

Memo : May 22, 1968

To : Mr. H.A. Rothfels

From : M. Langshur

Topic: Language Arts/Bilingual Classes

In our bilingual classes the children are taught to read in French by learning symbol-sound relationships i.e. they decode the written word by attributing a specific sound to a visual symbol. In view of the fact that there is a large core of similiar grapheme-phoneme relationships in French and English, it seems logical that the English language arts program should develop from what has already been taught.

According to test results so far, children seem to transfer skills learned in a second language to the maternal tongue.<sup>1</sup> This being so, the student should be allowed to start with the skills he has mastered in the French language when he tackles written English. These skills can then be used as a foundation from which he may progress.

If, however, we teach him to read English by a different method, we waste, to some extent, the tools he has at hand and inevitably retard, for a while, his development in written English. If we further complicate the process by introducing English words for spelling which have no phonetic relationship to each other or to the skills he has thus far learned, the effort of creating order from the confusion of approaches can again be an initial retarding factor for the child.

To help overcome these problems, I recommend that the programmed reading series published by McGraw-Hill be used as the core of the English language arts program in the bilingual classes. In this program, grammar and punctuation are taught as an integral part of the program, as well, the child learns to write, spell and read each word because of the developmental linguistic approach it uses.

Such a linguistic approach teaches phonics in a planned sequential order and in a gradual manner to take advantage of the fact that the phonetic reliability of English words is as high as 80-85%.<sup>2</sup> The advantages of having the spelling and reading program complementing rather than confusing each other are obvious.

The program allows the child to develop (at Grade II and III levels) a vocabulary of approximately 4300 phonetically regular words which he can read, write and spell. Because his knowledge of word attack skills has been established in French in Grade I he should be able to move into Grade II materials almost immediately. At this time the child reads and writes in English, stories, descriptive paragraphs, reports and poems.

<sup>1</sup>W.E. Lambert. "Some Intellectual Consequences of Following a First-Grade Curriculum in a Foreign Language": pg. 27.

<sup>2</sup>G. McAuliffe. Decoding for Reading: Collier Macmilland: 1968.



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Because the time per day spent in teaching the English Language Arts is of necessity limited, it should be as productive as possible. This indicates that a totally integrated Language Arts program in English developed from the skills already acquired in the French program would be more useful than separate activities in reading, writing, spelling, speech and composition. These activities may have some correlation to each other in content, but each as presently taught, requires different learned skills..

Therefore, given a good basic Language Arts program, and the ability to stimulate creative student involvement, the teacher of English in the bilingual classes should be able to achieve maximum results within the given time.

cc: Mr. R.G. Smith  
Mr. D.S. Hadley  
✓ Mr. C. Amyot  
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ML/jt