

A FOUR WEEK PROGRAM USING THE DEVELOPMENTAL METHOD TO IMPROVE
THE COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF FOUR STD II STUDENTS AT CALCUTTA
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIS SCHOOL IN THE COROZAL DISTRICT.

Submitted to the Principal of Belize Teachers' Training College
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Trained Teacher's
Certificate.

By

Neri Gilharry

13 August, 1999

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Reading is very important. It does not only mean the pronunciation of words. But also the act of getting meaning from printed or written words. It is basic to learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. Reading provides the key to all kinds of information. It enables us to learn how to build or fix things, to enjoy stories, to discover what other people believe and to develop ideas and beliefs of our own. Reading is very important at school, at work and during leisure time.

Reading depends first on our perceiving written letters and words. We must then be able to comprehend what we perceive. Comprehension is part of the reading process. The reader must know not only the meaning of isolated words, but their meaning when combined in phrases, sentences and longer groupings. Comprehension depends on the reader's previous experience. For example, a person who has never seen a giraffe or a picture of one cannot fully comprehend the word giraffe.

The researcher became aware of the different Reading Comprehension skills while doing Level 1 at Belize Teachers' Training College and saw the importance of it. As a child at the primary school the researcher doesn't recall being taught these skills; most of what was done were recall questions and oral reading. During internship the researcher sought the opportunity to implement the Reading Comprehension skills which was facilitated by the use of Basal Readers in L.S.D.A school. The children performed very well since they were a Std I class and had been trained to use the skills in Infant I and Infant II. The researcher's second year of teaching experience was done at a C.S.D.A. school in Std IV. The reading program had just been adopted from L.S.D.A school and children posed a problem, since they had not used these skills before. They had problems answering higher level questions as contrasted to recall questions. Higher level questions require critical thinking. The students in Std II at a C.S.D.A. school appear to have a similar problem. They encounter problems in reading comprehension since most of them belong to mestizo families where Spanish is spoken most of the time. Spanish is their mother tongue. English is our national

language. It is used in schools and children must learn to write and communicate the language.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher found that Std II students at C.S.D.A. school in the Corozal District have problems with Reading Comprehension skills. Children are comfortable answering recall questions, which is at the lowest level of questioning, but face a problem when having to answer higher level questions.

After the identification of the problem the researcher planned and conducted a reading program whereby children were provided with a series of remedial lessons which increased the confidence of children in answering the higher level questions. A four week program was conducted using the developmental method approach. The main question to be answered was the following:

Is this program, using the developmental method approach, effective to solve the problem children have with comprehension skills?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to develop comprehension skills to enable children to understand what they read and become critical thinkers. By acquiring these skills children would increase the comprehension ability and enjoy reading.

To aid the children, the researcher implemented and conducted a four week program in reading to develop comprehension skills in the inferential and critical levels.

The emphasis of the researcher's study was to develop the following higher level comprehension skills:

1. Context clues
2. Inference / Drawing conclusions
3. Predicting Outcomes
4. Making Judgement
5. Character traits
6. Moral lessons

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In executing this program the researcher hopes that it would be beneficial to:

1. TEACHERS

Teachers who have a similar problem can use this as a source, if the program proves to be effective.

2. CHILDREN

Children will be able to acquire Reading Comprehension skills and use them.

3. RESEARCHERS

Researchers studying a similar problem can use this program as a reference and build up on it.

4.- PRINCIPALS

Principals will be able to see the importance of comprehension skills and encourage his/her staff to make use of them.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. L.S.D.A. Libertad Seventh Day Adventist
2. C.S.D.A Calcutta Seventh Day Adventist
3. Developmental Method Approach - A series of textbooks called basal readers are used. Each is carefully designed to fit into the total "system." The entire series spans the period from kindergarten to sixth or eighth grade. They introduce the skills considered important for new readers.
4. Comprehension - Clear grasp of what is read.
5. Inferential level. - Reading between the lines
6. Critical level - Reading beyond the lines.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Educators must know what reading is. Reading is the key word for an individual's open response to comprehend and to function efficiently in his/her society. Reading is the process of recognizing and understanding the meaning of written or printed symbols. In a broad sense this process is applied to musical notes, scientific formulas and equations, shorthand, Braille symbols for the visually impaired, and sign language for the hearing impaired. According to Cheyney (1971) "Reading is the ability which includes the desire to comprehend printed symbols." Therefore it is prerogative that an educator stimulates the students' interest towards the material being read. Cheyney also believes that, "When the focus on reading is enlarged to include the interrelated areas of listening, speaking, and writing the mind's retentive capabilities are aided considerably. Listening is the first of the language process to be learned and continued. It is always coupled with writing. Writing is the most difficult of the four aspects of the language arts, but adds a dimension which increases considerably the effectiveness of others."

However, reading does not only entail the recognition and understanding the meaning of written or printed work, it also involves such factors as the reader's physical and mental abilities, emotional state, and cultural background. According to Tinker and McCullough (1968) "Written and printed symbols serve as a stimuli to aid the individual reader to recall meanings of relevant concepts already in his/her possession from through past experiences. The interpreted meanings are then organized into the thought process in accordance to the purpose of the reader. New insight may be formed by these organized processes. The new acquired meanings guide the reader to modify previous perceptions and behaviours. They may altogether change the reader's personal and social behaviour." In addition, children should be thought that reading is written 'conversation.' Before man learned to write and read they communicated their beliefs and knowledge orally from generation to generation. In advanced civilizations like the Mayas, they used symbols called hieroglyphics to record their societal advancement. Likewise, modern man record their societal advancement using the Roman alphabetical symbols. Consequently, members of the modern society must

learn to read to benefit from the wealth of knowledge acquired. Today, in the class room, the beginner learns that printing symbol stand for speech that makes sense. As the child advances in school so does his reading skills. He/she also has to learn that reading is silent thinking and does not necessarily involve vocalizing. From there on the reader reads for academic acheivement, to inform him/herself, for pleasure, or share in the insight of others concerning diverse human issues.

The ability to read is one of the most important human accomplishments. In any civilized society it is almost impossible for an adult to get through the day with out reading. A person must read for safety and efficiency in the home. For example, a person must read manuals of instructions for household equipment, labels of medecine, packaged food, cosmetics etc. The average adult must also read sales contracts, leases, tax forms and many types of correspondence. Likewise few jobs can be learned without text books and manuals or obtained without taking written tests. In applying for a job there is also the need to read and fill out the application form. Therefore, Reading serves as a means of communication and a tool for learning. Lectures, audio or visuals are helpful, but printed material is the major educational tool. Reading is an indispensable function in any society. It satisfies needs in any way which other things such as radio, movies and television cannot equal. The truth is that Reading will continue to be the pimary means of passing on information and experiences. Regrettably a large portion of our population are poor readers since most schools dropouts, at the primary and secondary levels, are dew to low levels of achievement in reading comprehension.

In the complex process of reading the basic factors in comprehension are thinking, command of vocabulary and the concepts for which word stand, and perceiving the relations between words, phrases, and sentences. Reading comprehension is affected by the readers interest, relevance of material and purpose for reading. Norton (1980) suggests that there should be much more to teaching of comprehension skills than just reading at the recall level alone. She contends that, "Comprehension deals with word meanings as well as the literal and inferential meaning of reading and their interpretation." Hence, the importance of educators to be aware of an offer to those learning to read more

challenging comprehension skills. For example, anticipating sequence of events, drawing conclusions, summarizing or evaluating critically.

As the content of material varies the specialized vocabularies encountered should be mastered. Specialized reading skills will be needed when the material includes arithmetical problems, computers, maps, graphs, tables or other features of scientific writing. All of the above recommend that teachers' goal should be to teach reading having in mind the progressive skills in their specific objective in reading instruction.

Once teachers know the progressive skills involved at a given grade then the teachers selects the best teaching method thata will create learning in the children. According to Walker (1992) the following ae the targeted skills for Std I to Std IV and Std IV through adult respectively.

Std I to Std III

Fluency based on

1. Automatic Association of what words look like with what words mean.
2. Breaking sentences into htought units.
3. Use of background knowledge to predict sentence meaning.

Typical Techniques

1. Chunking method
2. Repeated reading

Sentence Comprehension based on:

1. Use of sentence meaning to develop word meaning
2. Use of context to organize information
3. Familiarity with the content (background knowledge. Since sentences are longer and more complex, fluent word sentence and idea meaning. The major task of these readers is to use sentence context to decode unknown words and to develop word

meaning. The teachers' responsibility at these stages is to develop reading skills in fluency, sentence comprehension and vocabulary.

Std IV through adulthood

Non-Literal comprehension based on:

1. Integration of background knowledge with textual information
2. Self-monitoring (does it make sense?)
3. Self-questioning (I wonder what the author is going to say is important to remember?)

Typical techniques

1. Survey, questions, read, recite, review
2. Questions, answer relationships

At this reading level authors develop complex relationships that require an interpretation of text -

based information within a reader's personal world view. Therefore readers must be able to shift between text-based and reader-based processing to gain meaning from text. At this stage the teacher introduces skills that will develop critical thinking to assist inferential comprehension and study skills that will aid students in reading performance. The teacher also maintains skills in vocabulary and at the literal comprehension.

If teachers ask only factual comprehension questions, students will come to believe that factual recall is the most critical factor in learning. While this skill is important, there is a wide range of other comprehension abilities that need to be developed. Davis (1971) feels that comprehension includes the following abilities: (1) Knowledge of recall of word meanings; (2) ability to grasp detailed facts; (3) inferring word meaning from context; (4) following the structure of a passage; (5) weaving together ideas in the content; (6) drawing inferences from content; (7) identifying a writer's techniques; (8) recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, tone and mood; and (9) considering a passage objectively. Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading comprehension covers four categories of comprehension; literal recognition or recall; inferential comprehension; evaluation and appreciation.

Literal comprehension questions ask students to recognize or recall information stated in the story. Questions may focus on such literal information as identifying main ideas, details, sequence of events, comparisons, and character traits. Inferential comprehension questions go beyond literal presentation of facts; they require the students to hypothesize about a main idea, character trait, figurative language etc. Students may find passages in the book that justify their inferences, but the answers are not specifically stated, for example: (1) What do you think the moral of the story is? (2) Compare the characteristics of the baby dolphin and the adult dolphin by explaining how they are alike and how they are different.

Evaluation requires students to make judgements about the content of the literature by comparing it with external criteria such as the readers' experience or knowledge, for example: (1) What was the plan? Do you think it worked? Why or why not? (2) Was Sally right to tell her father about Don's plans when she had promised not to? Why do you feel this way?

Appreciation forces students to respond to literary technique. Appreciation questions require a heightening of the sensitivity to the techniques authors use in order to create an emotional impact within their readers. Many of the questions require children to respond emotionally to the plot, identify with the characters, react to an author's ability to create a visual image through the choice of words in the text, for example: (1) Describe the feeling and image conveyed by the description of the weather at the beginning of the story. How does the author make you see and feel? (2) What do you think the who's thought when they found everything gone? What would you think if it happened in your town?

We can conclude that the abilities stated by Davis are to a certain extent a subset of Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension. Basically it is the same thing.

Many approaches can be used to teach comprehension. One of such approaches is the one including basal readers. The New Standard Encyclopedia states that the developmental method uses a series of textbooks called basal readers. They serve as the

basic reading material in many schools. Basal readers gradually introduce the skills considered important for new readers, especially word recognition strategies. The textbooks also give students opportunities to apply and practice the various skills.

The typical basal reader series consists of textbooks for each level of reading instructions. Publishers of these textbooks try to present stories, essays, and other writings to which children relate. In addition to students textbooks, basal programs provide teachers manuals, student's workbooks, tests and supplementary materials for each grade level. Teachers who use basal readers generally separate the children into groups according to reading abilities and instructional needs. They can then select the teaching materials that most closely match their teaching goals and the student's needs.

In developmental programs most reading lessons involve answering in writing questions about the assignment and completing work book pages that enable students to practice concepts presented in reading lesson. A large number of lessons and activities can also focus on the development of comprehension and analytical thinking. In addition, many programs help students determine their purpose for reading and encourage them to select additional materials.

Huitz (1994) concluded that reading disabilities exist in the Corozal, Orange Walk and Belize District schools due to lack of teachers expertise to teach reading of the methods used. He claims that, "problems such as much traditional activities used in reading than child centered activities, no readiness program and poor teaching techniques-especially with untrained teachers and teachers with less than five years of teaching experience." Amalia Aguilar (1995) disagrees with this statement since from the past six years, attended workshops to better understand the technicalities of reading.

To say that teachers lack methods to teach reading is not enough. Teachers are given the opportunities to attend workshops, whether they implement what they learn is another matter. Teachers who do not attend workshops are negligent of their professional development. Moreover, a teacher may understand the different methods of teaching and how to use them, but if the teacher lacks knowledge of what sequence of skills to teach, he/she is at a loss. Therefore, another factor essential to reading is the progression of reading skills not included in Huitz research paper.

Castillo (1995) identified reading disabilities at the Ladyville Roman Catholic School. Castillo states that, "Children with reading problems are often put together in one classroom as one group without the benefit of a reading diagnostic test to find out what is each child's problem." These children share the common characteristics of 'Poor Readers' or 'Slow Learners' which are synonyms to reading disabled. Castillo also mentions several factors such as "Physical, Language, Environmental, Educational and Emotional" which can be the cause of reading disability in a child. If her

research paper shows that, "A simple factor does not cause reading disabilities and children with reading problems without the benefit of a reading diagnostic test", how can teachers outwardly label these children as slow learners without providing diagnostic tests and reading strategies to help these children?

Castillo's questions were whether "The children were too slow that the teachers ignore them" or if "the teachers did not know different methods in teaching." Castillo and Huitz both agree in the aspect of lack of teaching methods. However, Castillo has the slue to reading problems of her past students, "when children are given a reading passage they cannot pronounce words, they could not interpret what they read. "These children do not need methods how to learn but need reading skills that they have not mastered.

Informal interviews with the teachers of Std IV at Ladyville R.C. School reveal that students are streamed. The slower class have difficulty in pronouncing words in structural analysis, context clues, oral and written comprehension, construction of written sentences, knowing where to go for further information and how to look for "information " whereas, the average class know how to break words, pronounce new words, good at syllabication, spelling, vocal, oral reading and comprehension. Yet, they are fair when it comes to know how to use different resources for information or where to go for information needed. They are average at the literal level of comprehension and need guidance to arrive at the supporting ideas or main ideas. They are weak at such skills as cause and effect, summarizing and observing punctuation marks in writing.

Based on the information gathered from the informal interview it can be said that most teachers in the Infant and Middle division at Ladyville R.C. School concentrate their teaching mostly at the literal comprehension level. For even the average children display comprehension at the literal level mostly, since they are weak in the application and inferential level of comprehension. The findings of the interview also substantiates Castillo's findings. Aguilar believes that some teachers do not know the progressive skills in reading, especially when not trained.

The Developmental method approach can be used to teach comprehension. Each lesson in a basal reading program usually follows a definite series of steps, which are often referred as the Directed Reading Activity (DRA). These do not vary substantially from one publisher to another. The steps usually follow the pattern of: (1) preparation for reading the story, (2) guided reading, (3) skill development and practice, and (4) follow up activities.

Preparation for reading the story. This introductory phase is designed to motivate the students to read the story, to create a purpose for reading, to provide background information, and to develop concepts the students may need to understand the story fully. Questions are provided in the teachers manual to stimulate discussion about some aspect of the story. The teacher strives to create an interest in the story in this initial activity because,

presumable, she accepts the underlying assumption that students read only if they are properly motivated.

Before the story is read, the teacher usually introduces a certain number of new words. She may write these new words on a chalkboard or place them on cards and use them in pocket charts. She may present a new word in a sentence, in a phrase, or alone. The reading book discusses the meaning of the new words as well as their various physical characteristics, such as shape. Children may be asked to use the words in sentences to establish that they clearly understand the words.

Guided reading. The next step is the developmental phase of the lesson. The teacher's manual contains suggestions for the guided reading and ideas for developing ideas. Picture interpretation, oral reading, silent reading, and comprehension are all involved in this part of the lesson. The student is often directed to examine and discuss a picture at the beginning of the story and then to read a certain portion of the story silently. Generally he does not read the entire story at one time. Directions tell the students to read a certain number of pages, silently, to find the answer to specific questions or for certain purposes; the teacher then discusses the information found in the silent reading and directs additional reading for another set number of pages. This procedure continues until the entire story is read.

At each point, students must wait until all members of the group have read a section before they do further reading. Oral reading is done at certain

points in the guided reading. Sometimes the teacher has the students read orally specific parts of this story which answers questions the teacher has asked. For example, the teacher may direct that a student read the part that describes how some character felt about an event in the story. Thus the story is read silently and orally in parts, with the teacher asking questions at various points in the lesson.

Skill development and practice. During this part of the lesson, the teacher gives instruction and activities in such areas as vocabulary development, decoding, comprehension and study skills. The teacher's manual contains specific suggestions regarding appropriate activities to use. It states objectives and outlines teaching strategies. Usually it suggests several activities, with the recommendation that the teacher is to choose from the activities those that fit the needs of the particular students being given instructions.

Exercises written on chalkboards or charts can help to involve students in the group practice of the skill. For example, let us suppose that the skill under consideration is learning rules for the two sound of /c/, hard or soft. The teacher might write a list of four words on the chalkboard (mice, lace, cereal, cow) and ask students if the C had the same sound in all of them. Discussion would follow then the teacher might write a series of words on the chalkboard and ask students if the C had a hard or soft sound in each word.

The skill development and practice session may be used effectively for evaluation as well as instruction. Throughout the activity, the teacher would

note the various levels of students' proficiencies in the skill and may then assign the appropriate types and amount of reinforcement and practice pages.

Followup activities. Students perform follow up activities independently at their desks or various centers in the room. The assigned workbook pages, involving practice in a certain skill area, are often used as one type of follow up material. At times, the teacher will recommend additional reading in library books which relate in some way to the story read that day. Art music and writing activities are also used to extend ideas and concepts discussed in the group assembly. The teacher's guide outlines specific recommendations for follow up activities. Usually, more suggestions are given than can be used; therefore, teachers must choose those which best suit the interests of their particular groups of students.

The New Standard Encyclopedia states that the basal reading program has many outstanding features. The basal reading series, offers systematic guidance in the development of recognition, comprehension, and vocabulary skills by carefully planned sequential learning. Modern Educational Psychology tells us that such a system is superior to trial and error or to incidental learning, or probably to a program planned by the teacher. In addition, it provides materials based upon common child experience and the well known interests of children. Thus, it provides for a common core of experience for the entire group. Also it presents a program that is greatly superior to any that a modern teacher, in view of breadth of his professional preparation or, rather, the lack of breadth in the area of reading methodology

could possibly create. Furthermore, it makes available techniques and materials for determining the readiness of the child to learn to read or to proceed from step to step by easy stages. Moreover, it gives a basic or core vocabulary that is essential to any beginning or subsequent reading. It also affords materials that are carefully scaled in difficulty, sequentially arranged to promote learning, and controlled in vocabulary. Thus the program insures enjoyable and successful growth of the child's reading abilities. No other available body of reading materials possesses these characteristics.¹ Moreover, it puts forth materials that follow the best knowledge in such aspects as typography, format and physical readability. Lastly, it provides a well rounded selection of reading experiences. It includes both recreational and work-type reading, poetry and prose, factual and fictional matter, informational and entertaining materials that extend the child's ideas and knowledge in many fields.

The basal reading program has many strengths. It stresses sequential learning, and helps develop skills. It helps to overcome effects of child absence and aids in diagnosing difficulties. It helps test achievement and offers opportunity for self competition. It also provides record of progress which are more easily checked or graded. It saves teacher time for preparation since they are prepared by skilled persons. It provides for extensive, effective drill and permits pupils to check on their own progress. It provides follow up activities related to content of text and reinforces learning through repetition of vocabulary.

The Basal Reading program was compared to four other approaches by the Office of Education, Cooperative Research Branch. First, it was Basal versus initial teaching alphabet (I.T.A.). I.T.A. was superior in word recognition and spelling. There was no significant differences in comprehension, rate or accuracy of oral reading, usage and English mechanics. Second it was basal versus Language Experience. There was no real difference in spelling, word study skills, comprehension or word recognition. There was some tendency for language experience pupils to write longer stories with more varied vocabulary. Third, it was basal versus Linguistic systems. In some projects, linguistic pupils were superior in word recognition, but in other projects, there were no such differences. There was no difference in comprehension. Basal pupils generally scored higher in phonics skills. Fourth, it was basal versus Lippincott. Lippincott tended to produce greater achievement in reading, spelling and general language ability. Most of these differences were not educationally significant, for they were very slight.

If we were to believe, as some language specialists say, that the pupil's major task is to develop graphemic symbols into sounds, and by so decoding words he will understand their meaning, then the various teaching system emphasizing sound – symbol relationships seems quite effective. The I.T.A. Lippincott and Linguistic programs do appear to produce generally greater skills in word recognition (although they do not necessarily produce better phonics skills). But this superiority in word recognition does not produce greater comprehension or wider reading experience or greater liking for

reading – all of which are presumably primary goals of any good reading program. Nor do these systems consistently effect any superiority in the mechanics, fluency or depth of children's writing and speaking abilities. It still remains to be seen whether a teaching system which emphasizes better sounds as one of its major goals can do more than produce fluent word callers. Can such systems really produce fluent comprehending readers, as well as the basal system does? Can they provide the breadth of reading and writing experiences that the basal or language experience approaches offer? Finally, we see that these letter – sound systems are often more effective than the basal with the brighter pupils and sometimes less effective with below – average pupils. Perhaps their proper future role in the reading program is as an adjunct to certain current practices, rather than as an approach offered for the instruction of all or even most pupils.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

RESEARCH METHOD

After identifying the students' problem, the researcher designed and implemented a reading skills program that included the three levels of Reading comprehension skills: Literal, inferential and critical.

The program included four students which is almost half of the students of a Std II class. The program was divided into three units each unit dealt with one level of reading skills which was implemented. The first unit dealt with the literal level and it endured one week. The second and third units endured for three weeks and covered the inferential and critical level of comprehension skills. To gather the test scores for the purpose of the study a pre-test was administered to the four students. The pre-test consisted of a written story along with eleven questions. Children were graded according to a set of criteria. Questions in the literal level were allotted five points, inferential ten points and critical eleven points. After the four weeks period of the program the post test was administered to the sample students.

The data gathered from the pre and post test were placed in a table form. A bargraph was also used to present the data gathered.

THE SAMPLE

The population of this program was nearly half the pupils of Std II at Calcutta Seventh Day Adventist School in the Corozal District. This was a total of four students. The sample was selected by using the quota sampling strategy. The sample students ranged from ages 9 to 10. They were four girls. Three of these children are Adventist and there is one that doesn't belong to any denomination. The sample students were composed of three mestizos, and one creole.

The criteria used to select the sample of the population was based on the result of the pre-test given on April 23, 1998. The pupils who got 70% or less were the ones selected. The researcher found out that four pupils scored below 70%; the other six of them were above the average scale. The researcher realized that these six students didn't need help so they were excluded from the program. Therefore the population is not my sample. The subjects in the sample are referred to as A through D for the purpose of anonymity and to facilitate the analysis of the study.

INSTRUMENTS

A pre-test was administered to the ten Std II students to obtain the test scores for the purpose of the study. The pre-test was composed of a written story and eleven written questions. The questions were divided into three

sections. The first section was made up of three questions in the literal level; the second section consisted of three questions in the inferential level; and the third section included five critical questions. Literal questions were allotted five points each, inferential questions ten points each and critical questions eleven points each. The same test was used, at the end of the four week program, as the post test. A copy of the test along with criteria was included in the appendix.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The instruments that were used were chosen since they were the most appropriate ones to show that the developmental approach helps to build comprehension skills in the literal, inferential, and critical levels. In order to carry out the pre-test to obtain the test scores the researcher met the principal and classroom teacher on April 20, 1998 at the school at 2:30 p.m. where a convenient time was set. It was agreed on April 23, 1998 at 2:30 p.m. the researcher was at the school on the set date and time. Children were prepared to sit the pre-test and were given specific instructions for the completion of the pre-test. The pre-test began at 2:30 p.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. on the supervision of the researcher. Children read the written story individually, silently, and then answered the eleven written questions.

The implementation of the program endured from May, 4, 1998 to May, 29, 1998. Throughout the period teaching, learning activities were conducted

for four days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Each lesson lasted 45 minutes from 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Each lesson included a work sheet. These worksheets gave children the opportunity to apply the skills taught and also to evaluate how well the pupils understood the skills. The researcher asked the class teacher to carry out the program for her. After the four week period the researcher administered the post test to the sample Students. While the class teacher implemented the program the other six students were assigned group work at their comprehension level.

HOW THE DATA WERE ANALYZED

At the end of the program, the result of the pre-test and post test were placed in a table form for the purpose of comparing the data gathered. The result were also displayed on a bargraph to show the performance of each subject in the pre and post test. The scores were compared and the difference was recorded. This showed any improvement the subjects had between the time that the pre-test and post test were administered. The data on the table and graph were analyzed to find out if the program was effective by using the t-test chart. The degrees of freedom were three. To be 95% certain that the program was effective the t value should be atleast 3.182. If the t value is 5.841 or higher it will be 99% certain that the program was effective. If the t value is lower than 3.182 the program is not effective.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

After identifying the students' problem, the researcher designed and implemented a reading skills program that included the three levels of reading comprehension skills: literal, inferential and critical.

BROAD GOALS

At the end of the program children will develop confidence in answering questions based on the three levels of comprehension.

WEEK 1 LESSON 1

Topic: Cause and Effect

Time : 45 minutes

Objective: Given 4 selections that have cause and effect children will answer a question for each by shading the oval with the correct answer from among three options.

Materials: Flipchart, letter.

Activities:

- (1) Children play the post man. They finish a sentence.
- (2) Teacher explains what is the 'Cause' and 'Effect'. Children read aloud a sentence on flip chart. Teacher elicits what is the cause and effect in the sentence .
- (3) Children explain in own words what is cause and effect.
- (4) Two sentence strips are given to each group. Children discuss and identify cause and effect. Children report.
- (5) Children answer a question for each selection by shading the oval with the most appropriate answer.

Evaluation:

Children were getting confused with the cause and effect. Teacher had to spend more time that was expected in order for children to grasp cause and effect. The lesson was changed a bit. For children to clearly understand cause and effect they had to dramatize the sentence and actually see what the sentence stated. This facilitated understanding. The objective was achieved.

LESSON 2

Topic: Fantasy versus Reality

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Provided with a worksheet containing 5 sentences children will identify As reality or fantasy by marking F or R.

Materials: Surprise bag, flannel board, flip chart, flash card, worksheet

- Activities:
- (1) Individual take out pictures from surprise bag. They say whether it is real or not.
 - (2) Children classify pictures as real or not real and place them on flannel board. Teacher labels them as fantasy and reality. Children explain what is fantasy and reality, then teacher presents the meaning of each on flip chart
 - (3) Groups read the story, "The Beaver Expert" in their readers and state whether the story is reality or fantasy. Children support their answer.
 - (4) Children list three stories that are fantasy and three that are reality.
 - (5) Children write F or R on five sentences to indicate whether they are fantasy or reality.

Evaluation:

Children liked the activity with surprise bag. Children were eager to take out the pictures. It was easy for children to classify them as real or not real. Children explained very well, what is fantasy and reality and gave some examples of each. Objective was achieved.

LESSON 3

Topic: Main idea

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: After reading 2 short passages children will identify the main idea of the passage from among three options by underlining the most appropriate one.

Materials: Worksheet, letter, short story, reader, flashcard

Activities:

- (1) Children play the postman. An individual reads a short letter to the class. Children state what the whole letter is about.
- (2) Children look for a flashcard with the word, 'Main idea' under their desk. Flashcard is placed in pocket chart. Teacher elicits what is main idea.
- (3) Teacher explains what is main idea and how to find it.
- (4) Teacher reads a short story and then children give the main idea of it.
- (5) Children read the story, "Donna finds a way in the readers. children underline the sentence on a worksheet that best states the Main idea of the story.
- (6) Children identify the main idea of two passages by underlining the most appropriate answer from among three options.

Evaluation:

At first children had a little bit of problem in understanding what is the main idea. They kept giving details as the main idea. Teacher had to show children how to find the main idea of several stories before children could do it.

LESSON 4

Topic: Identifying details

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Using the story, 'Timmy Pretend' children will read silently and Answer six questions orally by answering True or False based on the story's details.

Materials: picture, reader

Activities:

- (1) Conduct picture reading
- (2) Explain the use of details in pictures and stories.
- (3) Guide students to read silently each page and answer questions after reading each page. Teacher asks literal question from teacher's guide book.
- (4) Children play a game. They ask question based on text from group to group.
- (5) Groups respond to oral literal questions based on the entire story.

Evaluation:

It was not difficult for children to find details in the story. Some children tended to use the same words written in the books to answer the oral questions. This was discouraged. Teacher encouraged children to answer the questions in their own words.

WEEK 2

LESSON 1

Topic: Context clues

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will write the missing words in five sentences to complete them.

Material: Flipchart, pocket chart

- Activities:
- (1) Children play 'pass it on.' When music stops the individual takes out a flashcard from the surprise box. Individuals with flashcards go to the front of the class and hold flash cards for the others to see. Class reads the words.
 - (2) Children read 5 sentences displayed on flipcharts. They underline the new word in each sentence. Teacher explains that it is easy to know the meaning of the new words if used in sentences.
 - (3) Class is divided into groups. Each group reads and discusses the meaning of the new words. Groups report.
 - (4) The meanings of the words are reviewed by asking individuals to give the meaning in their own words.
 - (5) Children give oral sentences using the new words.
 - (6) Children write the missing word to complete 5 sentences.

Evaluation:

Through context clues children readily came up with a definition for the new words, after discussing in their groups. The oral sentences children reported showed that the objective was being obtained

LESSON 2

Topic: Predicting outcomes

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will predict the outcomes of four situations in a work sheet.

Materials: Worksheet, reader, flip chart

- Activities:
- (1) Teacher tells a short story about Mary. Teacher asks children to state what will happen.
 - (2) Teacher explains what is predicting outcome.
 - (3) Children read a situation on flipchart. Then they predict the outcome .
 - (4) Children give instances when they predicted outcomes.
 - (5) Teacher reads the first page of the story, "Timmy Pretend" and children predict what will happen. Teacher reads the second page and the same procedure is repeated.
 - (6) Children predict outcomes of 4 situations on a worksheet.

Evaluation:

The teacher captured the childrens' attention by changing the tone of her voice when telling the story. Children were very attentive. The outcomes children predicted showed that they were really thinking. The objective was achieved. Children did very good in the worksheet.

LESSON 3

Topic: Making judgement

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will make judgement based on two situations and write their Response.

Materials: Cinema box, reader, flipchart

Activities:

- (1) Teacher reads a story and poses a question which require children To give their opinion.
- (2) Teacher explains clearly what making judgement mean and encourage children to respect others opinions.
- (3) Making judgement questions are presented using cinema box. Each one is discussed separately.
- (4) Children read the story, "Timmy Pretend" in groups. Children read three questions on flipcharts and make judgement.
- (5) Teacher explains that opinions cannot be right/wrong
- (6) Children make judgement on two situations.

Evaluation:

When children gave their opinion some were arguing that it was wrong. Teacher explained that it can't be wrong nor correct. Children thought carefully before giving an answer they were really judging if it was right or wrong, good or bad. Children performed well. The objective was achieved.

LESSON 4

Topic: Draw Conclusions/Inference

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children would answer three questions based on the story, "Timmy Pretend".

Material: Index Cards, Strips of paper with sentences, flip chart.

Activities: (1) Distribute index cards to the children and help them write

'Long ago' in large letters on each card.

(2) Individuals fish strips of paper with sentences that have clues that describe life, long ago or in present time. The individuals read the sentences aloud while the others listen to each sentence and infer which time period is being described. Then they hold up the appropriate cards.

(3) Teacher writes the word 'Conclusion' on chalkboard. Teacher explains what is drawing conclusion/inference.

(4) Children read aloud a short story on flip chart. Then they answer five questions orally.

(5) Children read the story "Timmy Pretend" in their readers. They answer three questions whereby they have to draw conclusion.

Evaluation: Children were involved throughout the lesson. Children really reasoned to make a decision based on the sentences. They liked the game. The objective was not fully achieved. Most students were only able to get two right answers out of three.

WEEK 3

LESSON 1

Topic: Context clues

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will complete six sentences by writing the six new words in the blank spaces.

Materials: Worksheet, flash cards, short story, pocket chart.

- Activities:
- (1) Individuals fish flash cards with new words from fish pond. Children read the new words aloud.
 - (2) Teacher reads a short story aloud. Children listen for the new words.
 - (3) The story is reread, pointing to each word on the pocket chart as it is read.
 - (4) Children play a game whereby sentences with the new words are displayed on the flannelboard and children read them aloud then find the meaning by discussing in their groups. Children get 10 points for each correct answer.
 - (5) Children give oral sentences using the new words.
 - (6) Pupils complete six sentences using the new words in a worksheet.

Evaluation: Children liked fishing the flash cards. They were eager to get a chance to fish. Children did well in identifying the new words in the story. Children gave interesting sentences, orally, using the six new words. Children were able to give the meaning of all the words using context clues. The objective was achieved.

LESSON 2

Topic: Creating a story ending

Objective: Given a story without an ending, in groups, children will write a suitable ending for it, then read it to the class.

Materials: Paragraph, story, tape recorder, cinema box

- Activities:
- (1) A paragraph is displayed on cinema box. Children read it. Teacher illicit that it has a beginning and an ending.
 - (2) Children listen to the story, "The Beaver Expert", without an ending, played on the tape recorder.
 - (3) Discussion on how endings are detemined.
 - (4) Children identify the importace of an ending.
 - (5) Children listen to a short story then create an ending for it.
 - (6) Each group gets a short story without the ending. The groups identify the problem then they come up with a suitable ending. Each group reads their ending to the class.

Evaluation: Children were attentive during the entire lesson. They were very quiet while the story was played on the tape recorder. Children created interesting endings for the short stories.

LESSON 3

Topic: Drawing conclusion/Inference

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Based on the story 'The Beaver Expert', children will draw conclusions to answer four questions on a worksheet.

Materials: Flipchart, short story, worksheet, readers

- Activities:
- (1) Children read the following on flipchart and state what is the correct answer.
 - a. Jill was still, but she was very fast. Jill was _____.
(sitting at the park, riding a car, riding a horse.)
 - b. Ray heard the bulldozer. He saw it make a big hole.
Ray was _____ (swimming, reading, watching)
 - c. Pam was not happy nor sad. Pam was _____.
(sleeping, crying, laughing)
 - (2) Teacher reviews what is 'drawing conclusion'.
 - (3) Teacher reads aloud a short story. Children answer orally four questions, based on the story, whereby they draw conclusion.
 - (4) Children read the story, 'The Beaver Expert' in their readers. They write whether four statements are true or not true and find evidence in the story to support their answers.

Evaluation: Children had some difficulty in completing the sentences in the introduction. Children carefully analyzed the statements then made a decision. Children were able to state in their own words what drawing conclusion meant.

LESSON 4

Topic: Moral of the story

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: In one or two sentences children will write the moral of the story.

Materials: Story, cinema box,

- Activities:
- (1) Teacher tells class a story where she learned a lesson. Children share a few examples.
 - (2) Teacher explains that lessons are also learned from stories and that they are called morals.
 - (3) Volunteers read aloud a short story from cinema box. They discuss and state the moral.
 - (4) Children read the story, 'The Beaver Expert' then write the moral of the story.

Evaluation: Children were eager to share stories where they learned a lesson. Teacher gave an opportunity to four students to share their stories. It was a bit difficult for children to get the moral of the story. At first only two students got it right, so teacher provided individual help. This facilitated children's understanding and more children were able to get it right.

WEEK 4

LESSON 1

Topic: Context Clues

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will complete five sentences by writing the new words in the blanks.

Materials: Cinema box, new words, story, worksheet, strips of paper with sentences.

- Activities:
- (1) Children read aloud the new words displayed on cinema Box.
 - (2) Teacher reads a story while children listen for the new words
 - (3) The story is reread, pointing to each word on cinema box as it is read.
 - (4) Groups are given sentences on strips of paper. Children discuss the meaning of the new words then report.
 - (5) Children give oral sentences using the new words.
 - (6) Children complete five sentences by writing the appropriate word in the blank spaces

Evaluation: Children readily found the meaning of the words by using context clues, that showed that they were thinking critically. They gave very good sentences using the new words. The objective was achieved.

LESSON 2

Topic: Identify traits of a character whose actions are described in a written selection.

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will write three things about the two characters of the story 'Cold Drinks on the Cuff' to show what kind of persons they were.

Materials: Flipchart

- Activities:
- (1) Children are given strips of paper with characteristics such as kindness, selfish, friendly, and honesty. Children dramatize them while others guess what characteristic it is.
 - (2) Teacher elicits that things people often do indicate what kind of people they are.
 - (3) Children read the story 'Cold Drinks on the Cuff' then write three things about the two characters that show what kind of persons they were.

Evaluation: This lesson surely helped children to look for the answer on difficult parts of the story. Children searched for character traits. The majority of the children found most of the character traits. A few had difficulties in finding the character traits. Teacher provided individual help to them.

LESSON 3

Topic: Making Judgement

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will read the story and make judgement on two things the characters did

Materials: Flipchart

- Activities:
- (1) Children read a situation on flipchart and give their opinion.
 - (2) Teacher elicits from children what is making judgement.
 - (3) Questions required to make judgement are presented on flipchart. Each one is discussed.
 - (4) Children read the story 'Cold Drinks on the Cliff'.
Children make judgements on the following things the characters did.
 - a. Was it right/wrong for Jane to give Bobby lemonades on credit.
 - b. Was it right/wrong that Bobby didn't want to pay his bill?

Evaluation: Children were able to state in their words what making judgement meant. Children placed themselves in the situation and made judgement. They performed well and the objective was achieved.

LESSON 4

Topic: Moral of the story

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: Children will write the moral of the story 'Cold Drinks on the Cuff' in complete sentences.

Materials: Tape recorder, readers

- Activities:
- (1) A child tells a story where he/she learned a lesson. The other children state the lesson learnt
 - (2) Teacher reviews what are morals by telling children a story, stating the moral learnt then asking children to tell what is "Moral" in their own words.
 - (3) Children listen to a story played on tape recorder. They discuss in groups to find the moral of the story. Children state the moral.
 - (4) Children read the story, 'Cold Drinks on the Cuff' then write the moral of the story.

Evaluation: Children readily stated the lesson the child learned, but they got a bit noisy while stating the moral the child learned. They were able to give the meaning of "Moral" in their own words. The objective was achieved.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Four weeks reading program designed by the researcher to address the comprehension problem at Calcutta S.D.A. school was indeed a success. In light of the outcomes from the post-test compared to the pre-test, we can see improvement from all of the subjects.

Figure 1 graphically illustrates the overall improved performance of the entire sample on the post-test compared to the pre-test. It is interesting to note the tremendous improvement from all the subjects.

Figure 2 shows that the subjects A,B,C,D scored 23%, 29%, 35%, 41%, on the pre-test respectively. Most of them more than doubled their previous score with their grades of 89%, 84%, 89%, and 74.5% respectively. Figure 3 shows a further detailed numerical data of the test outcomes. It shows the total points allotted to the questions in each level of comprehension; 15 points for literal, 30 for inferential, and 55 for critical. In this figure the increase in each level is more visible. We can clearly see that all the subjects increased in the three levels of comprehension.

Subject A and D were more fluent readers than subject B and C. Although subject C was not as co-operative in group discussions she benefitted from peer tutoring. The researcher expected a higher score from subject D on the pre-test since she was performing excellent throughout the

program. This can probably be attributed to the fact that subject D was not feeling well when she took the post-test. She had been absent for two sessions due to illness, but on the day the post was administered she said that she felt well enough to take it, and was given the opportunity to do so.

Subject B was not very fluent in reading, but benefitted a lot from peer tutoring. She was always actively involved in the lessons and she was persevering. She was frequently seen reading books in the reading corner. Subject A obtained the lowest score in the post-test. At first she was shy and wouldn't participate much. As the days passed the class teacher motivated her and gradually she began participating. Then she was always alert and actively involved and dedicated herself to her work.

The researcher believes that a significant contributing factor for these results was the type of passages provided. These passages were within the students' context in terms of content and language.

With references to figure 2 the statistical difference was determined by using the following equation. The value of t was solved as follows.

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}$$

$\bar{D}$

MEAN OF THE DIFFERENCES

$\sum D$

SUM OF THE DIFFERENCES

N

NUMBER OF SUBJECTS

$\sum D^2$

SUM OF D

$N-1$

DEGREES OF FREEDOM

$$t = \frac{52.125}{\sqrt{\frac{11419.25 - 43472.25}{4(3)}}$$

$$t = \frac{52.125}{\sqrt{\frac{11419.25 - 10868.0625}{12}}}$$

$$t = \frac{52.125}{\sqrt{\frac{551.187}{12}}}$$

$$t = \frac{52.125}{\sqrt{45.932}}$$

$$t = \frac{52.125}{6.777}$$

$$t = 7.691$$

To be 99% certain that the program was effective for a degree of freedom of 3 the t value should be 5.841 or higher. In this case the t value is 7.691 which indicates that the program was effective.

FIGURE 1 & 2

FIGURE 1

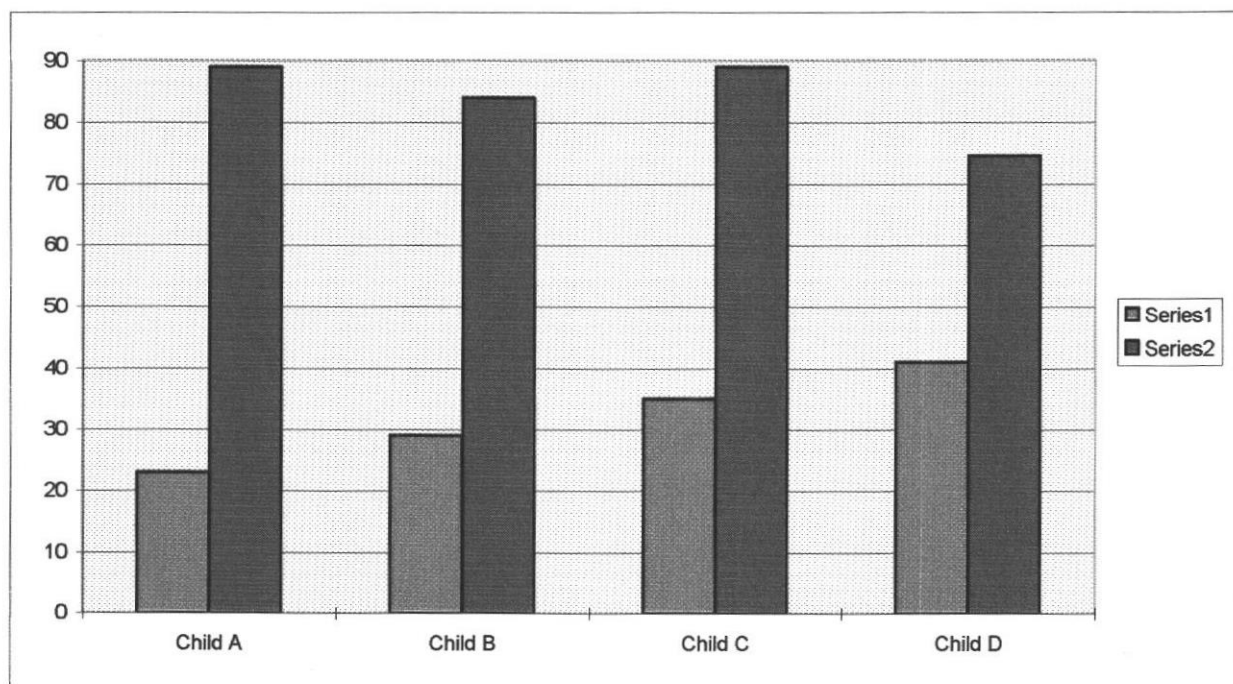


FIGURE 2

Subject	Pre Test Score	Post Test Score	D	2 D
Child A	23	89	66	4356
Child B	29	84	55	3025
Child C	35	89	54	2916
Child D	41	74.5	33.5	1122.25
			208.5	11419.25

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 3

	POINTS ALLOTTED TO LITERAL QUESTIONS (15)	POINTS ALLOTTED TO INFERENTIAL QUESTIONS (30)	POINTS ALLOTTED TO CRITICAL QUESTIONS (55)
Points obtained by A on pre test	13	10	0
Points obtained by A on post test	15	30	44
Points obtained by B on pre test	15	3	11
Points obtained by B on post test	10	30	44
Points obtained by C on pre test	9	15	17
Points obtained by C on post test	11.5	30	33
Points obtained by D on pre test	9	15	17
Points obtained by D on post test	11.5	30	33

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

Limitations are indispensable to any type of research. Although the 4 week Action Research was a success, the optimum and ideal results were not attained. These limitations are the result of adverse factors that were beyond the researcher's reach. Besides the emotional factors that affected the subjects throughout the program, there were physical factors hindering the perfection of the program execution.

The researcher chose Calcutta S.D.A. school primarily because the researcher had noticed the problem children had in answering high level comprehension questions at that specific school. The teacher was interested in working along with the researcher to correct such problem in her students. At the time of the program execution, the researcher was unable to actively involve herself with the subjects. Instead she had the classroom teacher execute the entire program. Although the researcher trusted the teacher as reliable, and the instructions on the delivery of each lesson was clear and unerringly, it would have been optimal if she herself had carried out the program.

Although these limitations had a negative effect on the execution of the program, they were not major obstacles. Even though the program was executed with limited resources it resulted in a satisfactory success.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reading, as vital as it may be to education, has no funtions if there is no comprehension of what is read. Learning to read only becomes true when the child totally understands sentences and words in the extent of their meaning. Regretfully many of our children at primary school level fail to join together these two interrelated elements, and regard reading as complete even if they donot understand what they have read. This is so either because teachers fail to identify the problems children have in understanding textual material or because the instructional methods used by teachers are inadequate to solve reading comprehension problems.

The 4 week program developed by the researcher employed comprehension skills that enhanced and equiped children with the necessary tools for reading enjoyment as well as for answering higher level questions. At the end of the 4 week program, which is of course limited time, the children involved in the Action Resesarch were able to understand most of what they read as well as infer beyond the literal interpretation of the passages.

The researcher recommends that teachers be acquainted with skills and methods necessary to implement programs such as this that will improve the quality of comprehension in the students. The teachers must be willing to monitor the children's reading comprehension development and to offer expert guidance when needed. A survey be made to analyze the reading comprehension level of children in our schools and the programs used in schools

in our country. The Reading Skills implemented in this program be adopted as an integral part of the primary school curriculum guides. This program would be used to familiarize new teachers with the reading skills that should be used in a reading program.

Reading Comprehension Programs that involve higher level questions train children to become active comprehenders. Words become more tangible when meaning are attached to them, other wise reading is just nonsense syllable analysis. (McCollough 1952). Reading will never be complete without comprehension. It is therefore necessary to ensure that reading programs promote comprehension.

CHAPTER 6

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APPENDIX

Pre and Post Test

Children read the story and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

HOW THE SUN CAME

There was no light anywhere, and the animal people stumbled around in the dark.

"Light!" they said. "We must have light! On the other side of the world, there are people who have light. Maybe they will give us some."

"If they have all the light there is," the fox said, "then they must be greedy people. They won't want to give up any of it. Maybe we should just go and take the light from them."

"Who shall go?" everyone cried. The animals all began talking at once about their speed and strength. Who would be best able to get the light away from the greedy people?

At last the possum said, "I can try. I have a fine, big bushy tail, and I can hide the light inside my fur." He set out at once.

As he traveled eastward, the sun's rays became brighter until they dazzled his eyes. The possum squeezed his eyes almost shut to keep out the light. That is the way his eyes are to this day.

On and on the possum went with his eyes squeezed almost shut. At last he found the sun. He snatched a piece of it and hid in his bushy tail. But the sun was so hot, it burned all the fur from his tail. By the time he got home, his tail was as bare as it is today. And he had lost the piece of the sun.

The people still had no light. They still stumbled around in the dark.

"I will go," said the buzzard. "I am not so foolish as to put the sun in my tail.

So the buzzard went. The people who kept the sun were now watching out for thieves, but he flew so high they could not see him.

The buzzard dived southward from the sky and snatched a piece of the dazzling sun in his claws. He set the sun on his head and started for home. But the sun burned off all his head feathers, and he could carry it no longer that is why the buzzard's head is bald today.

Now the people cried out, "What shall we do today? Our brothers have done the best they can do. What else can be done so that we will have light?"

A small voice spoke from the grass. "There may be something I can do," it said.

"Who is speaking?" every one asked.

"I am Grandmother Spider," the voice answered. I may be able to bring you light. Who knows? At least I can try.

Then Grandmother Spider felt around in the dark until she found some damp clay she took a handful of the clay and rolled it into the shape of a small round bowl. She started eastward, carrying the damp clay bowl. As she traveled she spun a thread behind her so that she could find her way back.

She came to the place of the greedy sun people. She was so little and so quiet that no one noticed her. She reached out gently, took a tiny bit of the sun and placed it in her damp clay bowl.

Then she went back along the thread that she had spun. As she traveled, the damp pottery had slowly dried. The sun's light grew and spread before her as she moved westward.

"Thank you, Grandmother," the people said when she returned. "We shall show our gratitude by remembering you always."

The people spoke the truth. Even today the spider's web is shaped like the sun. If you look closely, you can see the sun and its rays.

LITERAL LEVEL (5 PTS)

1. What is the main idea of the story?
2. Why did the animals stumbled around in the dark?
3. Name the characters of the story.

INFERENTIAL LEVEL (10 PTS)

4. Could animals have been alive before there was sunlight?
Support your answer.
5. What is a buzzard? Give 2 points that support your answer.
6. Why are the characters called 'Animal People'?

CRITICAL LEVEL (11 PTS)

7. What lesson did the animal people learn?
8. Create another ending for the story.
9. Was it good for the animal people to thief the sun? Why?
10. What kind of person was the buzzard?
11. The animal people wanted to remember grandmother spider always, so they decided to do something very interesting. They got a piece of celotex, many colours of paint, and different sizes of paint brushes. What were they going to do.