

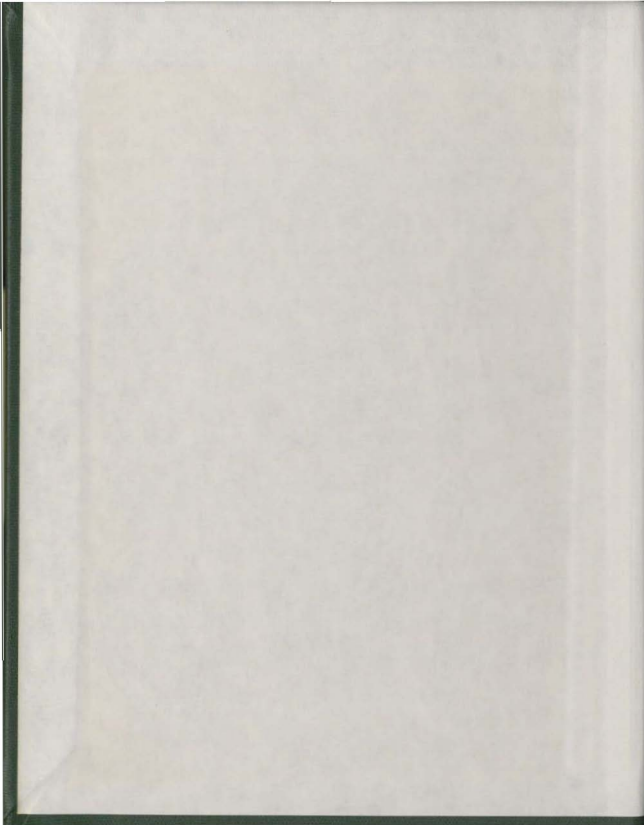
USING THE LANGUAGE
EXPERIENCE APPROACH TO
TEACH READING TO A GROUP
OF SENIOR SPECIAL
EDUCATION STUDENTS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH
TO TEACH READING TO A GROUP OF
SENIOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

An Internship Report
Presented to
the Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Gerard Arthur Leonard ©
January 1979

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this internship was to implement a Language Experience Approach with a group of senior special education students who were apathetic about school in general and about reading in particular. A related aim was to examine the efficacy of the Language Experience Approach in the special education classroom.

The subjects of the study were a group of senior special education students enrolled in a central high school 40 kilometers from St. John's. Of the ten subjects, eight had experienced repeated failure in school and were diagnosed as educable mentally retarded.

The internship was implemented over a period of five months. Procedures were designed to increase the students' abilities in the areas of oral language, sight vocabulary, structural analysis, comprehension, oral reading, and writing skills.

Positive changes in the subjects' reading achievement, attitude and productivity indicated the effectiveness of the internship. Average gains of 1.5 years were seen in reading comprehension and 1.0 years in vocabulary. These gains in reading achievement were significantly greater than those which would normally have been expected during the

period. At the end of the internship period the students expressed a more positive attitude toward reading and in general a more favourable attitude toward school.

It was concluded that the internship was effective in meeting its objectives. The Language Experience Approach, in allowing each senior special education student to begin at his own level, had respected basic readiness differences while simultaneously permitting the individual to gain missing experiences without loss of dignity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
NEED FOR THE INTERNSHIP	2
PURPOSE OF THE INTERNSHIP	4
ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT	4
2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH	6
DEFINITION OF MENTAL RETARDATION	6
CAUSES OF MENTAL RETARDATION	8
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	12
CHARACTERISTICS AND RATIONALE OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH	13
ADVANTAGES OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH	17
LIMITATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH	19
USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH WITH OLDER STUDENTS	20
3. METHODOLOGY	26
OBJECTIVES	26

Chapter	Page
PROCEDURES	26
Subjects	27
Instructional Materials	28
Teaching Procedures	30
Implementing the Approach	32
4. EVALUATION OF THE INTERNSHIP	40
READING ACHIEVEMENT	40
STUDENT ATTITUDES	46
STUDENT PRODUCTIVITY	48
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	50
SUMMARY OF THE INTERNSHIP	50
CONCLUSIONS	51
RECOMMENDATIONS	52
REFERENCES CITED	54
APPENDICES	
A. LIFE SKILLS UNIT	59
B. ESTES' ATTITUDE SCALE	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Results of the <u>Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test</u>	29
2.	Student Grade Scores in Comprehension on Forms A and B of the <u>Nelson Reading Test</u>	41
3.	Student Grade Scores in Vocabulary on Forms A and B of the <u>Nelson Reading Test</u>	42
4.	Grade Scores on Two Administrations of the <u>Slosson Oral Reading Test</u>	44
5.	Student Grade Scores on the <u>Gates-McKillop Oral Reading Test</u>	45
6.	Scores on Two Administrations of the <u>Estes' Scale to Measure Reading Attitudes</u>	47

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The senior special education student generally approaches reading with a whole history of negative school experiences, feelings of failure, and emotional blocks to learning. Current reading materials provided by the Department of Education, however, hold very little interest for this type of student. Rarely do any of the texts speak the language of those students or communicate to them in any meaningful way. The texts are written for the younger student and as such contain few issues of interest to the older student. Although they are usually reading at the primary level, their interests are similar to those of junior high school students. In spite of this, very little high interest, low vocabulary material is provided for them by the Department of Education.

Senior special education students are in need of a fresh new approach to reading if they are to overcome their negative attitudes toward it. Language experience may be that approach. In it the initial material is their own and is based on their experiences.

NEED FOR INTERNSHIP

During the last decade there has been a rapid growth in the number of special education classes in Newfoundland. The Special Services Division of the Department of Education states that ten years ago there were ten classes for educable mentally retarded students in the province. Today there are 638 such classes in operation.

Kirk (1972:40) points out that there is a wide range of students enrolled in special classes. He classifies the major deviations under five headings:

1. Communication Disorders--learning disabilities and speech handicaps
2. Mental Deviations--intellectually gifted and mentally retarded
3. Sensory Handicaps--auditory handicaps and visual impairments
4. Neurologic, Orthopedic and Health Impaired
5. Behaviour Disorders

The largest group is classified as educable mentally retarded. Kirk (1972:196) maintains that this group will often be retarded in reading by three to six years.

When special education teachers in Newfoundland gather for conferences and seminars, the most widely discussed problem is how to cope with reading difficulties. This problem is magnified as the ages of the students increase. It becomes extremely difficult with students who pass the elementary school age. For the purpose of

this study, elementary school ends at grade six. From here students go to grade seven, which is the beginning of junior high school. The average age of students entering junior high ranges from twelve to thirteen years. The teacher is faced with providing reading material that is interesting to them. Curriculum materials prescribed by the Department of Education are too immature because the students may be four to five years behind their grade level in reading. Generally the only curriculum materials available are the basal readers, spellers and workbooks. Because teenage students are not interested in reading primary books, material relevant to the age level is necessary.

The Language Experience Approach provides a process which allows students and teachers to deal with these problems head on. First of all, students are presented with a new way of approaching reading, dissimilar to the primary and elementary readers and phonics workbooks that brought failure before.

Their lack of familiarity with the Language Experience Approach itself encourages hope. Because the approach is new, it captures their interest. In addition, the method builds on the students' feelings of confidence and self-respect by treating them as individuals with ideas worthy of being communicated and preserved in writing. The informal, personal atmosphere of the language experience classroom allows students to relax; it lessens the intense pressure to perform and allows the learning process to

4

flow more easily. The use of a Language Experience Approach permits the students to deal with their reading problems rather than ignore them. Over the years they have learned to avoid reading because it presented so many problems.

In this internship the Language Experience Approach was used for a five month period in association with an ongoing reading program. The school program was an individual one, based on the reading levels and the needs of the students. The program drew on a number of sources. These included the Open Highways readers and workbooks, reading games, SRA reading materials, The Macmillan Spectrum of Skills and high-interest, low-vocabulary books, as well as activities to develop sight vocabulary and word attack skills.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERNSHIP

The major purpose of this internship was the implementation of a Language Experience Approach in an attempt to motivate a group of senior special education students and as a result to improve their reading performance. A secondary aim was to provide some evaluative information concerning the efficacy of the Language Experience Approach in the special education classroom.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This chapter has included a discussion of the problem, the need for the study and the purpose of the

internship. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to mental retardation and the literature related to the Language Experience Approach and to its application with students beyond the primary grades. Chapter 3 contains the objectives of the internship and the methodology used to achieve them. Chapter 4 presents an evaluation of the internship. The final chapter summarizes the study, discusses conclusions drawn from it, and makes specific recommendations.



Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH

The review of the research is divided into two major sections. The first section reviews the relevant research relating to mental retardation. The characteristics and environmental causes of retardation are examined. The focus is on environmental causes since the subjects of this study may, at least in part, be classified as retarded because of their limited backgrounds. The second section reviews the literature related to the Language Experience Approach and to its application with senior special education students. Specifically, it reviews selected writings about the characteristics, advantages and limitations, objectives and assumptions underlying the approach and its use with older students.

DEFINITION OF MENTAL RETARDATION

A widely accepted definition of mental retardation developed by the American Association on Mental Deficiency is stated by Herber (1961:3-4):

Mental retardation refers to subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior.

7

According to Erickson (1965:2), the American Association on Mental Deficiency maintains that:

... mental retardation is a term descriptive of the current status of the individual with respect to his level of functioning and adaptive behavior. Consequently, the individual may meet the criteria of mental retardation at one time and not at another.

The term mental retardation, as it is commonly used, implies a condition of low intelligence, but it does not describe the degree of impairment, nor predict the individual's potential for social and personal competence. For the purpose of this internship it is necessary to provide a more specific definition. The terms most commonly used, by Kirk (1972), Erickson (1965) and Gillespie and Johnson (1974) are educable mentally retarded and trainable mentally retarded.

Erickson (1965:3) explains the term educable mentally retarded:

The term educable mentally retarded is used to describe the child whose intelligence places him in the 50-75 IQ range, and whose learning characteristics and social adjustment suggest the need for special services and school adjustments to meet his needs.

Kirk (1972:164) states that the educable mentally retarded child is one whose IQ ranges from 50-79. He states that an educable mentally retarded child is one who, because of subnormal mental development, is unable to profit sufficiently from the regular school program, but who is considered to have potentialities for development in three areas: (1) educability in academic subjects at a

minimum level, (2) educability in social adjustment to a point where he can function independently in the community, and (3) minimal occupational adequacies to such a degree that he can later support himself partially or totally at the adult level.

The trainable mentally retarded child, according to Kirk (1972:164), is one whose IQ ranges from 30-55. He maintains that the trainable mentally retarded child is one who is not educable in the sense of academic achievement, ultimate independent social adjustment in the community, or independent occupational adjustment at the adult level.

CAUSES OF MENTAL RETARDATION

The research describes many causes of mental retardation. These include brain damage (pre-natal, natal and post-natal) as well as cultural and environmental factors. The focus of this internship will be on cultural and environmental factors.

Gillespie and Johnson (1974) report a study carried out by Skeels and Dye (1939) in which they examined the effect of early environmental intervention on IQ. They took thirteen children from an orphanage and placed them in an institution for the mentally retarded. The children were all under three years of age and had an average IQ of 64. They were placed on different wards of the institution where they could receive large amounts of individual

attention from the older girls and attendants. After a period of one and one-half years their IQ's showed an average increase of 27.5 points as measured by the Kuhlmann Test of Mental Development. They used a contrast group of twelve children who remained in the orphanage. These children had an initial IQ of 87.6. After thirty months this group, who remained in the non-stimulating environment, showed an average decrease of 26.2 points.

Sarason (1959:644) contends that mentally retarded individuals in

... somewhat staggering numbers in our population come from the lowest social classes) or from culturally distinct minority groups, or from regions with conspicuously poor educational facilities or standards.

This view is supported by Dunn (1968) who reports that in the upper range of retardation, 60 to 80 percent of the children are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, studies by Kirk (1968) and Davis (1940) present evidence that mentally retarded children may be functioning at lower intellectual levels because of cultural deprivation.

Kirk (1958) reports a study he carried out with a group of young mentally retarded children who were institutionalized. Fifteen of the subjects were offered preschool education, while twelve children of similar ages and IQ's were retained in the wards. The average age of both groups was 4.5 years at the beginning of the experiment and 7.8 years when last examined.

The results of the study showed that the experimental group gained substantially on the Standford-Binet Scale, on the Kuhlmann Tests of Mental Development, and on the Vineland Scale of Social Maturity. The contrast group dropped on all the follow-up tests. Of the fifteen children in the experimental group, six were paroled from the institution, either to their own homes or to foster homes, because of increases in IQ and adjustment. Not one of the contrast group was paroled from the institution during that period.

In a similar experiment in the community, Kirk (1958) studied twelve children from inadequate homes. These children attended a special community preschool for the mentally retarded. Comparisons were made with their siblings and twins living in the same homes but without the benefits of preschool education. These two groups were also compared to four children who had been taken out of inadequate homes, placed in foster homes and in a preschool.

The study showed that the four foster-home children all made gains in IQ scores as measured by the Standford-Binet Scale and Kuhlmann Tests of Mental Development. Eight of the twelve experimental group who lived in inadequate homes made gains on the same tests. Only one-seventh of the control group of twins and siblings made gains in IQ when tested. Their IQ scores either remained the same or dropped.

Kirk (1972:181) reports a study carried out by Gushin and Spicker in 1968. They applied a specialized

curriculum to a group of 28 five-year old culturally disadvantaged children ranging in IQ's from 50 to 85. They compared their progress with two other groups, one attending a traditional kindergarten and the other remaining at home. The results of the experiment showed that the experimental preschool group of 28 children increased their Stanford-Binet IQ scores from 75.8 at the kindergarten level to 91.3 after the first grade. The traditional kindergarten group increased their IQ's from 74.1 to 82.9, indicating that the traditional kindergarten plus first grade program had some effect on IQ but not as great as the specialized curriculum. The home group made no progress while they were at home, but began to increase their IQ's after first-grade experience.

A similar experiment was conducted by Weikart (1967:163-181). In the Weikart program the experimental children attended school in the morning, and in the afternoon the teachers instructed the parents at home. The results of the study indicated that the experimental group made substantial gains in IQ's during the first year - from 78.4 to 91.1 - while the contrast group made only slight gains. By the second grade, however, there was little difference, with the experimental group having an average IQ of 85.5 and the contrast group 83.9. At the end of the second grade the experimental children were significantly higher than the contrast group on all aspects of educational achievement.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Davidson (1972:1) states that the beginning of the Language Experience Approach can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. She points out, for example, that Leo Tolstoy used the compositions of his Russian students as reading materials.

According to Hildreth (1965), comparative studies involving experience-related approaches and basal approaches were reported in the literature as early as 1926. The related studies cited by Hildreth include those by Gates (1926), Hildreth (1930), Lee (1933) and Allen (1961). As indicated by Hildreth, measured results in these studies reflect some superiority in the achievement of pupils who were taught through experience-oriented instructional methods.

Hildreth (1965) points out that studies by Hann (1965), McCanne (1966), Stauffer and Hammond (1965) and Vilscek and Cleland (1966) show that pupils taught through the Language Experience Approach scored significantly higher on word meaning and paragraph meaning than students taught using the basal reader approach:

Betts used the term Language Experience Approach in a work published in 1946. He described the approach generally and placed it at the highest level of teaching competency on a scale of eleven.

Crutchfield (1966:285) points out that in current practice the Language Experience Approach can be defined more specifically than before in light of its development by classroom teachers in San Diego County, California, who worked under the direction of Roach Van Allen. The class was organized on an individual basis to permit each child to express his own ideas through art media, writing and speaking.

Since 1950 the Language Experience Approach has flourished through the work of Roach Van Allen, Russell Stauffer, Mary Anne Hall, Dorsey Hammond and others. It has progressed far beyond a program for young readers to its present use with senior special education students.

CHARACTERISTICS AND RATIONALE OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Kennedy (1974:77) points out that the Language Experience Approach to teaching reading is based upon the belief that reading should be a part of total language growth. As such, it should be developed in conjunction with instruction in all the communication skills. Kennedy goes on to say that the Language Experience Approach can be used at any achievement level and probably is the most effective standard approach for teaching initial reading skills to disadvantaged children.

According to Spache and Spache (1973:242-243), the Language Experience Approach attempts to bring reading and

the other communication skills together into one program.

They state:

The plan for reading instruction is based not on some series of books but upon oral and written expression and identified needs of the children. The basic motivation is approached through the child's realization that his oral language can be written and thus read.

Lee and Allen (1963:244) maintain that in the Language Experience Approach the following pattern is evident: What a child thinks about he can talk about. What a child talks about he can write. What a child writes he can read. If the child can read what he has written, then he can read what others have written. According to Spache and Spache (1975:244) this pattern is based upon the assumption that reading is a by-product of the child's thinking and oral expression.

Hall (1970:4) also maintains that the Language Experience Approach to reading integrates the teaching of reading with other language arts as children listen, speak, write and read about their personal experiences and ideas. A child's speech, says Hall, determines the language patterns of the reading materials, and his experiences determine the content. According to Hall (1970), Lee and Allen (1963), Spache and Spache (1973) and Kennedy (1974), the Language Experience Approach uses the premise that reading has more meaning for a child when it is based on his experiences.

The pattern of listening, speaking, writing and reading about personal experiences is clearly outlined in diagrammatic form by Hall (1970:5):

Step 1 - SPEECH
The child expresses
his thoughts.

Step 2 - ENCODING
The child or teacher
writes the child's
thoughts.

Step 3 - READING
The child reads
the written
record.



COMMUNICATION
OF MEANING

Hall (1970:5) states that the model shows

... the child's involvement as he moves from talking to encoding to the reading of his thoughts. As the child sees his speech encoded into printed symbols, the communication of the meaning of his speech in written form is evident to him. As he decodes the printed symbols and associates them with his previously spoken thoughts, he is communicating through reading.

The characteristics of the Language Experience Approach are implied in Hall's definition. She states that for the purpose of emphasis three major characteristics must be elaborated on. The first of these, says Hall (1970:6-7), is that pupil-composed materials constitute a major source of reading materials in the Language Experience Approach. Newspapers, basal readers, and textbooks may be used as the child increases his ability to read.

The second characteristic is that the interrelationship of all the communication skills is stressed. Reading is not taught as being separate from the other language arts but as part of them. Listening, speaking, and writing skills are incorporated with instruction in reading.

A third characteristic is that there are no vocabulary controls in the reading materials other than the extent of the child's speaking vocabulary. There will be, however, considerable repetition of function words as there is in basal readers. Hall emphasizes the point that teachers should not alter or shorten sentences to control vocabulary. To do so, she says, conflicts with the basic underlying philosophy of the approach.

The language experience classroom is operated as a language laboratory that extends throughout the day. Vilscek (1968:2) states that language skills are extended and ideas are refined as children listen to stories and recordings, view films and filmstrips, dictate stories to each other, study words, develop flexibility in using the letters of the alphabet to serve their spelling needs, and begin to record their ideas in writing independently.

Vilscek states that one important aspect of the Language Experience Approach is that children have frequent opportunities to read their own writing to the entire class, or to small groups. She maintains that the child who is reading his own writing (the meaning of which he already knows) can devote his energies in oral reading to clarity

of expression, effectiveness of presentation, and other necessary details that make listening to oral reading a pleasure.

ADVANTAGES OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Whether a Language Experience Approach is used as a major reading program or whether it is used in conjunction with other programs, it has inherent in it certain advantages.

Hall (1970:8) points out that the Language Experience Approach is a personal way of learning and teaching. She says that the student using the approach is actively involved in the reading process as he creates his stories and shares them with others. The Language Experience Approach looks at each child as an individual by using different personal materials for each one.

A second major advantage is outlined by Miller (1972:52). She states that the Language Experience Approach enables children to read their own language patterns which are generally much more mature than those found in the basal readers. She further states:

... not only can children read their own language patterns easily, but eliminate the language regression that some reading authorities feel is a limitation to the use of the basal reader approach.

A third major advantage outlined by Hall (1970:9) is that the Language Experience Approach is a creative way of learning and teaching. She states:

Divergent responses are encouraged, accepted and valued as children express themselves in the process of producing reading materials. The child's role, as a producer of personal materials for reading, makes creative thinking a natural part of the learning art.

Teachers who use the Language Experience Approach, Allen (1970:9) maintains, must believe that each child has some potential for creating and that he can express his creative efforts through the medium of language.

The Language Experience Approach is also valuable, says Miller (1972:53), because it stresses the meaning aspect of reading. She says that it is obvious that children always read for meaning when they are reading about their own experiences.

Some further advantages of using the Language Experience Approach are outlined by Allen (1968:7). These advantages are summarized below:

1. A Language Experience Approach does not require standard English as a basis for success in the beginning stages.
2. The approach does not require, nor does it recommend, ability grouping in the class.
3. Materials already available can be used effectively.
4. Children can begin to read using a sight vocabulary which has been developing in the home and community environment.
5. The approach allows for the effective use of aides by the teacher.

6. Team teaching arrangements can be used to great advantage.

7. The approach is upgraded in the sense that much of the direct language teaching is done with materials produced by the children.

8. Children learn to spell the words of highest frequency at the same time that they learn to recognize them as sight words.

9. The program requires that all children participate in a variety of expressive activities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE-APPROACH

Kennedy (1974:85) points out that the possible disadvantages in the use of the Language Experience Approach are more closely related to the way the program is implemented than to any intrinsic weakness in the program itself. Most problems, according to Kennedy, can be avoided with careful planning.

The major disadvantages, as cited in the literature, are summarized by Heilman (1972:210). The first is the difficulty in controlling vocabulary. Too many words may be introduced at one time. Second, basic sight words may not be repeated often enough to ensure mastery. Third, when used exclusively as a method, it puts too much burden on the teacher, demands much time and requires a high level of training. Fourth, it is difficult to adapt this type

of instruction to the needs and abilities of all children. Fifth, it encourages memorization rather than mastery of sight words.

Miller (1972:54) believes that the Language Experience Approach cannot function as a major method for teaching reading beyond the primary grades because children must begin to read in the content fields and cannot be limited to reading about their own experiences at this point. She goes on to say, however, that this approach can still be of value to intermediate grade children who are either culturally disadvantaged or disabled readers.

USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH WITH OLDER STUDENTS

The Language Experience Approach is a method commonly used with younger students. Reports of this approach being used with older students are very scanty. There is, however, some literature that should be considered because of its pertinence to this internship.

A study carried out in San Diego County, California, is reported by Gillespie and Johnson (1974:182). This study may be applicable to the retarded. Sixty-seven teachers participated in the study of teaching reading by the language experience, the individualized and basal approaches. By standardized testing, those conducting the test concluded that through the Language Experience Approach, children could make at least as much progress in learning

reading skills as through other approaches. However, the Language Experience Approach was not considered superior to the others.

Brazziel and Terrell (1962) conducted a study in which a six-week readiness program for one class of twenty-six culturally disadvantaged children emphasized the use of experience charts. These researchers found that experience materials provided meaningful reading content for disadvantaged children when used in connection with other readiness activities and materials. Since this program was a combined one, the effect of the experience materials alone is not known, but the scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test administered at the end of the study were significantly higher for the experimental group than for the three control classes in which experience charts had not been used.

Hall (1972:12) reports a study carried out by Lamb (1971) who also investigated the Language Experience Approach in beginning reading with culturally disadvantaged children. The control group used a modified basal reader approach and the experimental group used the Language Experience Approach. She found no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of achievement and attitude as measured by the California Reading Test and the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory.

A study with educationally retarded seventh graders using the Language Experience Approach in social studies,

mathematics and science was conducted by Wilson and Parkey (1970). While they found little difference in reading achievement between the experimental and control groups as measured on the Botel Word Opposites Test, the experimental group did view themselves more favourably as learners.

A brief review of a study with retarded children carried out by Woodcock is reported by Gillespie and Johnson (1974). He compared the Language Experience Approach with other methods, including i.t.a. and basal readers. No significant differences were found in achievement.

The result of a program with four illiterates ranging in age from sixteen to eighteen in the Women's Job Training Program in West Virginia is reported by Becker (1970). Experience stories which were vocationally oriented were used as reading material. At the beginning of the study the four subjects were classified as non-readers, but after eleven months their scores on the Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales were: 2.8, 3.3, 3.8, and 5.5. All four subjects showed steady improvement in the skills areas. Improvements in attitude and self-confidence were also noticed by the researchers.

A reading approach used with a group of Maori children is described by Ashton-Warner (1963) in her book Teacher. When the students arrived at school in the morning they were each required to tell the teacher the words they wanted to learn that day. These words were recorded on large

sturdy cards. The students then grouped themselves in pairs for the purpose of communicating by hearing and reading each other's words. Next, they individually wrote their words on the chalkboard and read them to the class. The following morning all the words were placed in a pile from which each student picked his own words. Those words not remembered were discarded as unrepresentative of his inner feelings. During the daily period new words were gathered from the activities in the classroom and at home and they were added to the student's pile of words. Ashton-Warner called these words the "key" or "organic" vocabulary since they "came out of" the child and were key words in his life. She states that first words have intense meaning for a child and must be part of his being.

The results of using the Language Experience Approach in two schools with special education classes are outlined by Stauffer (1970:246-247). The results were based on a three-year study. Positive results were reported from students and teachers at the end of the three-year study period. Stauffer states that the most significant change was in the attitudes of the teachers and students. Children who had been discipline problems began to share and teach up with others.

Hall (1978:15) reports a study carried out by Calvert in 1973. This study concentrated on language experience programs at the secondary level. He developed a teaching guide for language experience activities at the seventh and tenth grade levels. Vocabulary, comprehension, writing, attitudes toward teachers, use of

reference materials and use of graphic materials were evaluated. He reported significant differences in pretest and posttest mean scores on attainment of originality and interest in writing samples of seventh-grade and tenth-grade students. Significant differences between pretest and posttest mean scores of vocabulary and comprehension in both grades were noticed. Significant improvement was also shown in the students' ability to use reference and graphic materials. Significant differences were seen in pretest and posttest attitudes toward teachers. He concluded that the Language Experience Approach at the secondary level can be helpful in teaching reading and writing.

Hall (1978:15-16) reports a study conducted by Mallett in 1975. He investigated the efficacy of using the Language Experience Approach with a group of twenty-one North American Indian remedial junior high school students in British Columbia. Gains were measured in vocabulary, comprehension, writing achievement and attitude. After eight weeks of instruction the students using the Language Experience Approach were compared with students using a traditional reading-laboratory approach. A second comparison was made after a further eight weeks. No statistically significant differences were reported on measures of vocabulary and comprehension, although significant differences were reported for both writing and attitude with the group using the Language Experience Approach.

Mulligan (1974:206-211) reports the results of using the Language Experience Approach with potential high school dropouts in a socially and economically depressed area of New York. Significant improvement was noted in comprehension, vocabulary, attitude and attendance. He considers the approach a highly motivational basis for skills acquisition.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the objectives of the internship, and reports on the subjects, materials and teaching procedures used in the implementation of the Language Experience Approach in a senior special education classroom.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this internship was to seek answers to two major questions:

1. Can the use of the Language Experience Approach change the negative attitudes towards reading that a group of senior special education students have developed over the years?
2. Can the use of the Language Experience Approach increase the reading ability of students who are retarded in reading by more than three or four years?

PROCEDURES

To prepare an effective program and to fulfill the objectives of this internship it was essential to assess the subjects in terms of home background, reading ability and intellectual development and to plan specific teaching procedures.

Subjects

The subjects of this study range in age from 13 to 18 years. Two of the subjects are 13, two are 14, two are 15, two are 16, one is 17 and one is 18.

At the time of the study all subjects were enrolled in a special education class in a central high school located 40 kilometers from St. John's. The school accommodates Grades 7 to 11 with a total enrollment of 340 students. The school is equipped with a science laboratory, French laboratory, gymnasium and library. Students are bussed to the school from five surrounding communities.

Subjects A, B, E, F, H, I and J are members of large families. While Subjects C, D and G are members of small families, Subject C is living in a foster home and Subject D is an adopted child. Subjects C and D have both been diagnosed as having emotional problems. Examination of the cumulative records shows early failure in school by all the subjects. Ten first experienced failure in grades one and two and all have repeated grades at the elementary level. School records show that older siblings experienced little success in school and several withdrew before completing grade eight. Approximately 70 percent of the parents are poorly educated and rate low on the economic scale.

The IQ's, as measured by the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test, show that eight of the subjects fall within the definition of educable mentally retarded (IQ 50-75)

as given by Erickson (1965) and Kirk (1972). Two subjects fall within the normal range. Table 1 presents the verbal and non-verbal IQ scores obtained by the subjects on this test. The Lorge-Thorndike Tests were designed so that the average IQ in the standardization group was 100 and the standard deviation was 16 points.

A review of school health records indicates no uncorrected medical problems. Factors such as obesity and family problems are evident within the group. The subjects seem to control themselves adequately and function well with their peer group. They have adjusted well to their class and seem contented. There does not seem to be any stigma attached to the class so that there is a good environment for learning.

Instructional Materials

Instructional materials included writing materials such as notebooks, scrapbooks and handmade books, art materials, newspapers, magazines and textbooks. Several career workbooks were used to implement the Life Skills Unit. These workbooks are listed under resource material in Appendix A. Books on many topics were borrowed from the school library and from the Curriculum Materials Center at the University. Several students became members of the Scholastic Book Club, and an exchange of the books that they purchased provided an even larger variety of reading materials.

Table 1

Results of the Lorge-Thorndike
Intelligence Test

Student	Verbal	Non-Verbal
A	72	59
B	83	74
C	60	72
D	90	82
E	50	67
F	65	72
G	54	52
H	61	76
I	66	73
J	65	68

Teaching Procedures

To prescribe a rigid methodology for using the Language Experience Approach would conflict with its underlying philosophy. There are, however, according to Kennedy and Roeder (1973:14), certain basic methods that assist in the implementation of the approach and its integration with an ongoing reading program. The four methods are:

1. Dictation. The student dictates a short passage, which the teacher prints word for word on a sheet of paper. The teacher reads the story back to the student, pointing to each word while the student repeats it. The student then reads the story by himself. Next, the teacher points randomly to words in the passage to make sure the student is building a sight vocabulary and not just memorizing the spoken words.

2. Transcription. As in the Dictation Method, the student or group of students tells a story from personal experience. Instead of immediately writing, the teacher tape records the story and later transcribes it, either in part or in total. Once the material is typed or written, the student and teacher can use it for all of the sight vocabulary and word attack skills necessary.

3. Directed Writing. In the Directed Writing Method the focus begins to change from reading to writing. This method often employs in-class group writing: questionnaires, group dialogues, and plays. Starting from highly structured one word responses to their own questions

or to one word fill-in-the-blank exercises, students gradually increase the amount of writing they do.

When students can copy and complete sentences competently, they can move on to exercises which are less tightly controlled but which still provide direction and focused skill practice. "Questions" and "Answers" is one such exercise. Each student writes a question on a sheet of paper. The teacher may make suggestions or the students may write whatever they want to ask each other. Written and oral responses are given to these questions. It is with this careful direction that students move on to the development of longer responses.

4. Free Writing. Each student, working individually, writes about a personal or a shared group experience.

Either students choose the topic or the teacher chooses one designed to practice a specific skill. Students write during the class period and are encouraged to ask each other or the teacher for help with spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

While there are no specific procedures laid down for using the Language Experience Approach, Kennedy (1974: 78-79) emphasizes the development of the following:

1. Oral Language. Activities that necessitate talking and discussing are emphasized at all times, since oral language development is viewed as an essential factor in all future progress in language development.

2. Basic Reading Skills. Basic reading skills, such as recognition of sight words, word analysis, and comprehension, are introduced and taught to small groups or individuals as near as possible to the time they are needed.

3. General Language Skills. As instruction progresses, varied types of instructional materials at increasingly difficult levels are utilized to give pupils a greater variety and range of language experiences. Extensive use of listening, oral language, reading and composition leads to the development of more advanced communication skills.

To follow the developmental pattern outlined above it was necessary for the intern to plan an approach for the implementation of the program on a day-to-day basis.

Implementation of the Language Experience Approach

As was indicated earlier in this report, it is extremely difficult to prescribe a rigid method to implement a Language Experience Approach in any classroom and in particular in the senior special education classroom. Careful planning is necessary on a day-to-day and weekly basis, but extensive flexibility must be built into the program.

Before setting the program in motion the intern planned a number of units and devised several activities to aid in the development of each unit. Because of the wide range in reading abilities among the subjects each unit was approached from an individual point of view.

To describe the individual program used for each of the ten subjects would be extremely lengthy. A general description, however, of the method used will be given.

In general, a unit approach was used. There were no time restraints placed on the units. Each subject was allowed to work through the unit at his own rate.

Specific objectives and procedures were laid down for each unit. The intern did not isolate a particular time of day for work on the units and the group did not have to complete one unit before commencing another. The subjects were sometimes working on two or three units at the same time. A detailed account of the Life Skills Unit is given in Appendix A. This unit spanned the whole internship period. A brief description of some of the other units is outlined below.

Early in the internship period a unit was developed around the life and music of Elvis Presley. This time corresponded with his death, and interest in his life and music was high. The subjects collected the lyrics of his songs. Newspaper and magazine articles were collected and displayed. The subjects wrote about his music and life and compiled their information in scrapbooks. Their work was used to develop the areas of oral language, sight vocabulary, structural analysis, comprehension and oral reading.

A number of books and short stories were read to the subjects during the five-month period. The book

Sounder, by William Armstrong, was rated very highly by them. As a result of this interest, the subjects set out to write and illustrate their own version of the book. This often involved rereading parts of the book. Words of interest were isolated for their word banks. Their written work provided the intern with an opportunity to give them practice in analyzing word parts and in developing comprehension skills.

A third unit was concerned with people of interest to the subjects. Several collected information on a singer and his songs while others were involved with their collections on sports figures and movie stars. The material collected was used in basically the same way as was that of the Elvis Presley Unit.

While allowing flexibility in unit development and implementation, the intern was always cognizant of the fact that certain basic areas of reading had to be developed. These key areas, which were focused on daily, are outlined below.

Oral language. The first step in implementing the Language Experience Approach was to increase the subjects' oral language facility. This was accomplished by having them talk about their experiences. Discussion was centered around activities in which the subjects were involved, personal or group experiences, and topics introduced by the intern. The latter often ranged from problems associated

with school to topics of interest in the newspaper. The important factor was to motivate the subjects and have them realize, probably for the first time, that what they had to say was important.

Sight vocabulary. A sight vocabulary grew out of the experience stories and activities of the subjects. From every story each subject isolated a number of words that would become part of his or her word bank. They printed these words on cards and placed them alphabetically in an individual file. They placed the more difficult words on rings. When these words became familiar, they were added to their files. Ample opportunity was provided to practice these words both within the group and individually with the intern.

Special word lists from social studies, home economics, physical education and science were also created. In the later stages of the internship the words collected were used for word analysis exercises and for spelling references when writing.

Several scrapbooks containing labels of commonly used products were prepared by the group. These were used to strengthen vocabulary. Because the subjects had experience with these products, they could easily read the words on the labels and soon they became part of their sight vocabulary.

Structural analysis. Structural analysis involved attacking unfamiliar words by analyzing word parts. The subjects were taught to look for compound words, roots, prefixes, suffixes, contractions and known syllables. These structural analysis skills are outlined in chart form by Hall (1970:94). This chart was used to record skills taught and mastered. The material for analysis came from the subjects' group or individual stories, word banks and other written work. For example, their popular song collection provided an interesting focus for the study of word endings, contractions, prefixes, suffixes and compound words.

Comprehension. Each of the subjects' compositions was used for the practice of comprehension skills. Understanding what was written provided no difficulty because the material was their own. Many different kinds of materials were used to enhance the subjects' comprehension. These included the use of high-interest, low-vocabulary books, newspapers, popular songs, biographies of persons of interest to the subjects as well as fiction and informational books. The unit on the life and music of Elvis Presley and the accumulated material on other personalities, such as actors, singers and sports figures, proved to be a valuable aid to comprehension.

The daily newspaper was used regularly to strengthen comprehension skills. The subjects engaged themselves in such activities as news displays of local, national and

international events, letters to the editor, collection of news items relating to their community and the preparation of news stories with an emphasis on school and community events.

Accounts of movies and television programs were used to advance understanding of character, sequence of events and suspense. For example, the subjects developed character profiles of their favorite television and movie stars. Specific television programs were studied with the idea of showing the importance of a logical sequence of events. Their own stories and other written materials were then used to reinforce this idea.

All the subjects were enrolled in a home economics program. Various recipes were collected and used. This activity provided an effective method of building the skill of following directions as well as increasing vocabulary.

Oral reading. During the internship period, the subjects were given ample opportunity to practice oral reading. They frequently read their own writings to the class and to individuals within the group. Oral reading was encouraged because they were able to concentrate on presentation rather than meaning. The presenter already knew the meaning because he was reading his own work. The subjects were permitted to comment on each other's reading with a view to improvement rather than criticism.

Extensive use was made of the tape recorder and listening center during oral reading. The subjects selected passages they wished taped. With the aid of headphones the group then listened to the passages. Following this the selections were replayed. Suggestions were made by the group as to where improvements could be made. For example, the idea of putting more feeling and stress on certain sections was a frequent suggestion.

Writing skills. A basic principle of the Language Experience Approach is that pupils create materials for reading. In the initial stages of the internship the focus was on group experience stories that were teacher directed. As the subjects developed further skills, their writing became more independent.

In using group experience stories the subjects were given ample opportunity to discuss the topic. Key ideas that resulted from the discussion were outlined on the chalkboard. When this was completed the intern helped them discriminate between relevant and irrelevant details. The remaining points were then put in story form on the chalkboard by the intern. The sentences and other details were provided by the subjects. Immediately after recording the story it was read to the group. The group then read the story and finally individuals volunteered to read it. Written copies were kept by all subjects in individual folders. These were kept for future reference.

As soon as the subjects became accustomed to this procedure and when they had developed more confidence, individual stories were created. The same assistance was now given by the intern on an individual basis. The intern read the composition, the intern and subject read it together and the subject read it alone, with help when needed.

Group and personal experience stories were used to reinforce skills such as editing and proofreading, expanding sentences and substituting more accurate words and phrases.

Chapter 4

EVALUATION OF THE INTERNSHIP

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the internship based on empirical data and the intern's observations. Changes in the subjects' reading achievement, attitudes and productivity levels are presented as evidence of the effectiveness of the internship in achieving its purpose.

READING ACHIEVEMENT

Forms A and B of The Nelson Reading Test, grades three to nine, were administered as pretest and posttest to assess gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary made by the subjects during the internship period.

Grade level scores received by the subjects on comprehension for both forms of this test are presented in Table 2. The results indicate that all of the subjects made some gains in reading comprehension during the internship period. The mean grade level was increased from 3.9 to 5.4, a difference of 1.5 years.

Table 3 presents grade level scores received by the subjects on vocabulary for both forms of the Nelson Reading

Table 2
Student Grade Scores in Comprehension on Forms A and B
of the Nelson Reading Test, Grades 3 to 9

Student	Pretest	Posttest
	Form A	Form B
A	2.8	3.6
B	5.6	6.8
C	2.5	4.5
D	3.7	6.0
E	3.0	4.6
F	4.1	5.6
G	4.1	4.8
H	3.0	5.6
I	4.4	5.6
J	5.5	6.4
Mean Score ^a	3.9	5.4

^aSignificant gain score (correlated t-test, $p < .01$)

Table 3
 Student Grade Scores in Vocabulary on Forms A and B
 of the Nelson Reading Test, Grades 3 to 9

Student	Prestest	Posttest
	Form A	Form B
A	3.0	3.8
B	6.1	7.2
C	2.6	4.2
D	6.7	7.5
E	3.8	4.8
F	4.8	6.0
G	3.5	4.2
H	3.8	4.7
I	3.6	5.4
J	5.4	6.5
Mean Score ^a	4.3	5.4

^aSignificant gain score (correlated t-test, $p < .05$)

Test. The results show that gains were made by all subjects. The mean grade level was increased from 4.3 to 5.4, a difference of 1.1 years.

The Slosson Oral Reading Test was administered prior to instruction and immediately following the internship period. Grade scores for both administrations of the test are presented in Table 4. The results indicate that all of the subjects made gains in vocabulary during the internship period. The mean level increased from 4.3 to 5.3, a difference of 1.0 years.

A related aim of using a Language Experience Approach was to increase oral reading fluency. To assess gains in oral reading, two forms of the oral reading subtest of the Gates-McKillop Reading Test were administered. The results reported in Table 5 show increased scores for all subjects in oral reading. The mean score increased from 3.7 to 5.0, a difference of 1.3 years.

In order to determine whether these gains in reading achievement were significantly greater than those which would normally have been expected during the internship, the t-test for dependent samples (Chase, 1967:141-151) was applied. An application of the t-test revealed that the differences were significant for comprehension at the .01 level and for vocabulary at the .05 level of confidence on the Nelson Reading Test. The differences were also significant for the Slosson Oral Reading Test at the .05

Table 4
Student Grade Scores on Two Administrations of
the Slosson Oral Reading Test

Student	Pretest	Posttest
A	3.0	3.6
B	6.4	7.2
C	2.8	3.8
D	6.2	7.4
E	4.1	4.8
F	4.5	5.8
G	3.0	4.2
H	3.5	4.6
I	3.8	5.2
J	5.6	6.8
Mean Score ^a	4.3	5.3

^aSignificant gain score (correlated t-test, $p < .05$)

Table 5
 Student Grade Scores on the Gates-McKillop
Oral Reading Test

Student	Pretest	Posttest
	Form A	Form B
A	3.1	3.8
B	6.2	7.4
C	2.8	3.6
D	4.8	6.2
E	3.1	4.6
F	3.3	4.8
G	3.4	4.4
H	3.2	4.6
I	3.8	5.2
J	3.1	5.6
Mean Score ^a	3.7	5.0

^aSignificant gain score (correlated t-test, $p < .05$)

level and for the Gates-McKillop Reading Test at the .05 level of confidence.

STUDENT ATTITUDES

Prior to the beginning of the internship period, the subjects were administered the Estes' Scale to Measure Reading Attitude. This test consists of twenty statements to which the subjects were asked to respond using a scale of A to E. Statements given a rating of A indicate strong agreement and statements given a rating of E indicate strong disagreement. A neutral response C is three on such a five-point scale. The numerical value of the other statements depends on whether they are classified as positive or negative statements. For the negative items, A is assigned a value of one and E has a value of five. The values are reversed for the positive items. In this case, A has a value of five and E carries a value of one. A total score of 60 would indicate a neutral position. A perfect score of 100 would indicate a very positive attitude toward reading. This scale is presented in Appendix B. Table 6 presents the scores for the pretest and posttest administrations of the attitude survey.

These scores indicate that all subjects improved in their attitude toward reading. An application of the t-test for dependent samples revealed that these scores differed significantly at the .001 level of confidence.

Table 6
Student Scores on Two Administrations of the Estes'
Scale to Measure Reading Attitude

Student	Pretest	Posttest
A	48	71
B	65	89
C	58	85
D	75	82
E	53	83
F	47	73
G	62	83
H	57	77
I	81	92
J	58	75
Mean Score ^a	60.4	81

^aSignificant gain score (correlated t-test, $p < .001$)

During the period of the internship the subjects showed mounting self-confidence in valuing their ability to communicate their own ideas in oral and written form. The subjects began to approach reading with a positive attitude. A sharing of material and ideas was evident once they became accustomed to the new approach.

The subjects showed a growing interest in printed material. Extensive use was made of the school library which made available a number of high-interest, low-vocabulary books. Books made available by the Curriculum Materials Center at the University were used to provide a much wider range of reading material. Several students became members of a book club and an exchange of these books provided a variety of reading material.

STUDENT PRODUCTIVITY

The intern felt that there was a definite improvement in the work produced by the subjects in all areas. Near the end of the internship period all the subjects were writing their own stories. It was noted that special care was given to mechanics, spelling, and sentence structure because the material was to be shared with others. The intern also observed a significant change in attitude toward all school subjects and in particular toward mathematics, where very rapid gains were made. At the end of the internship period most subjects had mastered concepts

at the grade 7 and 8 level. This improvement was probably due to a new sense of security that resulted from using the Language Experience Approach. They may have felt that if significant improvement was possible in reading, they could also show improvement in other subject areas. The intern attributed the success to an overall change in attitude toward school.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the internship, major conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations concerning the application of the Language Experience Approach in a senior special education classroom.

SUMMARY OF THE INTERNSHIP

The purpose of this internship was to implement a Language Experience Approach with an attempt to motivate a group of senior special education students. A related aim was to investigate the efficacy of using the approach with older students.

The subjects of the study were a group of senior special education students ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. Eight of the subjects fell within the classification educable mentally retarded as measured by the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test. All of them had experienced early failure in school and had had little subsequent academic success. They showed general apathy toward all school subjects and especially toward reading. This is supported by the fact that the subjects were retarded in reading by three to four years.

The internship was implemented over a period of five months during which a variety of procedures were used to achieve the objectives. In addition to regularly scheduled reading periods, there was an attempt to integrate language experience activities with all subjects.

The approach was implemented with the idea of increasing the subjects' abilities in the areas of oral language, sight vocabulary, structural analysis, comprehension, oral reading, and writing skills. Specific activities were designed to strengthen each area.

Positive changes in the subjects' reading achievement, attitude and productivity indicate the effectiveness of the internship. The subjects made average gains of 1.5 years in comprehension and 1.0 years in vocabulary. These gains were statistically significant when compared to gains normally expected during the internship period. The subjects showed a more positive attitude toward reading as the internship progressed. Attitudes toward school seemed more positive at the end of the internship and the subjects were confidently expressing themselves in oral and written forms.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the results of the study:

1. The Language Experience Approach is an effective approach to teach reading to senior special education students.

2. The use of the Language Experience Approach was the main factor in overcoming the subjects' negative attitudes toward reading.

3. The Language Experience Approach, in allowing the special education student to begin at his own level, respects basic readiness problems while simultaneously permitting the individual to gain missing experiences without loss of dignity.

4. The Language Experience Approach can bridge the gap between schooling and the needs and desires of the individual.

5. The Language Experience Approach can effectively reverse the results of a limited background and assist the discouraged student in increasing reading fluency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the positive results of this study, the intern recommends the use of the Language Experience Approach with senior special education students. He further recommends that before such a program is implemented in the special education classroom the points listed below be given consideration:

1. The teacher, before trying to implement a Language Experience Approach, should have a clear understanding of the basic philosophy underlying the approach.

2. In order to implement a successful program the teacher must fully understand the students' needs and

interests. Success will only come when topics relevant to the students' age level rather than grade level are explored.

3. To be totally effective the Language Experience Approach should be integrated with all subject areas. This would include subject areas such as social studies and home economics.

4. The language experience classroom must be flexible and relaxed if there is to be a free expression of ideas.

5. The Language Experience Approach should not be used as a total reading program but as part of an all-encompassing program.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LIFE SKILLS UNIT

LIFE SKILLS UNIT

Title. Finding a Job.

Rationale. Special provisions for educable mentally handicapped children are beginning to be considered as part of the total school program in most schools. In developing curriculum, consideration must be given to life skills.

Each life skill should be organized around objectives or goals of learning that are relevant to adequate fulfillment of the skill. General, rather than specific, recommendations, are made such that each teacher has wide latitude in interpreting the recommendations or guidelines.

Teachers are encouraged to exercise their ingenuity in implementing recommended activities and to explore freely additional activities, depending on the students in the class.

Many basic considerations should be taken into account in prescribing any lesson plans for children with special needs. The plans outlined here were directed towards helping the senior educable mentally retarded student become more familiar with the task of searching for a job. The purpose of the unit was to give individualized instruction in this regard to each of the students and to have them become aware of the specific techniques in job interviewing and the importance of completing the job application form concisely. Stress was placed on the

importance of handwriting, spelling and the concise answering of questions during the unit. The purpose was to show the students that the prospective employer uses these as an indication of the applicant's personality.

Objectives

1. To identify and define general characteristics consistent with job education and training.
2. To develop behaviors and skills necessary for the performance of certain tasks, e.g., filling out forms.
3. To understand the importance of job interviews.
4. To develop methods of investigating occupations which may be open.
5. To learn how to match abilities and interests with available jobs.

Teaching Sequence

A. Answering Advertisement

1. Look through the newspapers for the advertisement section.
2. Discuss clippings.
 - a) Have students select samples for different kinds of jobs.
 - b) Discuss the suitability for the individuals.
3. Discuss the method of reply as required in the advertisement.
 - a) Written replies.
 - b) Telephone replies.
 - c) Visit the office noted in the advertisement.

B. Manpower Standard Form

1. Discuss terminology appearing on the form, e.g.:

form	application	reference
citizen	preference	medical
qualifications	surname	permanent address
2. Discuss the rationale for the use of the form.
3. Discuss application forms in general.
4. Practice filling out the form both as a group and individually.

C. Job Application Form

1. Discuss the format of the form.
2. Discuss special words appearing on the form, e.g.:

optional	approved	social insurance
experience	occupation	marital status
previous	practical	employer
employee	spouse	
3. Practice completing job application forms for specific jobs.

D. Job Interview

1. Discuss the following items:
 - Appearance ✓
 - Manners
 - Confidence
 - Punctuality
 - Specific Techniques of Interviews

2. Prepare a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of those people to be used as references.
3. Prepare a list of things not to do during an interview.
4. Role play several interviews.

E. Job Market

1. Discuss the type of jobs suitable and available to the educable mentally retarded, e.g.:

Gardner	Grocery Clerk
Janitor	Hospital Worker
Car Wash Attendant	Meat Cutter
Mechanic's Helper	Printer's Apprentice
Laundry Worker	Bakery Worker
Construction Worker	Sanitary Engineer
Office Helper	Farmer
Domestic	Waitress
Dry Cleaner	Elevator Operator
Window Dresser	Seamstress
Switchboard Operator	Shampoo Girl
Fishery, Land or	
Plant Worker	

Resource Material

A. Workbooks

Dogin, Y. 1974. Help Yourself to a Job.
Books 1, 2 and 3. Minneapolis, Minnesota:
Finney Press.

Eskell, R. 1971. Forms In Your Life. Toronto:
Globe Modern Press.

Hudson, M. W. 1966. Getting Ready For Payday.
Books 1, 2 and 3. Phoenix, New York: Frank E. Richards.

Hudson, M. W. 1965. On The Job. Phoenix, New York:
Frank E. Richards.

Schneider, B. 1974. Getting And Holding A Job.
Phoenix, New York: Frank E. Richards.

Schneider, B. 1974. Your Money Going or Growing.
Minneapolis, Minnesota: Finney Press.

B. Audio-Visual

1. Getting and Keeping Your First Job - Part I and Part II.
2 Filmstrips and 2 Cassettes. Film Library, College
of Fisheries, St. John's, Newfoundland.
2. Jobs and Advancement: A Good Place To Be
Color Film - 12 Minutes. Film Library, Department
of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland.

APPENDIX B
ESTES' ATTITUDE SCALE

ESTES' ATTITUDE SCALE AND VALUE KEY^aAttitude Scale:

A = Strongly Agree
 B = Agree
 C = Undecided

D = Disagree
 E = Strongly Disagree

1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.
2. Money spent on books is well spent.
3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.
4. Books are a bore.
5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.
6. Sharing books in class is a waste of time.
7. Reading turns me on.
8. Reading is only for grade grubbers.
9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish.
10. Reading is rewarding to me.
11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.
12. Most books are too long and dull.
13. Free reading doesn't teach anything.
14. There should be more time for free reading during the school day.
15. There are many books which I hope to read.
16. Books should not be read except for class requirements.
17. Reading is something I can do without.
18. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading.
19. Books make good presents.
20. Reading is dull.

Response Values

Items	A	B	C	D	E
The negative items:					
Nos. 1,3,4,6,8,9,11,12,13,16,17,20	1	2	3	4	5
The positive items:					
Nos. 2,5,7,10,14,15,18,19	5	4	3	2	1

Response values to assign to each possible response to each item.

^aThere are now two forms of the Estes' Attitude Scales: one for middle, junior and senior high school students, the other for elementary school students. This scale has been reproduced with the permission of Dr. Thomas Estes and the publisher.

