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SIEGFRIED ENGELMANN

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Teach Your Child To Read In 100 Easy Lessons

Siegfried Engelmann, Phyllis Haddox, Elaine Bruner

■ The Complex Skill of Reading

The sophisticated reading that adults do is analogous to playing a concerto on the piano. The goal of learning reading is to prepare children for the concerto of reading – reading complicated material silently, at a reasonably fast rate, and understanding the details of the message the author presents.

The concept of the concerto is that it happens one at a time, mastering it before they move to the next step.

Below are four points about an effective sequence for teaching reading:

1. The beginning exercises are simple and do not resemble later exercises. (Just like first piano exercise do not look much like advanced ones.)
2. The program provides teaching for each single skill that a child is expected to use when performing even the simplest reading exercises
3. The exercise change form slowly, and the changes are relatively small, so that the exercises are always relatively easy for the child.
4. At every step, the program provides for very clear and unambiguous communications with the child.

■ The DISTAR Reading Program

The program was tried out with students and changed with others until it was smooth and manageable. A potential is realized. The teacher must present the various exercises as specified and must make sure that the child is able to perform every task presented in each lesson.

Research Involving Distar

Distar has been involved in more than a dozen comparative studies. The results are uniform: children taught with Distar outperform their peers who receive instruction in other programs. The largest single study in which Distar was involved was the comparison of U.S. Office of Education Follow Through sites – the largest studies conducted.

The University of Oregon Follow Through Model, which used Distar instruction in all grades and all subjects, outperformed all the other sponsored programs in reading achievement, arithmetic achievement, language performance, and measures of self-esteem.

The Distar programs are more effective than other programs because they control more of the details that are important to successful teaching.

It also controls vocabulary, the specific task that are presented, the type of examples, the number of times the example appears, and even the teacher's wording – including specifications about how effectively correct different types of errors that may occur.

Communication Clearly with the Child

To appreciate the pitfalls that are involved in clear communication, we have to put ourselves in the place of the child who is trying to learn to read.

It is better to begin by presenting the child with words that are easy to distinguish by looking at the first letter. Example:

he go fat run with

Although the child will recognize that first letter and might quickly read, the child may later encounter a problem because he will confuse the words that start with the same letter. For example, **he** and **him**.

This is a matter of lack of clear communication. One of the powerful techniques for teaching initial reading skills is called the language experience method. This involves doing something with the children, then talking about the experience, then writing sentences on the board that tell about the experience, then pointing to the word in the sentence and showing the children how to read them. It is easier for children to remember the sentences than it is for them to identify the individual words.

Another problem occurs if we try to teach too much during the initial reading exercises. The programs taught in many schools fail to differentiate between decoding and understanding. Decoding is the simple act of identifying the words in a sentence. Decoding does not necessarily imply understanding. Being able to decode can happen if the children do not understand the sentence.

When teachers tend to show children pictures and talk about them, the children formulate certain misconceptions and then when they read, they will read by referring to a picture and that it must be understood before decoding.

Unfortunately, students who fail to learn to read in school learn either one of the above two misconceptions. Few students in high elementary, who are referred to as poor readers, read some words by saying a synonym that bears no resemblance to the word on the page. Ex. Fine and good. The reader approaches reading in the context of understanding the meaning, ending up

saying a different word. (although they have the same meaning). When this is communicated as a path to succeed, it remains temporary because this method will result in a serious setback later.

To avoid this, a special program can be used to proceed carefully, tiptoeing around the pitfalls, without taking shortcuts. This arranges the process so that the child *first* decodes and *then* discovers the meaning. This process is directed, a step at a time. As the child becomes adept at linking the steps, the directions shrink, and the child assumes responsibility.

Decoding is the central skill in initial reading. Most of the other skills are nothing more than language skills. If the child has the language skills necessary to understand the spoken sentence, the child has the skills necessary to understand the decoded sentence. The central issue is not that of teaching the child to understand, but to teach the child to decode the sentences that are to be understood.

(We should not require the child to read sentences that are beyond the child's understanding, anymore than we would require somebody to read a Spanish text if the person had no understanding of Spanish.

▪ **Making Teaching Easier**

Effective communication is the sum of many details. Unless these details are controlled, the child will receive poor communication from the teacher, and the teacher will receive poor information about the child.

A case of children labeled "disabled" students, two problems were noted. The first was that they had not been taught properly. Their confusion suggested that the malfunctions existed in the teachers' techniques, not in the children's minds. The second problem was that these students seemed to believe the labels. They hated reading or trying to read. The solution was to start teaching them all over, carefully. The children later discovered that that they could learn, their progress impressed their teacher, and that reading or learning is not sad at all. A child's self-image goes through a remarkable growth spurt when the child receives powerful demonstrations of success.

▪ **DISTAR Orthography: Why the "Funny" Print?**

Orthography is a fancy word that refers to the letters that make up the words, or how the words are spelled. One difficulty is that the word said is not spelled the way it sounds. Ex. "Said" is pronounced as "sed".

An interesting exercise for beginning readers is teachers is to try to make up simple sentences in which the orthographic code is perfectly regular – each letter would make exactly the same sound each time it appeared in the sentence. **Pam had ham** is a perfectly regular sentence.

English is not a regularly spelled language. It is an amalgam of contributions from Latin, Greek, and French. DISTAR introduces an altered orthography. This orthography does two things:

1. Presents variations of some symbols so that we can create a larger number of words that are spelled regularly (each symbol having only a single sound function).
2. Provides joint letters (joining s and h in "she" to show that they make one sound).

Some Texts and Tables from the Book

➤ Sound Chart

m	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add humps: m
s	Start at top: S	
a	Start with backward s: ʒ	Add ball: a
e	Start with horizontal line: → Note: Do not make long line over e.	Make c around it: e
t	Start with vertical line: ↓	Cross near top: t
r	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add curved line: r
d	Start with c: C	Add vertical line: d
i	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add dot: i
c	C	
o	Start like c: C	Close: O
n	Make first part of m: n	
f	Start with cane: f	Add horizontal line: f
u	Start with cane: u	Add vertical line: u
l	Make vertical line: ↓	
g	Start with c: C	Add: g
h	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add hump: h

k	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add v shape: k
v	Make v: ↘ ↗	
w	Start with v: ↘ ↗	Add v: w
th	Start with cane: L ↘	Add vertical line: ↓ Add hump and cross: th
sh	Start with s: S	Add h: sh
p	Start with vertical line: ↓	Close with backward c: p
ch	Start with c: C	Add h: ch
b	Start with vertical line: ↓	Close with backward c: b
y	Start: ↘	Add: y
er	Start with e: e	Add r: er
j	Start with vertical line: ↓	Add curve: j
wh	Start with: w	Add h: wh
x	Start: ↘	Cross: x
z	Start with horizontal line: →	Add v shape: z
qu	Start with c: C	Add vertical line: q Add u: qu

Presented as Lessons

LESSON 1

TASK 1 SOUNDS INTRODUCTION

1. (Point to **m**.) I'm going to touch under this sound and say the sound. (Touch first ball of arrow. Move quickly to second ball. Hold two seconds.) **mmmmmm**. (Release point.)
2. Your turn to say the sound when I touch under it. (Touch first ball.) Get ready. (Move quickly to second ball. Hold.) "mmmmmm."

(To correct child saying a wrong sound or not responding:) The sound is **mmmmmm**. (Repeat step 2.)

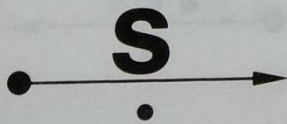
3. (Touch first ball.) Again. Get ready. (Move quickly to second ball. Hold.) "mmmmmm." (Repeat three more times.)



4. (Point to **s**.) I'm going to touch under this sound and say the sound. (Touch first ball of arrow. Move quickly to second ball. Hold.) **ssssss**. (Release point.)
5. Your turn to say the sound when I touch under it. (Touch first ball.) Get ready. (Move quickly to second ball. Hold.) "ssssss."

(To correct child saying a wrong sound or not responding:) The sound is **ssssss**. (Repeat step 5.)

6. (Touch first ball.) Again. Get ready. (Move quickly to second ball. Hold.) "ssssss." (Repeat three more times.)



TASK 2 SAY IT FAST

1. Let's play say-it-fast. My turn: **motor** (pause) **boat**. (Pause.) Say it fast. **motorboat**.
2. Your turn. Wait until I tell you to say it fast. **motor** (pause) **boat**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "motorboat." (Repeat step 2 until firm.)

(To correct child saying word slowly—for example, "motor [pause] boat":) You didn't say it fast. Here's saying it fast: **motorboat**. Say that. "motorboat." Now let's do that part again. (Repeat step 2.)

3. New word. Listen: **ice** (pause) **cream**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "icecream."
4. New word. Listen: **sis** (pause) **ter**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "sister."
5. New word. Listen: **ham** (pause) **burger**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "hamburger."
6. New word. Listen: **mmmēēē**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "me."
7. New word. Listen: **iiiff**. (Pause.) Say it fast. "if."
8. (Repeat any words child had trouble with.)

TASK 3 SAY THE SOUNDS

1. I'm going to say some words slowly, without stopping. Then you'll say them with me.
2. First I'll say **am** slowly. Listen: **aaammm**. Now I'll say **me** slowly. Listen: **mmmēēē**. Now I'll say **in** slowly. Listen: **iiinnn**. Now I'll say **she** slowly. Listen: **shshshēēē**.
3. Now it's your turn to say the words slowly with me. Take a deep breath and we'll say **aaammm**. Get ready. "aaammm."

(To correct if child stops between sounds—for example, "aaa [pause] mmm":) Don't stop. Listen. (Don't pause between sounds **a** and **m** as you say **aaammm**.) Take a deep breath and we'll say **aaammm**. Get ready. "aaammm." (Repeat until child responds with you.)

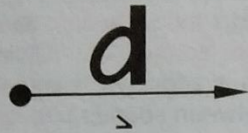
4. Now we'll say **iiinnn**. Get ready. "iiinnn." Now we'll say **ooonnn**. Get ready. "ooonnn."
5. Your turn to say words slowly by yourself. Say **aaammm**. Get ready. "aaammm." Say **iiiff**. Get ready. "iiiff." Say **mmmēēē**. Get ready. "mmmēēē." Good saying the words slowly.

LESSON 12

TASK 1 SOUNDS INTRODUCTION

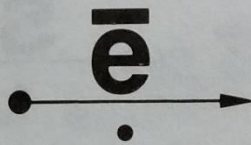
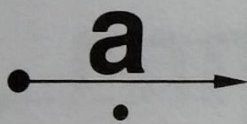
1. (Touch ball for **d**.) We always have to say this sound fast. My turn to say it fast. (Quickly move to end of arrow as you say sound.) **d**.
2. My turn to say it fast again. (Touch ball for **d**.) Say it fast. (Quickly move to end of arrow.) **d**.
3. (Touch ball.) Your turn. (Pause.) Say it fast. (Quickly move to end of arrow.) "d."

(To correct if child says "duh," "dah," or "dih"): Listen: **d**. Say it fast. (Repeat steps 1-3.)

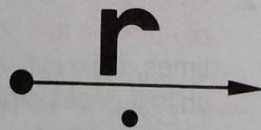
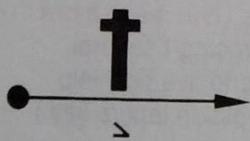


TASK 2 SOUNDS REVIEW

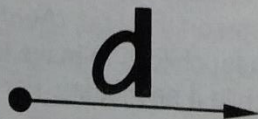
1. You're going to say all these sounds. (Touch first ball for **a**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball. Hold.) "aaa."
2. (Touch first ball for **ē**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball. Hold.) "ēēē."



3. (Touch ball for **t**.) Take a good look and get ready. (Pause.) Say it fast. (Move quickly to end of arrow.) "t." (Repeat until firm.)
4. (Touch first ball for **r**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball. Hold.) "rrr."

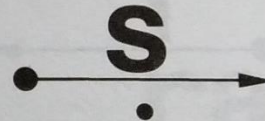


5. (Touch ball for **d**.) Take a good look and get ready. (Pause.) Say it fast. (Move quickly to end of arrow.) "d." (Repeat until firm.)



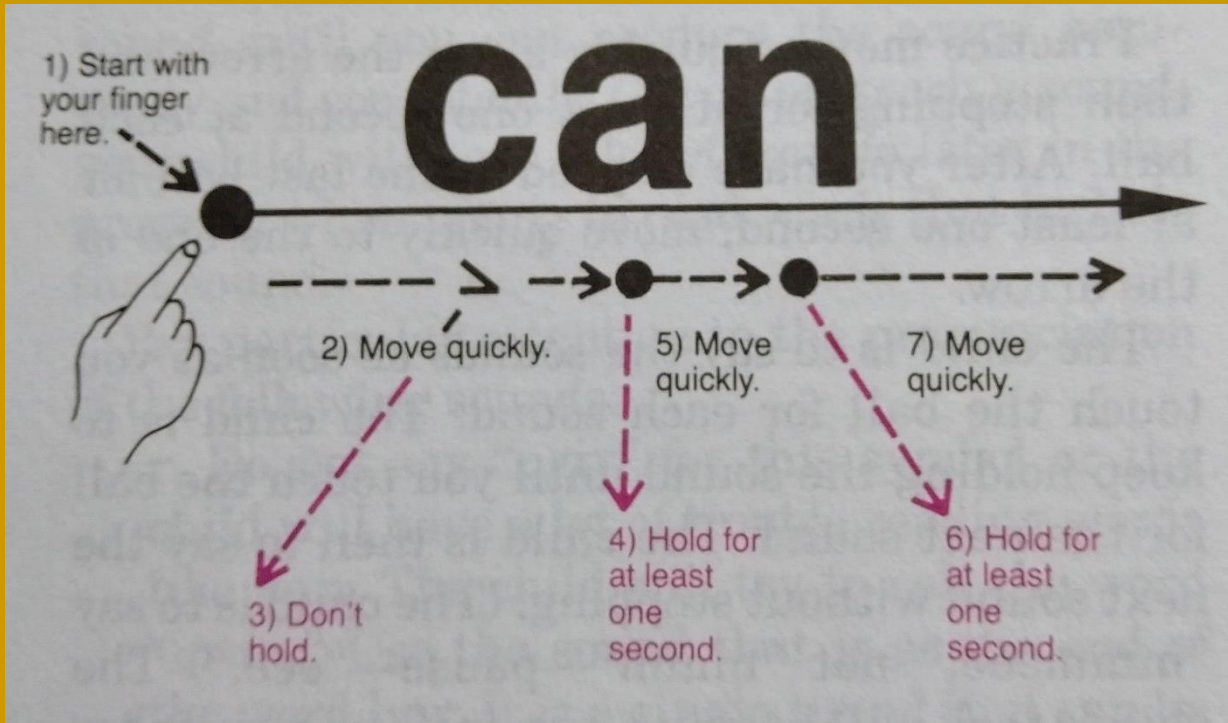
TASK 3 RHYMING

1. (Point to **r** and **s**.) You're going to rhyme. These are the sounds you're going to start with. (Touch first ball for **r**.) Say the sound. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold.) "rrr." (Touch first ball for **s**.) Say the sound. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold.) "sss."
2. (Touch first ball for **r**.) You're going to rhyme with (pause) **ēēd**. What are you going to rhyme with? "ēēd." Rhyming with (pause) **ēēd**. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold. Then slide to end of arrow as child says:) "rrrēēd." (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide.) "reed."
3. (Touch first ball for **s**.) You're going to rhyme with (pause) **ēēd**. What are you going to rhyme with? "ēēd." Rhyming with (pause) **ēēd**. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold. Then slide to end of arrow as child says:) "sssēēd." (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide.) "seed."



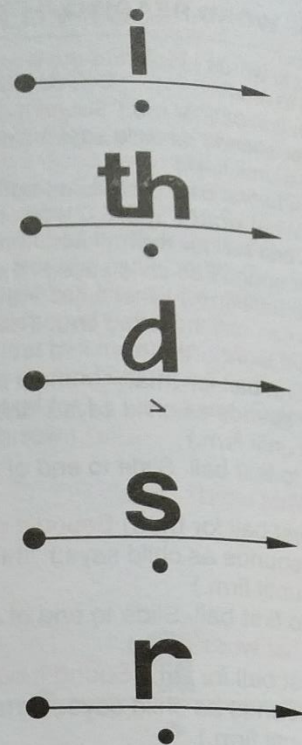
TASK 4 SAY THE SOUNDS

1. Say **rrrēēēd**. "rrrēēēd."
Say it fast. "read."
Say **sssēēēd**. "sssēēēd."
Say it fast. "seed."
Say **sssaad**. "sssaad."
Say it fast. "sad."
Say **sssēēēt**. "sssēēēt."
Say it fast. "seat."
Say **mmaaad**. "mmaaad."
Say it fast. "mad."
2. Let's do those words again. (Repeat step 1 until firm.)



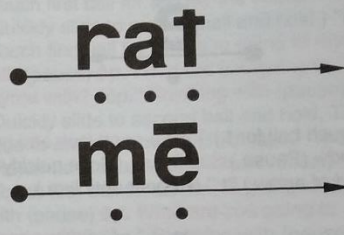
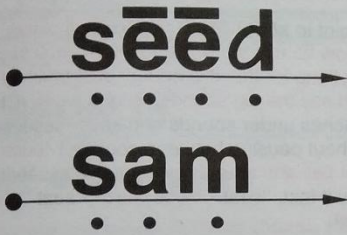
86 **TASK 4 SOUNDS**

1. Take a good look at each sound. Say it slowly if you can. Don't get fooled.
2. (Touch first ball for **i**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball.) "iii."
3. (Touch first ball for **th**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball.) "ththth."
4. (Touch ball for **d**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to end of arrow.) "d."
5. (Touch first ball for **s**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball.) "sss."
6. (Touch first ball for **r**.) Get ready. (Quickly move to second ball.) "rrr."

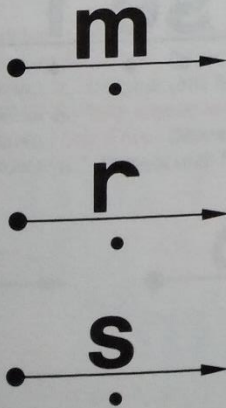


TASK 5 WORD READING

- (Touch under first ball for **seed**.) You're going to read this word. You're going to sound it out. Then you're going to say it fast. Sound it out. (Touch under **s**, **ē**, **ē**, and **d**, as child says "sssēēēd" without pausing between sounds.) (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide quickly to end of arrow.) "seed." What word? "seed."
- (Touch under first ball for **sam**.) You're going to read this word. You're going to sound it out. Then you're going to say it fast. Sound it out. (Touch under **s**, **a**, and **m**, as child says "sssaaamm" without pausing between sounds.) (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide quickly to end of arrow.) "sam." What word? "sam."
- (Touch under first ball for **rat**.) You're going to read this word. You're going to sound it out. Then you're going to say it fast. Sound it out. (Touch under **r**, **a**, and **t** as child says "rrraaat" without pausing between sounds.) (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide quickly to end of arrow.) "rat." What word? "rat."
- (Touch under first ball for **mē**.) You're going to read this word. You're going to sound it out. Then you're going to say it fast. Sound it out. (Touch under **m** and **ē** as child says "mmmēēē" without pausing between sounds.) (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide quickly to end of arrow.) "me." What word? "me."

**TASK 6 RHYMING**

- (Point to **m**, **r**, and **s**.) You're going to rhyme. These are the sounds you're going to start with. (Touch first ball for **m**.) Say the sound. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold.) "mmm." (Touch first ball for **r**.) Say the sound. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold.) "rrr." (Touch first ball for **s**.) Say the sound. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold.) "sss."
- (Touch first ball for **m**.) You're going to rhyme with (pause) **at**. What are you going to rhyme with? "at." Rhyming with (pause) **at**. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold. Then slide to end of arrow as child says:) "mmmat." (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide.) "mat."
- (Touch first ball for **r**.) You're going to rhyme with (pause) **at**. What are you going to rhyme with? "at." Rhyming with (pause) **at**. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold. Then slide to end of arrow as child says:) "rrrat." (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide.) "rat."
- (Touch first ball for **s**.) You're going to rhyme with (pause) **at**. What are you going to rhyme with? "at." Rhyming with (pause) **at**. (Quickly slide to second ball and hold. Then slide to end of arrow as child says:) "sssat." (Return to first ball.) Say it fast. (Slide.) "sat."



sēē . mē . rē_ad.

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TASK 10 PICTURE COMPREHENSION

1. You just read (pause) **see me read**. Now you're going to see a picture. Somebody in the picture is saying (pause) **see me read**. What will somebody be doing in the picture?
2. Look at the picture.
3. Who is saying (pause) **see me read**?
4. What is he reading?
5. Can dogs really read? No, of course not. But you can read.
6. Why do you think the dog is wearing those glasses?

TASK 11 SOUNDS WRITING

1. (Write **i** at beginning of first line. Point to **i**.) What sound? "iii."
2. First trace the **iii** that I made. Then make more of them on this line. (After tracing **i** several times, child is to make three to five **i**'s. Help child if necessary. For each acceptable letter say:) Good writing **iii**.
3. Here's the next sound you're going to write. (Write **e** at beginning of second line. Point to **e**.) What sound? "ēēē."
4. First trace the **ēēē** that I made. Then make more of them on this line. (After tracing **e** several times, child is to make three to five **e**'s. Help child if necessary. For acceptable letters say:) Good writing **ēēē**.

The Frog That Made Big Sounds—Part 2

A little frog with green spots made big sounds.

The other frogs in the lake did not like those sounds.

On a spring day a big fog came over the lake.^(a)

The frogs said, “We can not see in this fog, but we can sit on the shore and sing.” The fog was so bad

that the sound of the frogs was not loud.^(b) Then a

big frog said, “I hear a ship. That ship can not see

where it is going. It will run up on the shore if we do

not stop it.” Another frog said, “We will make big

sounds so the ship will hear us.”

So these frogs made the biggest sounds they had

ever made. “Ruck, ding, ding, ruck.” But the fog ate

up the sounds.^(c)

Then a big frog said to the little frog with green spots, “Can you make sounds that a ship can hear?”

The little frog shouted, “Blap, blap.” These sounds were so loud that the other frogs jumped into the lake.^(d)

They said, “That sound is like a kick in the ears.”^(e)

But the ship did not run into the shore. A big frog

said, “They can hear that loud sound.”^(f)

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