

Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1964

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling,
"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to wisdom".

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Coming attractions

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Proper Programming to insure validity of an experimental teaching project Color Coding as an aid in Teaching Reading

The School Drop-out Problem, its Causes and Effects

Why Johnny Can't Learn to Read

1. Late News

i.t.a. Teacher-Training Workshops

Mr. John Townsley, educational representative for Initial Teaching Alphabet Publications, Inc. will conduct a series of courses thruout the country this summer. The two-day workshop covers the development of i.t.a.; training in how to write and spell in i.t.a.; a discussion of the use of i.t.a. in the teaching of reading, creative writing, and its impact on curriculum; a review of the language arts skills developot in the i.t.a. program; recent research results, with special attention to the transition to T.O. and spelling in both mediums.

Each participant will be given a complete set of i.t.a. readers, workbooks, teacher's manuals, 3-ring binder, and a special packet on how to write and spell (list price \$35.00). Grade teachers may think it sarcastically funny that they should need to go back to school again to learn how to write and spell – yet the new order (as well as the old) requires uniformity of spelling and writing in order that the teacher's spelling shall not conflict with that in the book. It is only to make this easier and surer for the neophyte in i.t.a. that these workshops are arranged.

Registration is limited. Registration fee (includes cost of materials) is \$50.00. Please send to: Initial Teaching Alphabet Publications, Inc. New York.

Schedule

June,	1-2	New York, N. Y.
	8-9	Philadelphia, Pa.
	11-12	Pittsburgh, Pa.
	11-13	Hofstra Univ., Hempstead, L. I.
	22-23	San Francisco, Calif.
	26-25	Chico, Calif.
	29-30	Los Angeles, Calif.
July,	6-7	Cleveland, Ohio
	9-10	Dayton, Ohio
	13-14	Chicago, Ill.
	16-17	Milwaukee, Wisc.
	20-21	Minneapolis. Minn.
	23-24	St. Louis, Mo.
	27-28	Buffalo, New York
	30-31	Detroit, Mich.
Aug.	17-21, 24-28,	Lehigh Univ, Bethlehem, Pa.
	17-19,	Hofstra Univ, Hempstead L.I., N. Y.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1964 pp2–7 in the printed version*]

(*ita* characters in the original are indicated by asterisks, mainly two letters joined, and new characters for *r* and reversed *z*. See chart.)

2. Maximizing Simplicity and Similarity with General Suitability of Standard Print Forms, by Sir James Pitman

A paper read by Sir James Pitman at the International Reading Association's Convention at Philadelphia on 1st May, 1964.

My great uncle Benn Pitman landed in Philadelphia in 1853, bringing with him the then latest of my grandfather's augmented roman alphabets. Earlier, Stephen Pearl Andrews had brought, in 1843, my grandfather's earlier designs and a very considerable application had taken place, with most successful results, in Waltham, Massachusetts, between 1852 and 1860. Furthermore, William T. Harris, later to become Commission of Education at Washington and at the time Schools Superintendent at St. Louis, had also successfully demonstrated, by large scale application, the principles of a 40-sound-40-letter alphabet. Thus America in the past has staked an honoured claim in the recognition that all has not been well with our traditional orthography, at any rate as the medium for the first teaching of reading. More recently Mr. Phil Hilaire, of this Association and of this State, and Dr. Nancy Young, an honoured figure in this Association, were quick to appreciate the potential value of my exposition – in a paper to our Royal Society of Arts in November, 1960 – of the principles involved and of the intention shortly to carry out a large-scale scientifically controlled experiment.

The publicity generously afforded by the British (and American) press, designed to help Mr. Downing to gain the voluntary approval by parents, which I had promised to our Minister of Education, was immediately picked up by Dr. Ben D. Wood, of Columbia Univ, and later by Dr. Albert Mazurkiewicz, of Lehigh Univ. and Dr. Harold Tanyzer, of Hofstra Univ, who came hot-foot and independently to Britain to discover for themselves what might be happening in this apparently most hopeful enterprise. When the history of education in America comes to be written, I am confident that these five will deserve high recognition for their *a priori* leadership. Where others have, possibly reluctantly, followed, even in the light of fact, these men and women understood, hoped, accepted and courageously set to work to pioneer what they had thus come to believe in.

You have heard from Dr. Mazurkiewicz and Mr. Downing the phenomenally encouraging results of their respective investigations comparing *ita* with T.O. both in Britain and in America. I will proceed, therefore, on the assumption that there have been experienced three apparent miracles.

The child.

1. Reads *much* more easily – Simplicity.
2. Transfers effortlessly – Similarity.
3. Apprehends meaning whatever may be his accent – General Suitability of Standard Forms.

Let us then examine the nature of the three factors underlying these observed happenings – the factors of Simplicity, Similarity and of General Suitability of Standard Forms – by making a number of propositions.

I. SIMPLICITY

1. Among these three factors, Simplicity is the first and must be paramount. Fortunately, experience has shown transition is very easy and that Similarity may thus safely yield to Simplicity, which latter can thus be uncompromisingly dominant over Similarity. Indeed, the transition has been found to be so effortless that we may conclude that Similarity has still a margin in hand sufficient to allow a further move in the direction of Simplicity, were that to be at all possible.

Any new medium may and should thus be designed with Simplicity as the dominant primary and with Similarity as secondary – even if a most desirable secondary. The ideal medium is thus one which is as Simple as it is humanly to make it, yet as Similar – as may also be possible – as a good designing of the characters and a wise choice of the spellings may achieve.

The highest degree of Simplicity, and thus of rationality, is of paramount importance because every child will benefit from maximum Simplicity. Even the child who is most favoured by every natural ability will be thereby helped to an even more certain success and to a much earlier enjoyment of the benefits of reading and communicating, and will be reinforced and developed further in all those natural abilities while of course the less favoured child direly needs all the help he can be given if he is to overcome the limitations which his nature or accident have imposed upon him. Indeed he, poor soul, can achieve success, enjoyment and rehabilitation only in proportion as Simplicity is offered to him and the causes of frustration and of still further harm removed.

Thus any expense made necessary in achieving Simplicity must count for nothing. Every device which works for Simplicity should be employed, every opportunity exploited to ensure it.

It is improbable that a complete sacrifice of the Roman Alphabet and so of all vestiges of Similarity (in a radical departure to a potentially simpler alphabet of characters such as those of Kunowski's Sprechspur or George Bernard Shaw's alphabet) would yield significantly greater Simplicity, but it must be confessed that in our present absence of knowledge, we can say no more now than that this is unlikely – and that it is unlikely too that parents and teachers will be found willing to allow others to investigate with their children whether the Roman alphabet is inimical to Simplicity or whether, as may now be supposed, Similarity (which is attainable only if the Roman Alphabet be retained as the basis), may also be cultivated, as in ita, without any loss in Simplicity, to the point of effortless transition.

2. All characters ought to be highly characteristic. For instance, *ee, *ng, *th, *th, *sh, *ch, etc. are particularly distinctive – and thus easy for the child to learn and to recognize – because they "have whiskers."

Some augmentations, for instance, *ie, *au, *ue, are just as characteristic in themselves but less distinct from their constituent parts, e.g.: ie, au, ue. Fortunately, [except for ie, and then only rarely (e.g. *spaniel*, *soldier*)] these constituent parts do not occur together in English speech and so these augmentations too are adequately "whiskered" and thus highly characteristic.

The fact that the child at the very outset writes these characters as a single character, as well as sees them when printed, helps him further in establishing for himself that comprehending unity which is the essence of distinctive characterization. After all, to us *w* appears a single unit, and to be adequately distinctive from the double unit *vv*. This character *w* may be seen to have become for us a characteristic character. Our habit of forming it as a unit has no doubt greatly helped us in conditioning ourselves to regard it as a unit.

On the other hand, some of the "retentions" are not as characteristic as is desirable and as have been made of all the "augmentations." Some are indeed not sufficiently characteristic for Simplicity. e.g. *b* and *d* are much too similar, differing only in being "mirror images" of one another, (Fortunately the corresponding lack of distinction between *p* and *q* does not arise because *q* has been excluded). In the case of *b* and *d* the extension of a small descender in *d*, (named *did* in contradistinction from *d*, named *dee*) adds a "whisker", and thus a satisfactory second factor of individuality, and thus increases Simplicity.

The other pairs of the retained characters, not as characteristic as might be desired, were considered, namely the pairs *n* and *u*; *a* and *d*; *n* and *h*; *o* and *a*, and types were designed and produced for a more characteristic form for *n* or *u*. When specimens had been professionally produced and viewed in context, the decision seemed inevitable that only in the case of *did* would it be possible in the search for even greater Simplicity, to make the pairs sufficiently distinct, without doing undue violence not only to the next important issue – Similarity between ita and T.O. – but also to the inevitably also important – aesthetic considerations.

3. In being thus characteristic to an extent sufficient to afford the easiest possible learning of visual discrimination, the augmentations are thereby also made more positive in their indications of sound value. A diacritic mark, such as, that in *śugar*, *óught*, *óne*, is almost – if not wholly – negative, similarly *th* is clearly not as positive as **th* and **th*, and moreover fails to afford the means of differentiating in a number of otherwise heterophonic pairs, e.g. *teeth*, *teethe*: *loath*, *loathe*, etc.

If the extra codes of printing specially be necessary in any case, clearly it is desirable to adopt a policy of maximizing the characteristics and of indicating, as positively as possible the unique sound value of each of the characters thus added.

4. Lower case letters are preferable to upper case. In a situation in which economy of space between the lines is not a factor of any importance, and in which therefore the lower case *a,b,...y,z* do not need to be considered as being as big as their upper case equivalents *A,B,...Y,Z*, the ascenders and descenders of the alphabet are irrelevant to considerations of relative size. Meanwhile those very ascenders and descenders are highly characteristic features and are thus seen to be most important for distinctiveness. These considerations thus determine the preference for the lower case forms, as a most valuable and thus determining factor in distinctiveness and thus in Simplicity.

5. There must be at least as many characters as there are sounds to be characterized.

No character can be allowed to represent more than its own characteristic sound. It must be unique. We must not allow ourselves, because we have been conditioned to tolerate exceptions to this most important factor in Simplicity to suppose that the child will not be misled whenever a character has a value different from that which he has been taught. Thus the word *the* needs as much to be respelled as do the words *once*, *ought*, *all*, etc., because, there is as great a violation of simplicity in using *t* for *the* as in using *o* for *once*. (cp. *Thomas*, *those*: *all to get her*, *altogether*: *anthem*, *anthill*: *oncoming*, *once* etc.) Simplicity would be thrown overboard were characters not confined to their own and to *only* their own value.

Fortunately for the purpose of reconciling Simplicity with Similarity, it is both possible and convenient, in the design of the augmented characters, to provide for all the sounds which at present lack their own character, an augmentation in which, as in **th*, **ch*, **ee*, etc., the other factor of Similarity may also be very adequately maintained. Indeed, it seems that Fortune has been smiling on the English language and that only in the case of **dz* (me**dz**ue r, but even then not in ju**dz*) need there be any significant sacrifice of Similarity in thus achieving a unique character for every sound while at the same time serving Similarity as well as Simplicity. By the careful choice of

characters it is possible to conserve a very adequate visual clue between the ita characters and one or more common uses of the corresponding usual T.O. characters. It is, moreover, possible also to ensure that ita, and its spellings, may conserve a form commonly employed in T.O. for that sound, and thus to maximize Similarity and thus make the transition effortless,

Again, it is important to recognize that the grouping of sounds in accordance with vocal utterance happens, as my grandfather pointed out in the eighteen-forties, to be very different from the grouping in terms of meaning, and incidentally of T.O. Whereas the vocal organs form the relationships: i, *ee: e, *ae: i, *ie: o, *oe: a, *α, and o, *au: ai and *ie: u, *oe: the groupings by meaning and by long established practice in T.O. has been very different: e, *ee: a, *ae: i, *ie: o, *oe: u, *ue:

It is thus important, in designing any initial teaching medium, to disregard the phonetic consideration and to conserve relationships both of meaning and of simplicity between the new medium and the old. *fed* needs thus to be related to *f*eed*, not to *fid*: *matrnl* to *m*aetriarc*: *infinity* to *f*ienal*: *p*oest* to *post*eerior*: *ass*ue m* to *assump*shon*.

6. The central, or as I prefer to call it "relaxed" vowel is better not visually represented – and the character *ray r* (or the character *er *r*) is better always included, even in that unique situation of colonel, (çu*rnel (cp. ke*rnel).

In the first place, the evidence is that the child, who does pronounce the relaxed vowel, is able with no apparent difficulty to read (and to relax when reading out loud) the vowel in every such case: e.g. ab*out, an*them, *aepril, ki*ngdom, upon, ferr*uel, f*uet*iel and if possible even more easily where vocalic *r* would be appropriate also.

In the second place, the relaxed vowel is so frequent that, even if the characters *a* and *u* be used (which were specially designed – in an attempted perfectionism – to maximize similarity in *ab*out*, *ki*ngdam*, *turn*, that Similarity appears even then to have been too greatly destroyed. For instance, while the use of these special characters is in such cases more tolerable, in other cases it is clearly intolerable, such as *an*tham*, *mu*thar*, *aepral, *martar* and *hu*r* (her), *bu*r*th* (birth), *mu*rtl* (myrtle). In the light of what little good they do to Simplicity, they are seen in their multitude to do great damage to Similarity. We have only to consider how frequent in occurrence are the last syllables in *say polar*, *mother*, *author*, *arthur*, *martyr*, *picture*, and *Ayrshire*, to recognize what is easily demonstrable, that the relaxation of the vowels is most frequent and that Similarity has been greatly conserved by ignoring both of the relaxed vowels – and by supposing that all such words would be understood, if heard pronounced by an announcer who did not relax them. This great gain in Similarity is thus achieved with apparently no significant loss in Simplicity.

7. The 40 chosen units of sound which have been proved in some 125 years of use by millions of shorthand writers (in more than the two most popular systems) have been found to constitute the ideal foundation for both Simplicity and Similarity.

There is no advantage – and indeed a great disadvantage in splitting the diphthongs: *ie, *oi, *ue, *ou, *ae, *ch, j, etc. and using only their constituent elements. No improvement in Simplicity would follow the reduction of the characters from 40 to 33 with which the 40 sounds could thus have been represented. This splitting – practised in the International Phonetic Alphabet – is seen to *diminish*

Similarity disastrously and to add no factor of additional Simplicity. Note the following example:

ðis pɔint wil bi wel əprɪfɛitɪd wen ðis futnɔt ɪs stɑdɪd əz ən ɛgzɑmpl əv ðə greɪt daɪvədʒəns frəm nɔrməl əpɪərəns wɪtʃ ðɪs I.P.A. ælfəbet ɪntrədʒusɪz.

Nor is there need to recognize sounds additional to the forty (e.g. 'n and 'l in *kitten* and *kettl* as is done in widely accepted analyses of English speech. Forty families of sound seem to serve Simplicity in practice, as they may be expected to do and have been demonstrated to do, by experience in learning and writing shorthand, That number and choice moreover greatly enhances Similarity too.

8. There must be no significant sacrifice of Simplicity to Similarity. Nevertheless the application of this priority for Simplicity does not in practice rule out that which is in practice highly significant for Similarity, but only marginally significant for Simplicity. There has been demonstrated to be much gained in Similarity, but no significant loss in the Simplicity, by

(i) the retention of double letters

(ii) the comparable retention of more than one character per sound to be characterized in a few cases.

(i) The reading learner appears to find it as simple to read *middl* as *midd*ae*, *imminent* as *immeasurable*, *innosent* as *innavigabl*, *illisit* as *illiberal*. (In each case then is a sufficient pause between the double sounds in the *second* of these pairs, to justify the retention of double letters. However, no child is sufficiently sophisticated in his hearing of such differences to be able to detect them). All children appear to find sufficient simplicity also in *arid*, *carrid*, *verifie* and *terrify*, *origin* and *horrific*, etc. notwithstanding the "doubling" or the "singling" of the characters. Similarity of *letter over leter*, *happy over hapy* is most important.

(ii) The reading learner also appears to find *c* and *k* to be acceptable alternative representations of the sound *kuh*; this too is most valuable for Similarity.

This ability of the learner to learn easily (as in the case of *c* and *k*), notwithstanding that there is, in this one case more than one character for a single sound, is a valuable discovery for the third aspect, "General Suitability". The provision of more than one form has been found to be no detriment to Simplicity also in the cases of certain pairs, in which, in the pronunciations of many readers, there is in practice one and the same sound for the two different characterizations, because in the speech of those persons (but not of others) there happen to be less than 40 sounds. For the benefit of those to whom they are heterophones, these corresponding visual forms need to be heterographs. Apparently it is no detriment to Simplicity, for those for whom they happen to be homophones, that they should be thus represented by heterographs. Those who regard them as heterophones have their meaningful discrimination respected; those who regard them as homophones are apparently not over-burdened or disturbed. Such pairs (and groups) are:

Whether, weather; aural, oral; saw, sore; bomb, balm; cot, caught; ar, our; massed, mast; higher, hire; marry, marry, Mary; pull, pool; turn, tern; fir, fur; carve, calve; flower, flour; layer, lair; over-seer, seer; ewer, your; stuper, stooper.

Those to whom *boar* and *bore* are heterophones seem to be not unduly disturbed to read them as the homophone *bor*. A decision has accordingly been taken in ita to represent them as homophones. If this were not practised, meaningful values would be destroyed in *fort*, *fortress*, *four*, *forty* and, no doubt, other cases. Having been tested in practice, no apparent loss of simplicity seems to have been occasioned (or even noticed) even in the Midlands of England, where the sound values are clearly heterophones and not homophones.

The homophones (in uncultured speech) *Boyd* and *bird* (both as *boid*) and *hat* and *'at* (both as *'at*) may even more be disregarded.

It is thus possible, without harm to those who do not distinguish the pairs set out above (*whether*, *weather*, etc), (and it is essential in the interest of Simplicity for those who distinguish these pairs), that those heterophones which are so meaningful in speech (within the 40 sounds) should be differentiated in print also. This is possible even to the limit of so differentiating *mast* (*massed*) from *mast* by indicating the broad *ah*, in such spoken words as,

1.	2. *(note 5)	3.
gas	p*ass	spaz
fascin*aet	f*ast	fa*the*r
caʃh	c*ask	cam (calm)
bat	b*ath	bam (balm)
pastor	p*ast*uer	pam (palm)

*Note 5. This character has been designed to be deliberately ambiguous by carrying characteristic features of both 'a' and 'a'. The reader is thus enabled to group this character with 'a' or 'a' as he finds appropriate and the teacher will teach the value of the character accordingly. Speech-words in this group of the 40 sounds present an exceptional problem in alphabeticism which is present in none of the other 39. This ambiguous character is a neat solution of a situation which is in itself ambiguous. Teachers and children, who necessarily use one version or the other, should not attempt, *in their writing* to meet the needs of those who use the other. They should write, as they speak, either 'a' or 'a' and leave to the printer, who alone needs to cater for the ambiguous market of world-wide-English, the task of maintaining the fine visual discriminations which the typographer is able to furnish, and to the editor and a dictionary the task of determining and indicating to the printer where such ambiguity, is needed,

Thus a child need never be confronted by a visual form in the middle column which he may not readily associate, as may be appropriate to him, with his own speech by, association with either the character to the right or the one on the left. This enables the principle of simplicity to be maintained even in this most difficult aberration from the otherwise dependable norm. It is clearly as desirable that those who pronounce the words in the middle column should not be confronted with a character which indicates another and different sound, as it is desirable (in all the other 39 speech sounds) that no character should have no more than one sound value.

For Simplicity to be maximized, it is most desirable that all the sounds used by the reader should be represented by characters – and by characters which have, in the eyes of the reader, only one sound value. Even in the few cases where the ita form is not in the closest of all practical associations with his speech the printed form indicates a pronunciation which he would readily understand were he to hear it (e.g. the *t* and *d* are kept in *p*oestcard*, *dustbin*, and *kwestion* is presented *where kwes*chon* would be even closer). Even *whether* rather than *wether*, *cot* rather than *caught*, etc., present him with a form which if not his speech form is the speech form of others and one which is immediately understood notwithstanding the difference.

9. Where meaning is stable, form must also be stable; also where meanings are related, forms ought also to be related, so far as Simplicity will not be thereby violated.

There appears to be no difficulty in reading the stable forms of *the* and of *and* in all meaningful situations. No additional Simplicity is afforded by a variation in form, supposedly valuable in reflecting the variations in pronunciation of "*the pen*", "*thi appl*" and "*thee veri best wae*" and of *and* in:

1. *and* it came to pass
2. law *rand* order
3. china *ran* glass
4. buttons *an* bows
5. bacon 'n eggs

Clearly the closer relationship to speech reduces Simplicity while also reducing Similarity. Equally, as mentioned above, no difficulty seems to be presented by the purist forms *p*oestcard*, *dustbin*, *handcuff* etc., to those who do not pronounce the *t* or *d*. It would thus seem that for both Simplicity and for Similarity the retention of the root forms *the*, *and*, *p*oest*, *dust*, *hand*, etc. is most beneficial.

II. SIMILARITY

Subject to the prior claims of Simplicity, the characters should be so designed as to achieve maximum Similarity, so that those words which are at present reasonably alphabetic in T.O. may remain so, and so that the transition from any word, when once mastered in ita, may be made as easily as possible to its T.O. equivalent. To the extent (and it has been found to be a great extent) that this may be done, a most valuable foundation may be laid, and almost from the very beginning, for that ease of transfer which is to be made effortlessly later on. Pages 19 to 66 of the 6th edition of "*New Spelling*" give the greater part of the statistics for arriving at the judgements in achieving this most important factor.

However, the choice in the design of the characters to be based on T.O. representation of that sound is a complex, not a simple choice, based upon statistics, if each character is to avoid fouling the needs of one or more of the other 39 characters in representing the 40 sounds and is to achieve Similarity and a balance in the alphabet as a typographic whole. For instance if the character 'a' were to have been preempted for the sound in '*aid*, *make*, *play*' it cannot be used also for the sound in '*hat*'. Equally, the use of the character 'A' would destroy balance in a lower case alphabet, and a new character, of non-romanic design, would destroy Similarity. The considerations for judging every "retention" and every "augmentation" are thus influenced by the considerations applicable not only to all the retentions but to all the augmentations.

2. In seeking to make the augmentations easy to learn, by reason of including characteristic "whiskers" (see Simplicity 2), what may be called the top coastline of complete words needs to be preserved to the greatest extent consistent with aesthetic considerations. While the child is using characters in a per character analysis and per sound synthesis, the lower half of any augmented character is as valuable as the top for carrying the differentiation. When, however, with advancing skill, he begins to form word patterns, it is on the top coast-line of words that his eye and memory will be concentrating, and it is thus important that then there should be the least disturbance practicable in this important top half.

3. Lower case characters, which have in any case been preferred on grounds of Simplicity, are preferable also on grounds of Similarity, since lower case is not only more prevalent in use in T.O. but is the medium in which the interesting communications are printed. By and large, upper case is predominantly used in public notices (KEEP OFF THE GRASS) or in contextually meaningless proper names (SMITH AND BROWN).

4. The spellings, as well as the characters must, subject to the prior claims of Simplicity, be ones which conserve Similarity.

Any cultured pronunciation which is widely heard on T.V. and readily understood in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, America, Australia, Canada. etc., and which yields a closer Similarity

between ita and T.O. is the pronunciation to be preferred for achieving Similarity, and has been found not to conflict with Simplicity.

5. The considerations which should be dominant in the design of 1 above and in choice of spellings of 4 above, ought to be primarily and consciously practical and visual. What are essentially phonetic considerations and an over-nice regard for minor differences in sound, should be subordinated to what will best achieve Similarity with Simplicity. Even with a totally non-alphabetic medium (such as Chinese writing), a mother is able to identify her son reading by hearing him, even without seeing him. Thus a medium which is designed to be a great improvement on T.O. for indicating sound, need not go as far as to be either a delicate phonetic alphabet and precise spellings furnished with it; even less need it be an *ad hoc* alphabet and individualistic spellings tailor-made for each child's individual speech – or even for regional differences of speech. Moreover, this emphasis on the practical issue of conveying meaning with the greatest possible Simplicity and Similarity is even more possible seeing that the child is operating in the reading-wise direction – and only incidentally in the writing-wise direction, and then with as much variety in the writing-wise direction as he cares to practise and the teacher to tolerate. This fact, that the direction is reading-wise, ensures that the principles of design of the medium are transferred, in larger part than might be supposed, from the phonetic field to the visual field – a field in which meaning and only meaning, becomes the end, and visual shape no more than the means to that end. If the meaning is clear, because the relationship from print to sound is close enough to convey meaning, there is no need for any closer relationship. Indeed, as we have already seen, a too close relationship will destroy Simplicity and Similarity no less than General Suitability just as the child in the second year of his life accepts and understands a speech word as carrying its appropriate meaning, notwithstanding that the speech sounds are *not* at all those which he himself could yet (or may ever) use (a child's speech sounds are radically different from those of the father and will always be different where the child is a daughter), so the child will, having established the meaning of a print-form, clothe it, so far as it may be desirable to speak it, with his own distinctive speech sounds. This factor is thus doubly beneficial, making it possible for the medium to be Generally Suitable, as well as highly Similar, while yet being an individually practical one.

If the medium were to adopt a writing-wise standard, rather than a reading-wise standard, and were consequently to proliferate print-forms for single concepts (e.g., the, and, to, etc., – now represented in T.O. by a single print-form as a common norm to which all printers and writers conform), and were it to recognize individual or even regional differences, both benefits would be lost. The medium would be neither a practical tool nor one which would be also Generally Suitable. Standardization is thus as practical and generally desirable in the initial medium as it has hitherto been in the final medium.

6. The employment in moderation of more than one character to represent a single sound (e.g., *c* and *k* to represent *kuh*) has been shown to be not inimical to Simplicity and is clearly most beneficial to Similarity. At any rate this experience would seem to have been true of ita. Duplication of such characterization has thus been employed but in great moderation (only 44 characters for 40 sounds). There are, moreover, in these 4, special extenuating considerations. The pairs *z* and **z* (cp. *fez* with *fee*z*) and *r* and **r* (cp. *turret* with *turn*) are so closely related visually that **z* and **r* may be regarded as imposing no significant addition to the learning load. If this be accepted, the total is reducible from 44 to 42. The justification for including *c* as well as *k* is to be found in the statistics on pp. 20-23 of *New Spelling*, 6th Edition. (The character **k* as a compromise, was designed and produced but was, no doubt rightly, finally rejected.) The justification for **wh* rather than for printing *hw* turns largely on the consideration that so many children who drop the initial *huh* in their pronunciations of *whether*, *when*, *wh*ie*, are better suited by the order *wh* than by *hw*, and that those who aspirate the *huh*, find it just as easy to accept *wh* as the characterization for that diphthong as do all children to accept *j* and **ch*, **ie* and **ou*, etc, as characterizations for those diphthongs.

Additionally, it greatly aids Similarity.

The burden of learning 44 characters for 40 sounds would thus seem to have been very little more and to have favoured Similarity without significant harm to Simplicity. The 40 sounds with their 40 unique related characters, plus the four extra characters *c* (as well as *k*); **z* (as well as *z*); **r* (as well as *r*) *wh* (instead of *hw*); may to all practical purposes be regarded as having occasioned no significant diminution of Simplicity. This extra burden of only four characters, three of which are visually related to their "pair" is in any case to be regarded in the light of the 70 or so (not 26) characters to be learned in the traditional alphabet, or 200 or so if the various ways of presenting the digraphs: *th*, *TH*, *Th*, *sh*, *SH*, *Sh*, etc. are counted in T.O., just as the characters **th*, **sh.*, etc. have been counted in the 44 of ita.

7. Just as Simplicity is not compromised, but Similarity helped by the doubling of letters (e.g. *letter* not *leter* – see Simplicity 8), so too Simplicity is not harmed but Similarity is greatly helped by splitting, in appropriate cases, the diphthongs **ch* and *j*. For instance, just as *letter* is better than *leter*, so *mat*ch*, *jud*z*, etc. are clearly preferable in terms of Similarity to *ma*ch* and *juj*.

8. The root word appearance should be kept wherever possible. In such cases understanding will be helped, as well as Similarity conserved. For instance *upon* is better than *apon*, *mu*the*r wo*z* and *mu*the*r i*z* is much more consistent, as well as much better, than *mu*tha wo*z* and *mu*thar i*z*, *spe*shiality* and *spe*shial* are better than *spe*shiality* and *speshal*. Furthermore, *s*oeljer* and *kwes*chon*, *pity* and *spaniel* than *piti* and *spanyel*.

III. GENERAL SUITABILITY OF A COMMON FORM.

1. When the child and the teacher move from one class to another or from one school, district, or even country, to another, they ought not to be confronted with a number of differing alphabets and spellings. Such a departure from common form will be confusing – and has been found to serve no countervailing good purpose. Just as the existing T.O. is a reading norm covering individual, regional and national differences (a standard which, when learned, is perfectly adjusted nevertheless to the vast varieties of speech throughout the millions of the English-reading world), so any new reading medium may be no less a standard one and ought no less to be so. Just as in T.O. there are great advantages in conformity to unvarying standard, so in ita are those advantages of world-wide consistency preserved. After all, the only difference is that the new medium has been designed to be much more easily learned. (See note 4).

Note 4. Differences in spelling in T.O., few and unimportant as they are, cause much expenditure – and to apparently no advantage whatever. Books which in Canada, England and much of the rest of the English-reading world are printed with *honour*, *programme*, *centre*, need to be re-set if they are to sell also in the U.S., equally, if spelled *honor*, *program*, *center*, they need to be re-set if they are to be happily read by those outside America. The opportunity of any worth-while change to alphabeticism (changing *once* to *wuns*, etc. has real value, where changing *centre* to *center*, *honour* to *honor*, instead of to *senter* and *onor*, has only nuisance value) ought to escape this danger and allow any book in English, wherever printed, to be acceptable (at least in its alphabet and spellings) everywhere. Furthermore, such standardization will be convenient to teachers who do not wish to re-learn a new convention on changing post, and to children who do not wish to be faced with new conventions when their parents move home. Babelization in the field of print is wholly without advantage, and full of damage as well as economic disadvantage.

Indeed, it has been shown (in Simplicity 6,7,8, & 9), that to vary the form of print for any word, in a closer relationship to the variations in pronunciations of that word, is a cause not of Simplicity but of confusion. It has been thus seen above that Standardization and Conformity to a Common Form

is compatible with Simplicity and Similarity, and is in itself most beneficial.

The child, from whatever speech region, has been found able to read a common form without disturbance coming from any variation of his own dialect, that is to say of either his own regional or even his individual pronunciation and speech habits, notwithstanding that other children with a different dialect and with other varying individual pronunciations and speech habits, find *the very same* medium no less apt to their needs. This happy experience, now demonstrated in all the main areas of the English-speaking world, has proved that the alphabetic relationship of ita is adequate, and is effective for all. I never cease to be amused when I hear young children – whether in Scotland, America, Ireland, England, Wales or Cockney London – perfectly adapting the alphabet to their already established speech. The medium (indeed this will be true of any other medium in which a child succeeds in learning to read meaningfully) is thus shown to be also so perfectly adapted to communication in speech that every mother, coming into a classroom, can recognize the reading aloud of her own son, even without seeing him.

2. Educational organizers require, for economic reasons, that materials manufactured in the medium should be standard in both alphabet and spellings. Only if they be so standard may economies of scale be exploited initially, and may economies of flexibility be enjoyed in deployment. Publishers have a corresponding interest in furnishing only what so conforms and will be thus universally acceptable. Type founders and setters, printers, typewriter manufacturers of apparatus for kindergartens and schools are equally interested that the alphabet (and spellings) should be so standard. The Tower of Babel was an expensive inconvenience as well as a communicative disaster!

It is then fortunate that both Simplicity and Similarity may be achieved without harm to the General Suitability of a Standard Form, and that in presenting my rights in the design of the Characters and the choice of the Spellings with them, I have stipulated that such standards must be expected and that conformity must be complete, in both characters and spellings. I foresee no changes, but in any such event it will be most important that when one so changes, all should so change too.

3. A common norm from word to word, page to page and book to book is no less important within a classroom. The child is helped by such consistency – indeed it may be said that a most valuable first fruit of the invention of printing in the fifteenth century was this very establishment in T.O. of a standard norm, its general acceptance and the accord of universal conformity with it – in place of the variety of forms in which mediaeval manuscripts had heretofore presented the words of English speech. The printing of the Bible in English – not Dr. Johnson – made spelling inevitably, and most valuably, conventional and uniform.

4. As mentioned in 1. above, the medium of T.O., when learned, is generally apt for the speech of men and women, boys and, girls, children in whatever family, region or country they live. The words which they read, and clothe with meaning, they pronounce (if ever they have to read out loud) with their own individual tongue. The disadvantage of T.O. is not in failure to be generally suited to the needs of the reader when he has learned to read – only in its suitability for the earliest processes of learning to read. Not only does ita enjoy general suitability to the needs of the reader equal to that enjoyed by T.O., but in doing so it is able also to afford the desired Simplicity (which makes learning so much easier) and nevertheless to preserve enough of the requisite Similarity to make the transition effortless.

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3. Reading Measurement: American and British Style, by William R. Powell.

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The problem of measurement will appear in any experimental study where objective assessment is of paramount importance and where results must be compared to those of other experiments. Comparison between experiments in the field of reading is difficult under the best of conditions, but where the tests are used in the experiments that differ in the assumptions underlying the construction of these instruments the method of administration, and the type of score scales in which the results are expressed, comparisons are doubly difficult. The purpose of this article is to consider the measurement problems of experiments in the area of reading. It will focus on the problems of research programs, such as the *i/t/a* (initial teaching alphabet) which began in England and is rapidly expanding into several sections of the United States.

In a recent article by Valerie I. Kemp in this Bulletin (October, 1963), and by John Downing in several different publications, frequent mention is made of the test instruments used for the evaluation of the progress of pupils taught by the *i/t/a* system, Unfortunately, for most American observers the instruments mentioned by these British authors have little or no meaning in terms of the type of measurement involved. We have to rely on the judgement of the experimenter for the selection of appropriate tests for the objective assessment. It is not the purpose of this writer to raise questions about the experimenter's judgement – this is not questioned. But, because there is a natural tendency for American readers to make comparisons between data from American studies and that reported in the British studies, the tests used should be analyzed to see if such a comparison is warranted. The reader is warned, however, that it is dangerous to compare the tests of different cultures.

The usual tests reported in English studies dealing with reading in the early years are the *Raven Matrices Tests*, use for a measurement of general intelligence, the *Crichton Vocabulary Scale*, a verbal component for intelligence measurement; the *Schonell Graded Word Reading Test*, the *Vernon Graded Word Reading Test*, the *Burt Graded Reading Vocabulary Test*, used as measures of word recognition; the *Schonell Simple Prose Test*, *Burt's Continuous Prose Test*, and a sub-section of the *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability*; used for a measure of reading comprehension. It is to be pointed out here that the above tests are considered to be excellent test instruments for the purposes for which they were constructed. However there are distinct differences in the above tests as American readers might intuitively tend to regard them. It is on these differences that we need to focus.

The *Raven Matrices Tests*, both coloured and uncoloured, produce a mental age score, and thereby function as a test of general intelligence. Although excellent tests, they have had limited use in this country, where they have been used chiefly by people in special education. The *Raven Test* is a non-verbal "test of fairly complex reasoning ability" consisting of a series of incomplete visual designs. Because it is of a non-verbal type with heavy emphasis on visual perception involving reasoning ability, it would appear that the measurement of general intelligence as it relates to reading, is a successful tool for this purpose. It may well be that a test of this type is more appropriate for measurement in the reading area than any test currently utilised for the testing of young children in the United States. Because of its relevance to the visual perception area, and the relevance of visual perception to beginning reading, the *Raven Tests*, or similar type instruments would have great

potential for use with children during the years when perceptual qualities of the principal avenues of learning.

The *Crichton Vocabulary Scale* is often used as a supplement to the Raven Tests for the determination of general intelligence. On this test, children are asked to define words when they are presented orally. This type of test would be of the type found in the Oral Vocabulary Sub test of the *Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Tests*, used in individual diagnostic testing within this country.

The Graded Word Reading Tests (Burt, Schonell, Vernon) are mechanical reading tests and rest on the assumption that reading ability is the ability to recognize words presented visually. These tools are simply word-calling tests, however, they do have the advantage of being less dependent on intelligence than some type of comprehension tests. As the emphasis here is on *pronunciation*, not on the meaning of the word, the tests are individually administered to the pupils. An analogous type test which is widely used in this country would be the Reading Section of the *Wide Range Achievement Test*. However, the norms on the English tests are reported in reading age scores and not in grade scores as is common in this country. Because the sampling population is quite different as well as the type of yardstick used the norms of the tests, a direct comparison between British and American test scores would be inadvisable.

It should not be inferred that the above English Word Reading Tests are alike. Although they are administered in the same manner, the selection and placement of words are quite different. For example, the *Burt Test* starts with the four-year age group, while the *Schonell Test* starts with the five-year old level. The Burt Test starts with two letter words and systematically progresses to longer words and tends to be more phonetically based. The Schonell Test begins at the five-year old level and word length is not a basic factor. The words included tend to be more "look-and-say" related, as most of the words on the Schonell test have objective referents. It can readily be understood that two children could have identical scores on the Burt and Schonell tests, but yet the meaning of the score could be quite different.

The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability is a relatively new English standardized test. This test is a diagnostic battery which includes tests of word pronunciation, comprehension of prose material, reading speed, and accuracy. This comprehension is based on the oral reading of six graded passages accompanied with illustrations and the answering of questions following the reading. There is probably no corresponding standardized test of this type in the United States except subsections of some of our individual diagnostic batteries. The informal reading inventories which are used frequently in this country might give the American reader an insight into the type of testing accomplished by the Neale Tests, although the comparison is a poor one. The recent attempt by Robert McCracken (Western Washington State College to develop a *Standard Informal Inventory* might approach this point of view.

The *Schonell Simple Prose Test* and the *Burt Continuous Prose Test* approximates our concept of informal testing except that the former are standardized and take less time to administer.

From the above brief analysis of English tests, the American reader should be aware of two important points. First, the English tests are individually administered by the teacher to the subject. Second, the emphasis on the most frequently used English tests, as reported by Kemp, tend to place much emphasis on pronunciation of words without any contextual support. An elaboration of these two points would appear to be of importance.

It has long been recognized that individually administered tests produced different types of results (accuracy being one) than group administered tests which are widely used for research reports in this country. Several studies have indicated that group silent reading tests tend to give higher

achievement norms than oral reading tests which are individually administered. As a matter of fact, our silent reading tests tend to give grade scores representing a "near frustration" level. This simply means that the norm on silent reading tests tend to indicate a reading level *above* where developmental reading instruction should be given. Research indicates that silent reading test scores are about one to two years too high for indicating the instructional reading level. The variation depends on the trade-name of the test administered. For example, studies show that scores obtained from the *California Reading Test* are higher grade normwise than reading results from the *Metropolitan Reading Test* when the same child is compared on the two tests. Individually administered tests involving oral reading, if accurately given and properly interpreted, can produce scores which represent the instructional level. Therefore, when reviewing the accomplishments of pupils in any experimental study, the method of administration as well as the type of test used should be carefully evaluated before "jumping the traces" in interpretation and making any false comparisons.

The use of tests which give emphasis to only one type of reading ability, such as pronunciation, could lead to false assumptions of achievement levels and the type of instruction which produces this type of achievement. Early instruction which places heavy emphasis on mechanics of reading would tend to produce higher achievement scores in the early years than an approach which fuses the mechanics with other skills over a period of time. To fail to take such matters into account in the potential interpretation of his data, leads some investigators of reading studies into a bias of test selection, which would automatically favor his method; therefore, the results must be interpreted with great caution.

The current use of test instruments in the evaluation of i/t/a systems has been simply to rewrite the previous devised tests into the Augmented Roman type and administer the test to the subjects. Certainly there appears to be no violation of experimenter bias in this procedure and the fact that Downing and Kemp report the use of the *Neale Comprehension Subtest* as well as the use of a graded word reading test, would give support to different types of reading abilities assessed. (Downing used the Schonell Test; Kemp used both the Schonell and Vernon tests). However, it is highly important for the American reviewer of their data to remember that the test scores were derived through individual testing. The fact that the experimenters are using the Schonell Test, which has a "look-and-say" bias, would also support results of achievement scores obtained as not having a bias to a phonemic based instrument,

Experimenters with new programs for early reading instruction would do well to select carefully designs of measurement which do not give any bias to the particular type of program espoused. This is true of programs which give emphasis to item centered (words) elements, structure-centered (phonemic, etc.), or a fused approach. It would be relatively easy to design a study which focuses on the mechanics of reading and to select a test instrument which gives emphasis to mechanics and thereby show spurious results. The reverse procedure is applicable to an item-centered approach. However, the fused approach has greater difficulty in showing rapid gains initially as the skill emphasis is spaced over a longer period of time. Therefore, in comparative studies involving the fused approach, a longitudinal design becomes imperative if the experimenter wishes to have his work accepted.

Because there has been a tendency for research reviewers to be highly critical of the reports of studies which have dealt with structure-centered approaches, American experimenters in this area would do well to follow possible design of measurement, such as used in the current i/t/a experiments. A non-verbal test of general intelligence test should be selected. Due to the fact that this test would be administered to young children, it should draw heavily on perceptual skills which involve reasoning ability. The test should produce a mental age score and this score should be used for the data analysis rather than the so-called IQ score. (The IQ score has been confounded by the

chronological age of the child.)

The reading tests selected need to represent a balance of reading abilities. Therefore, the selection of the *Wide Range Achievement Test* might represent the child's ability to pronounce words out of context with no supporting pictures. However, this test does not have a parallel and the retest situation might present some difficulties. The *Word Recognition Test* of the *Botel Reading Inventory*, and the Word Recognition portion of the *Durrell Analysis of Reading Ability* could also be used for this purpose, but with the same corresponding re-test problem. The untimed presentation of words of the *Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test* might prove satisfactory because there is a parallel form for a re-test situation. The problem with most American standard word recognition tests is that they do not have enough words presented to represent the lower reading levels. Therefore, experimenters should take care in selecting a word-pronunciation test which takes this into account.

A test should also be selected which represents the pupils ability to read continuous contextual material and answer questions concerning the material read. The questions asked should represent various types of comprehension abilities and not just those questions of the factual variety. The selection of the Oral Reading Subtest of the *Gates-McKillop Diagnostic Reading Test* might be appropriate here because it has a re-test form. The *Gray Oral Reading Tests* (Revised, 1963) would also be recommended. These reading tests have four different forms and different norms for boys and girls which might produce interesting data for analysis. The *Gilmore Oral Reading Tests* would be appropriate because it also has parallel forms for re-test purposes. The Oral Reading Section of the *Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty* would also be suitable, but it contains only one form.

A complete informal reading inventory with graded paragraphs and word lists would serve nicely for the above evaluation areas, but perhaps an experimenter would be wise to use standardized measures. An experiment should represent the clear-out possibility of being able to be replicated by others; therefore, the use of standardized measures more nearly represents this possibility of replicating the testing procedures.

A prudent experimenter with a new structure-centered approach to the teaching of reading would also include a silent reading test in his evaluation also. Therefore, the selection of one of the Gates tests might be appropriate: The Primary Reading Tests, Sentence and Paragraph Reading; or the *Gates Reading Survey*, Level of Comprehension Section. The selection of any of the above tests would depend on the level desired.

The *New Metropolitan Reading Tests* or the *Stanford Reading Tests* of prose reading material would also be acceptable. These tests are, of course, group administered tests while the tests suggested previously are individually administered tests. The group silent reading test will produce higher reading scores (near-frustration) and the experimenter should expect this and make appropriate allowances in his interpretation of the data. Nevertheless, for an experimenter to omit this testing of silent reading abilities from his evaluation would certainly leave the door open for criticism from many quarters.

An innovator of a new system should clearly recognize that he must prove himself and his system. The existing system has time and tradition, as well as sentiment, on its side. Therefore an experimenter with a new approach or emphasis to the teaching of reading should be prepared to go the extra mile in evaluating his method. History has indicated this to be so in all areas of human endeavor, the field of reading being no exception.

The preceding discussion has focused of necessity on the product rather than the processes of reading performance. It is this author's contention that until researchers begin to focus seriously in

experimental studies in the school situation on the process and begin to measure it, the reading picture will continue to remain in a state of indecisive flux. Children learn through various avenues. The main avenue for one may be a blocked alley for another. What we need to do now is to focus on the sensual avenues (aural, visual, kinesthetic, tactile), and design measures to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses within each individual learner. Then the approach to learning is evident and the techniques for instruction indicated. The history of American reading instruction, as well as reading research, positively indicates that no matter what approach is applied, reading difficulties center around word-perception skills.

Certainly children need to become aware of a sound/symbol relationship; however, what we need to know about each child is which avenue to travel to obtain this relationship. Strange as it may seem, this relationship can be obtained through several different approaches; the key is knowing which avenue to use with each child.

Summary of Tests Discussed

British
Intelligence:
Ravens Matrices Test

Vocabulary:
Crichton Vocabulary Scale

Word Recognition:
Schonell Graded Word
Reading Test
Vernon Graded Word
Reading Test
Burt Graded Word Reading Test

Comprehension, Oral
Schonell Simple Prose Test
Burt Continuous Prose Test
Comprehension section,
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability

American
Intelligence:
Any non-verbal type giving mental age
score

Vocabulary:
Oral Vocabulary Subtest,
Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test

Word Recognition:
Reading Section: Wide Range
Achievement Test
Word Recognition Test:
Botel Reading Inventory
Word Recognition Section:
Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty
Words: Untimed Presentation, Gates-
McKillop Reading Diagnostic Tests

Comprehension. Oral
Gray Oral Reading Tests, Revised
Gilmore Oral Reading Tests
Oral Reading: Gates-McKillop Reading
Diagnostic Tests
Oral Reading: Durrell Analysis
of Reading Difficulty

Comprehension: Silent,
Gates Primary Reading tests: Sentence
Reading and Paragraph Reading
Gates Advanced Primary Reading
Tests: Paragraph Reading
Gates Reading Survey;
Level of Comprehension
Stanford Reading Tests:
Paragraph Reading
Metropolitan Reading Tests:
Paragraph Reading

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4. It's Russia who heeds our G.B.S., by E. E. Arctier.

From page 39 of *International Language Review* for March-April, 1964, comes this significant note.

ABC (American Broadcasting Company), on March 14, phoned long distance from New York to Floyd Hardin to inquire who in New York was qualified give information about phonetic alphabets, as they needed this data in relation to a recent development in this field in Russia. The ILR Editor referred the ABC inquirer to Abraham Tauber of Bronx Community College, who edited the recent book: "George Bernard Shaw on Language".

From the April, 1964 *Phi Delta Kappan* comes a reprint from the March 6 issue, of *Time Magazine*, with this elucidation.

Russians Start New Spelling Reform

The Russian language, as rich and varied as English, is equally hard to comprehend, and spell. With the 1917 revolution came a determined effort to clean up the lingual mess, and the regime simplified spelling rules and eliminated outdated letters. Just by liquidating the hard sign at the end of words, printers saved seventy pages on each copy of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

In Moscow last week, the newspaper *Vechernyaya Moshova* published an interim took at the work of the State Spelling Commission, which is preparing a new report on language reform to be issued next year. The major drive will be against useless double letters in Russian words thus *kommunist* will become *komunist*; *appetit*, *apetit*, and so on. Of 1,200 Russian words containing double letters, only twelve will be retained. Among them: Russia and other proper names. The soft sign following sibilants at the end of words will disappear, as did the hard sign following consonants, and sixteen rules of hyphenation are to be reduced to one. If all goes well, *Way and Peace* will be shorter than ever, great quantities of paper will be saved, and the State Speling Comision will win credit for once again enroling language in the fight for comunist progress.

"The Russian language, as rich and varied as English, is equally hard ... to spell" is certainly inaccurate, Many of this *Bulletin's* readers will remember the contributions of Victor N. Crassnoff, who came to this country in 1915 with the Russian Artillery Commission. Born and educated in Russia, he brought with him the degree of Mechanical Engineer. Cut off by the revolution from returning to professional life in his homeland, he taught Russian for a while at Southern Illinois University then joined Eastern Cartridge Company as a factory executive, a position he held till he retired.

His command of English is such that one assumes the accuracy of what he writes about the Russian language of his youth. Even then its print was so phonemic that at no time, from first grade through his engineering studies, did he need a dictionary for spelling or pronunciation. There wasn't any "lingual mess" for Lenin to clean up in preparation for his stupendous drive against the 75% illiteracy of Czarist Russia. But all the more credit to him, of course, for cleaning up what little there was. We of the English-speaking world had ten times as much regularizing to do to make our mother tongue as easily teachable and learnable as was that of even young Victor's schooldays. And what, in all the long decades since, has our Government done about it? Congress has not even brought to a public hearing the Bill to establish a National Spelling Commission which Congressman Harlan Hagen introduced six years ago and each session since.

Having just read Helen Bowyer's Reviews in the April *Phi Delta Kappan* and the March-April *International Language Review* of that book of Dr. Tauber's mentioned above, I am struck by the similarity of Shaw's motivation as a spelling reformer and that of the State Commission in charge of the new Russian reform. A major point they have in common is the waste of time, labor and

material, and the wear of machinery involved in the use of superfluous letters. To quote from the Kappan review: "In a leading article in the *Times* of London, Shaw counted 2,761 letters for only 2,311 sounds. 'The same ratio of waste on the 465,000,000 letters printed annually in the *Times*', he wrote its editor, 'gives 94,138,952 superfluous letters, each one of which has to be legibly written or typed, read and set up by the monotypist, cast in metal and machined on paper, which has to be manufactured, transported and handled. Translate all this into hours of labor. Translate the labor into wages and salaries. I leave the task to the *Times* auditors, who, after staggering the proprietors with their findings, should pass them on to the Auditor-General, to be elaborated into an estimate of the waste in the whole printing industry of the nation.'"

Are we of the United States so mightily advantaged over Russia, that we can keep right on with a wastage, several times greater than the one she is now about to eliminate from her print? Even were that true, there's another consideration to which we should turn our minds – fairly jump to turn our minds. In so far as the world now has an international language, that language is our own. And did we but have the simple decency towards the rest of mankind to phonemicize our spelling, it will assume, almost overnight a primacy from which no other language would have a chance of dislodging it. But while, these last forty years, we have been going our blind way here at home, and imposing needless hardships on those millions of foreigners who, one way or another, have been constrained to wrestle with our difficult orthography, Russian has been gaining an experience as a *lingua franca* beyond what any other language under heaven has ever deliberately planned and carried through. For the Supreme Soviet has decreed it the official language of the whole Union and has taught it to the sixty or more million peoples therein, whose native languages are entirely different. Having seen to it, way back in the twenties, that these native tongues had their spelling phonemicized to the point where they would faithfully train the ear and nurture the intelligence of their first and second grade children, and so ease their way to the study of Russian from there on. Moreover, the Government has brought it about that Russian is the foreign tongue most widely studied in all Soviet satellites and in the now stupendous education system of mainland China. Is it possible that this new simplifying of a spelling already so nearly phonemic, the Soviet Union is considering the possibility of Russian supplanting English as the world international language.

Why not? There's nothing very difficult about the Cyrillic alphabet. Besides, it transliterates quite well into the Roman. Russian grammar and syntax, to be sure, are more complex than ours, but most foreign peoples are used to complexity there. It doesn't cause them anything like the difficulty which the bedlam of our spelling does.

Well, then? If Russia is contemplating the undercutting of our English as this planet's *lingua franca*, what are we going to do about it? Just sit lethargically on our doorsteps and watch it happen, as the Romans sat while Alaric marched in and sacked their capital back in 410 A.D.? Even the phonemicizing out orthography would hardly cost us a brain cell. Look at the parentheses respelling of the Thorndike-Barnhart Beginning Dictionary and you'll find the brainwork already done. What trouble do you have with even *ptarmigan*, *phthisic*, *mnemonic*, when re spelled in the Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary key? Millions of our school children from fifth grade on could tackle textbooks in these parenthetical respellings just as they stand. For writing purposes, of course, their diacriticized vowels had better be replaced with vowel digraphs – on the order of World English's *maet*, *meet*, *miet*, *moet*, *muet*, or Sir Isaac Pitman's *mait*, *meet*, *miet*, *moat*, *moot*. How our professors, administrators, reading specialists, and writers of those never ending books on *How to Teach Reading*, could have overlooked these parentheses respellings, decade after decade, and just kept on shedding crocodile tears over our reading retarded, reading failures, drop-outs, juvenile delinquents, and what not, surely calls for a study in the mental blockages of much of our educational leadership.

Tho I wonder if the Russians haven't already made that study for us.

5. The Lehigh-Bethlehem i/t/a Study Interim Report Four, by Albert J. Mazurkiewicz.

Dr. Mazurkiewicz is Director of the Lehigh Univ. Reading and Study Clinic, and co-author of the Pitman Early- to-Read series of primers, books, teacher's manuals introduced last fall and reviewed in the March, 1964 S.P.B.

The i/t/a experimental teaching project under the Lehigh University Reading and Study Clinic started in September, 1963. Using Pitman's notational system of 44 symbols for the 40 sounds of English for initial teaching in reading instruction, the following chronology of events marks the progress and reports observations on the first six months of activity with the first grade population of the Bethlehem schools. The statistical description of the experimental and control populations noted below indicates, though small differences in the IQ means exist, the populations are equivalent and that differences in results obtained in testing reading achievement may be accepted as a reflection of the different print medium used in teaching the populations. Both populations are using a language-arts approach to reading instruction in which writing is used as an aid to reading development, experience story use is emphasized, wide supplemental reading is encouraged, and a variety in the basic material for instruction is promoted.

Table 1. Populations by Alphabet.

Variable	i.t.a., N=454		T.O., N=874		t Test
	M	SD	M	SD	
C.A.	74.87	5.22	74.37	5.11	.116
I.Q. Language	98.09	17.13	100.28	15.64	.375
I.Q. Non-Language	99.36	16.92	101.93	15.93	.435
Total I.Q.	99.00	15.26	101.34	13.57	.398

The lower scores noted in the i/t/a population, while non-significant, are a reflection of what might be described as non-random assignment of children to classes based on readiness test findings administered last spring. It was noted that one class included almost all of an intake of culturally deprived and Puerto Rican children of one school. A suggestion that the principal had "loaded the dice" in making up his first grade classes was apparent. Nonetheless, the differences between the total populations are slight and represent a stratified sampling, on geographical-cultural-social bases, of the population.

Following two and one half days of workshop training, fifteen first grade, three special education and one handicapped class got underway in September, 1963. Workshop training included two elements of prime importance: how to write the alphabet and how to spell using the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet (i/t/a). The teachers readily learned the twenty additional symbols but admitted difficulty in learning how to transcribe sounds into print. The problem was not a handicapping one, but rather was a reflection of the fact that few of us pay attention to sounds in normal conversation and that words in isolation take on sound characteristics which are incorrect when compared with the sounds uttered in normal conversation.

The methodology used emphasized the deciphering of the printed code by teaching the children to associate each of the 44 symbols of i/t/a with the spoken sound it represents. Simultaneously, reading activities that develop thinking skills were stressed to insure that children approach reading from the outset as a meaning-getting process.

Teaching was paced to the individual's rate of learning. A structure of whole group teaching from the outset was soon modified by these rates of learning. Small groups and individual instruction became the rule.

Initially, teachers were very anxious about using the Initial Teaching Alphabet in writing activities, showing concern about correct spelling. After about three weeks, this anxiety disappeared and new anxiety showed up, typified in the question we all here around the schools: "How far have the other teachers gotten?" After about six weeks, concern was shown that children were not reading "books" – that is, children were reading materials of various kinds, experience stories, sentences, words and phrases, and simple story content of pre-primer supplementary reader type, but statements such as "last year they'd be in a preprimer by now" and "we aren't reading Book Two yet" indicate this form of anxiety.

At the ten week mark, about 10% of the population had completed *Book Two*. Observations and teacher reports indicated that these children could read and deal effectively with a vocabulary of 320 words. This compared with about the same percentage of last year's population which used the traditional alphabet and achieved third preprimer status in a basal program in the equivalent time. Under the T.O. procedure, children could at this time read 66 words on a purely sight basis,

At the beginning of the fifth month of instruction, significant differences in the reading and writing abilities of the i/t/a population from the control population were observable. A range of achievement existed, from the ability to write connected discourse of several paragraphs of seven to nine word sentences down to the ability to write words which could be constructed from whatever number of sounds mastered by a given child.

Other observations were noted:

1. The reading program can be constructed to follow the rates of learning of children. The skills portion of the programs to a large extent is found to be embodied in the initial task the child has – learning to make, fix, and use associations between the sounds of his spoken language and the i/t/a symbols used to represent these in print.
2. This word recognition program, in contrast to the three year period under traditional procedures appears to become a program of 3 or 4 months for the bright child and about 5 or 6 months for the average child.
3. Interpreting the results of the *Botel Recognition Test* given to a small sample of the population in the fifth month of school (transliterated for use with the i/t/a trained population), it appears that complete mastery of the 44 symbol sounds by the first grade produces word recognition ability equivalent to a 3² level in this test. When children have had exposure to all 44 symbol-sounds but have had directed instruction in only 37, achievement on the transliterated *Botel Word Recognition Test* seems to be typically found at a 3¹ level.
4. The number of words used in the first grade programs can be any reasonable number since conventional limitations do not apply.
5. Sentence structure and language used can approximate the patterns found in children's speech.
6. A complete freedom to use the best teaching procedures exists. Experience approach, combined with group activity, combined with individualized instruction, may all be used.
7. No change in normal teaching procedure is required. Teaching, as such, is apparently no more difficult than usual. Teachers can prepare follow-up, supplementary materials as required by children's needs, rates of learning, or the kind and degree of reinforcement demanded, or as suggested by the curriculum, the season, or trial calendar.

In examining achievements of the, control and experimental populations at the beginning of the sixth month of reading instruction, it was noted that no standardized test could serve adequately. It was further recognized that any transliterated informal test would be an adequate measure only if

the instructional levels achieved by a child on such a test did in fact agree with the difficulty level of the material he could read instructionally, though the print medium be different.

The *Botel Word Recognition Inventory* was chosen as the test which seemed suitable for this purpose and was transliterated for use with the i/t/a populations. As noted by Botel, an achievement of 70 to 80% word recognition at any level indicated the child's instructional level.

The results of testing sub-sample populations representing the culturally deprived segment of the population were reported previously (January, 1964). The results below were achieved by sub-samples which represent a middle to upper class social-cultural segment of the population. The sub-samples were statistically equivalent in chronological age and I.Q. to the major populations.

Botel Inventory	i/t/a population	Traditional alphabet
Instructional level	N-78	Population N-58
4	7 (9%)	0
3 ²	21	0
3 ¹	17 (57.7%)	2 (3.6%)
2 ²	5	1
2 ¹	8	2
1	9	10
P	4	20
PP & below	7 (9%)	21 (36.2%)

The picture of two sub-sample populations which are heterogeneous in intelligence (IQ=78 to 140) indicates the first that it is entirely feasible to develop a high degree of reading skill (beginning third readers instructional level) by the end of the 5th month of first grade with a small segment of the population, using the traditional alphabet, and the language arts oriented basal program of instruction. However, the results indicate that some i/t/a taught children achieve at a higher point in the equivalent time (fourth reader instructional level) and that is significantly greater number of children achieved the third reader (or below) instructional levels. Almost 58% (57.7%) of the i/t/a population achieved an instructional level of 3¹ or higher on the transliterated *Botel Word Recognition Inventory* as compared to 3.6% of the traditional alphabet populations who achieved third reader instructional status on the identical but T.O. form of the inventory. The median reading achievement of the i/t/a population is at the 3¹ level, whereas the median achievement of the control group is at the primer level.

An examination of the lowest portion of this population, those achieving word recognition scores which classifies them as having an instructional level of Pre-Primer or below, indicates that only 9% of the experimental population is found at this level as compared with 36.2% of the control population.

At the beginning of the seventh month, children in the top groups are using i/t/a materials which have readabilities extending from 2.6 to 3.2 and are dealing with such word recognition skills as contractions, possessives and comparatives. The degree of reading skill achieved thus far, and the rate of progress noted, indicates transition activities in material with a mean readability of 3.4 will be begun in early April. *Transition*, however, was begun by a large section of the population *in the third and fourth month of instruction*. Five to eight percent of average classrooms (middle class populations) are reading T.O. materials at the present time though instruction is still going on in i/t/a materials, indicating that transition has been evolving naturally. No confusion is evident at the present time in such children's movement from one medium to the other.

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MAINE TEACHER
6. A LOT OF THUNDER VS. A LITTLE SOUND
BY FRANK DORR

THERE is a little voice crying out in the wilderness, striving to make itself heard in the confusion of conflicting ideas, criticisms, condemnations, claims, and counterclaims regarding the effectiveness of present methods of teaching reading.

We are asked why Johnny can't read, then told that Johnny can read, that he is reading better than he ever has before. Let us accept whichever of the above contentions we wish; the fact remains that Johnny can be taught to read better than he now does.

Before we take the plunge and try to demonstrate the truth of the last statement above, let us take a brief look at the basis on which the advocate of the existing reading systems base their claim to success in teaching reading effectively. Thirty years of research have resulted in the setting up of national norms in reading and have demonstrated conclusively that any of the present well-known basic reading systems administered and conducted according to the plans outlined in the teachers' guide books will enable the average teacher to bring an average class of pupils to an average level of achievement such that the median scores (the norm) for the grade will coincide very closely with the national norm. None of these systems claim to be able to do any more than this. When the achievement tests are given, the results will show, or should show, one-half of the pupils above the national norm, and one-half below that norm.

Now, it doesn't take any very great depth of reasoning to arrive at the conclusion that, actually, the only thing measured is the extent to which the typical heterogeneous grade can achieve in reading with the look-say method and in no sense relates this achievement to the real capacity of the pupils to progress. There is reason to believe that the "satisfactory" level of reading accepted by the look-say experts, that is the national norm, is too low – far below the real potential of most pupils.

One thing is clear; there is, and has been for thirty years or more, a real problem in reading. Too many children have come out of the elementary schools without learning to read, or with serious deficiencies in reading. There is no need to enlarge on this point here, since there has been, during the past few years, an abundance of criticism of reading as it has been taught.

Is there any hope of finding an answer to the problem? We believe there is at least a partial answer. Our belief is based upon the results of an experiment started in September of 1960, when we initiated an intensive and comprehensive program of phonetics as a basis for the teaching of reading. This program extended through the primary grades (one to three).

The results obtained during that first year were so significant that we extended the program into the fourth grade, and will expand the program in September of 1962 to include the fifth grade. We shall summarize below the results of the experiment to date and let you draw your own conclusions. We do not claim to have proven anything conclusively. But certainly the results thus far give very strong indications that the phonetic approach to reading is a valid and effective one.

In evaluating the results below, several points should be kept in mind. First, the teachers involved had been teaching the look-say method for ten or more years, and with a high degree of success as measured by conventional standards. Second, the grades concerned were heterogeneous in nature

with a spread of I.Q.'s from 70 to 140. Third, the scores of the retarded pupils, some of whom were taught their basic reading (phonetically) in a separate classroom, were included in the results. Fourth, no more time, or emphasis, was given to the new program than had been given previously to the look-say program which was based upon the most widely used and probably the most effective of the look-say basic readers.

The outcomes, expressed in broad terms, are discussed below. The results quoted are from the largest of our elementary schools. Results from the other schools, including two small rural schools, were equally good; in a few cases they were better than those obtained in the large schools.

Of the 101 pupils tested, all but 14 were above the national norm. All 14 of those below were retarded, some quite seriously so. Of the 14, five were only one-tenth of a grade below the norm, and six more were less than one-half grade below the norm. In the first and second grades (33 pupils each) only two in each grade were below the national norm. In the third grade, there were a large number of pupils who had reached that grade through social promotion, a policy we have recently abandoned.

Median scores for the first grade and the second grade were in the eighth stanine (norm, is the fifth stanine) for all reading sections of the achievement tests including *comprehension*. In the third grade, the median was in the upper sixth stanine. Scores of the retarded pupils are included in these results. If we exclude the scores of the seriously retarded social promotions in the third grade the median score was in the upper seventh stanine. Spelling showed an upgrading also, with median scores in the eighth stanine for the first and second grades, and in the seventh stanine for the eighth grade.

In the five years previous to installing the phonetic program, we had upgraded our reading to the point where median scores hovered about the national average, usually a little above. In spelling, we had been below the national average in the above grades, with median scores in the fourth stanine. The test scores used for comparison were those obtained on the Metropolitan Achievement tests given over the past four years. In all cases the scores were obtained with heterogenous grades, and through that period the special classes for retarded pupils were in operation.

Furthermore, no more time was devoted to reading under the phonetic program than had been given to reading with the basic look-say readers.

It may be significant that nearly all of the teachers involved in the new program were opposed to it at the start, fearing that,, the phonetics would be too complicated, too slow, and confusing to the pupils. Within a few weeks their opposition vanished, and all were enthusiastic about the new program. At mid-year, all grades were further advanced in the basic readers than ever before. Before the end of the year, many pupils in each grade were reading in the basic readers of the next higher grade. Even the retarded pupils made .7 to .8 of a grade progress as compared to .2 and .3 of a grade in previous years.

All pupils did much more independent reading. This year we have second graders (the top group) who will finish the 3-2 basic reader before the first of April. In other grades, comparable progress is being made. Second graders are borrowing books for independent reading from the third, and even the fourth grade room. Checks by the teachers indicate that they comprehend what they read independently. Parents report that their children read more at home, from books, magazines and newspapers; understand what they read, and effectively apply the phonetic skills in attacking new words not encountered in the reading vocabulary which they have developed in school. The response from a questionnaire sent out in May of last year showed parents overwhelmingly in favor of the new reading system, and enthusiastic about the improvement in reading shown by their

children. The teacher of the retarded pupils at the primary level reports that most of these children will show a full grade of progress this year. These are the children who have been almost completely lost under the previous method of teaching reading.

In presenting the case for phonetics, we do not mean to convey the impression that there is no value in the methods commonly referred to as look-say. Certainly no one method has all the answers to the reading problem. We do contend that phonetics provide the sounder basis for teaching reading, and that as the child progresses other word attack and word recognition techniques used in the look-say approach may be utilized.

It is interesting to note that all of the leading authors and publishers of basic readers justify their readers by stressing that they do include phonetics in their reading programs. They do so, but our experience indicates strongly that they do so too late, And too little.

Their programs actually progress more slowly because the reading vocabulary is so rigidly controlled and limited. The phonetic approach opens the doors wide, and the development of a reading vocabulary is limited only by the ability of the child to comprehend – there are no artificial restraints impeding his progress as there are in the controlled vocabulary readers. The phonetic approach will not solve all the problems of reading, nor will it necessarily make all children good readers; but we contend that our experience demonstrates a definite possibility, or probability, that with the phonetic approach we can teach more children to read better than we have done in the past.

Undoubtedly, all that has been presented in this discourse is an over simplification of the case against look-say, and for the phonetic program. However, in view of the results obtained in our grades, and in other areas over the nation, where the phonetic approach has been effective in promoting greater achievements in reading, it would seem only logical that all school systems should give serious thought to returning to phonetics as the basis for teaching reading, and to conducting experiments with the phonetic approach.

Our formula for teaching reading more effectively:

1. Phonetics.
2. Budget ample time for reading and related activities.
3. Let nothing interfere with the reading program.
4. Have all teachers using the system follow the plan meticulously.

Of these ingredients in our formula only number one is new in our program. All the others were utilized in the previous look-say program. To what, then, has the great advance in achievement been due? *To Phonetics as a basis for learning to read.*

Dissent and Defense

If there is a controversial issue in education, it's the teaching of phonics. Superintendent Dorr's article was sent to two Maine teachers who have strong convictions on the subject, Clayton Reed of Farmington State Teachers College and Arthur Olson of the College of Education of the University of Maine. The two men were invited to comment on Mr. Dorr's experience. Then it seemed only fair to give the author the last word.

Reading Problem – Nothing New! By Clayton Reed

There is, has been, and will be a reading problem for children and educators as long as there are schools. How to solve such problems with some degree of success is our goal. Anyone who implies or directly indicates that his system has the answer or formula has not tested his basic assumptions sufficiently. Therefore when "something old has been added" and develops such outstanding success in such a short time, somebody may be headed down the same road that many other school

systems have gone with regret.

All studies in the extensive use of the phonetic approach indicate that they have been abandoned or modified greatly toward the middle of the road position. Any good basal system with a competent teacher who uses a "multiple approach" to teaching of reading gives a child more possible avenues to his reading needs than extensive phonetic drill unrelated to his immediate problems.

One illustration of a phonetic system that has created considerable interest and assumed success is the Carden System which was in operation around the New York City area. When one examines the data as submitted by Arthur Gates, the same conclusion can be reported as already indicated earlier. Teachers using the Carden System reported that children were about a year ahead of their grade in reading ability. However, upon further examination, when average mental ages were converted to mental *grades*, we find these children not measuring up to their mental level. Moreover, children in the average American school with the use of other reading approaches did a better job with the same age and scholastic aptitude.

If one looks at the historical data available, one reaches the same conclusion that any reading system weighted heavily with phonics does not pay rich dividends.

The teachers who used the Carden System with such assumed crowning success began to discover "something was wrong." To correct their problems they had to abandon the system or modify their approaches.

In the last analysis no one set of basal readers or any system weighted heavily in phonics or any other skill will accomplish the goal of excellent reading performance. However, a basal system and a teacher who has the competency to guide children as individuals with unique problems, can teach reading successfully and do a better job. No system with a heavy dose of phonics from 1900 to 1962 has survived! The key is a teacher who can help the child to acquire all the skills necessary to unlock the meaning of the printed word.

An Oversimplification By Arthur V. Olson

The vast majority of reading teachers would agree completely with the idea presented in this article that we are not satisfied with the reading level of children in our schools. I sincerely hope that we will never be satisfied. There is always room for improvement.

I further believe that most teachers would agree with the author that there are many students in our schools who do not receive enough work in the word analysis skills through the basal readers and who need more practice with supplementary material. The points which I have mentioned are not new; every teacher that I know of has been saying the same thing for years.

After reading the article, however, there were several questions that came to mind.

- (1) What "Phonics system" is being used? As in all material that is published there are some materials that are good and some which are poor. Why doesn't the author tell us the material he is using?
- (2) Does the author know anything about the basal reading approach? It bothers me that the author refers to the look-say method as being the current approach to teaching reading. If the author knows so little about current practices in reading as to refer to look-say as current, I wonder how much faith we can put in his judgment on phonics show
- (3) If the author is trying to prove his point by statistics, then why doesn't he report all of the facts?

The author doesn't tell us the controls in setting up the "experiment" nor does he describe his population accurately. In fact, all we know is what he wants to tell us. When using "facts" to prove his point, he uses such quantitative phrases as "many pupils," "large numbers," "too many."

(4) Does the phonetic approach really open the door wider for a larger reading vocabulary? The author seems to be making the same mistake as other critics of the basal reading approach in assuming that the children do not read anything but the basal readers. Don't they read in social studies, arithmetic, science, etc?

In summary of my evaluation of the article, I can use the words of the author, "all that has been presented in this discourse is an over-simplification."

Rejoinder

It is comforting to know that Dr. Olson agrees with me on two points despite the fact that he entertains extreme doubts concerning my intelligence, my judgment, and my knowledge of current practices in the field of reading.

What is Dr. Olson criticizing, the article I wrote, or an article he thinks I should have written? If criticism is logical and unbiased, should it not be given in terms of the purpose of the article being evaluated? There was no intent to present an analysis of the phonetic program we have used effectively for the past two years, nor to try to prove anything through an extensive presentation of statistical facts. The sole intent was to report a reading program which, during the past two years, has produced results of such significance that it is difficult to understand how anyone, even Dr. Olson, can dismiss them casually.

We have had many inquiries, a number of visitations, and several conferences with teachers and supervisors dealing with our phonetic programs. As a result, the program has been adopted in whole or in part by thirty-three towns or school unions in the State.

I will attempt to answer Dr. Olson's questions briefly, in the order in which they were presented.

1. The phonics system used is the "Phonetic Keys to Reading" published by The Economy Company of Oklahoma City. Before Dr. Olson categorically condemns this as one of the poor programs, I suggest that he be fair enough to check on the widespread use of this program throughout the nation.

2. This question is not worthy of an answer. Does one detect in this question a little of the attitude of many of our learned Doctors who question the judgment of anyone who does not accept, without reservation, their own theories? Could we not say, with some basis of logic, that it was these erudite Doctors of Philosophy, through their "controlled experiments" and "statistical analyses," who were responsible for the development of reading programs which have been the cause of, or at least have contributed to, the present chaos in reading?

3. The author, as pointed out above, was not trying to prove anything by statistics. He was reporting on something which had happened. If what has happened in our locality with respect to reading is of interest to others, we will gladly furnish the facts and statistics to anyone who asks for them. Probably Dr. Olson would not accept our "experiment" and our "controls" as scientifically acceptable. However, the bases on which our results were evaluated are sufficiently sound to warrant a reasonable assumption of their validity. Our only claim is that our results are such as to be highly significant and worthy of investigation.

If Dr. Olson is open-minded enough to be willing to look beyond his own theories, he can have the

facts by requesting them. This opportunity was presented to him in the summer of 1961 by some of the students attending a reading workshop conducted by him. As I understand it, these facts were dismissed very casually by Dr. Olson and no attempt was made to seek further information.

He challenges my judgment and knowledge of current reading practices. I challenge his open-mindedness, and the sincerity of his interest in searching for the answers to the reading problem.

4. The phonetic approach does open the doors to a wider reading vocabulary. This has been demonstrated not only in our situation, but in many other school systems over the country. Perhaps Dr. Olson would be interested enough to seek information about these programs. We shall gladly furnish the information, if he wishes it. Isn't the good Doctor being a little absurd in assuming that I think children read nothing but the basal readers? After all, I do get into many elementary classrooms quite frequently. Does he? Children do read in social studies, arithmetic, science, etc., if they can. The complaint I hear from teachers is that pupils who have been taught to read (?) by the method commonly used cannot read in these areas with comprehension – that they experience great difficulty, and often almost total lack of ability, in attacking new words.

We do not claim to have solved all the problems of reading, but we do claim, and with justification, that with the phonetic approach to reading we have enabled more children to read better in all areas than was possible with the programs used previous to September, 1960.

Does a jump from the fifth to the seventh and eighth stanines in the median score in reading attained on achievement tests (Metropolitan. used for the last four years) have any significance? Our controls? The same teachers (not specially trained in the phonetic teaching), the same amount of time allotted, the same basal reading system, the same achievement tests. Only one new thing added – the phonetic approach. A scientifically conducted program? Perhaps not, but are not the results worthy of further investigation before condemning them?

Mr. Reed seems to place great reliance on the results of the testing by Dr. Gates. Is he aware that the results obtained by Dr. Gates have been invalidated?

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1964 p16]

Cartoon



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7. A Phonemic Notation as an Initial Teaching Medium, by Godfrey Dewey, Ed. D.

Simpler Spelling Association, Lake Placid Club, N. Y.

Today as never before, it is being recognized that the Paramount problem of American education is to teach children to read effectively. Ability to read understandingly is the bane of the educational pyramid and conditions all subsequent formal instruction. For the school child, reading failure is a chief cause of school dropouts which contribute greatly to juvenile delinquency, and for the adult functional illiteracy is, in our increasingly technological economy, an increasingly important factor in unemployment.

Students of the problem have long realized that the complex irregularities of our traditional orthography have been a chief factor in retarding the education of the English-speaking child as compared with children in countries such as Italy or modern Russia, which enjoy a simple and regular phonetic spelling. Educators have assumed, however, that since there was no immediate prospect that the present adult generation would accept any significant degree of spelling reform, there was nothing to do but to accept our present English spelling as one of the given conditions, the only possible medium for reading instruction. This plausible but erroneous assumption has resulted in the proliferation of reading breeding methods of every description, all striving to sweep the difficulties of English spelling under the rug, where unfortunately they bulk too large to be disposed of in so summary a fashion. There is however, a solution to the problem, dependent on the *medium* of initial instruction rather than the *method*, which gives promise of revolutionizing the present concepts and results of reading instruction.

For more than a century estimates have been made and evidence has been accumulated that normal English-speaking children can be taught effectively to read and write using *only* a substantially phonetic or rather phonemic notation until they have acquired considerable degree of fluency, and thereafter making a gradual transfer to reading and writing with the conventional alphabet and spelling, in at least a year's less time than they can be taught by any established method using conventional spelling only – and with markedly superior results, judged strictly by present conventional tests and standards.

Previous evidence for this profoundly significant fact includes the experiments in the schools of Waltham, Massachusetts from 1852 to 1860, using the phonetic alphabet devised by Sir Isaac Pitman and Alexander J. Ellis in 1847–9 in the schools of St. Louis, Missouri from 1866 for at least 20 years, using a modified alphabet devised by Dr. Edwin Leigh; and in 16 different schools in Great Britain between 1915 and 1924, using the New Spelling developed by the Simplified Spelling Society, a substantially phonemic no-new-letter notation almost identical with the World English Spelling of the Simpler Spelling Association in America. All this evidence, however, antedates the modern era of statistically balanced control groups, objective measurement and standardized tests, and therefore cannot be expected to convince the skeptic of the validity of so extraordinary a

conclusion.

More recently Dr. Frank Laubach, whose achievements in promoting literacy in more than 300 languages throughout the world are well known, has impressively demonstrated the strikingly superior results to be attained by using a phonemic notation as an initial teaching medium. His *English the New Way* employs a digraph notation which involves one diacritic but no new letters, and is otherwise almost identical with the British New Spelling or the American World English Spelling, except that he admits some 40-odd alternative forms to increase the similarity to conventional spelling, thereby paving the way for the complete transition.

More recently Sir James Pitman, grandson of Sir Isaac Pitman, is at last achieving, by means of a series of rigorously controlled experiments under unimpeachable auspices, the greatly needed conclusive evidence of the enormous superiority of a phonemic notation as an initial teaching medium. These experiments, begun in September 1961, in 75 schools in Great Britain are being conducted by the Reading Research Unit of the London University Institute of Education, in collaboration with the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, and with the guidance of a distinguished committee of educational and linguistic experts.

These experiments and the published teaching materials growing out of that experience are using a notation, the initial teaching alphabet or i.t.a., devised by Sir James Pitman, which consists essentially of 24 letters of the lower-case Roman alphabet (omitting q and x), augmented by 20 new characters which are in most cases ligatures or blends of the single type digraphs of the British New Spelling or World English Spelling, supplemented as in the case of Dr. Laubach by 40-odd alternative symbols intended to ease the transition to traditional orthography.

Definitive results must await a longer period of investigation but three preliminary reports dated November, 1962, May 1963, and November 1963 have already been published in this country. These clearly reveal not only the very marked superiority of the experimental groups but also the fact that the transition to fluent reading and writing of conventionally spelled English, which is the chief point of skepticism for those with no first-hand knowledge of the technique is actually taking place earlier and more easily than anticipated by the experimenters. Similar results are already emerging from a number of experiments begun in the United States during the school year 1963-64.

Since most proposals in this field have been put forward by those who look ahead to a thoroughgoing reform of English spelling, which would eventually make the transition to conventional spelling standards unnecessary, it should be emphasized that a phonemic notation as an *initial teaching medium* is completely divorced from spelling reform. Whether the notation to be employed, as a teaching instrument only, would be entirely suitable for eventual spelling reform purposes is of no more importance to the immediate educational problem than the nature of any other audio-visual aids used for class-room teaching of languages or other subjects but discarded after their purpose has been served. Its ultimate influence on the canons of English spelling is no doubt inescapable but that lies one or perhaps two generations in the future.

Pitman's initial teaching alphabet has already demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that

employment of a phonemic notation, sufficiently compatible with traditional orthography, for the first teaching of reading and writing can very greatly surpass the results achieved by any of the currently accepted methods or materials of reading instruction. It remains to be proved, however, whether comparable results may be achieved by use of an initial teaching medium such as World English Spelling (WES) which employs only the characters of the familiar and universally available Roman alphabet. WES, fully described in *A Summary of World English Spelling* (free on request), is a substantially phonemic notation devised with special reference to its compatibility with traditional orthography, with the result that it is immediately readable without error and with little hesitation by those familiar only with traditional orthography, and that traditional orthography is immediately readable without serious difficulty by those familiar only with WES. It assigns a single explicit value to each of the letters of the Roman alphabet (omitting only c, q, and x) and supplements them by a series of equally explicit digraphs. WES has the same phonemic basis as the British New Spelling, Sir James Pitman's. i.t.a., and Dr. Laubach's *English the New Way*, but since it has no new letters or diacritics it can be written on any ordinary typewriter or set in any printing plant. If such a no-new-letter notation proves to be feasible as an initial teaching medium it offers several important, advantages

For the Pupil, it obviates learning to read, and especially to write, a substantial proportion of characters, usually of more complex form, which will shortly be abandoned, instead of gaining additional practice in reading and writing the Roman alphabet letters which are a lifetime acquirement.

For the Teacher, it facilitates preparation, on any standard typewriter, of supplementary teaching materials adapted to particular situations.

For the pupil and the teacher, it permits the use of the standard typewriter as a teaching instrument in the very earliest grades, as demonstrated by Wood and Freeman 35 years ago, increasing fluent expression at a time when control of the more complex motions of writing is still a considerable effort

For the adult abroad, to whom English is a second language, it offers the exciting possibility, of continuing by to use the initial teaching medium as an auxiliary international communication medium, reading traditional orthography but *writing* in the initial teaching medium, thereby bypassing the considerable added burden of learning to *write*, i.e., to spell, traditional orthography.

Teaching materials for Pitman's i/t/a are immediately available and may be adopted with confidence. Similar materials employing World English Spelling will be made available as soon as educators are ready to experiment with them.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1964 pp18–21 in the printed version]

8. The Triple Revolution, by Helen Bowyer.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, Washington, D.C.

March 22, 1964

President Lyndon B. Johnson,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We enclose a memorandum, *The Triple Revolution*, for your consideration. This memorandum was prepared out of a feeling of foreboding about the nation's future. The men and women whose names are signed to it think that neither Americans nor their leaders are aware of the magnitude and acceleration of the changes going on around them. These changes, economic, military, and social, comprise *The Triple Revolution*. We believe that these changes will compel, in the very near future and whether we like it or not, public measures that move radically beyond any steps now proposed or contemplated.

We commend the spirit prompting the War on Poverty recently announced, and the new commissions on economic dislocation and automation. With deference, this memorandum sets forth the historical and technological reasons why such tactics seem bound to fall short. Radically new circumstances demand radically new strategies.

If policies such as those suggested in *The Triple Revolution* are not adopted we believe that the nation will be thrown into unprecedented economic and social disorder. Our statement is aimed at showing why drastic changes in our economic organization are occurring, their relation to the growing movement for full rights for Negroes, and the minimal public and private measures that appear to us to be required.

Sincerely,

(Names of the 32 signers)

cc – The Majority and Minority Leaders, The Senate, The House of Representatives, The Secretary of Labor.

The signers comprised 32 men and women prominent in science, education, medicine, religion, economics, journalism, law, labor. Among them were W. H. Ferry, Vice President of the Fund for the Republic, Dr. Donald B. Armstrong, Second Vice President, till his retirement, of Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. Gerard Piel, Publisher of the *Scientific American*, and Linus Pauling, the only person in the whole world to twice receive the Nobel Prize in all the 63 years of its activity.

Though the Committee maintains headquarters in Washington, its members are intimately aligned with The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California. The Center is an agency of the Fund for the Republic, which itself was created by The Ford Foundation "to promote the principles of individual liberty expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution." From its beginning in 1956, its President has been Dr. Robert Hutchins, till then

Chancellor of Chicago University. The word *radically*, both in the letter to the President and thruout the memorandum is used in its root sense of *basically, fundamentally*.

The memorandum comprises 27 pages of triple spaced typescript and may be had free on request to the Committees Washington address or to the Center, Santa Barbara. Any *Bulletin* reader who has not yet secured a copy, should do so promptly, and *read it*. If there is anything which could make yet more urgent the general upswing of intelligence which a rational spelling would bring about, it is the *shape of things to come* which this document portrays.

The Triple Revolution is the inter-related total of three stupendous onrushing changes in our American way of life. These the Committee discusses under the headings Cybernation, Weaponry, and Human Rights. Of the first, it says it has been brought about by the combination of the computer and the automated, self-regulating machine. This is heading us into a system of almost unlimited production of goods and services which requires progressively less human labor. Even now it is abolishing human jobs and pay checks to the point of reducing to proverty, slumdom, physical and social deterioration, some 38 million men, women and children, who, did we adopt those radically new strategies the letter recommends, could be enjoying an affluence, a physical, mental and moral well-being beyond anything the President's War on Proverty can achieve.

Of the second constituent revolution. the memorandum says "New forms of weaponry have been developed which cannot win wars but which can obliterate civilization. So little to date, however, has been our realization of fateful futility of this weaponry that we are spending a high proportion of our natural resources and of our manhours, physics; and mental upon its development. Indeed, so many men and women owe their paychecks to these weapons, which it would be national suicide to use, that the Committee's estimate of the disastrously poor – now some 38,000,000 men, women and children – would rise to flabbergasting numbers could "peace break out" between us and the Soviets.

At the moment of writing, the civil riots revolution has reached mob action and police reaction in both the North and South of our land. But at its worse it is, as the memorandum puts it "only the local manifestation of a world wide movement towards the establishment of social and political regimes in which every individual will feel valued, and none will feel rejected on account of his race". Without in any way underestimating this second and third component of their Triple Revolution, the Ad Hoc Committee is mainly concerned with cybernation. It is in that field that the most basically new thinking and the most fundamentally new strategies must be applied "if our nation is not to be thrown into unprecedented economic and social disorder."

The basic tenet of this new thinking is startling to the average citizen. "As a first step," says the memorandum, "it is essential to recognize that the traditional link between jobs and income is being broken." The economy of abundance which cybernation can so easily bring about, can sustain all citizens in comfort and economic security whether or not they engage in what is commonly reckoned as work. Wealth produced by machines rather than by man is still wealth. We urge, therefore, that society, through its appropriate legal and governmental institutions, undertake an unqualified commitment to provide every individual and every family with an adequate income as a matter of right. This undertaking we consider to be essential to the emerging economic, social and political order in this country. We regard it as the only policy by which the quarter of the nation now dispossessed and *soon to be dispossessed* by lack of employment, can be brought within the abundant society. The unqualified right to an income would take the place of the patchwork of

welfare measures – from unemployment insurance to relief – designed to insure that no citizen or resident of the United States actually starves.

The Committee realizes that there must be a transition period and we will leave our readers to gather from their own copy of the memorandum, the step it envisages for this. They are, of course, more or less tentative, for neither these 32 thinkers nor anyone else can predict either the steps or the speed with which in the next few years the computer and the self-regulating machine will take over *most* of the wage-paying jobs still performed by the human hand and brain. A year ago the chief victims of displacement were unskilled and low-skilled laborers – this year they are joined by a growing horde of engineers, technologists, accountants and lesser executives.

The President's reply stated that he had committed his administration to an unrelenting war on poverty and recognized that "Rapid advances in technology and sharp changes in the direction and location of economic activity pose both challenges and problems for the nation. Your Committee has clearly been willing to take a completely fresh look at these matters. You may be sure that the Committee's analysis and recommendations will be given thoughtful consideration by all those in the Executive Branch who are concerned with these problems."

Among those most deeply concerned was Sargent Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps and Special Assistant to the President in his war on poverty. "It seems to me," he wrote the Committee, "that your ideas go further, or at least are differently stated than those which we have adopted, but I hope that you have found the objectives stated in the president's message and in the proposed legislation he has submitted to the Congress to be worth while and worthy of your support."

This proposed legislation was the creation of an Office of Economic Opportunity and an appropriation of \$962.5 million dollars to finance its first year. The basic difference between the outlook of the Bill and the memorandum of the Ad Hoc Committee is that it does not "recognize that the traditional link between job and income is being broken." All that link calls for is sufficient education and sufficient special training to enable the would-be job holder to work on that more highly skilled level which cybernation will more and more demand. Of the nine projects proposed by the Bill, four address themselves to providing this education and special training. They are therefore, of special interest to our Bulletin readers, One of them authorizes the OEO Director to make grants to states to provide basic education and literacy training to adults, If literacy training here means teaching illiterates to read and write and near-illiterates to read and write better, through what medium is the teaching to be initiated? Through the same old spelling bedlam (who, do, you, two, shoe, blue, flew, through – please, seize, squeeze, frieze, these, keys) which keeps some third of even our high school enrollment reading at fifth grade level or below, Or through some weeks or months, to begin with, of a wan-sien-wan-sound system which could present these unrecognizables as just the old familiar *hoo, doo, yoo, too, shoo, bloo, floo, thro* – and *pleez, seez, skweez, freez, theez, keez* of their everyday speech? We have the word of outstanding reading specialists, both here and in England, of how speedily and enthusiastically men and women even past middle age learn to read in this phonemic print, and how easily, moreover, once they are fluent in this medium, they can switch to ordinary print. And how this new and many faceted skill vitalizes minds and hearts all but sunk in apathy. Is the President aware of this? Is Sargent Shriver, the Director-to-be (so one hopes) of the OEO? Are the state and local educational authorities to whom this adult project will be delegated? Wouldn't it be well for us to make sure of that through letters addressed to them individually, and letters in our local papers to the taxpayers who will foot the bill?

How many *Bulletin* readers remember the C.C.C.? – that project through which, during the Great Depression, FDR offered adolescents then out of school and out of work, a chance at a healthy and worthwhile living by helping to conserve their country's vital natural resources. Faced with an even greater conglomeration of these loose-end young, LBJ's Bill envisages a program very similar.

This coming year it hopes to enroll some 40,000 of them in camps in the national and state forests and recreation parks and wherever else they can serve their country and their own best interests. After screening in a number of reception centers, the applicants who pass muster are to be assigned to whichever of the many camps gives promise of best fulfilling for each the basic object for which the project was designed.

That object is to return him to normal life, well fitted to find and hold a job and discharge all the usual duties and obligations of a responsible young citizen. His life in camp will be apportioned to work, sports and other wholesome recreation, whatever basic education he needs and training in some marketable skill. Here, too, it is probable that this basic education must consist largely of remedial work in reading and writing, at least during the enrollee's first year. As it is none too probable that the local education authorities to whom this instruction will be entrusted will be aware of the magic a phonemic spelling works on the mind – and often on the whole life attitude – of the teenage retardee, well, here is another urgent reason for writing the President and his Special Assistant, Sargent Shriver. \$190,000,000 is a lot to spend on even as many as 40,000 adolescents, unless, among other things, it makes reasonably competent readers of them.

But our state and national forests, recreation parks, etc. are not the only areas of our national life which can provide employment for our needy young. Right in their hometowns are hospitals, schools, libraries, playgrounds, city parks, etc. too understaffed to work at proper efficiency and without the means to hire the help they need. Here, surely is a field for part time work for the teenagers of low income families who ought still to be in school. So the OEO proposes to use \$150,000,000 of its appropriation to permit 200,000 to stay there, or, if dropouts, to return. Again the reading problem bobs up. Some of them, at least, will need remedial instruction. Is this to be started on the *gallon, fallen – mention, pension – subjection suggestion – licquor, dicker* which ten years of previous schooling have failed to get into their heads, Or is it to be preceded by some weeks of phonemic spelling, such as the *i/t/a*, which, for three years now, has been making *readers* of retardees in England, and in this one year of its application, in several schools here in America.

A fourth primarily educational project of OEO apportions 72.5 of its 962.5 millions to permit students of low income families to enter upon or continue university-level education. That is to say, the Director of OEO would enter into agreements with these institutions to pay part time employment for them – for 140,000 of them this first year. Even here there well may be good reason to write the President and Mr. Shriver. Thousands of freshmen have to spend their time and their tuition fees in remedial courses before they can read and write well enough to register in College English 1.

For the rest, the President's Bill concerns itself with ways of creating jobs for unemployed adults and the training necessary for holding them. Also with loans to low income rural families where these seem likely to produce a permanent increase in their income. And with some provision of housing, sanitation, education and child day-care for migrant workers and their families. The Bill has already passed the Senate, and seems likely to pass the House. So the Office of Economic Opportunity may soon be a factor of our American way of life.

Good luck to it, and warm appreciation of the Presidential concern which called it into existence. But ... how long can it delay the "silent conquest" of cybernation? To what extent, even this coming year and the next, can it keep human muscles and human minds (those, that is, below the highest and the rarest) doing the work which the automated machine and the computer can do faster, better and more cheaply? Why add another Act of Congress to that "patchwork of welfare-legislation" through which, down the centuries, we have been trying to lessen the distress to which the "link between job and income" has condemned such millions of men, women, adolescents and children? Why not welcome with both hands that outpour of goods and services which, properly distributed would bring every American from nonagenarian to newborn, within that affluence in which – as of now – some half of them live today.

So the Ad Hoc Committee is still asking – not at all reassured by the probable passage of the OEO Bill, and not at all browbeaten by the reaction of much of the press. *Euphoria Unlimited! Why work? Universal featherbedding. Something for Nothing. People Paid Not to Work. Another Giveaway Scheme. Ad Hoc will put us all in hock*, jibed the headlines quite as if, along with laborers, accountants and engineers, there weren't already enough printers and journalists pounding the sidewalks in search of a job. An honorable exception to this prevalent contemptuousness is the *Times* of London, which captioned its comment of 23-3-64 with *Problems of New Abundance* and quotes in all seriousness the Committee's position: "The continuance of the 'income-through-job link' as the only major mechanism for granting the right to consume, acts as the main brake on the almost unlimited capacity of a cybernated production system." Another example of realistic thinking appeared in the *Telegram-Tribune* of San Luis Obispo, California. "Is there a way out?" it asked, and recognized that, as of now, "The dilemma of proverty amid abundance is here and it won't go away."

Among the really probing reactions to the memorandum is that of C. V. Parkinson, who asks. "Can we accept the Committee's basic premise? Or do we, at the very least, want to consider some nagging points? ... We grant that automated machinery can turn out great quantities of material the world wants and needs. But even the machines have to be supplied with some sort of raw material, and the world is not flush with currently used raw material, if one looks past the immediate future ... In the building of the world's top soil, which contains plant foods, approximately 7000 years – or 1000 years for each inch of plowable 7 inch depth – is the required natural time element. At the present time all geological and pedological surveys indicate that this food-producing topsoil is being depleted at the average rate of one tenth inch per year. Which means, if the process continues unabated, that the next 70 years will see the entire 7 inches of the world's topsoil lost.

The world is consuming nearly two quadrillion gallons more water than is annually replaced by rainfall – a rate nearly 35 times faster than natural replacement. This suggests that there is something more to the problem of abundance than the capacity of the machine to grind out finished goods ... But this is not the basis on which to fault the memorandum. The questioned is rather whether it has aired a problem which must be aired. And the answer is, *it has*."

"There will be many a wagging head to pronounce the authors of *The Triple Revolution* fools of the rankest order. But without such fools, man might still be chipping flakes from the rhyolite of Langdale."

Interweaving with the three revolutions going on today, is the aftermath of a revolution achieved

yesterday – and achieved with an even greater unawareness of its inevitable outcome, That was the cutting down of the human deathrate while leaving the birthrate unchecked. The resulting "population explosion" was already slowing down results in many lines of human betterment before cybernation began adding its enormous complications. No need to go into most of that with our *Bulletin* readers, but there is one point that can hardly be overstressed. As of now our population explosion is bringing with it a more than proportionate "stupidity explosion." In general the birthrate is highest among that third or fourth of American parents least able to give their offspring either the brains or the upbringing to mature into even averagely competent citizens.

So whether we go all the way with the Ad Hoc Committee, or accept as sufficient the President's approach to the solution to our poverty problem, or remain non-committal pending further study of that topsoil and rainfall essential to our future, either way, it is clear that our country is speeding into a production-consumption system almost inconceivably different from any it has known heretofore. The transition thereto may be achieved before the babies born while I am typing this sentence, pass out of their teens.

They may be our first cybernation generation. The first, that is, with any but hazy memories of the socio-economic organization of our present America. Are we going to bring them up with a happy, self-fulfilling adjustment to the one into which they will mature?

Of the several things necessary to this upbringing – decent housing, decent neighborhoods, adequate family incomes, etc. – adequate education could be the easiest and quickest to provide for them. Could be. *Could be, if* – If we freed it of the roadblock of our spelling; if we imparted it through wun-sien-wun-sound print.

Why don't we? As we look at the Russian, Spanish, Turkish translations of our *whole, bowl, goal, soul, pole, knoll, roll* – don't we ever sense the cruel disadvantage at which we are keeping not only our school children, but every home owner taxed for the support of our schools. Or was Shaw right? Are we people of the English-speaking world "impermeable to reason, to logic, and even to self-interest?" Well, if so, cybernation may come to the rescue, may do for us the simple, invaluable service we don't seem able to do for ourselves. Talking typewriters, talking printing equipment, are now on their way for the phonemic languages, When the U.S.S.R., the widespread Hispanic world, and – before too long – even China, is saving billions of dollars and uncounted hours of time on labor through the use of such mechanisms, shall we still cling to *what, knot, yacht – double, bubble, ruble – go, bow, beau, blow. though, sew, know*, as if it was money in the bank and not the unfortunate handicap it really is – or bring ourselves to spell them in the simple, truthful, necessary way which the machines will demand?

And if then, why not now?

Ed. note: The opinions and ideas expressed in the above article are those of the author, and are not necessarily in conformity with the ideas and objectives of the S.P.B.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Summer 1964 pp21–22 in the printed version]

Book Reviews.

9. The i.t.a. Reading Experiment, by John A. Downing.

**Published for the Univ. of London, Institute of Education, by Evans Bros, Ltd. London.
10/- (\$1.50) 1964. xiv & 143 pp. Reviewed by N. Tune**

This, the latest book on the i.t.a. experimental teaching project, is a complete compilation of three research reports which were given as lectures by the author, John Downing, Project Director. While it is largely confined to telling about the reading project in England, mention is made of several similar projects now going on in U.S. These three reports compare the progress in learning to read of groups of 4 and 5 year old children and their corresponding control classes, who started to learn to read in Sept. 1961. Both the i.t.a. and the control classes were carefully tested and matched by mental ages, They were both taught by the same method – the only difference being the medium of print in which they were taught. The results are impressively demonstrated in some 33 tables and 61 charts.

The first report "Medium or Method" deals with the theory back of the experiment. It explains why there should be a more valid means of comparing the results of using either Look & Say or Phonics as the method of teaching. Page 46 tells how failure to control the medium has prevented settlement of the Look-Say vs. Phonics controversy. Previous attempts to use phonetic alphabets for beginning reading instruction and why they were inadequate.

The second report "The Load and the Code" is a later progress report and deals with the ability to transfer from the code, in this case, i.t.a. to T.O. It shows why the traditional spelling of English is an important cause of failure to learn to read. Yet when the medium in which the children learn to read with ease and confidence is sufficiently alike in appearance, the children can transfer easily with the help of context. Several hypotheses are suggested and then tested to determine their validity.

The third report "Transfer and After" is devoted largely to checking the ability and ease with which the pupils transfer their skill in reading to the new medium – our conventional spelling and printing. Since, after all this is the ultimate goal, the results must be superior to teaching beginning reading in T.O. or the work would not be worth the trouble. The extensive array of tests and their resulting charts should leave no doubt as to the superiority of i.t.a. or the ease of transfer and resulting reading ability.

If this book does not make a big impression in education circles, it will be as G.B. Shaw said, "The English-speaking people are immune to logic and reasoning and even to self-interest, and can only be influenced by costs."

10. Communist Education, Edited by Edmund J. King.

Reviewed by Ivor Darreg.

Published by Methuen & Co. Ltd, Bobbs-Merrill Co, N.Y., 1963 \$2.95. viii & 309 pp.

Ever since the Russian word sputnik became an international byword due to the Soviet space advances, educators in the 'Western world have been asking, with self-deprecatory tones, whether our educational methods were less efficient than the Russians.

Russian Education is in effect an anthology, very much up-to-date, of 12 chapters by as many different authors in different countries. Inside information from such countries as Czechoslovakia and Poland is presented, as well as a thorough discussion of education in Russia and a brief account of China. The account of East Germany would seem to indicate that, whatever the privations the average person there has to endure, there has been some effort to keep up educational standards, albeit with heavy Communist indoctrination.

The overall picture presented in this book is one of regimentation, imposed conformity, indoctrination, and highly centralized bureaucracy, with the individual student's entire life-work being molded and predetermined according to the needs of the state. Nearly all students have to wear uniforms, and all their grades on tests are entered into a book, which becomes a sword of Damocles hanging over them throughout their school days.

The basic principles of Soviet education are tied to whatever the official pronouncements of the "party line" happen to be at the moment, so that educational planners and organizations are not free to adopt any programs or methods that might be considered heretical. Heavy stress is laid on Pavlovian conditioning and allied techniques.

The freedom our educators enjoy, of choosing from a wide range of philosophies and psychologies in elaborating their systems and programs may well prove to be our greatest strength in the long run. The autonomy of our local school boards and individual institutions, with its resultant diversity of educational programs offered, will also assure our eventual success. Thus one should not be overly concerned about the achievements of Communist education, for progress in some aspects has been bought at the sacrifice of others equally or more important.

While this book does not say very much about the procedures in teaching reading, which would be of main interest to readers of this *Bulletin*, there is a brief allusion to the use of syllables rather than letters or whole words, as the basic unit, young pupils without previous instruction can be taught to sound these syllables in about three months. On a syllable basis, the spelling of Russian and other Slavic languages is quite consistent, and instruction is facilitated by the fact that it is much easier to divide words of those languages into syllables than it is in the case of English words.

In the chapter on China, mention is made of the proposals for latinizing the writing, but little hope is held out for any extensive romanization before about 15 or 20 years. The present characters cover a wide range of pronunciations, over a set of what are really separate languages, rather than mere dialects. Until the standard Mandarin dialect can be imposed, extensive application of Roman letters is not very practical.

11. Spell it Right, by Harry Shaw.
Published by Barnes & Noble, New York. 1961-63, \$1.00 147 pp.
Reviewed by Helen Bowyer

The Christian Science Monitor is quite right when it says that "about every stumbling block you can think of has been covered within the 143 pages of this book." And right again in its approving comment that "Throughout the emphasis is on the simplest approach to correct spelling. Even if you have always shied away from spelling rules, you'll like the way Mr. Shaw gives them to you. He does it with a light touch.

What still more impresses this reviewer is his unequivocal recognition of the orthographic bedlam which makes these rules necessary, and the candor with which he shares this realization with his readers. "From bitter experience we know that the spelling of English words is illogical and inconsistent. In fact, it is downright eccentric and on occasion, idiotic, as writers through the years have gleefully or rathfully pointed out."

How does one cope with such a situation? Learn to see words, advises Mr. Shaw. Impress each one on your memory, letter by letter, syllable by syllable, first with eyes open, then with eyes shut. Learn a few simple spelling rules. Use memory devices and *consult your dictionary* until you are sure of the spelling.

Nothing new, to be sure, in these admonitions. Nothing more, here, than hundreds of other books have been prescribing since before McGuffey's day. What makes this one more noteworthy than most is the persuasiveness with which it develops its techniques.

Indeed, had our spelling fallen from Heaven, *az nou iz*, and a voice from on high had thundered, "Change not one jot or tittle of it," I would back Mr. Shaw for an Educational Cross of Honor for his enheartening treatment of an inescapable curse. Or did our meticulous conserving of every bit of our orthographic illogic, inconsistency eccentricity, idiocy, give our schools some vast advantage over those of the phonemic U.S.S.R., I would propose a Congressional Medal of Honor for him. But with their guardian angels weeping over the reading retardation of some one third of even our high school enrollment, and the Soviet fourth grader already winding up a very thoro education in the mechanics of his basic learning tool – well, what is there for a realist to do? The thing which occurs to me at the moment is to suggest that Mr. Shaw entitle his next book *Spel it Riet* and devote his persuasiveness to demonstrating the majik hwich a wun-sien-wun-sound alfabet kuud wiep out the groes miskeoeding throo hwich wee aar nou kripling our luvli muther tung.

Harry Shaw, a graduate of Davidson College, is a noted lecturer, author and editor. He has taught English and directed workshops at New York Univ. and Columbia Univ. He is the author of a *Complete Course in Freshman English* and several other books dealing with writing and literature. He has also written *Errors in English and Ways to Correct Them*, a Barnes & Noble publication. His editorial experience includes work with LOOK magazine, Harper & Bros, E.P. Dutton & Co, Henry Holt & Co, and Barnes & Noble, where he is presently Consulting Editor.

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Spelling is learning all the inconsistencies you wouldn't have if it was written phonetically.