

## The Characteristics of the Approach

Most children learning to read English have already been using spoken English for some time. In this approach, we propose to provide an adequate coding which will permit transcription of spoken speech into its written forms.

No-one can be expected to learn all the signs of written English in the first lesson anymore than he can be expected to learn all the words of his language in one session. It takes time to turn spoken speech into written speech. But how long a time is needed and how best to use the time are controversial questions amongst teachers. Time is one of the most precious commodities in life. In this approach we try to make the most intense use of it that is possible, so that the child learns to read in the minimum time and is, while learning, being educated in the fullest sense.

One of the main characteristics of this approach is intensity. This is seen in the tremendous speeding up of the process of learning to read and write.

To achieve this intensity, drill and repetition are banned from the start and are replaced by game-like activities which, on the one hand provide the motivation for learning, and on the other hand give the child the opportunity to form pictures in his mind which can be recalled easily. At the same time he learns to correct his own mistakes. The children will be asked to play seriously a number of games, each game having a particular function, complimentary to that of the others. Together these games will give children the opportunity to meet all the challenges of reading and writing. The games proposed here are original and each new one appears when there is a danger that the approach may become static and require the memorisation of particular facts.

Another characteristic of the approach is its deliberate reduction of the need for memorisation and its emphasis on conscientiousness and recognition.

Reading is concerned with a set of conventional signs which follow historically developed rules. Whatever views one may hold about it, one must acknowledge it to be a highly intellectual activity. In this approach it is accepted as that and treated as such. We do not attempt to hide the fact and have no preconceived ideas about young children being incapable of the high level thinking which is necessary. The discoveries about the ability of young children to operate at that high level, which result from the use of this approach with non-readers, may one day prove more important than the techniques suggested in it.

So from the beginning we put aside pre-conceived ideas and go on at once to provide the analytic-synthetic means that transform a speaker non-reader into a reader-

speaker, aware at the same time of words, of their sounds and their transcriptions into a special code, here that of English.

Analytic-synthetic methods are similar to those used spontaneously by children whenever they learn independently of adults in essential fields of experience. This use of what may be covered by natural ways of learning, brings to the fore another characteristic of the approach. Here, children find out for themselves, with the teacher standing back and not allowing her own pre-conceived ideas to influence them.

Because of the game-like character of the method, outside motivation is no longer needed; because the teacher stands back and allows the children to find out for themselves, they become responsible for their own learning; because the children can use ways of thinking they have developed in meeting challenges, it is possible to operate at a high intellectual level, using analytic-synthetic procedures that are little connected with memory and that mobilise the full awareness of the learners. Because one constantly goes back to the dynamics of consciousness one fully uses the time consumed in the work, giving an intensity to each experience and helping the child grow in competence in using his abilities.