

UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON

PERADENIYA

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

OF

READING EFFICIENCY

A Dissertation

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by

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CHAPTER VSUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at developing a reading improvement programme and assessing whether it could produce a measurable improvement in the reading speed and comprehension of the readers who followed it.

The readers were selected from adult students who were following a course of training in a teacher's college, for it was hypothesised that even these adult students did waste time unnecessarily over their reading due to their lack of knowledge and practice, in different techniques of efficient reading.

It was hypothesised that a course of training in reading, using timed reading passages and at the same time providing instruction on the basic techniques of better reading, would increase reading efficiency. The efficiency was to be determined by the level of speed and the level of comprehension reached by the subjects.

The procedure was to develop a reading improvement programme in the first place. For this purpose, prose passages from general reading material were chosen. For each passage, a set of open-ended questions was constructed. The responses given by groups of adult students to these questions were utilized in framing the multiple-choice questions which were used as comprehension checks in the subsequent experiment.

Ascertaining the level of speed and comprehension of the experimental group and the control group was done by using two of these timed reading exercises. The readers who were in the experimental group were given a training in reading. During the seven practice sessions they were provided with tips for better and faster reading.

A post-test administered to both groups of readers -- experimental and control groups -- again measured their level of reading speed and comprehension.

As hypothesized the results of the study proved that prior to the training in reading, almost all the readers were reading below their potential abilities.

The principal finding that the readers who received special training in reading were as a group, superior to those who did not receive such training, led to the conclusion that a course of reading lasting even a brief period of time as seven weeks could increase the speed and comprehension of the readers.

Simpson in discussing whether reading ability can be improved says that the answer is definitely in the affirmative, and further states that by systematic training nearly all persons can improve their reading abilities within a period of 4-7 weeks.¹

1. Simpson, E.A. 'Instructors' guide for S.R.A. Better Reading Books, Science Research Associate, 57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago, 1959, p. 8.

The findings of this study helped the following conclusions to be arrived at:

- That the reading ability of even the adult students cannot be taken for granted.
- That almost all the readers can raise the level of their reading abilities.
- That guidance in reading can improve the reading efficiency of even the adult learner, and
- That a planned and systematic course of reading improvement could effect a measurable improvement in the readers who followed it.

The fact that the teachers themselves exhibit poor reading abilities indicate that they will not be able to do justice to their own students. Therefore, the ultimate conclusion to be reached is that the curriculum planners, teachers and teacher educators need consider the importance of better reading and faster reading not only during the elementary and secondary school levels, but also at the post-secondary school levels.