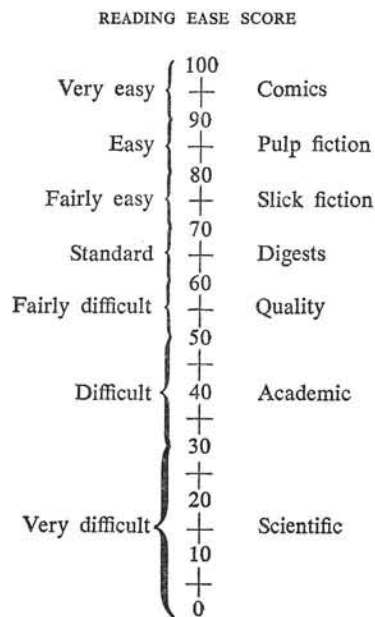


Points of View

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Your discussion by letter with the Editor was most interesting. In fact I had been thinking, just as you pointed out in your first letter, that the *Journal of Cooperative Extension* needed to increase its readability. To rate it objectively, I did a readability study using the Flesch formula. (You may be familiar with this method of counting words per sentence and syllables per 100 words to determine just how difficult it is to read some specific material.)

Flesch suggests 30 to 50 as the range of reading ease scores we can expect in academic magazines. Only scientific ones would usually be harder to read. A graph¹ shows this better than words.



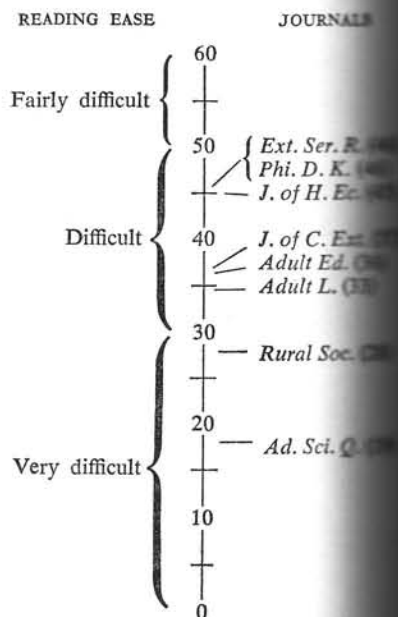
Articles in the issues of the *Journal* that I scored came out this way:

¹ From *The Art of Readable Writing*. © 1949 by Rudolf Flesch. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publ.

ISSUE	READING EASE SCORE
Summer, 1964	35
Spring, 1966	40
Summer, 1966	30
Fall, 1966	41

This gives an average of nearly 37 for the four. The four scores all lie within the range expected for an academic magazine.

After scoring these issues of the *Journal*, I wondered how it would compare with some of the other professional journals. So I scored several articles in each of six other professional journals: *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Adult Education*, *Adult Leadership*, *Journal of Home Economics*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and *Rural Sociology*. I also did the *Extension Service Review*. The *Journal of Cooperative Extension* stands up pretty well, I think. It wasn't the most difficult to read, nor was it the easiest. These were the scores:



Of course, these scores measure only ease of reading, as it is determined by length of words and sentences. Motivation of the reader and his interest in the subject will also help him decide whether to read an article. The ease of reading score doesn't tell us very much about how interesting an article is. Neither does it give us any clue as to the substance or significance of the content. An ease of reading score just indicates how easy or hard to read we may find it.

I thought you might like to see where the *Journal* stands in its readability just now. I was pleased to find that the Fall, 1966 issue—the latest one—scores highest on reading ease. By the way, doing this readability study was my suggestion. I asked the Editor (you know him, G. L. Carter), if he thought it might be worth the effort to do an analysis like this. Since I work with him as a research assistant he let me do the study! The result is that all of us who work on the *Journal* are more conscious of readability. These scores shouldn't cause the *Journal of Cooperative Extension* staff to sit back and relax. This readability business needs constant attention.

One other thought—this "Points of View" feature was started to give readers a chance to talk back. This can help us better understand the audience we edit for, and it can get ideas aired that are worth having.

In case a curious reader should decide to check my letter on its reading ease, I did a score on it. It's 63.

MARY BOPPELL

Madison, Wisconsin

Dear G. L.:

The dialogue presented in the Fall 1966 *Journal* prompts me to add my voice. I too have experienced the frustrations of the busy agent syndrome. I was too busy to read the latest *Journal* on my desk and besides, it looked too technical. The jargon was unfamiliar.

It was not until I returned to graduate school (where I am presently) that I realized we Extension agents have a responsibility to ourselves and to the profession to be aware, not only of what's going on in our county, but

what's happening in the state, the nation, the world—even outer space. We need to know the latest developments and research results in our specialty. Perhaps that's asking the impossible, but when more people attempt the impossible we'll begin to experience the progress we now only talk about.

In the past year, how many readers have read a novel, attended a lecture, a concert, an art exhibit? How much time has been spent reading professional literature? When county Extension agents accept the need for professional improvement, the *Journal* will be read and understood by all. The responsibility to improve professionally rests with the individual agent, and reading the *Journal* is certainly the best way to begin. Ten per cent of an agent's time is not too much to spend on professional improvement. The technical language problem takes care of itself as the agent expands his horizons. We all learned how to read—let's not let these skills get rusty.

Thanks, G. L., for letting me enter the discussion. The *Journal* has made a great contribution to the Extension profession.

ROLAND D. MANTHE

Madison, Wisconsin

Emphasis on Resource Development

"Adapting to Resource Development," in the Fall issue of *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, shows a real understanding of the problems facing Cooperative Extension Service in the field of resource development. We definitely have an increased emphasis in this field from the Washington level, but the responses from county and state administrative levels are not always in agreement with this new emphasis. As a resource development specialist I do believe, as the authors state, that for the most part there is an increasing public acceptance of economic and environmental planning as a legitimate endeavor for Extension.

There is probably no decision that Cooperative Extension will make at this time that will have any more bearing on its future than the role that it is to play in resource development. Gary W. King and Emory J. Brown have written

an excellent article on the implications that this program will have on Extension and the alternatives that Extension has to face in the future.

JACK T. SLOAN

College Station, Texas

Specialization and Education

We in extension have a vital role in assessing the educational needs of our present and future society, and in stimulating and conducting adequate educational programs. The question is—What kind of education should we have? The conventional education of a few years ago is no longer adequate.

Within our universities today, science courses are being offered that are almost completely technical. The only acceptable programs seem to be specialized ones, which exclude all but a few disciplines. A student may even be asked to decide on his speciality at the end of his first college year.

Why specialize so early? Why not let students first explore a range of interests? The standard reply, of course, is that there is too much new information to be taught in all technical fields.

As we look around us, we can see the effects of specialization. Some are excellent, but far too many demonstrate the weakness of this approach. Too often, specialists make little attempt to keep abreast of developments in adjacent fields or even in different aspects of their own subjects. One result is a frequent and widespread lack of understanding between research, administration, teaching, extension, and public.

A prominent scientist recently told me that he could not see why extension should be affiliated with the Agricultural Institute of Canada, since extension workers are not scientists and are doing, in his view, neither research nor teaching. He implied that extension should go its own way, independent of others.

Even within extension, many of us still have a strong bias towards the idea that students from cities or from disciplines outside agriculture have little to contribute to agricultural research or education. These surviving notions of exclusiveness work against extension and against agriculture.

Fortunately, there is also a trend to liberalize agricultural education by replacing some technical subjects with basic science, and offering more courses in the social sciences.

This is encouraging, but those in favor of "education" are still outnumbered by those who seem more concerned with "training" students in the latest facts and methods. The situation has been noticed by some employers. One told me, "You educate the student—we will train him."

If we do not develop thinking men and women who can apply imagination, insight, and the power of analysis—if instead, we concentrate on preparing students only for specific jobs—then our future is indeed in peril. Then we educators a responsibility also to prepare people for jobs that do not now exist?

How do these matters concern extension? We, especially, require a well-balanced education. We are called upon increasingly to appraise our society from many angles—technical, economic, social, cultural. This is a cry from merely dispensing information or developing local skills.

New and larger roles for extension workers are inevitable. We must work with persons from many specialized fields. Success depends on establishing common objectives, mutual understanding, a cooperative approach. We can give guidance concerning the education required to meet such goals.

Furthermore, the basic aim of education for all the people should be the same as that for the scientist or the extension worker—to develop a person who can and will think effectively.

As professional educators, we have a responsibility to see that general education develops the talents of people and provides them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are not soon outdated.

I repeat—we in extension are in a unique position to make a real contribution to the shaping of education.

L. C. PAAN

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

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