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A REPORT ON THE USE OF COLOR CODED CARDS TO PROMOTE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION IN SPANISH CLASSES.

Abington High School, Pa. North Campus.

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A report on the use of color-coded cards to teach slow learners beginning Spanish is presented here. Each card packet taught a specific concept and allowed for individualized pacing and self-testing. Achievement tests were administered at specific intervals to assess student progress. The report indicates that there was a significant increase in the number of passing grades among students in this individualized program. Recommendations are that the maximum size of a low ability class be twenty students, that color-coded cards continue to be used with the low-ability group, and that color cards also be developed for more advanced language students. A sample achievement test is appended to the report. (AF)

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A REPORT ON THE USE OF COLOR CODED CARDS TO
PROMOTE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION
IN SPANISH CLASSES

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I. THE PROBLEM

This year a decision was made to track students in first year French and Spanish classes. At the end of the first marking period these students were tested and placed into a one, two, or three ability group. The groups were identified as follows:

Group 1 - Show good language learning ability

Group 2 - Show average language learning ability

Group 3 - Show less-than-average language learning ability

Thirty-two students classified as Group 3 were assigned to the writer, and their grade distribution was:

C - 11, D - 19, F - 2

After working with these students for two weeks, the writer decided to investigate the possibility of using colored cards to help them recognize various concepts. The color card method was so enthusiastically received, that it was difficult to produce enough color packets. A decision was made to provide released time under Title III. At this point the program was developed to include spelling, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure using the student text, La Familia Fernández, as a guide.

II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The program consisted of a series of packets containing color coded cards. Each packet taught a specific concept. Every student began with packet number one and proceeded at his own pace.

Student procedure with the color coded cards

- Phase #1 The student worked by himself at his own pace to learn the concept developed in that particular packet by matching colors to help him locate the correct responses.
- Phase #2 When the student felt that he had learned the concept, he took the self-test that was contained in the packet. If he had less than two mistakes, he gave the test to the teacher and proceeded to work with the next packet. If he had more than two mistakes, he was required to review the materials.
- Phase #3 After the student had mastered a specific number of packets, he was retested, and special attention was given to his oral and written achievement. These scores determined his marking period grade.

Test scores were charted for a daily check on student progress and achievement. In addition to the packet self-tests, the student also took four written tests and one oral test. (See appendix for a sample written test.)

Since a special grading system had to be devised, letter grades were assigned to the completion of a specific number of packets each marking period. The number of packets required depended upon the degree of difficulty presented by the lessons.

III PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Two types of data were collected and analyzed. One type of data, kept in the teacher's grade book as a simple grid chart, was the daily record of each student's test scores. This information was made available to any student wishing to compare his achievement with that of other members of his class.

The other type of data was in the form of a graph showing the progress of each student through the various instructional packets during the three marking periods in which the packets were used. (See figure, Page

That the use of the color coded cards for the slower learner might have been effective in reducing the number of "F's", seems to be substantiated somewhat by the Interim Report on a Continuous Progress Program in Spanish 1 and French 1 by Dr. Glatthorn, Dr. Ferderbar, and Alan Quay. This report related that the per cent of "D's" and "F's" after regrouping showed an average decrease of approximately 21 per cent. In Spanish 1 (the report also shows) the per cent of failures the second marking period was only one-ninth that of the same marking period the previous year, when the classes were ungrouped and without packets. For the third marking period, the per cent of "F's" in Spanish 1 still remained approximately one-third that of the 1966-67 Spanish 1 classes.

Figure 1

GRAPH SHOWING THE RELATIVE PROGRESS, OF EACH NINTH AND TENTH GRADE STUDENT IN THE CLASS, THROUGH THE PACKET LESSONS

Key

9th grade student

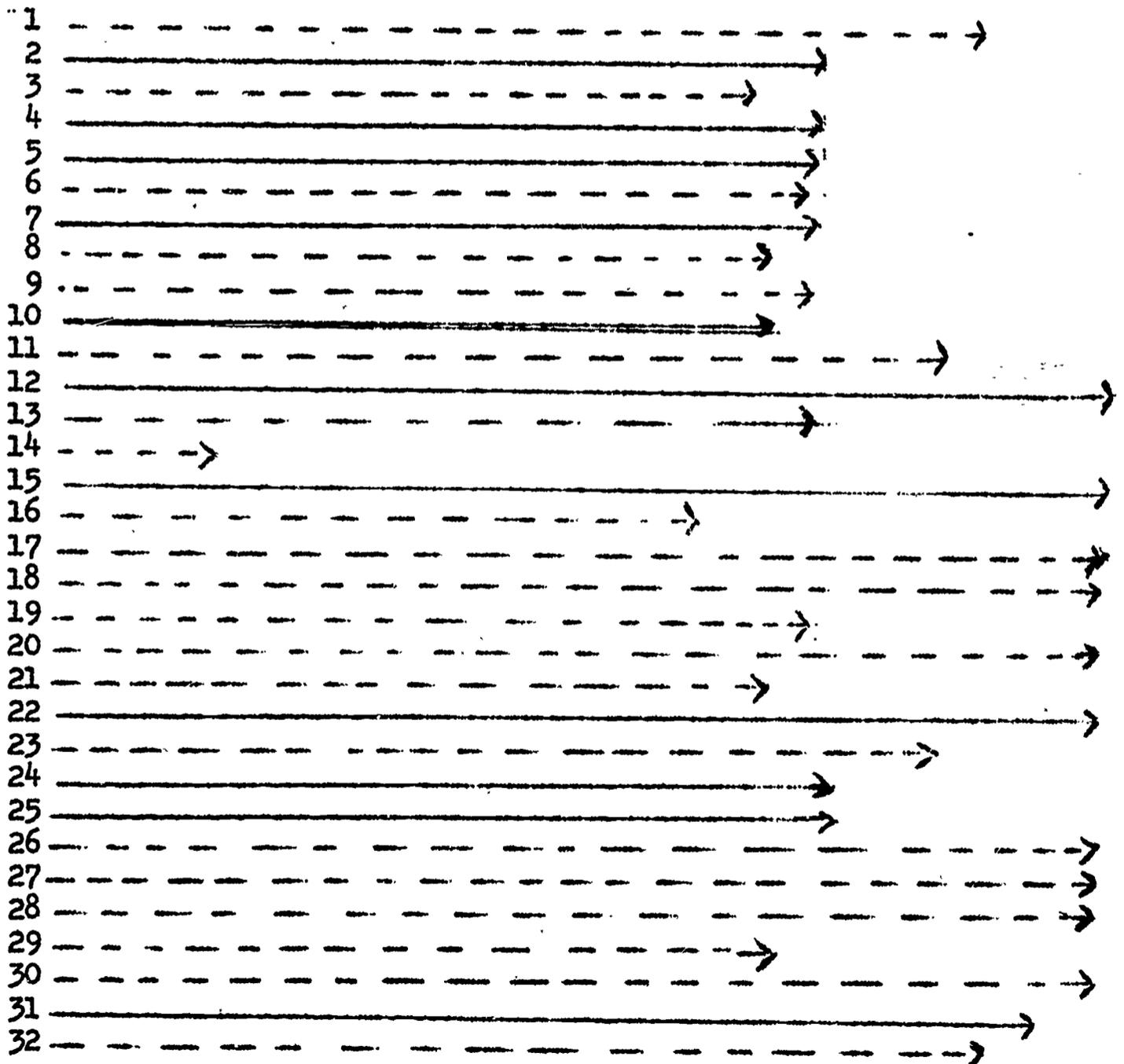
(represented by dotted line)

10th grade student

(represented by solid line)

No. of Packets 5 15 25 35 45 55 65 75 85 95

Student No.



As indicated in figure No. 1, three of eleven tenth grade students and seven of twenty-one ninth grade students finished 95 packets. That is almost one third of the students finished all of the packets (95) and received, with the help of their test marks, a grade of C. One-half of the students, many of whom had been receiving F's before regrouping, managed to earn D's. The remaining one-sixth of the students received F's. Some of these F students covered as many as 70 packets but neglected to learn the concepts as thoroughly as was necessary.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Of the thirty-two students in the third and fourth marking periods, there were fifteen who showed a definite interest in and willingness to work with their materials. Of these, six have the necessary language background to continue next year in a 11₃ ability group. The other nine worked diligently but unfortunately had difficulty retaining more than two or three concepts, thus despite their efforts, their grades continued to remain low.

Seven students were repeaters who were taking Spanish for the second or third consecutive year because of parental pressure.

Two definite advantages were evident:

Each student was able to proceed at his own pace and at the same time realized that he was accomplishing something.

The students did not have to be constantly supervised, and this permitted the teacher to help individual students with their questions and oral work.

Two disadvantages were:

Some of the sets became torn, disorganized or lost when the students did not exercise proper care.

The more industrious student was apt to take the packets from the classroom and eventually the sets were lost.

Conclusions

The difficulties encountered with this particular class
were:

There were too many repeaters in one class. The class of thirty-two (twenty-seven boys and five girls) was definitely too large. A class of twenty students would possibly have been more advantageous.

Though two students would have preferred not to move up and leave their friends, there was little parental or teacher objection. The continuous progress program seems to have been somewhat successful since there was a 21% average drop in the number of failures.

Recommendations

The writer strongly recommends that future classes of slow learners or underachievers such as the students described in this study be held to a maximum of 20 students.

The writer also strongly recommends that the color card system be used for the slow learner who has a definite interest in learning a foreign language.

Further development of these cards should be made to include material for the second and third year student. These cards or packets could then be used in a language clinic as a means of review as well as a means of reinforcement for many other language students.

Some provision should be made for the slower learners to continue with this type of instruction during the summer months and thus enable him to continue his language program in September, at the proper level.

Other media should be examined for use as possible aid to students presently repeating the language.

APPENDIX - A

SAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

ME LLAMO _____

Below are a list of Spanish nouns. Decide whether the noun is masculine, feminine, singular or plural. Place the LETTER of your answer in the space provided at the left of the noun. EL, LOS, LA, LAS

A B C D

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. día | _____ 16. médico | _____ 31. sandwich |
| _____ 2. papá | _____ 17. huesos | _____ 32. fruta |
| _____ 3. hermanas | _____ 18. perro | _____ 33. vasos |
| _____ 4. casa | _____ 19. gusto | _____ 34. ranas |
| _____ 5. muchachos | _____ 20. amigas | _____ 35. mañana |
| _____ 6. vista | _____ 21. años | _____ 36. padres |
| _____ 7. hombre | _____ 22. universidad | _____ 37. parque |
| _____ 8. cajas | _____ 23. señores | _____ 38. escuela |
| _____ 9. agua | _____ 24. razón | _____ 39. días |
| _____ 10. arroyo | _____ 25. dulces | _____ 40. tardes |
| _____ 11. canicas | _____ 26. fuente | _____ 41. sombrero |
| _____ 12. zapato | _____ 27. dedos | _____ 42. lunes |
| _____ 13. escaparates | _____ 28. estudiante | _____ 43. leche |
| _____ 14. hambre | _____ 29. vestidos | _____ 44. naranjas |
| _____ 15. duraznos | _____ 30. paseo | _____ 45. estómago |
| | | _____ 46. sed |

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED RETURN THE
PAPER.

ME LLAMO _____

I. Rewrite the following sentences in the negative.

1. Pepito es un médico. _____
2. El y yo estamos bien. _____
3. Ella se llama María. _____
4. Yo tengo mucha hambre. _____
5. Juan y María viven aquí. _____

II. Write the following in the plural.

1. la universidad bonita _____
2. el señor grande _____
3. Su niño gordo _____
4. nuestra escuela roja _____
5. mi vestido azul _____

III. Write the following in Spanish.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Who _____ | 2. Whom _____ |
| 3. How _____ | 4. What _____ |
| 5. When _____ | 6. Where _____ |
| 7. Why _____ | |

IV. Write the following numbers in Spanish.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 7 _____ | 13 _____ |
| 15 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 14 _____ | 12 _____ |

V. Complete the following sentences.

1. Pepito, Emilio y Amelia son _____.
2. Pepito _____ cinco años.
3. Yo _____ gordo.
4. Nosotros _____ sed.
5. Yo _____ en la escuela.

Conjugate the following verbs. When you are finished return the paper to me.

ESTAR

yo _____

tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

QUERER

Yo _____

tú _____

usted _____

nosotros _____

él y ella _____

llamarse

yo _____

tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

BUSCAR

yo _____

tú _____

Juan _____

María y yo _____

Los niños _____

IR

yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

él y yo _____

usteded _____

SER

YO _____

tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

VIVIR

yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

Juan y yo _____

Juan y María _____

TRAER

Yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

Nosotros _____

Los perros _____

SABER

yo _____

tú _____

Pepito _____

El y yo _____

el y ella _____

PONER

Yo _____

tú _____

El perro _____

Nosotros _____

Ustedes _____

TENER

Yo _____

tú _____

Elena _____

Carlos y yo _____

Juan y María _____

DAR

Yo _____

tú _____

usted _____

el y yo _____

ellos _____

