

# The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." HOSEA 4:6

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.  
"Without vision, the people perish."

## Miscue Analysis: Training Normal Children to Read Like Defective Children

Back in the early 1900s, when the professors of education were working overtime to find "scientific" justification for changing reading instruction in American schools from alphabetic phonics to the look-say, sight, or whole-word method, many studies were done to see what kind of effect the new method would have on children's reading ability.

One study done by Myrtle Sholty, published in the February 1912 issue of the *Elementary School Teacher*, revealed that the two methods of teaching reading produced two different kinds of readers: objective and subjective. The alphabetic-phonics method produced fluent, accurate, objective readers while the sight method produced impaired subjective readers who guessed at words, omitted words, inserted words, substituted words, and mutilated words. The sight readers' lack of phonetic knowledge put them at a distinct disadvantage. They were unable to accurately decode the words since they looked at them as whole configurations, like Chinese ideographs, with no connections to the sounds of the language.

Reading researcher Geraldine Rodgers,

in an unpublished manuscript on the history of reading instruction (p. 728), states that Sholty's experiment merely confirmed what had been discovered in 1903 by German psychologist Oskar Messmer, who had identified the two types of readers. Rodgers writes:

"When William Scott Gray [future editor of 'Dick and Jane'] published his summary of American reading research in 1925, which has been the foundation for all 'histories' of 'reading research' ever since, he 'naturally' omitted Messmer's German work, and 'accidentally' misreported Sholty's research in his brief summary so that it was no longer recognizable concerning either its nature or its conclusions.

"Sholty was reporting on her tests with three little girls half-way through second grade, so the tests must have been done before 1912, probably after February, 1911. Of the three second-grade girls, two were reading words in parts, for sound, but one was reading only whole words for meaning. However, all three little girls at the University of Chicago experimental school were 'helped' by context guessing, which was

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