

## Effectiveness of Remedial Education in Children with Reading Disorders

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### Abstract

In spite of having intelligence and regular class room teaching a significant percentage of children have reading disorders. 25 such students were identified and were divided randomly into 5 groups. Each group was given 25 sessions of remedial education. Remedial education consisted of teaching students the basic sight words, decoding skills and regular exercise based on their current level of reading achievement. The children were encouraged to monitor their own progress and verbal reinforcements were used to motivate them. The post assessment results indicate that there was significant improvement in reading skills after the remedial education. The strategies used and the implications of the study are discussed.

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Key words -

**Remedial education,  
Reading disorders,  
Basic sight words,  
Decoding skills**

The main feature of specific reading disorder (ICD-10) is a specific and significant impairment in the development or reading skills, which is not solely accounted for by mental age, visual acuity problems or inadequate schooling. Mann and Brady [1] report that 8 to 10 per cent of the children in normal elementary school class room face such problems. Mercer and Mercer [2] report that about 10 to 15 per cent of the general school population experience significant difficulties in reading. In India, Sachedeva [3] found 17 per cent of the children studying in English medium schools had significant reading problems.

Reading skills play an important role in language development and language development often influences scholastic achievement. In this context, it becomes imperative to help these students develop reading skills. Kaun [4] found joint oral reading, known as neurological impress method successful in developing the reading skills of these children with reading disorders. Studies have also reported success with phonic approach [5], [6] and whole word approach [2]. Using behavioural method, Wadworth [7] reported significant progress in nine out of ten subjects.

In our school setting, what we need are simple strategies that could be used by a resource room teacher or by parents at home and help these children acquire reading skills.

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## Method

The aim of the present study is to develop simple and suitable strategies of remediation for children who have reading difficulties.

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## Sample

The sample consisted of 25 students in the age group of 8 to 11 years, studying in IVth class. These students were rated by their respective class teachers as having significant problem in reading. Students with mental retardation, sensory handicaps and irregular attendance were excluded.

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## Tools

1. Wechsler intelligence scale for children [8] - WISC was adopted to Indian conditions by Malin [9]. This was further modified by John [10] and this version was used in the present study.
2. John [10] had developed passages for testing reading levels of children studying in 1st to 7th standard. These passages were used in the present study. A checklist of errors was used to note down the number of errors.

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## Procedure

One hundred and five students studying in IVth class were screened from a Government aided English medium primary school. Out of this group 32 students were identified by their respective teachers as having significant problems in reading. Five students did not fulfill the inclusion criteria and were dropped from the study. The remaining 25 students were randomly allotted to 5 groups. Each student was assessed for baseline performance. They were asked to read from 1st to 4th standard passages. The number of mistakes made were noted down. Each group of 5 students received 25 sessions of remedial education. Each session lasted for 20 minutes. At the end of 25 sessions a post treatment assessment was done using the same passages as before.

### **Intervention strategies used in the remedial education**

(A detailed programme is available with the authors)

The assessment indicated that the poor readers lacked two important skills. These were poor ability to recognize simple, common words and poor ability to exploit the system of phonics. Therefore, the target set for remedial education was:

1. Improving the basic sight words.
2. Improving the phonic skills.

## Strategies used

- a. A list of basic sight words was prepared. These were the common words repeatedly used in the student's text book. Flash cards were prepared for each word and through them the children were taught 4 to 5 words everyday.
- b. Decoding skills were taught using Rosner's decoding units. This contains 108 decoding units and each unit has a set of words. Each set is organized into four levels. (A-D) of increasing difficulty. Each child was taught 2 to 3 units every day according to the instructions given by the author.
- c. They were given drill exercises. Depending on the reading level, they were asked to read everyday for 5 to 7 minutes. Mistakes were noted down and corrected at the end of the reading. Children were encouraged to monitor their own progress by keeping a diary. Reinforcements were given on progress by the experimental and other children in the group.

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## Results and Discussion

Out of 105 children 32 children were identified as having significant problems in reading. In this identified group, one had borderline intelligence and one had uncorrected visual problems and three children had irregular attendance. Leaving these 5 children aside, we can say 25 out of 105 children had significant reading problems and this gives a prevalence rates of 23 per cent for specific reading disorder (ICD-10).

The post treatment results indicate that the number of errors made while reading had comedown significantly after the remedial education.

*Table I - Verbal, performance and fullscale IQ of the five groups of students*

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*Table II - Pre and post treatment scores of errors made in reading for the five group of students*

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In general, approaches to remediation to reading disorders fall into two major categories - process oriented approach and product oriented approach. Based on the assumption that poor reading is due to perceptual immaturity, the process oriented approaches stress the importance of perceptual training. Hammill [11] made a review of the literature and concluded that training in the visual perceptual processes per se do not help children develop reading skills. On the other hand there are many studies which claim that strictly a task oriented academic approach help children develop reading skills [2], [12]. In this approach the reading task is analysed in terms of its components skills and the child's reading skill development is carefully charted. Remediation then is focused on these components of the reading act not yet mastered. In the present study a similar approach was followed. In the assessment children showed poor knowledge of basic sight words and word attacking skills. Therefore strategies were evolved to focus on developing basic sight words and teaching phonic skills. In addition behavioural principles were used in executing the programme. The results of the present study imply that a good many children have significant reading problems and these children can be helped using simple task oriented remedial strategies in a resource room at school or by parents at home.

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