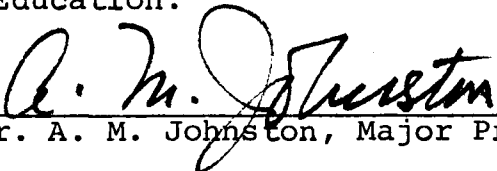
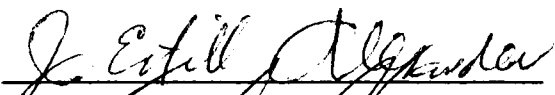
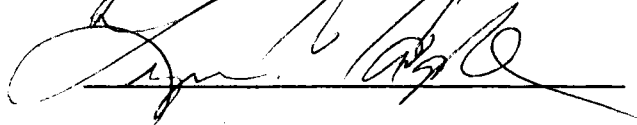


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Martha S. Fowler entitled "The Effectiveness of the Language Experience Approach in First Grade." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Elementary Education.


Dr. A. M. Johnston, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

A

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE
APPROACH IN FIRST GRADE

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Martha S. Fowler
August 1979

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ABSTRACT

This study measured the effectiveness of the language experience approach to beginning reading. Two first grade classes, an experimental group using the language experience approach, and a control group using the traditional basal-phonics approach, were involved in the study. Both classes were pretested using the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve. A 10-week period of beginning reading instruction was then followed by posttesting using the same measurements. Data were analyzed using analysis of covariance. With a 0.5 level of confidence as criteria, it was found that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test. Similarly, there was found to be no significant difference between the groups on Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve with the exception that the girls in the control group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group on total score and the boys in the experimental group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group on one subscore.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

How children learn to read and the methods best designed to facilitate this learning has been the subject of much research in the field of education. The language experience approach is one method which has received considerable attention in recent years. In essence, the language experience approach uses

. . . the language and thinking of the learner as a foundation for reading instruction. Each learner's language and personal experiences are used to create reading materials which help to show the reader the relationship between written language and his already familiar oral language.¹

Reading as communication is the emphasis of the language experience approach, with those skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, closely interwoven.² Children usually enter first grade with a functional speaking vocabulary of at least 2,500 words, more usually 7,500. Yet the basal readers used by these first graders contain a

¹Mary Anne Hall, Teaching Reading as a Language Experience (2nd ed., Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1976), p. 1.

²Dorris M. Lee and R. V. Allen, Learning to Read Through Experience (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 1.

very controlled and limited vocabulary of generally about 400 to 700 words.³ In the language experience approach, there are no such limitations placed on vocabulary. Indeed, the vocabulary used is as individual as the children, coming directly from them. Limiting the reading vocabulary, therefore, would seem to limit children's development in reading. On the other hand, using children's own expanded and relatively unique vocabulary would appear to increase their reading performance.

An additional feature of the language experience approach, generally thought to be important, is the potential for motivating children to higher achievement and enhancement of positive self-regard. Presumably, children are positively motivated in their beginning reading by the emphasis placed on their personal thoughts, words and ideas.

In order to examine the effectiveness of the language experience approach in promoting reading readiness and motivation to achieve, the present study was designed.

I. THE PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study was to measure the effectiveness of the language experience approach in facilitating

³Russell G. Stauffer, The Language-Experience Approach to the Teaching of Reading (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 5.

reading readiness and motivation to achieve with first grade children. Two groups of first graders were studied. The experimental group was taught beginning reading with a language experience approach and a control group was instructed with a basal-phonics approach. Data using measures of reading readiness and motivation to achieve were collected and compared for differences.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Research has shown the language experience approach to be a valid method of teaching reading.⁴ It is, however, a much less widely used method than the basal reader approach, as it has been estimated that 90 percent of primary grade teachers use basal readers for reading instruction.⁵ It would seem important, however, that materials be made available to teachers and teachers-in-training in order to use different approaches for different children.

An attempt was also made to answer the question of whether either the language experience approach or the basal

⁴Russell G. Stauffer and W. Dorsey Hammond, "Effectiveness of a Language Arts and Basic Reader Approach to First Grade Reading Instruction," U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Cooperative Research Project No. 2679, 1965.

⁵Robert Karlin, Teaching Elementary Reading: Principles and Strategies (2nd ed., New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975), p. 35.

reader approach has a contribution to make in the area of the child's perception of self and motivation to achieve. Little research has been done in the area of motivation regarding the two approaches.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach is an integrated language arts program which builds upon the interrelationship between and among reading and the related language arts of writing, speaking, and listening.⁶

Reading Readiness

Reading readiness is the attainment of the levels of interest, experience, maturity and skills which enable the learner to engage successfully in reading tasks. It is often used to indicate the preparedness of a child for beginning reading instruction.⁷ For the purpose of the present study, reading readiness was measured by the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test.⁸

⁶Carter Good, ed., Dictionary of Education (3rd ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 329.

⁷Ibid., p. 472,

⁸J. Murray Lee and Willis W. Clark, Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test (Monterey, California: CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1962).

Motivation to Achieve

Motivation to achieve is a combination of psychological forces which initiate, direct, and sustain behavior toward successful attainment of some goal which provides a sense of worth.⁹ For the purpose of the present study, motivation to achieve was measured by Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve.¹⁰

IV. HYPOTHESES

There will be no significant differences at the .05 level in reading readiness as measured by the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test:

- A. Between the experimental and control groups on total score.
- B. Between the experimental and control groups on the letter symbols subscore.
- C. Between the experimental and control groups on the concepts subscore.
- D. Between the experimental and control groups on the word symbols subscore.
- E. Between the girls in the experimental group and the girls in the control group.

⁹Good, p. 375.

¹⁰Dorothy C. Adkins and Bonnie L. Ballif, Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve (Monterey, California: CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1973).

- F. Between the boys in the experimental group and the boys in the control group.
- G. Between the girls and the boys in the experimental group.
- H. Between the girls and the boys in the control group.

There will be no significant difference at the .05 level in motivation to achieve as measured by Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve:

- I. Between the experimental and control groups on total score.
- J. Between the experimental and control groups on the factor of school enjoyment.
- K. Between the experimental and control groups on the factor of self-confidence.
- L. Between the experimental and control groups on the factor of purposiveness.
- M. Between the experimental and control groups on the factor of instrumental activity.
- N. Between the experimental and control groups on the factor of self-evaluation.
- O. Between the girls in the experimental group and the girls in the control group.
- P. Between the boys in the experimental group and the boys in the control group.

Q. Between the girls and the boys in the experimental Group.

R. Between the girls and the boys in the control group.

V. ASSUMPTION

It is assumed that the effectiveness of the teachers of the experimental and control groups is equivalent.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The present study was limited to a sample composed of 50 first graders in 2 groups from low to middle economic backgrounds.

The present study was limited by using only one measurement of reading readiness, the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test, and one measurement of motivation to achieve, Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve.

Because of the practicality of operating within an existing public school program, the present study was limited to a 10-week period.

VII. PROCEDURES

The first grade groups involved in this study were two of five first grade groups from a Knox County school in a middle to low economic neighborhood. Most children were assigned to a first grade class by systematic sampling

from groups of low, middle, and high ability. A few children were placed by teacher recommendation or parental request. Teachers were randomly assigned to groups.

The experiment was conducted for 10 school weeks during the beginning of the school year with the experimental group being taught by the investigator. The experimental group was involved with the language experience approach as it is used for the teaching of beginning reading. Children made individual and group experience charts, stories and books. They made word banks, labeled items around the room, played word games, and used an extensive classroom library. There were no basal or phonics texts used.

The control group participated in a basal-phonics approach to beginning reading. They used the workbooks published by the program with lessons in phonics and the vocabulary of the basal textbooks. They did a few group experience charts, visited the school library, had a small classroom library, and participated in many teacher-directed lessons in handwriting and letter recognition.

The teacher of the experimental group, the investigator, holds the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education plus 36 graduate hours, has 2 years private school kindergarten experience and 5 years public school experience with 1 of those years in first grade. The teacher of the control

group holds the degree of Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and has four years public school experience, all in first grade.

The teacher of the control group was consulted weekly by the investigator as to the kinds of activities used in the classroom. This was done in order to note and report in the study the differences and similarities of instruction between the experimental and control groups.

Pretesting and posttesting was done using the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve. Because existing groups were used for the study rather than groups formed by complete random sampling, analysis of covariance was used to equate the groups so that their scores could be compared.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The language experience approach recognizes the function of reading as the core of a language arts program. It realizes that a child's ability to understand written language is rooted in that child's unique experiential background.¹¹ This chapter will deal first with the background and rationale for the language experience approach and then with specific studies which have used the approach.

II. THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

The decade of 1920 to 1930 marked the advent of two significant aspects of beginning reading: (1) the practice of using charts based on children's experiences to introduce them to reading, and (2) the concept of reading readiness. In the following decade a related program, the activity program, was widely acclaimed. This program advocated the teaching of reading within the context of a unit of work and through the use of school-made books and charts as well as a large number of books brought into the classroom. For the first time the school was distracted

¹¹George D. Spache and Evelyn B. Spache, Reading in the Elementary School (2nd ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 170.

. . . from its age-old concept of schools centered almost exclusively on subject-matter goals to schools in which consideration is given to the child, himself, his stage of development, his interests, his activities, his choices and his decisions.¹²

The language experience approach of today can combine all three of these educational ideas.

Through language experience the teacher can start where the child is, communicating through channels which the child has at that point, using language and illustrative concepts which are familiar.¹³ Children have the chance to express their own thoughts and ideas about themselves and the environment.¹⁴ The high value placed on children and their language is reflected in the teacher's acceptance and utilization of that language to produce classroom reading materials.¹⁵ As children progress, they realize that oral language can be written and then read both by themselves and by others. Lee and Allen see this process as:

¹²Nilá B. Smith, "What Have We Accomplished in Reading? A Review of the Past Fifty Years," Elementary English, 38 (March 1961), pp. 141-150.

¹³Roger W. Shuy, "Whatever Happened to the Way Kids Talk?" (Paper read at the National Conference on Language Arts, Philadelphia, 1969.)

¹⁴Roach Van Allen, "Language Experiences Which Promote Learning." (Paper presented at the Early Childhood Lecture Series, Ypsilanti, Michigan, September 29, 1969.)

¹⁵Roach Van Allen, "Up-dating the Language Experience Approach," ERIC No. 040831, May 1970.

What I can think about, I can talk about.
 What I can say, I can write.
 What I can write, I can read.
 I can read what I write and what other people
 can write for me to read.¹⁶

This interrelatedness of listening, speaking, writing, and reading in the language experience approach emphasizes the meaning of reading as communication. Children's language and experiences are used to create reading materials personal to them, thereby underscoring reading as communication.¹⁷

The language experience approach is thought to be inherently motivating to children. It is a meaning centered approach where

. . . materials are elicited from children and from life experiences. Children develop a sense of self-worth and learn that their ideas have both importance and communication worthiness.¹⁸

Sinatra and Kinsler see the child's attitude about self as central to learning success. Materials must meet the intellectual and emotional needs of the child, thereby utilizing motivation, attention and memory.¹⁹ Lapp and Fram stress the

¹⁶Dorris M. Lee and R. V. Allen, Learning to Read Through Experience (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 5-7.

¹⁷Mary Anne Hall, Teaching Reading as a Language Experience (2nd ed., Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 4-5.

¹⁸Richard Sinatra and Karen Taber Kinsler, "Values Strategies in the Teaching of Reading," ERIC No. 109659, February 1975.

¹⁹Ibid.

need for an "eclectic language arts program which stresses individual language development through personal experiences"²⁰ and Allen states that,

How a child feels about himself and his relations with others--his family, his teacher, and other members of his class--will determine to a great extent what he is able to say, write, and read.²¹

III. STUDIES USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Research in beginning reading has been difficult to generalize or compare because of the many variables with which the researcher deals. In the 27 United States Office of Education First Grade Reading Studies²² an attempt was made to explore various approaches under conditions which would make it possible to compare findings. This was finally not possible due to measurement differences and instructor variables, although in general it was found that no one method is distinctly better overall than the others. There were indications however, that word-study skills added strength to reading programs.

²⁰Diane Lapp and Ralph D. Fram, "The Neglected I," Elementary English, 52, Vol. 1 (January 1975), pp. 45-48.

²¹Roach Van Allen, "Attitudes and the Art of Teaching Reading," National Education Association, Washington, D. C., ERIC No. 038240, 1965.

²²Guy L. Bond, "First Grade Reading Studies: An Overview," Elementary English, 43 (May 1966), pp. 464-470.

Similarly, in her study of reading research done before 1965, Chall found that children taught beginning reading with a code emphasis generally do better than children taught with a meaning emphasis.²³

However, in a study involving 27 classes and extensive pretesting and posttesting, Kendrick found that for most of the analyses there was no significant difference in scores between an experience approach to language arts and the traditional basal method.²⁴ In a continuation of that study through second grade, he and Bennett found that the level of confidence in the differences that were observed improved with time in instruction. The experience approach was certainly an effective method and possibly conducive to achievement in other areas, as reflected by the groups' superior performance on the social studies and arithmetic concepts tests.²⁵

Hahn studied three approaches to beginning reading, finding no one method consistently superior and no significant

²³Jeanne S. Chall, Learning To Read: The Great Debate (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 134.

²⁴William M. Kendrick, "A Comparative Study of Two First Grade Language Arts Programs," Cooperative Research Project No. 2576, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1966.

²⁵William A. Kendrick and Clayton L. Bennett, "Effectiveness of a Second Grade Language Arts Program," Cooperative Research Project No. 3235, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1967.

differences in reading attitude. He did find, however, that the language experience and Initial Teaching Alphabet²⁶ groups produced more creative writing. He also felt that there was an advantage to dropping the use of workbooks, preprimers and primers in order to spend this time allowing children to sort their thoughts and dictate and record ideas.²⁷

In a study involving kindergarten children, Johnston found that there was a significantly greater difference in the amount of vocabulary development in a group using the language experience approach than in a group which did not use the approach.²⁸ In a study involving first grade children, Hill found that children could indeed express themselves through creative writing when provided with the atmosphere and experiences inherent in the language experience program.²⁹

Vilscek, Morgan and Cleland compared a coordinated basal approach with an integrated experience approach and found the

²⁶John A. Downing, The Initial Teaching Alphabet Reading Experiment (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1965).

²⁷Harry T. Hahn, "Three Approaches to Beginning Reading Instruction - ITA, Language Arts and Basic Readers," The Reading Teacher, 19 (May 1966), pp. 590-594.

²⁸Jane E. Johnston, "The Effect of the Language Experience Approach on Kindergarten Children's Vocabulary," (Thesis presented to Graduate Council, The University of Tennessee, August 1972.)

²⁹Mary E. Hill, "The Creative Writing Ability of First Grade Children," (Thesis presented to Graduate Council, The University of Tennessee, August 1960.)

experience approach to have higher mean scores for total groups.³⁰ Similarly, in a study involving 20 first grade classes, Stauffer and Hammond found that the language experience approach groups achieved significantly higher scores than the basal reader groups on tests of word reading, paragraph meaning, and spelling. Both groups achieved equally well on tests of word study skills and vocabulary. The basal group achieved significantly better in arithmetic.³¹

In a study conducted in four cities in the United States, Sylvia Ashton-Warner's methods³² were used. A comparison was made between children's requested, key vocabulary, and that found in basal readers. Although there was a significant correlation of vocabulary among basals, there was a significant difference between that vocabulary and the key vocabulary requested by children. It would seem, therefore, that the more meaningful key vocabulary would make easier the process of learning to read, spell and express thoughts in writing. The Ashton-Warner methods "involve the

³⁰ Elaine Vilscek, Lorraine Morgan and Donald Cleland, "Coordinating and Integrating Language Arts Instruction in First Grade," The Reading Teacher, 20 (October 1966), pp. 31-37.

³¹ Russell G. Stauffer and W. Dorsey Hammond, "Effectiveness of a Language Arts and Basic Reader Approach to First Grade Reading Instruction," Cooperative Research Project No. 2679, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1965.

³² Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Teacher (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963).

child in using his own meaningful language experience as the basis for skill development."³³

Pertinent to the relevance of a child's own language experience, is Hillard and Troxell's study of the informational backgrounds of kindergarten children entering first grade. The informational backgrounds were divided into either rich or meager on the basis of questionnaires filled out by parents regarding their occupations, number of child's older siblings, the child's travel experience, the number and kinds of media in the home, social experiences in the home, the child's language and conversation, the reading environment, the child's contacts outside the home and any other experience mentioned by parents. The children from a rich background had a distinct advantage over those from a meager background as measured by the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test. They also made more rapid gains in reading progress and complex reading abilities.³⁴

Literature pertinent to the two tests used in this study, the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal

³³Athol E. Packer, "Sylvia Ashton-Warner's Methods Tried in Four U. S. Cities," University of Florida, Gainesville, ERIC No. 033838.

³⁴George Hillard and Elenor Troxell, "Informational Backgrounds as a Factor in Reading Readiness and Reading Progress," Elementary School Journal, 38 (December 1937), pp. 255-263.

Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve is found in the procedures chapter.

IV. SUMMARY

The language experience approach has been found to be at least as effective as other methods of beginning reading. There is also some evidence which seems to indicate that it has a positive influence on children's motivation to achieve. Hall notes that,

Psychologically, the factors of success, motivation, interest, and attitude, which affect self-concept and achievement, support the use of the language experience approach.³⁵

³⁵Mary Anne Hall, Teaching Reading as a Language Experience (2nd ed., Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1976), p. 9.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Using two first grade classes, an experimental and a control group, the present study measures the effectiveness of the language experience approach to beginning reading. Both groups were pretested and posttested using the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve (see Appendix).

I. SAMPLE

The experimental group consisted of 18 children, 10 boys and 8 girls. Although the class began the school year with 25 children, 2 were repeating first grade and were not included in the study for that reason, 1 child could not be tested due to a severe vision handicap, 2 more children enrolled after the study had already begun, and when a new first grade teacher was added to the staff, 4 children became part of her class. All consent letters were returned with permission granted.

The control group consisted of 17 children, 6 boys and 11 girls. Although the class began the school year with 29 children, 3 were repeating first grade and were not included in the study for that reason, 1 child was judged too immature for the testing situation, and when

the new class was formed, 5 children became part of that class. Two children did not return their consent and one parent refused permission.

Pretesting of both groups took place during the week of September 4, 1978. The study began September 11, 1978. It ended November 18, 1978, with posttesting completed the week of November 20, 1978.

II. EXPERIMENTAL PLAN

The experiment was conducted for 10 weeks at the beginning of the school year. The experimental group received the language experience approach to beginning reading.

Units

Units of study were developed, each lasting approximately two to three weeks and centering on the topics of: myself, my family, my neighborhood, school, Halloween, Thanksgiving, colors, nursery rhymes and fall.

Library

There was an extensive library within the classroom, consisting of:

- A. At least 20 children's classics.
- B. At least 30 books on the current unit topic.
- C. At least 75 books on topics of interest to the children.

- D. At least 20 reference books including various dictionaries, a thesaurus, encyclopedias, and content area texts.
- E. Children's magazines.
- F. Adult magazines and newspapers.
- G. Books and stories made by the children.

The library corner had rugs, pillows, a rocking chair and a small table and chairs.

Word Banks

Each child developed a word bank of words he or she knew. Words were added to the bank by such activities as:

- A. Key vocabulary--the child may ask for any word which has importance to him or her.
- B. Free words--a small bulletin board area where words are posted daily. Anyone who can read a word may have it.
- C. Story words--any word that a child knows from the experience stories may be added to the word bank.

Word Games

Some games and skills which were used with the word bank were:

- A. Classifying words.
- B. Choosing favorite words.

- C. Writing words in fingerpaint, sand, clay, pudding.
- D. Auditory discrimination of phonemes.
- E. Visual discrimination of letters and words.
- F. Finding their words in books, magazines or newspapers.
- G. Alphabetizing their words.
- H. Putting words together to make phrases or sentences.
- I. Comparing words with a partner.
- J. Playing word bingo or concentration.

Labeling

Many objects were named within the classroom and marked with the written labels of their names.

- A. During the first day of the study the teacher began labeling supplies and areas in the room, with the active participation of the children. Extensive labeling continued for about a week and then recurred as needs arose.
- B. Children's drawings and paintings were labeled with their comments.
- C. Lockers and cubbies were labeled with the children's names.
- D. Bulletin boards were labeled.

- E. Games such as matching, scavenger hunts and treasure hunts were played with duplicate sets of the labels.

Group and Individual Experience Stories

Stories were dictated to and written down by the teacher.

- A. Some stories were dictated by the total group and some by smaller groups.
- B. Some stories were individual.
- C. Topics for the stories included: daily occurrences and conversations of the children; seasonal and holiday experiences such as a fall walk, carving a jack-o-lantern, a Halloween story or a Thanksgiving study; experiences resulting from the unit being studied such as making a class album, a family book, a neighborhood walk, making hand and footprints, experimenting with colors, making play dough, and a visit from Star Wars characters.

Booklets and Bookmaking

Books and booklets were made by the children.

- A. There was a special area of the room where bookmaking supplies were kept. It was stocked

with: different sizes, shapes and kinds of paper; crayons, pencils, and colored pencils; staplers; tape; magazines and newspapers to cut up; scissors and paste.

- B. Children were encouraged to make books on special topics and to illustrate their books.
- C. Each child had a composition book of individual dictated stories, copies of some group stories, and creative writing.
- D. Each child kept a picture dictionary of word bank words.

Reading Times

There were special times each day for extra reading.

- A. The teacher read aloud to the class a minimum of 20 minutes per day, utilizing exceptional children's literature, books brought in by the children, and flannel board stories.
- B. Approximately 25 days ended with a 10-minute period of quiet reading time for everyone.

III. CONTROL PLAN

The control group followed a basal-phonics approach to beginning reading.

Textbooks

The teacher used The Bookmark Reading Program³⁶ for first grade. Supplementary materials which are a part of the program such as vocabulary word cards and workbooks were used.

Phonics

The teaching of phonics was supplemented with the Phonics Workbook,³⁷ Level A. A workbook was given to each child.

Library

Books in the classroom included basals, basal supplements, content area texts, and about 30 books from the school library.

Reading Time

The teacher read to the class about 15 minutes per day, utilizing library books and books brought in by the children.

Experience Charts

Five group experience charts were done.

³⁶Margaret Early et al., The Bookmark Reading Program (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovarovich, Inc., 1974).

³⁷Elwell et al., Phonics Workbook (Cleveland: Modern Curriculum Press, Inc., 1976).

IV. TESTS

Pretests and posttests were given to both groups using the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve.

The Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test

The Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test was designed as an objective measure of a child's ability to learn to read. It should be used in conjunction with teacher judgment and other assessment measures and is not designed to stand alone.³⁸

The Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test for kindergarten-first grade yields a total score plus subscores on tests of letter symbols, concepts, and word symbols. The letter symbols subtest consists of matching like letters or selecting the one different letter. It measures the ability to note likenesses or differences in letter forms. The concepts subtest consists of picture items and measures oral vocabulary, understanding of concepts, ability to follow directions, and word meanings. The word symbols subtest consists of a stimulus word which must be selected from several responses. It measures recognition of similarities and differences in letter and word forms. It is a small-group test and can be

³⁸J. Murray Lee and Willis W. Clark, Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test Manual (Monterey, California: California Test Bureau, 1962), p. 2.

administered in 20 minutes. The norms for the 1962 Revision were obtained by equating to the adjusted norms of the 1951 test which was standardized on 5,000 pupils. This adjustment was done on data obtained from an additional 1,000 pupils. Split-half reliabilities range from .87 to .96. Predictive validity coefficients range from .37 to .74 when compared with teacher ratings and from .25 to .70 when compared with the reading tests developed by the authors.³⁹

When compared with the California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity,⁴⁰ the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test was found to predict reading readiness at least as well and was considered preferable because of its short testing time, ease of interpretation, and lesser expense.⁴¹

Olson and Fitzgibbon found that the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test measures similar abilities as the Metropolitan

³⁹Lee and Clark, pp. 3-6.

⁴⁰Elizabeth T. Sullivan, Willis W. Clark, and Ernest W. Tiegs, California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity (Monterey, California: California Test Bureau, 1963).

⁴¹Kenneth D. Hopkins and George E. Sitkei, "Predicting Grade One Reading Performance: Intelligence vs. Reading Readiness Tests," The Journal of Experimental Education, 37 (Spring, 1969), pp. 31-33.

Readiness Test⁴² with commonality among subtests.⁴³ Panther found it to be useful in assessing reading readiness and a valid predictor of reading achievement.⁴⁴

Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve

Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve is designed to measure five aspects of achievement-oriented behavior: (1) school enjoyment, (2) self-confidence, (3) purposiveness, (4) instrumental activity and (5) self-evaluation. School enjoyment refers to whether the child expects to enjoy working in school. Self-confidence focuses on whether children see themselves as successful or unsuccessful. Purposiveness reflects ability to set up ways of behavior to accomplish future goals. Instrumental activity is related to purposiveness and involves knowing and taking steps toward accomplishing goals. Self-evaluation is reflected in the ability to evaluate one's own performance. It is designed for preschool through first grade and may be

⁴²Gertrude H. Hildreth, Nellie L. Griffiths and Mary E. McGauvran, Metropolitan Readiness Test (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1950).

⁴³Arthur V. Olson and Norinne H. Fitzgibbon, "Factor Analytic Investigation of Two Reading Readiness Tests," Perception and Motor Skills, 27 (October 1968), pp. 611-614.

⁴⁴Edward E. Panther, "Prediction of First-Grade Reading Achievement," Elementary School Journal, 68 (October 1967), pp. 44-48.

given individually or in small groups in 1 20 to 45-minute session. It is an objective-projective questionnaire of 60 items. Sample items include:

This rabbit tries to play a new game.
This rabbit keeps on playing an old game.

This kitten likes to come to school.
This kitten likes to stay home.

This bear shows his school work to others.
This bear hides his school work from the others.⁴⁵

Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve

reports reliability coefficients which range from .69 to .82 for a first grade population. Content validity is claimed on the basis of method of test construction including pilot tests, item studies and analyses, test analyses, administrators' opinions, and comprehensive work done on its predecessor test, Gumpgookies.⁴⁶ Construct validity is established by factor analyses on 96 items administered to kindergarten and first grade children. The authors assume some of the criterion-related validity of Gumpgookies since the theoretical basis is the same. Statistically significant relationships were found between test scores on Gumpgookies and teacher ratings of motivation as well as low positive

⁴⁵Gary D. Borich and Susan K. Madden, Evaluating Classroom Instruction: A Sourcebook of Instruments (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 207-209.

⁴⁶D. C. Adkins and B. L. Ballif, Gumpgookies (Honolulu: Education Research and Development Center, 1970).

correlation (.20 to .35) between Gumpgookies and Stanford-Binet.⁴⁷ Norms were standardized on children from various socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.⁴⁸

Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve is based on the premise that a young child's success in school depends on motivation to learn as well as intellectual ability. The child is motivated when a pleasant experience is expected, there is belief in one's ability to achieve and determination of one's own purposes, there is knowledge about how to achieve and there is self-evaluation. Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve appears to be a promising measure of achievement motivation, with good psychometric properties and appealing item content.⁴⁹

Pretesting of both the control group and the experimental group was done on successive mornings, September 4 through September 8, 1978. Children were tested in groups of 15 with the investigator as administrator and 2 parent volunteers as proctors. Proctors did not have children involved in the study. Each test was given in a single session of about 45

⁴⁷Lewis M. Terman and Maud A. Merrill, Revised Stanford-Binet Scale (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937).

⁴⁸Gary D. Borich and Susan K. Madden, Evaluating Classroom Instruction: A Sourcebook of Instruments (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 207-209.

⁴⁹Borich and Madden, p. 209.

minutes. Posttesting followed the same format during the week of November 20, 1978.

Raw data from the tests were put on computer punch cards and analyzed, using analysis of covariance (see page 8).

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

I. INTRODUCTION

The first major section of this chapter will present the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test data and findings related to it. The second section will deal with Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve and will present the data and findings related to it.

II. THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Total Score

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on total score. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 1 and reads as follows: the control group had an adjusted mean of 59.53 involving 15 students. The experimental group had an adjusted mean of 59.24 involving 17 students. The F score was computed as 0.053 which was significant at the 0.819 level and for the purpose of this study was not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 1
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF TOTAL SCORES ON THE
LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	15	59.53	0.053	0.819
Experimental	17	59.24		

Letter Symbols

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the letter symbols subscore. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 2. The F score of 0.233, which was significant at the 0.633 level, was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Concepts

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the concepts subscore. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 3. The F score of 0.750, which was significant at the 0.393

level, was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF LETTER SYMBOLS SUBSCORE
ON THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	15	22.93	0.233	0.633
Experimental	17	23.12		

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF CONCEPTS SUBSCORE ON THE
LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	15	18.47	0.750	0.383
Experimental	17	18.35		

Word Symbols

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the word symbols subscore. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 4. The F score of 0.075, which was significant at the 0.786 level, was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF WORD SYMBOLS SUBSCORE ON
THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	15	18.13	0.075	0.786
Experimental	17	17.76		

Comparison of Girls

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the girls in the experimental group and the girls in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 5. The

TABLE 5

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF GIRLS ON
THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Girls	11	58.82	1.601	0.223
	Experimental Girls	9	61.11		
Letter Symbols Subscore	Control Girls	11	22.73	1.349	0.261
	Experimental Girls	9	23.67		
Concepts Subscore	Control Girls	11	18.18	0.003	0.954
	Experimental Girls	9	18.22		
Word Symbols Subscore	Control Girls	11	17.91	1.816	0.195
	Experimental Girls	9	19.22		

F score of 1.601 on total score was significant at the 0.223 level. The F score of 1.349 on the letter symbols subscore was significant at the 0.261 level. The F score of 0.003 on the concepts subscore was significant at the 0.964 level. The F score of 1.816 on the word symbols subscore was significant at the 0.195 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Comparison of Boys

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the boys in the experimental group and the boys in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 6. The F score of 1.33 on total score was significant at the 0.315 level. The F score of 0.124 on the letter symbols subscore was significant at the 0.733 level. The F score of 4.576 on the concepts subscore was significant at the 0.061 level. The F score of 0.274 on the word symbols subscore was significant at the 0.614 level. Although the significance of 0.061 which favored the control group boys subscore approached the .05 level, none of the levels were, in fact, significant at .05 and were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 6

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF BOYS ON
THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Boys	4	61.50	1.133	0.315
	Experimental Boys	8	57.13		
Letter Symbols Subscore	Control Boys	4	23.50	0.124	0.733
	Experimental Boys	8	22.50		
Concepts Subscore	Control Boys	4	19.25	4.576	0.061
	Experimental Boys	8	18.50		
Word Symbols Subscore	Control Boys	4	18.75	0.274	0.614
	Experimental Boys	8	16.13		

Comparison of Sexes in the Experimental Group

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the girls and the boys in the experimental group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 7. The F score of 1.095 on total score was significant at the 0.313 level. The F score of 0.524 on the letter symbols subscore was significant at the 0.481 level. The F score of 0.212 on the concepts subscore was significant at the 0.652 level. The F score of 0.783 on the word symbols subscore was significant at the 0.319 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Comparison of Sexes in the Control Group

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the girls and boys in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 8. The F score of 0.720 on total score was significant at the 0.413 level. The F score of 0.191 on the letter symbols subscore was significant at the 0.670 level. The F score of 2.554 on the concepts subscore was significant at the 0.136 level. The F score of 0.267 on the word symbols subscore was significant at the 0.615 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 7

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF SEXES IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
ON THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Experimental Girls	9	61.11	1.095	0.313
	Experimental Boys	8	57.13		
Letter Symbols Subscore	Experimental Girls	9	23.67	0.524	0.481
	Experimental Boys	8	22.50		
Concepts Subscore	Experimental Girls	9	18.22	0.212	0.652
	Experimental Boys	8	18.50		
Word Symbols Subscore	Experimental Girls	9	19.22	0.783	0.391
	Experimental Boys	8	16.13		

TABLE 8

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF SEXES IN THE CONTROL GROUP
ON THE LEE-CLARK READING READINESS TEST

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Girls	11	58.82	0.720	0.413
	Control Boys	4	61.50		
Letter Symbols Subscore	Control Girls	11	22.73	0.191	0.670
	Control Boys	4	23.50		
Concepts Subscore	Control Girls	11	18.18	2.554	0.136
	Control Boys	4	19.25		
Word Symbols Subscore	Control Girls	11	17.91	0.267	0.615
	Control Boys	4	18.75		

Summary

The hypotheses were tested to measure the effectiveness of the language experience approach to beginning reading, as compared to the basal-phonics approach, using the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test as one measurement. There was found to be no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The language experience approach was neither better nor worse than the traditional basal-phonics approach.

III. ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Total Score

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on total score. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 9. The F score of 3.262 was significant at the 0.081 level and although it approached the .05 level in favor of the control group, it was not, in fact, significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

School Enjoyment

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the factor of school

TABLE 9

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF TOTAL SCORES ON ANIMAL
CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	52.18	3.262	0.081
Experimental	16	49.13		

enjoyment. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 10. The F score of 2.182 was significant at the 0.150 level and was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF FACTOR OF SCHOOL
 ENJOYMENT ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST
OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	10.06	2.182	0.150
Experimental	16	8.38		

Self-confidence

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the factor of self-confidence. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 11. The F score of 2.176 was significant at the 0.151 level and was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 11

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF FACTOR OF SELF-
CONFIDENCE ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST
OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	10.47	2.176	0.151
Experimental	16	9.19		

Purposiveness

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the factor of purposiveness.

Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 12. The F score of 0.838 was significant at the 0.367 level and was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 12

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF FACTOR OF PURPOSIVENESS
ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST OF
MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	10.65	0.838	0.367
Experimental	16	10.63		

Instrumental Activity

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the factor of instrumental activity. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 13. The F score of 1.658 was significant at the 0.208 level and was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 13

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF FACTOR OF INSTRUMENTAL
ACTIVITY ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST OF
MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	10.65	1.658	0.208
Experimental	16	10.50		

Self-evaluation

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the experimental and control groups on the factor of self-evaluation. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 14. The F score of 0.417 was significant at the 0.523 level and was not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Comparison of Girls

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the girls in the experimental group and the girls in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 15.

TABLE 14

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF FACTOR OF SELF-
EVALUATION ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A
TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Control	17	10.59	0.417	0.523
Experimental	16	10.44		

Total Score. The F score of 4.688 on total score was significant at the 0.047 level and was significant for the purpose of this study. The girls in the control group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group. Thus the null hypothesis concerning total score was rejected.

Factor Scores. The F score of 1.702 on the factor of school enjoyment was significant at the 0.212 level. The F score of 4.069 on the factor of self-confidence was significant at the 0.062 level. The F score of 2.067 on the factor of purposiveness was significant at the 0.171 level. The F score of 3.081 on the factor of instrumental activity was significant at the 0.100 level. The F score

TABLE 15

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF GIRLS ON ANIMAL
CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Girls	11	52.91		
	Experimental Girls	7	47.00	4.688	0.047
Factor of School Enjoyment	Control Girls	11	9.82		
	Experimental Girls	7	8.29	1.702	0.212
Factor of Self-confidence	Control Girls	11	10.82		
	Experimental Girls	7	8.71	4.069	0.062
Factor of Purposiveness	Control Girls	11	10.82		
	Experimental Girls	7	10.57	2.067	0.171

TABLE 15 (Continued)

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Factor of Instrumental Activity	Control Girls	11	10.82	3.081	0.100
	Experimental Girls	7	9.86		
Factor of Self-evaluation	Control Girls	11	10.64	2.826	0.113
	Experimental Girls	7	9.57		

of 2.826 on the factor of self-evaluation was significant at the 0.113 level. Although the significance of 0.062 on the factor of self-confidence, which favored the control group girls approached the .05 level, none of the levels on the factor scores were, in fact, significant at .05 and were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis concerning factor scores was upheld.

Comparison of Boys

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the boys in the experimental group and the boys in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 16. The F score of 0.308 on total score was significant at the 0.589 level. The F score of 0.916 on the factor of school enjoyment was significant at the 0.359 level. The F score of 0.094 on the factor of self-confidence was significant at the 0.764 level. The F score of 0.014 on the factor of purposiveness was significant at the 0.909 level. The F score of 0.059 on the factor of instrumental activity was significant at the 0.813 level. The F score of 2.756 on the factor of self-evaluation was significant at the 0.123 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

TABLE 16

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF BOYS ON ANIMAL
CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Boys	6	50.83	0.308	0.589
	Experimental Boys	9	50.78		
Factor of School Enjoyment	Control Boys	6	10.60	0.916	0.359
	Experimental Boys	9	8.44		
Factor of Self-confidence	Control Boys	6	9.83	0.094	0.764
	Experimental Boys	9	9.56		
Factor of Purposiveness	Control Boys	6	10.33	0.014	0.909
	Experimental Boys	9	11.00		

TABLE 16 (Continued)

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Factor of Instrumental Activity	Control Boys	6	10.33	0.059	0.813
	Experimental Boys	9	11.00		
Factor of Self-evaluation	Control Boys	6	10.50	2.756	0.123
	Experimental Boys	9	11.11		

Comparison of Sexes in the Experimental Group

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the girls and the boys in the experimental group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 17.

Total Score. The F score of 3.203 was significant at the 0.097 level. This significance, in favor of the boys, approached .05 but was not, in fact, significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Factor Scores. The F score of 0.424 on the factor of school enjoyment was significant at the 0.526 level. The F score of 0.776 on the factor of self-confidence was significant at the 0.394 level. The F score of 1.247 on the factor of instrumental activity was significant at the 0.284 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis concerning these factors was upheld.

However, the F score of 8.384 on the factor of self-evaluation was significant at the 0.013 level in favor of the boys. Therefore the null hypothesis concerning the factor of self-evaluation was rejected. The boys in the experimental group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group.

TABLE 17

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF SEXES IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Experimental Girls	7	47.00	3.203	0.097
	Experimental Boys	9	50.78		
Factor of School Enjoyment	Experimental Girls	7	8.29	0.424	0.526
	Experimental Boys	9	8.44		
Factor of Self-confidence	Experimental Girls	7	8.71	0.776	0.394
	Experimental Boys	9	9.56		
Factor of Purposiveness	Experimental Girls	7	10.57	0.885	0.364
	Experimental Boys	9	10.67		

TABLE 17 (Continued)

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Factor of Instrumental Activity	Experimental Girls	7	9.86	1.247	0.284
	Experimental Boys	9	11.00		
Factor of Self-evaluation	Experimental Girls	7	9.57	8.384	0.013
	Experimental Boys	9	11.11		

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence between the girls and the boys in the control group. Data relating to this hypothesis are found in Table 18. The F score of 0.001 on total score was significant at the 0.972 level. The F score of 0.122 on the factor of school enjoyment was significant at the 0.733 level. The F score of 0.044 on the factor of purposiveness was significant at the 0.757 level. The F score of 0.335 on the factor of instrumental activity was significant at the 0.572 level. The F score of 0.312 on the factor of self-evaluation was significant at the 0.585 level. These levels were not significant for the purpose of this study. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

In summary, the hypotheses were tested to measure the effectiveness of the language experience approach to beginning reading as compared to the basal-phonics approach, using Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve as one measurement. In most instances, there was found to be no significant difference in motivation to achieve between the experimental group and the control group. However, it was found that the girls in the control group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group on total score and that the boys in the experimental group performed significantly better than the girls in the experimental group on the subscore of self-evaluation.

TABLE 18

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SCORES OF SEXES IN THE CONTROL GROUP
ON ANIMAL CRACKERS: A TEST OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Total Score	Control Girls	11	52.91	0.001	0.972
	Control Boys	6	50.83		
Factor of School Enjoyment	Control Girls	11	9.82	0.122	0.733
	Control Boys	6	10.60		
Factor of Self-confidence	Control Girls	11	10.82	0.044	0.837
	Control Boys	6	9.83		
Factor of Purposiveness	Control Girls	11	10.82	0.099	0.757
	Control Boys	6	10.33		

TABLE 18 (Continued)

Test	Group	N	Adjusted Means	F Score	Level of Significance
Factor of Instrumental Activity	Control Girls	11	10.82	0.335	0.572
	Control Boys	6	10.33		
Factor of Self-evaluation	Control Girls	11	10.64	0.312	0.585
	Control Boys	6	10.50		

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study was to measure the effectiveness of the language experience approach in beginning reading. An experimental group using this approach was compared to a control group using the basal-phonics approach. Comparison was made using pretest and posttest scores on two measurements: the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve. Using analysis of covariance with the pretest as the covariant, an F value was computed for the adjusted scores.

II. LIMITATIONS

The present study was limited to a sample composed of 50 first graders in 2 groups from low to middle economic backgrounds.

The present study was also limited by using only one measurement of reading readiness, the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test, and one measurement of motivation to achieve, Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve.

Because of the practicality of operating within an existing public school program, the present study was limited to a 10-week period.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test

The findings for the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test indicated no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. It is concluded therefore that the language experience approach was found to be neither better nor worse than the traditional basal-phonics approach to beginning reading.

Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve

In most instances, the findings for Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve indicated no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. It is concluded therefore that for the total group the language experience approach was found to be neither better nor worse than the traditional basal-phonics approach to beginning reading. However, the girls in the control group performed significantly better on total score than the girls in the experimental group, indicating perhaps that the basal-phonics method may be the superior method to use with girls in beginning reading instruction. This is also reflected in the factor of self-evaluation involving the experimental group. The boys in that group performed significantly better than the girls indicating that, for the girls, the basal-phonics approach might have been more appropriate.

IV. DISCUSSION

In most instances, on both measures, there was found to be no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. One reason for this may be the relatively short duration of the study. Ten weeks is a brief time in which to measure significant differences between groups. The study also dealt with a small number of cases. Due to absenteeism, the sample of 17 for the control group was actually 15 for the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and 17 for Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve. Likewise, the sample of 18 for the experimental group was actually 17 for the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and 16 for Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve.

However, it was found that the girls in the control group performed significantly better on total score of Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve than the girls in the experimental group. Similarly, on the factor of self-evaluation involving the experimental group, the boys performed significantly better than the girls. This may indicate that the basal-phonics approach is a more appropriate method to use with girls. To some degree, this was noted by the investigator during the 10-week study. The girls in the experimental group, while performing as well or better than the boys, frequently asked questions such as, "When do we get our workbooks?" and "Aren't we going to

read those (the basal) books?" Although they were reading charts, stories and other books, they did not equate this with the reading their friends were doing in other classes. Therefore, they may have had a built-in bias against the present study. It may be that while the language experience approach did indeed teach beginning reading, it did not fulfill the expectations of the children and their parents for what reading instruction should be. Particularly in first grade, children and their parents have very specific ideas of what should take place. Most of these ideas are formed from experiences in traditional settings for beginning reading. Once these children have experienced the traditional approach or their parents become more familiar with the language experience approach, they might be freer to accept this alternative. Had the present study continued over a longer period of time, some of these difficulties might have been overcome. Likewise, because of the children's experience with the present study, future studies may gain greater acceptance from the children and their parents.

V. IMPLICATIONS

Since in most instances, on both measures, there was found to be no significant difference between the basal-phonics approach and the language experience approach, this would indicate that various methods should be considered to

teach beginning reading. If teachers have at their disposal a variety of methods and materials for reading instruction, surely there will result a better matching of individual children to the method best suited for their instruction. Certainly the basal-phonics approach may be best for some children, the language experience approach for others, and perhaps still another approach for some children. We must not lock ourselves, as teachers, or the children into one particular method or approach.

Additional research needs to be done in the area of the language experience approach both alone and in combination with other approaches. Particularly helpful would be studies which take place over a longer period of time and which encompass a larger sample. Additional studies need to be done in other grades and at other times of the year to measure the effectiveness of this approach. In view of the findings concerning girls, it may be time to introduce the idea of using one method of teaching reading to girls and another for boys, especially in view of their differing developmental levels in the beginning school years. Certainly we should study the individual skill development of boys and girls who are exposed to the language experience approach, the basal-phonics approach, or a combination of the two.

The results of this study indicate that the language experience approach can be used to teach beginning reading.

Further studies could indicate at what times, levels, and with what children it would be most appropriate.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Parents:

A new school year is beginning and the children and I are excited about all that we will be learning and doing. I can tell you that teaching first grade is never dull and that the children make it constantly challenging.

As a part of my endeavor to become a better teacher, I have, for several years, been attending evening graduate classes at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I hope to complete my master's degree next spring. One emphasis of my study has been first grade beginning reading. I feel there is a need for assessing the children's strengths and weaknesses early in the year. Surely the sooner we know a child's needs, the sooner we can begin to help him or her on the road to success in school. Mrs. _____ and I will be working closely and I will be testing both her class and mine the week of September 4 and then again the week of November 20 so that we can see how far we have come and plan for the skills we still need to work on. The tests I will give the children are the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test and Animal Crackers: A Test of Motivation to Achieve. Mrs. _____ and I will be the only ones to see the individual scores. The 2 classes involved will be in a 12-week comparative study between 2 established methods of teaching beginning reading. Mrs. _____ will be using The Bookmark Reading Program and I will be using the Language Experience Program for helping the children learn to read. Although I will summarize the data and write it up in my thesis, no names will be mentioned and it would be impossible to figure out an individual score. Below this letter you will find a permission blank. Please sign and

return it as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at home (691-0883).

Thank you for your help. I look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,

Martha S. Fowler

_____ Yes, my child has my permission to take the tests indicated in Mrs. Fowler's letter. I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time without penalty.

_____ No, my child does not have my permission to take the tests indicated in Mrs. Fowler's letter.

Signature

VITA

Martha Lee Spencer Fowler was born in Wilmington, North Carolina on May 3, 1944. She attended public schools and graduated from New Hanover High School in May, 1962. In September of that year she enrolled in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education in January, 1966.

The author taught in the Durham, North Carolina schools until June, 1967 when she and her husband, Mike, moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. She taught in the Knoxville and Knox County school systems as well as private school, and has two children, Amy and John David. She enrolled in The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in January, 1974 from which she graduated in August, 1979 with a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education.