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ONE METHOD OF TEACHING A SECONDARY SCHOOL READING COURSE

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While teaching secondary school reading courses, many instructors are faced with a problem because of the various majors held by the students in each class. Students with many different majors are found in each class, and there are few common reading needs in these areas. This writer tried a method of organizing a secondary school reading class which seemed quite effective in meeting the needs of the students.

Whole-Class Activities

Approximately two-thirds of the secondary school reading course was devoted to whole-class learnings about reading. There are a number of topics that are sufficiently universal to enable all preservice teachers to study them in a whole-group setting. While presenting these reading topics, a number of teaching devices were used. Panels consisting of approximately four students each studied one of the universal topics, reading textbooks and periodical articles and reporting to the entire class employing such techniques as role playing, exchange of ideas among panel members, and eliciting responses from the entire class. Other teaching techniques included the use of lectures by the instructor, whole-class discussions, and appropriate films and filmstrips. A series of films on reading improvement produced by Coronet Films proved useful in clarifying some of the universal topics.

The universal topics in reading studied were as follows:

- (1) *Elementary Reading Methods*—Those that seemed to be related most directly to secondary reading were presented. The basal reader approach which utilizes a method of presentation applicable to the giving of a secondary school reading assignment was illustrated as was the individualized reading plan which is related to secondary school unit teaching.
- (2) *Word Recognition Techniques*—The value and use of word form clues, picture and context clues, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and dictionary usage were illustrated.
- (3) *Comprehension Skills*—The skills of literal and inferential comprehension, critical reading, and creative (integrative) reading and their use in secondary schools was studied.

- (4) *Rate of Comprehension*—Several methods to develop the reading rate were presented. Stress was given to the development of flexibility in rate of reading.
- (5) *Development of a Meaning and Concept Vocabulary*—Various methods of meaning and concept development at the secondary school level were illustrated.
- (6) *Developing an Interest in Reading*—A number of ways to motivate secondary school students to read were presented.
- (7) *Study Skills*—Various study skills such as finding main ideas, locating significant details, following directions, outlining, note-taking, and summarizing were illustrated.
- (8) *Survey Q3R*—This study technique with its steps of survey, question, read, reread, and reconstruct (review) was studied. (3) Emphasis was placed upon how to adapt this study technique to the various subject matter areas.
- (9) *Evaluation of Reading*—The value and use of standardized and informal reading tests at the secondary school level was illustrated.

Small-Group Activities

The last one-third of the course was devoted to small-group work. The students were divided into groups on the basis of their major area, and the following areas formed the groups:

English—Speech—Foreign Language
 Social Science
 Science
 Mathematics
 Business Education
 Industrial Arts—Home Economics
 Physical Education—Driver Education
 Music
 Art

There are differences in the reading needs of the majors that are grouped, but the common reading needs seemed to justify their formation.

Each group consisted of four to eight students, and each selected a chairman who was responsible to the instructor and a recorder. The instructor assigned several topics to be researched and discussed during each class period, and the chairman then directed the activities of his group.

Some of the topics studied were the following:

- (1) The specialized reading skills required in the area.
- (2) The value of reading instruction in the area.
- (3) Effective methods of giving a reading assignment in the area.
- (4) Several methods to provide best for the individual reading differences of secondary students.

Several topics studied by the groups in the academic areas were as follows:

- (1) The construction of informal reading tests to determine the ability of secondary students to read the prescribed textbooks.
- (2) The determination of the readability level of the prescribed textbooks using the Dale-Chall Readability Formula. (2)

Several teaching techniques were employed in the groups. Video tapes constructed in the University High School were used in some of the groups. The video tapes illustrated methods for teaching the special reading skills in the various subject matter areas and several methods for giving effective reading assignments. Participation in University High School classes would have been desirable and is highly recommended, but was not possible because the University High School facilities were already being used for junior participation.

Summary

College instructors face a difficult problem in teaching secondary school reading courses because of the many major areas represented by the students in each class. This writer attempted to make the course as meaningful and practical as possible to all of the students.

The first two-thirds of the class periods were devoted to the study of some universal topics in reading. These topics were designed to help the college students improve the general reading skills of their future secondary school students. The last one-third of the sessions were devoted to small-group instruction in which each student studied only the special reading skills and needs of his major area.

References

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3. Robinson, Francis P. *Effective Study*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1946.