

**LEWIS C. RICHARDSON'S
ENGLISH INSTITUTE
1943-1949**

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INTRODUCTION

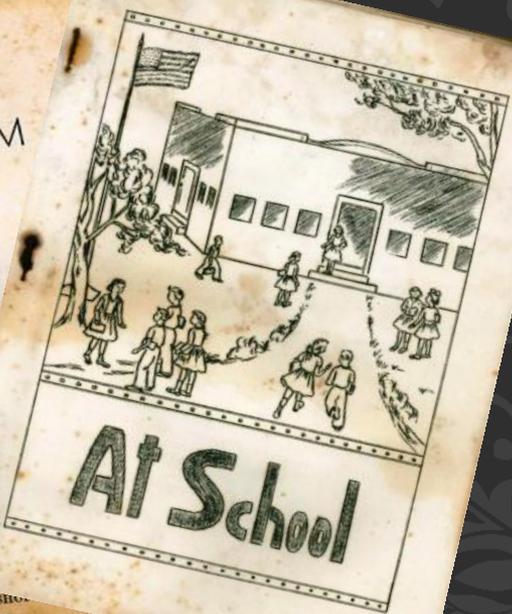
In 1943, Lewis C. Richardson of the English Department of the College of Humanities at UPR in Rio Piedras was asked to devise an English Institute for the public schools of Puerto Rico.



Richardson (1902-1967)

- ❖ Purpose: to study problems related to English teaching in Puerto Rico and to produce courses and books adapted to the Puerto Rican reality.
- ❖ Served as an important source of teacher training on the island at the time.

ON THE FARM



At School

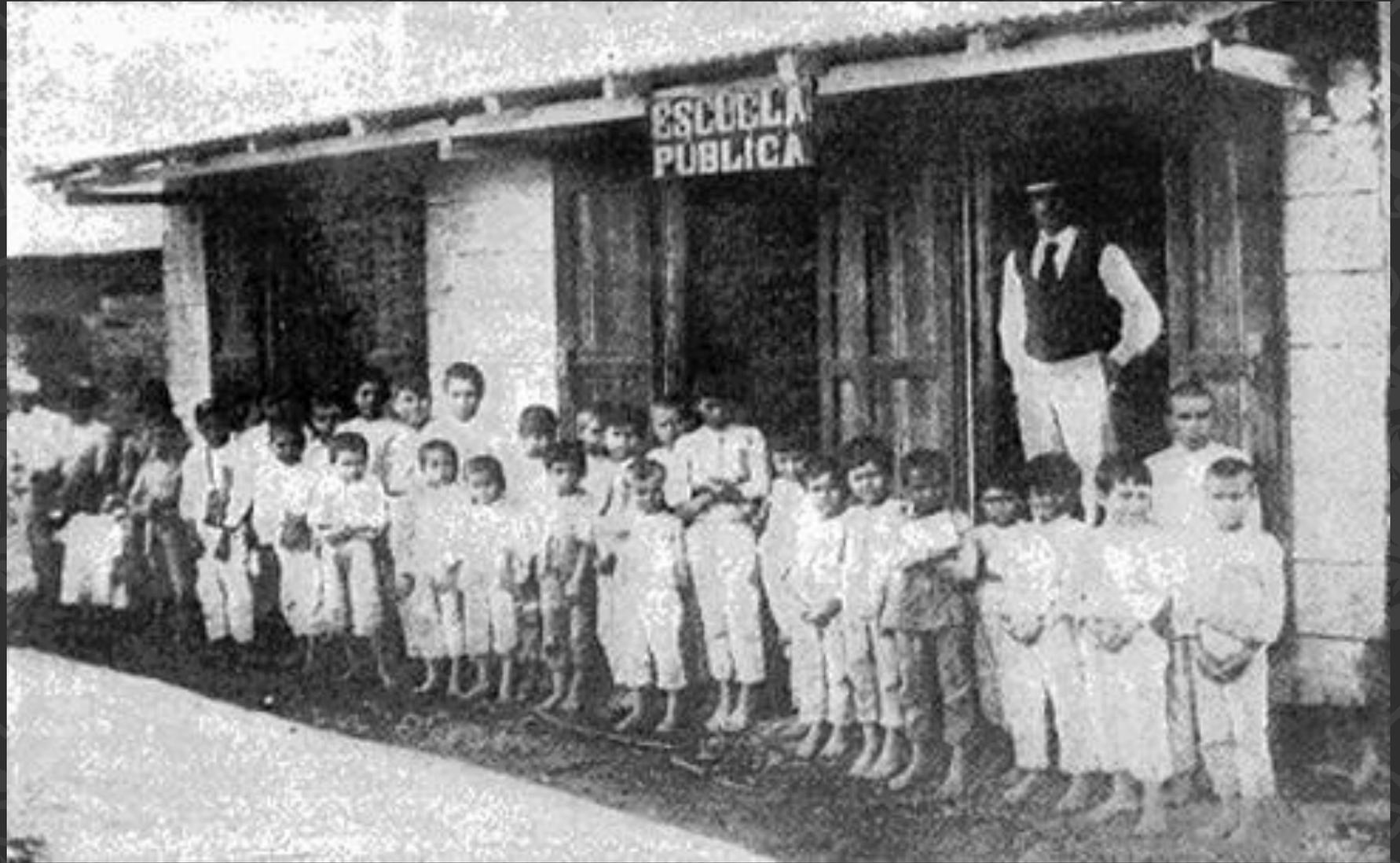
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THE ENGLISH WORKSHOP
University of Puerto Rico
Summer, 1945



- Decaying materials discovered in the Richardson Seminar Room at UPR-RP.
- Investigation into English Institute launched to restore it to its rightful place in the history of PR language education policy and planning.

BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN PUERTO RICO

- **Just prior to the US takeover of PR in 1898, the island had been granted local autonomy by the Spanish throne.**
- **A limited school system existed, primarily administered by the Catholic Church.**
- **There were few schools outside of the towns.**





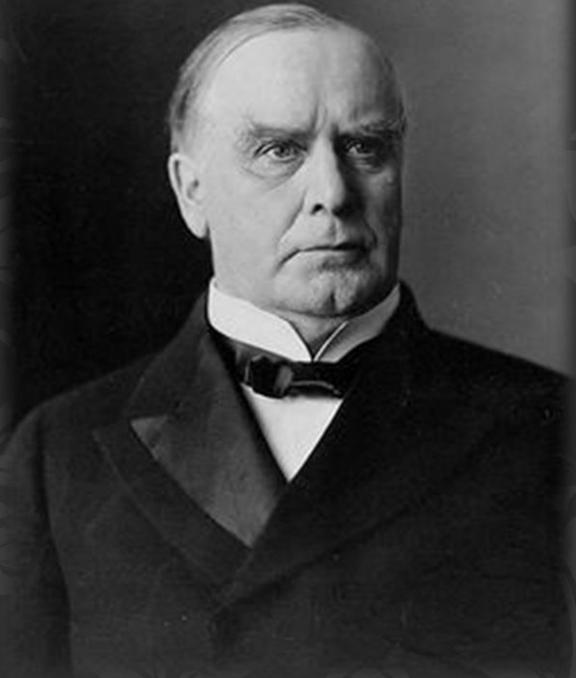
A MOSLEM IN
THE PAST



- The Spanish decree of 1880 had established a primary education system under the governor's supervision.
- Attendance was compulsory for children ages 6-9, but the scarcity of schools (especially in rural zones) made this impossible.
- Only 16.7% of school-aged children were in school, and the illiteracy rate was 80% (Osuna, 1949).



One-room schoolhouse in Trujillo Bajo



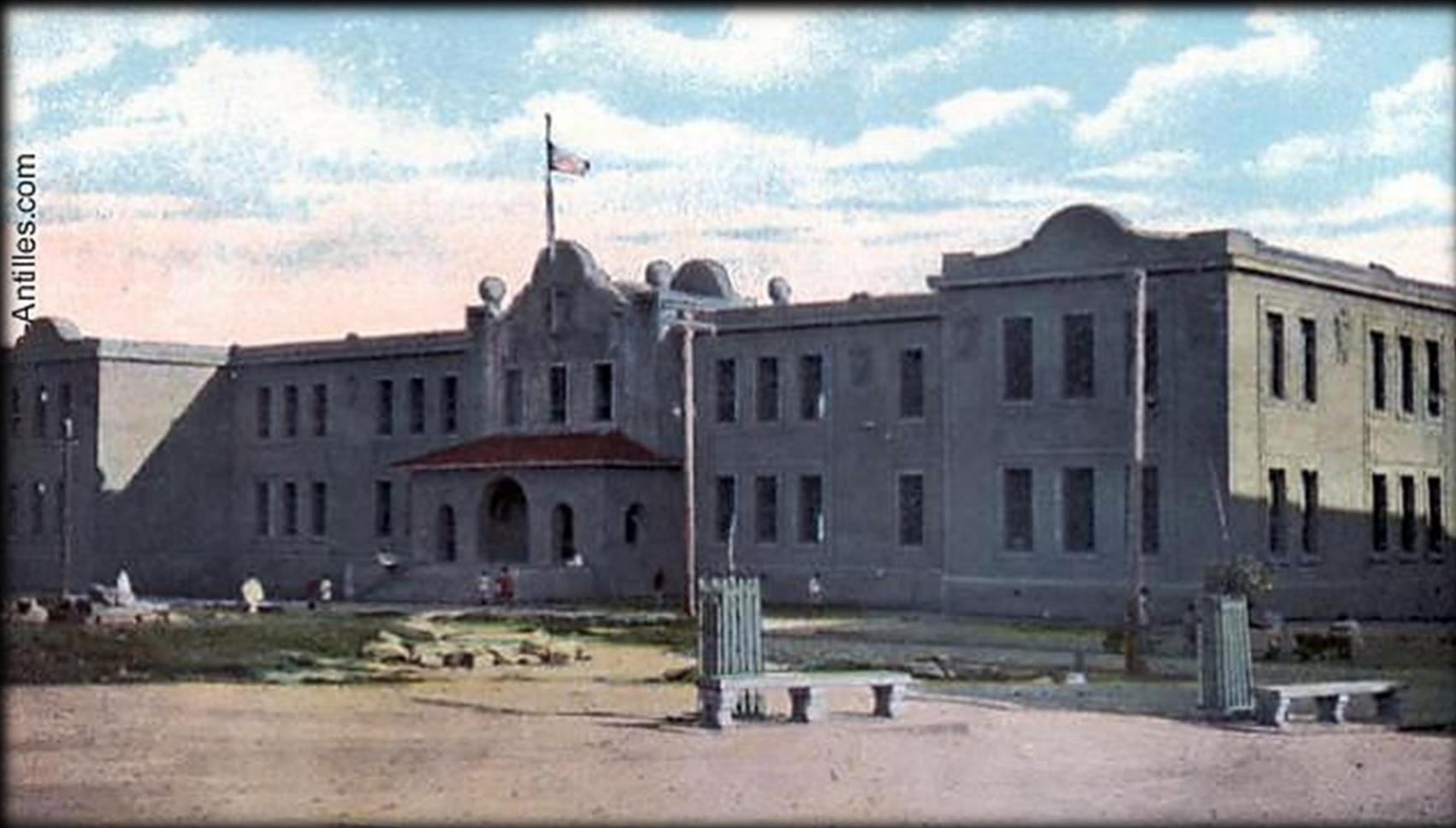
- After the US military occupation in 1898, Pres. William McKinley signed the Organic Act of 1900, establishing a civilian government, and issued the first laws related to education.
- The Dept. of Education was created, headed by a Commissioner appointed by the US President and overseen by the US Congress.

- Hundreds of secular, coeducational, public schools were built, running on the 10-month US academic calendar and following US curricular models.
- Between 1901 and 1913, the US planners established:
 - 630 urban elementary schools
 - 1,050 rural elementary schools
 - 4 secondary schools

Washington Irving Elementary School in Adjuntas (1903)



Baldorioty de Castro High School in San Juan (1910)



Labra High School in Santurce (1910)



Labra School - Santurce - P.R. RODRIGUEZ ARCHIVES

Ponce High School (1915)



Rafael Balseiro Maceira School in Barceloneta (1921)



José Fontán High School in Morovis (1925)



Central High School in Santurce (1925)



- School enrollment rose from 30,000 in 1901 to 150,000 in 1917, almost one-third of the school-aged children on the island (Ayala & Bernabe, 2007).
- The public school system was perhaps the greatest contribution the US made to PR society, yet it was plagued with problems from the outset due to its flawed language policy and its disregard for PR culture.

- The 12 Commissioners of Education appointed 1900 - 1947 were instructed to Americanize the islanders via the English language.



- This language policy was pursued to varying extents throughout the period, despite the fact that Spanish was the vernacular of the PR people.



The prevailing ethos in the US at the time was “One country, one flag, one language,” as can be seen in the 1922 coin above.



- Under the Falkner Policy (1903 - 1916), English was the medium of instruction for all grade levels.
- However, the amount of English utilized in elementary and intermediate schools varied, depending on whether they were urban or rural.
- In all policies prior to 1949, English was the language of instruction in high schools.



- PR teachers were required to learn English under the threat of losing their teaching certificates.
- Teachers qualified to teach English were paid higher salaries.
- US teachers were recruited, causing great tension among the ranks of PR teachers. (Cebollero, 1945)



In 1931, journalist Epifanio Fernández Vanga passionately denounced the use of English for teaching in Puerto Rican schools as producing generalized “speech defects.”

“El defecto en el habla se les impone a todos; por lo menos a todos los que frecuentan la escuela.” (Fernández Vanga, 1931, p. 286)

- There was considerable opposition to English as the medium of instruction throughout this period, especially from the Puerto Rico Teachers Association.



- Many attempts were made to pass local legislation making Spanish the language of instruction, but all were vetoed by US authorities.

- Subsequent language policies varied in the amount of English utilized at different levels.
- Unfortunately, few of the Commissioners utilized research or language planning procedures to derive their policies.
- Policies changed according to personal whim and political expediency.



- José Padín (1930- 1936) ran against the current by making Spanish the medium of instruction in grades 1 - 8 and emphasizing oral training in English.
- He based his decision on various studies which showed that the use of the vernacular in schooling helped the academic development of the children.
- His position on Spanish cost him his job.

José Padín



Padín's successor, José Gallardo, was appointed by Pres. Roosevelt with strict instructions to ensure that "the coming generation of American citizens in Puerto Rico grow up with complete facility in the English tongue" (Roosevelt, 1937).



Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Gallardo attempted to please everyone with the following transitional bilingual plan:

Gallardo Plan	
Grades 1-2	All Spanish, English as subject
Grades 3-4	$\frac{1}{3}$ English, $\frac{2}{3}$ Spanish
Grades 5-6	$\frac{1}{2}$ English, $\frac{1}{2}$ Spanish
Grades 7-8	$\frac{2}{3}$ English, $\frac{1}{3}$ Spanish
High school	All English, Spanish as subject

- The plan was cumbersome for the teachers and confusing for the children.
- Governor Tugwell agreed that teaching in Spanish was “the most practicable course” but felt it led to “politically agreeable, but otherwise unfortunate, policies,” like not importing teachers from US.
- Result was poorly trained English teachers whose English could not be understood.
(Tugwell, 1946, p. 479)

- In 1945, PR Bill 51 (*Proyecto del Idioma*) designated Spanish as the language of instruction.
- The bill was vetoed by Gov. Tugwell in 1945 and Interim Gov. Manuel A. Pérez in 1946, but the legislature overrode the vetoes and sent it to Pres. Truman who also rejected it.



- In 1942, the Consejo de Educación Superior had made Spanish the language of instruction at the UPR, wherever possible.
- In response to the official rejection of Bill 51, outraged UPR students organized a protest in late 1946 involving more than 100,000 college and high school students, educators, and local political figures across the island.



In 1948, Luis Muñoz Marín became the first elected governor of PR.

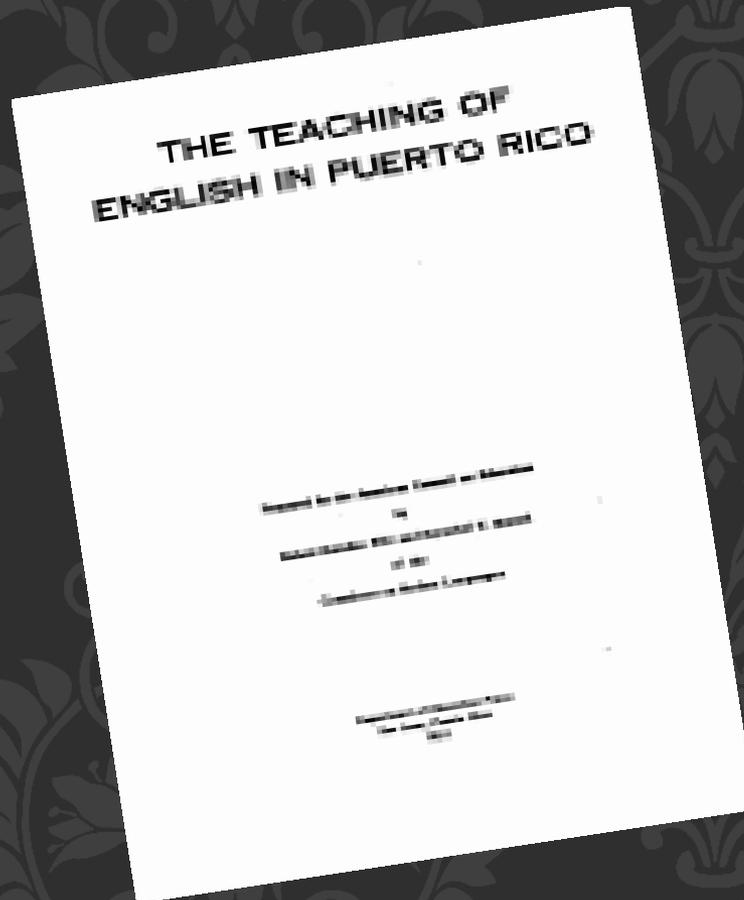


- He appointed Mariano Villaronga as Secretary of Education.
- Villaronga immediately made Spanish the medium of instruction at all levels, the language policy that exists to this day.

ENGLISH INSTRUCTION DURING 1940S

- With all the capricious changes in language policy, it should not surprise us that the level of English mastery during the 1940s was less than satisfactory.
- The supply blockade by German subs and the severe rationing in PR during World War II also made it difficult for educational projects to thrive.

- The American Council on Education sent Robert H. Fife & Herschel T. Manuel to assess the situation in PR.



- From 1940 to 1944, Fife & Manuel administered the Inter-American achievement tests (parallel English and Spanish instruments devised to determine degree of mastery in both languages) to 20,000 Puerto Rican students distributed among all levels.
- These tests were normed on Mexican and US student populations.

- The battery included verbal and non-verbal tests of comprehension and association, general and specialized reading tests, and speaking tests.
- Results published in 1950 indicated that the PR students scored lower overall in Spanish than the Mexican school children.
- Only 15% read English as well as they did Spanish, and only 20% read English as well as their US peers.

- **Conclusions: most PR children had little hope of true bilingualism, and only a small percent would profit from English medium instruction.**
- **Recommendations:**
 - better materials
 - improved libraries
 - more exposure to oral English
 - more experimentation with new teaching methods





In response, the Puerto Rico Department of Education created the English Section to revise the curriculum and cooperated with the English Institute (the subject of this talk) in carrying out research and pedagogical experimentation.

Produced by
THE ENGLISH WORKSHOPS
and
THE ENGLISH INSTITUTE
University of Puerto Rico

The DEPR also established:

- a cadre of English teacher trainers
- the School of the Air to expose Puerto Rican students to native English speakers via radio



THE 1943 CHÁVEZ COMMITTEE

- In 1943, the Chávez Committee came to PR to assess the social and economic conditions.
- They ended up focusing on the poor English skills of the people, calling it “a shocking conspiracy to perpetuate Spanish and eradicate English.” (Tugwell, 1946, p. 478-9)

- Island educators were summoned to explain why they had failed to teach English.



- Among those testifying was Lewis C. Richardson, director of the newly-formed English Institute and representative of the Puerto Rico Teachers Association.

“El inglés debe enseñarse en Puerto Rico y debe enseñarse bien, pero la sabiduría de dedicar una gran parte del limitado tiempo escolar al inglés [...] es muy discutible desde el punto de vista del inglés mismo, desde el punto de vista de otras asignaturas y desde el punto de vista de la economía.”

--Lewis C. Richardson
[Reported in *El Mundo*, Feb. 20, 1943]

Richardson also stated:

“There is a feeling, I think, among all groups—the independentists and the non-independentists—that Spanish culture should be retained, and also the best of American culture. In other words, it is not a political situation.”

[Reported in *World Journal*, Feb. 20, 1943 by Oliver Headland & cited in Mohr, 1988, p. 42]

Richardson felt that:

- **Spanish was the most pedagogically sound medium of education for PR.**
- **Teaching in Spanish would facilitate the acquisition of English.**
- **The best way to create more English speakers was by intensifying English classes.**

These beliefs were the core foundation of the English Institute and guided its work for six years.



CREATION OF ENGLISH INSTITUTE AT UPR-RP

Richardson was asked by Dr. Pedro Cebollero, acting Dean of College of Education at UPR, Rio Piedras, to create an English Institute because of his excellent track record as an able leader with a holistic view of the problems of English education.



- Taught in and directed rural high schools
- Developed public school English curriculum in 1934 under Padín's administration
- Active in Puerto Rican Teachers Association

Objectives of English Institute:

- Study problems related to teaching English in Puerto Rico
- Formulate courses and produce textbooks adapted to the island's needs
- Put students in contact with North American lifestyle and way of thinking, not to Americanize but rather to develop cultural understanding

Richardson's team:

- UPR-RP professors from the Dept. of Methodology & Practice in the College of Education & the English Dept. in the College of Humanities



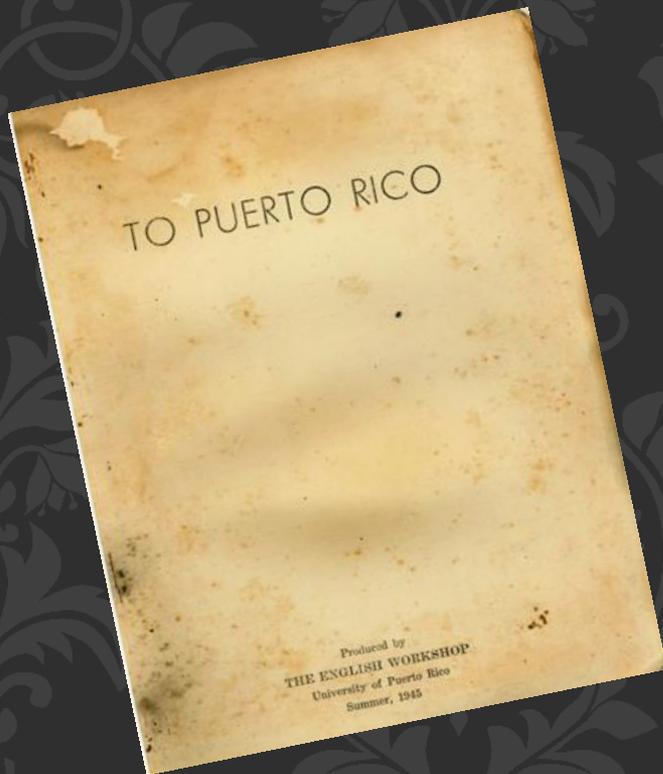
- Teachers and English supervisors from the PR Department of Education

Planning:

- Accomplished via a series of intensive, hands-on English Workshops during:
 - Summer of 1945
 - Saturdays during 1945-46 school year
 - Summer of 1946
- The hallmark of the workshops was the active participation of the teachers who would implement the curriculum.

Goals:

- Determination of when English reading should begin
- Preparation of reading material for grades 1-4
- Creation of an oral program to precede and prepare for reading.
- Articulation of a cohesive methodology for teaching English



- The team decided that the third grade would be the best time to introduce English reading.
- They created reading materials and oral lessons to prepare students for the readings.

Pilot project:

- The first grade materials were tried out during the 1947-48 year with 20 urban classes and 18 rural classes distributed among 15 school districts.
- The third grade materials were also tried out during 1947-48 school year with 9 urban and 10 rural classes distributed among 15 school districts.



Curricular goals and philosophy:

- A coherent and unified curriculum was prepared for grades 1 - 4.

- In the first grade, the aim was to make communication in English enjoyable and develop the ability to understand and respond to simple spoken English.



- The basic philosophy was that children should not be forced to talk but rather allowed to listen before attempting oral production, much as when acquiring native language as infants (cf. silent period of 1970s SLA theory).
- Listening practice would come from hearing teacher sing songs, direct games, give commands, and make comments (cf. natural approach of the late 1970s and 1980s).



“The ‘English atmosphere’ is important, but the teacher should not worship it to the extent of sacrificing the children’s understanding of words and expressions used in the classroom.” (*Guide for the Teaching of Oral English in the First Grade*, p. 6).



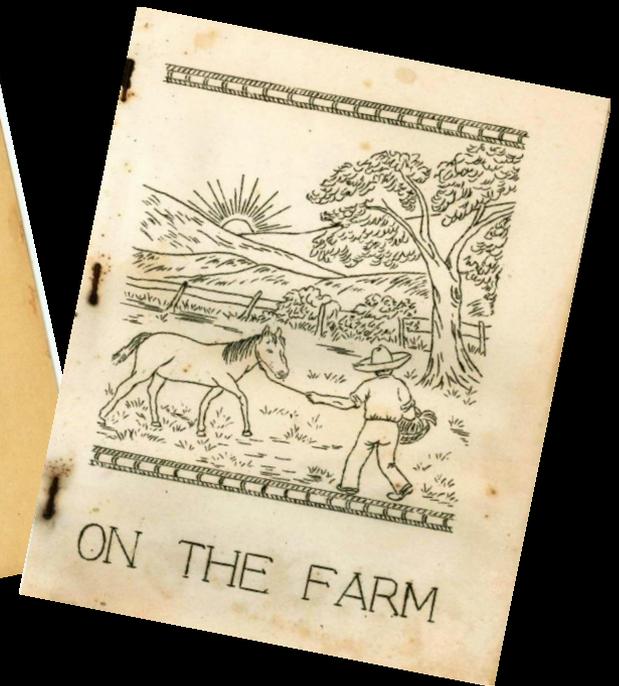
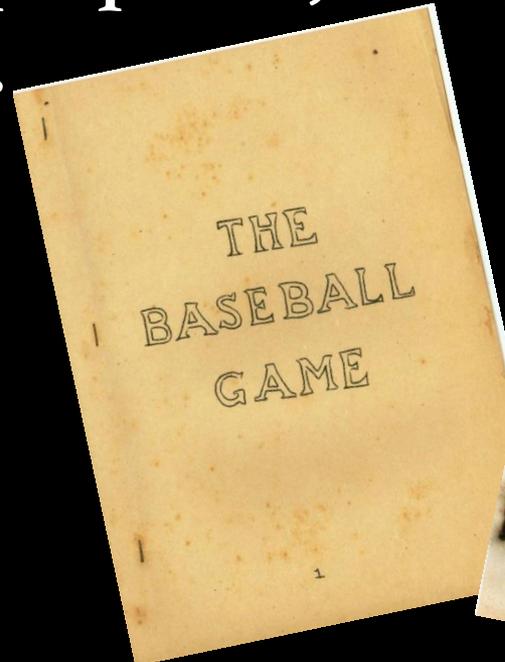


- Speaking readiness would be indicated by the child's desire to speak.
- Not all children would develop readiness at the same time.
- Meaningful, interesting, and varied repetition over extended period of time was the key to effective teaching and learning.

- Simple questions regarding how to say something in English would stimulate curiosity regarding English language.
- Games taught in the English class could be played in English during recess for practice and enjoyment.
- Pictorial materials produced by children for use in one language could be used for work in the other language.

MATERIALS PRODUCED
BY ENGLISH INSTITUTE

Detailed teachers' guides for teaching oral English (grades 1-2) and for teaching reading (grades 3-4) were prepared, along with illustrated readers.

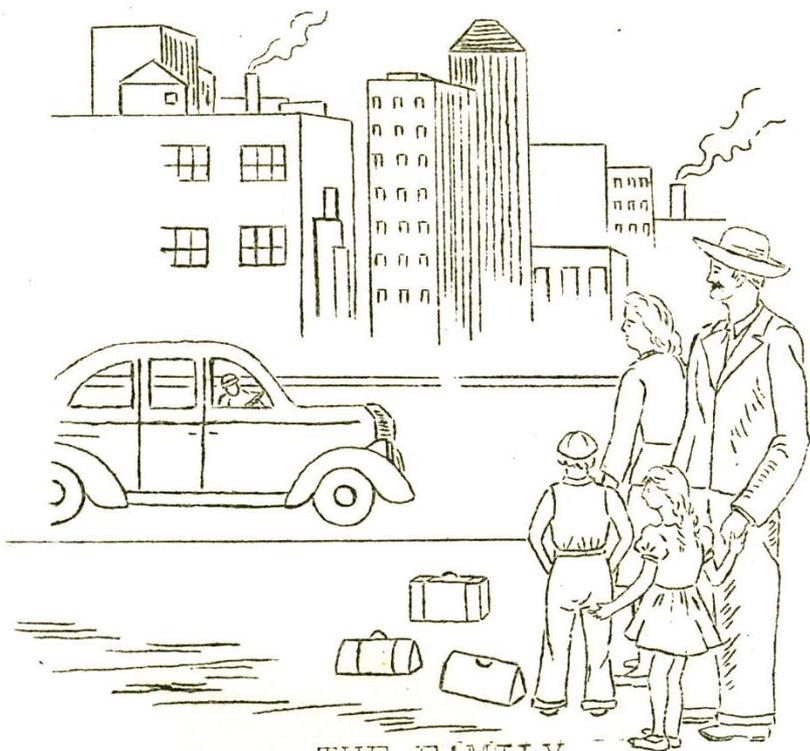


Scope and sequence:

- The first grade oral English curriculum (7 units) was carefully planned and sequenced with vocabulary built up gradually and recycled from lesson to lesson.
- Detailed explanations of grammatical structures and vocabulary were provided for teachers, as well as sample lesson plans stating specific aims and suggested procedures.

FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM

Unit 1	simple commands using a physical response methodology
Unit 2	use of <i>this</i> and <i>that</i> .
Unit 3	present progressive verbs in affirmative, negative, and interrogative modes
Unit 4	adjectives of color and size
Unit 5	prepositional phrases and the command <i>put</i>
Unit 6	questions with <i>where</i> and <i>who</i>
Unit 7	The family



THE FAMILY

This is a family.

This is a Puerto Rican family.

This family lives in New York.



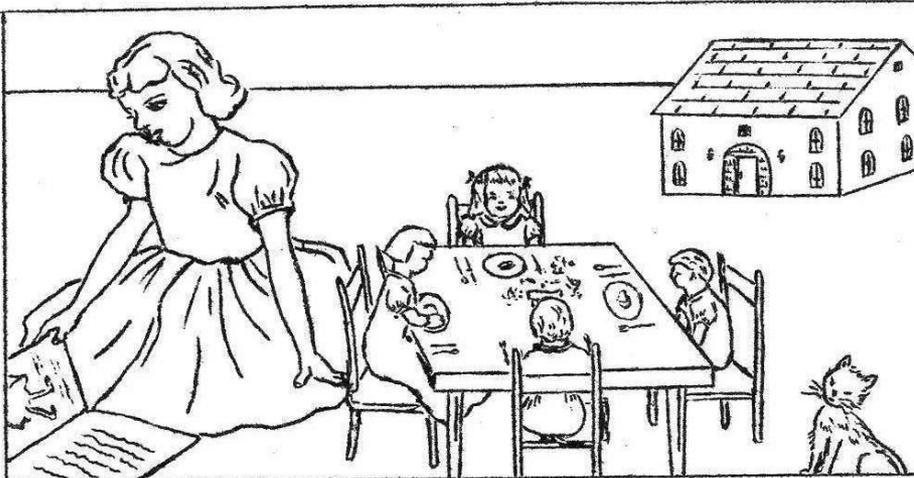
THE AIRPLANE

This is an airplane.

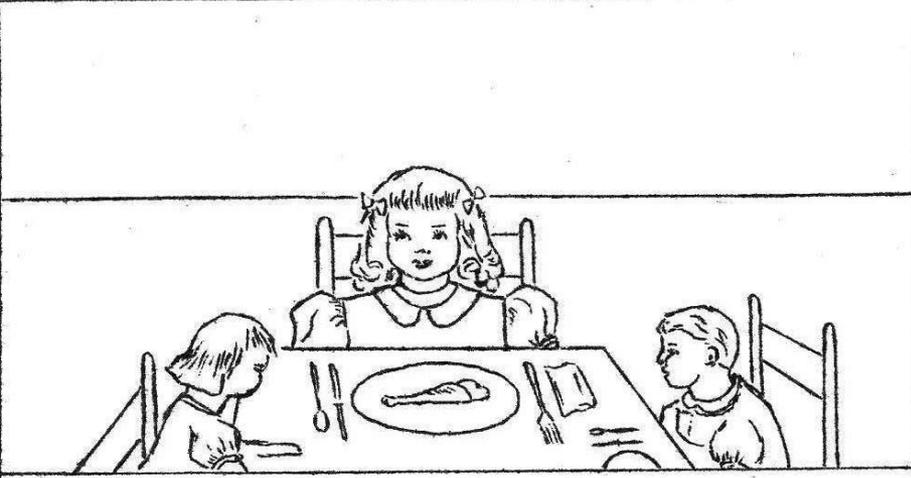
The airplane is in the air.

The airplane is going to

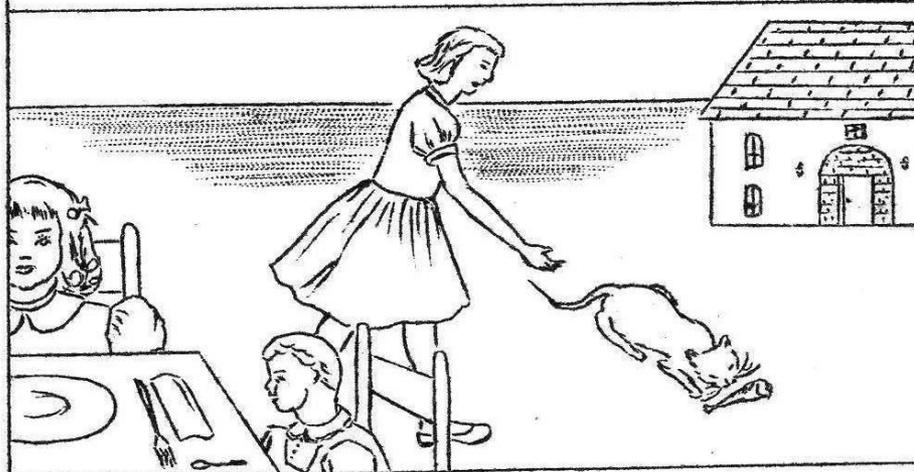
Puerto Rico.



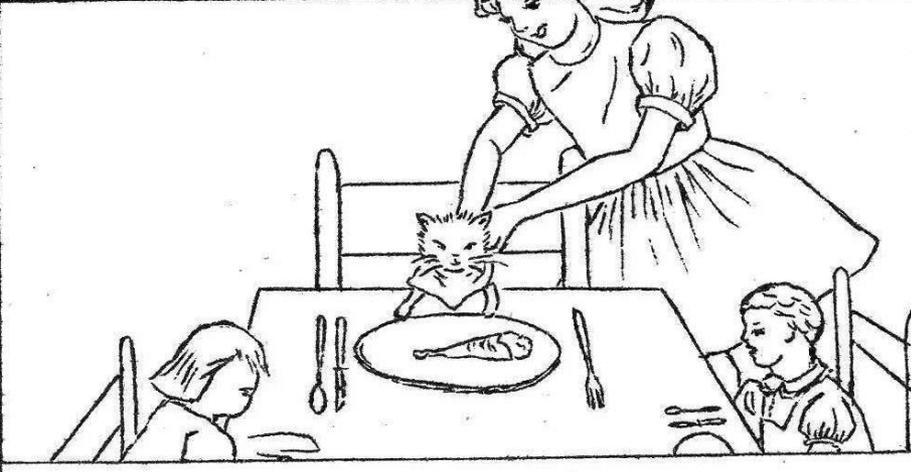
This family is eating dinner.



Mother is eating chicken.



"No, Misifú," says Lydia. "No, no!"

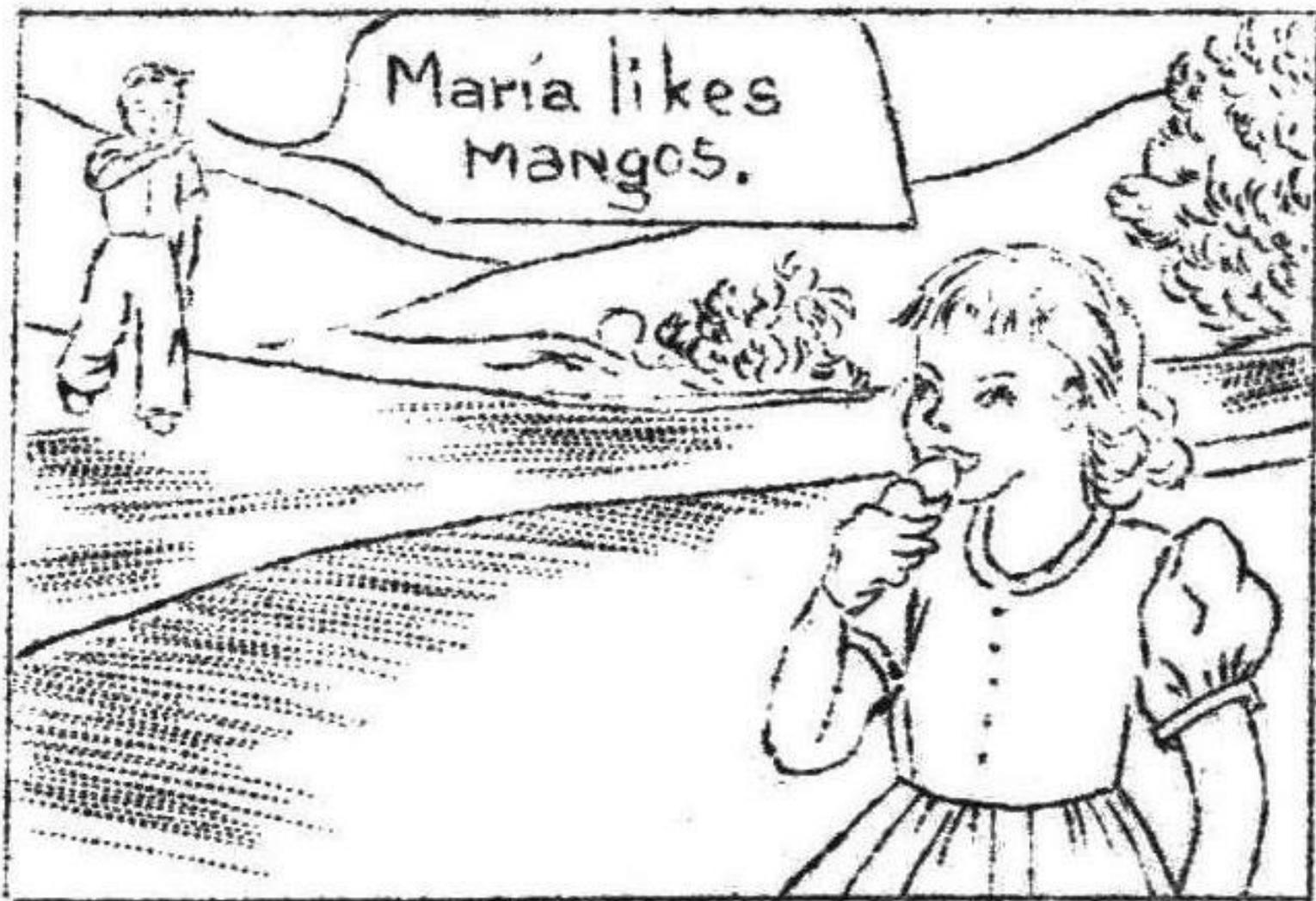


Misifú is going to eat dinner.

Juan likes rice
and chicken.



María likes
Mangos.



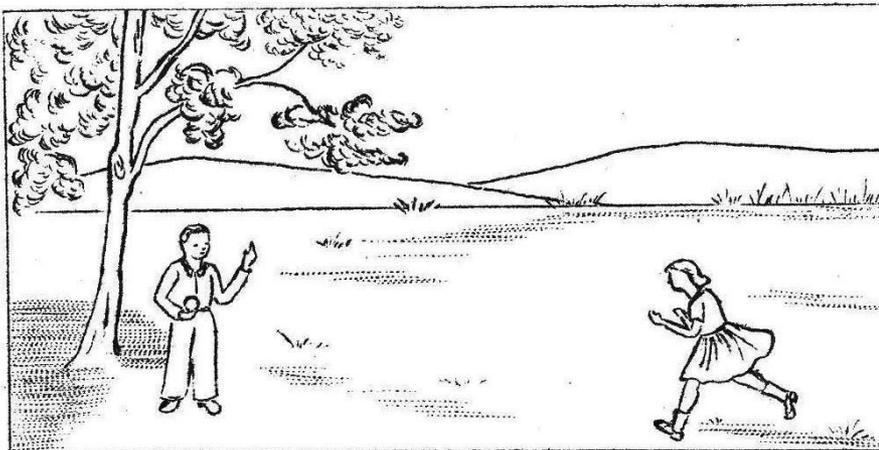
- The second grade curriculum (6 units) used vocabulary and grammatical structures based on the first grade curriculum plus additional items required for new units.
- A grade guide provided vocabulary and constructions taught in the first grade to ensure review in the second grade.
- All vocabulary referred to typically Puerto Rican settings and activities.

SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

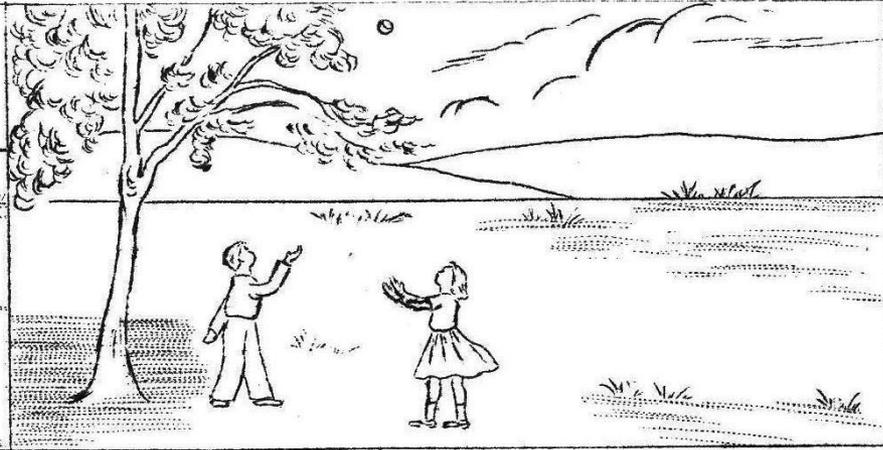
Unit 1	<i>The farm</i> --farm animals and structures.
Unit 2	<i>Stores</i> --store items plus phrases needed to request and pay for them.
Unit 3	<i>The picnic</i> --reviewed and integrated Units 1 & 2 vocabulary plus more food terms.
Unit 4	<i>Christmas</i> --decorating Christmas trees, receiving presents, and having fun.
Unit 5	<i>A birthday party</i> --built upon <i>Christmas</i> vocabulary, adding terms like <i>birthday cake, ice cream, laugh.</i>
Unit 6	<i>At school</i> --enlarged school vocabulary & reviewed grammatical structures & vocabulary.



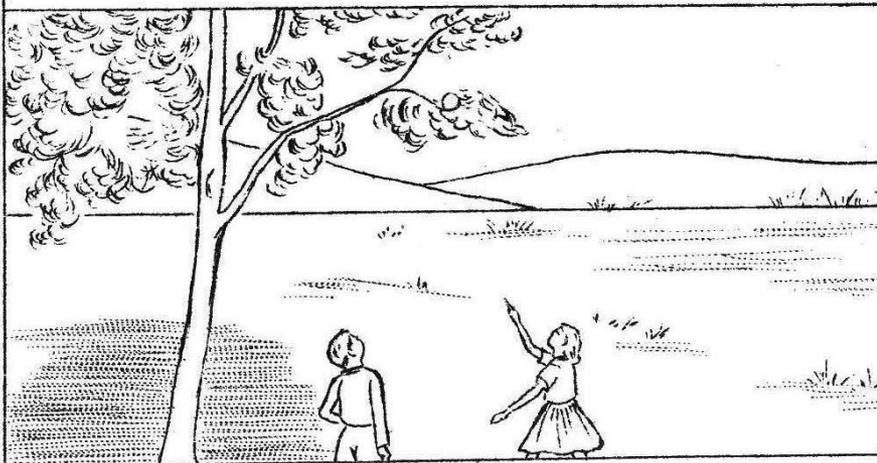
- Richardson and his team wanted to develop locally-relevant reading materials for teaching English in PR public schools.
- They decided to utilize experiences of PR children that had universal appeal in the early reading material and then move into childhood experiences associated with children of the continental US.



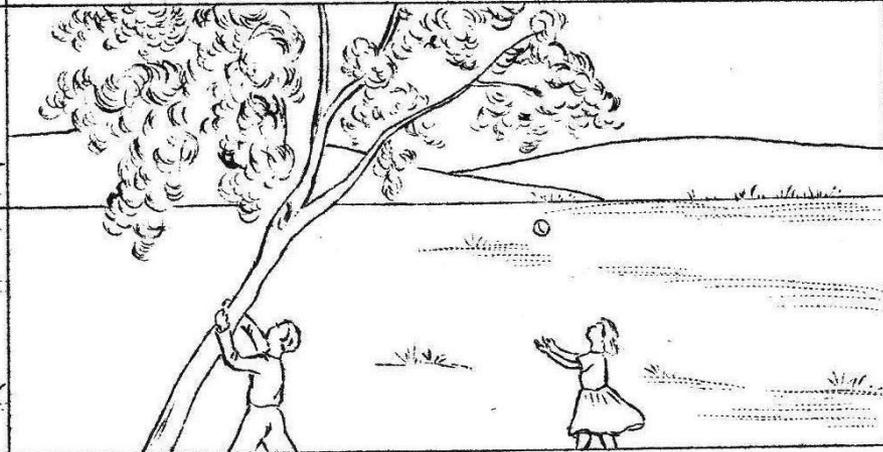
"Come, Lydia," says David.



The ball is in the air.

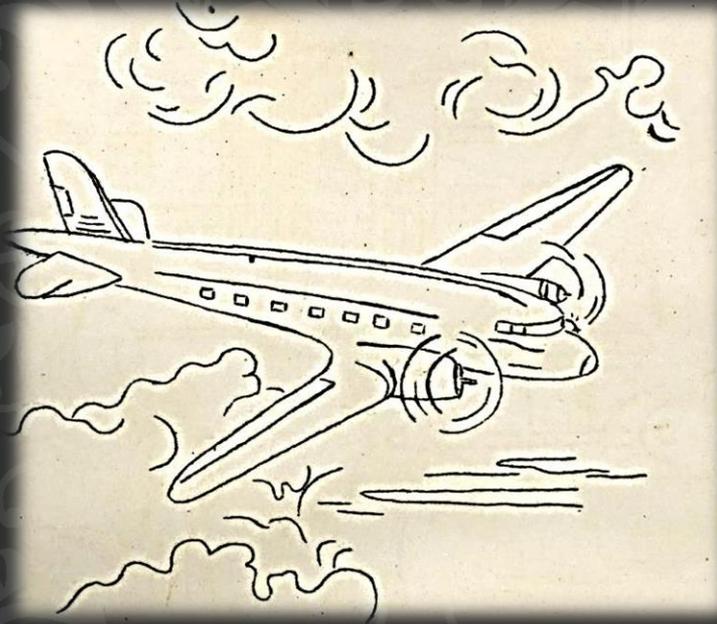


"Look, David," says Lydia.
"The ball is in the tree."



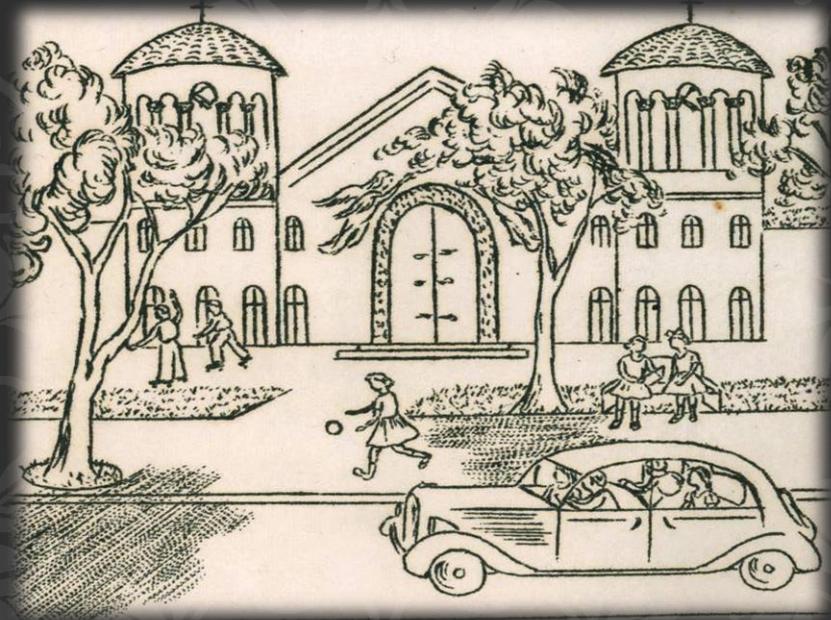
Down comes the ball!

- The first three books dealt with the visit to PR of two Nuyorican children.



- The fourth book had their island cousins travel to the U. S.

As the *Guide for the Teaching of English Reading in the Third Grade* explains:



“...the more unfamiliar matter will be introduced against a background of the familiar. The known Puerto Rican environment is used in such a way that it will logically lead to and prepare for the unknown continental environment.” (p. 3)

Third grade materials

Pre-book reading

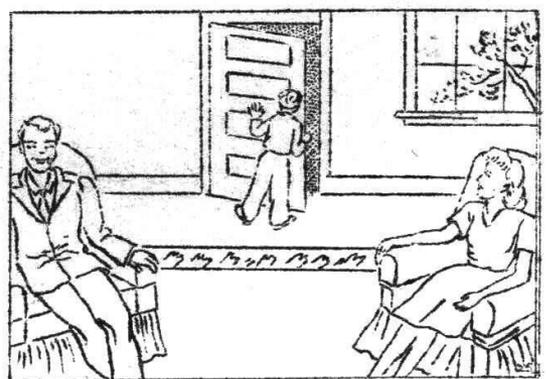
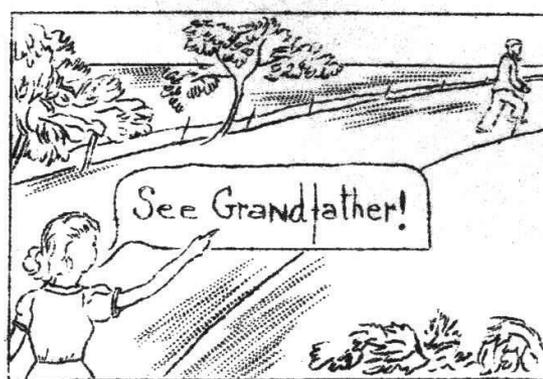
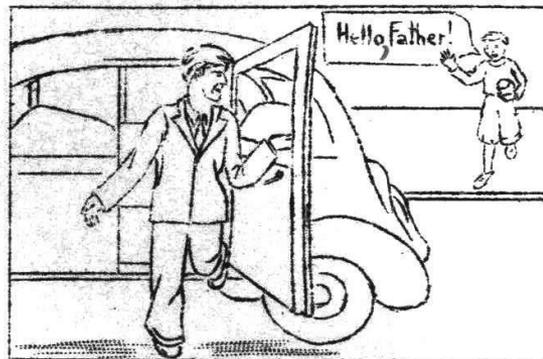
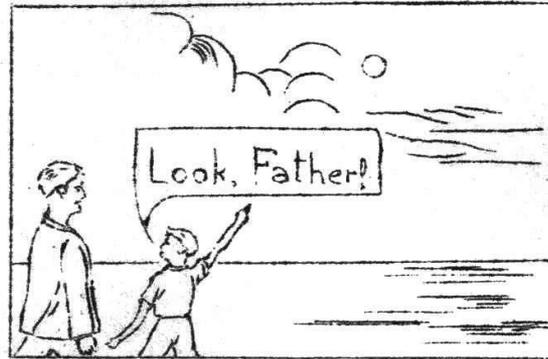
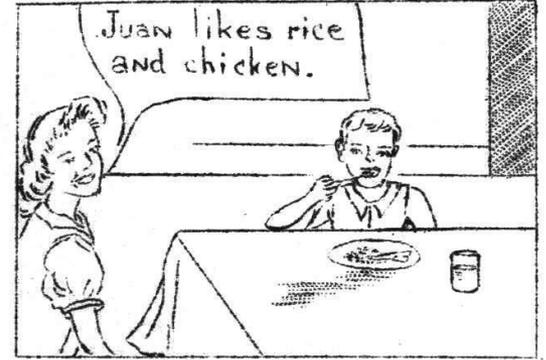
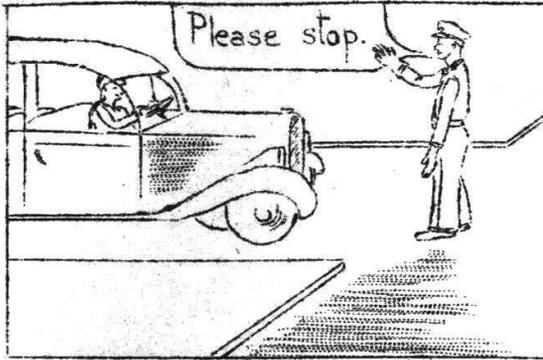
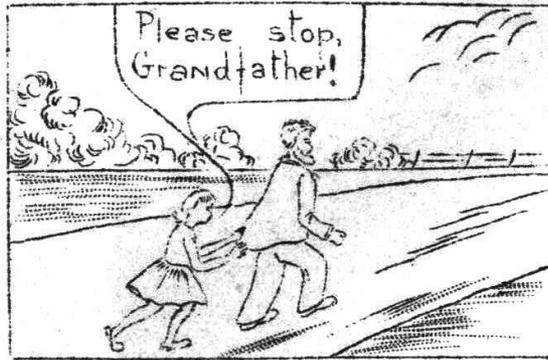
Binglish (vocabulary game)

To Puerto Rico (first reader)

Workbook to accompany *To Puerto Rico*

25 Supplementary Stories

BINGLISH BOARD



On the Farm (second reader)

25 Supplementary Stories

At School (third reader)

25 Supplementary Stories

FUN IN THE
TOY STORE

THE
MOVING ROCK

A RIDE TO
EL YUNQUE

SUGAR CANE

Grandfather lives on a big farm.

Peter, Mary and Father are looking at the farm.

"Look!" says Mary, "See the big grass."

"No," says Father, "that is cane. That is sugar cane."

"Is sugar cane good to eat?"

"Yes, Peter," says Father.

"Here, eat this."

"Mmmmmm! Sugar cane is good!"



BANANAS

"Oh look!" says Mary.

"Bananas on a tree!"

This is not a tree. This is a plant," says Father. "It is a banana plant."

"I like bananas," says Peter

"Here are two bananas, one for Mary and one for Peter."

"Thank you, Father."

"Thank you."



GOING TO TOWN

"Get ready to go to town, children," says Mother. "We three are going with Grandfather in the car. He's going to town this morning. Come, let's go and buy Ana's present."

"Is Grandmother coming to town with us too?" asks Mary.

"No, Mary, she isn't coming today. Are you ready, children? Say good-by to her."

The children say good-by to their grandmother.

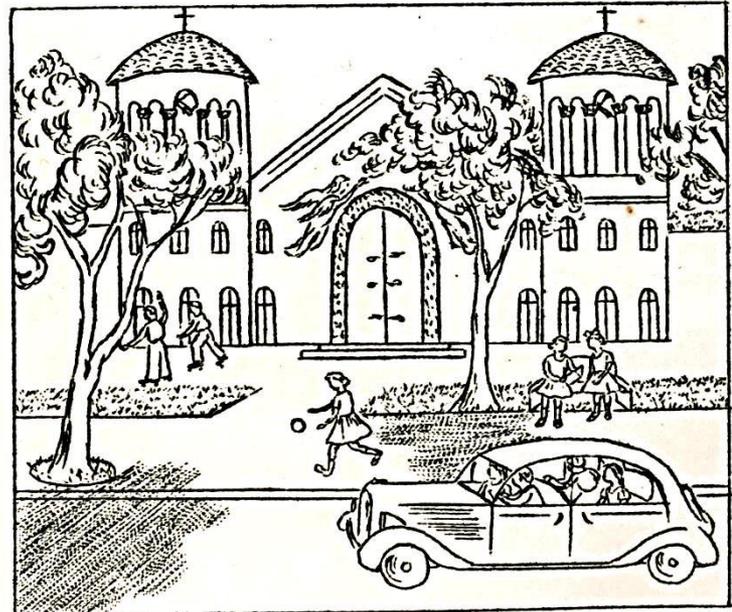
"Good-by, children. Have a good time!" says Grandmother.

They go to town.

IN TOWN

"What's that?" asks Mary.

"I know," says Peter. "That's the plaza. See the trees. And there's the church. Look at the pretty church. Hear the church bells. Hear the church bells ring. What a pretty town this is!"



David and Carlos were laughing with their friends. They were going to see Johnny Davis. They were going to see Rafaelito Ortiz. They were going to see all the Caguas baseball players, and the Mayagüez players.

At last they came to the baseball park. Father got out and bought the tickets. He bought six tickets.

"Come, children," he said. And they all went into the baseball park. The children were near Father.

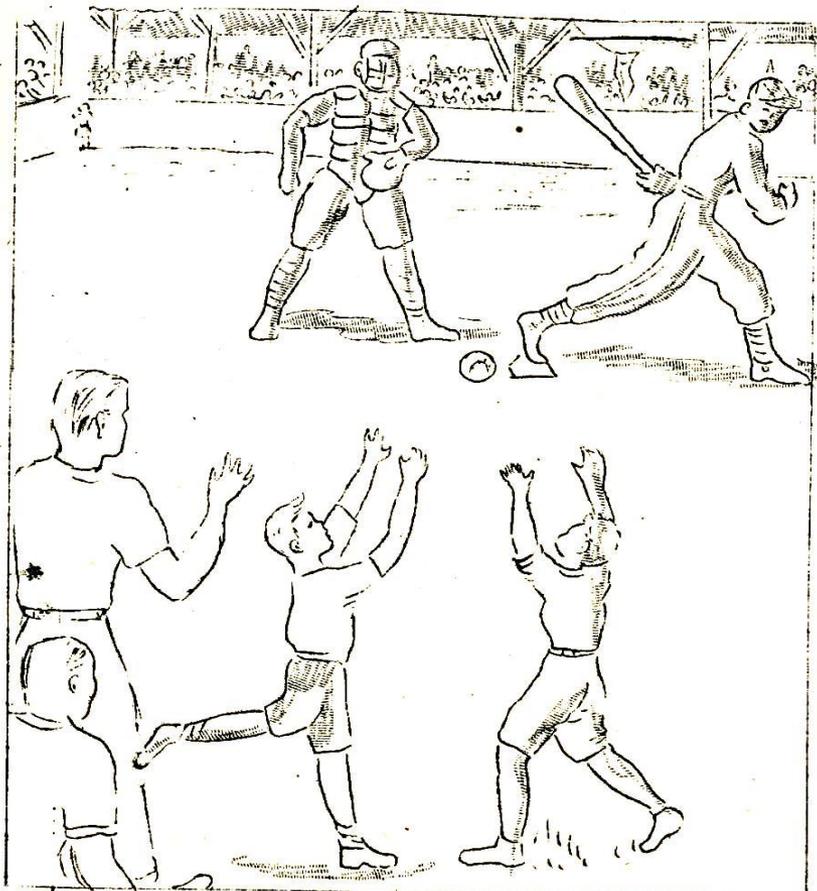
"Here we are," said Father. "Look, children. That's Rafaelito Ortiz. And there's Alonso Perry with the bat."

"Where? Where is he?"

"There he is with the bat."

"He's so big!" said Ramón.

"Look! Look! There goes the ball up, up in the air."



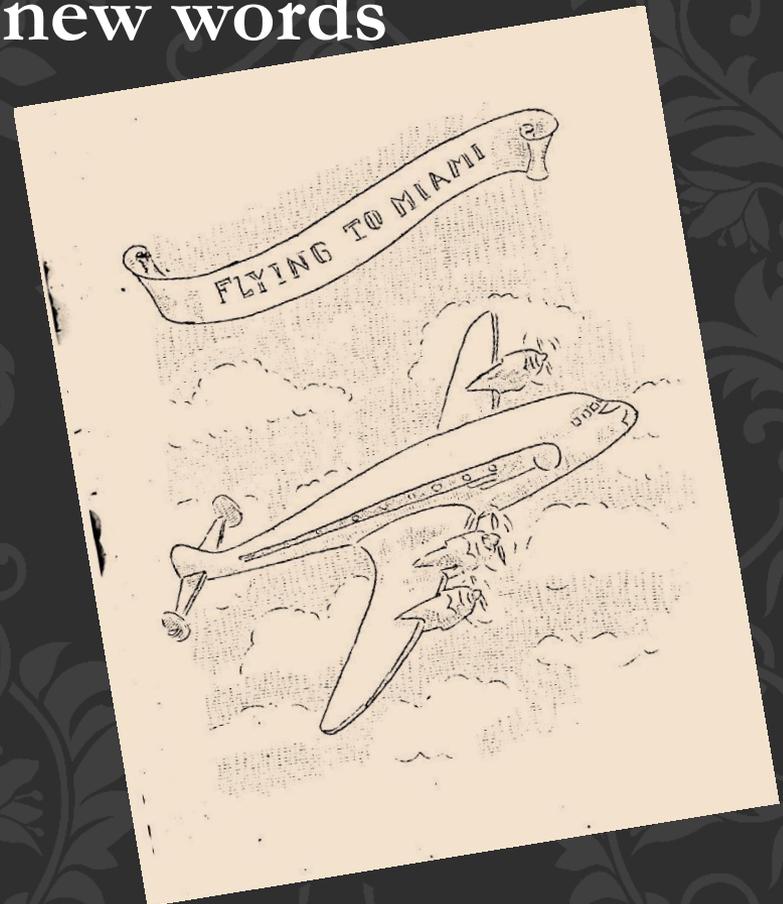
"It's coming to us, David! It's coming to us!"

David and Ramón ran for the ball.

"Oh! I have it!" said Ramón. Here it is!"

The fourth grade curriculum added:

- a new reader titled *Flying to Miami*
- more supplementary stories
- a page-by-page list of new words introduced in the reader



A BOAT RIDE

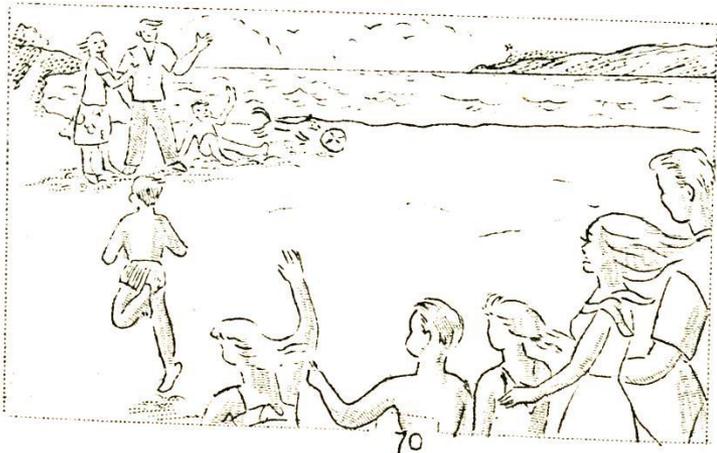
This was the family's last day at Miami. They went to Miami Beach. They saw Mr. and Mrs. Pérez and Oscar there.

"Hello, friends!" Mother said. "Come, children. Let's go to see our friends."

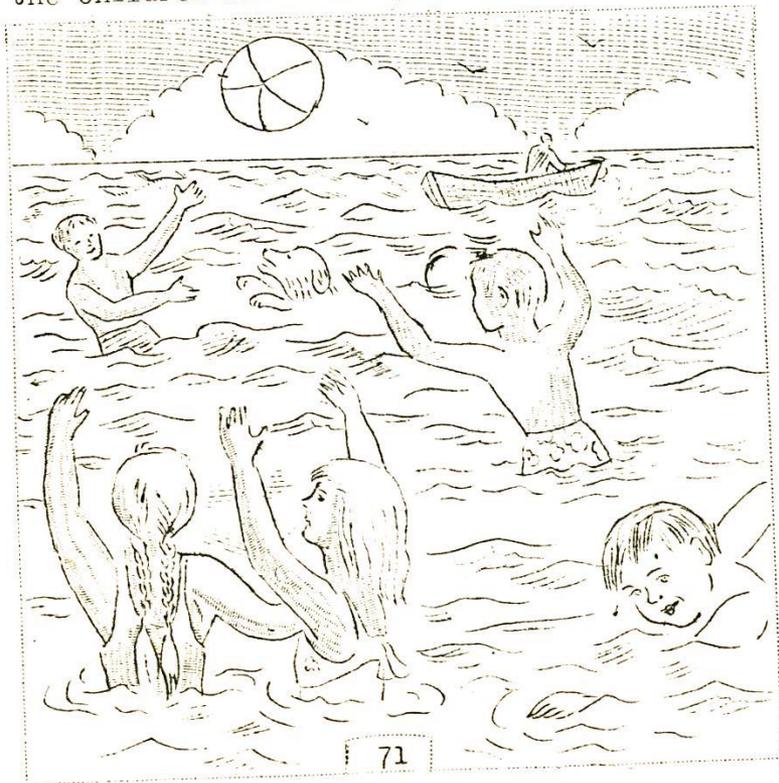
"Oscar's dog is with him. We're going to have fun," said Luis.

"I don't like Miami Beach. There's no swimming pool here," said Ana.

"Let's all go and play in the water," Peter said.



"Don't go far away, children," said Mother. The children ran and then jumped into the water. They were all having fun. They were playing with a big red and yellow ball. Oscar's dog was playing too. Father, Mother, and Mr. and Mrs. Pérez were laughing and talking about the children and their game.



Basic philosophy of reading curriculum:

- For reading readiness in English to develop, a pupil must be able to read simple material in Spanish with relative fluency and pleasure and have oral-aural mastery of vocabulary and constructions to be encountered in English.
- Children learn to read by reading.



- Reading in the native language and foreign language both include a need for material that is:
 - culturally relevant
 - arouses children's curiosity
 - seems worthwhile
 - has generous repetition of key vocabulary
- Once general reading skills are developed in the native language, skills transfer over to the new language.

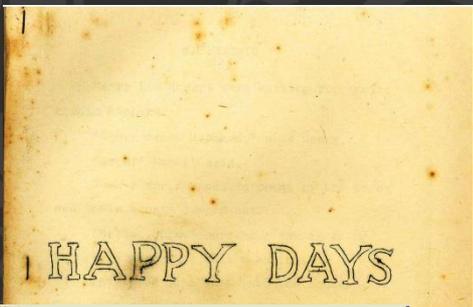
- Emphasis was placed on the creation of textual materials by children via:
 - preparing illustrations that the teacher would put into words
 - dictating stories which the teacher would put into book format.
- All classroom items were labeled in English to create an English reading environment, and flashcards were used extensively.



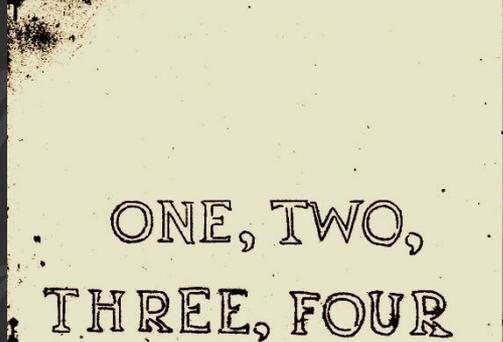
General procedure (followed in all readers):

- Two readings: first one silent, and second one silent or oral. If oral, it was linked to an interactive group activity or game.
- The use of Spanish was reduced to the minimum necessary to insure comprehension. Any idea put into Spanish was then repeated in English.

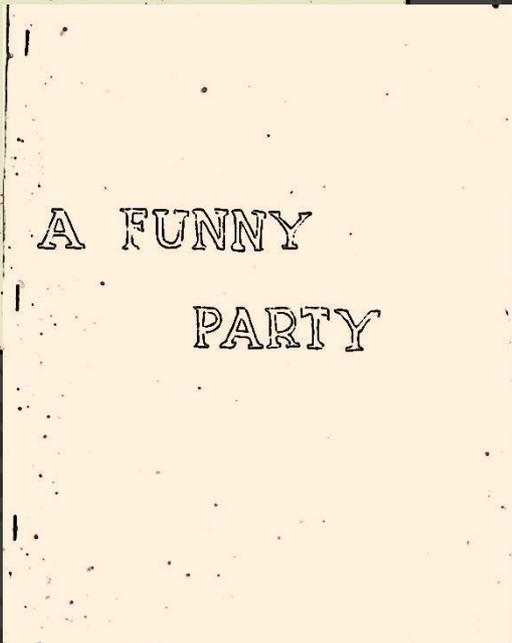
- Supplementary stories were left on the library tables so the children could read during their free time.
- Teachers conducted supervised reading sessions with one group while another group read silently.
- Children kept track of the stories they read on charts.



HAPPY DAYS



ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR



A FUNNY
PARTY

- Students were constantly questioned in order to ascertain their mastery of the vocabulary and its use.
- Drawings and pantomime were used extensively in presenting new vocabulary.
- Role playing was used to act out parts of the story to reinforce what was learned.

- The materials were tested across the island, and teachers were asked to give “frank criticisms and constructive recommendations” (*Guide for the Teaching of Oral English in the Second Grade*, p. 1).
- Teachers were urged to contribute games, rhymes, and songs, suggest reorganization, report on ease of use, and consider if the material could be covered adequately in the time allotted.

EVALUATION OF ENGLISH
INSTITUTE PILOT PROJECT

- The pilot project was evaluated via a reading test at the end of the 1947-48 school year.
- The test was on 161 words included in the third grade experimental curriculum, 145 of which also appeared on the DEPR's 600-word vocabulary list for grades 1-3.

- One section was based on the regular curriculum and another, on the experimental.
- Each section contained 30 vocabulary items and 14 reading items.
- Students had to give the Spanish word or sentence that corresponded to the English test item.
- All instructions were given in Spanish.

**Table 1: Third grade students tested for
reading achievement , 1947-1948**

	Try-Out Groups	Regular Groups	Total
Urban	298	267	565
Rural	376	259	635
Total	674	526	1,200

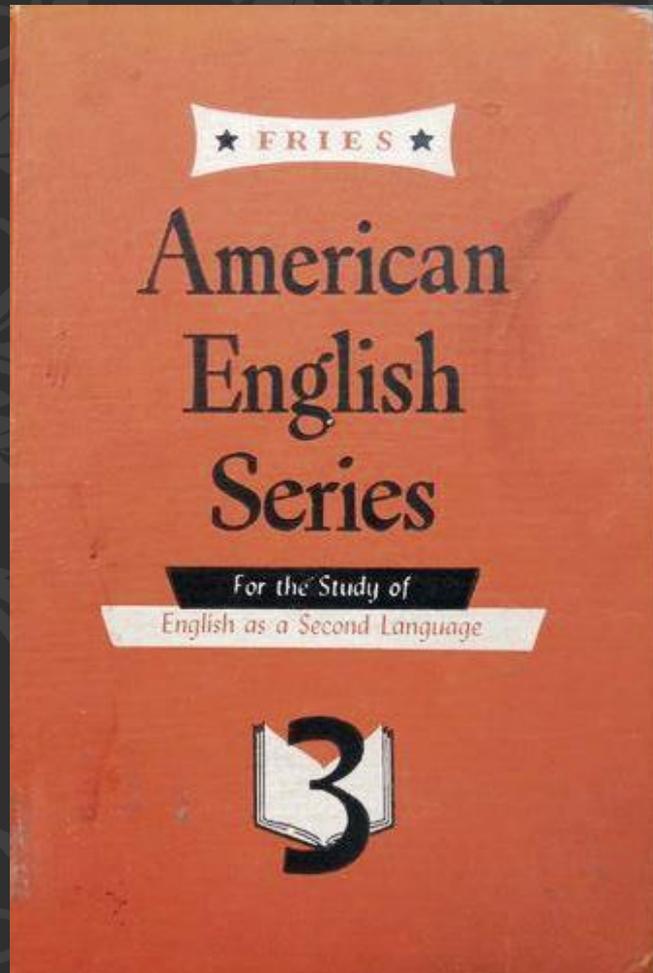
- The results showed that the try-out groups did better overall and in each section than the regular-course groups, in both urban and rural schools.
- In fact, the rural try-out groups did better than the urban regular-course students.
- This indicated the success of the third grade experimental curriculum in developing students' vocabulary skills.

**THE DEMISE OF RICHARDSON'S
ENGLISH INSTITUTE**

- In 1949, for reasons that are not completely clear, the English Institute was transferred to the Dept. of Education of Puerto Rico.
- The DEPR decided to adopt Charles Fries' approach to English teaching and set aside the curriculum of the English Institute.



- Fries was a well-known linguist at the University of Michigan's English Institute and author of several grammars and studies of American English which were being used internationally.



- Charles Fries produced the 3-volume *Fries American English series* in conjunction with Paulina Rojas and the English Section of the DEPR in 1952.
- The series served as the official ESL textbook in Puerto Rico and was used until the 1960s.

- There was intense pressure to purchase ESL textbooks from US publishers.
- Puerto Rico represented a huge customer base they were anxious to exploit.
- Locally produced, inexpensive, rustic readers created by Richardson's English Institute could not compete with the slick products of US presses.

- Richardson was deeply disappointed about the rejection of his curriculum and teaching approach after six years of hard work and apparent success.
- He was asked to continue directing the English Institute, but turned it down and dedicated himself to working as Vice President of the Puerto Rican Teachers Association until 1953.

**IMPLICATIONS OF RICHARDSON'S
ENGLISH INSTITUTE**

The English Institute program had very positive elements that curriculum planners today would do well to incorporate:

- **Cultural relevance**
- **Low cost**
- **Teacher involvement**
- **Focus on oral English until third grade**
- **Interest in broader problem of English in Puerto Rico**

- Richardson's English Institute represented an earnest attempt to improve the teaching of English in PR .
- Knowledge of the Institute's materials and methodologies could have aided in the development of the English curriculum after the 1940s.
- Many of the issues addressed by the English Institute would come back to haunt PR education during the 1980s and 1990s.

- “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
--George Santayana (1905)
- The point of today’s talk (and the much longer article on which it was based) was to attempt to restore the English Institute to collective consciousness so that we can hopefully learn something from its experiences.
- I hope I have succeeded in doing so.

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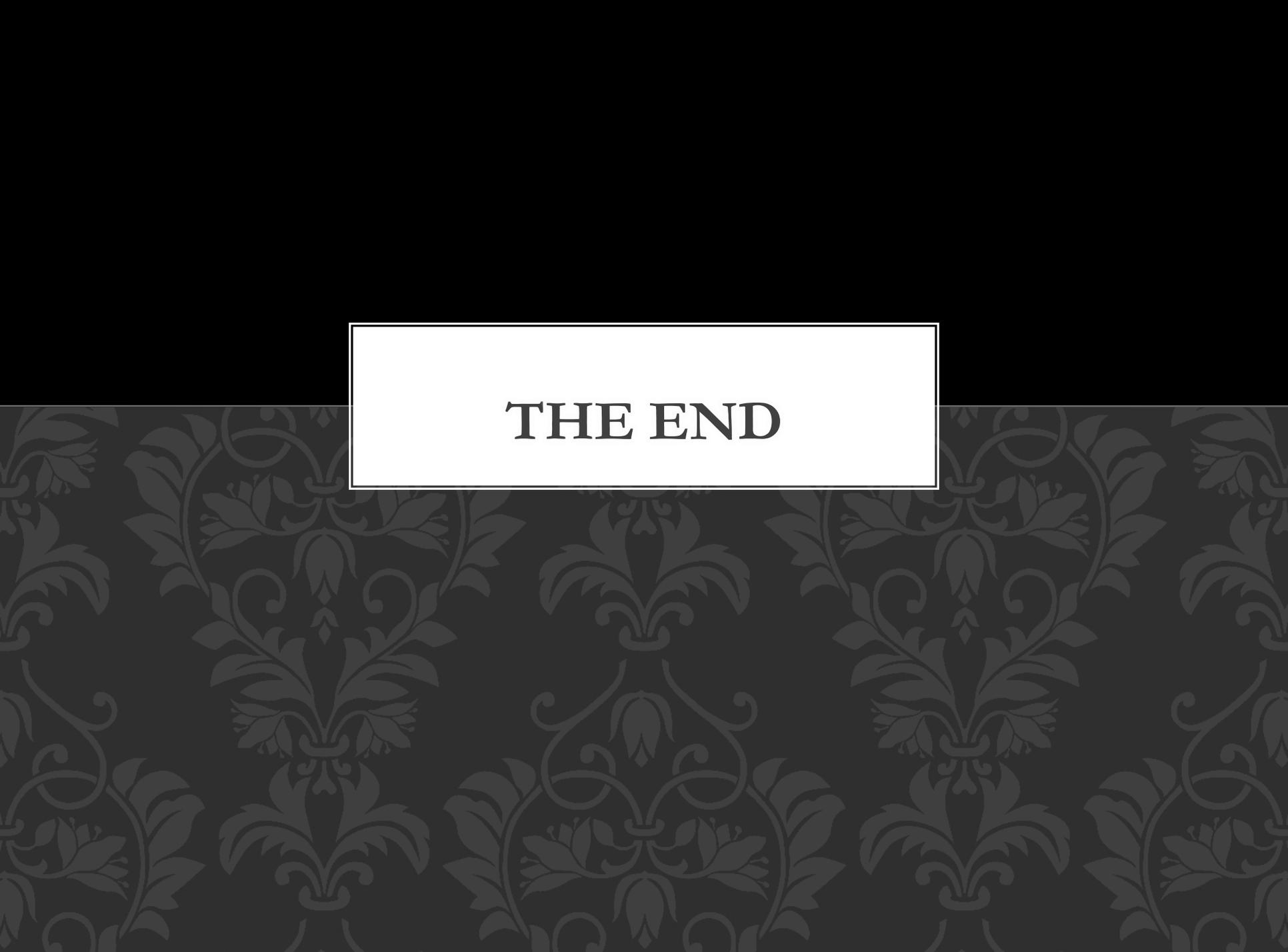
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THE END