

# The Blumenfeld Education Letter

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

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EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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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."

## Can Dyslexia Be Artificially Induced in School? Yes, Says Researcher Edward Miller

Ever since *The New Illiterates* was published back in 1973 we have known that the chief, and perhaps only, cause of dyslexia among school children has been and still is the look-say, whole-word, or sight method of teaching reading. In that book I revealed the fact that the sight method was invented back in the 1830s by the Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, the director of the American Asylum at Hartford for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb. He had been using a sight, or whole-word method in teaching the deaf to read, by juxtaposing a word, such as *cat*, with the picture of a cat. And because the deaf were able to identify many simple words in this way, Gallaudet thought that the method could be adapted for use by normal children.

Gallaudet, who believed that education was a science and could be improved by scientific experimentation, gave a detailed description of his new method in the *American Annals of Education* of August 1830. It consisted of teaching the child to recognize a total of 50 sight words written on cards "without any reference to the individual letters which composed the word." After the child had memorized the words on the basis of their configurations alone, the letters of

each word were taught. The final step was to teach the letters in alphabetical order.

In 1836 Gallaudet published *The Mother's Primer* based on his look-say methodology. Its first line was: "Frank had a dog; his name was Spot." In 1837 the primer was adopted by the Boston Primary School Committee. Horace Mann was then Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, and he favored the method. The educational reformers of the time were against anything that smacked of old orthodox practices, and they considered intensive, systematic phonics to be one of them. The *American Annals of Education*, representing the progressive views of the time, provided a ready platform for the critics of the alphabetic-phonics method. One could find such opinions as the following in its pages:

He [the child] should read his lessons as if the words were Chinese symbols, without paying any attention to the individual letters, but with special regard to the meaning.... This method needs neither recommendation nor defense, with those who have tried it: and were it adopted, we should soon get rid of the stupid and uninteresting mode now prevalent. (Oct. 1832, p. 479)

If it is true, that so long as we cling with intense

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