

Laura Zirbes and Progressive Reading Instruction

Author(s): David W. Moore

Source: *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 86, No. 5 (May, 1986), pp. 663-672

Published by: [University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1001276>

Accessed: 22-10-2015 01:30 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Elementary School Journal*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Laura Zirbes and Progressive Reading Instruction

David W. Moore

University of Northern Iowa

You don't give children fork lessons before they can have food. [*Childhood Education*, 1967, p. 215]

The principle represented by the above aphorism can be applied to many aspects of instruction. It opposes mechanistic, isolated skills instruction and supports practices that focus on obtaining meaning. Laura Zirbes, a remarkable educator who was active during the middle years of this century, not only made this statement but also vigorously promoted the principle that it expresses during her long career. A prolific writer, energetic teacher, and popular speaker and consultant, Zirbes left educators a substantial legacy.

In this paper I describe one aspect of Laura Zirbes's contribution to education, her conception of worthwhile reading instruction. First, her credentials as a noteworthy historical figure are presented, and then her view of the appropriate goals and methods of reading instruction is detailed. My presentation includes many quotations from Zirbes's writings. Finally, I suggest implications of Zirbes's work for classroom practice.

Overview of career

Laura Zirbes began her teaching career in the elementary grades in Cleveland, Ohio, from 1903 to 1919.¹ During that time she became interested in the pioneering studies of Judd, Dearborn, and Gray, so she explored the practical implications of their early basic research in an applied classroom experiment. Her report of one part of the study, "Diagnostic Measurement as

The Elementary School Journal
Volume 86, Number 5
© 1986 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.
0013-5984/86/8605-0006\$01.00

a Basis for Procedure" (Zirbes, 1918), was published in the *Elementary School Journal*.

In 1920, Zirbes accepted a position as investigator in reading at Lincoln School, a well-known experimental elementary school affiliated with Teachers College, Columbia University. After serving 4 years as a researcher in the experimental school, Zirbes became a lecturer in education at Teachers College. She earned bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees at this institution.

After completing her doctorate in 1928, Zirbes joined the Ohio State University faculty. She remained there until 1954, when she retired with the rank of emeritus professor of education. While at Ohio State, she broadened her career and contributed substantially to the fields of early childhood education, teacher education, elementary education, and curriculum development. Zirbes produced more than 200 published writings during her career, was a featured speaker at many conferences and school districts, and advised numerous doctor's and master's degree candidates.

Laura Zirbes earned considerable stature in education. To illustrate, President Truman awarded her the National Women's Press Club's "Woman of the Year Award" for achievement in education in 1948. And the consensus of her professional colleagues is that she was an inspiring, dedicated advocate of innovative reading practices.²

Progressive reading instruction

Laura Zirbes devoted much of her career to advocating progressive practice in reading. Her writings about this area of the curriculum are especially valuable because they present a consistent point of view. As we know, defining progressive education is like the proverbial task of nailing jelly to a wall. The substance keeps slipping away. Too many practices associated with progressive education are reported in the literature to allow a single, tidy definition

of that school of thought (see, e.g., Cohen & Mohl, 1979; Cremin, 1961; Doll, 1983; Mayhew & Edwards, 1965). For instance, "progressives" advocated individual freedom, social reconstruction, mental health, vocational training, and centralized school administration.

Despite the wide-ranging points of view affiliated with progressivism, a somewhat characteristic viewpoint was held by educators such as Zirbes who wrote specifically about the elementary school reading curriculum. These educators criticized traditional emphases on oral reading, rote learning, and appreciation of fine literature. The central features of progressive reading instruction, as articulated by Laura Zirbes, are as follows.

The goal of reading instruction

Progressive reading instruction according to Laura Zirbes was meant to lead to the goal of balanced development: "We still find the market filled with prescriptive material for class room work in reading which rides roughshod over relative values and justifies itself in terms of heightened power secured at the expense of all round, balanced growth" (Zirbes, 1928c, p. 102). Balanced growth meant that teachers should attend to more than one facet of their students while providing reading instruction. For example, balancing one skill with another skill meant that teachers should provide proportionate emphases on abilities such as sight word recognition, phonic analysis, comprehension, and rate. Zirbes rejected the notion that teachers should concentrate on one or two skills, such as phonic analysis or sight word recognition, during the entire course of instruction. She realized that specific tasks could only emphasize one skill at a time, but she called for attention to a wide range of reading skills across a program of tasks (see, e.g., Zirbes, 1928b, p. 48; 1929a, p. 228).

Along with developing skills proportionately, Zirbes viewed reading instruc-

MAY 1986

tion as a time to develop readers' concepts. Reading to learn was not separated from learning to read: "Reading in the progressive class rooms of today not only begins with experience, but enriches experience by serving as a stimulus to creative expression and by concerning itself with content as well as skills" (Zirbes, 1928c, pp. 99–100).

Developing students' attitudes toward reading was another essential aspect of reading instruction. On the one hand, emphasizing skill over attitude was deemed counterproductive to skill development: "Certain reading procedures which build skills at the expense of attitudes have been prevalent and they too often eventuate by defeating their own ends" (Zirbes, 1925a, p. 864). On the other hand, Zirbes considered that developing attitude was valuable in its own right: "If you are teaching reading creatively and developmentally, you are introducing children to satisfaction that will enrich their whole lives" (Zirbes, 1959, p. 172). Zirbes recognized that children who would not read were as disadvantaged as children who could not read.

According to Zirbes, personal values were another facet that required balanced attention. She recommended reading practices that fostered personal growth in areas such as initiative, self-confidence, and spontaneity. She frequently commented on the need to develop active, purposeful, dynamic students. She averred that "the modern reading program finds its true realization and justification in the contribution it makes to the development of personalities" (Zirbes, 1940, p. 155).

The goal of balancing students' skills, concepts, attitudes, and values during reading instruction is roughly analogous to advancing an army along a broad front. Brief forays might be conducted to extend specific forces, but uniform progress and constant integration of all forces are the primary concerns. Balanced development of the primary facets of reading was the

main goal of instruction in Zirbes's conception of progressive practice.

Methods of reading instruction

Laura Zirbes produced many articles, research reports, monographs, and books that focused on methods for achieving the goal of balanced reading development. This section describes four general methods that represent the convergences of her recommendations: (a) enlist purposeful activity, (b) integrate the language arts, (c) present reading functionally, and (d) promote wide reading.

Enlist purposeful activity. "Purposeful reading activities are not only the core of the progressive reading program but are also the means of vitalizing all other subjects and classroom activities" (Zirbes, 1929b, p. 105). As this quotation illustrates, the basic method that drove progressive reading instruction was purposeful activity. Zirbes repeatedly noted that purposes—meaningful reasons for reading—were the integrative, assimilative force behind students' reading development. Clear, compelling purposes that focused students on obtaining meaning from print were unequaled for helping students achieve balanced reading growth. For instance, students who lacked relevant reasons for reading might develop skills, but attitudes and values would most likely wither. This emphasis on searching for personal meaning was a clear reaction to traditional reading practices that emphasized declamation and memorization.

Zirbes's belief in purposeful activity corresponded with the beliefs of many prominent progressive writers. To illustrate, in an appendix to one of her early publications, Zirbes acknowledged William Heard Kilpatrick as one of her "sources of insight and endeavor" (Zirbes, 1924a, p. 150). And it was in Kilpatrick's famous description of the project method that "wholehearted purposeful activity" (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 320) was given the highest instructional priority. The project

method called for students to participate in asking questions, to search for information, and to report the findings. Zirbes actively promoted young children's projects with topics such as boats, trains, animals, and farms.

From the beginning of her career, Zirbes promoted research projects as well as language-experience and individualized approaches to reading instruction. These three approaches share the common feature of engaging students' interests and curiosity before emphasizing skills; they are grounded in children's internal purposes for learning. Traditional practices subordinated children's interests and needs to the materials and skills dictated from outside by a teacher or ready-made program.

With regard to specific purposes for reading passages, admonitions of the mid-1800s were to "speak distinctly, and mind your stops" (Corson, 1895, p. 811), but by the late 1920s, educators such as Zirbes suggested that students read "to see how the story ends," "to see how many persons would be needed to play the story," or "to find out whether the story could be true" (Zirbes, 1929b, pp. 95-96). However, even though teachers could easily set such purposes, purposeful reading did not necessarily occur: "There is a vast difference between purposeful reading and assigned reading. The teacher who begins by saying, 'Now I want you to do thus and so,' is not getting purposeful reading. We must guide the reader to set up purposes for himself" (Zirbes, 1932b, p. 6). Student-set reasons for reading were thought to enlist much more purposeful activity than teacher-set reasons.

Integrate the language arts. Promoting situations that include listening, speaking, and writing along with reading is a predictable method for one who is concerned with balancing students' development—and Zirbes repeatedly made it a point to call for balanced treatment of the language arts: "Reading is to be conceived and treated as an integral phase or aspect of

total language development" (Zirbes, 1940, p. 152). Indeed, essential features of the project method and the experience approach included activities such as writing about what was experienced, reading what others had written, and orally reporting findings to a listening audience. Good examples of Zirbes's early conceptions of language arts integration in response to specific passages are found in the "silent reading exercises" that she prepared for a health textbook (Bigelow & Broadhurst, 1924). For instance, some exercises were to (a) mount pictures from old magazines in order to supplement a talk on primitive and modern ways of heating homes, (b) re-read a chapter and consult an encyclopedia in order to list things used for fuel, and (c) make a "safety first" picture book that contained rules under each picture.

Interestingly, the exercises suggested in the health textbook represented assigned reading more than purposeful reading according to Zirbes's distinction quoted above. Other examples of assigned reading occurred in a set of instructional materials that she produced for the Keystone View Company (Zirbes, 1927). This apparent contradiction between stated belief and actual practice is resolved by noting their chronological progression. Zirbes seems to have first sanctioned teacher-set assignments to locate information as a progressive alternative to assignments that called for nonselective, verbatim recall of entire passages; she later preferred student-set purposes over teacher-set ones when her view of instruction expanded.

Present reading functionally. Zirbes shared with many progressives an aversion to separating instruction into specific subject areas. She argued against compartmentalizing knowledge and skills according to distinctions inferred by adult minds. Teaching reading only during "reading" time and social studies only during "social studies" time seemed absurd to her. In addition, teaching skills such as inferring main ideas only when a program stipulated it

MAY 1986

seemed ill advised. Zirbes realized that knowledge and abilities could be analyzed and segmented into discrete parts, but she believed that presenting the parts in a preset order disintegrated effective learning situations. Instead, she argued for involving students in purposeful situations and then for providing specific materials and instruction as the need occurred. Reading lessons were thought to be most effective when students were interested in a topic and sought to make sense of their worlds, not when a fixed-in-advance program dictated that instruction should occur. She reported one incident that she had observed that clearly violated her notion of presenting reading functionally: "I am thinking of a teaching situation where a teacher had used decorations to make the whole class-room radiate a Christmas spirit. There were Christmas pictures,—one a Santa Claus—cutouts, chains and evergreens. It was just before Christmas and the children were flooded with Christmas, when she said, 'Now children, forget all about Christmas and take out your readers; we are going to read *The Gray Cat* today' " (Zirbes, 1932b, pp. 5–6).

Along with introducing reading materials that fit students' current interests, Zirbes advocated presenting skills that fit students' needs in relation to their materials. The sequence for presenting phonic elements, sight words, and comprehension processes was to be established by what students needed to know in order to cope with their current reading materials. She was in favor of teachers having a scope of reading skills in mind, but students' needs were to determine the sequence of skills presentation. She reported that progressive practice "grants that there are places for specific training, but those places are on the way to broader outcomes, and should be determined with reference to specific needs and uses" (Zirbes, 1928b, p. 47). This opportunistic method of introducing skills was in clear opposition to the systematic methods recommended by researchers such as

Arthur I. Gates (1926) and adopted by basal reader programs.

Zirbes field tested and published three manuals of reading practices (Zirbes, 1924a, 1925b; Zirbes, Keelor, & Miner, 1927), and she produced a kit of books and other visual media for primary-grade children (Zirbes, 1927), so she clearly was willing to provide materials for classroom instruction. But she was unwilling to be part of a systematic, sequenced program that was designed without input from the particular students to be served. In fact, she demonstrated her conviction by rejecting several offers from William S. Gray to participate in the production of basal reader programs.³ Her disdain for Gray's support of systematic, preset instruction was further demonstrated by her critical review of the thirty-sixth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE), which Gray chaired. According to Zirbes, the yearbook contained "an abiding and unquestioning faith in the 'systematic introduction of skills in an orderly arrangement of successively difficult steps' " (Zirbes, 1937, p. 221). She pointed out that the yearbook, to its discredit, did not indicate that an alternative method of introducing skills was available.

Zirbes's rejections of Gray's offers and her criticisms of his work are noteworthy because she worked with him on several substantive projects. She collaborated with Gray on the twenty-fourth NSSE yearbook, and they produced two lengthy chapters for Hillegas's *The Classroom Teacher* (Gray & Zirbes, 1927–1928a, 1927–1928b). In addition, Gray was involved in the early planning of Zirbes's primary-grade materials project for Keystone. An exchange of letters between the two about a visit by Gray to the Cincinnati, Ohio, public schools also indicates that Gray and Zirbes had a somewhat close working relationship.⁴ Despite this connection, Zirbes never compromised her belief that reading should be presented to students in a functional manner.

Encourage wide reading. At the middle of this century Zirbes (1950b) claimed that the wealth of reading materials available to young children was “an educational achievement of note” (p. 2). She praised McGuffey’s 1-century-old, pioneering contribution of providing graded reading materials that were reasonably suited to the interests and abilities of children, but she saw the value of such graded, basic readers as anachronistic for 1950. The abundance of well-crafted, inexpensive children’s literature seemed to her an unprecedented opportunity for balanced reading instruction.

Stocking classrooms with library books, magazines, encyclopedias, and brochures; conducting an individualized reading program with much time for self-selected, self-directed reading (Zirbes, 1941, 1950a, 1956, 1961); and conducting research projects provided the balance that Zirbes sought. Such wide reading balanced individuals’ profiles because each child needed to read at more than one level; wide reading opportunities were appropriate for classes because each class always contained students with a range of individual differences.

The great regard that Zirbes had for children’s literature is demonstrated by the books that she produced for young children. She wrote four books in collaboration with others, which were part of a set produced by Keystone View Company (Keliher & Zirbes, 1930; Zirbes & Keliher, 1939; Zirbes & Wesley, 1926, 1928). The books were accompanied by stereographs and lantern slides in order to add to children’s concept development and reading attitudes.⁵ Two other pieces of children’s literature were published individually by separate houses (Zirbes, 1932a, 1960).

Discussion

While gathering data for this report, I encountered many respected individuals in the reading field who did not know about Laura Zirbes or her work. Her low visi-

bility is surprising, especially because of her prolific writings. Two explanations might account for why Zirbes is relatively unknown today to reading professionals. First, she did not construct a compelling theoretical rationale or data base to support her convictions. She relied primarily on exhortations in her writings, ignoring tightly reasoned support for her case. Along this same line, her published recommendations were typically stated in general rather than specific terms. She left day-to-day classroom management concerns to the creativity of teachers. Her best work seems to have occurred when she directly faced groups of people.

A second possible reason for Zirbes’s eclipse is that she was not part of the reading establishment. She did not produce a reading education textbook; she was not connected with a basal reader program; and she was not active in the professional reading associations. Furthermore, Zirbes’s view of reading instruction, especially with its disdain for preset sequencing, deviated from the mainstream of the reading education profession during the middle of this century.

Even though this paper highlights Zirbes’s thoughts about reading instruction, it is important to realize that it is restricted because it only describes the major, consistent themes that I inferred. Zirbes wrote about facets of reading that are not presented here. She commented in some detail on concerns such as reading interests, social responsibility, innovation, and assessment, but her comments were limited. To illustrate, early in her career Zirbes wrote about reading assessment issues that involved diagnosis, testing, and evaluation (see, e.g., Gray & Zirbes, 1927; Whipple, 1925; Zirbes, 1918, 1925a, 1928a, 1928d, 1929c). However, reading assessment was not a well-developed, long-standing concern of hers. Travers (1983) suggests that Zirbes’s chapter on reading tests in the twenty-fourth NSSE yearbook “showed little enthusiasm” (p. 357), and

MAY 1986

the page space that she devoted to assessment in her writings decreased substantially over time. Consequently, her view of the role of assessment in reading instruction is omitted in this report.

Another restriction of this paper is that it does not examine the implementation of Zirbes's recommended instruction in American schools. Despite progressive recommendations through the years, such instruction seems to have been embraced only in scattered parts of the country. Contemporary reports of elementary school reading practices (EPIE, 1977; Rosenshine, 1981; Sirotnik, 1981) indicate that the dominant pattern consists of rather traditional activities. Teachers, not students, plan and initiate reading activities. Reading materials largely consist of a single textbook and corresponding worksheets. Reading activities follow a prescribed sequence and are conducted during specific time periods. Exceptions to these practices certainly exist, but traditional, teacher-centered instruction seems to occur most frequently. Twenty years ago Harris suggested that progressive reading recommendations "made an impression without winning a victory" (1964, p. 137). Others have fervently advocated the conception of reading instruction that Zirbes articulated, yet it seems to be practiced only to a moderate degree. This paper focuses on the nature of Zirbes's recommendations for instruction. The links between progressive recommendations and what actually occurred in classrooms certainly deserve attention.

In closing, this paper points out how one individual, Laura Zirbes, applied the general concepts of progressive education to a specific area of the curriculum. Zirbes connected the progressive goal of balanced development to reading, and she endorsed purposeful activity, language arts integration, functional instruction, and wide reading as the primary means to this goal. Zirbes's work has implications for classroom practice mainly by its articula-

tion of a coherent instructional program. Educators who ground their teaching practices in balanced development are able to plan and implement consistent activities. For instance, the goal of balanced development clearly justifies reading instruction throughout the class day rather than just during the time set aside for working with basal reader materials. If students encounter words that contain a noteworthy spelling pattern in social studies materials, then the teacher might point out that pattern. Writing activities can be conducted that focus on what students read during study of the content areas. Time for independent reading can be defended. The consistency of daily classroom instruction can be enhanced by following Zirbes's recommendations and by creating additional procedures that are within the spirit of progressive thought.

Teachers who cannot accept Zirbes's view of instruction might compare their viewpoints with hers for purposes of clarification. Having one view that is articulated provides a point of reference that others can use when articulating their own views. To be sure, factors such as time, discipline, and mandated materials influence daily instruction (Duffy, 1982). But teachers with a clear sense of direction certainly are to be preferred over those who fill their days with whatever comes along.

Finally, historical case studies such as this one can refine conceptions of a particular point of view by clarifying its foundations. To illustrate, progressive conceptions of instruction can be understood in several different yet related ways. The "new progressives" of the 1960s who resonated to the work of A. S. Neill supported a form of child-centered instruction that was quite libertarian. For instance, the children at Neill's Summerhill school attended classes only when they desired. Furthermore, some educators and noneducators seemed to equate progressive instruction with the schooling caricatured in the popular novel and movie *Auntie Mame*,

which had children running naked through the halls. As this paper shows, at least one early proponent of progressive education endorsed more down-to-earth practices.

Notes

1. Most of the biographical data on Laura Zirbes reported here comes from news releases and vitae information provided by the university archives staff of Ohio State University. In addition, Seeger (1954) provides a helpful, though incomplete, bibliography of Zirbes's publications. Unfortunately, no collection of Zirbes's personal papers is held by Ohio State University or Teachers College, Columbia University, and no one acquainted with Zirbes that I contacted knew of such a collection.

2. Ten individuals whose careers indicated that they shared some of the same ideology as Laura Zirbes were contacted in order to obtain information about her and to assess her status in reading education. The 10 who responded to my inquiries were Roach Van Allen, Walter Barbe, Alvina Treut Burrows, Roma Gans, Leland Jacobs, Lou LaBrant, Nancy Larrick, Russell G. Stauffer, Jeannette Veatch, and M. Jerry Weiss. All comments about Zirbes that appear in this paper are my own.

3. Charles R. May (personal communication, September 15, 1983) shared this information. May interviewed Zirbes 4 months before her death as part of his dissertation research on the Ohio State University laboratory school.

4. Copies of the May 1931 letters were given to me by Nancy Mavrogenes, who found them in William S. Gray's papers stored with the Department of Education, Judd Hall, University of Chicago. Mavrogenes was gathering data for her doctoral dissertation on Gray. In the letters, Zirbes warned Gray about the public school situation in Cincinnati, Ohio, wherein the principals assumed expanded roles as instructional leaders. Zirbes had been brought in "to emphasize parts of the reading program which lie definitely outside of the province of basic readers." She bluntly reported finding the principals "somewhat superannuated, on the whole, and not particularly aware of the fundamental principles underlying certain changing practices in reading."

5. Zirbes was an early advocate of visual aids in classrooms. In an address to the newly formed Department of Visual Education of the National Education Association, Zirbes (1924b)

reported the value of slide presentations for concept development. This report recently was characterized as "astonishingly ahead of its time" (Cambre, 1981, p. 5) in an historical overview of instructional media.

References

- Bigelow, M. A., & Broadhurst, J. (1924). *Health for every day*. New York: Silver Burdett.
- Cambre, M. A. (1981). Historical overview of formative evaluation of instructional media products. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, **29**, 3-25.
- Childhood Education* (1967), **44**, 215.
- Cohen, R. D., & Mohl, R. A. (1979). *Paradox of progressive education: The Gary Plan and urban schooling*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat.
- Corson, H. (1895). Vocal culture in its relation to literary culture. *Atlantic Monthly*, **75**, 810-816.
- Cremin, L. A. (1961). *The transformation of the school: Progressivism in American education, 1876-1957*. New York: Knopf.
- Doll, W. E., Jr. (1983). A re-visioning of progressive education. *Theory into Practice*, **22**, 166-173.
- Duffy, G. G. (1982). Fighting off the alligators: What research in real classrooms has to say about reading instruction. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, **14**, 357-373.
- Educational Products Information Exchange (EPIE). (1977). *Report on a national study of the nature and the quality of instructional materials most used by teachers and learners* (Tech. Rep. No. 76). New York: EPIE Institute.
- Gates, A. I. (1926). A modern systematic vs. opportunistic method of teaching. *Teachers College Record*, **27**, 679-701.
- Gray, W. S., & Zirbes, L. (1927). Diagnosis and remedial teaching. *Ohio Schools*, **5**, 315-316.
- Gray, W. S., & Zirbes, L. (1927-1928a). Primary reading. In M. B. Hillegas (Ed.), *The classroom teacher* (Vol. 2, pp. 39-386). Chicago: Classroom Teacher.
- Gray, W. S., & Zirbes, L. (1927-1928b). Reading in the intermediate grades. In M. B. Hillegas (Ed.), *The classroom teacher* (Vol. 6, pp. 81-282). Chicago: Classroom Teacher.
- Harris, A. J. (1964). Progressive education and reading instruction. *Reading Teacher*, **18**, 128-138.
- Keliher, A., & Zirbes, L. (1930). *Animal tales: True stories for boys and girls who like to read*

MAY 1986

- about animals. Meadville, PA: Keystone View.
- Kilpatrick, W. H. (1918). The project method. *Teachers College Record*, **19**, 319–335.
- Mayhew, K. C., & Edwards, A. C. (1965). *The Dewey school*. New York: Atherton. (Original work published 1936)
- Rosenshine, B. V. (1981). How time is spent in elementary classrooms. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, **17**, 16–24.
- Seeger, R. E. (1954). *The writings of Laura Zirbes: A bibliography*. Columbus: Ohio State University, College of Education.
- Sirotnik, K. A. (1981). *What you see is what you get: A summary of observations in over 1000 elementary and secondary classrooms* (A Study of Schooling in the United States. Tech. Rep. Series No. 29). Los Angeles: University of California, Graduate School of Education.
- Travers, R. M. W. (1983). *How research has changed American schools*. Kalamazoo, MI: Mythos.
- Whipple, G. M. (Ed.). (1925). *Report of the National Committee on Reading* (Twenty-fourth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education). Bloomington, IL: Public School.
- Zirbes, L. (1918). Diagnostic measurement as a basis for procedure. *Elementary School Journal*, **18**, 505–522.
- Zirbes, L. (1924a). *Illustrative units of reading activities for all grades or growth stages, with pertinent problems and reference readings* (Experimental ed.). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College.
- Zirbes, L. (1924b). The relation of visual aids to educational objectives. In National Education Association of the United States, *Addresses and proceedings of the second annual meeting* (pp. 964–966). Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Zirbes, L. (1925a). Attacking the causes of reading deficiency. *Teachers College Record*, **26**, 856–866.
- Zirbes, L. (1925b). *Beginning reading with the farm book* (Teacher's, experimental ed.). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College.
- Zirbes, L. (1927). *Teachers guide to Keystone Primary Set*. Meadville, PA: Keystone View.
- Zirbes, L. (1928a). Checking up on the reading habits in the elementary school. *Individualized Instruction*, **1**, 10.
- Zirbes, L. (1928b). *Comparative studies of current practice in reading, with techniques for the improvement of teaching* (Teachers College Contributions to Education No. 316). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College.
- Zirbes, L. (1928c). Progressive practice in reading. *Progressive Education*, **5**, 99–103.
- Zirbes, L. (1928d). Some character and personality problems in remedial cases in reading. *Childhood Education*, **5**, 171–176.
- Zirbes, L. (1929a). An evaluation of reading in elementary schools. In J. H. MacLachy (Ed.), *Ohio State educational conference* (Proceedings of the ninth annual educational conference) (pp. 226–228). Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Zirbes, L. (1929b). Purposeful reading. *Educational Research Bulletin*, **8**, 94–97, 102–105.
- Zirbes, L. (1929c). The supervision of reading. In W. H. Burton (Ed.), *The supervision of elementary subjects* (pp. 132–191). New York: Appleton.
- Zirbes, L. (1932a). *Little journeys with Washington*. Richmond, VA: Johnson.
- Zirbes, L. (1932b). Present practices in teaching reading as they affect child development. In A. Temple (Ed.), *A better beginning in reading for young children* (Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education) (pp. 2–7). Washington, DC: Association for Childhood Education.
- Zirbes, L. (1937). The teaching of reading: A second report (Review of *The teaching of reading: A second report* [Thirty-sixth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Pt. 1]). *Curriculum Journal*, **8**, 220–221.
- Zirbes, L. (1940). What is a modern reading program? *Educational Method*, **20**, 151–155.
- Zirbes, L. (1941). Individual differences among pupils, and their relation to the reading program, with special reference to the middle grades. In W. S. Gray (Ed.), *Adjusting reading programs to individuals* (Supplementary Educational Monographs No. 52) (pp. 66–70). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Zirbes, L. (1950a). The role of reading in achieving the goals of schooling in grades one to three. In W. S. Gray (Ed.), *Keeping reading programs abreast of the times* (Supplementary Educational Monographs No. 72) (pp. 25–28). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Zirbes, L. (1950b). *What is wrong with today's reading instruction?* Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Zirbes, L. (1956). Individualized reading. In F. C. Gruber (Ed.), *Teaching in America* (Forty-third annual Schoolmen's Week proceedings) (pp. 50–52). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Zirbes, L. (1959). *Spurs to creative teaching*. New York: Putnam.

- Zirbes, L. (1960). *How many bears?* New York: Putnam.
- Zirbes, L. (1961). Reading reconsidered. *Grade Teacher*, 78, 41, 90, 92, 94–95.
- Zirbes, L., Keelor, K., & Miner, P. (1927). *Practice exercises and checks on silent reading in the primary grades: Report of experimentation*. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College.
- Zirbes, L., & Keliher, A. (1939). *The book of pets, for boys and girls learning to read*. Meadville, PA: Keystone View.
- Zirbes, L., & Wesley, M. (1926). *The story of milk for boys and girls who have just learned to read*. Meadville, PA: Keystone View.
- Zirbes, L., & Wesley, M. (1928). *Workers: Written for boys and girls who want to read about the busy world*. Meadville, PA: Keystone View.