

## Chapter 7: Major Approaches and Materials for Reading Instruction

Published reading series are the most widely used materials for teaching reading in elementary schools in this country. Basal readers have been improved in recent years and provide teachers with anthologies of reading materials, detailed teacher's manuals, and many supplementary materials. Some published series are being called literature-based and/or language-integrated series because of their greater focus on quality literature selections and integration of other types of language activities with the reading. Many new series are also giving teachers and students more decision-making power and control over the lessons. Literature-based and language-integrated series focus on more student-generated prediction and more instructional options for the teacher than are found in traditional basal reader manuals.

The directed reading activity (DRA) is the teaching strategy presented in traditional basal manuals. This strategy can be used with other reading materials as well. Teachers can use the enrichment activities of the DRA before the story to help build and integrate background. Comprehension monitoring can also be made a natural part of a DRA. An alternative to the DRA is the directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA). Literature-based reading approaches include whole-class reading of a core book, literature circles reading several books for which there are multiple copies, thematic literature units, and the individualized reading approach. Whole-class reading of a core book, thematic literature units, and the individualized reading approach all include use of minilessons. Thematic literature units center around a theme, a genre, an author, or a book. All of these approaches include various types of responses to literature. The individualized reading approach allows children to move at their own paces through reading material that they have chosen. Student-teacher conferences help the teacher monitor progress and build rapport with the students. Sharing activities allow group interaction.

The language experience approach interrelates the different language arts and uses children's experiences as the basis for reading materials. This approach has many advantages: it incorporates the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modes of learning; it promotes a positive self-concept and fosters close contact between teachers and students; and it serves as an effective remedial technique in the upper grades. This approach can be introduced in kindergarten, but it continues to have applications for all students in higher grades, especially in conjunction with content area activities.

Some approaches are particularly helpful for individualizing instruction. Among these are programmed instruction and computer approaches, in addition to the individualized reading approach. Programmed instruction is administered through materials that present information in small, sequential steps. The student responds at each step and receives immediate feedback about the correctness of the response. Students are allowed to learn at their own paces. Computer approaches include computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and computer-managed instruction (CMI), in which the computer takes care of such tasks as recordkeeping, diagnosis, and prescription of individualized assignments. Many computer applications have been found to be appropriate for use in whole language classrooms. Computer-managed instruction can help teachers keep track of student performance.

An eclectic approach combines desirable aspects of a number of different methods. The only limitation to possible combinations is the teacher's imagination.