A Case Study of Middle School Reading Disability

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As director of a university reading clinic, each year I (Morris) see scores of children who struggle with reading. Our clinical program is straightforward and short on frills; it consists of a parent interview (1 hour), informal testing to determine each student's reading level (1 hour), and intensive one-to-one tutoring (two times per week during the school year), all designed to help the student improve his or her reading ability. Some of the students we tutor improve rapidly in reading, others make slow but steady progress, and a few show little gain despite our best efforts.

Sometimes a specific clinic case captures my attention. Usually it is a child who is having an undue amount of difficulty processing written language. But on occasion, a case stands out less for its exceptionality than for its apparent generality. That is, in getting to know a particular disabled reader and his or her family, and reflecting on the educational havoc caused by the reading problem, I recognize that this student represents many others in the public schools.

This article describes such a case. Brett (a pseudonym), a sixth-grade boy of average intelligence, came to us reading at the second-grade level. His school diagnosis was learning disabled, and his chances for becoming fully literate appeared slim. This case study report includes a summary of the initial parent interview, a detailed description of the student's tutoring program (including assessment), and a commentary on the public school's responsibility to provide effective remedial reading instruction.

Parent Interview

Brett's mother, Mrs. Stacey (also a pseudonym), took off from work early on a Friday afternoon and drove 60 miles to have Brett evaluated at our reading clinic. I interviewed her as Brett was being tested. Mrs. Stacey lived with her husband and three children in a small town in western North Carolina, USA. Although neither she nor her husband had attended college, her oldest daughter was now a freshman at a state university and her other daughter was doing well academically in junior high school. Brett, her youngest, was her concern because he had scored at the second-grade level (2.8) on a recent, school-administered standardized reading test.

According to Mrs. Stacey, Brett had repeated kindergarten and experienced difficulty learning to read in first grade. "He would memorize the basal stories," she said, "but he couldn't read them." In December of second
grade, Brett was tested for a possible learning disability and was diagnosed as dyslexic. He spent his third- and fourth-grade years in a self-contained special education class but advanced little in reading despite the help of an after-school tutor. In the fifth and sixth grades Brett was mainstreamed into the regular classroom, receiving resource help 90 minutes per day. Mrs. Stacey approved of her son’s placement in the regular academic classes; however, the special education assistance program in Brett’s middle school was changing, and Mrs. Stacey did not like the changes. In the sixth grade, Mrs. Stacey explained, the special education resource teacher no longer provided Brett with direct instruction in reading but instead concentrated on helping him understand and complete assignments in all his academic subjects. Mrs. Stacey recognized the need for such assistance, but she stated adamantly:

Brett is finishing the sixth grade and he can’t read his textbooks. If the resource teacher isn’t helping him improve his reading skills, then who is going to do it? I think the school is giving up on reading, and I’m not going to have it. I’ve come up here [to the university] to get some help.

I must admit that I had nothing but admiration for this forceful, straight-talking mother. Not only had Mrs. Stacey diligently supported her child through 6 trying years in school, but now she was interpreting and rightly confronting a change in school policy that could adversely affect her son’s chances of achieving literacy. If the learning disabilities resource teacher was no longer going to provide direct reading instruction for Brett (a rising seventh grader reading on a second-grade level), who then was going to teach him to read—his middle-school English teacher, science teacher, or math teacher? This seemed highly unlikely.

At this point in my interview with Mrs. Stacey, I was handed some early and tentative results from Brett’s reading evaluation. His word recognition, passage reading, and spelling scores all indicated a second-grade instructional level. I explained to Mrs. Stacey that Brett was 5 years below grade level in reading; however, I also told her that I could not be sure about the severity or intractability of his reading problem without working with him over a few weeks in a clinical teaching situation. I mentioned that we ran a 4-week reading clinic each summer and was about to say that the distance might be prohibitive. Mrs. Stacey interrupted me in mid-sentence: “Brett will be here this summer.”

Reading Instruction

Summer 1992

During the summer of 1992, I assigned Mrs. Ervin, an experienced first-grade teacher taking a reading practicum course, to work with Brett. We began by looking back at Brett’s performance on the spring reading evaluation (see Table 1).

On the initial informal reading inventory (IRI), Brett’s oral reading was slow, labored, and barely audible. He consistently waited for the examiner’s help on difficult words, not wanting to risk a mistake. Brett’s silent reading was little better. His silent comprehension of the second- and third-grade passages was poor, and his silent reading rates approximated those of a first grader. Notice in Table 1 that Brett’s oral reading accuracy and oral reading rate dropped significantly at second grade. However, he did show some strength in word recognition at the second-grade level (flash 70%; untimed 85%).

Mrs. Ervin tutored Brett 1 hour per day, Monday through Thursday, during the 14-day summer practicum (2 days in week 1; 4 days per week in weeks 2–4). The principles that guided her instruction were traditional but timeless in their importance:
### Table 1
Brett’s initial test results in word recognition, passage reading, and spelling (May 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Word recognition</th>
<th>Passage reading</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Silent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flash (%)</td>
<td>Untimed (%)</td>
<td>Accuracy (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Instructional level criteria (%) varied by assessment task: word recognition (flash) 70%, oral reading accuracy 92%, oral and silent reading comprehension 75%, and spelling 40%.

- Determine the student’s reading instructional level—the level where he is challenged but not frustrated—and present instruction accordingly.
- Use reading material that is of personal interest and significance to the student.
- Build comprehension through informal discussions of stories or articles as they are being read.
- Assess the student’s word recognition along a continuum of written word knowledge (for example, beginning consonants, word families, vowel patterns, multisyllable words) and then, over time, provide systematic, developmentally appropriate word study.
- Explore ways of getting the student to practice reading when he is away from the tutoring setting.

Mrs. Ervin’s lesson plans, which did not vary across the 14-day summer session, reflected the four principles shown in Figure 1 and described in detail in the following section.

1. **Guided reading.** After previewing a second-grade story (or book chapter), Brett and his tutor would alternate reading pages orally, stopping occasionally to check comprehension. After four or five pages of this partner reading, Mrs. Ervin would elicit a plot prediction from Brett and then have him silently read the remaining three or four pages of the story. He was encouraged to ask for help on difficult words. Again, comprehension was checked.

Brett began the summer by reading four stories in an old second-grade basal reader titled *Tricky Troll* (Eller & Hester, 1976). He then read two chapter books [books long enough to be divided into chapters but not long enough to be considered novels], *The Stories Julian Tells* (Cameron, 1981) and *Shoeshine Girl* (Bulla, 1975), both written at a second-grade reading level. Mrs. Ervin developed an interesting and effective plan for supporting Brett’s reading in the chapter books:

- Brett read a chapter with Mrs. Ervin in the tutoring session.
Figure 1
Sample lesson plan

1. Guided reading
   Begin by having Brett orally read a 200-word sample from Chapter 2 of *Shoeshine Girl* (graph accuracy and rate).
   Review content of Chapter 2, and then begin Chapter 3 (partner read first three pages; Brett reads last three pages silently).
   Send Chapter 4 home on tape.

2. Word sort
   Sort a patterns (a, a-e, ar, all).
   Play Concentration game with 12 of the words.
   Do spelling check on 6 words.

3. Writing
   Have Brett add to, and possibly finish, his story on Atlanta trip.

4. Easy reading
   Introduce new Starpol book *Testing Hunter 4* (partner read first four pages, then let Brett proceed independently).

• Brett then took the next chapter home on an audiotape. His task was not just to listen to the taped chapter (six to eight pages), but to practice reading it in preparation for an oral reading check the next day.

• Brett began the next tutoring session by reading a 200-word sample from the practiced chapter. Mrs. Ervin recorded his oral reading accuracy and rate, and shared this information with Brett.

• The content of the practiced chapter then was discussed. A third chapter was part-

ner read in the tutoring session, and a tape of the fourth chapter sent home.

By reading the same book in the tutoring sessions and at home (with audiotapes to support him), Brett was able to finish both chapter books in the short 4-week session. Not only did his reading ability improve, but his self-concept as a reader changed. He was completing meaningful reading assignments, possibly for the first time in his life.

2. Word study. At each tutoring session Brett spent a few minutes sorting one-syllable words into vowel patterns (see Figure 2).

Brett enjoyed these brief lessons where he and his tutor categorized words by pattern. He also benefited from the short spelling checks (five or six words) that followed each sorting activity. Over 3 weeks, he worked across the common a, e, and i vowel patterns (see Invernizzi, Abouzeid, & Gill, 1994; Morris, 1982; or Schlagal & Schlagal, 1992, for more information on word sorting).

3. Writing. At first Brett was reluctant to write, and writing did prove to be a slow, arduous process for him. Mrs. Ervin was firm but encouraging. She allowed Brett to select his own writing topics and emphasized the expression of ideas, not mechanical correctness, in first drafts. Choosing to write about sports and later a family trip to Atlanta, Brett progressed from short three-sentence accounts at the beginning of the summer to two-paragraph stories several weeks later. Mrs. Ervin helped him revise and edit two of his favorite pieces, which then were typed and illustrated.

4. Easy reading. Brett quickly became hooked on the Starpol books (Tully, 1987), a series of space adventures written at a late-first-grade to late-second-grade difficulty level. (Each Starpol book is 24 pages with engaging, colorful illustrations on each page.) Brett and his tutor would begin a Starpol story in the tutoring session and on most days
he would finish the story at home. This easy but meaningful reading in a single series helped to improve Brett's word recognition, fluency, and confidence.

At the end of the summer session it was apparent to everyone involved that Brett had made gains in reading and self-confidence. Mrs. Stacey was very pleased, but at the same time concerned about the summer clinic coming to an end. I suggested that she ask Mrs. Ervin to continue tutoring Brett during the upcoming school year (the Staceys lived approximately 45 minutes from Mrs. Ervin's school). To my delight, Mrs. Ervin agreed to tutor Brett after school if I would provide professional assistance now and then, a request to which I readily agreed.

School Year 1992–1993

Brett was tutored once per week during the 1992–1993 school year; the busy work schedules of his mother and tutor precluded more frequent sessions. Mrs. Ervin, for the most part, followed her tutoring plan from the summer reading clinic. This included guided reading of chapter books, word study, repeated readings of familiar passages, writing, and taped readings for homework. Brett read third- and fourth-grade chapter books during the year. In order, these were Mustard (Graeber, 1983), Stone Fox (Gardiner, 1983), How to Eat Fried Worms (Rockwell, 1973), Oxels in the Family (Mowat, 1981), and Skinnybones (Park, 1982). He again alternated reading a chapter in the tutoring session and the following chapter at home (with the support of an audiotape). Brett's comprehension of these books was excellent, his oral reading accuracy and rate adequate, and his interest high.

To improve Brett's reading fluency, Mrs. Ervin employed the method of repeated readings (Samuels, 1979). In this activity Brett read a familiar passage for 3 minutes. The number of words read was graphed. He then read the same passage again, and then a third time in the following tutoring session. Each time the number of words read in 3 minutes was graphed (see Figure 3).

Brett benefited from the repeated readings in several ways: the timed trials heightened his concentration, rereadings of the same passage consistently increased his fluency or rate, and the immediate graphing of results provided Brett with much-needed performance feedback.

After a few weeks of tutoring, Mrs. Ervin shared with me the difficulty Brett was having with spelling instruction. He was being asked to learn 10 seventh-grade words per week (for example, horrible, elegant, brilliant, companion, doubtful); however, Brett was unsure of even third-grade spellings (that is, whether boil was spelled "boil," "bole," or "boyl"). His frustration over weekly spelling assignments was building rapidly.

At this point Mrs. Ervin and I devised a plan for helping Brett with spelling. First, we assessed his spelling ability by administering the first three levels of a diagnostic spelling inventory (Schlagal, 1989). Results showed that Brett was functioning at a second-grade level in spelling. With these results in hand, Mrs. Ervin

| Figure 2 |
| Word sort example |
| mat | rake | card | (?) |
| fan | made | park | fall |
| bag | face | far | ball |
| flat | dart | name |
approached the school about providing Brett's spelling instruction during his tutoring sessions. The classroom teacher and learning disabilities resource teacher consented readily, with the stipulation that some type of weekly assessment be turned in to the school.

In late October, Mrs. Ervin located a third-grade spelling book and used this as a resource to provide Brett with both spelling and word-study instruction for the remainder of the school year. Each Monday, in the tutoring session, Brett took a pretest on a unit of 15 words from the spelling book. (Note: The first six units in the book reviewed second-grade spelling patterns.) Brett, on average, misspelled four to six words on the weekly pretest. He immediately self-corrected the pretest, writing each misspelled word correctly three times, and then sorted the 15 spelling words into patterns (see Figure 4).

Brett's homework assignment was to use each misspelled pretest word in a meaningful
sentence and to review the entire spelling unit for a Friday posttest to be administered at school by his resource teacher. The following Monday, a new spelling unit was introduced in the tutoring lesson. From November through May, Brett worked through 20 of the 36 units in the third-grade book. He consistently scored 93% or better on the Friday posttests.

**School Year 1993–1994**

Mrs. Ervin and a colleague, Mrs. Conrad, continued to tutor Brett once per week during the school year. Brett was now a stronger reader and, consequently, his tutors increased the challenge level of his assignments. In year two, Brett read narrative and content material written at a fourth- or fifth-grade level; he studied spelling patterns selected from a fourth-grade spelling book. Basic tutoring procedures did not change significantly from year one to year two.

**Posttesting**

Mrs. Ervin used posttesting to evaluate Brett’s reading progress once per year. Each time, she administered the same word recognition and spelling lists, along with different but equivalent sets of reading passages.

Table 2 summarizes Brett’s posttutoring (May 1994) performance. Comparing this performance against his initial assessment (Table 1) shows that Brett made considerable improvement in all areas of contextual reading: word reading accuracy, rate, and comprehension. A second-grade-level reader in 1992, 2 years later he was reading fluently at the fourth-grade level. Brett also improved in spelling. Using 40% accuracy as an instructional level criterion (Morris, Blanton, Blanton, & Perney, 1995), Table 2 shows that Brett progressed 2 years in spelling, from a second-grade to a fourth-grade level. Interestingly,

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**Figure 4**

**Example of third-grade spelling unit and accompanying word sort activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelling pretest</th>
<th>Word sort activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. tray</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. feel</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. paint</td>
<td>PANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. sneak</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. seem</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. real</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. hay</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. chain</td>
<td>CHANE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. free</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. lay</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. fail</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. treat</td>
<td>TREAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. train</td>
<td>TRANE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. sweet</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. wheat</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>train</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Flash (%)</th>
<th>Untimed (%)</th>
<th>Accuracy (%)</th>
<th>Comp. (%)</th>
<th>Rate (wpm)</th>
<th>Comp. (%)</th>
<th>Rate (wpm)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>89</td>
<td>—</td>
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</table>

Note: Instructional level criteria (%) varied by assessment task: word recognition (flash) 70%, oral reading accuracy 92%, oral and silent reading comprehension 75%, and spelling 40%.

Brett’s smallest gain was in decontextualized word recognition (flashed and untimed). Here, he advanced from a second- to a third-grade level, with most of this gain coming in the first year of tutoring.

**Summary of Reading Instruction and Test Results**

Summary of reading instruction and test results shows that Brett received 78 hours of tutorial instruction over the 2-year period. His reading lessons were characterized by balance, support, and adherence to instructional level. Balance was reflected in the consistent lesson routine of reading for meaning, word study, fluency drill, and writing. Although reading for meaning in narrative and content materials dominated, the systematic study of word patterns also was emphasized. In fact, a unique feature of the after-school lessons was the tutor’s skillful integration of spelling and word-study instruction.

When tutoring began in the summer of 1992, Brett was a struggling reader, severely lacking in confidence. He required tutorial support to read in context, and this support was provided in several ways: partner reading in which tutor and child alternated reading aloud pages at the beginning of a story; taped reading in which Brett read along with a tape-recorded version of a story or chapter at home; repeated readings in which he read aloud one short passage three successive times, working on fluency; and guided reading in which the tutor’s questions and probes facilitated Brett’s silent reading of a story. Significantly, much of this contextual reading support was phased out as Brett became a stronger reader over the 2-year period. For example, in year one Brett often read an assigned chapter at home with the assistance of a tape recorder; in year two he was able to read a chapter at home without the tape recorder.

Balanced instruction and appropriate tutor support were important, but the essential
element in Brett's successful reading program was the tutor's diligent, unrelenting attention to instructional level. Initial testing showed Brett to have, at best, a second-grade reading level. Mrs. Ervin, putting aside age and grade expectations, began working with Brett at the second-grade level. Over a 2-year period, Brett progressed steadily—from a second- to a fourth-grade instructional level in both reading and spelling. Progress was slow but foundational, and, importantly, it was understood and appreciated by the tutor and student alike.

Brett's 2-year gain in reading and spelling was encouraging, particularly in light of the minimal reading and spelling progress he had made during his first 6 years in school. One less positive test finding, however, warrants mention. It was noted earlier that Brett's ability to recognize isolated words lagged behind his contextual word recognition ability, particularly in the second year of tutoring. It can be argued that the second-year gain in reading skill was contextual in nature and that the underlying word recognition competence stalled (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990). Such an interpretation is certainly consistent with Brett's longstanding word-recognition problem. It also highlights the necessity of a continuing word study program—systematic study of developmentally appropriate word patterns—if Brett is to make further advances in reading and spelling.

Commentary

I believe that there are many thousands of Bretts sitting in middle-school classrooms. These students struggle mightily with grade-level reading assignments and, because they are forced to read at frustration level most of the school day, their reading skills may improve little from year to year, causing them to fall further behind their peers. Some of these students are labeled learning disabled or slow learners, but the inescapable fact remains that they have the potential to learn if they receive appropriate instruction.

Appropriate instruction in Brett's case rested, in large part, on his tutor's knowledge of how to teach reading. Mrs. Ervin understood the fundamental importance of instructional level, she exercised good judgment in selecting interesting material, she was skillful in getting Brett to search for meaning in text, and she possessed knowledge of the English orthographic system and of appropriate strategies for teaching that system. Moreover, Mrs. Ervin's summer practicum experience, although short in duration, allowed her to practice her teaching—to refine her understanding of the process—in a one-to-one context under the watchful eye of an experienced clinician.

Obviously we need more Mrs. Ervins in our schools to meet the needs of students like Brett. I have no formula for producing such teachers, but I do think it must be done at the graduate level and at least two conditions must be satisfied. First, graduate methods courses in reading instruction must be rigorous and provide teachers with a balanced, comprehensive view of the reading process. Reading teachers must understand both word recognition and comprehension development and be able to facilitate growth in both areas through thoughtful, carefully planned instruction. Second, reading teachers-in-training must be provided with carefully supervised clinical teaching experiences. Henderson (1981) addressed this issue eloquently:

I am convinced that a year-long practicum should be required for all reading specialists. The work should be carried on under the direct supervision of an experienced clinician who can show by example both the techniques and the exercise of judgment that are needed. No formula will suffice nor will practice by a teacher alone convey what must be mastered... It is only by experiencing the effects of refined teaching that students learning to be teachers are gradually able to free them-
selves from the false belief that it is the method rather than they themselves that must control the set for learning... Such teaching skill is learned only gradually, by example and practice. (pp. 129-130)

There are no shortcuts. One learns to teach reading by teaching—and reflecting on the teaching act—under the supervision of an experienced guide. For those who believe that clinical training is a relic from reading education's past, keep in mind that today such training receives impressive theoretical support from the “reflective practitioner” work of Schon (1987) and the “assisted learning” work of Tharp and Gallimore (1988). Also note that Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985), the most successful early reading intervention program to come along in years, is a pure example of clinical teacher training.

Are we providing prospective reading and learning disabilities teachers with rigorous, balanced reading methods courses and carefully supervised clinical teaching experiences? This question must be answered by individual graduate programs. I do know that there has been a general lessening of interest and vitality in clinical training as part of U.S. reading education over the last two decades. I also know that in the three states in which I have worked (Virginia, Illinois, and North Carolina), only one graduate course in reading has been required for a master’s degree in learning disabilities (a course that was not a teaching practicum). This is an unfortunate situation, because expertise is needed to help disabled readers. Until reading and special education faculty members in colleges of education commit themselves to developing teaching expertise in their graduate students, I do not foresee significant improvements in the quality of school-based remedial reading instruction (see Kauffman, 1994).

Given adequate training in teaching reading (a crucial assumption), a Title I [U.S. fed-

erally funded education program for at-risk children; formerly Chapter I] or learning disabilities teacher can make a positive difference with students like Brett. The same general principles apply to tutoring and to small-group instruction: identifying students’ instructional levels, giving them interesting books that they can read, and pacing them efficiently in accordance with their advancing reading skill. Several of the specific tutoring activities mentioned in this case study can be adapted easily to small-group contexts (for example, guided reading, taped reading, writing, word study).

Unfortunately, many Title I and most learning disabilities teachers have difficulty assembling workable instructional groups during the day (that is, a small group of students working at a similar reading level). Disabled readers come to the resource room when their academic schedule allows, not necessarily when there is an optimal time or context for teaching them to read. Conducting an effective 40-minute reading lesson with four students from two different grades who read at three different reading levels is next to impossible, and a year’s worth of ineffective lessons adds up to minimal reading growth. Note, however, that prioritizing instructional time for students is a school scheduling problem, not a student learning problem. If reading improvement were the priority for students like Brett, then scheduling conflicts could be resolved at the beginning of the year through discussion among teachers and principals.

A current trend in special education, called inclusion, is to deemphasize “pull-out” programs, where direct reading instruction has traditionally been provided, and instead to have the resource teacher assist the student with academic assignments in the regular classroom. But, as Brett’s mother observed in the parent interview, “That’s fine, but who is going to teach Brett how to read?” It may be possi-
ble to provide appropriate instruction to remedial readers within the inclusion model, but it is difficult. At a minimum, there needs to be coordinated planning of lessons by the classroom and resource teachers, textbook materials written at several difficulty levels, and opportunities for small-group teaching within the regular classroom (Walsmley & Walp, 1990). Anyone who spent time in schools recognizes that this is a tall order. If the inclusion model leads to resource teachers abandoning direct instruction in reading to become teacher consultants or academic subject facilitators, then students like Brett will pay a huge price in terms of their reading development.

An alternative to total inclusion models, and one that I favor, is a specialist position that combines small-group pull-out teaching with some classroom consultation. If we can assume expertise on the part of the specialist, there are several advantages to this role. By continuing to provide direct reading instruction to small groups on a daily basis, the specialist teacher continually refines his or her teaching skills. By sharing expertise with classroom teachers through conferences and model teaching, the specialist can influence a larger number of students in the school. My own experience points to a third advantage to this reading teacher/consultant role. Regular classroom teachers listen most attentively to those consultants who work directly with at-risk students on a regular basis and make a difference in their learning.

Allington (1994) points out that, historically, U.S. public schools have not been successful in meeting the needs of students like Brett. He suggests that we disband the current remediation system (Title I and learning disabilities) and start over. My concern with this radical analysis is that I am not sure we have given the current system a fair chance. In my opinion, much blame should be assigned to graduate teacher-training programs. If all Title I and learning disabilities teachers were well trained in teaching reading, and if all these teachers had adequate freedom in scheduling workable instructional groups during the school day, then I see no reason why they could not make a significant difference in their students' learning. The present case study illustrates that even a child who has fallen 4 years behind in reading can make substantial progress if he or she receives effective instruction. As Mrs. Ervin stated:

In many ways I have changed after working with Brett. Certainly I have learned things from the tutoring experience, but more important I have come to believe even more strongly that it is never too late to help a child learn to read.

REFERENCES


**Reading Materials Used With Brett**