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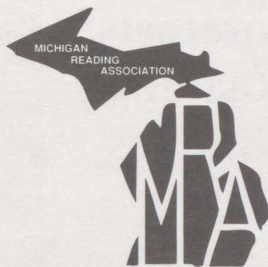
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# Lots of Children, But None to Spare

by Joyce E. Stoner

**"Lots of Children. . ."** In our Michigan school districts we have thousands of children in regular education, special education, bilingual and compensatory education programs. Although many times these students are sorted out and instructed differently, research is telling us that these students' instructional needs are more nearly the same than they are different. But, because current teaching methodology is far behind the research indicators, we want to look at how we teach kids, because we have **"none to spare"**.

Things are changing in the arena of education, perhaps much more slowly than many of us would like to see happen. During the past four years the Curriculum Review Committee has invested much time and energy in providing reading training for educators throughout Michigan.

Many local educators, after attending these training sessions, returned to their home district and began providing reading inservice to their staff members. As this took place, instructors in compensatory education and special education realized that they, too, desired to be kept abreast of the current information in reading instruction. As they attended the reading inservice, many felt a need for more in-depth staff development to provide for their specific needs.

The Michigan Department of

Education compensatory education unit has worked closely with Elaine Weber, Michigan Department of Education Reading Specialist, and has sponsored working sessions at Higgins Lake for the past two summers. From these industrious groups of people have come the **Compensatory Education Module**, along with flipcharts explaining fluency, explicit instruction, comprehension monitoring and positive attitudes about reading.

The Michigan Department of Education Special Education supervisors have been most supportive of the original training workshops, but they were also very much aware of their students' own particular needs. A committee comprised of special educators from many areas of the state, with some Curriculum Review Committee members, met often during 1987-88 to discuss their concerns. One result of this committee's efforts is a reading flipchart for special educators.

During this past year, four two-day Conferences for Special Populations were held in various locations (Lansing, Dearborn, Grayling, Grand Rapids). Sessions were presented for educators of adult, bilingual, compensatory, migratory, special and vocational programs. Basic reading knowledge module information, along with data more specific to particular program needs were available as choices during the conferences.

One of the most exciting aspects of these sessions was to see some of the practioners who helped write the modules for special populations present to the conferences. This added great credibility to the knowledge and strategies put forth.

The participants responded that these sessions have been extremely helpful in introducing information to many of them and also helpful for reinforcing ideas to those who feel a need to change the way they instruct reading.

How will all of this impact Michigan students? Will a change in reading instruction mean fewer dropouts? That more students will reach higher levels of literacy? That more students will obtain jobs? That more will develop a love for reading?

That is our vision - to make certain that fewer of these students are lost, for we know there are **"none to spare"**.

**Joyce E. Stoner** is from the Port Huron Area School District, Port Huron, Michigan.

## Forum and Forecasts: Secondary Reading Enters the Nineties

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content literacy -- leadership training and related issues.

A new decade and a dramatically changing youth population with increasing numbers "at risk" for school failure and dropping out, coupled with the rising literacy demands of society, will demand new decisions by secondary educators. Secondary classrooms will witness a shift from the traditional information-disseminating, text-centered model of teaching to an interactive learner-centered one, emphasizing information gathering and processing, and critical and creative reasoning. By providing opportunities for dialogue among educators, we will enable them to embrace these changes. On-going forums will promote our mutual vision of teachers as leaders, models, and coaches of learning, and our vision of schools as places where thought is taught, and literacy nurtured.

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