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DIAGNOSTIC AND ATTAINMENT TESTING: ENGLISH.

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CONTENTS

Introduction	
I. Description of Tests Used	1
II. Administration of the Tests and Test Results	8
III. " " " (cond.)	31
IV. Summary of Errors and Assessment of Attainment	39
V. Remedial Work and Conclusion	45
Appendix	52

## DIAGNOSTIC AND ATTAINMENT TESTING: ENGLISH

### INTRODUCTION

The results of our efforts as teachers are seldom self-evident. Whereas the farmer, the mechanic or the carpenter can merely look and see what he has been doing, the teacher must go to some trouble to find the results of his work. To do so he employs measures or tests to see if the children are getting anything out of his teaching. If he did not do so, a great deal of his effort might be wasted to the disadvantage of his pupils.

The following is an account of some testing carried out in Primary classes 5 and 6 of the Government Experimental School, New Town, Accra (Lagos Town) and in the Forms 1, 2 and 3 of the Government Middle School, Anumle. In both schools, at least in the classes where the testing was done, English is the medium of instruction.

This investigation set out to measure attainment in English. The importance of English as a basic subject cannot be overemphasised. It is generally agreed that poor English in the Middle Schools is a large cause of backwardness in most other subjects of the curriculum in the Secondary Schools. It is also generally agreed that reading is about the most important subject in the curriculum of the Primary School and that success in this subject effects to a very large extent progress in most other subjects and influences the child's whole attitude toward school life.

English has become the lingua franca for a large proportion of the inhabitants of the world. In Africa, and particularly West Africa, it is necessary for those who work with Europeans. It is the means by which technical information may be gained by those who follow practical pursuits. Notices and advertisements in most towns and villages in British West Africa are written in English. Assembly Debates and discussions are recorded in English and for the public they are reported by the journalists in English. A large catalogue could be made of how English has become important in various walks of life. The ability then to read and interpret accurately those notices, advertisements, technical information, etc, makes a knowledge of English indispensable.

The tests which I have used for my survey are graded Attainment and Diagnostic Tests prepared and standardised by Prof. F.J.Schonell. These types of graded tests are a most accurate way of assessing the level attained by children. There are six tests in all. They test reading, comprehension, spelling and visual discrimination of words.

The tests will reveal, I hope, the general level of attainment in the respective sections of English tested. They will reveal to what extent children in the middle schools can be expected to gather information or understand simple instructions from a piece of reading. They will test the accuracy of understanding of what is read and the speed with which the comprehension can be accomplished. The results of these tests will provide material with which we can compare one child's performance with another's and the result of the whole population with the norms as worked out by Prof. Schonell from his cases.

It is hoped that these tests will also reveal what specific and general errors are made by the children. The causes of the errors will be inferred from the results. When teachers know what errors are made and why they are made they will be in a better position to eradicate those errors.

CHAPTER I  
DESCRIPTION  
INTRODUCTION OF TESTS USED.

Mention has already been made of the field of my investigation. I now give a brief description of the respective tests which I used. In all, there were six tests. They are Visual Word Discrimination Test, Silent Reading Test A, Simple Prose Reading Test, Spelling Test I, Silent Reading Test B and Reading Scale Test.

SIMPLE PROSE READING TEST: (Test R2: Schonell's Diagnostic and Attainment Testing).

This test is a straight forward narration based on a dog. The language used here is quite simple and can be understood clearly by any average child who has been taught English for about 3 years. Any child who has read the Oxford English Readers for Africa<sup>books</sup> 1 and 2 should be able to read this little story fluently and with understanding.

The story is printed in very bold print. The first paragraph is printed in about 20 or 18 point Gil Sans type while the rest of the story is in an 18 point Gil San type of print. The lines are arranged in meaningful wholes and are neither too long nor too short.

In an atmosphere of calm and friendliness the testee is given the book containing this story in the exact print. The testee is told to read the passage <sup>about</sup> allowed for the investigator. The testee is told to try to remember what he reads as the investigator would ask him questions about the text.

While the testee reads, the investigator notes on his error sheet any incorrect versions of words given. The testee is made to re-read any word he reads badly. The time taken to complete the reading is noted.

When the testee has finished reading, the book is taken away from him and he is then asked questions based on the reading. Both the passage for reading and the questions to be answered after the reading are reproduced below. No attempt has been made to reproduce the passage in the standardised type of print. But the length of the lines has been maintained.

MY DOG

One day my dog cut his leg  
On an open tin, so I put him  
under my arm and ran to a shop.  
Here a man wound some rag round the cut.  
I then took my pet home  
and made him lie down in a box of straw.

After three days he could put  
his paw to the ground,  
so we went for a short walk in the park.  
At the end of a fortnight he had quite recovered  
and we were able to play once again.

I am glad he is better because we like to ramble together in the woods, chasing grey squirrels, jumping over fallen trees, and playing hide-and-seek.

He is a very clever animal. He is able to catch a brightly coloured ball in his mouth. He quickly returns a stick to me when I throw it away.

He can carry a basket between his teeth when I go on errands for my mother and he runs as swiftly as a hare.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED AFTER READING TEST R2

1. What did the dog cut his leg on?
2. Where was the dog taken when he cut his leg?
3. What did the man do to the dog's leg?
4. What was in the box in which the dog had to lie?
5. How long was it before the dog could put his paw to the ground?
6. Where did the dog go for his first walk after he could put his paw to the ground?
7. How long was it before the dog was quite well?
8. Where do the dog and his master ramble together?
9. What did they play in the woods?
10. What else did they play in the woods?
11. What else did they play in the woods?
12. What can the dog do?
13. What else can the dog do?
14. What else can the dog do?
15. What else can the dog do?

For comparison with individual performances of the testees I produce below Norms for Simple Prose Reading Test, "MY DOG".

READING AGES FROM AVERAGE NUMBER OF ERRORS MADE IN THE ORAL READING OF THE TEST.

Reading Age In Years	Average No. Of Errors Made
Less than 6.0	More than 18
6.0	18
6.5	14
7.0	11
7.5	8
8.0	5
8.5	3
9.0	2
9.5	1

READING AGES FOR COMPREHENSION ( AS TESTED BY THE QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED AND FOR SPEED )

Reading Age In Years	Average Time Taken In Minutes & Seconds	Average No. Of Questions Answered Correctly
6.0	4 minutes 45 seconds	6.0
6.5	3 " 16 "	7.0
7.0	2 " 51 "	8.0
7.5	2 " 38 "	9.0
8.0	2 " 6 "	10.0
8.5	1 " 35 "	11.0
9.0	1 " 28 "	12.0
9.5	1 " 18 "	13.0

The simple Prose Reading Test measures attainment in continuous reading. From the number of questions answered correctly, the reading age of the testee is inferred. The reading age for word recognition is also calculated from the errors made. The "My Dog" comprehension scores are reputed to give reliable indication of ability to understand what is read by young testees and by backward readers up to the age of 9+. Thus it will be agreed that it is a suitable test for the Lower Forms of the Middle Schools.

## II. SILENT READING TEST A: (R3)

This test by Professor Schonell in his Diagnostic and Attainment Testing contains 20 short paragraphs. At the end of each paragraph there is a question. Paragraphs 1 and 2 are complete with answers to serve as examples.

Some of the paragraphs which would not be quite understood by children in Primary and Middle Schools in this country have been omitted, leaving one paragraph complete with answer and ten paragraphs each with a question to be solved by the testees. For convenience, names have been altered to names familiar to the children. This test was prepared and standardised by Mr. A. Taylor of the Institute of Education of the University College of the Gold Coast. An example of what change was made in one paragraph will illustrate this claim:-

Professor Schonell's: Last Monday we went to the Zoo. We spent much time in front of an iron cage which held seven monkeys. They made us laugh when they put out their paws for nuts.

What was the monkey's cage made of?

Mr. A. Taylor's: Amah is a potter. She makes clay pots. She

makes big pots and small pots. Yesterday she made three pots.

What does Amah make her pots from?

This test was used last year over a fairly large population and its validity affirmed. It can be used in Middle Schools (in the lower Forms) where English is the medium of instruction or in Primary Classes 5 and 6 (Stds 2 & 3) where English is the medium of instruction as in the Government Experimental School in Lagos Town, Accra.

The language in this test is quite within range of any pupil who has read Oxford English Readers for Africa Books 1 and 2. The last paragraph contains words such as hull, funnel and masts (parts of a ship) which may be strange to the children. But from the context their meanings can be inferred. Besides, an exact knowledge of their meanings has very little bearing on the question to be solved at the end of the paragraph.

The children are expected to read these paragraphs and answer the questions, all within nine minutes. But experience last year showed that this time is too short for the Lower Forms of the Middle School and for the top classes of the Primary School. So it was decided to let the testee continue until he has finished. Instead of asking the testee to answer on separate sheets of paper, a space is provided at the end of each paragraph for the answer.

Paragraphs 2 and 7 are reproduced here and the whole test appears as Appendix I.

Para 2: I am a wild bird. My home is in a tree. I can fly high in the air. I can sing a song.  
Where is the bird's home?

Para 7. Kofi took the money and went off with smile, his eyes sparkled with joy and he said to himself. "Now I shall be able to buy the new bicycle that I have always wanted." Was Kofi happy or sad? .....

For ease and convenience the children were asked to work with pencils.

III. SILENT READING TEST B. (TEST RA)

Silent Reading Test B, by Prof. Schonell contains 20 short paragraphs of slightly more difficult material than Silent Reading Test A. Unlike Silent Reading Test A, Test B contains at the end of each paragraph two, and in one case three, groups of words A & B and A B&C. In each paragraph there are two blank spaces, A & B respectively and in one case there are three blank spaces. Of the words in each group only one would make correct sense when inserted in space in the paragraph immediately before the groups of words. Paragraph 1 is produced here as example:-

Fred had five white mice. He kept them in a tiny hutch made of wood and .....(A). One day when he went to feed the mice he found that they had gone. He looked round and found a small .....(B) in the wire.

- (A) bread,                    sand,           wire, leaves, paper
- (B) pot,                    nut,           pole, stick, hole.

For my purpose I have used only ten paragraphs but in order to have it properly graded I have chosen all the odd paragraphs: 1, 3, 5, 7, to 19.

The time set for this test was the same as if the whole test was done. As with Silent Reading Test A, this test sets out to find how accurately the testees can read and to what extent they understand what they read. In some paragraphs the meaning of the word to be chosen at the end of the paragraph was expressed in different words, and the testee would be expected to be able to detect it. The whole test as I used it appears in this work as Appendix II.

GRADED WORD SPELLING TEST S1.

The Graded Word Spelling Test which measures a testee's attainment in spelling can be given to a single testee or to a group of testees. It contains 100 words arranged in such a way that the simple ones come first and increase in difficulty. The words are dictated by the examiner and written on paper by the testees. To help the testees to know which is to be written, the word is first said alone. Next it is put into an explanatory sentence and then dictated again alone after which the testees write it on their paper.

But for verbal factors in spelling which may affect the results, the Graded Word Spelling Test, by experiment, has been known to produce results which correspond very closely to the intelligence of the testee. The testee's result on the Graded Word Spelling Test can be scored in the form of a spelling age and spelling quotient. All the words of this test will be shown in the administration of the test.

READING SCALE

This is another test of reading for comprehension. It contains in all 33 short paragraphs. But as the last paragraphs are rather difficult, I omit paragraphs 30 - 33 inclusive for my testees. The testees are expected to read each and to answer the question at the end of each. At the end of each paragraph there are 4 facts - (a), (b), (c) & (d) one of which alone answers the question correctly. The children are instructed to underline the fact which answers the question. Here is one of the paragraphs reproduced as an example.

Mary went to the grocer's and bought some sugar and some syrup. How did Mary get the sugar and the syrup?

- (a) She paid for it. (b) Her mother paid for it afterwards. (c) The grocer gave it to her. (d) It does not say who paid.

The whole test appears as appendix IV.

This test is designed to be used as a measure of the testee's mechanical reading age. For this purpose, the testee is made to read as far along the scale as he can until he has made altogether a total of four errors in word recognition. I did not intend to use it for this purpose but <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ measure comprehension. From the score made by each testee his comprehension age will be calculated. Stated simply, to find out the testee's comprehension age,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  years are added to the number of right answers divided by four. For instance a testee who had 10 answers right has a comprehension age of 8 ( $10 \div 4 = 2\frac{1}{2} + 5\frac{1}{2}$ ).

#### IV. VISUAL WORD DISCRIMINATION TEST:

Professor Schonell otherwise refers to this test as Test R7 in his Diagnostic and Attainment Testing. This test contains 150 words arranged in 25 groups. Each of the 25 groups consists of six words. Of these six there is one known as the key word. Those other five words are each made up of almost the same letters as the key word. Some of them, by phonic rendering, are homonymous to the key word. A copy of the whole test appears on this work as Appendix III but groups 1 and 2 are reproduced here. The key word of each group is here underlined, not so done in the original:-

1. thred thraed threab thread thread
2. peices pices gices pieces pieses piecese.

The testee is shown the key word, of say group I for five seconds. At the expiration of the five seconds the testee is expected to identify the word among other words of the group. Should he fail at the first attempt, the testee is allowed to have a second trial. If he still fails to select the correct word, the testee is shown the key word a second time for another five seconds. Then he is asked to identify it from among the words of the group. If he fails again he is allowed the final trial. The fourth time of failure is final failure. Each time the examiner records the incorrect selection made by the testee. The testee is next shown the next key word and the procedure is repeated.

From the error sheet a fairly accurate estimate of the pupil's power of visual perception of words can be made and the errors common in the population detected.

As will be seen from my administration of the test, I changed this test from being a purely individual test to a group test. The reason for this change was the length of time it would ...



ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS AND TEST RESULTS

The validity and reliability of a test depend on its construction, standardisation, and not less, on the close adherence to the instruction on the method of administration. Unless otherwise advised, the instructions by Professor Schanell on how to give the test, were very closely observed in this investigation. The following is an account of how each test was given. Some observations made during the tests are included. The results and errors and weaknesses common among the children, as revealed by the individual tests are also included.

I. SIMPLE PROSE READING TEST ( MY DOG )

This test was given to the pupils in Middle Forms 1, 2 & 3 of the Government School, Anumle. Forty pupils in all were tested in this test. The choice of the testees was more or less a random one.

A quiet room, the School library room, was secured for this purpose. Here the testees came singly. To dispel fear and nervousness from the testees, a short introductory conversation was held with each of them. It began by offering the testee a chair and asking his/her name. The names, school uniform, class rooms, the Domestic Science room and other spheres of the school formed the topics of the conversation.

A copy of Diagnostic and Attainment Testing by Professor Fred J. Schonell and Mr. M. E. Schonell was then given to the testee. Page 42 of the book was placed before the testee who was told to read it aloud to the examiner. The testee was asked to try to remember what he/she read because the examiner would ask him/her some questions about the text read. The testee then proceeded to read.

While the testee read, I recorded on the error sheet any incorrect versions given. The testee was encouraged to try again any word over which he baulked. If after fifteen seconds he was unsuccessful he was made to spell the word. If he still could not recognise the word, I said it to him/her and he/she repeated it and proceeded. The time the testee took to read the passage was noted.

As soon as the reading had been completed I took the book from the testee and said, "Good, now answer these questions please". I then asked the testee one question after another of the 15 questions listed in the description of the Tests. I endeavoured as much as possible not to indicate whether the answers were correct or not. For every correctly answered question I put a dot under the question number in my error and score sheet. For wrong answers I ~~inserted~~ inserted the letter Y. The recording of either a dot or 'y' was done

very cautiously without attracting the testee's attention.

From the number of errors made the reading age of each testee was calculated based on the Norms For Simple Prose Reading Test, "My Dog". Their reading ages were calculated also from the comprehension as tested by the questions answered. The time taken to read the text gave a good measure of the reading speed. The following is the list of those who were tested showing, their chronological ages, sex, Time taken to read the text, errors made (no.), the number of questions answered and their reading ages calculated. Table I.

On the whole the words that most testees stumbled over were wound given as wund instead of waund, perhaps from the word "cut" met earlier in the text. The other unfamiliar words were squirrel, errand, straw, chasing, paw and ramble.

SCORE SHEET FOR SIMPLE PROSE READING TEST: READING AGES MEASURED.

NAME OF TESTEE	BOY Or Girl	Form	Chron. Age	Read. Errors	Read. Age	No. of Qq. From R.E.	Read. Age Based On Qq. Answd.	Time Used
Adu Mensah	Boy							
Tsatsoo Laryea	Girl	1	12.1/6	4	8.5	10	8.0	2 mts 45 s
Theresa Ankrsh	"	1	11	7	7.5 less	6	6.0	3 " 10 "
Solomon Gaisey	Boy	1	11.7/12	19	6	0:L.6.0	10	" 15 "
Winfred Senoo	"	1	13	8	7.5	3:L.6.0	4	" 5 "
Gertrude Larbi	Girl	1	13.1/6	12	7.0	10	8.0	5 " 0 "
Kwao Senoo	Boy	1	12.2/3	11	7.0	4	L.6.0	3 " 15 "
William Yaotey	"	1	12%	8	7.5	5	L.6.0	3 " 20 "
Josephina Tonyigah	Girl	I	12	6	8.0	2	L.6.0	3 " 20 "
Charlotte Dede A.	"	II	13.5/6	5	8.0	4	L.6	3 " 4 "
Solomon Ayetey	Boy	II	12	13	6.5	2	"	4 " 30 "
Adjoker Adjei	Girl	III	12.2/3	8	7.5	7	6.5	1 " 30 "
Peace Angba	"	II	13	6	8.0	1	L.6.0	3 " 30 "
Issac Quaye	Boy	II	13.5/6	14	6.5	1	"	4 " 26 "
Rebecca Iomotey	Girl	II	13	4	8.5	0	"	1 " 35 "
Edward Yebuah	Boy	II	12.3/4	8	7.5	4	"	4 " 15 "
Gladys Gadzenaki	Girl	II	14	12	7.0	5	"	3 " 25 "
Grace Doku	"	II	14	11	7.0	0	"	4 " 25 "
Comfort Osabatay	"	II	13.1/3	19	L.6.0	0	"	9 " 16 "
Gladys Wiredu	Girl	III	15	2	9.0	4	"	1 " 35 "
Selina Doku	"	III	14	4	8.5	8	7.0	2 " 0 "
Gabriel Doe	Boy	III	12	2	9.0	6	6.0	2 " 0 "
Amuzu Kofie	"	III	14	5	8.0	7	6.5	3 " 0 "
Fredrika Smart Abbey	Girl	III	12.2/3	8	7.5	7	6.5	4 " 13 "
Yao Misinu	Boy	III	13.7/12	2	9.0	11	8.5	1 " 35 "
Fredrick L.O.Kodjoe	"	III	14.1/6	3	8.5	10	8.0	1 " 38 "
Mary Quarshie	Girl	III	13.5/6	6	8.0	2	L.6.0	3 " 7 "
Reuben Awulley	Boy	III	15	5	8.0	8	7.0	2 " 15 "
Flora Dodoo	Girl	III	13%	4	8.5	6	6.0	2 " 25 "
Benjamin Hukporti	Boy	III	14	2	9.0	6	6.0	1 " 10 "
Yao Lucas	"	III	14	3	8.5	1	L.6.0	1 " 45 "
Aryee Quarshie	"	III	15	11	7.0	7	6.5	4 " 25 "
Mary Odonkor	Girl	III	16	6	8.0	2	L.6.0	2 " 35 "
Okoshia Quashie	"	III	17	12	7.0	0	L.6.0	4 " 30 "
Nancy Cudjoe	"	III	15	5	8.0	7	6.5	2 " 0 "
Sath Oekre	Boy	1	14%	11	7.0	5	L.6.0	4 " 30 "
Ofoan Samuel	"	1	14.2/3	3	8.5	2	"	2 " 5 "
Philip Nartey	"	1	14.1/6	2	9.0	10	8.0	1 " 40 "
Helene Tetteh	Girl	1	13.	15	6.5	13	L.6.0	6 " 30 "
Adjetej Okine	Boy	1	13	13	6.5	3	"	4 " 0 "
Aryee Kofie	"	1	14	4	8.5	0	"	2 " 30 "

II. SILENT READING TEST A. (TEST R3)

This test was given in the Primary Classes 5 & 6 (Stds 2 & 3) of the Government Experimental School, Lagos Town. As I had been during the practical teaching period attached to this school it was easy for me to create an air of friendliness before the test. I began by making the class 6 pupils engage in a mental alertness exercise. Then I told them I wanted them to do an English exercise. I then distributed the test papers, face downwards. At the back of the paper each pupil wrote his/her name, sex, age and class.

When that was done, I gave the following instructions:- Use a pencil. Write clearly and as shortly as possible. Work as quickly as you can. If a question is too hard, do not waste time over it but go on to the next one. Read each paragraph and the question at the end of it. Write the answers to the question on your question paper. Where children's faces showed doubts I asked the class teacher to interpret it to them in the vernacular. I then did paragraph 1 with the children and answered the question at the end of it. The children were then asked to do paragraphs 2 - 11 and the question at the end of each. As soon as a child finished he was free to bring his paper. The time taken was recorded on the question paper. The first child finished in ten minutes and the last child did not finish until after forty minutes. In both classes ninety six pupils were tested. Table II shows the distribution of marks in Test R3.

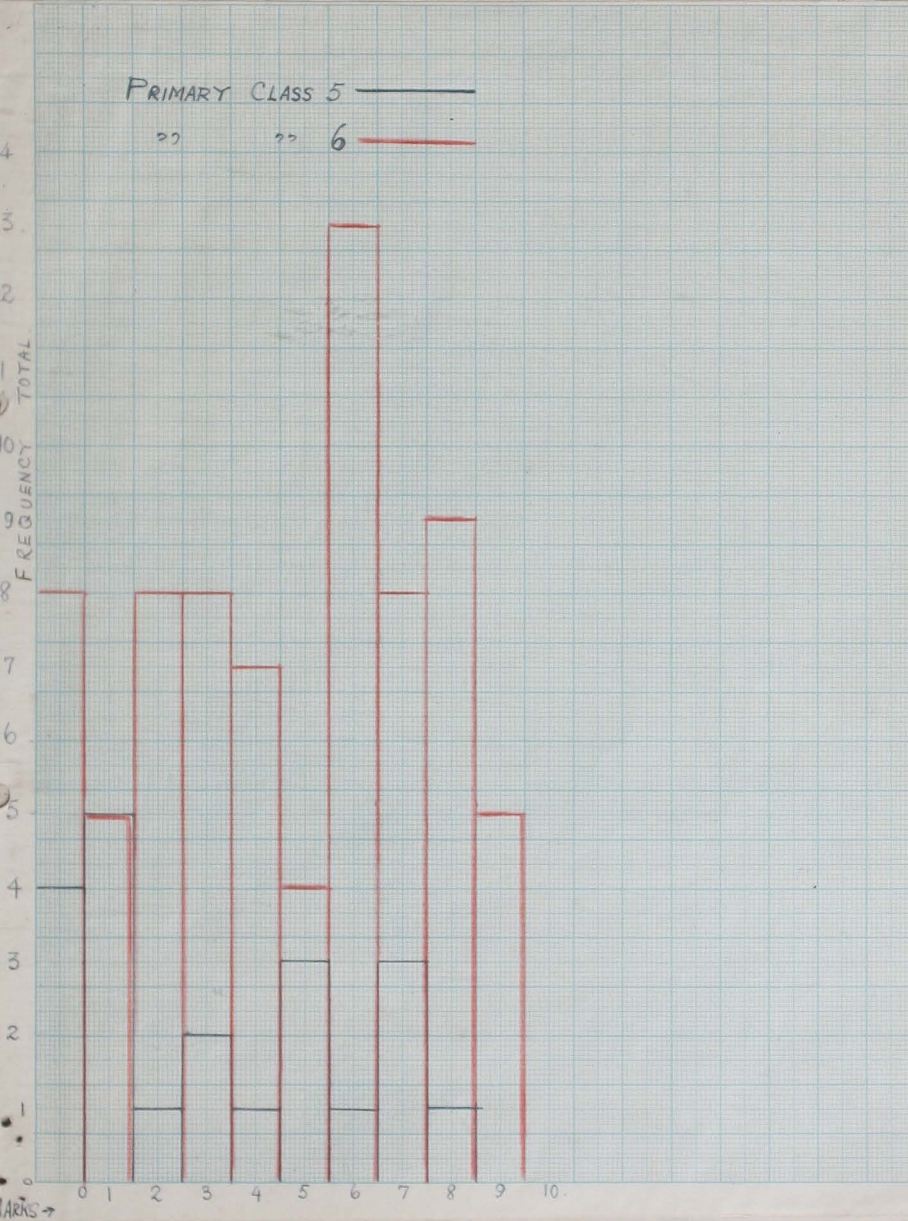
During the test it was difficult to make the testees quiet. Although they were told to do it silently, they appeared almost unable to read silently. In all cases the lips were moving up and down as the reading was done. The finger was used to go along the line as each word was read.

Below is a Frequency Distribution Sheet for both classes. (TABLE II)

PRIMARY CLASS 6			PRIMARY CLASS 5		
SCORE	TALLIES	FREQUENCY	SCORE	TALLIES	FREQUENCY
10	-	-	10	-	-
9		5	9	-	-
8		9	8		1
7		8	7		3
6		13	6		1
5		4	5		3
4		7	4		1
3		8	3		2
2		8	2		1
1		5	1		5
0		8	0		4
	75	75		21	21

The histogram (fig.1) compares the scores of the children of P6 with those of P.5.

FIG. I HISTOGRAM SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS IN. S.R. TEST A.



The following is a schedule of errors and weaknesses revealed by the Silent Reading Test A. (Test R3) TABLE III(a)

CLASS OF ERROR OR WEAKNESS	SPECIFIC EXAMPLES	TALLIES	FREQUENCY
1. Slow reading. Not a single testee did the test in the time set for it.	The first child finished in 10 minutes the last in <del>40</del> .40 minutes.	All (96)	96
2. Weak Comprehension	Only 5 children scored 9 marks 13 children made no score.		
3. Inability to draw meanings from a poem (Question 10)	Either meaningless phrases were given or no attempt at all was made.		42

As an illustration of the degree of poor work submitted and which clearly illustrates how very little the children understand what is read, the following are answers given by two testees from the Government Experimental School, Lagos Town, Accra.

They were: Susannah (Spelt by herself Susuana) Attuquay aged 12 years and Kodjo Nyam also aged 12. Both are in Primary Class 6. They will be referred to as A (Susannah Attuquay) and K (Kodjo).

- Q. 2. I am a wild bird. My home is in a tree. I can fly high in the air. I can sing a song.  
Where is the bird's home? A ..... My home is not thee  
K.....is sleeps in The. (His  
(spacing of words)
3. We have a baby. When we speak to him he waves his little hand. He has ten teeth. He sleeps most of the day.  
How many teeth has the baby? ....A.... Theis teeth hi the  
bird  
K. ...inisa home.
4. Amah is a potter. She makes clay pots. She makes big pots and small pots. Yesterday she made three pots.  
What does Amah make her pots from? A... It ix from is  
very good  
K... it is a from
5. Yaw is a fisherman. He goes fishing in a wooden canoe. There are five men in his crew. Last year he took the canoe down to Komenda to fish.  
How many men are there in Yaw's crew?

- A. .... there are creu ore.  
 K. .... in There are Sixman.

6. It was getting so dark that Alice thought a storm must be coming. "What a big cloud there is", she cried, "and how fast it is growing. It will soon cover the whole sky." Do you think the sun was still shining?

A. .... it will sun still ore key

K. .... No doni think The.

7. Kofi took the money and went off with a smile, his eyes sparkled with joy and he said to himself. "Now I shall be able to buy the new bicycle that I had always wanted".

Was Kofi happy or sad? A. ... Yes Kofi happy ore brid

K. ... The Kofi isled.

8. In some countries coloured lights are used to direct the cars at cross streets. A red light means "Stop", an orange light means "Get ready" and a green light means "Go".

What light is used for "Stop" A....his stop in the school.

K.... in The A light.

9. I can skip, I go to school everyday, I wear a nice dress and when I grow up I will wear ear-rings.

What am I? A. .... This is am are the rings.

K. .... If I will go to school.

10. The daylight is dying

Away in the West

The wild birds are flying

In silence to rest.

Do these lines tell about evening or morning?

A. ... The moning to the sea.

K. ... The is about

11. If you are waiting on shore for a ship to come in, the first thing you see is the smoke, later the funnels and masts come in sight, and lastly the hull of the ship itself is seen.

Suppose you are watching a ship leaving land. What is the last part of the ship that you would see?

A. .... The

K. .... he i sseen

The following frequency distribution table shows what questions presented some difficulty and which questions were familiar among the testees: Table III(b) *Continued on page 15*

Question No.	TALLIES	Frequency
1	Example Done	
2		74
3		61
4		33
5		57
6		24

Table III(b) (Contd)

Question No.	Tallies	Frequency
7		49
8		58
9		10
10		30
11		7

Questions 11, 9, 6, and 10, arranged beginning with the most difficult, proved to present the greatest difficulties. As can be seen from Appendix I, these questions required some thinking from the testees and this they failed woefully to do. The reason for this is not far to seek. A short visit to most of the schools and presence in a lesson will reveal how very little, if any at all, reasoning is brought into the teaching. The children are given facts which they are expected in most cases to reproduce to their teacher in almost the same words, usually without any attempt to develop understanding.

This weakness suggests very definitely the need for more silent reading in the schools. Silent reading, not as one usually finds it done but silent reading which must be followed by questioning by the teacher. The question to develop understanding more than to measure the remembrance of facts which eventually leads to the futile attempt at cramming the given pieces. This was observed to be the case in one of the schools visited. Silent reading was turned into a recitation period, children struggling in vain to commit to memory what they were asked to read silently. When an attempt was made to test the understanding of the matter read, the answers given were fallacious and unrelated to the question.

It is shocking to note that children who are said to have read the Oxford English Readers for Africa Books 1,2,3 and are now reading Book 4 and who are believed to have read several Supplementary Readers could not do even a single question in Silent Reading Test A. As has been noted somewhere else, 13 children did not get a single one correct. Nine children made one score each and the same number made two scores each.

Several answers possessed practically no sense.

Again for illustration answers given by Allotey Comney aged 12 years and at present in Primary Class 6 are reproduced below:

The spacing between his letters is observed here:

To: Question 2: u home is te  
 " " 3. it bats trak  
 " " 4. ther civ wrac  
 " " 5. lot ensiot

To Question 6:		No the nrks
"	7:	Ke wat happl
"	8:	Red t le D a s.
"	9:	I teng
"	10:	wthe st
"	11:	nat e i o m sk

For comparison answers given by Clement Osabutey also aged 12 and in the same class are here reproduced.

To Question 2 he writes	.....	It's in a tree
"	3 " "	..... He has ten teeth
"	4 " "	..... She made it from clay
"	5 " "	..... there are five men in his crew
"	6 " "	..... It has getting so dark
"	7 " "	..... Kofi was happy
"	8 " "	..... A red light is used for stop
"	9 " "	..... You are a girl
"	10 " "	..... These lines tell evening
"	11 " "	..... It's back

This shows clearly the disparity in the level of attainment in reading, comprehension and writing between members of the same class and who are generally given the same lessons with the strong hope that all the children are taking in what is taught. It will be agreed that this disparity between the children and the low reading ability and comprehension will more or less clog the post-primary educational machines. If Clement Osabutey must not be held back too much and if Allotey Commey must not be carried along over the road she cannot trace or use it becomes abundantly clear that they must be taught separately at least for reading. This suggestion to split the big class up into smaller groups according to attainment is yet a dream to many teachers. On this very dream hangs the success of most of the teaching in this country.

III. SILENT READING TEST B. (TEST BA)

This test was given in Middle Form I of the Government School Anumle. There were altogether 42 pupils who did the test. Each testee's paper was turned face downwards. At the back of the paper each testee wrote his name, age and whether boy or girl.

The following instructions were then given: "You will find ten short paragraphs on your question paper. Read each paragraph silently. You will notice that there are spaces marked with the letters A & B. Write on your answer paper the one word from row A that will make the best sense when put in <sup>space</sup>~~space~~ A, and write on your answer paper the one word from row B that will make the best sense when put in space B. Where the space is too small or where your writing of the chosen word does not show clearly, you may further underline in rows A and B what words you have chosen respectively". When children showed some doubt, the instruction was repeated to them in the vernacular. They then turned their question papers face upwards and began to do the test. The time allowed them to do the test was fifteen minutes. As soon as any candidate finished, he was advised to submit his paper. Four pupils finished before the fifteen minutes expired.

These children were quieter than those who did the Silent Reading Test A. Whereas those who did the Silent Reading Test A were almost unable to read silently these did so.

For marking I awarded one mark for each correct word chosen, whether written in the space or underlined in the <sup>row</sup>~~space~~. Table IV shows the particulars of the testees of this test.

TABLE IV

NAME OF TESTEE	BOY Or Girl	AGE	NO. OF QQ ATTEMPTED	SCORE	TIME USED
Adu Mensah	Boy	16	6	8	15 minutes
Lantey Aryee	"	14	6	5	15 "
Kwaku Tetedze	"	13	5	4	15 "
Hamaidan Joseph	"	10	9	7	15 "
Asharkor Quaye	Girl	12½	10	8	14 "
Tsotsoo Laryea	"	12.1/6	10	8	13 "
Daniel Solomon	Boy	12.1/6	4	7	15 "
Michael Johnson	"	12.1/3	6	10	15 "
Amuzu Kwablah	"	10.5/12	5	6	15 "
Seth Anyor	"	12.1/3	6	6	15 "
Kofi Kukui	"	15	7	7	15 "
Lantei Aryee	"	13	4	4	15 "
Emelia Gaba	Girl	13½	7	9	15 "
Artiso Aryetey	Boy	12.1/3	7	5	15 "
Mammah Adishetu	Girl	12.1/3	6	7	15 "
William Yaotey	Boy	12½	7	5	15 "
Kwao Senoo	Boy	12.7/12	6	6	15 "
Alberta Davis	Girl	12½	9	5	15 "
Gladys Norman	"	11½	8	10	15 "
Bertha Hukportie	"	12.1/6	7	5	15 "
Eugene Ammah	Boy	12.1/6	6	6	15 "
Adzoko Osekre	Girl	12.1/6	10	10	15 "
Beatrice Mensah	"	12	10	9	15 "
Theresa Ankrah	"	11.1/6	6	5	15 "
Estha Ama	Girl	14	3	2	15 "
Gertrude Larbi	"	13½	9	6	15 "
Solomon Gursej	Boy	12.2/3	10	13	14 "
Pamela Cronje	Girl	12	6	6	15 "
Rebecca Dede	"	13½	10	7	12 "
A. Cudjoe	"	13½	8	8	15 "
L. Norman	Boy	12.5/6	6	6	15 "
V. Lamptey	"	12	9	10	15 "
Daniel Laryea	"	13	7	6	15 "
George B. Adjekum	Boy	11	4	3	15 "
Josephina Tonyigah	Girl	12½	5	6	15 "
Jacob O. Sai	Boy	12½	8	11	15 "
Eric Gyampoh	"	11.5/12	7½	8	15 "
Winfred K. Senoo	"	13.1/6	6	5	15 "
Robert A. Epakpovie	"	12½	7	6	15 "
Perfect A. Angba	Girl	12	5	6	15 "
Shasha Odonkor	"	12.1/3	6½	3	15 "
Janet Dodoo	"	12	8	6	15 "

A look at the table above will reveal that testees scored more marks than the number of questions they attempted. That is so because each question correctly done would gain 2 marks, one at A and the other at B. Question 10 would fetch 3 marks. Besides, for calculating comprehension and reading ages 2 marks are added for the example done with the children. The calculation is based on Table VI of Schonell's Diagnostic and Attainment Testing page 59.

A Frequency Distribution table based on Table IV is shown here - Table VI. Table V reveals several mistakes and weaknesses prevalent among the children. Outstanding among these are slow and parrot fashion type of reading, poor comprehension and reasoning.

For a full list of errors see Table V herein included:

SCHEDULE OF WEAKNESSES DISCLOSED BY SILENT READING TEST B.

TABLE V

TYPE OF ERROR	E X A M P L E S	TALLIES	F.
Slow Reading	Double the time was allowed for this test but only six testees finished it, though with poor results	100% IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII-III IIII IIII	42
Poor Comprehension	The number of questions attempted is very high compared with actual scores	Almost 100% of the population.	?
Poor reasoning or inability to infer ideas from given facts	Cases answered that a weeping owl said: " I am so ... (glad or happy) I am so ,.... (fat) I am so .... (long) I am so .... (soly)	IIII IIII IIII IIII III IIII II II I	23 27 2 1
Inability to use clues in the text led to random choice of words	A hutch made of wood & sand for wire " " of bread " " " " " leaves " " " " " paper " " found a small pot for a small hole " " nut " " " " pole " " " " stick " " " " rope " " He picked up the fish for the bottle " " " rope " "	IIII IIII IIII III IIII II IIII IIII II IIII III III I IIII IIII I IIII II	9 8 7 4 7 5 3 3 1 11 7

Tables V (Contd)

Type of Error	Examples	Tallies	F
Inability to use clues in the text led to random choice of words	He picked up <del>the</del> shell for the bottle " " up the stick for the bottle	II II	2 2
Inability to use clues in the text or to be guided by the indefinite article	Changed me into <u>an woman</u> for <u>an owl</u> " " into <u>an sparrow</u> for <u>an owl</u> " " into <u>an beam</u> for <u>an owl</u> " " into man for <u>an owl</u>	IIII IIII IIII III III I	9 8 3 1
As above and poor number combination one and one more = 3. and also not able to be guided by the demonstrative adjective 'this' and choosing words that make no sense	When I have caught <u>this</u> two for this one " " this worm for this one " " line " " and fish more for & two more " bites " " " " three " " " " one " " "	IIII IIII II II IIII II I IIII III IIII IIII IIII	12 2 7 1 8 5 5 4
Inability to reason or connect facts for instance that smoke will come out of the chimney and will be blown about the sparrow	The wind leaves for the wind blew smoke " " stones for smoke " " clouds " smoke " " food " smoke crumbs from the village plates for 2 streets " " chimney " " " " roofs " " " " trees " "	IIII IIII IIII I IIII I IIII IIII III III III IIII IIII IIII	16 6 5 4 3 3 3 15
Inability to reason from given words. May-Pole was kept till next	Until next October for May holiday winter Decked houses with paint for branches nuts, flags & ribbons	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII III	5 14 4 9 8

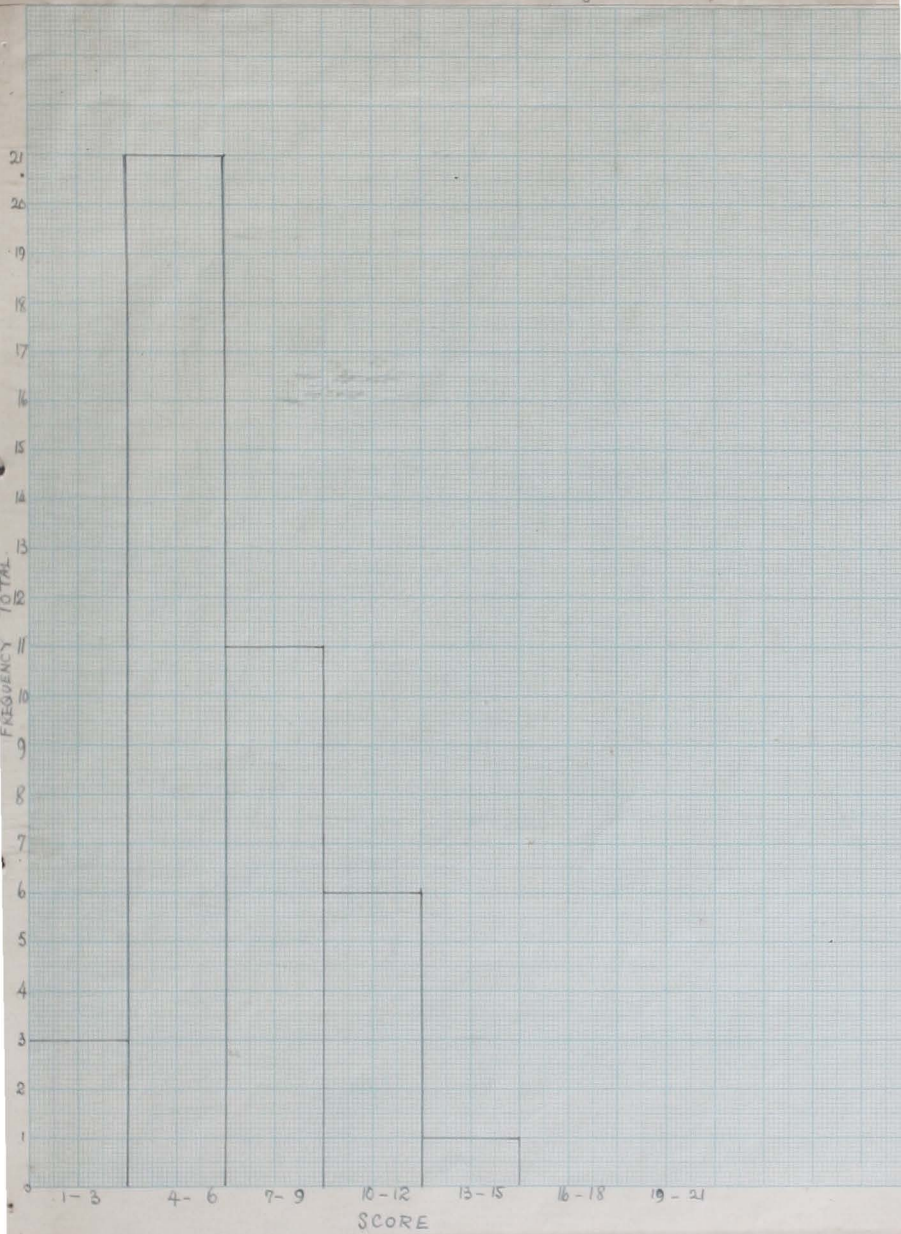
TYPE OF ERROR	EXAMPLE	TALLIES	F
Inability to infer meanings of unknown words from the context	Lights perch for birds perch	II	2
	Sailors " " " "	IIII IIII I	11
	Storm " " " "	IIII	4
	fish " " " "	I	1
	Saved the ships " saved the birds	IIII II	7
	" " homes " " " "	IIII II	7
As above or to complete a straight forward little story	When they get into train for		
	into difficulty	III	3
	" " " house " "	IIII	5
	" " " stream " "	I	1
	leave their money for their friends	III	3
	" " pupils " " "	III	3
	" " horses " " "	II	2
" " goods " " "	I	1	
Miscellaneous all arising out of inability to use clues or reason logically	Miscellaneous	IIII IIII IIII IIII II	27

TABLE VI FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR SILENT READING B

SCORE	TALLIES	FREQUENCY
13	1	1
12	1	1
11	1	1
10	IIII	4
9	II	2
8	IIII	4
7	IIII	5
6	IIII IIII II	12
5	IIII II	7
4	II	2
3	II	2
2	I	1
1		

For assessing the general level of attainment Fig II which plots the populations achievement on an Histogram is here attached. It will be seen that the majority of the testees obtained less than 40% marks. This poor performance can only be ascribed to reading disability and lack of understanding of what is read. This weakness can only be mentioned here as it is treated better in another section of this report.

FIGURE 2 Showing Distribution of Marks in S.R.T.B.



CHAPTER III ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS & TEST RESULTS CONTD  
IV. VISUAL WORD DISCRIMINATION TEST. TEST R7

This test was given in Primary classes 5 and 6 of the Government Experimental School, Legos Town. Because it was realised that it would take a considerable time to test the children singly, with the advice of Mr. A. Taylor the test was converted from an individual to a group test. I preferred to use the word "gamé" to test because the class teacher remarked that <sup>the</sup> word 'test' always <sup>scared</sup> ~~scared~~ his children and makes them work badly. I distributed the question papers, face downwards among the children. I then told them that we were about to play a little game with them and that they would only play it well if they did exactly what I told them. I asked them to write down their names, whether boy or girl and their ages. This was done at the back of the question paper - word list. I then gave the following further information:- "There are 25 rows of words on the paper before you. (I showed what a row looks like) We shall deal with one row at a time. I shall write a word on the blackboard. You shall look at the word for some time then at my command you shall turn the paper and you shall look for the word from the row whose number will be on the board. When you find the word you shall underline it, and you shall again turn over your paper so that the back of the paper shall face you".

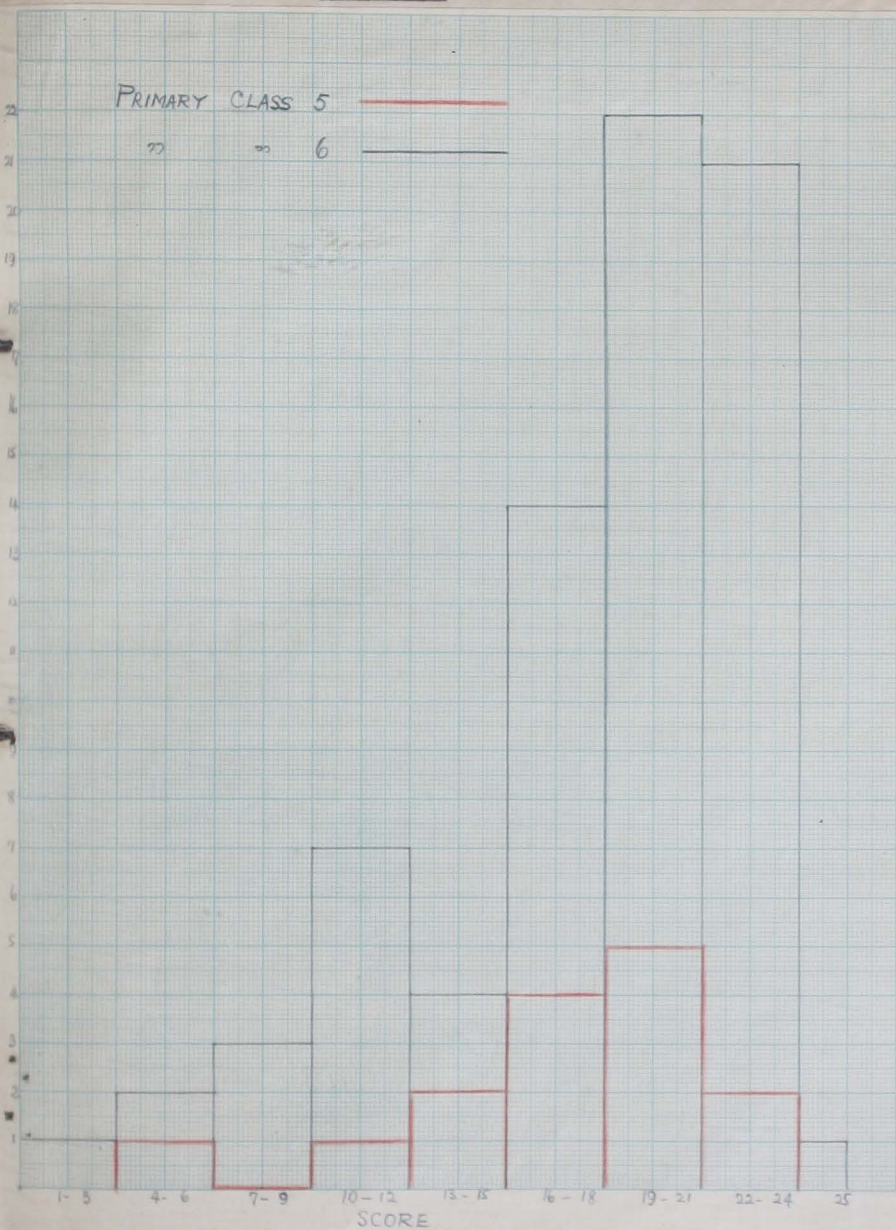
I then asked them to shut their eyes while I wrote the first number on the board and the first key word on the board thus:  
1. thread.

The pupils were commanded to open their eyes and to look at the word on the black board. After five seconds the word was cleaned off and the children proceeded to identify it in the first row. When all felt sure they had identified it and had underlined it they turned their paper downwards. They shut their eyes and the second key word 'pieces' was written on the board. They looked at it for five seconds, identified it and so on till all the 25 words and rows had been treated. The children were told that if one did not feel sure he had seen the word properly he could ask for it to be repeated. Two pupils made use of this provision. For them the word in question was written on a piece of paper, shown to them a second time for another five seconds and then they were asked to go and identify it.

In this test as in any other bit of work that requires silent reading it is almost impossible to make the children of these classes do it silently. To aid their visual perception and identification of the word the children either said or spelt the word to themselves loud enough to be heard by the neighbours. No amount of talk could dissuade them from helping their vision and memory in that way. This points the way to the desirability of conducting this test as an entirely individual test.

Under these circumstances one would expect the result of this test to be much better than it turned out to be as can be seen from table VII - Children's Errors in Visual Word Discrimination Test - and also from the histogram for that test - Figure III.

FIGURE III SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS IN V.W.D. TEST



## CLASSIFICATION OF CHILDREN'S ERRORS

## FROM VISUAL WORD DISCRIMINATION TEST (TABLE VII)

CLASS OF ERROR	SPECIFIC ERROR	EXAMPLES	TALLIES	F	
1. Confusion of structural differences	'a' confused with e	stetue for statue	IIII		
			IIII I	11	
	a "	" o patch " patch	IIII IIII IIII	14	
	a "	" u husband " husband	IIII IIII IIII III	18	
	b "	" d mardle " marble	IIII IIII IIII III	18	
	m "	" n fron " from	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII III	43	
	m "	w who " who	IIII III	8	
	p "	q pieces " pieces	IIII IIII	9	
	2. Omission of the final consonant	d omitted	husban for husband	IIII I	6
		s "	torch " torches	IIII IIII IIII IIII III	23
s "		crag " frags	III	3	
g confused with q: danger for danger			IIII IIII IIII IIII I	21	
3. Transposition of letters	n and w	donw for down	IIII IIII III	13	
	ae and ea	taech for tesch	IIII IIII <del>XXXXXXXX</del> IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII I	61	
	ai and ia	sied for said	IIII IIII III	13	
	ei " ie	<del>pieces</del> pieces " pieces	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	42	
	ar and ra	cargs for crags	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII II	32	
	ni for in	snig for sing	I	1	
	d " g	gander for danger	IIII	4	
		fringe " finger	1	1	
	ru " ur	brunt " burnt	IIII I	6	
	x s " u	husbund for husband	III x	3	
	al " la	paly " play	IIII IIII IIII I	21	
	x ere " ree	there for three	x See 6		
	el " le	vevlet " velvet	IIII I	6	
	or " ro	form " from	IIII IIII IIII II	22	

3. Transposition of letters (contd)	h for w	<del>xxxxxx</del> how for who	IIII IIII	9
<hr/>				
4. Phonic basis				
attack	ea = e	thred for thread	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	35
	sound (i)	plaiy for play	IIII I	6
	i = i	pices " pieces	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII II	32
<hr/>				
5. Inconsistent attack on words	Only the beginning of the word guides the testée	sing for sing X pictur " picture	1 IIII IIII IIII IIII III	1 23
	marbe	marbe " marble	IIII I	6
	(a)The begi- nning & end of words alone looked at & elimina- tion of the nasal conso- nant	figer for finger dager " danger baket " basket afturnonn,afternoon	IIII IIII II IIII IIII II I IIII IIII	12 11 1 10
<hr/>				
6. Poor Visual perfeption	barkset	barkset " basket	IIII II	7
	r confused with s	finges " finger thre there/these for three	IIII III IIII IIII IIII	8 14
	adding letters:	patech for patch	IIII IIII IIII I	16
		vevelete for velvet	IIII III	13
	eliminating letters	afternnonn for afternoon	IIII	5
	tech, tech,	tech for teach	IIII	5
	also c in patch (path)	velet " velvet	IIII IIII IIII III	18
		staue " statue	IIII	4
		sattue" statue	III	3
	Miscellaneous:	terhoes for torches,	IIII IIII III	13
		afternoon & afternoon	IIII	5
		pitcure for picture	IIII IIII	9
	u confused with n	statue for statue	IIII IIII I	11

V. GRADED WORD SPELLING TEST A S.I.

It was in the Middle Form 3 of the Government School Anumle that I conducted this test. Each testee was provided with a blank sheet of paper on which each wrote his name, whether boy or girl and his/her age. I told them that they would be writing down words which I would dictate to them. I told them to write the words in rows, five words to a row, and that if one found a word too difficult one might put a dot in its place so as to maintain the rows. This latter bit of instruction was to facilitate marking and calculation of spelling age and quotient. I then dictated the first word clearly and distinctly. Next I read a short explanatory sentence containing the word in order to aid the pupils to know the word which was dictated. Thirdly I said, "Write (net)". The first word happened to be net. All the words were treated in the same way - First the word, second the word in a sentence and third the word again alone. At the command, "write - " the pupils wrote the word mentioned.

The time at my disposal at the time of giving the test was rather short so that I could not go round the class to abide by one of the instructions for giving this test, namely, that the examinee should go round and stop any testee from continuing who had failed on eight or ten consecutive words. This departure from the instruction turned out to be very useful as it affirmed, to my satisfaction, the claim made by the designer of this test, namely, that as the words increase in difficulty any testee who failed on 8-10 consecutive words would find it difficult to get other succeeding words right. Table VIII shows the scores and the Spelling Ages of the testees calculated from their scores. The following is the list of words and sentences in which they were dictated.

S.I. GRADED WORD SPELLING TEST

Net:	The fish was caught in a net	Write	Net
Can:	Can you do this?	"	can
fun:	The game gives us much fun	"	fun
top:	Put the book on the top of the table	"	top
rag:	We need a rag to clean this with	"	rag
sat:	The man sat on a mat	"	sat
hit:	I hit the table with my hand	"	hit
lid:	Bring the pot with its lid	"	lid
cap:	The sailor had no cap on	"	cap
had:	I had bread for my breakfast	"	had
let:	I will not let you go	"	let
doll:	I bought my daughter a doll	"	doll
bell:	The time keeper rings the bell	"	bell
yes:	Do you like eating eggs? Yes, I do	"	yes
then:	Give him the pen and then look up	"	then
may:	The rain may fall on any day	"	may
tree:	The monkey jumps from tree to tree	"	tree

B.1. Graded Word Spelling Test (Contd.)

by:	John sat by my side	Write by
ill:	We go to the hospital when we are ill	Write ill
egg:	My hen laid an egg this morning	" egg
land:	The land is not very hilly	" land
how:	How much did you pay for it?	" how
Your:	That book is not your book	" your
cold:	I'll have cold water for my bath	" cold
talk:	He saw me but did not talk to me	" talk
flower:	The cocoa tree bears a flower before a pod	" flower
son:	They had three daughters and one son	" son
seem:	From here they seem to be working hard	" seem
four:	Four shillings is the cost of the book	" Four
loud:	He did not speak loud enough	" loud
ground:	Sit on the ground	" ground
lowest:	The fraction was reduced to its lowest terms	" lowest
brain:	He <u>has</u> no brain in his skull?	" brain
write:	He wants you to write a letter	" write
amount:	How much does it all amount to?	" <del>wise</del> amount
noise :	He made a big noise last night	" noise
remain:	You may go, I'll remain here	" remain
hoped:	He hoped to be here with us	" hoped
worry :	Why worry about it now?	" worry
dancing:	They were dancing when the light went out	" dancing
damage :	The rain did a lot of damage	" damage
else:	Do you want anything else?	" else
through:	He passed through the narrow gate	" through
entered:	Nobody entered when he was talking	" entered
cough:	He suffers from cough	" cough
fitted:	The bottle is fitted with <sup>a</sup> rubber cork	" fitted
spare:	I have <sup>no</sup> time to spare	" spare
daughter:	Her daughter is crying	" daughter
edge:	Do not walk on the edge of the bridge	" edge
search:	Go and search for the lost ball	" search
concert:	The school staged a nice concert	" concert
domestic:	They keep no domestic animals	" domestic
topic:	You suggest the topic of our talk	" topic
method:	He worked his sum by a very old method	" method
freeze:	We may freeze if we continue to stand in this cold	" freeze
avoid:	Try to avoid meeting him next time	" avoid
duties:	We must all do our duties	" duties
recent:	Read his most recent book on the subject	" recent
type:	What type of man is he?	" type
instance:	Can you give an instance of what you mean?	" instance
liquid:	He needs liquid food not solid food	" liquid
assist:	Will some one assist him raise the board?	" assist

S.L.Graded Word Spelling Test (Contd)

readily:	He answered it readily	Write readily
guess:	Can you guess what I have in my hand?	" guess
attendance:	His school attendance is poor	" attendance
description:	He gave a very accurate description of it	" description
welfare:	He sees about the welfare of his people.	"welfare.
various:	He gave various suggestions	" various
genuine:	This one is genuine, that one is an imitation	" genuine
interfere:	Don't interfere with him	" interfere
accordance:	This is not in accordance with the rule	" accordance
mechanical:	He solved his problems in a mechanical way	" mechanical
anxious:	I am very anxious to know what he did	" anxious
signature:	Whose signature is this at the end of the letter?	" signature
allotment:	The allotment he left his wife was too small	" allotment
approval:	The plan awaits the headmaster's approval	" approval
accomplished:	He has not quite accomplished his task	" accomplish
remittance:	When the first remittance of his fee is received he will be enrolled	" remittance
financial:	He needs financial support	" financial
capacity:	We calculated its capacity by using water	" capacity
surplus:	The surplus amount was given out	" surplus
exceptionally:	John is exceptionally quick today	" exceptionally
successful:	I hope that I will be successful	" successful
preliminary:	The police are making preliminary investigations	" preliminary
resource:	He finds an unfailling resource in painting	" resource
prologue	I enjoyed reading the prologue to his work	" prologue
colonel:	He is promoted to the rank of a colonel	" colonel
coarse:	The material for this suit is very coarse	" coarse
referring:	I shall be referring to this point again	" referring
courteous:	He is very courteous in his behaviour:	" courteous
exhibition:	Darsable articles were displayed at the exhibition	" exhibition
affectionately:	She is very affectionately attached to her mother	" affectionate
attorney:	He is chief clerk in the attorney-general's office	" attorney
pinncle:	From afar we could see the pinncle on the Church	" pinncle
toboggan:	We will slide down together on a toboggan	" toboggan
definite:	The general gave definite orders	" definite
guarantee:	I guarantee to bear the penalty if he fails to return	" guarantee
anniversary:	Many thought provoking speeches were made at the first anniversary celebration of the union	" anniversary



## ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS AND TEST RESULTS CONTD.

CLASSIFICATION OF CHILDREN'S ERRORS  
IN SPELLING TEST. TABLE IX

CLASS OF ERROR	EXAMPLES	TALLIES	F
-----			
1. Weakness in Visual Perception of Words	(a) Transposition of letters	IIII IIII	
	Readily given in different versions	IIII IIII IIII IIII	III 33
	Avoid given as aviod	IIII III	8
	(b) Reversal of words		
	Concert given as consert, cornest,	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	24
	(c) Miscellaneous: <u>Edge</u> given		
	as ege, age, earge, erge, hedge, and hang	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII II	27
	<u>Search</u> given as werch, seartch, sell	IIII IIII IIII IIII I	21
	<u>Topic</u> :-given as toppic torpick	IIII IIII IIII IIII	17
	Assist given as assis, assist, assit, assaint, accist etc.	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	30
	(d) Confusion of visually similar letters:		
	Them for then, seen for seem: III		3
-----			
II. Weakness in Auditory Analysis & Synthesis of Verbal Material	Lowered power of analysis		
	Fitted given as feated(7)		
	fited(8), fitten(4)	IIII IIII IIII	
	fighted (3)	IIII II	22
	&		
Faulty Pronunciation	Lid given as lead (8);		
	leid, lady, laiden 21,	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	
	lane 2 and need (1)	II	32
	Entered given as enter(12)	IIII IIII	
	entry(3), ented(7)	IIII IIII II	22
	Hit given as heat 4, hite(1)	IIII	5
Faulty Pronunciation			
	1. Confusion of Voiced and voiceless a		
	Recent given as resent and reason	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	29
	" Guess given as gears & gets (18),	IIII IIII IIII	
	geas & gues (14)	IIII IIII IIII II	32
	II. Wrong vowel sound		
	Doll given as door(9)	IIII IIII IIII	
	dull (4) dorne (1) and dual(1)		15

Faulty Pronunciation

II. (Contd)

Fun given as fan (7) fine (2)			
found (5), thounge (2) farn(1)	IIII IIII IIII	II	17
Cap given as cup	IIII		4
Rag given as range (5)			
raigh 3	IIII III		8
III. Inclusion of the nasal consonant			
Worry given as worrying	II		2
brain given as bring	I		1
Son given as song	I		1

Miscellaneous 1. Errors due to phonic analysis

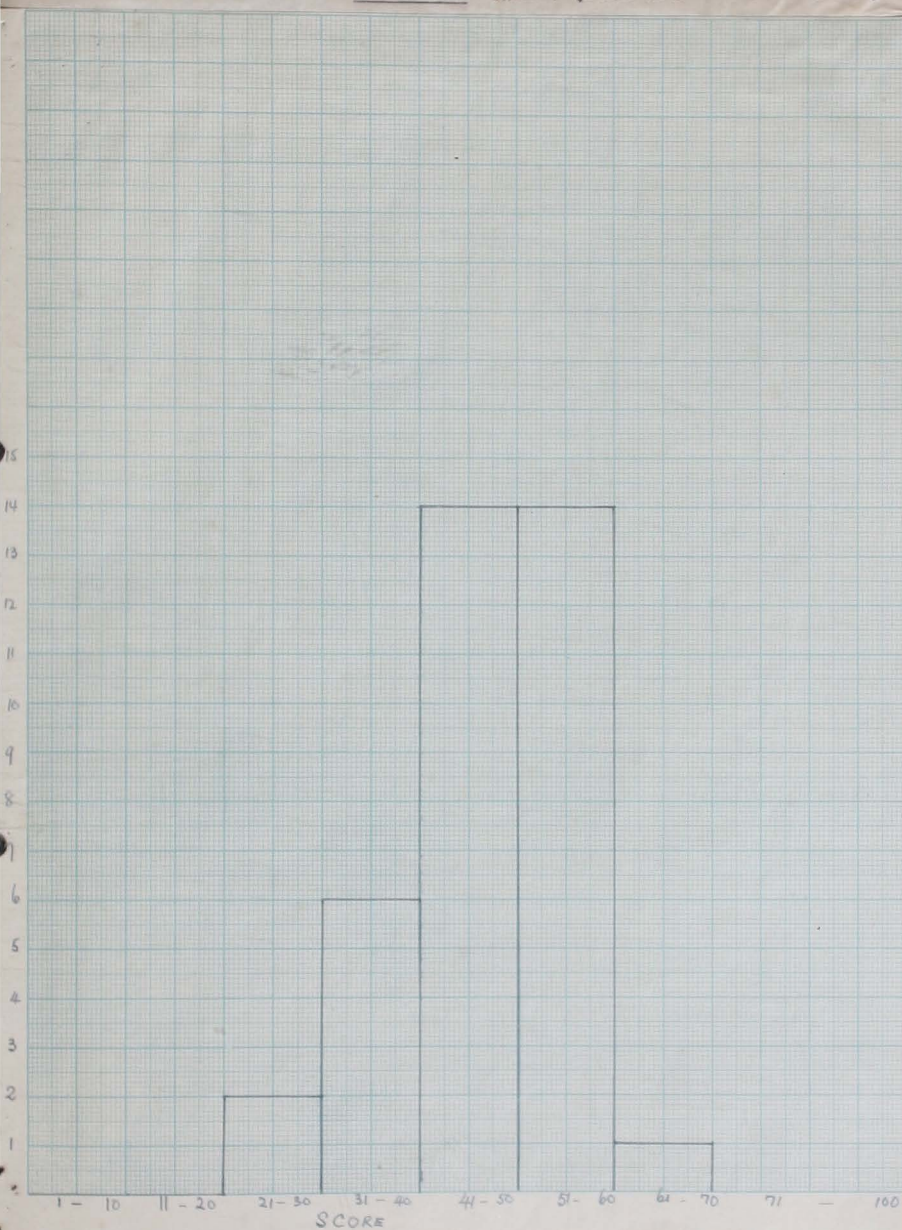
Type given as tipe (12) or	IIII IIII		
tip (7) or tie (2)	IIII IIII I		21

II. Others: Various wrongly spelt 17

Genuine " "			31
Interfere " "			24
Cough " "			18
Description " "			29
Spare " "			32
Welfare " "	IIII IIII IIII IIII	I	21
Instance " "	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII		24
Freeze " "	IIII IIII		9
Liquid " "	IIII IIII		9
May: wrongly spelt (mai, main, mail)	IIII IIII		10
Had: wrongly spelt (had)	III		3
Noise " "(nose, noice)	IIII		4
Amount " " amout	IIII		5
Through " "	IIII I		6
Lowest " "(Lowerst)	IIII		5
Duties " "(duety, duitys)	IIII IIII		10
Flower " "(fly, flour)	IIII		5
Sat " " (sad, such)	III		3
Domestic " "	IIII		5
Damage " "	IIII		5

The testees' marks are plotted on Fig IV

FIGURE IV SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS IN G.V.S.T.



It was very interesting to note how the testees' scores decreased as the words increased in difficulty. This test convinces anyone who is using a standardised test for the first time of the validity and claim that standardised tests hold.

Most testees failed to register any score after the 60th word.

After the 70th word the following scores were made:

One testee spelt 6 more words correctly after the 70th. It was this testee who made the highest score - 62 out of 100.

Three testees spelt 4 more words correctly each, six spelt 3 more words correctly each and five testees spelt 2 more words correctly each after the 70th word. All who could spell any words correctly after the 70th word made a total score of not less than 45 except in one case where the testee made a total score of 43 and could spell the 74th word correctly. The words which were correctly spelt after the 70th word were accordance, signature, capacity, affectionately successful and preliminary. These are words which the children either hear frequently or which they themselves use often. The word affectionately is commonly used by children when they write private letters either to their parents or as class practice. The words successful and signature are used often by children, teachers and the general public speaking English. The word "capacity" is met with in Arithmetic lessons involving weights and measures.

But for wrong vowel sounds, the monosyllabic words were on the whole better spelt than the other words. Next came the disyllabic words. The multisyllabic words presented great difficulty. Such words that had in their make up and in the same place, ~~the same place~~, the same letter repeated, were usually wrongly spelt. The testees dropped out one of the double letters in those words. In other cases the testees doubled letters where only one existed. This was clearly noticeable in the following words. The incorrect versions are given in brackets. Guess (gues, ges), attendance (atendane), Welfare (wellfare), accordance (acordance) allotment (aloiment), remittance (femittance) etc.

#### READING SCALE TEST

The question papers were distributed among the testees who wrote their names, ages, sexes and class at the back of the paper. As has been pointed out previously, this test measures two facts, namely, the reading age and the comprehension age of the testee. In this investigation it was used only for the latter purpose. For this purpose the testees were asked to read the paragraphs 1-29 silently and at the end of each to underline the answer which he thought was right. There were at the end of each paragraph four possible answers, one of which was right. The puzzles increase in difficulty as they progress numerically.

Reading Scale Test (Contd)

Towards the end of the paper the alternative answers become very close, so close that it becomes very difficult to decide on which is the right one. Paragraph 17 is reproduced here to illustrate the point.

"Leonard was engaged by the Irish Linen Association to act as their London agent:

It says that the Irish Linen Association did ..... what?

- (a) Made Leonard an actor
- (b) Helped him to get married
- (c) Gave him a job in England
- (d) Promised him a job in London."

Although several testees chose (a) as the correct answer it is clear that neither (a) nor (b) can be the right answer. At the same time it is not very easy to decide between (c) and (d). The word 'engaged' could mean both 'gave' and 'promised a job'. Besides, (c) which would seem to be more correct brings in a Geographical point (London in England) which was not involved directly in the paragraph.

This test proved to be too difficult for most testees as Table X shows.

SCORE SHEET FOR READING SCALE TEST

TABLE X

NAME	AGE	SCORE	COMPREH. AGE
Benjamin Hukporti	14	21	10%
Antie Codjoe	13.5/12	16	9%
Rueben Awulley	15	16	9%
Gabriel Doe	12	16	9%
Fredrick Kodjoe	14.1/6	16	9%
Joseph Ablorh	14	15	9%
Jacob Amah	13	15	9%
Victoria Hammond	13	14	9
Jacob Awulley	16	13	8%
Fredricka S. Abbey	13	13	8%
Joseph Hodamu	15	13	8%
Ablah Akuetteh	16	13	8%
Gladys Wiredu	15	13	8%
David Boye	14.1/6	13	8%
Kwame Yao	13	12	8%
Amegbletoh Kofi	13.5/6	12	8%
Samuel Ofose	14.2/3	12	8%
Johara Lamptey	14	12	8%
Cecilia Atiogbe	14	12	8%
William Mensah	14	11	8%
Lucas Yao	14	11	8%
Asu Kwaku	14	11	8%
Christian Kofie	15	11	8%
Mary Quashie	14	11	8%
Kwakuvi Abalo	14	11	8%
Nancy Codjoe	15	11	8%
Tetteh Boye	13	10	8
Yao Misinu	13.7/12	10	8
Akoshia Quashie	17	10	8
Kofie Amuzu	14½	10	8

Table X. (Contd)

NAME	AGE	SCORE	COMPREH. AGE
Tetteh Ahulu	15.1	10	8
Esther Adoteye	15	10	8
Flora Dedu	13	9	7½
Seth Kwei	14½	9	7½
Selina Doku	14	9	7½
Quashie Abia	15	9	7½
Ewekuvi Mensah	13	9	7½
Vincent Agbokpa	15	9	7½
Joseph Adu	15	8	7½
Mary Odonkor	15	8	7½
Joseph Thomas Kotey	17	8	7½
J.S. Abbey	15	7	7½
Aryeequaye Cobblah	18	6	7

The disparity between the testees' chronological age and comprehension age is too great to be regarded simply as a weakness in the children. When it is noticed that with the best performance the testees' comprehension age is 2½ years lower than his chronological age it will be agreed that the fault lies <sup>not</sup> only in the testees. The alternative field to look for the fault then is the test itself. It is also to be agreed that the testee (Aryeequaye Cobblah) whose comprehension age is 11 years below his chronological <sup>age</sup> will assimilate very little even from easier reading material. It must be admitted that while this test was difficult its validity as a means of assessing the testees' attainment still holds good. A look at Aryeequaye Cobblah's performance in Spelling Test A also spots him out as a decidedly weak case. In the Spelling test he made a total score of 45 out of a possible 100 which brings his spelling age 8½ years below his chronological age and a Spelling quotient of 50. The amount of reading to be done by testees in this test is also quite considerable. As reading in general had been noted to be very weak this weakness consequently affected the performance and result of this test.

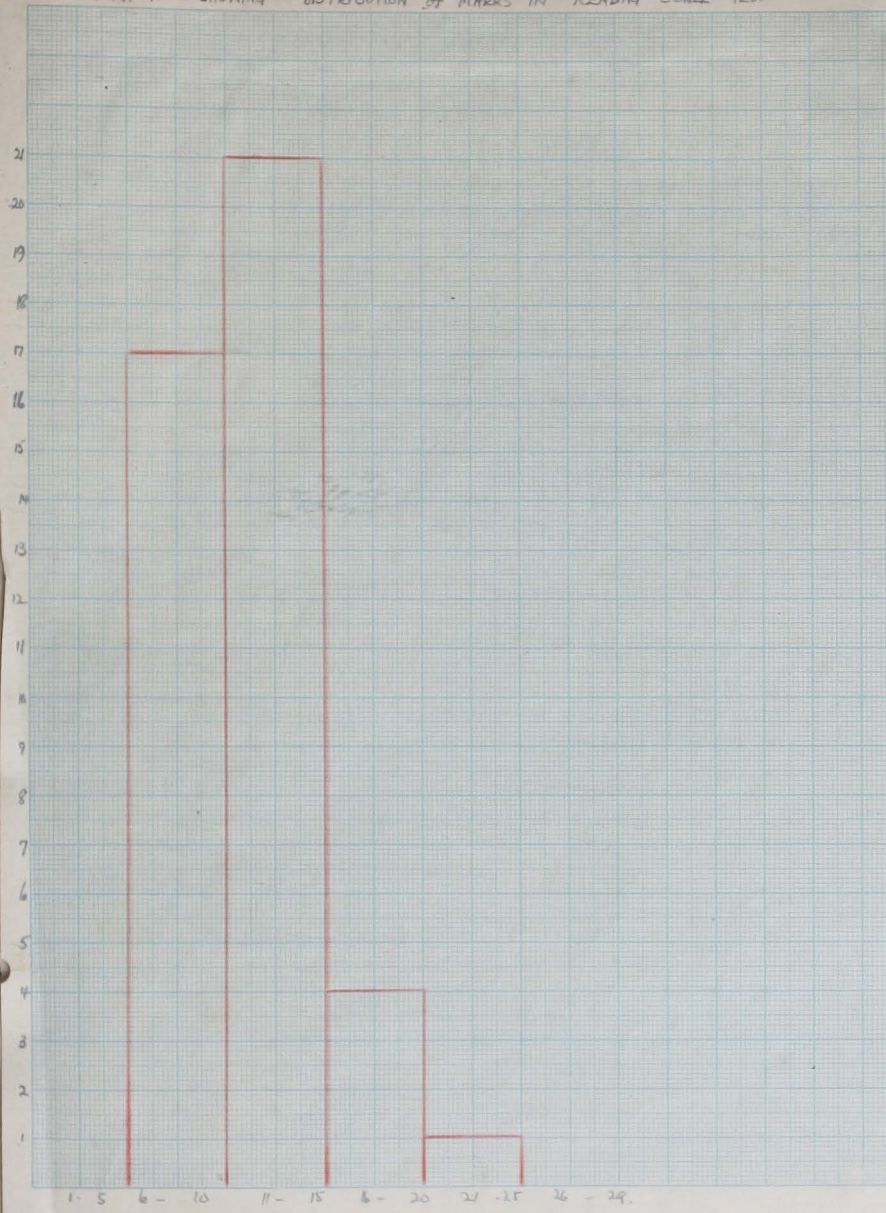
From the foregoing it becomes clear that this test needs adapting to conditions obtainable here. The amount of reading too might be reduced.

It was noticed that several testees began to underline answers even before they had read the paragraphs.

This shows very clearly that there was plenty of guess work to which several testees were found to be prone as also in Simple Prose Reading Test. The exact reason for this guess work has not been deduced. It can only be "guessed" that these 'backward' cases might have done so in order that they might not spend far more time over the tests than their more brilliant mates. As the answers were chosen at random it would be almost meaningless to attempt to list the errors which were made by the testees. In fact nearly every one of the four possible answers was underlined by one or other of the testees. Some examples will here justify this claim.

- Para 1. Ans. It says that Tom rubbed the dog because he was dry
- " 2. " The boy gave away some of his sweets; so it says he was  
..... happy
- " 3. My sister likes ~~me~~<sup>me</sup> to open my book and read to her.  
It says that when you open your book your sister likes  
you to do .....what?  
Ans. Teach her to read.
- " 5. Please don't let anyone spoil these nice fresh flowers.  
It says that we do not want the flowers to be ....what?  
Answer: Nice
- " 7. Wine is made from the juice of grapes which grow in warm  
countries.  
What kind of drink does it say we get from warm countries?  
Answer: Water etc.
- Attached is Fig.V. which plots the testees' scores in a histogram.

FIG. V. SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS IN READING SCALE TEST.



The tests having been administered and the results having been worked out, the children's level of attainment can now be assessed. From the list of errors and weaknesses displayed a few common ones will be selected. An attempt will be made to infer the causes of these errors and where possible, hints, <sup>given</sup> on how to eradicate them and guard against their being committed.

As has been pointed out earlier, the teacher ought to go to some trouble to find out whether what he has been and is imparting is being understood by his children. He has to know whether they are gaining anything from what they read and whether they understand the language he uses or not. He can then adjust his teaching to suit the children's level of understanding. It is also only then that he can decide with certainty what books his children can be expected to read with understanding and what instructions they can be expected to carry out with reasonable accuracy.

It is regretted that the population involved in this investigation was rather small. On the other hand it is fair to draw certain conclusions from these results because, although the schools in which these investigations were carried out may not be the best in the country, they are at the same time not the worst. Both, as has been pointed out, are Government Schools. One, the Government School, Lagos Town is an experimental school and one could therefore expect it to be a model. Weaknesses exhibited in these schools are, for the sake of this investigation, taken to be general.

The scores made by the testees would mean very little if left as they were made. So that they might mean something, the children's scores have been converted in some cases to their mental or subject age. By this, it is possible to state whether these testees have made scores comparable with the Norms of the children of their age. It is also possible to assess their performances as being either above or below their chronological ages. This will be dealt with later in this report.

The errors made by the testees are classified below under the separate tests that were conducted.

SIMPLE PROSE READING TEST: The chief weaknesses revealed by this test were:

1. Parrot fashion reading. The testees revealed very poor comprehension of the matter read. Along with this the rate or speed of reading was lamentably slow. This slow reading consequently affected the comprehension. By the time many testees reached the end of the passage, they had almost forgotten what they first read.
2. Poor mechanics of reading. Testees revealed partial

and almost complete inability to get over words which gave them some difficulty at first. Nearly all the candidates who stumbled over a word never succeeded in reading the word correctly. When asked to spell a word the testees usually did so by giving the names of the letters that formed the word instead of giving the sounds of the letters. It can be understood how very little, if at all, this method of spelling can be of use in reading.

3. Answers being illogical and unrelated to the questions.

In some cases answers were given in words whose meanings the children did not understand. It clearly revealed the children's attempt to remember, parrot-fashion, what they had read. Examples of such answers have been given under the Administration of the tests - (My Dog).

#### SILENT READING TESTS A & B:

These two tests revealed the following weaknesses:

1. Poor and slow reading. The time stipulated by Professor Schonell for both these tests was exceeded. In one test the children were allowed to go on until they finished. Some children, instead of the stipulated 10 and 15 minutes, respectively, took more than 30 minutes to complete Silent Reading Test A.

Some testees were not only too slow, causing poor results to themselves, but too slow when compared with other children of the same 'class'. One testee, Rasaki, by name, did Silent Reading Test A in ten minutes and had six answers correct out of a total of ten. Two testees, Martha Okine and Mary Kingdom took 15 minutes respectively to do the same test and each made a score of 8 points out of 10 while Kotey Josephine and Awudu Amadu did not finish until they were both made to stop work after 40 minutes had elapsed from the beginning of the test. These two made scores of 2 ~~xxxx~~ and 3 respectively out of 10. Several other testees who took as long as 40 minutes failed to make even one score. This weakness is linked up with the next one.

2. Poor Comprehension. Even where candidates stated that they had finished the test the answers they gave showed a complete lack of understanding of the paragraph read. As has been mentioned earlier in this report, answers were given at random. Where the testees were given alternative choices, the wrong one was chosen as frequently if not more than the correct one. Examples of this random choice have already been given.

3. Writing and Written English. Under the Administration of tests it has been exemplified, by reproduction of specimen answers how inadequately the children have acquired the mechanics of writing and how poorly they combine letters to build 'words', words which are neither English nor Vernacular words. The confusion between capital and small letters was also exhibited.

VISUAL WORD DISCRIMINATION TEST.

The errors revealed by this test included the following:

1. Transposition of letters. The total number of transpositions amounted to 256. The letters which gave rise to frequent transpositions were mainly double vowels and diphthongs such as ea, ae; ai and Ia; ei and ie, etc.

2. Confusion of Structural Differences. There were altogether 161 errors that belong to this category. The letters which were usually confused possessed a common character and differed somehow. The testees showed a good degree of seeing the similarities but poor discrimination. The points in which the letters differed escaped notice. The letters confused most were b and d; m and n; m and w, p and q; g and q; u and n, k and p etc.

3. Phonic Basis Word Analysis. Seventy-three errors were committed in this category.

The sound of the letter 'e' as in bed, hen, etc led the testees frequently to choose the 'word' 'thred' for thread for when analysed phonically the two sound alike. The next word which caused the committance of errors in this group was the word pieces. Although many more versions were chosen, the commonest version chosen was pices for the testees failed to realise that as the word stands, the letter 'i' in it would sound as in side, price and not 'i' as in <sup>pieces</sup> pin, fix, tick, etc. [These words, of course, have not the same vowel sound as ]

Play was another word whose phonic analysis led several testees to choose plaiy.

4. Inconsistent Word Attack: Words whose beginnings and endings were correctly inserted but whose middle or inside letters were either missing or incorrect were usually chosen by the testees. This reveals a haphazard word attack and choice. Errors of this kind were sixty-five in all. The exact words which were so treated have been listed under Administration of Tests.

5. Miscellaneous, Poor Visual Perception. The rest of the errors, 125 in all, have been ~~listed under~~ ~~Administration~~ classed under this error group. Errors of this group included: confusion of letters which are quite different structurally, addition of letters in words - in some cases it was multiplying letters already present in the word such as 'r' in afternnoon, 'e' in vevelete etc or the introduction of new letters into a word such as 'r' in barsket for basket, 'e' in patech for patch. Some-times it was the elimination of certain letters from the words. Wrong versions of the following words were rendered in this group: afternoon for afternoon, tech for teach (perhaps this was again a wrong phonic analysis of error), velet for velvet, stauw for statue, patl for patch, pictur for picture, etc.

GRADED WORD SPELLING TEST.

A careful analysis of the errors of this test has been given under Administration of Tests to which reference can be made. For the present it should be sufficient simply to mention the main error groups. They are: Weakness in Visual Perception of Words, Weakness in Auditory Analysis and Synthesis of Verbal Material, Faulty Pronunciation. The mistakes of this test are very closely allied to mistakes in reading. They therefore will be treated together in this report.

READING SCALE TEST

Errors made in this test correspond very closely to those made in Simple Prose Reading Test and Silent Reading Test A & B. As this test was slightly more difficult than any of the other tests involving reading, the reading speed was still slower here than in the other tests. Along with this the comprehension was lower also than <sup>in</sup> the other tests, producing as it did a great deal of guess work and random choice of answers.

Despite the fact that the tests used are meant for pupils of lower chronological ages than for those among whom this investigation was conducted the result is not encouraging. Even after having made due allowance for the difference in the cultural backgrounds of Professor Schonell's population and this, and taking into consideration a certain amount of temperamental traits, emotional attitudes and other home and school influences that might have some effects on the performances of the children it must be admitted that the reading and comprehension on the whole, were lamentably poor.

A comparative analysis of the scores bears this out. For example:

Simple Prose Reading test:

No of testees scoring 75% and above	Nil.	tion.
Testees scoring up to 60% " " .....	12.5%	of the popula
" " " 50% " "	17.5%	" "
" " " 40% " "	40%	" "
" " below 40% of the marks	60%	
" " " 50% " " "	82.5%	
The highest age in class presented. ...	17 years	Chronological Age
" " " " " "	9.0 "	Reading Age
The lowest age " " " "	11 years	C.A.
" " " " " "	" less than 6 "	R.A.

In some cases the difference between the testee's chronological ages and their reading ages was as much as 11 years - e.g. Quarshie Akonhia - C.A. 17; R.A. less than 6.

If Prof. Schonell considers a difference of 2 years already serious then a difference of up to 10 years shows that there must be something radically wrong somewhere. Of course, as

has been pointed out above, allowances must be made taking into consideration the cultural background of these testees and to whom English is a second language.

Silent Reading Test A. A comparative analysis of scores in this test also reveals definite weakness in some testees; for 12 testees made no scores at all while 10 testees scored only a mark each.

Silent Reading Test B: The greatest weakness exhibited here was slow reading and comparing the number of questions attempted with the scores made, the comprehension is seen to be low.

Reading Scale Test: Comprehension was shown in this test also to be very poor.

The following figures will serve to illustrate this:-

Testees scoring up to		75% of the marks	Nil	lution
"	"	70% and above	1 testee or 2% of the population	"
"	"	60%	" 1 "	" 2% "
"	"	50%	" 7 "	" 16.3% "
"	"	40%+	" 19 "	" 44% "

Again the difference between the chronological ages and the comprehension ages of the testees is very great. It ranges from 2½ years to 11 years.

In all cases the scores made by these testees are far below the norms as given by Professor Schonell. The range between the scores made by the respective members of the same class is more widely spread and varied than the chronological ages presented by the same children.

Apart from difference in children's cultural background from Professor Schonell's cases and apart from the reasons already mentioned, several other factors might have contributed to produce this low standard of work. Some of those factors are considered below:-

On the first plane, the tests might have been unsuitable. This is unlikely, for as had been stated earlier, these tests were standardized in the United Kingdom, and some items of the Silent Reading Tests were adapted to local experiences. Besides some items of Silent Reading Test A were adapted to local conditions and children's experiences. It has, of course also been pointed out that the Reading Scale Test needs adapting to the testees' experience and language.

On the second plane this general poor performance could be ascribed to low intelligence or mental age. As the measurement of this is at present inadequate for West Africa and as it would be totally fallacious to label the whole population as unintelligent this factor will also be dropped out of consideration. The next plane to which attention will now be directed is the teaching of English in schools.

The methods of teaching English, the materials (Readers) used and the amount and type of reading done by children in and out of school hours will be the topic of what follows:

The first problem that affects the proper teaching of English is that of classification or allotting of classes to teachers. The possession of a standard Seven certificate has generally been taken as a criterion for teaching English and other subjects of the curriculum. Until trained teachers become plentiful or sufficient in number (and it will be long before this hope is realised) this state of affairs will continue to operate. Where immediate change could be made would be to make these Probationary Teachers in charge of higher classes of the Primary school and not the beginners' classes as is the case at the moment. The teaching of English requires knowledge, patience, method, tact and hard work, ~~etc~~ including organisation and management, all of which can be counted, for the time being, as lying outside the province of the Probationary Teacher. The next problem links with this: It is the class teaching.

The practice in the whole country, and West Africa, for that matter, is to teach the children as classes. This rigid class teaching has its advantages, no doubt, and can safely be encouraged for the teaching of several subjects of the curriculum. For the basic subjects - English (<sup>language</sup> ~~language~~) and Arithmetic this practice ought to give way to arranging the children into groups according to attainment. To stick rigidly to class teaching means consequent neglect of individual problems and differences. It has been pointed out earlier in this report big differences existing between the testees by comparing scores of an average and a backward child respectively. The difference is greater still between a backward and a bright child. A look at either Figs I II or III will reveal that the children of a 'class' fall into distinct groups according to attainment. To neglect these "natural" groups and to teach the whole as a class or unit is to hold up the progress of some and unduly hasten that of other children, the practice that does justice to none of the groups.

The bright child needs to be allowed to progress at his rate, given the proper guidance and being provided with suitable material, - text books and apparatus. The backward child, in his category, needs help to get over the mechanics of the reading, and wants to learn and do what he can feel confident over; so that his progress and success, with the otherwise simple material, will act as a source of encouragement for further success.

But when the bright and the backward are grouped together, the bright lose interest over what they consider too easy and the backward get discouraged over what they regard as insurmountable. But when this unhealthy rivalry is removed each works to his advantage and does his best.

The difficulty immediately surrounding the implementation of this practice is again the question of staffing and teaching practice. As with class teaching, only under able and willing hands can this teaching in groups according to attainment be successful. It requires knowledge to be able to manage the different groups. It requires hard work to plan for and provide each group with something to do. It requires that the teacher shall be able to make and use, properly, individual and group apparatus, for teaching English. This group teaching makes a further demand on the teacher that he shall always move round and help the children over their difficulties. From what has been said it is clear that this group teaching cannot be entrusted into inexperienced and unwilling hands. When that is the condition it would be better to stick to class teaching until teachers trained to cope with the work are available or until Probationary teachers, in service, are taught to ~~manage~~ <sup>manage</sup> groups by the headmasters or other trained teachers; for good class teaching is better than poorly planned and badly managed group teaching.

#### CHAPTER V REMEDIAL WORK & CONCLUSION

Looking now specifically at the teaching which produces these results the following can be said. Several causes can be advanced to be responsible for this weakness in reading and comprehension. The following ones which were actually seen in operation in schools during practical teaching periods are given as examples.

##### (a) Parrot-Fashion Reading.

During a short visit in a school I saw children/<sup>of</sup> one class very busy chanting a whole lesson from an Oxford English Reader for Africa. 'Chanting', I say or rather reciting. The children repeated from memory the contents of a whole lesson. Every child or every group of two or three children had a reader open before him/them. They turned, with precision, from page to page as the matter of one page was exhausted. This must have required plenty of drill to be able <sup>to</sup> turn the leaves of the reader so mechanically and yet so accurately. On being asked, several children were quite unable to identify the words and even the sentences which they had just been chanting. It can be understood that although such children have 'read' the Oxford English Readers for Africa, Books 1-3 or even 4, they will be unable to read any other printed matter, even of ~~xx~~ a simpler nature. That really proved to be the case with the Simple Prose Reading Test, Silent Reading Tests A & B and Reading Scale Test.

##### (b) LOUD READING.

The aim of teaching reading is to enable the pupils to acquire information from the printed page as accurately and as rapidly as possible. With this aim in view, oral reading

becomes a means to an end. But general practice seems to lose sight of the main objective, for in schools the emphasis on oral reading is such that defeats that aim. While the recital of whole lessons has been mentioned there is yet a practice which was seen to operate in one class, presumably in the school and schools. A Lesson lasting 40 minutes was entirely given to the reading of a sentence each by some boys of the class. This was followed by a discussion on the mistakes made by the reader. While it is realised that oral reading serves a useful purpose, it is also admitted that too much oral reading impedes the general progress of reading. When oral reading is of a nature similar to the one mentioned to have been seen in actual practice, the reason for lack of comprehension which was manifest in the reading tests becomes clear. With this type of exercise where in a whole period of forty minutes, (one of the only occasions when children do reading) only about 10-15 children have practice, and in reading only a sentence each, neither the speed in reading nor the accuracy of understanding can claim to be fostered. This means that both the quality and quantity of reading, to be of advantage to the children need different treatment. Suggestions about this will be given shortly.

(c) The Teaching of Mechanics of Reading.

The weakness of the teaching of the mechanics of reading was exhibited in the children's attempt to read aloud the Simple Prose Reading Test. The children showed a partial inability to read words over which they stumbled at the first attempt. Where the mechanics of reading have been acquired, children should be able to use their knowledge of word analysis and synthesis to read words which at first sight present difficulties. When the children were asked to spell a word that halted their reading, the spelling was always done in the A,B,C,D. fashion where the names, rather than the sounds, of the letters were given. The diversity between letter names and letter sounds in English is so very great that spelling by letter names cannot be of help to a reader who finds a particular word difficult.

(d) Amount of Reading Done. Most classes glue themselves to the class reader for the year. As has been pointed out, some regard the class reader as a piece of writing whose content must be committed to memory. In schools there are some supplementary readers provided.

In one school several modern readers are stocked. What is wrong with the practice in these schools is the use to which these supplementary readers are put. In short, they are no better used than the class readers.

Reading out of school hours lacks directive. Some children when asked whether they read at home and what they read, they enumerated several difficult and unsuitable books owned by their friends, parents and guardians.

The daily newspapers seem to be generally 'read'.

To improve reading and comprehension, the following line of action might be of some help.

Parrot-fashion type of reading must give place to emphasis on building up extensive powers of word recognition. This can be achieved by adopting the analytic method of teaching reading. With this method either whole sentences or whole words will be taken as initial units in teaching reading. Later, these units are broken down into their component parts: Sentences - Words - Syllables - letters. Here, what would be taught about the letters would be their sounds, the names being delayed till a later date.

The emphasis on oral reading should give place to practice in Silent Reading. The children should be given practice in extensive and intensive reading. Each bit of reading done must have a purpose. The children may read with the aim of either reading quickly through a given piece after which questions are asked and answered. Because several testees gave very illogical answers to questions it is here suggested that during all exercises done by children, whenever a child gives an unreasonable answer he must always be led to see the fallacy in his statement by careful questioning. Some-times the children should be given practice in summarising the contents of what they have read. This treatment does not apply only to the class readers. Supplementary readers should be given similar treatment. The Supplementary readers to be recommended are those which consist of short stories full of action in which the reader is impelled by the force of the plot to move on quickly from page to page.

The school library should be able to lend books of the right type to its pupils. Where the supply is limited, the children should be given the titles and authors of the books the teacher recommends. The teacher's whole attitude towards reading and books will, of course, do a great deal to instil either a right or wrong attitude to reading in his pupils.

While the teacher has as his master aim of increasing the reading speed and raising the standard of comprehension, he must arrange for the children to reproduce before him or before the class the substance of every piece of reading they have done. This arrangement will give the teacher the opportunity to deal with individual children's difficulties. The bright ones will proceed undisturbed by the slow and backward ones. The backward ones too will no longer be placed in that painful position of competing, unsuccessfully, with their more gifted class mates. On the contrary, they will be striving to improve upon their own former performances.

In addition to suggestions given above the following exercises will help to improve slowness in reading and comprehension - (adopted from Schonell: Backwardness in the Basic Subjects pp 266-276).

Exercises For Improving Slowness In Reading.

Flash Cards: When children have attained a fair standard of word recognition, flash cards, used properly, produce very good results in improving the speed of slow readers. The cards contain not single words but phrases - two or three words on a card taken from the pupils' reading books. The card is flashed before the group of weak readers for a few seconds - not long enough for any word analysis but sufficiently long to allow recognition of word wholes. Children then read paragraphs so treated, in their class reading books.

Command Cards: Properly graded commands are printed on cards. These are shown to the children who make either individual or group responses.

Question Cards: Sets of questions, about 12 - 15 in a set are given, a set to a pupil. A time limit is set and marks given for each question correctly answered. This exercise combines both speed and accuracy of comprehension.

Missing Words: Paragraphs, from which words are missing, are prepared from the class reading books and pupils are required to read quickly through the passages in their books, writing down the missing words.

Timed reading: Timed reading of simple material is set. Questions are asked on what is read.

Exercises for Improving Comprehension

Reading a story or poem and illustrating it by either drawing, colouring or cutting shapes or patterns.

Completion of Sentences: Children are provided with sets of sentences which they complete by an illustration in the place of the missing word.

Pairing Stories and Pictures: Sets of cards with a short story on each card are prepared, and appropriate pictures illustrating the material are selected. The children match the material with the pictures.

Pairing Sentences of Similar Meaning.

Riddles: Cards, each bearing a riddle are prepared. Children are given some riddles each. They read and solve the riddle.

These and many more exercises, when properly conducted and over a time long enough, will greatly improve the reading speed and accuracy of comprehension.

The scores in Visual Word Discrimination Test were very high. When it is remembered that each key word was only shown once, the testees' visual word perception can be judged to be good. As was pointed out, it is not unlikely that the testees' auditory powers were utilised because some testees in saying

the words to themselves, said them loud enough to be heard by their neighbours.

The Spelling Test, especially with familiar words, was also favourable. The greatest difficulty here was with the sounds of vowels. The following vowels caused the greatest confusion: æ, ʌ, i, i; and ə.

Some of the outstanding specific errors made during the tests will now be considered.

Transposition of Letters: The transposition of such letters as ae for ea, ai for ia and vice versa in these words: thread, readily; pieces, said; avoid, etc could only have arisen as a result of a lack of knowledge of the sounds that are produced by the combination of such letters. This very clearly indicates the teacher's task in eradicating this weakness. During his process of teaching reading by the analytic method and when words are broken down into their sound elements, the teacher will do well to lay emphasis on such elements that are likely to cause confusion. And when he next comes across a word in which the letters are in a reversed order, the teacher might lead the children to bring out the difference both in sound and letter order. Frequent use of such words both in speech and in writing will help to reduce the amount of confusion.

The teacher's more difficult task will be with the transposition of letters which in either order has the same sound such as ei & ie as in piece, deceive where both ie and ei sound (i:) Here again practice will help impress the correct form in the minds of the learners. The rule: 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' has aided many puzzled minds over the correct spelling of some words <sup>and</sup> ~~that~~ it can safely be given the children.

The treatment such as is mentioned above could be used to correct another error, the reversal of short words, which is very closely related to the transposition of letters.

Confusion of Structural Differences: The next error to which most testees fell victims was the confusion of letters which are structurally partly similar and at the same time different. It has been mentioned that the letters which were frequently confused were b and d, p and q, g and q, h and k, m and n, u and n, m and w etc.

The amount of confusion was great. But it would be tolerated when it is realised that this type of error is common among children, as Professor Schonell states, between the ages 5 - 7 and with backward readers, up to the age of 9. As most of the testees' Reading and Comprehension Ages fall within and even below this age range, it is hoped that the

error will decrease with age.

The teacher can, no doubt, hasten their decrease by pointing out the differences between letters commonly confused. He can do so by pointing out, for instance that

in	b	the chimney	'l'	comes before the body	'o'	'lo'
"	d	"	body 'c'	"	"	" chimney 'l' 'c l'
"	p	"	tail 'l'	"	"	" body 'o' 'lo'
"	q	"	body 'c'	"	"	" tail 'l' 'cl'

With such devices the differences between the other letters commonly confused, can be pointed out and corrected. The letters so corrected must be seen in several words and this to be repeated often. A combination of visual, oral and auditory powers in addition to the motor activity (seeing the word, hearing it spoken, speaking it and reproducing it in writing) will all help to fix the shape of the word in the children's memories.

Nearly all the errors committed in the Silent Reading Tests can be reduced to errors of reading and comprehension which have been dealt with.

Miscellaneous Errors: The errors which occurred and which are classed together as miscellaneous were numerous. To mention but few of them:

- (a) Errors due to wrong application of the phonic analysis of words;
- (b) Inconsistent word attack - (right - left and left-right word attack) with the result that the beginnings and ends of words alone were correctly given;
- (c) Errors arising from faulty pronunciation - mainly with vowels and an inclusion of the nasal consonant where none exist,
- (d) Elimination of letters in some words and a multiplication of letters in other words, etc.

While this report does not hope to be a text book on methods of teaching, it can here be suggested that plenty of practice, speech and writing, will achieve much. The teacher should not hesitate to bring the children several <sup>lessons</sup> ~~letters~~ back up to where their understanding of the matter halted and from there gradually, consistently and continuously to work them up to the required standard or rather up to their capability.

To end with what this report began, "The teacher cannot merely look and see what he has been doing, he must go into some trouble to find out where he is". This investigation has been a going into some trouble to find out where we are. Narrow as the field was, nevertheless, it has not failed to be a definite pointer. It has helped to reveal that our

efforts, as teachers, have not been altogether wasted. It has also revealed that our efforts need reinforcing in order to produce excellent results or at least results which compare favourably with other children of other lands.

This investigation has also revealed certain specific weaknesses. It has also exposed very clearly the disparity of the levels of attainment prevalent among children of the same 'class'. A diagnosis of animal and human diseases does not constitute their cures; so too can this bit of work not claim to be a remedy of weaknesses existing in the teaching and learning of English in our schools. It has helped to indicate some of the weaknesses so that the educator may remove them. It has pointed out where children are potentially liable to make mistakes so that the teacher may not be alarmed at their occurrence but shall be armed with a knowledge of them and of the means to prevent them from being committed.

A P P E N D I X " I "

SILENT READING TEST "A"

Read each paragraph and the question at the end of it. Write the answers to the question on your question paper. The first one has been done for you:

1. I have a dog. It is black and white. It is one year old. It sleeps in a box.

Where does the dog sleep? It sleeps in a box  
.....

2. I am a wild bird. My home is in a tree. I can fly high in the air. I can sing a song.

Where is the bird's home? .....

3. We have a baby. When we speak to him he waves his little hand. He has ten teeth. He sleeps most of the day.

How many teeth has the baby? .....

4. Amah is a potter. She makes clay pots. She makes big pots and small pots. Yesterday she made three pots.

What does Amah make her pots from? .....

5. Yaw is a fisherman. He goes fishing in a wooden canoe. There are five men in his crew. Last year he took the canoe down to Komenda to fish.

How many men are there in Yaw's crew? .....

6. It was getting so dark that Alice thought a storm must be coming. "What a big dark cloud there is" she cried "and how fast it is growing. It will soon cover the whole sky".

Do you think the sun was still shining? .....

7. Kofi took the money and went off with smile, his eyes sparkled with joy and he said to himself. "Now I shall be able to buy the new bicycle that I have always wanted"

Was Kofi happy or sad? .....

8. In some countries coloured lights are used to direct the cars at cross streets. A red light means "Stop", an orange light means "Get ready" and a green light means "Go".

What light is used for "Stop"? .....

9. I can skip, I go to school everyday, I wear a nice dress, and when I grow up I will wear ear-rings.

What am I? .....

10. The daylight is driving  
Away in the west.  
The wild birds are flying  
In silence to rest.

Do these lines tell about evening or morning? .....

11. If you are waiting on shore for a ship to come in, the first thing you see is the smoke, later the funnels and masts come in sight, and lastly the hull of the ship itself is seen.

Suppose you are watching a ship leaving land. What is the last part of the ship that you would see? .....

APPENDIX B

SILENT READING TEST B

(Time - 15 minutes)

Read each paragraph. You will notice that there are spaces marked with the letters A and B. Write on your answer paper the one word from row A that will make the best sense when put in space A, and write on your answer paper the one word from row B that will make the best sense when put in space B. Like this:

1. Fred had five white mice. He kept them in a tiny hutch made of wood and --(A). One day when he went to feed the mice he found that they had gone. He looked around and found a small --(B) in the wire.

(A) bread, sand, wire, leaves, paper.  
(B) pot, nut, pole, stick, hole.

2. One day a poor fisherman was casting his net into the sea, hoping to catch some -- (A). As he pulled in his net he saw in it a small glass bottle, but no fish. He picked up the -- (B) and

(A) wood, fruit, seaweed, fish, shells.  
(B) fish, rope, bottle, stick, shell.

3. Just then the moon came out, and they saw an owl perched up on a beam, and wiping the tears from her great, brown eyes. "Why do you weep?" asked the king.

"I am so --"(A), said the owl. "I am not really a bird, but a princess. A wicked man gave me a magic drink which changed me into an --"(B)

(A) happy, long, fat, sad, glad.  
(B) sparrow, woman, owl, man, beam.

4. A boy was once fishing, and he had by his side a very large can in which to put the fish he caught. So far he had caught nothing. A man who was passing saw that the lad had a bite and waited to see whether he would bring the fish to land or not. He said to the boy, "How many fish have you caught, Tommy?" The boy replied: "When I have caught this --(A) and --(B) more I shall have three".

(A) cold, one, line, two, worm.  
(B) bites, two, three, one, fish.

5. A pair of sparrows had built their nest in a hollow place near the top of a chimney. The wind sometimes blew the --(A) about them; but they did not mind that much for most of the day they spent in the streets below, chasing one another, peeping in at shop windows, or picking up crumbs from the village -- (B).

(A) leaves, stones, clouds, smoke, food.  
(B) plates, streets, chimneys, roofs, trees.

6. Hundreds of years ago it was the custom for young men and women to go before day-break on the first of May to a wood near at hand; some played music and some blew horns as they walked to the wood. They broke down branches of trees and gathered flowers. When they returned home about sunrise they decked their houses with the --(A) and flowers. They spent the afternoon dancing around the Maypole which was placed in a suitable part of the village and which stood there until next --(B).

(A) ribbons, paint, nuts, branches, flags.  
(B) autumn, winter, October, holiday, May.

7. Birds travelling long distances usually fly at night and are attracted by the bright lamps of lighthouses. In the past, thousands of birds have been killed by dashing themselves against the thick glass. Nowadays, many of our lighthouses have been fitted with special frames on which the --(A) perch and rest, and this has saved the --(B) of countless numbers of birds.
- (A) lights, sailors, birds, storm, fish.  
(B) lives, ships, wings, flight, homes.
8. When the bear was fairly out of sight, his companion came down out of the tree and asked what it was that the bear whispered to him "For", said he, "I observed that he put his mouth very close to your ear".  
"Why", replied the other, "it was no great secret; he only bade me beware how I kept company with those who, when they get into a --(A) leave their --(B) to look after themselves".
- (A) stream, difficulty, house, train, road.  
(B) money, pupils, goods, friends, horses.
9. So long as icebergs sail over deep water they move freely about as the currents or winds may drive them. But when they get into water shallow enough to allow their bottoms to grate along the sea floor, they tear up the mud or sand there until they are at last stranded. The coast of Labrador is often fringed with such grounded icebergs, some so small as to be driven on to the --(A), others so large as to run aground while still a long --(B) from the shore.
- (A) pier, fields, beach, streets, rivers.  
(B) miles, view, ship, rope, way.
10. Cotton goods cannot be made in every place. For spinning and weaving cotton well there must be moist air, plenty of water and plenty of coal. If the air is dry, the cotton threads snap when they are tightly stretched. The south-west winds which blow across Lancashire are moist or wet winds. They keep the air -- (A) so that --(B) can be easily spun and --(C).
- (A) hot, dry, warm, moist, cool.  
(B) wool, plants, rope, clothes, cotton.  
(c) sold, woven, bought, coloured, worn.

VISUAL WORD DISCRIMINATION TEST

1.	thread	thraed	threab	threed	thread	threard
2.	peices	pices	qieces	pieces	pieses	piesese
3.	who	how	wha	whos	who	ho
4.	down	dawn	down	drown	dow	down
5.	plaiy	ley	paly	plag	pley	play
6.	thre	thrie	there	three	these	theree
7.	babies	babees	babes	babeisr	babiese	badies
8.	sied	sed	saide	sad	said	sad
9.	danger	dsger.	danger	danger	dranger	gander
10.	forom	fram	fron	fom	form	from
11.	boaket	barkset	basket	bashet	baket	bakset
12.	touches	torche	tonches	torches	tarches	torches
13.	tewlev	twelve	twlave	tewle	tewelve	twilve
14.	finger	finsger	fingir	fringe	finger	finiges
15.	barnt	bunt	brunt	burnt	blurnt	lurnt
16.	puncture	pictur	pitcure	picture	pietare	piclure
17.	vevlet	velet	vevlete	velvit	velvet	velnet
18.	sings	sinq	sing	sig	snig	seng
19.	cragés	crays	cargs	crugs	crag	crag
20.	teech	tech	taech	treach	teack	teach
21.	potch	porch	patech	path	patch	patck
22.	hasband	husband	husban	hasbund	husband	husdand
23.	statne	settue	stactue	stetue	statue	staue
24.	Afternoon	afternoon	afternoon	afternoon	afternoon	afternoon
25.	marbe	marble	arsbel	murble	marde	mareble

## QUESTIONS ON THE READING SCALE

UNDERLINE THE ANSWER WHICH YOU THINK IS RIGHT

- The dog got wet and Tom had to rub him dry.  
It says that Tom rubbed the dog because he was ... what?  
(a) Dry (b) Wet (c) Cold (d) Not well
- He was a very good boy to give you some of his sweets.  
The boy gave away some of his sweets; so it says he was .....  
what?  
(a) Silly (b) Polite (c) Good (d) Happy
- My sister likes me to open my book and read to her.  
It says that when you open your book your sister likes you to  
do ..... what?  
(a) Shut it again (b) Read to her  
(c) Show her the pictures (d) Teach her to read
- Go away and hide behind that door where we found you just now.  
It says that we found you .... where? Write down the three  
words that tell us.  
.....
- Please don't let anyone spoil these nice fresh flowers.  
It says that we do not want the flowers to be ..... what?  
(a) Fresh (b) Nice (c) Spoilt (d) Touched
- The string had eight knots in it which I had to untie.  
What had I to do to the string?  
(a) Make 8 knots in it (b) Untie the knots  
(c) Make the knots tighter (d) Try to undo them
- Wine is made from the juice of grapes which grow in warm  
countries.  
What kind of a drink does it say we get from warm countries?  
(a) Water (b) Milk (c) Wine (d) Grape-fruit juice
- Mary went to the grocer's and bought some sugar and some syrup.  
How did Mary get the sugar and the syrup?  
(a) She paid for it (b) Her mother paid for it  
afterwards  
(c) The grocer gave it to her (d) It doesn't say who paid
- Quench your thirst by drinking a glass of our sparkling  
ginger ale.  
It says that ginger ale will stop you from being ..... what?  
(a) Quenched (b) Sparkling (c) Thirsty (d) Ill
- The people could scarcely obtain enough food to remain healthy.  
It says that the people were ..... what?  
(a) Not very ~~well~~ healthy (b) Very healthy (c) Ill (d) Very ill
- Elizabeth had her hair thoroughly combed and her fringe cut.  
How does it say that Elizabeth's hair was combed?  
(a) Not very well (b) Very well indeed  
(c) Quite well enough (d) It doesn't say
- By stretching up, George just managed to touch the garage  
ceiling. Did George touch the garage ceiling?

- (a) It doesn't say (b) Yes, but not easily  
(c) Yes, quite easily (d) Yes, but not every time
13. Father had a brief telephone conversation with my cousin Philip. Why did father use the telephone?  
(a) To give a message to Philip (b) To arrange to see him  
(c) To ask him a question (d) To have a short talk with him.
14. This coupon entitles you to a specimen piece of our delicious toffee.  
In this sentence, the word which tells you that I have a right to a piece of ~~toffee~~<sup>toffee</sup> is ..... what?
15. The chemist could not suggest a satisfactory remedy for my headache.  
What was it that the chemist could not do?  
(a) Sell me a medicine for my headache  
(b) Tell me of a good cure for my headache  
(c) Tell me of a good doctor for my headache  
(d) Give me a list of medicines for headaches
16. Nobody recognised Roger in his disguise as a police official. It says that the people did not know Roger because he was .... what?  
(a) Dressed up to look like somebody else  
(b) A policeman in real life  
(c) A stranger  
(d) Usually out of sight
17. Leonard was engaged by the Irish Linen Association to act as their London agent.  
It says that the Irish Linen Association did .....what?  
(a) Made Leonard an actor  
(b) Helped him to get married  
(c) Gave him a job in England  
(d) Promised him a job in London
18. Judged by his photographs your nephew is certainly a peculiar character.  
It says that the nephew was ..... what?  
(a) A queer sort of person  
(b) Photographed by the judge  
(c) A person of strong character  
(d) Wrong in his head
19. The examiner was impatient when I hesitated over a difficult phrase in my reading.  
What was it that the examiner did not like me to do?  
(a) Make mistakes (b) Read too fast  
(c) Read without expression (d) Stop at the hard words
20. Delicate individuals should gradually be accustomed to gentle physical exercise.  
It says that weak people should only take to exercise ...how?  
(a) Little by little (b) Only now and then

28. Certificates of insurance will be issued to all policy-holders paying the necessary premium.

Who does it say will get the certificate?

- (a) The person who pays the premium
- (b) The insurance agent
- (c) The insurance company
- (d) The police

29. The ceremony ended, appropriately enough, with the Choir and Orchestra joining in the National Anthem.

Write down the words in this sentence which tell you that it was the proper thing to end up with "God Save The King".