SUMMARIES
Nick CROWTHER and Gilbert DUCANCEL

TOWARDS MASTERING WRITTEN LANGUAGE

- Towards mastering written language
Mireille BRIGAUDIOT, IUFM de Versailles-INRP PROG, and Roland GOIGOUX, IUFM d’Auvergne-CNRS

- Adjusting teaching to learning: research carried out by the ‘INRP PROG’

* Towards a progressive building up of written language skills
Mireille BRIGAUDIOT, IUFM de Versailles-INRP PROG

The INRP piece of research entitled ‘The progressive building up of written language skills from the 1st to 2nd cycles’ (otherwise known as ‘PROG’), which was carried out over a period of three years, aimed for ALL pupils to pass the first stages in the learning of the written language (written comprehension, written work and knowledge of the written language system). It was completed in 1998 and led to the publication of two works intended for primary school teachers. In this article, the research is described from a methodological point of view (longitudinal action research) and some of the results are presented: ‘tools’ enabling the teacher to respect each pupil as well as encourage him/her in his/her approach to learning, principles of didactic devices which allow for real progressiveness in the initial mastering of skills which are both so natural (language skills) and so abstract (alphabetical written work). To conclude, we open up a discussion on the teaching/learning of the written language.

* Attempting to write from as early as nursery school: a carefully thought out risk which can lead to learning
Brigitte CALLEJA, Chantal CLOIX and Jacques RILLIARD, IUFM de Bourgogne-INRP PROG

Producing written work at the start of the second cycle (5 year olds) causes much apprehension in teachers due to the possibility of failure to which the pupils are exposed. This paper illustrates an appraisal of the possible risks which was made by two female teachers by showing how they use the performances of two children with learning difficulties as a basis for getting them to make progress. The accounts of the peculiar paths taken by these two children reveal, at different junctures, events which are comparable from the point of view of the progressiveness of the learning. These events show that the pupils become aware of certain aspects of written language and that they also take the tension out of the risks of making mistakes. For the teacher, these are key moments in the learning process which he takes into account when teaching.
* Reading : a modality of pupils' understanding of written language. Problematization set out by the INRP PROG research team; examples taken from a class of 6 year olds
Gilbert DUCANCEL and Denyse VERECQUE, IUFM d'Amiens-INRP PROG

This article aims first of all to present the problematization set out by the INRP PROG research team- i.e. The progressive building-up of written language skills: 1st and 2nd cycles; 3-8 years old- in the field of learning how to understand written language. Reading is but one of the modalities of that language activity. The article shows its specificity. At the same time, it puts forward the theory that learning to read is made easier if it is linked with activities concerning the understanding of written language when it is read aloud by the teacher.

Examples of such activities which were carried out in a class of 6 year olds are presented. A trial assessment of comprehension, via the retelling of stories which have been read aloud by the teacher, is developed and a critical analysis is carried out. Next, we describe the didactic device which was put in place within the class, the aim of which was to facilitate learning how to understand written work when pupils read it alone and in silence.

We conclude our article by underlining the paradoxical nature of using as an object of didactic work a language activity which cannot be taught and which is interior and thus inaccessible.

* And what if the passage into the culture of written language were a natural process?
Marie-Alix DEFRANCE, IUFM de Versailles-INRP PROG

The Ministry of Education directives state that the mission of primary schools is to guide the pupils towards the culture of written language and the day-to-day practices of teachers aim for this. The paper attempts to show how the 'PROG' research differs from these practices in that field: the aim of this research is not strictly the culture in written language but it puts forward the hypothesis that attaining this culture comes about quite naturally when children do language and, to a greater extent, cognitive activities concerning the written language over a very long period of time (over the course of the three years which make up the cycle). The objective which the 'PROG' research set for itself was for the children to build up for themselves skills and representations in the four main fields which are: the use of language in all its dimensions, understanding the written language, producing written work, and manipulating the written language so as to discover how it functions. The paper shows traces of this growing culture, and then shows, via research practices in all four fields, how each child creates for himself the roots of his own culture in the written language by sharing his representations with his friends, family and teachers.

- Constructing and evaluating tools for primary school teachers

* Understanding texts : how to help 7 year olds construct the coherence in the overall meaning of a text?
Denis LEGROS, IUFM de Créteil CoDiTexte-CNRS Université Paris 8, Hervé MERVANT, IUFM de Créteil CoDiTexte, Guy DENHIERE, Université de
A child's automatizing of the processes of identifying and of recognizing words is an essential stage in learning how to read at the end of the 2d cycle (7 year olds). However, as early as this time, it would seem important to contribute to putting in place or reinforcing the child's ability to construct the coherence in local and overall meanings of a text. This work comes within the framework of the 'Diagnos-Remédiation' project (concerning diagnoses and remedies) and aims to devise and validate series of learning and remedial sessions which have been adapted to dysfunctions observed during tests in the 'Diagnos-Reading' series. The aim of our research is to assess the effect, on 7 year olds, of series of sessions designed to help pupils build up the coherence in the overall meaning of what is said in a text.

* A cognitive training session for 5 year olds : its transferring effects when these pupils are learning to read, from 6 to 8 years old

Sylvie CEBE, Psychologie du développement, Université de Provence

Two distinct courses of action can be taken when preparing the pupils for the fundamental learning of written language: the first, didactic (given priority in this review), which concerns knowledge and savoir-faire relating to the language, and the second, cognitive, which centres upon the acquisition of general cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Our work comes within the framework of the latter. We believe that it is necessary to modify the learning conditions in which the pupils are placed (and especially pupils from working-class backgrounds) in order to improve the way they function from an intellectual point of view and thus make learning to read easier. That is what we attempt to do by putting forward a cognitive training session for 5 year olds. It aims at getting the pupils to acquire and put into practice logical frameworks of thought since their effective learning of the specific contents of school teaching depends upon these frameworks. After describing the psychological and pedagogical principles of our training session as well as the way in which we put them into practice, we will present the transferring effects of this session upon the same pupils when learning to read between the age of 6 and 8.

- Analysing the discrepancy between teaching and learning

* The role of the context when first learning to write at nursery school

Marie-Thérèse ZERBATO-POUDOU, IUFM de Toulouse-CeRF

The article poses the problem of the relationship between the pupil and knowledge which nursery school helps to build up when children first learn to write. We put forward the hypothesis that the nature of the graphic tasks which are used for grapho-motor skills training as well as the modalities of the interactions between the teacher and the pupil, as regards the object of knowledge as well as the pupils' activity, contribute to constructing a specific context which can affect the meaning the pupils attach to the school task and, moreover, to the object of knowledge in question, that is to say the written language.
**Reading, writing and professional acts**  
Gérard SENSEVY, IUFM de Bretagne

This article was written on the basis of the partial analysis of a lesson which was given to a class of 7 year olds by a trainee teacher (PE2). The objective of the lesson consisted in preparing a writing/re-writing card which was centred around ‘textual coherency’.

Using aspects of didactics in mathematics and thanks to an analysis of the lesson which was carried out by a group of five teacher trainers, I have tried to determine some of the conditions which must inevitably underlie the professional acts envisaged in this instance, and which consist in organising the studying of work produced by pupils with a view to devising a grid of ‘criteria’ which was mentioned earlier. I show, in particular, that these professional acts presuppose that both the knowledge which the pupils must acquire has been studied from a thoroughly didactic viewpoint and that the necessities brought out due to the very nature of the teacher-pupil relationship are taken into account.

**Embarking upon the written language and special needs teaching**  
Christiane MORIN, Université de Nantes-CREN

**Special needs help for children in difficulty at school : problems and perspectives**  
Philippe GUIMARD, Université de Nantes

**Learning to read : from practice to theory**  
Roland GOIGOUX, IUFM d'Auvergne-CNRS

The injunctions of the National Observatory of Reading, whose aim is to ban the practice of ‘asking questions about the context’ in order to help to identify words when children first start to learn how to read, are strongly contested in this paper on the basis of results obtained from three recent studies. Far from being a characteristic of the weakest readers, ‘dependency upon the context’ appears to be a developing constant amongst all pupils, including those who are going to become the best readers.

- Studying learning processes

**Transcribing complex graphonemes in French. The example of /o/**  
Sébastien PACTON, Université de Dijon-LEAD CNRS, Michel FAYOL, Université de Clermont Ferrand-LAPSCO CNRS

In French, a same phoneme can be transcribed by several graphemes (o, au, eau for /o/). The probability of finding a given grapheme varies according to the position (start-middle-end) of the phoneme in the word as well as to the other letters on either side of it (consonant preceeding or following the phoneme /o/). The fact that eau never appears at the start of a word can be explained by the way of a rule. On the other hand, the regularities relative to the distribution of o and au according to the letters on either side of them are only probabilistic, which renders any rule -and exercise- based teaching impossible. The children must assimilate these regularities through implicit learning.
The objective of this present piece of research was to study, by means of a task requiring pairs of non-words (opécile-eaupécile) to be identified, whether when and by using what indications primary school children become aware of the distribution of graphemes (o, au, eau) for which no phonological opposition exists. As early as the end of 1st year infant school, indications relative to the distribution of graphemes according to their position in the word are picked out and used in class (eau never found at the start of a word). In contrast, the pupils' judgements are only influenced by the relative frequency of the graphemes o and au according to the consonants which precede or follow the phoneme /o/ from 4th year infant school onwards.

* The difficulties of reading aloud: a socio-constructivistic perspective
Jacques FIJALKOW, Laurence PASA, Serge RAGANO, Université de Toulouse
Le Mirail- EURED CREFI

Analysing the difficulties encountered by children when reading aloud has been the object of many pieces of research. In this paper, we first of all reiterate the perspectives which were used during these studies: organistic, school psychology, psychoanalytical, psycholinguistic. We then present what could be a socio-constructivistic perspective as well as six concerns which the adoption of such a perspective enabled us to deal with. We then put forward a grid to be used for analysis, a list of types of children's concepts of reading, three examples of an analysis of answers which highlight the hypothetical reading processes of children, and, finally, two current pieces of research still being carried out.

* When reading is reading
Nicole MENAGER, LIRL-UPRES Anthropologie clinique, Université de Rennes 2

This piece of research comes within the framework of the Interdisciplinary Language Research Laboratory at the University of Rennes 2 and was the object of a research programme at the University of Namur in Belgium. It covers the fundamental aspects of learning of the mother tongue: what is at stake is the testing of the bases of the learning of reading and writing against the research carried out in clinic linguistics. Using these pieces of research as well as the work carried out concerning the learner's strategies, the article aims to analyse the shortfalls of the learning procedure suggested in the textbooks and to put forward aspects of remedies which take into account both the formal abilities of the learner and the skills needed to know how to read and write, and this especially within the framework of the links between language and writing.

* So that decoding does not remain a dead letter
Laurent DANON-BOILEAU, Université Paris 5-LEAPLE CNRS