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Smith, Nila Banton. (2002). *American Reading Instruction*. Newark, DE. International Reading Association.

**Outline for Chapter 5: The Period of Emphasis on Reading as a Cultural Asset**

**Motives and influences that affected reading instruction from 1880’s to 1910’s**

* The Cultural Emphasis -- Early 1880’s
	+ Coming off periods emphasizing patriotism and intelligent citizenship
	+ The stability of the country allowed for cultural pursuits in music, art and literature.
		- Now the emphasis is on reading to develop an interest in reading literature.
		- Comment by Superintendent of Public Instruction – “The person who teaches children to read and fails to cultivate in them a taste for good literature, puts an instrument into their hands which may possibly be used by them to their own destruction” (p. 109).
		- Course of Study 1901 Rochester, New York -- “Giving the child possession of the art of reading, without the power to discriminate between good literature and bad, is like giving him a sharp tool without instruction as to its proper use” (p. 110).
* Specific Reading Aims – early 1900’s
	+ Aims still focus on howstudents speak
	+ Additional aim focuses on developing an appreciation for literature
		- “The teacher should always bear it in mind that the content of the reading lesson is of more value than its form, and that an appreciation of good literature is worth more than the mechanical ability to read” (p. 114).
	+ It does not matter if one looks at course of study descriptions or teachers’ manuals in reading, the message is the same: children should be able to identify and enjoy reading good literature.

**New Reading Materials**

* Professional Books
	+ Right around the 1890’s the first professional books in reading became influential.
	+ Scudder’s *Literature in the Schools* published 1888- should teach complete English classics in schools rather than the “scrappy bits of moralizing materials found in readers” (p. 115).
	+ Sarah Louise Arnold’s *Reading: How to Teach It* – popular from time of publication in 1899 to approximately 1910. Recommended in courses of study for teachers. Strongly emphasized the importance of developing appreciation of literature.
	+ Charles A. McMurry’s *Special Method in the Reading of Complete English Classics* published in 1899 – should read longer quality works rather than short works – mentions suggested works like *Julius Caesar* and *Rip Van Winkle* among others.
	+ Edmund Burke Huey’s *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading –*first scientific contribution to reading instruction that at the time of Smith’s writing was still considered a standard reference
* Courses of Study
	+ These were the first attempts at establishing curriculum – outlining material to be taught and providing some general pedagogical suggestions
		- George A. Mirick – New Jersey Department of Public Instruction – 1914– published *The Teaching of Reading* – included background discussions on teaching reading and assignments by grades
		- ahead of its time because Mirick discusses the importance of recognizing silent reading as reading
* Supplemental Materials
	+ Because focus is on inspiring a love of reading good books, students need more than the readers. Schools realizing that the readers are good for drills but supplemental texts are necessary too.
		- Classes had a few copies of a supplemental text, so each child might have one. While one student reads aloud, a few others are following along and getting ready for their turn

**New Methods**

* Three important developments in methods
	+ One development focuses on upper grades
		- New techniques to develop appreciation for and permanent interest in literature
	+ Two developments focus on primary grades:
		- 1. elaborate phonetic methods
		- 2. sentence method and story method
* Upper grades – focus on appreciating literature
	+ Necessary to dissect the text in order to read it intelligently, understand and appreciate it
		- Smith provides an outline of procedure presented by George P. Brown of the Indiana Normal School

1. learn allusions in text

2. and 3. learn vocabulary

4. paraphrase the text

5. commit to memory

“No one who has ever experienced it will be able to estimate the values of a large store of classic pieces thus fixed in memory. They are valuable for the grandeur of the thoughts, for their excellence of style, and for the increased vocabulary they give” (p. 123)

**Features of New Methods**

* Elaborate Phonetic Methods
	+ Criticism of the word method– fine for early years when the words are easy. Not fine for later years when the words are more difficult.
	+ Rebecca Pollard – *Synthetic Method* – use natural language to teach reading – ex. the story with different animals and objects to represent the sounds she wished to teach. (steamship with P’s)
	+ Pollard – carefully considered children’s interests and levels of maturity – important to teach reading from the child’s interest not adult point of view
* Combined Alphabetic and Phonetic Systems
	+ Scientific Alphabet – reduced number of letters necessary to represent the sounds in English language and removed silent letters
	+ The Shearer System – a letter’s sound was represented by a mark that constantly stands for that sound
	+ The thinking here is that with consistency, students can learn to read more quickly. Neither method really caught on.
* Sentence and Story Methods --
	+ George L. Farnham – *The Sentence Method* – first reading system based on sentence method theory.
	+ Builds on the idea that the sentence is the unit of expression, and we understand parts of an object by considering it as a whole.
	+ First teacher introduces whole story until children are very familiar with it.
	+ Then read the separate words and phrases
	+ Then apply phonetics in a very simple and natural way.

**Basal Readers in General**

* Readers no longer had elocutionary rules or moralistic or informational selections
* Beginning readers included Mother Goose rhymes and folktales
* Upper Grade readers had mostly literary selections
* The type was larger and clearer
* Color pictures used for first time

**Basal Readers with Elaborate Phonetic Method Emphasis**

* **Ward’s Readers** – 1894– a primer and 6 readers with teacher’s instructions
	+ more pictures – 2 color pictures
	+ beginning pages reflect word method for words that do not lend themselves to phonetic sounding out
	+ Then phonics training and diacritical marks in the reading material
	+ Material based on children’s pets and activities
	+ Sentences sometimes in paragraphs, but did not necessarily have a connection
	+ Advanced readers had more pictures than those of the past and less patriotic and moralistic material.
	+ Advanced readers had more old tales and fables and some poetic selections about nature
* **The Beacon Readers** -- 1912-1913 – James H. Fassett
	+ More pictures than in the past
	+ Distinguish between words that are phonetic and those that are unphonetic
	+ Uses phonetic tables
	+ Sentences about children’s toys, pets and activities
	+ A few folktales and poems – very little nature material
	+ Upper grades – more pictures than previous period, less patriotic material, longer selection of literature

**Basal Readers with Sentence/Story Method Emphasis**

* Arnold and Gilbert’s Stepping Stones to Literature and Judson and Bender’s Graded Literature Readers – extremely influential in promoting the sentence or story methods. They were the first readers to introduce cumulative tales and rhymes into primary readers.
	+ Stepping Stones to Literature – 1897 - prided itself on including only good literature and having 8 readers adapted to the modern graded school
	+ Included nursery rhymes (Jack and Jill etc.), old stories (tortoise and the hare) and some short poems (these are still being remade today)
	+ Still had some repetitive sentences
	+ Later readers emphasize literature and history – moving from mythology to history as the years progress
* The Aldine Readers
	+ Frank E. Spaulding and Catherine T. Bryce – 1907
	+ Use rhymes that children memorize and later use as a reference to look up a word they might have forgotten
	+ Advanced readers have literature and poetry from American and English authors
* The Reading-Literature Series
	+ Margaret Free and Harriette Taylor Treadwell – 1910
	+ Illustrations are much better and make up much more of the primer and first readers
	+ The primer has adaptations from folktales while the *Fourth Reader* expands to include poems, myths and American literature
* The Elson Readers
	+ Scott Foresman – 1909-1914
	+ Focused on making material interesting to encourage learning to read and providing a broader variety to literary materials
	+ Like with the other readers, the primer has more illustrations printed in color while the fourth reader’s illustrations are not in color.
	+ Organizes the literature in the fourth reader into themes like fairyland and adventure, home and country, nature, famous world heroes and great American authors

**Beginnings of Reading Research**

* During this time period the interest in reading research started to emerge.
	+ Stimulated by early studies conducted in France and Germany
	+ Investigations were psychological and physiological – looking at eye-movements, visual perception and inner speech
* Important because calling attention to individual differences in reading, silent vs. oral reading and rate in reading

**Beginning Attention to Reading Disability**

* Between 1900-1910 there were reports of children who, despite having good vision, were deficient in reading
* Called this “word blindness”
* Important because recognizing that there are some students who have difficulty reading and maybe something could be done about it