

7-1-1972

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Recommended Citation

Criscuolo, N. P. (1972). Two Effective In-Service Reading Programs. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 12 (4). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol12/iss4/2

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TWO EFFECTIVE IN-SERVICE READING PROGRAMS

Nicholas P. Criscuolo

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In-service opportunities are given to secondary teachers in the New Haven public schools twice a month. On alternate Mondays students are released at 1 p.m., and teachers remain at their schools for in-service work. Such flexibility in scheduling permits the development of effective in-service education, and it is the purpose of this article to describe two programs in reading conducted recently in New Haven: one at the high school level and another at the middle school level.

One of these Monday afternoon sessions was reserved for a Reading Exposition which was held in the Library of the Wilbur L. Cross High School. The purpose of this Exposition was to enable teachers to become acquainted with some of the latest reading materials and equipment.

Sales representatives from the various book companies had been invited to display their materials. Exhibits of materials were set up in various sections of the Library, and teachers were able to visit each booth to see the materials and discuss their use with the representatives.

Some of the materials displayed which were of particular interest were the *Reading Attainment System* (Grolier), *The Name of the Game* (New Dimensions in Education), *Troubleshooters* and *Break-through* (Houghton Mifflin), and *Programmed Reading for Adults* (McGraw-Hill). In addition to viewing the materials, various reading bulletins and pamphlets were distributed free-of-charge.

In planning effective in-service reading programs, group activity and participation are important considerations. Such considerations were incorporated into a recent reading workshop for the English teachers in the city's three middle schools. Held at the Sheridan Middle School, the English teachers were divided into two groups for discussions of the topics: "Diagnosing Reading Problems in the Classroom" and "Developing Word Attack Skills." Reading teachers led both discussion groups.

The second part of this workshop employed the technique of "brainstorming." The two groups were subdivided into four groups. Each group received a question for discussion. A recorder was chosen in each group to jot down comments made for feedback when the

groups returned for a general discussion and evaluation of the workshop. The four questions discussed were:

1) What are some reading problems facing English teachers at the middle school level and what can be done about these problems?

2) What are some formal and informal ways to evaluate reading progress?

3) What are some techniques you have used to motivate students to read?

4) If you think that a record of the students' reading progress is important, what kinds of information would you include?

The recorders reported on their group's comments, and reactions to these comments were made by the author.

Both in-service reading programs were received enthusiastically by the secondary English teachers who attended them. Teachers felt that the Reading Exposition was practical and had served a real need for them to increase their knowledge of materials which could be used with the students enrolled in their classes. The middle school workshop was felt to be an effective one because it not only provided specific kinds of information on pertinent topics but permitted the English teachers a chance to participate in a meaningful way.