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A Study of Bill

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A STUDY OF BILL

This paper is a type of study of a nine year old boy whom I shall call Bill. Bill is from a normal middle class family. He is in the fourth grade. His I.Q. is average. His mental age and chronological age are just about the same. In all respects Bill seems to be a very normal boy. He does have glasses, but as yet he has not worn them to his sessions.

Bill's problem is that he lacks an interest in reading. He was given the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty test. His median grade for the oral reading was 3.9. and his median grade for silent reading was 4.9. He seems to be better in silent reading. His score was about fifth grade in listening, 6.5 in flash words, and 4.0 in spelling.

Bill needs oral reading practice. He tries to read too fast, and then does not comprehend what he reads. He needs security in oral reading. He mainly lacks effort.

Bill needs to learn to organize what he reads and get out the main ideas. When he reads, his voice is nervous, high-pitched, repetitious.

His reading specialist let him pick out some books to take home. He said he looked at them but did not read them.

Bill's mother is particularly interested in his taking an interest in reading. She wants him to read in the summer.

Bill's new reading specialist has some plans for him. She says he needs practice in phrase reading. She also wants to work with him and help him adapt his speed to the type of material

he is reading. He is going to try to improve his concentration.

Bill has also been reported as a behavior problem in school.

I am not sure how this relates to his reading problem.

February 5, 1970

Today Bill brought his glasses for the first time. When he came in, he had them on top of his head. The teacher began by talking about his glasses and her contact lenses. She took one of hers out for him to see. He seemed to be very interested. This lead to an impromptu science lesson on the eye.

Bill seemed to be personable enough, but he gave the impression of trying to prove himself. He acted very typical of his age group. He seemed to be a little nervous because all during the session he took his glasses on and off and played with a pencil.

The teacher gave him a Reading Interest Inventory and ask him to fill it out. He was very obliging. He said he was very interested in television. He likes Adem 12 and Twilight Zone. He told about a particular episode on Twilight Zone.

Bill also said he likes to play games. He kept bringing up pool. That seems to be a favorite. He also told about a paper game he had made up and seemed quite pleased about it.

Bill then informed the teacher that he did not like to read anything. He said it took too much time. He had never even heard of Sports Illustrated. In science class he said he didn't pay attention, he just drew pictures. He doesn't even read the funny papers. However he does like to read the funny in bubble gum.

According to Bill, he hasn't read a book in over a year. He has checked out books in the Library, but just takes them back. He commented that he wished his mother wouldn't push him to read.

The teacher ask him about such magazines as Jack and Jill and Humpty Dumpty. He said they were for babies. He also commented

that books had too many pages. He said he likes to collect them, but he doesn't like to read them. He said nobody ever reads to him.

Bill did show a slight interest in science fiction. He also said he liked joke books. The teacher showed him a book with some code messages in it. He picked up the book and began flipping through it. He took the book home with him. It is a book by Edgar Allen Poe with scary stories in it.

Bill says he wants to be a bachelor, but he couldn't spell it. He wants to go on dates all the time. He also told about other things he had done like take a girl to the show, go to basketball games, and dreams he had had.

I was very interested in the fact that there was something Bill wanted to tell the teacher, but he couldn't tell her with me in the room. He said that because I am married I am an adult. He said adults always tell when they aren't supposed to. The funny thing is that the teacher is older than I am.

READING INTEREST INVENTORY

Name of Pupil _____ Date _____

1. What do you do when you are not in school?
2. What games do you like to play?
3. Do you enjoy reading magazines and books?
4. What kind of books do you like to read?

Biography	News	Mystery	Myths
Adventure	Legends	Poetry	
Animal Stories	Aviation	Plays	

5. Name some books you have read this past year. Check the one you like the best.
6. Do you get books you read from home? School? Public Library? From a friend?
7. What kind of books and stories would you like to read?
8. What magazines do you read? Why?
9. Do you like to read newspapers? Why?
10. Do you like to have someone read to you? Who reads to you?
11. Does anyone encourage you to read during your leisure time? Who?
12. Would you like to have books of your own? What kind?
13. What school work do you like best?
14. What do you want to be?

February 12, 1970

Bill came in today wearing his glasses again and in a very good mood. He told the teacher how he had gotten in trouble in school today. They talked for a little while about flying kites and other things of interest to the boy.

Bill said he had worked on the book of codes. However, he has not read the book yet. He is going to keep it for a while longer and try to read it.

The teacher had brought some books on ghosts and scary stories like Bill had suggested he might be interested in. She read him two and a half pages of a story from Ghosts, Ghosts by Phyllis K. Fenner. Then she had him write an ending for the story. He seemed to be interested in what was going on.

It took him a few minutes to get started with his writing. After he finished, the teacher read what he had written. Then she read him the ending to the original story. He said he would like to take the book home and read a few of the stories. The teacher also told him about another book she had there for him to look at, A Wrinkle in Time by Madeline L'Engle.

February 19, 1970

Bill came in straight from school today. He said he had read a little in the book of ghost stories the teacher gave him last week. He said he took it to church to read, but didn't read it. He also commented that he had tried to read to a friend, but the friend would not let him.

The teacher got out the textbook More Than Words. She and Bill looked through it and talked about some of the stories. She ask him to read the story of William Tell and he did. He was reluctant to start reading and kept putting it off.

Bill seemed to be trying to read very fast. He made such mistakes as saying blow for bow, shaves for slaves, and Swess for Swiss. He does not watch his punctuation too close at times and his reading is not always smooth. He would run words together and then couldn't understand what he had read.

The teacher asked him questions about the story. He answered most of them correctly.

Next he read from a Reading Skills Card from the Webster Classroom Reading Clinic. He answered four out of the six questions on the story correctly.

He also worked through two of the Webster Word Wheels. He pronounced all but five of the words correctly. His mistakes were things such as saying shot for shoot, shock for shook, and choose for chose.

At the end of the session, the teacher took him over to the Ouachita library and showed him where to find books to read.

February 26, 1970

Today Bill came in singing a song about school not being for him. He talked about school for awhile and how he does not like poems. He said he hadn't read anything this week but his school books. He forgot to read the ghost story that his teacher ask him to. She ask him to read one of the stories and tell it to her next week. He said he would tell it to her, but he would not read it to her.

The teacher ask him if he had ever been to the zoo. He said yes and they talked about animals. This lead to his reading about camels from the Webster Reading Clinic. On the questions he had to answer on the card, he missed one. When the teacher first ask him to read it, he said he didn't want to. He wanted to do something sensible like make airplanes. The teacher also told him about a book on camels that he could read for next week and find the answers to some questions.

Next the teacher had him read some sight phrase cards by Dolche. He said, "Why read them? I know all the words." after he got started, he seemed to enjoy it. The few mistakes he made were due to carelessness.

Beginning next week, the teacher is going to make a poster to record the books and stories he reads. For books, he gets a big star; and for stories he gets a small star. He said he thought this would help to motivate him. Then he remembered a story he had read on Batman. He told about it. The teacher told him a story about Sea Wolfe. He was very interested.

March 5, 1970

Bill came in today without his glasses. He was carrying a stack of books. He said he had read the story Eddie and the Fire Engine and he told us about it. The reading specialist ask him some questions about the book which he answered.

Bill said that he and some friends had written secret codes to each other from the code list in Poe's book. However, he said he had forgotten to read any stories. He also said that he didn't answer the questions on camels; nor did he read any of the stories out of Ghosts. He is going to take the book home for another week.

Bill got to put a star on his chart for reading a story this week. He commented that he was glad he had read one so he could put up the star.

After a few minutes, Bill remembered that he had read the story Eddie and the Fire Engine a long time ago. He couldn't remember the name of the book he had read this week. Finally, he remembered that it was Clara Barton. Then he told us about the new story.

We all went to the library. The reading specialist read him the story "How the Camel Got His Hump," from Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling. This was the story he was supposed to have read for himself this week. He seemed to be pretty interested in the story.

Also, in the library they looked up camels in the World Book. Then the specialist read him the story of the "Tell-Tale Heart" by Poe. He played with a paper cup while she read, but he seemed to be listening. He said he liked the story.

For next week, Bill is supposed to read some more stories out of Ghosts. She ask him to bring in any other books that he read.

Bill's mother was supposed to come in this week to talk to the specialist, but she forgot to come. They tried to set up another time, but couldn't find one convenient to both. They will try to get together one day next week.

The reading specialist wants to ask the mother such questions as:

1. Does Bill know why he is coming here?
2. Do you try to motivate him to read without pressuring him?
3. Does he see you all read at home?

March 12, 1970

I was unable to go to the session with Bill today, but I found out the details from the reading specialist. She used the tachistoscope and the controlled reader with Bill. She said he seemed to enjoy it more than he has anything so far. He did real well, too.

Bill had read a story about some mittens. The reading specialist said it was not much of a story, but it was something. He got to put a star on his chart. He enjoys this a lot.

The specialist still has not worked out a time to meet with Bill's mother, but she is still trying.

March 19, 1970

Bill came in today wearing his glasses. He looked real tired and said he had had a tiring day at school. He did not seem to be too enthusiastic about doing anything.

Bill was determined to get his star this week even though he had not read a story. He thought up all sorts of reasons why he should have one. He said he had read a story about India in Geography and wanted to count it, but the teacher would not let him. He also said someone had read a story to him, but that did not count either.

We all went upstairs to the reading lab and Bill read from the Controlled Reader. The story was about Andrew Johnson. After the story, he answered the questions. He missed two.

When we went back downstairs, Bill said that he had been forgetting to read the story from the ghost book. He said he had too much homework.

The reading specialist read him the first chapter from the book A Wrinkle in Time. This is a scary story about esp. When she had finished reading, she ask him if he was interested in finding out how the story ended. He said he was, but he did not want to take the book home. She said they could read on it some more next week.

CONCLUSIONS

This was my last time to visit with Bill because I will be going out to do my practice teaching. I have really enjoyed this, and I feel like I have profited a lot from going to these sessions.

In my opinion, Bill's problem is more of a home problem than a reading problem. Apparently, his mother just reprimands him for not reading, but does not encourage him to read. She doesn't remind him to read his stories each week. He doesn't even realize he has a reading problem. It seems that he gets little or no stimulation from home. Perhaps if his mother or father would ask him to read to them that would help. The father is hardly ever mentioned. The mother seems to be the strong influence in the home.

I think Bill reads about average for his age. He does not like to read out loud, and when he does he tries to go too fast and doesn't pay attention to what he is saying. I think he lacks self-confidence.

Some weeks he seems to be a little more enthusiastic, and then the next week he won't be. However, I think coming to these sessions will help him in the long run.