
The approach caters adequately for intelligent pupils.	1
Pupils write their own "readers".	1
The method helps shy pupils to express themselves.	2
The approach helps pupils to recognise and correct their mistakes.	1
Pupils tend to become very observant.	1
<u>Comment</u> Since pupils get much opportunity to describe events and happenings around them they realise the importance of carefully observing everything that goes on in their surroundings.	
	52

4.6.3.2 Disadvantages for Pupils

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils in large classes do not get enough individual attention.	30	The method does not adequately cater for interests of individual pupils.	4
<u>Comment</u> It is a fact that the number of pupils in Junior Primary classes is too large, in most of the schools covered by this study. However, the teachers could do something to cope with this problem which arises in part from the shortage of school accommodation. For instance teachers could use the bright pupils to help the less bright pupils in specific tasks. Teacher aides recruited from the ranks of the parents would also ameliorate the situation. The latter suggestion raises a number of issues, but is definitely worth consideration.		The method does not provide enough activities for the pupils.	4
		Some pupils tend to get bored with the way the work is done.	2
		Pupils do not get enough opportunity to explore and discover for themselves.	2
Pupils who have been transferred from another school find it difficult to adjust to the new school in which BL is the chosen method of instruction.	10	<u>Comment</u> While it is true that LLR does require the teacher to play the dominant role in the teaching/learning situation, it does not mean that there is no room for manoeuvre. Within the framework of the system teachers could get pupils actively involved, if only to a limited extent, in the material being learnt. For instance teachers could use attractively prepared "work sheets" so that pupils learn through completing a given task.	
<u>Comment</u> The problem of adjustment referred to above is not peculiar to BL, but is more readily apparent in BL classes. The problem is pointed up by the difference in the order in which the core words are taught in the two schools concerned at the time the pupil was transferred. In BL the major part of the problem stems from the way the core words are selected for the sets in which they are taught. As explained in Section 9 this problem largely disappears if the core word sets are standardised. However, this will reduce the flexibility of BL.		Pupils are not given enough opportunity to talk about their daily experiences.	1
		Pupils do not learn as fast as they could.	1
		<u>Comment</u> Although these are extremely subjective comments they appear to suggest that LLR, as it is used at present, does not "make" pupils keen to get on with learning; that is, LLR does not really "stretch" the pupils in their learning efforts.	



BL	N	LLR	N
Weak pupils do not make much progress.	3	Pupils' knowledge of language use is not well developed.	1
Weak pupils get frustrated because they are unable to construct many sentences.	1	Pupils are conditioned to learning the flashwords and then reading the reader.	1
<u>Comment</u> The term "weak pupils" in the above remarks refers to pupils with relatively low IQ scores. Such pupils should benefit from a practical approach such as BL. In the light of this the remarks made are difficult to explain.		<u>Comment</u> The second of the two comments above explains the first. It may not be the fault of the scheme itself, but of the way the scheme is used, that is, placing great importance on learning of flash words. So much time is spent on flash word drill that teaching of language usage gets little attention.	
	44		16

#### 4.6.4 Size and Quality of the Pupil's Vocabulary

##### 4.6.4.1 Advantages for Vocabulary

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils learn to use words correctly.	7	All the pupils learn the same set of flashwords.	2
Pupils have very little difficulty in understanding the meanings of words which they learn.	3	Recording of the words is easier.	1
<u>Comment</u> The good grasp of the meaning of the words learnt by BL pupils can be attributed to the fact that the words are learnt in contexts which help to bring out the meaning of the new words. Children also create their own contexts.		<u>Comment</u> The fact that the sets of words to be taught as flashwords are pre-determined not only ensures that the same sets of words are taught to all the pupils but also helps to cut down the amount of work which the teacher has to do since less time is needed to record the progress of pupils. Moreover there is no	
The vocabulary of the pupils is not limited but rather enriched.	31		

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils learn new words all the time.	2	need to select words for the sets used in flash-work. For the teacher these are indeed very important benefits.	
Pupils are able to make new words by adding suffixes such as -s, -es, -ing to the core-words.	1	Slow learners and weak pupils remember the words since the "flashing" of the words is repeated many times.	8
<u>Comment</u> The above remarks show that the relatively small number of core-words used in BL does not have a stultifying effect. A possible explanation is that the "personal" words of the pupils, together with new words encountered in the Discussion Period (the Daily News session in particular), add to the firm foundation laid by the core-words.		Even disadvantaged pupils (materially and socially deprived pupils) are able to learn sets of words <u>given</u> to them.	2
Pupils are able to decode words on their own with the aid of the Word-Maker.	3	Even the very weak pupils are able to learn at least one word per day.	1
Pupils learn to spell words relatively early.	7	<u>Comment</u> It appears that LLR has the capacity to accommodate pupils who learn slowly for various reasons. Pupils need encouragement of this kind. But the possibility that the retention is tied to the frequency of flashing is cause for concern since the flash method cannot be retained indefinitely.	
<u>Comment</u> Spelling has become a growing problem ever since "spelling drills" were discarded. Therefore any method that helps to improve spelling without recourse to "drill" should be commended.		Pupils are able to read many words by the end of the year.	1
Pupils recognise words on charts and in newspapers.	1	Flash words prepare the pupils for the reader.	1
Constant handling and looking at the words on the inserts cause the pupils to recognise the words easily without being drilled with them.	5	<u>Comment</u> The last remark is a serious indictment of the way in which LLR is being used. Reading is very important in helping pupils to learn language, but the value of learning language for and through communication of thoughts should not be underestimated.	
Pupils learn and remember the core-words because they are commonly used words.	12		
Pupils remember and understand personal words because they themselves requested these words.	6		
	78		16

4.6.4.2 Disadvantages for Vocabulary

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>Demand for words is overwhelming when pupils begin to do Creative Writing.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>It is understandable that a high and persistent demand for words should be seen by some teachers as a disadvantage of the approach being used. The pupils' requests do tax the teacher's attention and energy a great deal. However, it should be seen as a benefit for the pupils. After all the demand arises from the kind of stimulation that must surely be desirable, whether or not it can be catered for adequately.</p> <p>Pupils tend to forget personal words when making sentences.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>The tendency to forget, or to take longer to learn the personal words, may be attributed to the way the Sentence Maker accommodates personal words. (Jessie Reid, 1974, p. 32). Whereas the core words cards are placed in slots labelled with the names of the core words, the personal word cards are put into unlabelled pockets. The suggestion here is that seeing the same word written twice helps a pupil to learn the word quicker.</p> <p>Pupils accumulate too many personal words and do not use many of them.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>The help and supervision of the teacher can do much to make the use of personal words effective. The ideal may be a situation in which the teacher suggests to the pupils the personal word/words (in the</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Pupils do not get an opportunity to use words in written work.</p> <p>A possible way in which this can be remedied is as follows: once a word has been taught by the flash-word technique the word could be used orally in sentences and then included in occupational work comprising exercises such as:</p> <p>(a) Make sentences using the following words: e.g., table, then, chairs, bus.</p> <p>(b) Choose the correct word to fill in the blanks, e.g., (made, party, going) Roy is ___ to the shop.</p> <p>(c) Make a word from this jumble of letters, e.g., scksti.</p> <p>Words are learnt in isolation and are therefore difficult to learn.</p> <p>The words are not constantly in front of them.</p> <p>Pupils tend to forget the words.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>To recognise words so as to be able to read the readers does not appear to be sufficient motivation for the pupils to learn words.</p> <p>Pupils are restricted to learning a set of words.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>The point that the pupils are restricted in learning words from the flashword sets only is not valid. In fact pupils do learn words other than the flashwords, e.g., in the writing of the Daily News and in Creative Writing.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>8</p>

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>third side of his triptych) which he might use in the sentence he is constructing. Alternatively the teacher can ensure the use of personal words by instructing pupils to use words from the personal store to make sentences. This can be given as graded occupational work, e.g.,</p> <p>(a) "Choose 5 words from your personal store and write a sentence for each word."</p> <p>(b) "Choose a word from your personal words and write a story around it."</p> <p>(c) "Choose ten words from your personal words and draw a picture for each word".</p> <p>Pupils seem to find difficulty in remembering words such as "where", "when", "he", "there", "why", "what", "got", "are", "went", "get", "had", and "his".</p> <p><u>Comment</u> To help pupils learn these difficult words teachers could use the Word-Maker. Pupils are taught to break up the word and sound the letters e.g. h-a-d is had. In this way pupils can learn to recognise functional words more easily.</p>	2	<p>Pupils are unfamiliar with some of the words.</p> <p>Some words refer to a totally different environment from the one in which the pupils find themselves.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> Regarding the "foreignness" of some words it must be accepted that this problem will remain for as long as readers are imported.</p>	2 3
	10		29

#### 4.6.5 The Demands made on the Teacher

##### 4.6.5.1 Advantages for Teachers

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The teachers have to be alert to spot opportunities for introducing the core words in the preferred order.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> If the teachers do not consciously look for opportunities to introduce core words in an informal manner they will have to spend more time introducing them as an imposition</p>	1	<p>Teachers have less work with regard to preparation of the lessons to be taught.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> It is quite natural, albeit disconcerting, that some teachers base their opinion of the merits of a teaching method on the amount of work which the method demands from</p>	3

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The work is varied, interesting, challenging, stimulating and rewarding to the teachers.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The inherent flexibility of BL gives teachers ample scope to use their initiative in the organisation of their work. The method has the potential to challenge the organisational capacity of even the most experienced teachers. The method stimulates teachers to exploit fully the many advantages it offers.</p> <p>The method makes it easy for teachers to assess the abilities and potential shown by pupils in handling language.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> Pupils using BL begin writing sentences relatively early. This helps: (a) the pupils to develop awareness of the meanings of words from an early stage. (b) the teachers to ascertain whether pupils have grasped the words.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1</p>	<p>teachers, but more specifically those in the Junior Primary School, ought to realize that the formative years in a pupil's life are of such great importance that no effort should be spared to provide the best possible tuition for pupils in the first phase of their education</p> <p>Control of the work done by the pupils in the class is relatively easy.</p> <p>Teachers are able to give their full attention to each of the ability groups in respect of teaching new words and consolidating words learnt through revision.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1</p>
	5		7

#### 4.6.5.2 Disadvantages for Teachers

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The method demands too much from the teachers.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> My experience suggests that BL does not demand so much that a teacher who has already used the method is hard-pressed to cope with it. However, a teacher who uses BL for the first time is under</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>The teachers have to assist the pupils all the time.</p> <p>Teachers have to continually write the flash words learnt by the pupils on the chalk board.</p> <p>The teachers have to help the pupils in spelling the flash words learnt.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>



BL	N	LLR	N
<p>considerable pressure if no preparation is done prior to the start of the school year.</p> <p>The above comments should not be seen to be "playing down" what BL expects from the teacher. On the contrary there is much to be done, not only in organising the actual school work but also in attending to the incessant demands of the pupils who have to be initiated into the routine of school. Indeed it may be these incessant demands which tend to overwhelm some teachers. The problem of adjusting to a school situation can be partly solved with an effective readiness programme. In addition, the use of a well-planned programme of training in class routine can reduce the amount of work required in "breaking in" pupils.</p> <p>Pupils who join a class on transfer from another school create extra work for the teachers.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> Pupils who join a class on transfer have to be tested in various aspects of their work and especially in their recognition of the core words. This has to be done before a pupil is assigned to ability groups for the various aspects of the curriculum, namely, Elementary Mathematics, Main Language and Handwriting. If there are several pupils on transfer the testing entails much extra work for the teacher.</p> <p>The incidence of transfer can be very high in developing townships. Good planning by the authorities concerned (in the case of government financed townships) can ensure that the majority of houses are available in December and early January.</p>	1	<p><u>Comment</u> The basis of the above comment is the absence of application of the flash words through sentence construction. Therefore the teachers cannot ascertain whether pupils understand the flash words or not.</p>	6



BL	N
Alternatively the authorities should be persuaded to give priority to families with school-going children for homes which are available in the December-January period. Since this problem will be with us for a number of years to come the education department should liaise with the housing authorities to minimise the problem	
The teacher is continually disturbed by pupils from other groups while attending to one of the groups.	1
Teachers have to work after school hours to cope with the correction of pupils' efforts.	2
Teachers do not get enough support and guidance from the administrative staff at the schools.	1
Teachers do not get enough "free" time needed for the preparation of the aids and correcting the pupils' work.	1
	31

#### 4.6.6 The Pupils' ability to Construct Sentences and the Variety of Sentences Constructed

##### 4.6.6.1 Advantages for Sentence Construction

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils are able to construct sentences relatively early, that is within the first few weeks of starting school.	32	Pupils do not have to construct sentences on their own.	2
Pupils generally experience little difficulty in constructing sentences.	27	Pupils construct sentences orally and do not have to illustrate or record them.	2
Pupils express themselves and their ideas through sentences.	5	<u>Comment</u> The two points made above do not appear to be advantages at all until they are seen from the point of view of teachers who assess the merits of a scheme on the basis of ease of teaching. If pupils do not <u>write</u> sentences routinely the teachers will have less work to check and correct.	
All pupils make sentences about their environs.	5		
Pupils quickly develop the ability to construct good sentences.	3		
Pupils speak and think in sentences within the space of a month.	3		
Pupils learn the skills of sentence construction from the beginning.	3		

BL	N	LLR	N
<p><u>Comment</u></p> <p>As BL gives pupils ample scope for free expression they find little difficulty in describing their experiences and other events in their social environment. They do this orally and in their Sentence Makers using core and personal words. This focus on experience, which is a dominant feature of BL, helps to make writing a natural consequence of speaking.</p> <p>The remarks about sentence construction should not be taken to mean that pupils become good at sentence construction solely through their own efforts. On the contrary the teacher plays a very vital role in demonstrating the value of the Sentence Maker.</p> <p>Pupils are helped to remember words through the construction of a series of sentences in which one or two words remain unchanged.</p> <p>Weak pupils do not feel left out as they can also construct some sentences even if these are of the simplest type.</p> <p>Pupils do not make too many mistakes and the mistakes they do make are easily corrected (in their Sentence Stands).</p> <p>Pupils are motivated to build more, longer and better sentences.</p>	<p></p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Alternatively it may be that these teachers prefer to spend more time on other aspects which they regard as more useful and thus view the time saved on writing sentences as an advantage of the method.</p> <p>Pupils from poor socio-economic environments, where reading material is scarce, can use the flash words set by set, to construct simple sentences.</p>	<p></p> <p>1</p> <p>5</p>

BL	N
<p><u>Comment</u> Pupils using BL are generally very keen to write the sentences which they construct in their Sentence Stands. Since they have to have the teacher's approval to write the sentences, they make every effort to get the sentences in the Sentence Stand approved. Another source of motivation is the "success" achieved in building a "correct" sentence. The first success spurs the pupil on to repeat the performance and this is reinforced by each successive achievement.</p> <p>Pupils learn to differentiate between words used in logical sequence, according to shape and size.</p> <p>Pupils become increasingly proficient and self-confident as a result of having to construct and read their sentences to the teacher.</p> <p>Recording of the sentences helps pupils to remember words.</p> <p>Sentences are at once meaningful to pupils as they write about their experiences.</p> <p>Pupils construct a wide variety of sentences.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p>
	103

#### 4.6.6.2 Disadvantages for Sentence Construction

BL	N	LLR	N
Weak pupils are unable to construct many sentences.	3	Pupils are not made to record in writing the sentences which they construct and render orally.	3
Sentence method frustrates pupils who cannot construct sentences.	2	Pupils are only able to construct their own sentences once they have compiled their own dictionaries.	1
<p><u>Comment</u> Pupils who fail to benefit from such a <u>practical</u> approach as BL cannot be expected to do much better on alternative methods which are even less practical.</p> <p>Bright pupils want to make many more sentences than time permits.</p>	1	<p>Pupils do not learn to construct sentences from an early stage, that is, in the first few months.</p> <p>Pupils find sentence construction difficult.</p> <p>Pupils are not required to make and read sentences with new words to the teacher.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>12</p> <p>4</p>
			33

#### 4.6.7 The Quantity and Quality of Pupils' Creative Writing

##### 4.6.7.1 Advantages for Creative Writing

All the observations recorded in this sub-section refer to BL as none of the respondents noted any advantages for LLR.

BL	N
Pupils write good English relatively early..	6
The Creative Writing of the pupils is of relatively high standard.	2
Pupils understand what they write.	1
Pupils write interesting and original pieces for Composition, Daily News and Creative Writing.	16
Practice in writing sentences seems to help pupils to write connected prose. They write the latter easily and freely.	14
Pupils are able to write a number of sentences on given topics.	7
Pupils' written work is meaningful as it is an expression of their own experiences.	1
<u>Comment</u>	
The high standard of the writing produced by pupils using BL suggests that the vocabulary of core words and personal words provides the pupils with ample material to express their ideas. Creative Writing follows on naturally from oral composition and simple sentence construction and they have much practice in the latter in their Sentence Makers.	
	47

4.6.7.2 Disadvantages for Creative Writing

BL	N	LLR	N
Pupils make too many requests for personal words during the Creative Writing session.	1	Pupils tend to depend too much on material written by the teachers on the flip chart.	1
Many pupils write sentences in which the subject remains unchanged, e.g., I love... I like... I have...	1	Most of the pupils do not write original stuff.	2
		There is little evidence of creativity in Creative Writing.	2
		Most pupils are able to write only in the latter half of the year and some pupils are unable to write short stories even late in the year.	9
		Pupils begin to write their own daily news relatively late in the year.	3
		<u>Comment</u> The majority of the observations above emphasise the fact that pupils being taught through LLR are tardy in acquiring the ability to express original ideas in their writing. This is not surprising if one considers that these pupils do not have sessions aimed specifically at developing sentence writing ability.	
	2		17

#### 4.6.8 The Preparation, Use and Usefulness of Adjunctive Apparatus and Aids

##### 4.6.8.1 Advantages for Apparatus

BL	N	LLR	
The use of the BL apparatus (Sentence Maker and Word Maker) makes the method a practical one in which pupils learn by working with the words from the beginning.	4	Flashcards, being the only aids, are easy to handle.	3
Pupils participate actively in the lesson as pupils handle the word cards in the process of constructing sentences.	3	The limited amount of apparatus saves the teacher time, time which is needed to distribute the apparatus to the pupils.	2
The apparatus serves as good occupational material which helps to keep the pupils gainfully occupied.	2	<u>Comment</u> Initially the distribution of the apparatus takes up some of the time that should be used for teaching, but this "wasted time" should not be lost. The faster rate of learning and the solid grasp of what is learnt should more than compensate for the lost time. Furthermore within a few weeks the pupils should become thoroughly familiar with distribution procedures.	
<u>Comment</u> The last observation probably has its basis in the belief that "fidgeting" is best combatted by letting pupils "fidget" purposefully.	2	In addition the delegation of some of the distribution work to pupils who display leadership qualities should further reduce the time taken to set up the learning situation.	
The BL apparatus has enough to keep the brightest, most energetic pupil busy indefinitely.	1	There are no small bits of apparatus which can get lost.	1
The Sentence Maker and the Sentence Stand facilitate correction of mistakes in sentences.		<u>Comment</u> This remark refers to the "loss" of little words by BL pupils. At the end of each day the "lost" cards are picked up and placed in a box. From time to	
<u>Comment</u> Reid (1974, p. 41-42) found that very few teachers appreciate the importance of self-correction which has been accorded "a fair amount of prominence in the Teacher's Manual".			
The apparatus helps to make the pupils self-reliant within a short time.	1		



BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The BL apparatus (Work Maker) and Sentence Maker) are supplied to the teachers and pupils.</p> <p><u>Comment</u>            Since the pupils have the same apparatus as the teacher the pupils can consolidate their learning by repeating what the teacher has done, using their own apparatus.            For the teacher the word cards reduce the need to repeat the writing of the words for individual pupils.</p> <p>The aids help to get pupils to work without delays which arise when elaborate instructions are required.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>time some pupils are requested to sort the cards in the lost box. In the process of sorting the pupils involved get reinforcement in their recognition of some of the core words. (See also pp. 54-55)</p> <p>The number of aids is very small.</p> <p>The teacher has only one set of flash cards to prepare.</p> <p><u>Comment</u>            Since the same sets of flash words are used for all the ability groups there is no need to prepare more than one set.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
	16		9

#### 4.6.8.2 Disadvantages for Apparatus

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The collection and storage of the insert cards at the end of a lesson is a problem for the teacher.</p> <p>The movement of pupils which occurs when the cards from the Sentence Maker are needed from the Word Store produces much disturbance and noise.</p> <p>The apparatus, particularly the inserts, can easily get lost or damaged and the aids are costly.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>5</p>	<p>The lack of concrete apparatus is a big handicap as shown by the observation that these pupils take a relatively long time to learn to make sentences.</p>	<p>6</p>

BL	N
<p><u>Comment</u> Neither the teacher nor the pupil is required to pay for the apparatus.</p> <p>Organisation of the apparatus is time-consuming. Additional apparatus has to be prepared to teach the flash words from the prescribed readers. Shortage of storage space for the aids is a problem in some schools. The different sets of core words used for the different groups makes extra work for the teacher.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> In general the amount of time needed to prepare the additional materials required for teaching reading and language is much less for LLR than for BL. As an instance, the BL teacher has to prepare four sets of flash words (one for each of the ability groups) whereas for LLR the teacher needs to prepare only one set as the same words in each set are used to teach the whole class. This illustrates clearly the main difference between BL and LLR. <i>BL individualises learning whereas LLR lends itself to whole group teaching. BL puts the onus of learning on the pupil and the onus of organisation on the teacher, while LLR places the emphasis on the teacher teaching.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>2</p> <p>7</p> <p>2</p>
	27

#### 4.6.9 The Overall Reading Proficiency of the Pupils

##### 4.6.9.1 Advantages for Reading

BL	N	LLR	N
Reading is fluent as pupils read sentences which they have written.	31	Reading is easy to organise as all the flash words taught beforehand are taken from the reader.	4
Pupils learn to read relatively early.	14	Pupils "read" fluently because of the emphasis on "drill" of flash words prior to reading.	3
Pupils read fluently and with understanding of language almost from the time they start reading.	9	Reading is controlled by the teacher.	
Pupils are able to read any reading material within their range of vocabulary and become independent readers fairly early.	2		

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>Pupils learn to read at their own pace and in their own style through active participation in handling words and in building sentences.</p> <p>Love of reading is established in most pupils.</p> <p>The good reading ability of the majority of the pupils is also reflected in their improved performances in other aspects of school work such as Daily News writing and Elementary Mathematics.</p> <p>The method ensures that pupils do not read "parrot fashion"</p> <p>The method helps pupils who find reading difficult.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> In describing the role of reading charts in BL, Reid says: "If the poor readers had been given something to read which contained only words they had in their folder, they would in all probability have been much more successful." (J Reid, 1974, p. 32). This observation appears to provide support for the last point above.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>4</p>	<p><u>Comment</u> In general it saves the teacher much work if all the pupils read from the same reader. In LLR the words taught to the pupils in advance are taken from the reader. While this method facilitates reading control by the teacher it does not do much to instil a love of reading in the pupils. On the contrary the method and the contents of the readers may well combine to reduce, even stifle, a pupil's interest in reading. The reading matter is largely unrelated to the experiences of the pupils while the method of drilling the words prior to reading tends to make reading something of a mechanical chore.</p> <p>All the pupils are given an opportunity to read to the teacher.</p> <p>The method helps to develop fluency in reading</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p>
	64		14

#### 4.6.9.2 Disadvantages for Reading

BL	N	LLR	N
<p>The pupils' reading suffers from lack of supervision as teachers do not listen to the pupils' reading.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Progress in reading ability of the pupils is generally slow.</p> <p>Pupils begin to read only after they have been tested on the flash words and placed in ability groups.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>2</p>

BL	N	LLR	
<p><u>Comment</u> The above remark suggests that the method is responsible for this shortcoming. On the contrary the manual on BL specifically sets out the following procedure to be followed by the teachers:</p> <p>(a) The pupil should read aloud, (to an audience), the sentence that he has constructed in his Sentence Stand.</p> <p>(b) The pupil should read aloud from the reading chart. (The reading charts comprise sentences constructed by the pupils and the teacher.)</p> <p>(c) The pupil should read from his "story book" to the teacher.</p> <p>(d) The pupils should read story books written by fellow pupils.</p> <p>The amount of time available for reading is not enough.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The time allocated to reading can never be enough. However, the above remark refers to the fact that the "effective" time spent on reading is reduced because much time is spent in preparing the reading material. A point that should not be overlooked is that in preparing the reading material the pupils are in fact reading as stated under (a) above.</p> <p>The exercise of writing out the sentences which they construct on the Sentence Maker helps to make the words familiar to them. Thus pupils should not have to read the same material repeatedly.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Pupils are able to read stories relatively late in the year.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The tardiness in getting the pupils started on reading and the flash word drill combine to retard the development of reading ability in these pupils. In particular, the practice of drilling flash words to enable pupils to read the reader make the pupil overly dependent on the teacher. This may explain why these pupils take longer to read stories on their own.</p> <p>The reading is relatively mechanical and meaningless.</p> <p>Some pupils tend to rely heavily on illustrations as aids to memorization of words.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The above remarks underline the observation that in LLR many pupils can "read" without really following the text or recognising individual words out of context. These pupils have obviously learnt the piece by heart and merely use the pictures as cues. This is proved by the fact that some pupils fail to even start reading if the "cue" picture is blocked out.</p> <p>Reading is boring as all pupils read the same book</p>	<p>1</p> <p>4</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
	7		16

4.6.10 The Quality of Letter Formation and General Neatness of Handwriting4.6.10.1 Advantages of Handwriting

BL	N	LLR	
<p>Pupils learn to write from the outset.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> A common problem which faces pupils who are learning to write is the relative size of letters. Some pupils find difficulty in reproducing, in their books, letters and words written on a chalk-board or wall chart. The distance between the pupil and the chalk-board, or wall-chart may aggravate the problem. Pupils cannot look at the board and write at the same time, In BL, pupils can use the insert cards which they can place on their books. The reproduction of the cards will thus involve a minimum of neck and eye movements. They can look at what they are trying to reproduce virtually all the time. Furthermore, the size of letters on the inserts is very close to the actual size of the letters suitable for the pupils.</p> <p>Pupils learn quickly that writing is a powerful means of communication.</p> <p>Pupils learn to write long before formal handwriting lessons begin.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> Pupils write a lot and in fairly well-formed printing from the word "go" because they are writing to be read.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Most of pupils using LLR learn to write well-formed letters and in general the writing of these pupils is neat.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p>
	6		4



#### 4.6.10.2 Disadvantages for Handwriting

Only one disadvantage was noted for BL and none for LLR.

Four of the respondents pointed out that the handwriting of BL pupils lacked good formation of letters and general neatness.

As shown in sections 4.6.6.1 and 4.6.7.1 pupils taught by BL generally became avid writers. The eagerness to write a lot in the shortest possible time may be the cause of the carelessness in letter-formation referred to above. However, the incidence of careless writing is not high. The desire to write to be read ensures that the incidence of bad writing is in fact very low.

#### 4.6.11 The Use of Punctuation and Upper-Case Letters

##### 4.6.11.1 Advantages for Writing Rules

BL	N	LLR	
<p>The pupils easily understand and learn the use of the full-stop and the question mark.</p> <p>Pupils learn punctuation from the beginning.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> In BL the teaching of the punctuation is taught concretely. Since the punctuation marks are on cards, the same as are used for words, pupils get into the habit of using them as necessary adjuncts to sentence construction. In fact, the teachers persuade pupils to acquire the habit by their disapproval of sentences which do not carry the required punctuation marks. The practice of writing the sentence from the Sentence Stand into their books, complete with punctuation marks, ensures that these pupils learn to use punctuation in their written work.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Pupils learn that the first word in a sentence begins with an upper case (capital) letter and ends with a full-stop.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> The insistence on using the upper-case letter to start the first word in a sentence, and ending a sentence with a full stop, is a good feature of LLR. The fact that a new sentence will start with a capital letter tends to remind pupils to check if the previous sentence was properly completed with a full-stop. Thus the use of the capital letter can help to reinforce the use of the full-stop and vice-versa.</p>	<p>2</p>
	4		2



4.6.11.2 Disadvantages for Writing Rules

BL	N	LLR	
<p>The pupils do not learn to use capital letters from the outset.</p> <p>Pupils tend to forget to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> As designed at present BL delays the introduction of the upper case letters until all the core words have been learnt. This delay in introducing the upper case letters is also incorporated in the "little" Breakthrough books as shown by the following excerpt from the Teachers' Manual. <i>"The colour code distinguishes the 12 easier books (which have no capital letters at the beginning of sentences) from the 12 that are somewhat more difficult (and which include the use of capitals). We do not believe that children need to know these additional letter shapes at first, but soon they must be introduced to them and their purpose discussed, because it is not long before they will meet them in other books and need them in their own writing; (Mackay Schaub, Thompson, 1970, p. 42).</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Pupils take a relatively long time to learn to use punctuation properly.</p> <p><u>Comment</u> A possible reason why LLR pupils take longer to master the use of punctuation is inadequate practice. As these pupils are not obliged to write sentences for every flashword learnt, the frequency of using punctuation marks is accordingly reduced.</p>	<p>2</p>
	3		2

#### 4.6.12 The Overall Effects of the Methods on the Pupils' Development

##### 4.6.12.1 Advantages for Pupil's Development

BL	N	LLR	
The method is child-centred.	4	The method lends itself to whole-class teaching.	6
The method is stimulating.	1	The method does not make heavy demands on the teachers' time and energy.	5
The method with its aids and well-defined stages, is very interesting.	5	The method can be used in a small classroom.	1
The method is not stereo-typed.	2	The method is simple to use.	1
The method is practical and this helps pupils to get a quick grasp of the words.	2	The method makes it possible for the teacher to attend to weak pupils.	1
The method is organised in such a way that pupils proceed from concrete operations to abstract ideas.	2		
The method is progressive in concept.	1		
It is a good method for average pupils.	2		
	19		14

##### 4.6.12.2 Disadvantages for Pupils' Development

BL	N	LLR	
It is not possible to give enough individual attention to the pupils.	23	The method is stereo-typed.	2
The work cannot be completed in the time available.	1	The method is very rigid.	1
The method is not suitable for use in schools where the platoon system operates.	1	It is an abstract method.	1
	1	The method does not provide stimulating experiences for the pupils.	1
	25		5

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A summary of the number of points made for the advantages and disadvantages for the aspects listed in Sections 4.6.1 to 4.6.12.2 together with the conclusions arising therefrom is given in Chapter

In order to elicit other comments which were not covered by the specified categories of "Advantages" and "Disadvantages", I included the heading "Additional Remarks". I left a generous amount of space thereunder (see Appendix 2). Since all the points noted were suggestions for the more effective use of BL and LLR these are discussed in the conclusion to the study, that is, in Chapter 9.

#### 4.7 THE READING OF THE BREAKTHROUGH BOOKS

The details regarding "Breakthrough" books available have been given in Section 2.3.4.1.11. The information on the reading of the "Breakthrough" books by the pupils of the teachers who answered the questionnaire (Appendix 3) is shown in Table IX. (The figures were valid as at 15 November 1978, that is, after pupils had had about 10 months of formal instruction in beginning reading.)

Table IX : The Reading of the Breakthrough Books

Number of pupils	Boys		Girls	
	No.	%	No.	%
who read simple books	754	50	631	47
Who read more difficult books	615	41	629	47
Who were unable to read	137	9	83	6
Total	1 506	100	1 343	100

It is clear from Table IX, that the girls have the edge over the boys in respect of reading performance. This is in agreement with the results of a well documented study (Clay, 1970, pp. 110-117). A more recent investigation (Reid, 1974, p. 55), commenting on *Breakthrough to Literacy* also found that girls performed better than boys in reading. As the figures shown in Table IX refer exclusively to pupils taught by BL the present results confirm Reid's finding that the method used may not be the main contributing factor to the established superiority of girls as readers. This subject thus merits further investigation.

CHAPTER 55. THE PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the pupils' questionnaire was to obtain information about the pupils and the environment in which they lived. The questionnaires were completed from June onwards. I visited the pupils' homes at dates and times which were arranged in advance. The questionnaires were completed on these visits which lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. I interviewed parents and pupils together, after I had given the parents a copy of the questionnaire. I entered the information given by the pupils and their parents. A copy of the questionnaire is included. (see Appendix 3.)

The various aspects of the questionnaire are discussed in the subsections which follow. For convenience three categories -- the first for pupils, the second for parents and the third for home conditions -- were used.

5.1 THE PUPILS5.1.1 The Age and Sex of Pupils

On January 17, 1978, the date on which pupils were admitted to school, all the pupils were older than 5 years 6 months. The minimum age for admission is determined by the Department of Indian Affairs, Division of Education, which controls the education of these pupils (see Chapter 1, p. 2).

Table X gives the average age, rounded off to the nearest month, of the pupils, as well as the distribution of the boys and girls in each of the four classes.

Table X : Age and Sex of the Pupils

School	CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Average Age of Pupils	6y 0m	5y 11m	5y 11m	5y 11m
No. of Boys	19	12	14	16
No. of Girls	15	16	10	12

Although there is a difference of 1 month between the average ages of the Experimental and Control classes at CJP, the overall average age of Experimental and Control pupils is nearly identical.

With regard to distribution by sex, only one of the four classes, the Control class at CJP had more girls than boys. Since girls are credited with better reading ability than boys at this stage of their development (Clark, 1970, p. 117) the distribution pattern should be borne in mind when comparing the efforts of the Experimental and Control group at CJP.

#### 5.1.2 The Religion and Home Language of Pupils

As show in Table XI all the pupils were Christians, Hindus or Moslems.

Table XI : Religion of the Pupils

School	CJP		SRS				
Class	E	C	E	C			
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28			
Religion					Predominant Home Language		
					English	Gujarati	Urdu
Hinduism	12	10	16	19	57		
Christianity	12	4	1	1	18		
Islam	10	14	7	8	15	4	20
TOTAL	34	28	24	28	90	4	20

Table XI also shows the languages used predominantly in the households covered by the study. The religious affiliations of pupils has been considered because of the possible bearing it has, albeit small, on the exposure of pupils to language during prayer at home, or in a place of worship.

In addition to the information in Table XI the following points should be noted:

- (a) In families where the religion was Islam, an Indian language, either Urdu or Gujarati, was invariably spoken. Even in the homes where English was the predominant language all members of the family, including the children, used Urdu or Gujarati quite often. Although it is not spoken in the home, all these children were obliged to learn Arabic because the holy scriptures contained in the Koran are written in Arabic.
- (b) The language used for mass prayer varies for the different religions. In the Christian churches attended by pupils in this study English was and is the only language used. Arabic is the main medium in the mosque, but English is also used when sermons are preached.



Hindu pupils use one of Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Sanskrit or Telugu in places of worship (generally temples). English is generally used as a medium for explaining the Hindu scriptures.

It appears that Christian and Hindu pupils may use or hear English to a greater extent during religious worship than Moslem pupils. If there is advantage in this for the former pupils, this is probably counter-balanced by the fact that the latter attend a formal school for vernacular classes where they learn to read, that is they get used to the connection between symbols and sounds.

### 5.1.3 Pupils with Physical Defects

As physical defects can have a marked effect on pupil's performance and as some defects are not obvious, I thought it necessary to ascertain the pupils' physical defects. I found that 5 pupils appeared to have problems which could have affected their school work. Table XII gives the particulars of these pupils.

Table XII : Pupils' Defects

School and Class	Name of Pupil	Defect/Sickness
SRS (E)	Naushad	Eye operation at 5 years
CJP (E)	Craig	Speech - stutters
SRS (E)	Simmi	Burnt on her right leg
SRS (C)	Naveen	Double fracture in his left leg
SRS (E)	Sachen	Asthma

Examination of the work of the 5 pupils revealed that:

- (a) The eye operation on Naushad and the stuttering of Craig had no harmful effects on their work. Both these pupils were performing well and they earned their places in the best ability groups for all subjects.

- (b) Simmi and Naveen were not adversely affected by the accidents which they had before they were admitted to school. Both these pupils were in the best ability group for reading.
- (c) Sachen was badly affected by his affliction. Frequent attacks of asthma forced him to miss school for many days. In view of this it is not surprising that Sachen was placed in the lowest ability group for all his subjects.

#### 5.1.4 Hobbies of Pupils

If one accepts the definition of a hobby simply as a favourite pursuit or pastime, one could include unorganised play as a hobby. In fact most parents stated that their charges favoured unorganised play as a pastime. Not a single pupil was engaged in hobbies involving collecting items such as stamps, coins, sea-shells, fish or pictures of animals or birds.

Table XIII shows the hobbies, other than unorganised play, and recreational activities, of all the pupils involved in the study. The fact that nearly twice as many CJP as SRS pupils had hobbies is a reflection of the differences between the catchment area of the two schools referred to in Section 5.4. p. 131.

Table XIII : Hobbies of Pupils

School	CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Hobby or Recreation				
Swimming	2	1	-	3
Reading	9	6	6	3
Writing	8	6	5	0
Music	2	0	-	1
Karate	1	1	-	-
Dancing	1	-	1	1
Bioscope	-	2	-	-

The paucity and lack of variety in their out-of-school pursuits may be attributed to one or more of the following factors:

- (a) The pupils were still too young to know about hobbies or what hobbies could do for them.
- (b) The home environment did not stimulate pupils to take up a hobby. Most parents had no hobbies (see Table XV, p. 120). Thus most children had nothing they could emulate.
- (c) The cost of a hobby may have been beyond the financial means of some parents.
- (d) Parents had little time to help or guide their children in choosing a hobby.
- (e) There were 24 homes where both parents were engaged in full time work. The need to attend to household chores after work leaves little time before the children go to bed.

Table XIII shows that, in general, reading and writing were very popular hobbies. In particular the table shows that more children in the Experimental classes had reading and writing as hobbies. Although one cannot conclude that the latter evidence is proof of the efficacy of BL, it may indicate that BL encourages and motivates pupils to read. In fact it reinforces that observations of teachers (Section 4.6.9) that BL pupils are enthusiastic readers.

## 5.2 THE PARENTS

### 5.2.1 The Occupation of Parents

The purpose of this survey of the occupations of the parents was to ascertain whether any of the classes were unduly advantaged or disadvantaged in having parents with professional and/or lucrative occupations, or in having parents with poorly rated and poorly paid jobs.

Since the actual job designations supplied by the parents were too numerous for inclusion in a succinct Table, I decided to place each occupation into a "job type" which best describes a particular occupation. However, it was difficult to assign some occupations to a category. For instance, I rather arbitrarily classified the owner of a driving school who was also the instructor as self-employed.

Table XIV : Occupations of Parents

	FATHER				MOTHER			
School	CJP		SRS		CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C
Type of Occupation								
<u>Professional</u>	2	-	1	2	-	-	3	3
<u>Managerial</u>								
Self Employed Persons	4	1	3	3	1	-	-	-
Business Managers	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Clerical</u>	4	5	2	4	-	-	1	-
<u>Trade</u>								
Artisans	4	5	5	5	-	-	-	-
Machine Operators	2	-	1	6	2	2	4	1
<u>Miscellaneous</u>								
Technicians	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Sales Personnel	8	6	5	3	-	2	1	1
Caterers	2	4	1	3	1	-	-	2
Truck/Bus Drivers	1	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
<u>Unemployed</u>	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-

Perusal of the above table reveals the following features about the occupations of parents:

- (a) The majority of the parents were artisans, salesmen, salesladies and clerks. These occupations indicate that the majority of parents were middle class in terms of social stratification.

- (b) The number of parents doing unskilled jobs was very small.
- (c) The unemployment of some parents could have been due to the economic recession which prevailed at the time.
- (d) There was no marked disparity in the number of parents with professional jobs for the Experimental and Control classes. This is important as it rules out the possible advantages of a stimulating home environment which is presumed to be the norm in the homes of professional people.
- (e) The wide diversity of occupations of the parents suggests that pupils would bring to school a variety of topics for discussion. As pupils are wont to describe what happens in their homes, or what their parents do, as items for the "Daily News" lessons, or in their conversations with their classmates, the general knowledge of all the pupils is bound to improve if children come from a diversity of backgrounds.
- (f) An overwhelming majority of the mothers were housewives. This meant that very few pupils lacked maternal care after school. My personal observations confirmed that none of the pupils were neglected as they were invariably cared for by their mothers, or by relatives who substituted for mothers who worked.

One item of information which I had obtained but did not include in Table XIV was the number of years in which the parents had worked in the occupations held at the time of the survey. I found that the majority of the parents had remained in their chosen occupations for 5 years or more. In addition to contributing to a stable family life, the observed "job stability" can also be taken to indicate that these families were not affected by the disruptions which often accompany job changes.

#### 5.2.2 The Level of Education of the Parents

The education attainments of both parents of each pupil was ascertained. Table XV gives the number of parents who had obtained a primary,

secondary or tertiary level of education. The table also shows the number of parents who had studied to improve their qualifications while in employment. Some of these latter studies were in-service courses offered by employers, or part-time studies undertaken outside working hours.

Table XV : Level of Education of Parents

School	FATHER				MOTHER			
	CJP		SRS		CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28	34	28	24	28
Level of Education								
Primary School Cl. 1 to Std 6	13	10	11	11	19	13	16	15
Secondary School Std. 7 to 10	17	18	13	13	15	15	6	12
Tertiary Education (University or Training College)	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Other qualifications (Trade Certificate, etc.)	6	6	8	1	-	2	-	-

The information in Table XV shows that:

- (a) There is no striking difference in the level of education attained by parents of pupils in the Experimental and Control classes of each leg.
- (b) More than half the number of the fathers of pupils in each class had had secondary education.
- (c) The number of mothers who had had secondary education was only slightly below that for the number of fathers, with the exception of mothers of pupils at SRS school in both Experimental and Control classes.



- (d) Very few of the parents -- 5 fathers and one mother -- had acquired post matric education at a College or University.
- (e) The number of parents who had improved their qualifications while in employment was fairly low -- about 20% of the total.

The table does not show that 2 of the mothers (of the pupils in the SRS Experimental class) were illiterate.

### 5.2.3 The Hobbies of Parents

The purpose of enquiring about the hobbies of parents was to get information on the interests of parents as well as to get some assessment of the possible influence of parents' leisure pursuits on the learning environment of pupils in the homes. For instance parents who are avid readers are very likely to try hard to get their children to take an interest in reading. In any case parents who are keen on hobbies are apt to discuss whatever they are doing with the rest of the family. If the parents have hobbies such as woodwork or toy-making, children are bound to get involved through helping their parents. In these and other ways children receive an informal education in the home.

The hobbies of both parents of pupils are given in Table XVI. The table shows the number of fathers and mothers who pursued a hobby in each of the categories listed for each of the four classes involved in the study. Some parents stated that they had no hobbies.

With regard to the responses summarised in Table XVI the following additional points emerge.

- (a) There is a wide spread in the choice of parental hobbies. Furthermore, the number of parents with hobbies with direct educational value were fairly evenly distributed over the classes. In particular, the pupils of the Experimental classes did not have any advantage in having a predominance of parents with reading as a hobby.

- (b) A sizeable number of the fathers -- about 25% of those who had hobbies -- had "participating in or watching sport" as a hobby. This was understandable in the light of the fact that a public swimming pool and sports fields were available in the neighbourhood.

Table XVI : Hobbies of Parents

School	FATHER				MOTHER			
	CJP		SRS		CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C
Class								
Roll of Pupil	34	28	24	28	34	28	24	28
Hobby or Recreation								
Bioscope	1	3	2	-	2	1	2	-
Sport - Generally Spectating	11	11	5	11	2	-	3	1
Listening to the radio	-	2	1	1	2	1	-	-
Reading	3	3	1	3	4	2	-	2
Music	2	2	1		-	-	-	-
Mechanics	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Watching TV	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Machine Embroidery	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Mission Work	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Woodwork	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

#### 5.2.4 The Economic Background of Parents

I did not ask the parents to disclose the salaries and wages because I have observed that most people are wary about revealing information which they regard as very personal. I therefore resorted to an indirect way of ascertaining the finances of the families. I took the purchase of cars, television sets and the amount of travelling done as a suitable indicator of a family's financial resources. With

regard to the purchase of cars and television sets, I have distinguished between cash purchases and purchases on credit schemes, as well as between monochrome and colour television sets. Table XVIII gives the information regarding the items mentioned above.

Table XVII : Economic Background of Parents

School	CJP		SRS		CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C
No. of families involved	34	28	24	28	34	28	24	28
No. of families which possessed	Television Sets				Cars			
A rented TV Set	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
A TV/car bought for cash	6	5	-	6	5	8	2	5
A TV/car bought on credit	5	8	11	8	6	9	10	9
A colour TV set	5	8	11	9	-	-	-	-
A monochrome set	6	5	1	6	-	-	-	-
% of families owning cars	-	-	-	-	32	60	50	43

Analysis of the data in the above table reveals the following:

- The majority of parents had bought their cars and television sets on credit.
- The majority of the parents had invested in colour television sets.
- Nearly half the number of parents (46%) owned cars.

#### 5.2.5 The Size of Family

As the size of the family has a direct effect on the welfare of pupils, it was necessary to ascertain how the family size varied over the homes from which the four classes of pupils in this study were drawn. The term "family size" is generally taken to be the total of parents and children.

Since there were no single-parent families and the number of deceased parents was negligible (2/114) I decided to take the number of children as a measure of the family size.

The survey showed that pupils in three of the four classes came from homes with an average of three children while the pupils for the remaining class were from families with an average of four children. Table XVIII shows the distribution which produced these averages.

Table XVIII : Size of Family

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of children per family				
1	3	2	4	2
2	9	6	3	7
3	13	8	9	8
4	4	8	6	8
5	3	1	1	1
6	2	2	0	1
7	0	1	1	1
Average No. of children/ family	3	4	3	3

The following additional points are relevant:

- (a) Pupils who were the only children in families were roughly the same in number in the four classes and these numbers were relatively small.
- (b) The majority of the 115 pupils were from families of two to four children.
- (c) Only 14 out of the 115 pupils were from families with more than 4 children.

In the light of the foregoing it appears that very few, if any, of the pupils would have experienced the neglect which sometimes arises from abnormal family size. Furthermore the fairly even distribution of family size over the four classes suggests that the size of family was unlikely to affect pupil-performance in school.

### 5.3 THE HOME CONDITIONS

#### 5.3.1 The Quantity of Living Space Available for the Pupils

The purpose of this question was to ascertain how much living space was available to the pupils in their homes. Although an abundance of living space does not necessarily mean that the learning environment is superior, a serious lack of living space could hamper a pupil's efforts to learn at home. I decided to get a rough estimate of the amount of living space available to pupils by counting the number of rooms other than the kitchen, bathroom and toilet.

Eleven of the 114 families surveyed lived in an extended or joint family system. In this system married children, usually sons, live with their parents on a semi-independent basis. The married children are allotted a number of rooms, depending on the total number of rooms available. In addition certain rooms such as the lounge, the bathroom and toilet are shared by the extended family. The numbers of families which had 2, 3, 4 and 5 or more "living" rooms as explained above is given in Table XIX.

Table XIX : The Quantity of Living Space Available for the Pupils

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of Living Rooms				
2	7	5	8	9
3	9	7	5	8
4	8	8	6	4
5	5	2	2	4
More than 5	5	6	-	3

The distribution in Table XIX shows that the pupils in both the Experimental and Control classes were affected in roughly the same way with regard to the amount of living space available. The table does not show that the majority of the families lived in flats, or houses in housing estates made up largely of sub-economic units.

### 5.3.2 The Food Eaten at School by the Pupils

As pointed out by Maslow, (1954, p. 32) in his hierarchy of needs, physiological needs are very basic needs. Thus the desire to learn only arises where basic needs have been satisfied. In the light of this I considered it useful to find out the eating habits of the pupils. I was interested in ascertaining the amount and contents of the lunch packs of the pupils, this being an indicator of the food available at home. I found that every pupil in all the four classes took a lunch pack to school. The lunch invariably consisted of sandwiches with cheese, eggs, pre-processed meat, jam and curries of all types as fillings. Curried vegetables, meat, fish and meat with vegetable were the most popular fillings for sandwiches. As a variation some pupils brought bread-rolls and home made bread (Indian bread) with fillings, cakes or pastries. In addition to the above about a quarter of the pupils brought fruit juices of various kinds.

In the course of the survey I also learnt that all the pupils had something to eat for breakfast. Thus none of the pupils came to school hungry. Furthermore there were no marked differences in both the quantity and type of food available to pupils in Experimental and Control classes, or between the two Schools.

### 5.3.3 The Reading Material Available in the Home

The reading material which was available to the pupils generally consisted of newspapers, periodicals and books bought by parents, or borrowed from the school or public library.

Of the daily newspapers only two, *The Natal Mercury* and the *Daily News*, were in evidence. Several different weekly papers were seen. Three of



the latter, *The Leader*, *The Graphic* and *The Post* were wholly community-oriented -- that is, reporting news affecting the black community in general and the Indian community in particular. The other weekly papers were the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Tribune*. The periodicals were family magazines or specialist-type publications on sports, cars, motor repairs and similar topics. Except for pictorial material, most of the contents of the latter type of periodicals were well beyond the scope of the pupils in this study.

The number of newspapers, periodicals and books and the numbers of families which had these is shown in table XX.

Table XX : Reading Material in the Homes of Pupils

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of listed items purchased per family				
1 daily newspaper	22	15	17	5
2 daily newspapers	5	5	3	3
Daily newspaper sporadically	7	8	4	10
1 weekly paper	12	3	9	13
2 weekly paper	5	2	12	7
3 weekly paper	5	2	1	4
4 weekly paper	-	1	2	3
5 weekly paper	2	-	-	1
1 monthly magazine	9	3	4	4
2 monthly magazine	7	2	5	3
3 monthly magazine	-	2	3	2
No. of listed items bought or borrowed by pupils				-
No. who bought story books	5	7	6	2
No. who were loaned by their brothers and sisters	9	4	5	3
No. who had reading cards from school	-	-		13

The numbers of families shown as purchasing the daily newspaper includes only those families who bought a newspaper regularly. When asked for the reason for not buying a daily paper, usually the answer was that they got all the news from the television and radio and that a newspaper was thus redundant. The other reason offered was that they had no time to

read a paper daily. The fact that all families bought at least one weekly paper which was read over the week-end suggests lack of time to read may be a real problem.

The story books which parents purchased for their children were generally fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Three Bears*, *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. The enquiry also revealed that some pupils attempted to read books borrowed from the public or school library by their brothers and sisters. The numbers of pupils who did this in the various classes is also given in the table.

On her own initiative the teacher in charge of the Control class at SRS prepared reading cards for her pupils. These reading cards contained words taken from the readers which pupils were not allowed to take home. The table shows that at least half her pupils were using the cards as reading material at home.

#### 5.3.4 Some Factors Affecting Pupils' Education

##### 5.3.4.1 The Effect of Family Travel

In popular parlance "travel broadens the mind". However one may view this, there can be no doubt that travel can provide educative experiences if informal learning is counted as education. In the light of this I probed the travelling habits of the families of the pupils. As might be expected, on account of their age, none of the pupils had travelled on their own. They always went with their parents or with other adults approved of by their parents. Table XXI gives the numbers of pupils who had travelled varying distances from home.

Table XXI : Effect of Family Travel

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Limits of Travel				
Within Greater Durban	3	4	6	8
Outside Durban but within Natal	9	8	2	3
Outside Natal but within R.S.A.	7	5	10	8
Outside R.S.A. but within Africa	1	-	2	2
Overseas	2	-	-	-
No. of pupils per class	34	28	24	28

#### 5.3.4.2 The Effect of Television and Radio

Since radio and television are obvious instruments of education I deemed it useful to investigate the habits of the families with regard to their use of radio and television. At the time of this investigation television programmes started at 18h00, and lasted for 5 hours. Only one channel was available. The total of 5 hours was shared equally between the two language media used (English and Afrikaans). The first half was used for one language and the second half for the other language. The order of showing of the English and Afrikaans halves was alternated daily. This arrangement gave a maximum of 4 evenings a week for English or Afrikaans to be the language medium in the first half of the 5 hours. Programmes aimed at children were always broadcast between 18h00 and 19h00. I found that children watched the programmes aimed at them, irrespective of the language medium used. The viewing habits of pupils is given in Table XXII.

With reference to the programmes for children which most children were "confined to", there was no marked difference in the numbers of pupils (from the different classes) who watched these programmes.

Table XXII : Television and the Pupils

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll	34	28	24	28
No. of Pupils who -				
Watched Children's programmes only	16	15	12	12
Watched other programmes as well	4	7	1	4
Were allowed to watch for limited time	7	4	1	1
Were allowed to watch specific programmes	1	1	-	1
Went elsewhere to watch TV	2	2	1	2
Watched TV occasionally	2	-	-	2

Radio programmes, by contrast with television programmes, did not have a strong impact on children. Pupils did not show the same enthusiasm for listening to the children's programmes on radio as they did for watching television programmes designed for them. The number of pupils who listened to a TV programme of their own choice varied between 1 and 4 over the four classes. Pupils invariably chose TV programmes with lots of action and excitement. A programme entitled "Squad Cars" was the most popular choice.

#### 5.3.4.3 The Effect of the Bioscope

Pupils usually went to the bioscope in the company of parents or elder brothers and sisters. The frequency of visits to the bioscope and the types of films seen are shown in Table XXIII.

The fact that pupils saw more films in one of the Indian languages was because that was what parents wanted to watch. The children simply went along with their parents. Of the films in the English medium pupils chose those with plenty of action and excitement.

Table XXIII : Visits to the Bioscope

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of pupils	34	28	24	28
Frequency of visits to the Cinema				
Once a week	3	1	3	-
Once a month	1	2	2	2
Once a fortnight	1	2	2	2
Once a term	3	6	6	5
<u>Type of film seen</u>				
Indian actors using an Indian language	9	7	9	5
Films with English dialogue	5	5	4	4

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

Overall the information in the preceding sections shows that pupils from the Experimental and Control classes were generally subject to very similar conditions. In particular all the pupils had adequate food, shelter and care. With regard to living standards the data in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 suggests that pupils in this study are from Indian middle class families in South Africa. However, it should be noted that these standards were not homogeneous throughout the populations around the two schools, in spite of the distance being only 3 - 4 kilometres between them.

My personal observations prompt me to note that the "average" family from the SRS catchment area enjoyed a slightly lower standard of living compared to that around CJP. Direct support for this observation is provided by the data given in Table XXIV. (Figures refer to % of families of each catchment area).

Table XXIV : Comparison of the Families in the Catchment areas of CJP and SRS

ASPECT	Catchment Area	
	CJP	SRS
Secondary or higher education of fathers	62	52
Secondary of higher education of mothers	48	37
Other qualifications of fathers	19	17
Other qualifications of mothers	3	0
Hobbies of fathers	71	58
Hobbies of mothers	23	15
Hobbies of pupils	63	38
4 or more living rooms in the home	55	42
Reading material bought or borrowed	40	15



CHAPTER 66. OBSERVATION OF THE PUPILS' WRITTEN AND ORAL WORK IN THE CLASSROOM6.1 INTRODUCTION

I adopted a strictly objective role in observing the work of the pupils and the teachers in the classroom. However, this did not exclude the method of interview and discussion which I used in such a way that the work of the pupils and the teacher was not disrupted.

With regard to observation of teacher behaviour I aimed to ascertain the following:

- (a) The extent to which the teachers were using the methods set out in the guides issued by the Division of Education of the Department of Indian Affairs.
- (b) The extent to which the methods and materials recommended by the guides were succeeding in the classroom situation.
- (c) The supplements, if any, of the teachers to the methods and/or materials used in the classroom.

This observational method of collecting information should be more revealing and reliable than interviewing teachers outside the classroom situation. In the latter method one has to presume that the teacher had interpreted the guides correctly. Furthermore, the kind of close observation which I aimed at should throw some light on the extent to which the teachers appreciated the underlying philosophy of the methods they were using.

As I have had considerable experience in the Junior Primary department, the observation and interviewing of the pupils was relatively easy. I assessed abilities ranging from good to poor. I ensured that my observations covered every stage of the work done by the pupils.

## 6.2 ARRANGEMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

All the classrooms involved in the study were equipped with an adequate number of charts dealing with Elementary Mathematics, Health Education, Right Living, Handwriting and Main Language. The "library corner" in each classroom was well stocked with suitable reading material, while the "nature corner" was used for the display of exhibits contributed by the teacher and the pupils.

### A Teacher discussing a "nest" from the Nature Corner



In addition, each classroom had an area designated "free choice corner", where the teachers placed workcards on Elementary Mathematics, Main Language and Handwriting. The teachers informed the pupils about the availability of workcards from this corner, but pupils had the freedom to choose card/cards which interested them.

### The Free Choice Corner



As is general practice, all the pupils occupied desks which were arranged in clusters. Since each cluster consisted of a rectangular arrangement of the desks, the pupils shared a common working area.

The pupils in the Experimental classes enjoyed the following additional facilities:

- (a) Each pupil had a Sentence Maker and a Sentence Stand.
- (b) Each pupil had the use of a bag which was fastened to the back of the chair on which they sat. As the pupils had their Sentence Makers and Sentence Stands in these bags, the time needed to train pupils to collect and return these items from a common storage point was saved.
- (c) A Teacher's Sentence Maker was placed on one side of the class in such a position that it was within easy reach of pupils. Labelled pockets of the Word Store for insert cards, to be used on the pupils Sentence Maker, were fastened on the wall rail.

### 6.3 THE TEACHING OF THE ALPHABET

In both the Experimental and Control classes there was uniformity in the teaching of the letters of the alphabet in the following respects:

- (a) The letters were taught verbally to whole classes, but the written work was done through ability groups.
- (b) The letters which had already been taught were assembled on a frieze which was used daily for revision purposes.
- (c) The Handwriting Guide (1973, pp. 6-7) was followed with respect to the order of introduction of the letters.

The order of learning the formation of the letters, based on similarities of strokes used in the formation of the letters, is given in Table XXV.

Table XXV : Grouping of letters for Handwriting

Group	Letters	Stroke
1	l h b k	A strong downward stroke
2	i r n m	A short downward stroke
3	j p	A short downward stroke and a curve
4	c o a d g q	An anti-clockwise curve
5	s f e	A small anti-clockwise curve to begin a letter
6	u y t	A short downward stroke which then turns to the right
7	v w x z y	angles

- (d) The pupils used a beginner's pencil and wrote on unruled paper until they had learnt the formation of all the letters and could write sentences with words well spaced.
- (e) The pupils drew a platform on which they were allowed to write after they were:

*"...able to form the 26 small letters correctly...  
 ...able to copy words with letters correctly spaced.  
 ...able to copy correctly short sentences with words well spaced.  
 ...able to write in a reasonable size with letters conforming in  
 their relative size to each other.  
 ...able, through training, to space the rows of writing to run  
 parallel to one another horizontally." (Handwriting Guide, 1973, p. 10)*

- (f) Pupils wrote in ruled books. The spacing between lines was 17 mm.
- (g) Pupils were placed into one of three ability groups. While the A and B groups had 3 formal writing lessons a week, the weakest group (C) had 4 lessons a week.
- (h) Pupils were given occupational work aimed at reinforcing the writing techniques learnt.
- (i) The teacher demonstrated letter formation on the chalkboard, but pupils were required to emulate the teacher's writing on writing strips, on which the letters were written with the required formation and correct spacing.

In other respects there were marked differences. In the Experimental classes the teachers introduced the whole alphabet in the shortest time possible. The emphasis was on sounding the letter and writing its symbols, even if the latter were not well formed.

By contrast the teachers in the Control classes stressed the correct formation of letters as well, and spent a great deal of time in teaching the letters to form words, which were then used in sentences. I would have expected that the emphasis on correct formation in Class i would have reinforced the pupils' learning of the letters, and hence their mastery of reading. However, I observed that the pupils in the Control classes took a relatively longer time to understand what they were reading and writing. It is possible that the considerable time involved in teaching letter formation somehow worked against a solid grasp of the sound and the symbol. The relatively longer time taken by the Control class at CJP in learning to write all the letters is shown in Table XXVI.



Table XXVI : Dates of Completion for learning to Write the Alphabet

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
<u>Ability Group</u>				
A	22-5-78	5-6-78	26-5-78	28-7-78
B	29-5-78	20-6-78	6-6-78	4-8-78
C	12-6-78	22-9-78	4-8-78	25-8-78

#### 6.4 THE AVAILABILITY OF THE FLASH/CORE WORDS TAUGHT

The term "availability" does not only refer to ease of access of the list of words taught, but also covers such aspects as the frequency of encounter and use of the words by the pupils. In the light of this it is clear that the following routines used in the Experimental classes helped the pupils to learn, use and remember the core words.

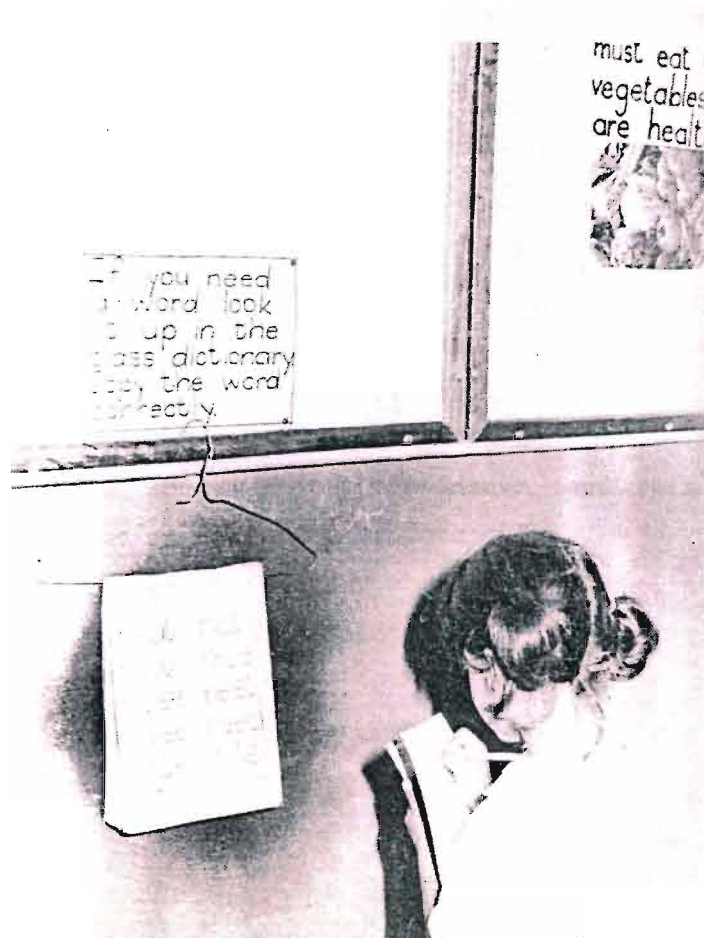
- (a) The teacher recorded the first 20/30 words, which were taught to the class as a whole, in sentences on wall charts. The teacher got the pupils to read the sentences daily, until pupils were tested and placed into ability groups.
- (b) The core words were displayed in printed form on the Teacher's Sentence Maker which was always in full view of the pupils.
- (c) Pupils had easy access to words in the Word Store at the side of the classroom.
- (d) Pupils had their own Sentence Makers in which the complete list of core words appeared.
- (e) Pupils could refer to their Word Book which carried the printed list of all the core words.



By contrast the following observations were made about the Control classes:

- (a) The teachers did not prepare and display charts containing the flash words taught.
- (b) Pupils were not allowed access to the teacher's box of flashwords. Consequently pupils used only those words which they remembered when writing sentences.
- (c) Pupils did not have their readers with them at all times as these were generally handed to the pupils during the reading period. However, these pupils were encouraged to use the class dictionary in which the teacher recorded some of the flashwords which had been requested by the pupils for sentence writing.

#### A Pupil using the Class Dictionary



## 6.5 THE TEACHING OF THE CORE/FLASH WORDS

### 6.5.1 The Teaching of the Core Words through BL

Since the 2 teachers using this approach differed in both the order of choosing and the method of getting the pupils to learn and write the core words, I will describe separately the approaches used.

#### Teacher 1

This teacher picked a "new" core word which cropped up during the Discussion Period and focussed the rest of the period on it. (The term "new" applies to a new core word which had not been formally introduced before.) The following is a verbatim illustration of how the word "run" was taught:

Pupil 1 : "I saw a rat run across the road."

Teacher : "Adesh used the word 'run' and this is how the word run looks. (The teacher displayed an insert card from her Sentence Maker with the word 'run' on it. The teacher then constructed the following sentence on the Teacher's Sentence Maker:  
I love to run.)

Teacher : "Let us read this sentence."  
(Teacher and pupils then read.)  
('I', 'love' and 'to' were words pupils had already learnt.)  
"Who else runs at home?"

Pupil 2 : "My sister runs at home."

Teacher : "Let us make that sentence."  
(Pupils helped the teacher by picking the insert cards from the Teacher's Sentence Maker).  
"To make the word 'run' into 'runs' we use this card."  
(Teacher showed pupils the insert card with the 's' on it).  
"Now let us make more sentences."

Pupil 3 : "My brother runs to the shop."

Pupil 4 : "The boy runs to the shop."

Pupil 5 : "I run to dad."

Pupil 6 : "I run in the morning with my friend."

Teacher : (Running slowly).

"What am I doing?"



Pupils Chorus : "You are running ma'am."

Teacher : "Yes, I am running, and this is how we spell 'running'."

(The teacher wrote the word on a blank card and inserted it into the personal column of the Teacher's Sentence Maker.)

During the next Main Language Period the teacher requested the four groups of pupils to construct sentences using the word 'run'. Generally the A and B groups were able to construct and write their sentences in their Story Books, while the C and D groups had to construct a number of sentences with the aid of the Teacher's Sentence Maker. In the following Main Language lesson C and D groups wrote sentences using the word 'run' while the A and B groups proceeded to the next new core word.

The above method of teaching core words has the following commendable features:

- (a) The core word helps to connect the work done during the Discussion Period with that of the Main Language period.
- (b) The inclusion of the core word in the class Daily News written by the teacher on the flip chart ensures that pupils have a further opportunity to revise the core word/words, e.g. The following Daily News contains the core word 'run'.  
Adesh saw a cat run across the road.
- (c) As pupils in the weakest ability group invariably record the class Daily News in their own Daily News books, this method reinforces their learning of the core words.

If no suitable core word cropped up during the Discussion Period the teacher used the next core word from her prepared scheme for each group.

## Teacher 2

As a means of creating interest in, and focussing attention on the Sentence Stand, this teacher put up the core word/words for each group on the Teacher's Sentence Stand. (The possibility of having more than one word for a group at one time arises out of the close association between certain words, e.g.,  
birthday and party, up and down, play and with.

The word/words for the different groups were distinguished by using a colour code. Since the teacher set this out before school started, pupils were challenged to recognise the word/words selected for their group the moment they set eyes on the Sentence Stand. Moreover, this method of displaying the core words, had the virtue of initiating informal teaching of the core words, as shown by the following observations:

- (a) Pupils tried to sound the word/words phonetically.
- (b) Pupils often recognised the word chosen for another group as a word they had already learnt -- the charm of the familiar. Thus they consolidated their own learning and were also able to help pupils of other groups to decode words.

The teacher's reason for assigning different words to the four groups was based on:

- (a) The need to allow the more able groups to proceed at a pace commensurate with their ability.
- (b) The need to define the work to be done by each group during the Main Language Period -- the assignment of a word to a particular group was equivalent to instructing the pupils to use the given word in making sentences during the Main Language Period.

This teacher introduced the new core words during the Discussion Period during which all the pupils were expected to make sentences with the new words. In the Main Language Period the teacher supervised two of the groups who were writing sentences made in their Sentence Stands, while the other two groups constructed sentences orally or had a discussion using the Teacher's Sentence Maker. In the next Main Language Period pupils who had done oral work in the preceding Language period constructed and wrote sentences while the remaining pupils did oral work.

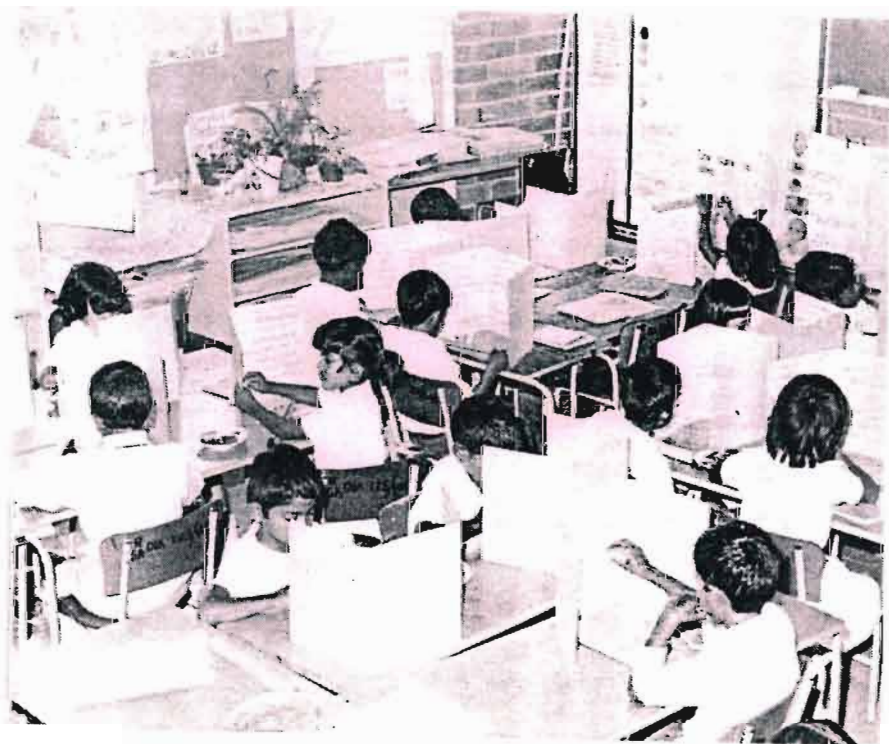
#### 6.5.2 Teaching of the Flashwords using LLR

Both the teachers using these series, i.e. the *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way* followed an identical procedure as they adhered strictly to the Main Language Guide. (See Section 2.3.2.)

A teacher using LLR discussing a flash word with the pupils



Pupils at work with their Sentence Maker





The following description illustrates how the teacher discussed a flash word:

Teacher : "How many of you have a garden?"

(A number of pupils responded by raising their hands.)

Teacher : "What do we see in the garden?"

Pupil 1 : "We see trees."

Teacher : "What grows on the trees?"

Pupil 2 : "Flowers and fruit grow on trees."

Teacher : "What else grows in the garden?"

Pupil 3 : "Vegetables grow in the garden?"

Teacher : "What are some of the tools we use in the garden?"

Pupil 4 : "We use a hoe and a fork."

Teacher : "What else do we use in the garden?"

Pupil 5 : "We use a rake in the garden."

Teacher : "Well, the word on this card says 'garden', (displaying the flash card) and it means a piece of ground for growing fruit and vegetables. Say this word after me 'garden'."

Pupils chorus : "garden".

## 6.6 THE STORY BOOK

This was the book used by pupils learning beginning reading through BL. In it they recorded the sentences which they had constructed using their core words and personal words. In the initial stages, when pupils were unable to write, the teacher wrote the sentences for the pupils. As soon as they could write reasonably well, the teacher entrusted the Story Book to pupils.

Although they could have started their work in the Story Book with phrases such as "my big sister", "my little cat" and "the naughty boy" pupils in both Experimental classes did not do this. All the pupils were trained to speak and write in complete sentences right from the outset. As noted later (Section 7.2.3) Teacher 1 encouraged pupils to use phrases in their Daily News.



A few further points need to be made:

- (a) The teachers corrected sentences which the pupils constructed in their Sentence Stands. Thus the sentences recorded in the Story Book were free of gross grammatical errors.
- (b) The sentences constructed by the pupils in the initial stages consisted of variations in only one of subject, predicate or object as illustrated by the following:

17 March



my dad got a  
new car.

my mum got a  
new car.

my brother got a  
new car.

The Teacher's Manual justifies such work by stating that the lack of variety should not be seen as "a sign of sterile repetition or as a lack of originality but as a linguistic practice." (Mackay, Shaub, Thompson, 1970, p. 20).

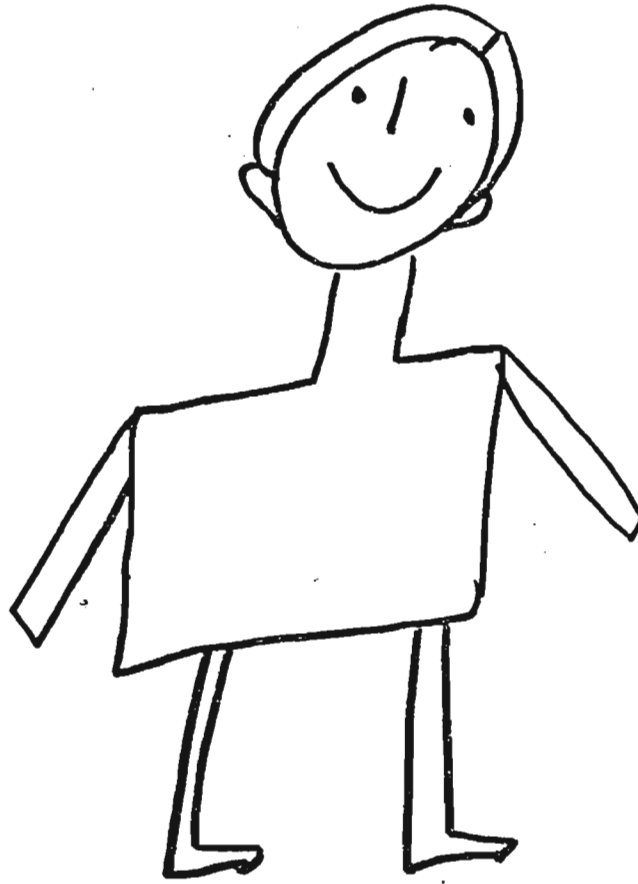
- (c) The demands on the pupils in the two classes differed. Teacher 1 was satisfied if the pupils wrote a single sentence, whereas Teacher 2 encouraged the pupils to write as many sentences as they could. Typically Priventheran (SRS) and Craig (CJP) had written the following for the word "big", during the time allowed.



Craig's effort with the word "big"

my house is big.  
 my dad is big.  
 my mum is big.  
 my brother is big.

Priventheran's effort with the word "big"



dad is big.

The difference in the output illustrates the point that teachers are often responsible for the quality and quantity of work done by their pupils. Invariably pupils strive to meet the expectations set by their teacher. In constructing four sentences for the core word 'big' that particular pupil, working under Teacher 2, effectively revised his knowledge of the words 'my', 'house', 'dad', 'brother' and 'mum'.

A further advantage for pupils who write profusely is that they have more reading material. This is important because, as I have said, pupils have no prescribed readers until they have learnt the 119 core words.

- (d) The pupils' work in the Story Book enabled the teacher to assess a pupil's progress over the whole year in respect of vocabulary expansion.

the bad boy  
stole my crayons.

What time will  
you go to town?

I will go to town  
after lunch.

Workers put  
a new fire  
hydrant next  
to our house.

My student  
teacher writes  
words for us in  
our dictionary.

On Monday my  
aunt went to the  
clinic with our  
baby.

We have grass  
growing round

our school.

After School  
my brother  
polishes our  
shoes.

My dad goes  
to the pool in  
the mornings.

my teacher  
said that I  
must do  
good work.

there is my  
brother  
brushing his  
teeth.

Samples of work taken at monthly intervals show a typical progress made by the pupils in Teacher 1's class in respect of both quality and quantity. The work of Kasthuri (a bright pupil) and Dhanasagran (a weak pupil) is reproduced below:

#### Kasthuri's Work

January we watch television. my dad watches television. my mum watches television.

(Note the inductive use of the collective "we".)

February I can write. my mum can write. my sister can write.

March the boy came to our house. the girl came to school. the children came to my birthday party.

(The teacher had introduced "birthday" and "party" in one day)

April I sleep with my mum on the bed. my dog sleeps in the kennel.

I go to sleep after having a bath.

(Note the use of a personal word "kennel".)

May my little sister has a lot of friends. my mum has a lot of dishes on the shelf. we have a lot of pretty pictures on our wall.

(Here "lot" and "of" were introduced in one day. See also p. 71, (iii).)

June there is my dad in the car. there is my cat on the tree. there is my sister in the shop.

July will you be at school on Monday? yes, I will be at school on Monday. will you be at the beach? no, I will not be at the beach.

(By July Kasthuri had learnt to use all the 119 core words.)

#### Dhanasegran's Work

January my brother is big. my dad is big. my mum is big.

February I watch television. my dad watches television. my mum watches television.

(Note the introduction of "es" as early as February)

March my sister is big. I love my sister. my sister is naughty.

April our baby is pretty. I play with the baby. our baby plays on the swing.

May I wash my face in the morning. I went to the shop in the morning. I eat my lunch after school.

June some of the children watch television. some of the children wear shoes.

July my dad goes to work by car. my teacher came to school by car.

August I saw a cat on the road. I saw the dog in the shop. I saw my brother taking the dog to the shop.

September I went fishing with my big brother.

October we have flowers in our house. my mum plants flowers in the garden and the bee sucks the honey.

November we are going to the beach on sunday. my brother fell from the bed. we are going to the fun fair. my brother fell from the step.

December we keep our bird in the cage. we feed the bird seeds. I saw birds in the park. when I go home I play with our birds. birds fly very fast.

Dhanasegran and Kasthuri use lower case letters at the beginning of the sentence although the upper case letters had been taught during Handwriting lessons and the teacher had used upper case letters in writing the Daily News on the flip charts.

(f) Although they had not been formally taught them, the BL pupils used several grammatical constructions, as the following selections from pupils' efforts illustrate:

(i) Subordination

Adjectival Clause :

I like the flower that has a sweet smell.

Noun Clause:

my mum showed me how to cut the fish.

Reduced Clause:

I watch sister go to play with baby.



(ii) Use of 'and' to:Join verbs

my brother fell and hurt his leg,  
bees come and visit flowers.

Join adjectives

my cat is brown and black.  
baby is pretty and naughty.

Show antithesis

I gave my brother a present and he gave me one too.

(iii) Sentences using bound morphemes

Yesterday my sister started her exams.

My friends and I went to a party and we had sweets and cakes.

Today my sister is finishing her exams.

My sister goes to the shop to buy the milk.

(iv) Use of the apostrophe

I went to my aunt's house for lunch.

I go to my friend's house to play with her.

A Pupil's Example

I visited My Sister's  
School.

There was no equivalent to the Story Book in the Control classes.

6.7 THE READING OF THE PUPILS

While the Control classes used the set of readers mentioned in Section 2.3.2.3 as the prescribed reading material, the Experimental classes were required to read the Story Book (See Section 2.3.4.1.11) and the following books from the *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way Series*. *The Red Book*, *The Old Shoe House*, *Eight Little supplementary Red Books*, *The Green Book*, *Eight little supplementary Green Books*, *The Three Pigs*, *Saturday Book*, *At the Barbers*, *The Blue Book* and *Pipkin's Ball*. Since the latter set constituted the common reading material for both classes, I based my observation of the pupil's reading fluency on the reading of these books.

I found that in general, the pupils in both the Experimental classes read more fluently and with greater confidence than Control class pupils. It appeared that their greater fluency and confidence arose from their better ability in word recognition. This superior ability of Experimental class pupils in word recognition is demonstrated in Table XXVII.

Table XXVII : Dates of Commencement and Completion for Recognition of Flash Word Sets

Flash word set numbers	DATES			
	CJP(E)		CJP(C)	
	Commencement	Completion	Commencement	Completion
11	14.6.78	21.6.78	22.5.78	30.5.78
16	29.8.78	8.9.78	9.8.78	21.8.78
20	2.10.78	11.10.78	14.9.78	3.10.78
24	9.11.78	17.11.78	13.11.78	27.11.78
25	20.11.78	29.11.78	28.11.78	Not tested

Table XXVII shows that although they started learning flash words from Set 11 after the Control classes, the Experimental class pupils made such tremendous headway that they overtook the pupils of the Control class within 3 months. Moreover of course, the Experimental class pupils knew a great many more words outside the confines of these sets than their coevals in the Control class.

It should be noted that the pupils of the Experimental classes had to learn the 119 core words before proceeding to learn flash words from Set 11. In the time that these pupils learnt the 119 core words, with thorough application, the Control classes had "learnt" about 15 flash word sets each set consisting of 10 words in the manner described in Section 2.3.2.1. Clearly the approach to learning the core words helped the pupils in the Experimental classes to develop good word recognition ability.

The superiority of the Experimental class pupils in word recognition is also shown in the higher scores obtained by them in flash word recognition tests. Tables XXVIII and XXIX give the scores of the entire A group from the Experimental and Control class respectively.

Table XXVIII : Scores for Flash Word Recognition of the Experimental Class at CJP

Asters	Flash Word Set Numbers										
Names of Pupils	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Vivekanand	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Craig	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9
Moganathan	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Aslam	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Clinton	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Kovishen	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Lynn	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Sheriffa	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Anusha	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10
Coleen	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Kasturi	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Lucretia	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Beverley	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Table XXIX : Scores for Flash Word Recognition of the Control Class at CJP

Ants	Flash Word Set Numbers										
Names of Pupils	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Kevin	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Feroz	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Vinod	10	10	10	10	7	10	10	10	10	10	10
Ayesha Bibi	8	7	8	9	8	10	9	10	10	10	9
Vanessa	8	7	9	10	7	8	10	10	9	10	10
Razia Begum	8	9	9	9	8	10	10	8	10	9	10
Zaheera	7	6	6	9	8	10	10	8	10	7	7
Rathish	7	6	7	9	8	10	10	8	9	10	10
Zaid	8	10	9	10	10	7	10	10	10	10	8
Sagren	10	10	10	10	8	10	10	8	10	10	10
Clinton	10	9	9	9	9	8	10	10	10	10	10
Shubnum	7	7	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10
Rookhia	10	10	10	9	8	8	10	8	10	10	10

With regard to additional reading material for the Experimental classes I found that the whole set of *Breakthrough* books (see Section 2.3.4.11.) had been placed in the library corner from the outset. I suggest that it would have been more helpful to the pupils if the books had been introduced in several stages so that only the simplest books were available in the beginning. This would have the effect of encouraging weaker pupils to get into the habit of using the library corner. I also noted that the simple reference books, *An abc for hungry girls and boys* and *About the house* were nowhere to be seen in the classroom. The same applies to the nursery rhyme cards. The absence of the latter is regrettable as these rhymes have much appeal for pupils and provide an incidental way of increasing a pupil's vocabulary.

#### 6.8 THE TEACHING OF PHONICS

The teachers in the Experimental and Control classes taught and tested the sounds of the letters and the blends according to methods described in Section 2.3.3. Table XXX shows the dates on which the classes at CJP were first tested and results of the test.

Table XXX : Testing of the Alphabet

School	CJP		SRS	
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Class	E	C	E	C
Date pupils tested	27-4-78	2-5-78	25-4-78	12-5-78
No. of pupils able to sound the 26 letters	21	8	12	13
% of pupils able to sound the 26 letters	62	29	50	46

The better performance of the Experimental class pupils over the Control pupils was maintained in the sounding of the blends as shown by the information in Table XXXI.

Table XXXI : Testing of the Blended Sounds

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Blended Sound	% of pupils who were able to sound the blends			
at	100	82	100	96
it	94	75	100	89
et	79	71	96	71
ot	97	79	96	79
ut	100	75	100	75
an	88	57	96	86
ad	91	71	100	68
in	97	71	100	61
un	94	43	100	82
ig	91	50	96	86
ip	85	57	100	89
op	91	61	96	93
up	85	57	100	61
am	97	54	100	79
en	88	75	100	82
ed	94	68	96	71
eg	91	57	96	89
og	100	61	96	96
ill	97	71	96	79
ell	88	68	100	Not taught
st	85	75	100	75
mp	91	57	100	Not taught
nt	91	82	92	61
nd	88	75	96	71
sw	91	68	96	Not taught
Average % for recognition of blended sounds	92	66	98	79

The relatively poor performance of the Control class pupils may be attributed to:

- (a) the lack of reinforcement which arises from writing the symbols corresponding to the **sounds**. As already noted in Section 6.3 the Experimental **class** pupils went ahead in writing because their teachers did not insist on perfect letter formation. The pupils in the Experimental classes therefore benefited from the reinforcement of writing the sounds they were learning.
- (b) Non-availability of the Word Maker which was a necessary learning adjunct in the Experimental classes.

The type of occupational work involving the blended sounds differed for the Experimental and Control classes. Since the pupils in the Experimental classes were writing sentences from a relatively early stage the teachers set writing sentences as occupational work on the blended sounds. The following are examples of pupils efforts for the blends at, ot, ad, ut, en.

My cat scratched me when I was playing with it.

My cat chased the rat into the house.

My mum is sad because her vase broke.

I went to school but my sister stayed at home.

My mum had an accident and the car got dented.

In the Control classes the emphasis was on using sounds to build words and drawing pictures for the words where applicable.

Both the Experimental and Control class teachers at CJP did not stop at teaching just the blended sounds. They helped pupils to build new words by extending known words, e.g., tent from ten, butter from but.



A pupil's effort with the sound 'in'

bin



my sister picked  
up the dirt from  
the grounds  
and she threw it  
in the bin.

Extension of the Blended Sound "st"



With regard to phonics the evidence above shows that by comparison with pupils in the Control classes the pupils in the Experimental classes were:

- (a) better at recognising the letters of the alphabet.
- (b) generally able to sound a greater number of blends.
- (c) generally constructed sentences while the Control classes were, in the main, drawing pictures to illustrate words in isolation.
- (d) not bored with the use of the Word Maker and Sentence Maker, in fact it often became necessary to persuade pupils to stop as they revelled in using the materials in making new words and sentences.

## CHAPTER 7

### 7. THE WRITING OF THE PUPILS

#### 7.1 THE CREATIVE WRITING OF THE PUPILS

*"The term 'creative writing' is seldom defined; it is more frequently illustrated by examples from children's own writing and from which a definition may be arrived at by guesswork.... The Breakthrough materials do encourage the children to write about the things that concern them most and this; in itself, is likely to lead to the production of what is commonly recognised as 'creative writing'."*

(Mackay, Thompson, Shaub, 1970, p. 110-111)

Creative writing is sometimes referred to as "personal writing". A pupil is ready for personal writing when he:

- "(i) can decide what he will write about*
- (ii) realizes that he must translate his thoughts into a form suitable for writing; and*
- (iii) can think of the actual words that are to be written."*

(Taylor, 1973, p. 146)

Creative writing, or personal writing, involves free writing on the part of the pupil, that is the teacher does not impose a rigid structure on the thoughts and words which the pupil uses in such writing. In this sense creative writing is different from the exercise termed "Composition". In the latter the teacher not only selects the topic but also supplies some of the ideas and most of the words and phrases needed to write the Composition. In other words he supplies a lot of the content and the form.

However, it should not be supposed that pupils need no guidance or "teaching" in the art of creative writing. In fact in the initial stages the teacher's help is required.

*"The part played by the teacher... needs to be carefully considered. Infinite patience, a clear understanding of what she hopes her children will achieve, the ability to recognise effort, and efficient organization are all necessary if this creative writing is to be satisfying to the child and acceptable to her. In considering how much help we should give, we must ask ourselves what we hope the child will gain from work of this sort.... We want him to write freely, and with his whole heart in it, and we want him to learn the value of careful and correct ways of doing things."*

(Goddard, 1958, pp. 99-100).

The pupils involved in this study received help and guidance of the type referred to above. Initial training in creative writing started when the teacher got the pupils to write their own Daily News. (This aspect of the pupils' writing will be treated in detail in Section 7.2).

The training in creative writing was not done with the class as a whole but in groups based on reading ability. The following pattern was used to get pupils to write on their own:

- (a) The teacher wrote a topic of her own choice on the chalkboard, e.g. My Friend, My Pet, My Birthday Party, My Toy and Our Class.
- (b) The teacher displayed a picture on the chalkboard and pupils wrote about the picture.
- (c) Pupils wrote about pictures which they had collected from newspapers or magazines.
- (d) Pupils wrote on topics of their own choice, e.g. My Mum, Our Garden, My House, My School and My Teacher.

#### 7.1.1 The Immediate Evaluation of Creative Writing

I began my evaluation of the pupils' creative work in the second week of November. The evaluation was done at this time, which was only three

weeks before the end of the school year, to ensure that all the ability groups in all the classes had had the opportunity to do some creative writing.

All the pupils had to write on a single topic namely, "What I do when I go home." I chose this topic because it was a subject on which every pupil could write something. Further I chose the very first period of the day as the time in which the pupils were to write. This was done so that the pupils would come fresh to the task.

The following procedure was used in conducting this creative writing "test".

- (a) I gave each pupil a big sheet of newsprint, together with a small unfolded sheet. Their names were written on both sheets.
- (b) I wrote the topic on the chalkboard.
- (c) I read the topic aloud and asked the pupils to follow suit. They all read the topic in chorus.
- (d) I then gave the following instruction verbally.

"Write about all the things you do when you go home after school  
Write all this on the big sheet of paper. If you need a word come to me with the small sheet of paper (which I have given you) and I will write the word you want on it."

My method of dealing with requests for personal words in this test was similar to that of 3 of the teachers of these classes, but differed from the teacher in the fourth class. Whereas 3 teachers had used the system of writing the words requested into the pupils' personal dictionaries, the remaining teacher wrote the requested word on the chalkboard. I used small pieces of folded paper for the following reasons:

- (i) To ascertain the total number of requests for words per pupil.
- (ii) To facilitate easy retrieval of the requests.

- (iii) To eliminate the possible influence of words written on the chalkboard on the pupils who had not requested the words displayed. This ensured that no pupil gained ideas which were not due to his own efforts.

Furthermore I told them that they might use their personal dictionaries, while for the pupils in the Experimental classes I added, "You may use your Word Maker, Sentence Maker and Sentence Stand." After a further 5 minutes I collected the two sheets given to each pupil.

### 7.1.2 The Quantitative Assessment of Creative Writing

#### 7.1.2.1 The Number of Words and Sentences Used

Table XXXII shows the number of words and sentences used by each pupil in the four classes.

Table XXXII : The Number of Words and Sentences Used

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Class	34	28	24	28
No. of words used	1 587	800	646	435
Average no. of words used	47	29	27	16
No. of Sentences used	196	99	94	77
Average number of words used per sentence	8.1	8.1	6.9	5.6

The pupils in both Experimental classes used more words than those in the corresponding Control classes. The fact that these pupils required a greater number of words suggests that they had more to say. This in turn suggests that these pupils had a better control of the language. Probably they also wrote more because they were quicker to find the other words they needed. The last-mentioned ability can be attributed to the practice which these pupils had in locating and using words from the Sentence Maker. This point is amply substantiated by the comments of the teachers (see Section 4.6.4.1.)



With regard to the number of sentences used, Table XXXII shows that Experimental class pupils wrote a greater number of sentences than the pupils in the corresponding Control classes. The average sentence length for pupils in the Experimental and Control classes at CJP may be identical, but this is due to the different types of sentences written by the two classes, as explained in Section 7.1.3.2.

#### 7.1.2.2 The variety of words used

The words "I", "the", "a" and "and" were not counted in assessing the variety of words used because these words were used by all the pupils in the four classes. The number of different words used by each class is set out in Table XXXIII.

Table XXXIII : The Variety of Words Used

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of Different Words Used	131	112	99	88

The Experimental classes not only used more words and sentences (Table XXXII) but they also used a greater variety of words than the Control classes. The actual words used in the different classes is given in Appendix 5.14

#### 7.1.2.3 Table XXXIV : The Demand for Words

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Total no. of words used (A)	1 587	800	646	435
No. of words requested (B)	156	158	74	111
A/B %	10	20	12	26

The pupils in both Control classes requested more words than did the Experimental classes. This greater demand for words is in itself commendable as it reflects a greater desire on the part of the pupils to express themselves. However, if it is seen in relation to the total number of words used we see that the Control class pupils requested a higher percentage of the total number of words.

This may be attributed to the following factors:

- (a) The pupils lacked independence and self-help strategies.
- (b) The personal dictionaries in Control classes had fewer words than those in Experimental classes.
- (c) Pupils in Control Classes seemed to remember words which they had learnt as flash words only, that is, there was no reinforcement of the words learnt through devices such as writing sentences.

One further observation is that Control class pupils lost much writing time waiting in a queue which was necessitated by the large number of requests for words.

#### 7.1.2.4 The Word Count and Comparison with the Leicestershire List

*"Word counts (of children's speech and writing) are useful and desirable. They stake out areas of word knowledge. They tell us what children may know by discovering the use of words by a few children."*

(Barbe, 1965, p. 109)

Word counts involve the compilation of lists of words most frequently used by children of a given age group. Several such lists are available, e.g., Thorndike-Lorge List, Buckingham Dolch List and the Gates List. (Barbe, pp. 108-109)

The Leicestershire List, compiled by Edward and Gibbon in 1973, is based on vocabulary of 7-year olds. In this list the words are arranged in alphabetical order, in groups of 250. The groups are graded on a gradient of frequency: thus the 250 words in the first group are those most frequently used by 7-year olds while subsequent groups tail off in order of frequency. I used Leicestershire List as a check list because it is the most recent.

Table XXXV shows the number of words used by pupils in this study in all four classes in writing, "What I do when I go home."

Table XXXV : The Word Count against the Leicestershire List

Group 1 250		Group 2 250		Group 3 250		Group 4 250		Group 5 250		Last 97 words		Words not in the list	
E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C
147	129	34	34	24	12	8	5	2	1	2	5	17	16

It is clear that the pupils in this study who, on average, were slightly below 7 years of age, were able to use some words from every group of the Leicestershire List in accordance with the gradient of frequency described above.

The fairly high number of words (32) which do not appear in the Leicestershire List, but were used by the pupils, is explained by the fact that a large number of these words referred to place names and features of the local environment, e.g. temple, Mitchell Park, Hindu, madressa, Blue Lagoon and mosque.

### 7.1.3 The Qualitative Assessment of Creative Writing

#### 7.1.3.1 The Use of Grammar

The number of grammatical errors was counted.

My mother have a car. (1 error)

I helps my mother. (1 error)

I go to my aunty house. (1 error)  
 I go park. ( 2 errors)  
 In the holidays I swim by the pool. (2 errors)  
 By my house their is many trees. (3 errors)

To assess the ability of different classes in the handling of language I devised an index of syntactical mastery. The total number of errors was divided by the number of pupils in the class to give the number of errors per pupil. The number of errors was then subtracted from the average sentence length. The resulting number multiplied by 10 gives the index of mastery.

TABLE XXXVI : Index of Syntactical Mastery

School	CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C
Roll of pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of Sentences	196	99	94	77
No. of words	1 588	805	645	435
Average no. of words per sentence	8.1	8.1	6.9	5.6
No. of Grammatical Errors	47	60	30	25
Index of Mastery	67	60	57	47

The higher index of mastery gained by CJP(E) and SRS(E) indicates that the pupils in these classes were able to write longer sentences with fewer grammatical errors compared to pupils of the Control Classes. Since correction of word usage from the beginning is an integral part of BL, pupils using this method not only write more but also write to better effect, making fewer grammatical errors. The greater opportunity which BL pupils have to work with the written code may also help these pupils to learn correct word usage.

#### 7.1.3.2 The Types of Sentences Used

The sentences written by the pupils in creative work were classified into 2 categories, namely simple and complex. A typical simple sentence was, "I play at home," while a complex sentence was, "I go to the shop to buy butter for mum."

Table XXXVII shows the number of sentences of each type written by the different classes.

Table XXXVII : Types of Sentences Used

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Total number of sentences	196	99	94	77
No. of simple sentences	64	83	74	68
No. of complex sentences	132	16	20	9

Both the Experimental classes wrote proportionately longer and more complex sentences. This reflects their greater ability to express themselves fluently. I believe that this is so because these pupils thought and wrote in sentences right from the beginning.

The pupils in the Experimental classes would have written even more if I had allowed them more time, as they requested. The point is that they were eager to write because they had something to say and the means to say it. On the other hand pupils in the Control classes made no requests for extra time to write more sentences.

Although pupils in both Experimental and Control classes wrote complex sentences there was a difference in the type of complex sentences written. In many instances the complex sentences constructed by the Control class pupils consisted of two simple sentences joined by "and", e.g. "I go home and I drink my tea." On the other hand, the complex sentences of the Experimental class pupils generally possessed greater structural variety.

"After I have my lunch I play with my tea-set and with my doll."

"After I do my Daily News I go to watch television by my friend's house."

"When I go home I help my mum to wash the dishes and dry the dishes."

### 7.1.3.3 The use of punctuation

The omission of punctuation marks, full stops, commas and the question mark was counted. The number of punctuation errors was counted thus:

What is your name - 1 error

I go to school - 1 error.

The number of errors of punctuation made by the pupils is shown in Table XXX

Table XXXVIII : The Punctuation Errors

School and Class	Roll	No. of Sentences	No. of Punctuation errors	% of errors
SRS (E)	24	94	46	48
SRS (C)	28	77	48	62
CJP (E)	34	196	60	30
CJP (C)	28	99	43	43

Notwithstanding the fact that the pupils in both Experimental classes wrote more sentences they made proportionately fewer punctuation errors than the Control class pupils. Moreover, the pupils in the Control classes made excessive use of run-on-syntax, e.g. "When I go home I have my tea and I go to the shop and I play with my friend."

In spite of the fact that this practice considerably reduced the number of chances for making errors, the Control class pupils still made the greater number. The better performance of pupils in the Experimental classes can be attributed to the fact that the teaching of punctuation is an integral part of the training given to pupils taught through BL.



#### 7.1.4 Some Examples of Creative Writing

##### Experimental class at SRS

Name : Kamini

Age : 7 yrs 0 mths

##### Shopping

I push the trolley for my mum. I go shopping with my mum. I like to go shopping. I go to the shop for my mum. Mum goes shopping. She buys lots of things. When I go shopping with my mum I see lots of toys. I go to the hypermarket.

##### Experimental class at CJP

Name : Lucretia

Age : 7 yrs 2 mths

##### The Fish

My dad and I went fishing and he caught a big fish. My mum cooked the fish for dinner. Fish are very big and they live in the sea. Every Saturday my dad goes to fish. My dad went fishing on Sunday.

##### Experimental class at CJP

Name : Kasthuri

Age : 7 yrs 1 mth.

##### A very hot day

Yesterday was a very hot day. I played with my friend in the garden. On Saturday was a very hot day I went to the pool with my cousins. One very hot day we went to the beach and my dad parked the car under the tree in the shade. In the beach it was very hot and my dad bought ice-cream and cold drink for us. On a very hot day we sit in the shade.

##### Control class at SRS

Name : Nirupa

Age : 7 yrs 1 mth

##### The Harbour

My mum went to the harbour. I love the harbour. The harbour is big. We see ships. The ships are big.

When I go home I change my clothes.

Then I have my lunch. After I have my lunch I go to play. Then I polish my shoes. After I polish my shoes I have a bath. Then I do my

Daily News. After I do my Daily News I go to watch television by my friend's house.

Then I go home and I sleep.

## 7.2 PUPILS' DAILY NEWS

In the Junior Primary class the "Daily News" period is a small but important part of that period of time (46 minutes) allocated to conversation or discussion.

Although Daily News forms a stimulating and vital part of this period it is one of the many topics used for getting the pupils actively involved in conversation and discussion. Some of the subjects which fit in well with the aims of this lesson are:

- (a) The Weather
- (b) The Nature Corner
- (c) Health Education
- (d) The Study of the Environment
- (e) Story Telling or Poetry
- (f) Phonics

It should be apparent that all these subjects are used as attention-getters. However, it must be emphasised that the objective is incidental teaching and learning. Thus a little of so called "remedial work" is deemed both necessary and essential. Obliquely and unobtrusively the teacher corrects errors in pronunciation and grammar. The following are some examples of difficulties which the teacher can attend to in an incidental manner.

- (a) Use of "was" and "were".
- (b) Use of "is" and "are".
- (c) Pronunciation of words such as "the", "a", "house" and "has".

In classes where the BL is being exploited the Discussion period is also used for incidental teaching of some core words as follows:

The teacher selects a word, e.g. play, which a pupil has used in conversation and demonstrates the use of the word through the construction of sentences with the Teacher's Sentence Stand and the Teacher's Sentence Maker. The word that the teacher selects is either a core-word which will be taught soon, or a word which has already been encountered. In this way pupils meet the core words more frequently and, hopefully, learn them much quicker. It is worth pointing out that the Daily News period affords the pupils ample scope for developing and displaying their skills in sentence construction.

### 7.2.1 Methods Used in Class during the Daily News Period

The ways in which the teacher gets and uses the contributions of the pupils during the Daily News session is extremely important. These can, generally, be classified into the following two categories.

#### (i) Use of pupil-centred news

The teacher gets responses from the pupils by asking:

"What news have you brought today?"

Some typical responses might be:

"I went to my uncle's wedding."

"I hurt my toe in the park."

"Yesterday I saw an accident."

"My brother bought a toy truck."

"Today is my dad's birthday."

The teacher listens to the news items presented by each pupil and, where necessary, helps the pupils to cast the sentence correctly with regard to pronunciation and grammar. After hearing all the contributions from the class the teacher selects one item which has possibilities for a lively discussion. The pupil who contributed the item faces the class for a "quiz session". For the first news item recorded above an actual quiz session proceeded as follows:

- |                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| <u>Rogini</u>  | : | "Where did the wedding take place?"         |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "It took place at the Orient Hall."         |
| <u>Avinash</u> | : | "How did you go to the wedding?"            |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "I went by car."                            |
| <u>Avanthi</u> | : | "Who got married?"                          |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "Uncle Moosa and Aunty Farida got married." |
| <u>Kugen</u>   | : | "Who did you go with?"                      |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "I went with my mother and father."         |
| <u>Roshan</u>  | : | "What did you see there?"                   |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "I saw many people."                        |
| <u>Segree</u>  | : | "What did you wear?"                        |
| <u>Ismail</u>  | : | "I wore a grey safari suit."                |

In some instances, at the end of the quiz, the teacher might add a few questions such as:

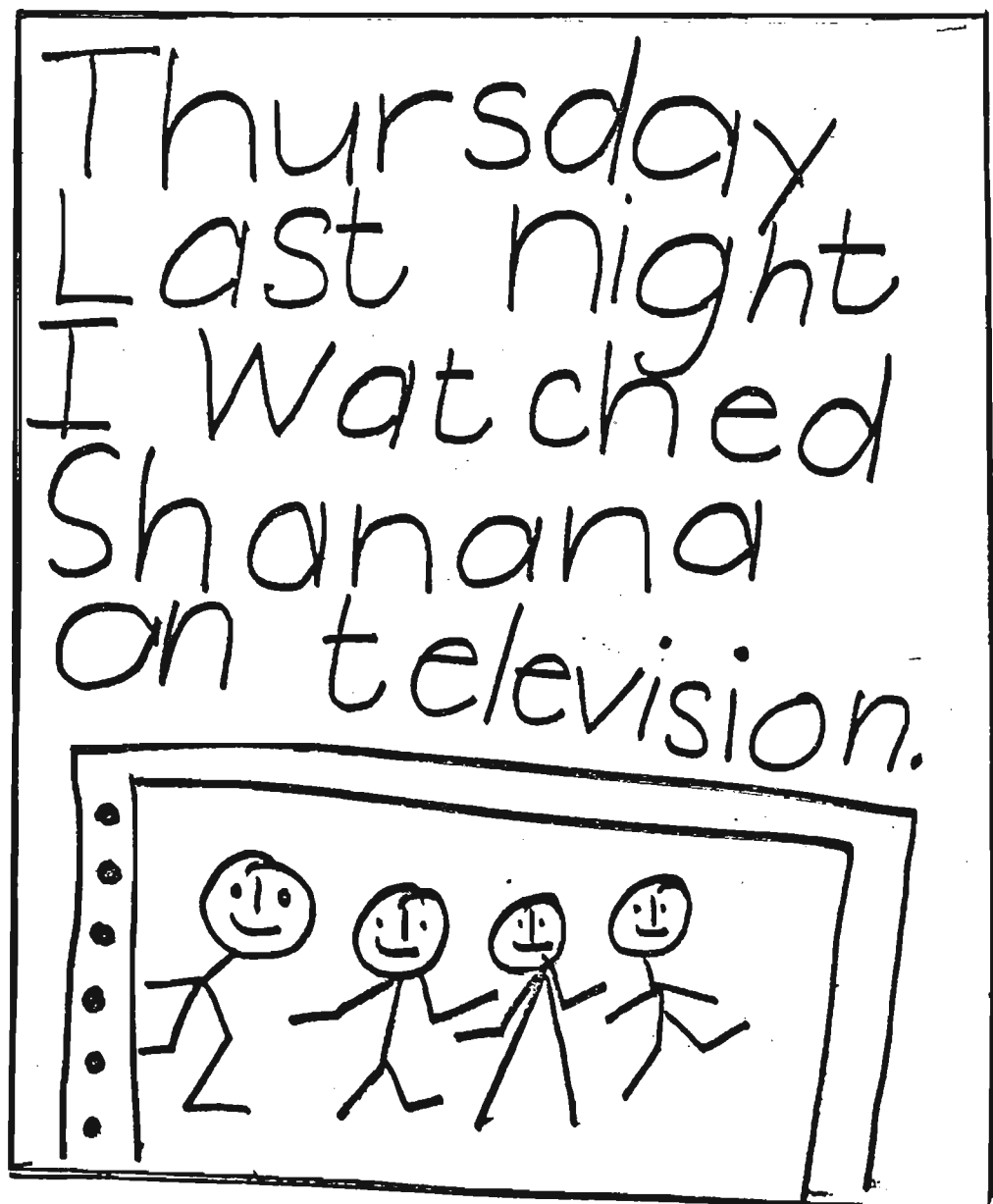
"How were the cards delivered?"

"What do you think would be written on the card?"

"What do we shower/throw on the bride and groom after the wedding?"

The teacher might also use this opportunity to build vocabulary by noting that the words "crowd", "parents" and "bride and bridegroom" may be substituted for "many people", "mother and father" and "Uncle Moosa and "Aunty Farida" respectively.

#### An Example of Pupil-Centred News



(ii) Use of Topics of Current Interest

In this approach the teacher chooses an item of news related to the school and its environment, or news items from the media: :

- (a) Parents' Day
- (b) A Plane Crash
- (c) The School Sports
- (d) A World Title Boxing Match
- (e) An Oil Tanker Accident

An Example of Topical News

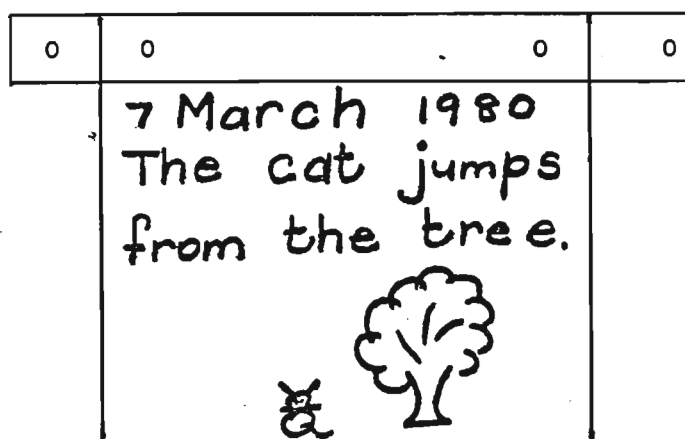




### 7.2.2 Recording of Daily News

The teacher records the news on a flip chart because it is easy to store and retrieve for subsequent reading. At least once a week pupils read the material written on the flip charts or in their personal Daily News Books instead of their "Story Books" or published readers.

#### Typical recording on a flip chart



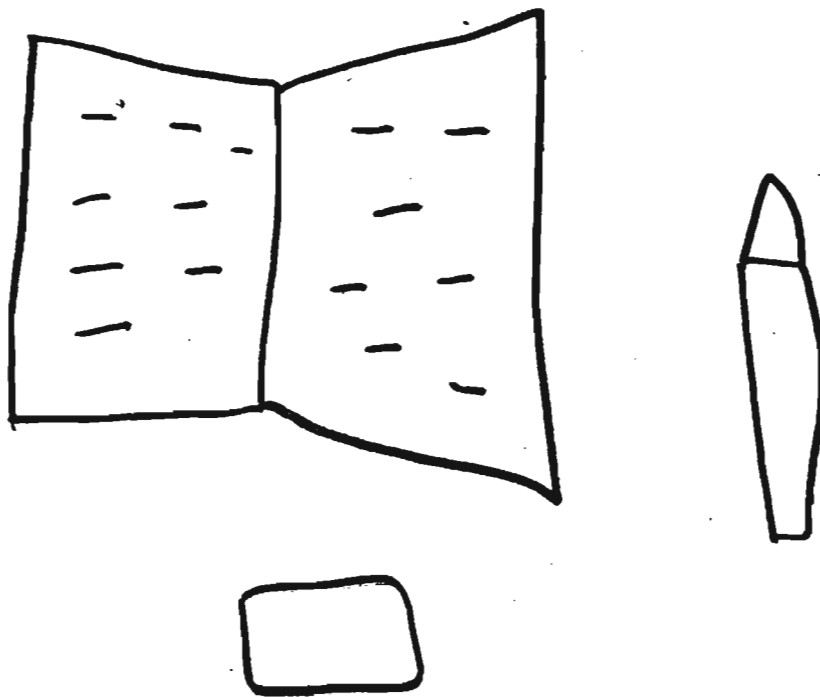
It should be noted that the teacher records the news by writing sentences right from the inception of "Daily News" lessons. To help the pupils to communicate easily and to show them easy ways to express their thoughts, the pupils are encouraged to record their news by drawing pictures accompanied by captions which progress from a single word, to a phrase and finally to a sentence. This progressive approach can be described as follows:

#### Stage 1

The teacher draws a picture and writes a sentence below the picture. Initially the pupils are expected to reproduce the picture in their own books and, if able, to copy the sentence as well. The teacher uses this method for the first two to three weeks.

Example of pupil's news in the second week at school

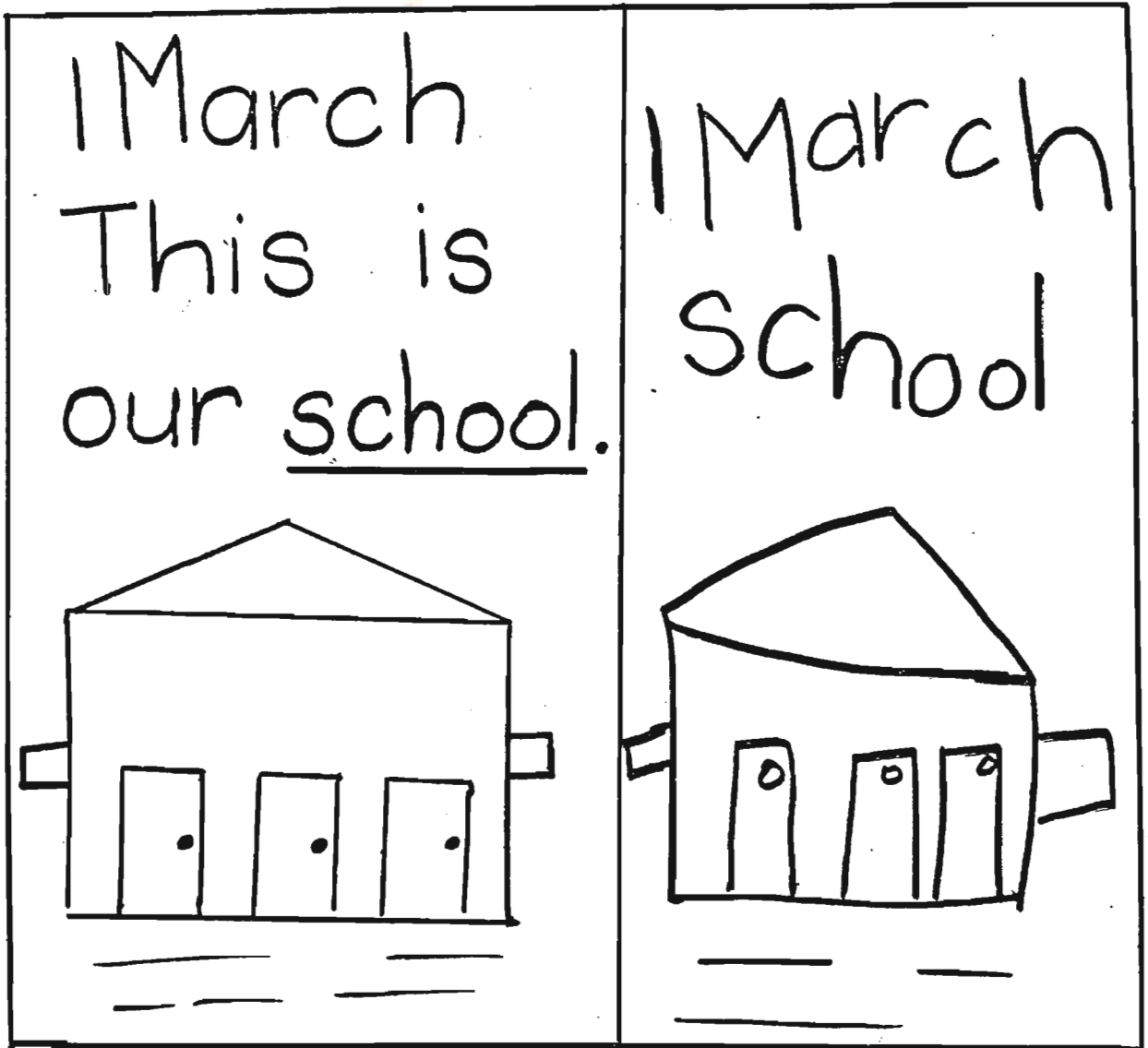
2 February



### Stage 2

In this phase the teacher writes a sentence on the flip chart and underlines the keyword. The sentence is supported by an illustration below it. By the third week the pupils have already gone through a readiness programme for writing exercises, (e.g., paper tearing, tracing, threading beads, buttoning, unbuttoning, lacing, and drawing patterns) so most pupils can write the keyword and draw the picture efficiently.

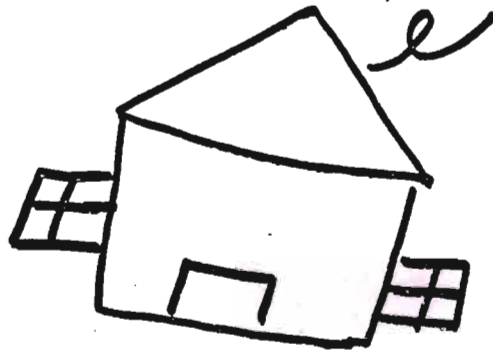
Some pupils even attempt to copy the whole sentence. A typical example of the teacher's record on a flip chart and the pupil's work is given below.

Teacher's Flip ChartPupil's EffortStage 3

In this phase the pupil can use phrases to describe the illustration being used. However, this practice is not yet generally adopted. Of the four teachers involved in the study, one teacher using BL used this stage. Teachers who skip this step are missing a good opportunity to introduce an important aspect of written work. An example of this type of recording is given on the next page.

The Daily News recorded in phrases

22 March  
early to  
School



Stage 4

The teacher writes the news as in Stage 3 but encourages the pupils to use their initiative and put the same news item in their own words with appropriate illustrations. In this stage only the weak pupils continue to use the flip chart prepared by the teacher. The following are typical examples of the pupils' efforts in writing their own Daily News.

in church  
we are  
having our  
rally.

We are get-  
ting our  
presents.

This bus  
carrying 81  
passengers  
overturned  
down a steep  
hill.

on Saturday  
we went to  
a party  
because my  
aunt is going  
to shift at  
the end of  
this month.

Someone  
parked his  
car in our  
yard. My dad  
had to call  
the police to  
find out  
whose car it  
was.



### 7.2.3 The Aims of the Daily News Lesson

- (a) To get pupils to understand that there is a relationship between the spoken and the written word.
- (b) To develop in the pupils the left to right directionality so essential in reading.
- (c) To extend the pupil's vocabulary through discussion of topics which are pupil-centred.
- (d) To get pupils to learn the difference in spacing between the letters in a word and between words.
- (e) To get pupils to appreciate the need for punctuation marks and capital letters.

In stages (a) to (c) described above, the pupils should learn about letter formation, spacing between letters and spacing between words. One can only assess whether aims (c) and (e) above have been realised in or after stage (d).

#### 7.2.3.1 The use of Punctuation Marks and Capital Letters

##### (a) Control Classes

Teachers using LLR are expected to teach their pupils right from the beginning that a sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. As anticipated the pupils in the Control classes rarely failed to use the capital letter when it was required. These pupils were helped further in the use of capital letters because they were taught the alphabet through the alphabet frieze and chart which carried the upper and lower case letter next to each other, thus:

My brother went  
to school.



On the other hand these same pupils did not use the full stop in a number of instances when it was required. The following is an example of a pupil's Daily News without the fullstop.

19 October

My garden

I work in my  
garden I work  
with  
in the my dad  
garden

The Daily News written without the full stop

It is worth noting that teachers in charge of Control classes were lax regarding the use of the full stop. Teachers marked, as correct, sentences which did not carry the full stop.

(b) Experimental Classes

The pupils in these classes very rarely failed to include the full stop at the end of a sentence. This seems to indicate that there has been much transfer of training from the practice of inserting the full stop card at the end of a sentence constructed on the Sentence Stand to writing the full stop at the end of a sentence in Daily News work.

However, these pupils rated badly, in comparison to the Control classes, on the use of the capital letter at the start of a sentence. Most pupils in these classes started using capital letters only in November, whereas they ought to have done so as soon as they had learnt the 119 core words, that is about mid-August for the A Group (see Table XXVII, p. 152.)

As shown in the following examples, taken from the pupils' work, the use of the apostrophe sign had been learnt well by these pupils.

I was playing with my sister's doll house.

Last night we went to my aunt's flat.

Our neighbour's dog is sick.

There is mum's car on the road.

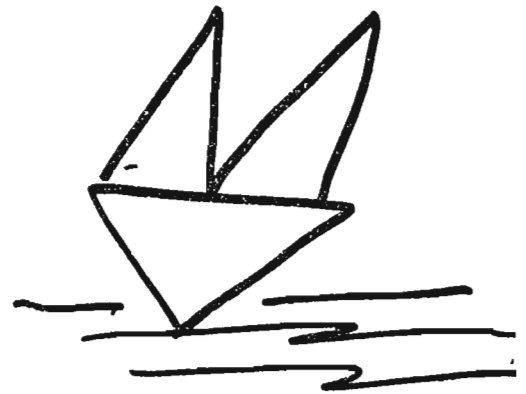
The rogue stole my dad's car.

7.2.3.2 The Spacing between Letters and Words

(a) Control Classes

These pupils generally found it difficult to understand and use spaces between words in spite of the fact that the teachers involved emphasised this point through the use of the flip charts. The following is a specimen of a pupil's work in Daily News, showing poor spacing between words.

10 May  
 Wednesday  
 Daily News  
 Fathima went  
 to the  
 harbour.



Daily News with poor spacing between words

(b) Experimental Classes

These pupils acquired a good idea of spacing quite early. Again this may be due to transfer of training. The practice of leaving spaces between cards when constructing sentences on the Sentence Maker seems to help these pupils to get the idea of spacing their words properly in the sentences which they write in their books. The following example is typical of the even spacing used by these pupils.

184  
13 October

A Story

last night my  
dad read us  
a story.

the name of  
the story is  
the three pigs.

A Daily News item with even spacing between words

#### 7.2.3.3 The Left to Right Movement in Hand-writing

Pupils in all classes had no difficulty in learning that writing proceeded from left to right in the system being used.

#### 7.2.4 Commencement of Daily News Writing by Pupils

In all the classes involved in this study the teachers used their discretion as to when to allow the pupils to write their daily news. In general the teachers allowed pupils as a group (ability groups) to start writing their own news. However, one teacher (in charge of a Control class) worked on an individual basis. This teacher only let a pupil write his/her daily news when, in her opinion, the pupil was ready for it.

The way in which one of the Experimental class teachers initiated her pupils into writing their own news is commendable. She got her pupils to augment the class Daily News by adding their own bit to it. In this way the pupils concerned gained confidence in writing news items with an individual flavour.

The following table gives an indication of the time of year when the different ability groups started writing their own Daily News. (One Control class is omitted because the teacher concerned started the pupils on an individual basis.)

Table XXXIX : Commencement of Daily News Writing by Pupils

School	CJP	SRS	SRS
Class	E	E	C
Group			
A	May	June	August
B	June	August	October
C	July	September	October
D	August	October	November

The above table shows that both the Experimental classes started writing their own Daily News much earlier than the Control classes. This may indicate that BL builds confidence in working with words more quickly than LLR..

### 7.2.5 Topics chosen by the pupils for Daily News

The topics selected by the pupils in both groups covered the same ground, e.g., Shopping, A Toy, My Friend, Our Baby, My Birthday, A Visit to my Granny, Deepavali, My Teacher. The absence of any significant differences in the topics chosen is not surprising, in view of the fact that all the pupils are drawn from a single racial group in the same socio-economic environment, sharing a common cultural background. Differences in religious affiliations did not seem to influence the choice of topics. Popular topics were those concerned with activities at school and home. Items of current interest featured in the news media came next in order of preference.

A remarkable point about the pupils' choice of topics is that they did not distinguish between news that was private and personal and news suitable for public airing. For instance pupils would enthusiastically write about their mothers having babies in hospital.

### 7.2.6 The Use of Flash/Core Words in Daily News

#### (a) Control Classes

It was evident that pupils were not making much use of words learnt as flashwords in writing their Daily News, and this despite the fact that they had learnt their flash words well as shown by:

- (i) their ability to recognise words in the flash word list
- (ii) their ability to use them in sentences during oral work
- (iii) their ability to write sentences correctly using flash words.

The cause may lie in the contents of the flashword list. Since the majority of the flash words are chosen from the prescribed readers written for pupils with a different background these flash words are of little help to the pupils in expressing their experiences.

#### (b) Experimental Classes

In these classes pupils made extensive use of core words taught to them. This supports the inference that the relevance of the words to the pupils' experience is very important. The following



samples, taken from the "Daily News" work of the pupils in the Experimental classes, illustrates how the familiarity of the words learnt as flash words helps these pupils to construct sentences showing understanding of different aspects of language.

(i) Use of s, ed, es and ing

ed - I went to the swimming pool but my brother stayed at home.

s - I am happy because my dad brings me sweets.

ing - All the children were playing in the sand.

es - My brother kisses my dad when he comes from school.

(ii) Use of joining words, e.g. and, but, because

I went to the pool but the baby stayed at home.

My brother runs to school because he is late.

The baby was crying because he was hungry.

My mum hit my brother because he was naughty.

I was wearing my hat when it was raining.

Yesterday I went to the library with my neighbour and brought a book to read.

(iii) Use of clauses and phrases

My dad took me to the shop.

He said I must keep the change.

I saw a ball on top of the tree.

Yesterday we went to the museum where we saw many things.

From Barlows where my dad works their television section shifted to Cape Town.

(iv) Use of Adjectives

A candle factory in Sea Cow Lake caught on fire.

My little brother likes hitting the bad boy.

Dad painted the window sill white.

Tonight my dad will be taking me to see the colourful lights in West Street.

(v) Use of the infinitive

My brother went to the Blue Lagoon to fish.

In my dad's shop they have a television to see whose stealing.

We are going to paint our house pink.

My friend and I went to the shop to buy bread.

7.2.7 Quantity and Quality of Daily News Writing(a) Control Classes

The type of sentences constructed by the pupils in the Control classes in this study was typical of those generally made by pupils in classes using LLR. They lacked variety. Furthermore, pupils tended to keep the sentences as simple as possible. The main reason for the poor quality of the majority of the pupils' efforts in sentence construction might be the late start that they got in writing sentences, coupled with the fact that these pupils learnt words primarily for the purpose of reading their readers. It should be noted that pupils need lots of practice in writing down their thoughts in complete sentences. In the initial stages pupils have to refer to the class teacher or the class dictionary to obtain the spelling of words they intend to use in sentences. However, there were exceptions. The following are samples of sentences of good quality written by pupils in the Control classes:

- My dad was near the spot where the bomb went off in Pine and Grey Streets.
- During the Christmas holiday we are going camping to the North Coast.
- Yesterday my sister's caretaker died. The funeral is is today. The whole school is going to the funeral.
- If I pass my exams my mother will buy me a gift. She will also buy one for my sister.

(b) Experimental Classes

Since these pupils were afforded the opportunity of writing sentences from almost the beginning of the school year, the sentences that they wrote were more complex and varied by comparison with those written in the Control classes. It is clear that these pupils made much use of the

core words and their personal words . Moreover these pupils wrote more sentences on average than pupils in the Control groups. In fact it can be said that BL pupils were not merely constructing sentences, but were expressing their thoughts and feelings in writing. The following samples taken from the contributions of these pupils to the Daily News lesson illustrate the point that the sentences they wrote were both complex and interesting.

- . I went to my aunt's house and I played with my cousin.
- . Yesterday I went to my cousin's house for the week-end.
- . My cousin's baby is sick. We took her to the doctor. The doctor gave her an injection.
- . We had prayer for my late granny. It was the day after my brother's birthday.
- . Yesterday my aunt came to visit us. My aunt made coffee for herself. She took the afternoon off.
- . Today is my baby cousin's birthday. She is one year old. My cousin is having a party for her.

In order to get a fair comparison of the quantity and quality of the Daily News written by the Experimental and Control groups the best efforts of both groups on a particular date (24 November 1978) are set out in Table XL (see page 190). The later date was deliberately chosen so as to give both methods maximum time to reveal their strengths.

Table XL : A Comparison in Quality and Quantity in Writing the Daily News

Control Class	Experimental Class
1. Dad went to work early this morning.	1. Yesterday I saw a rainbow in the sky. It has many colours.
2. I like to play with my friends. They are pretty.	2. My sister has new felt pens. She has nine colours.
3. Today I am going to help my mother.	3. My mum and my aunt went to see my uncle. He is sick in bed.
4. Yesterday my aunt bought a telephone and she phoned my granny.	4. On Wednesday there was a very strong wind. It did a lot of damage.
5. The lamb has gone to the SPCA. It was in the papers.	5. Yesterday my aunt made four tarts and she sent some for us.
6. I like my mam. I like to give my mam good work.	6. Last night we went to see my uncle in hospital. He was having an operation.
7. Today I am going to the beach.	7. On the sixth of December we are closing school for the December holiday.
8. Last night my mum bought chips for me. Then I went to my aunt's house. I slept by my aunt's house.	8. Yesterday a Pastor and his wife visited us. We had a prayer meeting.
9. My mum bought a watch for me. It is pretty.	9. Yesterday we saw hailstones. There was also thunder and lightning.
10. I looked out of the window I saw a rainbow. It was green and yellow.	10. Yesterday I went with my neighbour to the library and brought a book to read.

### 7.2.8 Recording of the Personal Words required by the pupils in the writing of the Daily News

Since the four teachers involved in the study attended to the recording of the personal words in different ways a brief description of the procedure used by each teacher is given below.

#### (a) Experimental Class - Teacher 1

The teacher wrote all the new words or personal words which arose during the discussion period on a flip chart. The teacher then instructed the pupils to enter the words from the flip chart into their word books. This was a daily exercise.

Some of the possible problems associated with this approach were:

- (i) slow pupils did not succeed in recording all the words
- (ii) some words were not recognised by some pupils
- (iii) some words might not have been of any use to some pupils.

#### (b) Experimental Class - Teacher 2

This teacher wrote the personal words on the side of the chalkboard. At the conclusion of lessons for for the day the teacher recorded the words alphabetically in the class dictionary. This class dictionary, in the form of a flip chart, is hung on a wall within easy reach of all pupils. The teacher ensured that the pupils noted the words in their word books by setting occupational work involving the use of the class dictionary. For instance the teacher gave the following instructions to a particular group:

"Pick out all words you know which begin with letters m or o and write these words in your word-books."

The approach used by this teacher has these good features:

- (i) pupils noted only the words they recognised;
- (ii) the picking process ensured that the pupil was actively involved in the exercise and not just copying words mechanically
- (iii) the permanent record enabled slow pupils to complete their work after conclusion of the day's work, if necessary.

It is notable that the pupils in this class wrote more for Daily News, but made fewer demands on the teacher for words. This can be attributed to the commendable manner in which the teacher handled the recording of the personal words. In fairness it must be pointed out that this teacher had the advantage of greater experience in using BL as compared to Teacher 1.

(c) Control Class - Teacher 3

This teacher wrote the words that the pupils needed on the chalk-board. The pupils used the words they needed in writing their Daily News. The teacher did not compile a class dictionary and also did not require the pupils to prepare their own dictionaries. In the light of the approach used by this teacher it is easy to appreciate why the pupils in this class made frequent demands for words to use in writing their Daily News.

(d) Control Class - Teacher 4

This teacher helped pupils individually to compile their dictionaries. Whenever a pupil needed a word the teacher wrote the required word in the pupil's dictionary. Furthermore this teacher prepared cards and books with words, arranged in alphabetical order, which were likely to be requested by the pupils. The one striking disadvantage of this teacher's method was that it might consume too much time or overtax the teacher.

### 7.3 CONCLUSION

Overall, the assessment of the writing of the pupils showed that Experimental class pupils wrote more and to better effect than Control class pupils. This difference was observed for both aspects of creative writing, that is in writing on given topics and writing on Daily News. The qualitative and quantitative differences in the creative writing of the Experimental and Control classes suggest that the use of BL materials helps pupils to learn language more readily and with better understanding.



## CHAPTER 8

TESTING8.1 THE ASCERTAINMENT OF THE PUPILS' PRE-SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Ideally this test ought to have been done on the day the pupils enrolled for Class i. However, this was not possible because the organisation of the school takes time which varies from school to school. In the case of the schools used in this study about two weeks were taken for organisation. Thus the test was conducted in the third week after commencement of the academic year. At this stage pupils would have gained minimally from formal instruction at school. The purpose of the test was to assess the pupil's knowledge of reading and writing.

Oral instructions were used and pupils were asked to give oral replies except for the test on their writing ability. The pupils were tested individually in another room where a desk and two chairs were provided. I tested 10 pupils from the Experimental and then 10 from the Control classes. The testing was done in this way until all the pupils had been tested. This ensured that pupils were subjected to identical conditions with regard to day, weather and the investigator's disposition. About 5-10 minutes were spent on each pupil. Although I tested every pupil I assessed only the work of those pupils involved in the study. (Details regarding selection of pupils have been included in Section 3.3).

8.1.1 Pre-School Attendance

Information regarding pre-school attendance, given in Table XLI, was obtained from pupils. This was corroborated later by parents.

Table XLI : Pre-school Attendance

School	CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C
Roll of pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of pupils who had been to a nursery school	25	21	9	10
% of pupils who had been to a nursery school	74	75	38	36

The substantially higher percentages for pupils from the CJP school is another pointer to the difference in supportiveness of the families in the two zones.

### 8.1.2 Recognition of Words and Letters

I made cards, each having one of the following words and letters. The words and letters were chosen at random with due regard to frequency of use in general conversation and pre-school reading material.

cat	h	mum	b
my	s	dog	play

I showed each card to the pupil and asked the question, "Is this a word or a letter?" Only pupils who recognised all the words as words, and letters as letters, were given a score of 1. This obviated chance and minimised the effect of guessing. The result in Table XLII shows that a majority of pupils did not know the difference between a letter and a word. There was also no marked difference between the Experimental and Control classes.

Table XLII : Recognition of Words

School	CJP		SRS	
	E	C	E	C
Class				
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of pupils able to distinguish between words and letters	5	4	3	4
% of pupils able to distinguish between words and letters	15	14	11	14

### 8.1.3 Directionality in Reading

I showed a card with a single sentence on to each pupil.

I go to school.
-----------------

I gave the following instruction:

"Show me with your finger where we start to read."

"Now show me with your finger which way we go in reading this writing."

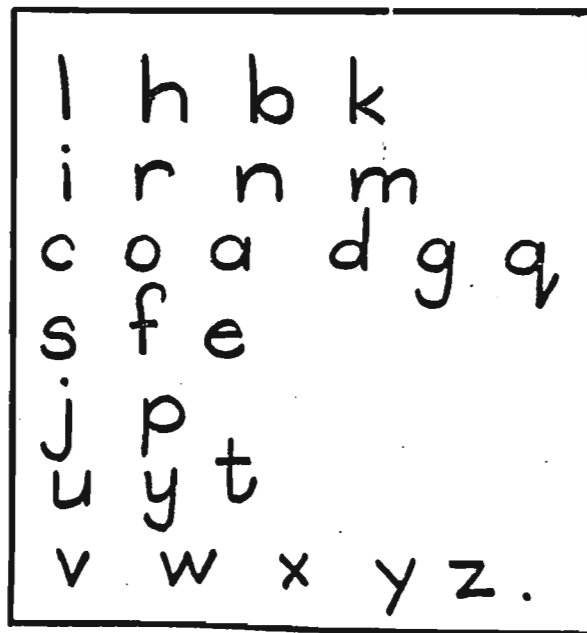
The responses given (see Table XLIII) indicate that there was no significant difference between the two groups on this test either.

Table XLIII : Directionality in Reading

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
No. of pupils who stated the correct direction	24	19	17	21
% of pupils who stated the correct direction.	71	68	71	75

#### 8.1.4 Knowledge of the Alphabet

I asked pupils to read letters in the following sequence:



This jumbled arrangement, listed according to the basic stroke formation, was chosen in order to reduce the effect of possible rote learning or of knowing the alphabet song.

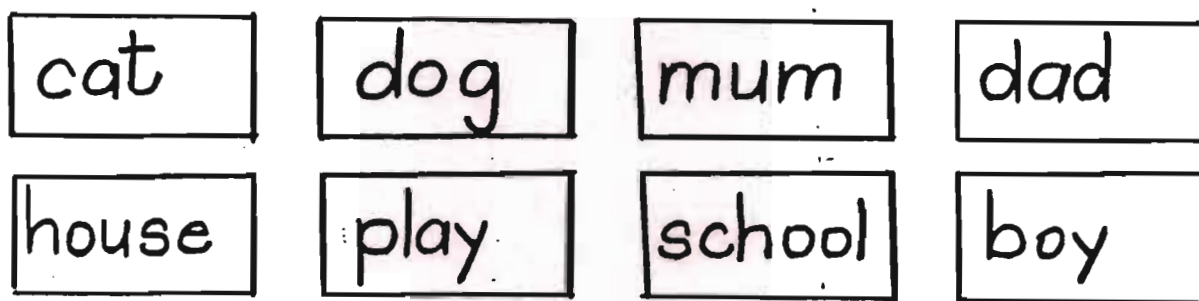
Table XLIV : Knowledge of the Alphabet

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of pupils	34	28	24	28
Average number of correct responses	3	4	5	4
No. of pupils unable to recognise a single letter	15	17	10	11

Table XLIV shows that quite a large number of pupils in both groups failed to recognise a single letter of the alphabet.

#### 8.1.5 Size of Vocabulary

I showed pupils cards with the following commonplace words written on them.



The result in Table XLV shows that the total number of correct responses was in keeping with the expectation that it would be very low. Nevertheless both CJP classes outstrip SRS classes, again pointing up the value of a supportive home background.

Table XLV : Size of Vocabulary

School	CJP		SRS	
Class	E	C	E	C
Roll of Pupils	34	28	24	28
Total No. of correct responses	16	17	9	11

8.1:6 Ability to write words

In this test pupils were asked to write whatever they liked. I gave the following instruction, "Write whatever you can write." No time limit was imposed and none was necessary. Most pupils were unable to write anything. Only 10 pupils, 6 from the Experimental classes and 4 from the Control classes, were able to write their names. One pupil was able to write "I love mum" and "I love dad" in addition to writing his name.

The majority of those who were able to write at all either used upper case letters, or mixed upper and lower case letters. When I asked them how they had learned to write, they invariably responded that they had learned from members of the family.

Examples of pupils' handwriting

Anusha COLLEEN

LUCRETIA Simmi

ASLAM

Kamihi

LYNN

Overall, the tests of pre-school experience confirmed the expectation that pupils would have negligible knowledge of reading and writing. Furthermore there were no significant differences, on the aspects tested, between pupils in the Experimental and Control classes, though pupils at CJP were slightly superior in all facets of language development.

## 8.2 THE TESTS ON READING ABILITY

### 8.2.1 The First Test

All the pupils from all four classes were tested on the Schonell Word Reading Test in June 1978. In order to ensure that the conditions under which the pupils in the different classes were tested were as equal as possible the following procedure was used. Ten pupils from each class, on rotation, were tested until all the pupils had been tested. The pupils were tested individually in another room where no one else was present. The duration of each test was 5 to 7 minutes.

### 8.2.2 The Second and Third Test

To counter any suggestion that the time of testing (June), or the type of test (Schonell) favoured either the Experimental or Control classes, all the pupils were re-tested in November 1978 on the Rearranged Burt Word Test.

The third and final test was administered in November 1979. This time it was only possible to test the classes in the CJP leg. (The SRS school had been demolished in January 1979 and the pupils had been transferred to a number of schools in and outside the area.) The Rearranged Burt Word Test was used again. The results of these tests are given in Table XLVI (see page 199).

The test of the pre-school background (section 8.1) showed that there were no significant differences between the Experimental and Control classes with regard to reading ability. The results set out in Table XLVI show that the pupils in the Experimental classes had a Mean Reading Age (RA) which was consistently higher than that for pupils in the Control classes. The point of importance here is that the pupils in the Experimental classes not only built up a lead over the pupils of the Control class, but were able to maintain this lead. It should be noted that in the year after the study (1979) pupils who were in the Experimental class at CJP, where the post-test was conducted, were no longer learning to read through *Breakthrough to Literacy*. Notwithstanding, they still had a higher Mean Reading Age than the Control class pupils. This may



Table XLVI : Results of Schonnel and Burt Tests

Test No. and Date	School and Class	Number of Pupils	Mean C.A.	Mean R.A.	Difference in Mean R.A.s	t (calculated)	t (table) (99,5% level)
1 (June 1978)	CJP (E)	34	6 y 6 m	5 y 6 m	3 months	3,99	2,66
	CJP (C)	28	6 y 5 m	5 y 3 m			
	SRS (E)	24	6 y 5 m	5 y 3 m	2 months	3,91	2,68
	SRS (C)	28	6 y 5 m	5 y 1 m			
2 (November 1978)	CJP (E)	34	6 y 11 m	6 y 9 m	5 months	2,82	2,66
	CJP (C)	28	6 y 10 m	6 y 4 m			
	SRS (E)	24	6 y 10 m	6 y 5 m	6 months	2,99	2,68
	SRS (C)	28	6 y 10 m	5 y 11 m			
3. (November 1979)	CJP (E)	29	7 y 11 m	7 y 10 m	3 months	1,39	2,68
	CJP (C)	21	7 y 10 m	7 y 7 m			

t was calculated from 
$$\frac{|\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2|}{s} \sqrt{\frac{n_1 n_2}{n_1 + n_2}}$$

(Day, Underwood 1967, p. 55)

Values of  $t_{\text{table}}$  were taken from "Handbook of Statistical Tables" (Owen, 1962, p. 29).

be attributed to the momentum which the Experimental class pupils had from using BL in 1978. However, the fact that the difference in the Mean Reading Age of the Experimental and Control classes is no longer significant at the 99,5% level, shows that the Experimental class had lost some of its edge over the Control class. This confirms the findings of Pienaar (1978). It should be noted that the Experimental class had a change of teacher and method while the Control class had only a change of teacher. However, it is not possible to assess the influence of these changes on the results obtained.

Further consideration of the information in Table XLVI shows that the Mean Reading Ages of the pupils in the Experimental and Control classes taken together is higher for CJP than for SRS pupils. This difference in the performance of the pupils of the two schools on identical tests was also revealed in all aspects of the Creative Writing described in sections 7.1 and 7.2. On the assumption that all other variables may be discounted, the difference between the two schools appears to reflect the differences in facilities offered by the schools and the socio-economic status of pupils' families. The lack of facilities at SRS and the lower standard of living of families in the SRS catchment area were described in sections 3.1.3 and 5.4.

With regard to the classes at CJP, the superiority of the Experimental class over the Control class is noteworthy in view of:

- (a) The ratio of girls to boys being higher for the Control class than for the Experimental class (see Table X).
- (b) Girls having been shown to have better reading ability than boys (see section 5.1.1).

The pupils in the Experimental classes were superior to those in the Control classes, not only in the quantitative sense explained above, but also in qualitative aspects as shown in the standard of their creative writing (Section 7.1 and 7.2).

## CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Before proceeding to give a summary of the crucial aspects of this study and the recommendations arising therefrom, I feel it would be useful to bring together the salient features of LEAP as exemplified by *Breakthrough to Literacy*.

Although it is modern in terms of its comparatively recent arrival on the educational scene, *Breakthrough to Literacy* is not entirely revolutionary in concept. In the main, *Breakthrough to Literacy* uses well-known and well-tested bases. For instance, the dictum of proceeding from the known to the unknown is thoroughly exploited in making the method pupil-centred. When pupils make contributions to lessons such as Daily News they use words they know in spoken form only. In writing the Daily News on the flipchart the teacher helps the pupils to learn the hitherto unknown written form. Once the pupils can recognise a number of words from their written form the teacher shows pupils that a sentence can be expanded with the addition of new words, the meaning of which can be derived from the context in which they are used. Thus the pupil is learning new words using the known words as a firm base from which to operate.

Another well-known educational ploy is the gradual progress from concrete operations to abstract thinking. The *Breakthrough to Literacy* materials are especially well suited for the application of this technique. Some illustrations will serve to substantiate:

- (a) In constructing sentences with the aid of the Sentence Maker a pupil has to position the insert cards in the Sentence Stand. By varying the position of the cards, the pupils can change the meaning of the sentence, e.g.

"I am good."

"Am I good?"

"Good, am I?";

or do the same by adding new insert cards, e.g.

"I have a dog" and

"I have a black dog."

Again the pupils proceed from the mechanical shifting of word-cards to the firm grasp of the idea that a sentence can be recast or expanded quite easily.

- (b) The pupil constructs words on a Word Maker using letter cards. By changing the position of the letters a pupil can make new words, e.g. from "dam" he can make "mad". Initially these anagrams are obtained by purely concrete operations. After going through the stage of writing the words, the pupils grasp the idea that the same set of letters differently organised can make different words.
- (c) Initially pupils learn that words change meaning, with the acquisition of bound morphemes, simply by the addition of cards on which morphemes are written, e.g. "play" becomes "plays", "played" and "playing".

These concrete operations help the pupil to get the idea which he needs to use in changing word forms when doing oral or written work.

In addition to the facets discussed above *Breakthrough to Literacy* does have aspects which make it a "new" approach. To teachers steeped in the traditional methods used in teaching beginning reading, the most revolutionary feature of *Breakthrough to Literacy* is the absence of prescribed readers in the initial stages. Pupils are expected to compile their own reading material with the guidance and assistance of the teacher. Thus reading and writing have to be done almost simultaneously. In fact the approach owes much of its success to the way in which reading and writing complement each other. "Breakthrough" pupils are keenly aware that the stories that they write are not only for their own consumption but will be read by the teacher and, most importantly, by other pupils. It appears that in this, and in other school activities, the need to impress peers is indeed very high. Thus the motivation to write well is maintained at a heightened level. "Beginners launched on Breakthrough want to write in order to be read and want to read in order to write expressively" *Fiat Lux*, Vol. 9(2), (Pienaar, 1974 (2), p. 17). This mutual reinforcement

of reading and writing is capable of generating a reciprocal relationship between the pupils and teacher. The teacher helps the pupil to read and write. In turn the feedback from the pupil helps the teacher not only to identify the pitfalls which beset pupils, but also any weaknesses in her instructional techniques. Thus the feedback serves to reinforce the effectiveness of the teaching. Detractors of the method may claim that such corrective feedback is generated by other methods as well, but those who teach through Breakthrough after using other methods usually concede that the feedback from Breakthrough pupils is truly phenomenal.

Active involvement of pupil and teacher is neither a novel nor a unique feature of *Breakthrough to Literacy* but the extent to which the Breakthrough materials in general, and the Sentence Maker in particular, demand the involvement of teacher and pupil is remarkable. Perhaps the most positive aspect of *Breakthrough to Literacy* is that both pupils and teacher tend to accept their active roles with great enthusiasm. This compulsive attitude towards the learning task was observed to be present right across the entire range of pupils from the most to the least able, as shown by some of the comments of teachers whose opinions were sought in this study;

"Pupils participate freely in discussion."

"Every child is actively involved."

"Even the weakest pupils do not feel left out as they too can construct sentences."

"Progress made by the bright but educationally and socially deprived pupil was outstanding."

"It is stimulating for both the teacher and the pupil."

"The results produced make the teacher and the pupils enthusiastic."

"At the end it is worth all the work."

The last comment explains why a method as demanding as *Breakthrough to Literacy* can still generate enthusiasm in a teacher. The enthusiasm of the pupils to write sentences can and is seized upon by the teacher to do incidental teaching. Much of the grammar required by the pupils is taught in this way. On the debit side it may be argued that



some pupils get left out of such incidental teaching and therefore learn less than they would or could with a more direct teaching method. Clearly it is up to the teacher to ensure that what has to be taught is taught.

Another possible drawback with *Breakthrough to Literacy* is that the use of "pupil-written" Story Books promotes in-breeding of ideas. The alternative at the present time is to use the prescribed readers such as the *Let's Learn to Read* and *Gay Way Series* which have been written for children from a vastly different socio-cultural background. These books contain material which for the most part is outside the experience of our pupils. "The readers should have characters with Indian names and the stories should have relevance to the environment of the pupils" is a telling comment made by one of the teachers who responded to the teacher's questionnaire. Furthermore the language used in these books is strange to our pupils.

*"...as far as language is concerned it must be remembered that though the vast majority of these children think and speak English at home, the English they speak is a distinctly restricted code, characterised by short staccato sentences, idiosyncratic usage and an unmistakable accent. It is essentially a patois.... It is therefore very different from the English the pupils come across in their readers."*  
(Pienaar, 1978/1979, p. 41).

I must hasten to add that Pienaar's observations refer specifically to a poor working-class area, but they do serve to highlight the point regarding the relevance of reading material used by the pupils.

In *Breakthrough to Literacy* the relevance of the pupils' reading material is accorded great prominence because it is used as a means of capturing pupils' interest and motivating them to read. This very important in the initial stages of teaching reading. However, pupils cannot and should not be restricted to reading material within the realms of their own experience for too long. In the light of this it is commendable that



a mixed method, with *Breakthrough to Literacy* as the dominant component, be used in our schools. This study has shown that this mixed method, namely BL, has been well-received by those who have used it, as shown by a summary of the advantages and disadvantages given by teachers who completed the questionnaire referred to in Chapter 4 (see particularly Table XLVII).

Table XLVII : Summary of Advantages and Disadvantages of BL and LLR

ASPECT	Number of Advantages		Number of Disadvantages	
	BL	LLR	BL	LLR
Reading Materials	45	42	5	23
Language and Concepts	57	0	0	12
Pupils' Background	52	7	44	16
Pupils' Vocabulary	78	16	10	29
Demands on Teachers	5	7	31	6
Sentence Construction	103	5	6	33
Creative Writing	47	0	2	17
Apparatus	16	9	27	6
Reading Proficiency	64	14	7	16
Handwriting	6	4	1	0
Rules for writing	4	2	3	2
Pupils' development	19	14	25	5
	496	120	161	165

The summary shows that overall the advantages of BL listed by the teachers heavily outweigh the disadvantages. Furthermore the teachers named more disadvantages than advantages for LLR. In the opinion of these teachers BL is particularly strong in helping pupils to become good at vocabulary expansion, sentence construction, language usage and reading.

The overall conclusion that BL offers many more benefits for a pupil than LLR, is amply supported by other results of this evaluation:

- (a) Observations of the pupils and the teachers in the classroom showed that pupils using BL were enjoying their "close involvement" with reading and writing. Further, the teachers were enthusiastic and their enthusiasm was maintained at a high level by the remarkable progress of their pupils.
- (b) A qualitative and quantitative assessment of the pupils' Creative Writing showed that BL pupils not only wrote more but also used a greater variety of words and sentences than LLR pupils under comparable conditions.
- (c) An assessment of the reading abilities of BL and LLR pupils using Burt and Schonell Word Reading tests revealed that BL pupils were consistently better than the LLR pupils with whom they were compared.

The overall results obtained in this evaluation vindicate the decision of the Education Department whereby "the use of '*Breakthrough to Literacy*' ... will gradually replace the reading series '*Lets Learn to Read*' in our schools." (Circular 1/1979 p. 7). In view of this decision no effort should be spared to make the use of BL as effective as possible.

Since teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of the chosen method, their views and suggestions regarding the use of BL should be given due consideration. For this reason I reproduce here the suggestions made by the respondents to the teachers' questionnaire. My own comments on some of the suggestions appear in parentheses.

*"A teacher's Sentence Maker should be provided for each group so as to make the teacher's work lighter and save time for the teacher."*

(The implementation of this suggestion would cost very little each year if the desired number was accumulated over a few years.)

*"More time must be allocated for Main Language."*

(Pupils using BL invariably find that they can write more sentences if time permitted. However, the solution to the problem does not lie in allowing more time for the Main Language period, as this would result in less time being allotted to other subjects which might also benefit from more time being made available to them. Furthermore the very weak pupils might find the Main Language period too long or too demanding in terms of work output and thus develop a negative attitude to language work.)

*"The number of pupils in a class should be about 30 so that pupils get enough individual attention and teachers can do everything required by the approach without being overtaxed."*

*"Breakthrough is not advisable in a school where the platoon system is used."*

(In a shared classroom the risk of damage and loss to apparatus is high. These problems could be minimised if it were possible to organise the school in such a way that the classrooms used by the Junior Primary classes were not shared. This should not be difficult to do as the number of pupils for the second session is generally less than that for the first session.)

*"For thorough preparation and for working with a sound mind and body teachers in the Junior Primary classes should teach for only 20 hours a week."*

(In accordance with the stipulation of the Education Department teachers should teach an average of twenty-two hours per week. Junior Primary work involves 20 hours of teaching a week. This means that Junior Primary teachers are often required to teach an average of two hours a week in Senior Primary or other Junior Primary classes. This often entails additional preparation

of work of a very different kind. As the individual attention required by BL pupils makes heavy demands on their energies, these teachers can have but little enthusiasm for further teaching duties. In any case they need a lot of time to prepare apparatus and aids required for teaching through BL. In view of this, a reduced work load, with 20 hours being the maximum, would have a beneficial effect on both the attitude and efficiency of BL teachers.)

*"Teachers in the Junior Primary classes should be given less extra-curricular duties so that they can have more time for preparation."*

*"The same set of flash words should be used for all ability groups in a class."*

(The flash words referred to above are the 119 core words of BL. I do not support the suggestion because its implementation would reduce the flexibility and efficacy of *Breakthrough to Literacy*. However, I do realize that the use of a single set of flash words for all ability groups would help tremendously to cut down the demands made on the teacher on account of the following:

- (a) The teacher need prepare only one set of flash cards and reading charts for all ability groups.
- (b) The teacher need not test pupils when they are promoted or demoted from one ability group to another.
- (c) The recording of the progress of the pupils, in learning the core words, would be facilitated and the volume of recording required would be reduced.
- (d) Pupils in higher ability groups could be used as teacher-aides for lower ability groups.)

*"A teacher should be allowed to teach the same set of pupils from Class I through to Std. I."*

(This suggestion is worth considering in the light of the following:

- (a) At the beginning of Class ii and Std. I the teacher does not have to use up valuable teaching time learning to identify pupils or ascertaining the potential of individuals.
- (b) There is no need for the teacher to explain the routines to be followed since the pupils already know what the teacher expects when a particular instruction is given.
- (c) The teacher can keep a watchful eye on slackers and slovenly pupils right from the beginning of the year.
- (d) Since the teacher knows the learning problems of the pupils, remedial work can begin early in the year.
- (e) The pupils can get to grips with the new work without having to adapt to the demands of a new teacher with a different working style.
- (f) Teachers should be well motivated to ensure that pupils get a firm grasp of the year's work. Teachers would also be discouraged from glossing over or conveniently neglecting some aspects of the work in Class i and Class ii because there will not be a someone else who will face the extra teaching burden the following year.

With regard to the disadvantages of adopting the above suggestion, the most dangerous aspect is the possibility that pupils may be saddled with the same mediocre or poor teacher for three successive years.)

In addition to those recorded above other suggestions arose out of the disadvantages of BL noted in Chapter 4. I have incorporated these into the following recommendations for enhancing the efficacy of BL in our schools.

# 1. The Number of Pupils per Class Unit

The number of pupils should be reduced. At present the number of pupils in a Junior Primary class ranges from 30 to 45 with the average being between 35 and 40. Although it would be desirable to have class units of 24 pupils, a maximum of thirty per class would be a satisfactory interim measure in view of the costs involved. The urgent need to reduce class size is justified on the following grounds:

- (a) The first year of a pupil's formal education is extremely important in terms of laying a good foundation for the pupil's future education. Damage done at this stage may be irreparable. The larger the class the greater the danger of a pupil being neglected by the teacher. The teacher will have no time for pupils with special problems.
- (b) It is not possible to meet adequately the need for personal supervision of pupils' work, or to give individual attention to a pupil by using bright pupils to teach less bright ones. This is so especially in the first half of the year. Anyway no "teacher aide" from among the pupils is a satisfactory substitute for a dedicated teacher.
- (c) BL makes great demands on a teacher's time, organisational skills, physical energy and ingenuity. No teacher, no matter how good he or she is, can do justice to all the pupils in a large class.
- (d) The success of BL owes much to the enthusiasm generated in the pupils. The teacher is most definitely the stoker for the fire of enthusiasm in the pupils. If the classes are large, pupils have to queue to get personal words, to get sentences checked by the teacher, or to get the teacher to write sentences in their books for them. Long time-lapses between the start of the pupil's urge and its gratification tend to cause pupils to lose interest and "opt out" of the system.



## 2. The Size and Design of the Classroom

The design of the majority of the classrooms used by Junior Primary pupils had been based on the "chalk and talk" method. Even some of the newer schools -- those built in the last 10 to 15 years -- do not have adequate facilities to satisfy the needs of BL teachers and pupils. The large amount of apparatus to be displayed, stored and used, puts a heavy premium on space. An increase in the size of the classroom, together with the provision of facilities for displaying and storing the apparatus, would help to extract the most from BL.

## 3. The Number of Teaching Kits

In the present dispensation each teacher is given one Breakthrough kit consisting generally of a Teacher's Sentence Maker, Pupils' Sentence Makers, Sentence Stands, insert cards, Breakthrough Books, and Word Makers. As discussed in Section 6.5.1 the teacher is obliged to use some method for marking the core words for each ability group. Furthermore the Sentence Makers get cluttered. If each teacher were given 4 teachers' kits these problems would be eliminated and the obvious benefits of fewer pupils working from the one Teacher's Sentence Maker would accrue.

## 4. The Education of Parents

Parents should actively help the education of their children. However, they can help positively only if they themselves are *au fait* with the curriculum and the methods used in the schools. Hence the need for an education programme for adults. This investigation has revealed, through the interview with the parents, that there is much ignorance among them. Some of them knew pitifully little about curriculum content, the teaching methods used, the importance of the use of facilities such as the library and the role of educational hobbies in enriching pupils' learning.

Parent-teacher organisations should play a useful role in adult education programmes. Teachers should use them as a means of informing parents about

their work and attendant difficulties. In turn, parents could work through the parent-teacher organisation to ascertain what they are expected to do for their children. In the absence of information teachers blame parents, and *vice-versa*, for the poor performance of pupils.

None of the present generation of parents had had any knowledge or experience of BL in their school days. In their eagerness to help their children some parents might actually hinder a pupil's progress by using grossly different methods.

Though highly desirable, it would not be feasible to get parents to be fully conversant with the details of the teaching method and materials. Therefore the least that should be done is to get parents to appreciate the the current method teaching beginning reading and language is very different from the ones previously used.

Notwithstanding all that has been said above, parents can help in one very important respect, namely, by raising the level of their own education through a concerted reading programme. Also they should consciously try to improve the standard of their spoken English. Children are faithful imitators and some of this is bound to rub off on children and inculcate in them a positive attitude towards reading and speaking.

Adult classes, organised and controlled by parent-teacher organisations, would help greatly. Such classes should receive financial and other support from the education authorities. Trained and highly motivated teachers should be used. Their services should be well remunerated.

##### 5. The Greater Use of the Word Maker

If used properly the Word Maker can help pupils to get a solid grasp of phonics. Training pupils to extract the most from the Word Maker is extremely time-consuming. For this reason teachers with large classes are unable to put enough emphasis on word-building. This is a further reason in favour of a reduced class size. Even in the present circumstances teachers should seek ways and means of getting pupils to use the Work-Maker more frequently.

## 6. The Compilation of Books

*"Children should have access to as many good children's books as possible to encourage them to develop an interest in and an attachment to books and to give them the desire to read for themselves."*

(Mackay, Schaub, Thompson, 1970, p. 39).

The writing of "books" in addition to the Story Book, referred to in section 2.3.4.1.11, is not only a revolutionary aspect of *Breakthrough to Literacy*, but is also a driving force behind the approach. The writing of books of interest to pupils can be done by the teacher using contribution from the whole class, by a group of pupils, or an individual pupil supervised by the teacher. The topic must be those that interest pupils, or those that "catch" their imagination.

Clearly the teacher has to assume a vital role in the compilation of these children's books, which should be aesthetically attractive as well.

Teachers need time to attend to this aspect of the work, which is so crucial to the success of BL. This is yet a further reason for a reduction in the number of pupils in a class unit.

## 7. Use of Apparatus at Home

Schools are obliged to abide by general policy that pupils are not allowed to take the aids home. The possibility of damage or loss of the aids is therefore the possible basis for these remarks. Since it would be very beneficial for the pupils to have the aids at home I suggest that the BL aids should be made available on hire to the parents of the pupils. The hiring terms and the collection of the aids could be channelled through parent-teacher bodies which have been instituted at every school.

## 8. Every teacher in the Junior Primary Section should be obliged to teach through *Breakthrough to Literacy* for at least one year.

Personal experience in using BL would be invaluable in helping a teacher appreciate the tremendous benefits accorded by BL with regard to reading and free writing standards of pupils taught by this method. Teachers thus convinced of the merits of BL are more likely to ensure that pupils in Class 1 and Std. 1 maintain and progress further on the headstart which they gained in Class 11 than teachers who have had no first-hand experience of BL.

If *Breakthrough to Literacy* is to endure and generate lasting advantages for our pupils, some, if not all, of the recommendations outlined above should be effected. It is my considered opinion that as *Breakthrough to Literacy* takes root and grows so will the love of reading. This can only have a salutary effect on the rest of the pupil's education. As Bacon said, "reading makes a full man."

APPENDIX 1FLASHWORDS FROM THE LET'S LEARN TO READ AND GAY WAY SERIES

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
<i>The House</i>	<i>The House</i>	<i>The House</i>	<i>The House</i> <i>The Cat</i> <i>Roy's Toys</i>	<i>Roy's Toys</i>
Roy house door live the am is this in I	open too who cat and sitting room kitchen Carol mother	has toys sleeps playroom father upstairs bedroom my have come	our her you see here no he seen a look	box little of his bricks makes paints plays tools with

Set 6	Set 7	Set 8	Set 9	Set 10
<i>Roy's Toys</i>	<i>Roy's Toys</i> <i>Carol's Toys</i>	<i>Carol's Toys</i>	<i>Carol's Toys</i>	<i>Roy's Toys</i>
table then chairs away puts red am bus street stop	she helps him big bed got for doll lovely what	blue going gets baby cake to made tea-set out party	five saucers plates water but ten teapot all cups some	times after they paper will it wash at wall out

## APPENDIX 1 CONTINUED.....

Set 11	Set 12	Set 13	Set 14	Set 15
<i>Gay Way Red Book</i> <i>Roy's Toys</i> <i>Carol's Toys</i>	<i>Carol's Toys</i>	<i>Gay Way Green Book</i> <i>Second Green Book</i> <i>The Three Pigs</i> <i>Saturday Book</i>	<i>Saturday Book</i>	<i>Saturday Book</i>
lorry went bang ting down no are so jumped shoe	garden sticks left old by go scissors meow boy girl	way ring straw window gate chimney fire take Saturday basket	morning list money good shop read please sugar gives butter	say eggs where Mrs green we home children thank off

Set 16	Set 17	Set 18	Set 19	Set 20
<i>Saturday Book</i>	<i>Saturday Book</i>	<i>Saturday Book</i> <i>At the Barbers</i>	<i>At the Barbers</i> <i>Gay Way Blue Book</i>	<i>Gay Way Blue Book</i>
shall yes may chocolates Jane closed friend dinner Tom now	just new town cars brown horse flowers cart again lights	ice-cream yellow cafe story like about night towel your milk	ship barber hair more robin take gave coat your away	then feathers took train said look tree road oak crocodile

21	Set 22	Set 23	Set 24	Set 25	Set 26
Way e Book ond Blue k pkin's (l)	Second Blue Book (Pipkin's Ball)	Second Blue Book (Pipkin's Ball)	Second Blue Book Sunday Book	Sunday Book	Sunday Book
ght skers  rella n gan thday ool ing y	breakfast teacher corner flew fly mouth cupboard bird growing hungry	beak listen learn heads wall ball middle size nose paws	round walk across other bicycle water pipe wash Sunday quiet	sails or boat fire fishes park there bread swimming ducks	tickets that ready daisies pretty which past grass how conductor



THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHERS  
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Teacher: .....  
(Optional)  
Name of School : .....
2. Qualification of Teacher:
  - (a) Academic, i.e., Std. VIII; Degree: .....
  - (b) Professional, i.e., Natal Teachers' Diploma: .....
  - (c) Have you improved your qualification since you acquired a Teacher's Certificate? YES/NO .....
  - (d) If yes, state improvement: .....
3. Teaching Experience:  
How many years of teaching experience have you had
  - (a) altogether .....
  - (b) in the Junior Primary classes .....
  - (c) teaching Breakthrough to Literacy (the Language Experience Approach) .....
  - (d) Teaching the Look-and-Say Method in Class (i) .....
  - (e) In which year did you last use the Look-and-Say Method? .....
4. Breakthrough to Literacy:
  - (a) When it was suggested to you that you should try out this approach were you:
 

enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/>
interested, but doubtful	<input type="checkbox"/>
neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
reluctant	<input type="checkbox"/>
resistant	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicate with an X in the appropriate square.
  - (b) How many pupils are there in your class?
 

Boys	.....
Girls	.....
  - (c) How many pupils in your class are not likely to pass at the end of the year?
 

Boys	.....
Girls	.....

## APPENDIX 2 CONTINUED .....

- (d) Of the children in your class how many are still non-readers?

..... out of .....

Are there any special circumstances that might account for slow stare? .....

Give details, please .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- (e) If you were given the choice of method of teaching beginning reading, which would you choose? .....

Give reasons, please .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- (f) When you compare your experience of *Let's Learn to Read* and *Breakthrough to Literacy* what do you see as the main advantages and disadvantages of both. Try to be as specific as possible.

Let's Learn to Read

Advantages: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Disadvantages: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Additional Remarks: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

APPENDIX 2 CONTINUED .....

Breakthrough to Literacy

Advantages: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Disadvantages: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Additional Remarks: .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

(g) How many children are:

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
(i) Reading the more difficult library books in your class.	.....	.....
(ii) Reading only very simple books, including the Red and Yellow Breakthrough books	.....	.....
(iii) Unable to read	.....	.....

ALL INFORMATION SUPPLIED WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND NO NAMES OF PERSONS OR SCHOOLS WILL BE IDENTIFIED AS SUCH.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

THE PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO PUPILS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL  
AND CONTROL CLASSES

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PARENTS OF THE PUPILS

1. PUPIL:

- (a) Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Sex: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Religion: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) Any Physical Defects: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. FATHER:

- (a) Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Occupation(s) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Number of years of experience in the said occupation(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Standard passed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) Any other qualification: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (f) Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (g) Model of car: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (h) How car was purchased - Cash or H.P. \_\_\_\_\_

3. MOTHER:

- (a) Name of mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Occupation(s) before marriage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Occupation(s) after marriage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Number of years of experience in occupation(s), if any, \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) Standard passed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (f) Any other qualification(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 (g) Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

4. LANGUAGE:

- (a) Home Language: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Any other language spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

5. FAMILY:

- (a) Number of children in the family: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Position of the child in the family, i.e., 4/5: 2/3 \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3 CONTINUED.....

6. HOME CONDITIONS:

- (a) Number of rooms in the house: \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Number of people living in the same house besides the family (excluding servants): \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Does the child have his/her own room: \_\_\_\_\_

7. LUNCH:

- (a) Does the child bring play-lunch to school. YES/NO: \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) If yes, what does it consist of? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICALS:

- (a) Names of newspapers or periodicals bought:
- (i) Daily \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) Weekly \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) Monthly \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Do you ever read to, or with the child? YES/NO \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

9. HOBBIES:

- (a) Has the child any long standing hobbies or pastime? YES/NO \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

10. TRAVELLING:

How far away from Durban has the child travelled?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. RADIO:

- (a) Do you have a radio? \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) How many hours per week does the child listen to the radio? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) What is his/her favourite station? \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) What are his/her favourite programmes? \_\_\_\_\_

12. TELEVISION:

- (a) Do you have a television set? \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Is it in colour or black and white? \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Is it rented or bought on H.P. or bought for cash? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) How many hours per week does the child watch television? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3 CONTINUED .....

(e) What are his/her favourite programmes?

---

---

---

---

(f) Do you limit his/her viewing in anyway, in terms of time,  
and/or pre-select the programmes he/she may watch?

---

---

13. BIOSCOPE:

Does he/she go to the bioscope? \_\_\_\_\_

How often does he/she go? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of films does he/she like? \_\_\_\_\_

---

14. ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

---

---

---

---

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---

---



## APPENDIX 4

WORD COUNT - WORDS USED BY PUPILS IN ALL FOUR CLASSES IN WRITING THEIR  
 "WHAT I DO WHEN I GO HOME" 'ESSAYS'

WORDS	SRS (E)	SRS (C)	CJP (E)	CJP (C)	LEICESTERSHIRE LIST					Last 97 WORDS	NOT ON THE L.LIST
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
					250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	259 WORDS		
afternoon		X	X		X						
after	X	X	X	X	X						
apple				X	X						
Asherville		X									X
at		X	X	X	X						
aunt	X	X	X	X	X						
baby			X	X	X						
back			X		X						
ball	X		X		X						
bath	X		X	X		X					
bazaar		X									
beach	X	X					X				
bed	X	X	X		X						
began			X				X				
bench		X									X
big	X				X						
book	X	X	X		X						
boys		X			X						
bought	X	X	X		X						
bread			X	X		X					
breakfast			X				X				
brigade			X								X
brother	X		X	X	X						
brush	X	X									
build-o-fun	X							X			X
bunk			X								X
bushy			X								X
butter			X					X			X
buy			X	X	X						
by			X	X				X			
cake		X			X						
calls				X	X						
came			X		X						
can	X	X	X		X						
car	X	X	X	X	X						
carpet											
cat	X	X			X						
catching	X	X				X					
cents				X							X
change	X	X	X	X		X					
chalkboard				X							X
Checkers	X										X
cheese											
chicken			X				X				
children	X			X	X						
clean	X	X	X	X		X					
climb		X				X					

## APPENDIX 4 CONTINUED .....

WORDS	SRS (E)	SRS (C)	CJP (E)	CJP (C)	LEICESTERSHIRE LIST					Last 97 WORDS	NOT ON THE L.LIST
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
					250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	259 WORDS		
clothes	X	X	X	X		X					
cook	X		X			X					
come	X		X	X	X						
cousins			X				X				
cowboys		X		X	X					X	
crooks		X									
dad	X		X		X						
daily			X								X
dishes	X	X	X	X						X	
do	X	X	X	X	X						
dog	X	X			X						
doll			X	X	X						
doing				X				X			
down	X			X	X						
draw				X		X					
dress	X	X		X	X						
drink		X		X		X					
dry	X		X	X			X				
Durban		X									X
eat			X	X	X						
father		X		X							
feed			X	X		X					
feel			X		X						
finished		X		X	X						
fire			X		X						
flash	X		X								X
fly			X			X					
floor		X	X	X				X			
flowers	X			X	X						
fold	X										X
food		X	X	X	X						
for	X	X	X	X	X						
friend	X	X	X	X	X						
from	X		X		X						
game	X		X	X	X						
garden	X		X	X	X						
gave				X	X						
get				X	X						
gives				X	X						
go	X	X	X	X	X						
goes	X										X
got	X				X						
granny	X										
grass			X			X					
gun	X	X				X					
hair		X				X					
hang			X								
Hardy		X						X			
have	X	X	X	X	X						x
he	X			X	X						
help	X	X	X	X	X						
hen	X					X					
her	X			X	X						

## APPENDIX 4 CONTINUED .....

WORDS	SRS (E)	SRS (C)	CJP (E)	CJP (C)	LEICESTERSHIRE LIST					Last 97 WORDS	NOT ON THE LIST
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
					250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	259 WORDS		
hide				X		X					
Hindi	X										X
his	X		X	X	X						
hits				X			X				
home	X	X	X	X	X						
homework		X		X							X
hot	X					X					
house	X	X	X	X	X						
ice-cream				X			X				
in	X	X	X	X	X						
is	X				X						
it	X				X						
jet	X						X				
jump			X		X						
keep	X				X						
kiss	X							X			
kitchen		X	X				X				
kite			X				X				
kitten				X		X					
learn	X		X	X			X				
lends				X							X
lets			X		X						
library	X		X				X				
like				X	X						
little			X		X						
look				X	X						
lot	X				X						
love	X				X						
Madressa			X								X
make	X		X	X	X						
market	X						X				
me	X		X	X	X						
milk		X	X	X		X					
mineral		X									X
Mitchell			X								X
money				X	X						
morning		X		X	X						
mosque		X		X							X
mother		X		X	X						
mummy	X		X		X						
my	X	X	X	X	X						
myself				X		X					
new		X	X		X						
Noddy			X								X
night	X	X	X	X	X						
of	X				X						
on	X	X	X	X	X						
only				X	X						
over			X		X						
our		X	X	X	X						
out			X	X	X						

## APPENDIX 4 CONTINUED .....

	SRS (E)	SRS (C)	CJP (E)	CJP (C)	LEICESTERSHIRE LIST					Last 97 WORDS	NOT ON THE LIST
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
					250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	259 WORDS		
outside		X		X	X						
own				X	X						
packet			X				X				
paper			X			X					
park		X	X			X					
parrot			X								X
plant			X				X				
play	X	X	X	X	X						
polish			X						X		
pool		X	X	X				X			
pretty				X		X					
pup			X								X
put			X		X						
read			X		X						
red				X	X						
room			X	X			X				
ride			X			X					
rest	X		X					X			
run	X				X						
Saturday		X									X
saw			X	X	X						
school	X		X	X	X						
see	X	X		X	X						
seek				X	X						X
send	X		X			X					
set		X	X	X	X						
shine			X				X				
shop	X	X	X	X	X						
shirt			X						X		
shoe			X			X					
sister	X	X	X	X	X						
sleep	X	X	X	X	X						
soccer			X								X
some			X	X	X						
small		X					X				
stairs	X			X		X					
story			X		X						
sun				X	X						
sums			X	X		X					
supper			X				X				
sweep	X	X	X	X			X				
swim				X		X					
swimming				X		X					
take		X	X		X						
Tamil		X								X	X
tanker		X									
taxi				X					X		
tea	X		X	X	X						
teeth	X	X						X			
tells			X			X					
television	X	X	X	X	X						
then	X		X	X	X						

## APPENDIX 4 CONTINUED .....

WORDS	SRS (E)	SRS (C)	CJP (E)	CJP (C)	LEICESTERSHIRE LIST					Last 97 WORDS	NOT ON THE LIST
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
					250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	250 WORDS	259 WORDS		
thing			X		X						
time	X				X						
tired			X				X				
ten				X		X					
to	X	X	X	X	X						
town	X				X						
toys	X		X	X	X						
train		X		X	X						
trees		X			X						
trunk		X									X
up	X		X	X	X						
van		X			X						
visitor		X				X					
V.W.		X									X
was	X				X						
wardrobe			X								X
wash	X	X	X	X		X					
watch	X	X	X	X	X						
water			X		X						
went	X	X	X		X						
were			X		X						
when	X	X	X	X	X						
window			X			X					
with	X	X	X	X	X						
words			X						X		
work	X	X		X	X						
write	X	X	X	X		X					

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