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ABSTRACT

The procedures taken and the results obtained in the planning of a reading and study skills course at Floyd Junior College are described. The course objectives and course structure are outlined. The aim of this course is to teach students reading, listening, notetaking, and study skills necessary for college success and to provide them with adequate practice for mastery of these skills. Students are tested both at the beginning and end of the course, and their scores are graphed to show each student's progress. Students are taught either by the instructors or by use of faculty-prepared or commercially-prepared tapes. Each faculty member prepared a taped lecture, an excerpt from his text, and a sample test over this material. A student experiencing difficulty in any course may choose to work individually on tapes, excerpts, and tests. Each student evaluates and improves his own place of study and develops a system of budgeting his time and keeps a weekly schedule of planned activities which are checked by the faculty. References are included. (AW)

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PLANS FOR EDUCATION 100:

A READING AND STUDY SKILLS COURSE AT FLOYD JUNIOR COLLEGE

By Susan Ann Howell, Instructor in Education

Presented at the National Reading Conference

December 3, 1971

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Plans for Education 100,
A Reading and Study Skills Course At
Floyd Junior College

Statement of Problem

To plan a combination reading, listening, and study skills course which will be of immediate and long range benefit to freshmen at Floyd Junior College.

Introduction

This paper describes the procedures taken and the results obtained in the planning of the curriculum for the combination study skills and reading course entitled Education 100 at Floyd Junior College.

Actions Planned

- I. Survey materials and teaching methods used in other junior college reading and study skills courses.
- II. Examine reading and study skills texts for use in this course.

- III. Study and select reference books, films, software, and hardware to be used.
- IV. Study screening procedures of other junior colleges in deciding how to select students for this course.
- V. Decide on teaching methods most relevant to this course.
- VI. Plan the curriculum for the course.

Actions Taken

- I. The DeKalb, Clayton, and Dalton Junior College reading departments were visited.
- II. Letters were written to several colleges asking for course descriptions of their reading and study skills programs.
- III. A study was made of reading and study skills problems of freshmen, with the help of instructors and professors at Floyd Junior College. The results of this study showed that entering freshmen have difficulty with notetaking, doing required reading, keeping up with daily studying, taking essay examinations, and following written instructions.
- IV. Objectives of the course were planned. They are included in the course description.
- V. Textbooks from various companies were considered for adoption. Each text was judged according to whether it would be beneficial in carrying out the objectives of the course. Although a variety of texts were chosen for resource materials, no specific one was selected for use by all students. Specific books are recommended for purchase by individual students whose needs can be served by those books.
- VI. Films, filmstrips, tapes and hardware were studied. So far no films or

filmstrips have been chosen although they are still being reviewed. The Xerox Listening Skills System was selected. Five Shadowsopes were purchased.

- VII. The basic methods for use in teaching the course were decided upon. The decisions made were based on how best to fulfill the objectives of the course. The course description explains the methods chosen.
- VIII. Screening for the course was based on the McGraw Hill Reading Test. Of the three part test, if two scores were below the fifth stanine students were recommended for the course.
- IX. Recycling of the course will depend on the following:
1. Evaluation of the course by the students and by the instructor.
 2. Reactions from students in class discussions.
 3. Re-evaluation of screening procedure for the course.
 4. Measurement of improvement of students' study skills and reading skills as determined by teacher made tests and McGraw Hill Reading and Study Skills Tests.
 5. Grades made by these students as they continue through college.

Objectives

1. Present a course in reading and study skills in order to enable the students to achieve greater success in college.
2. Examine different note-taking formats.
3. Acquaint the students with different types of lectures which they will encounter in college. These lectures are classified mainly as inductive, deductive, chronological, and explanatory.
4. Develop skill in note-taking through practice and evaluation of note-taking procedures.
5. Enable each student to improve his vocabulary in subject matter areas through directed vocabulary work in materials introduced during the course.
6. Motivate each student to evaluate and to improve his place of study.
7. Help each student develop a study schedule appropriate to his own needs.
8. Present a systematic approach of reading improvement which will enable each student to improve his ability in reading college texts.
9. Help each student improve his specific areas of weakness in reading.
10. Familiarize the students with massed and distributed study.
11. Acquaint the students with techniques of preparing for and taking objective and subjective tests.
12. Provide the students with suggestions for studying in different subject matter areas.
13. Acquaint the students with methods of reading graphic presentations.
14. Make students aware of the Library of Congress method of classifying books and give them practice in finding materials according to this method.
15. Introduce the students to library reference materials and provide them with some experience in using these materials.

Course Description

The aim of this Education 100 course at Floyd Junior College is to teach students reading, listening, note-taking, and study skills necessary for college success. Providing the student with adequate practice to enable him to realize mastery of these skills is an important part of this course.

Involving the faculty of the college in preparing materials for the course contributes to the success of the program. Each faculty member prepared a taped lecture, an excerpt from his text which served as a basis for his lecture, and a sample test over this material. The instructor was provided with relevant teaching aids and the college faculty became more aware of the needs of these students in their classes.

In order for this course to be meaningful, it is important for each student to experience improvement through application of principles that are introduced. Students are tested at the beginning of the course in listening, note-taking, reading and study skills. Each student's scores are graphed and made available to him. At the end of the course, post tests are given and scores are graphed to show the progress made by each student. Although this method of evaluation is useful, the evaluations made during the quarter by the student and instructor as skills are mastered are considered equally important.

Lectures by the instructor and commercially prepared tapes are now being used to introduce listening skills. The course instructor is in the process of preparing tapes which will be more appealing to college students. Plans are for these tapes to be completed and in use by spring quarter of 1972.

Note-taking skills are taught by the instructor and developed by each student through practicing note-taking from tapes prepared by the faculty. Different formats used in note-taking are presented to enable each student to decide on one

most appropriate for him. These formats are borrowed from the book How to Study in College by Walter Pauk, 1962 (6). Students evaluate their improvement through a scoring system adapted from the one devised by Robert A. Palmatier at the University of Georgia (5). Transparencies prepared by the instructor provide keys for each student to use in judging his notes.

Each student evaluates and improves his place of study. He also develops a system of budgeting his time and keeps a weekly schedule of planned activities. These two facets of the course are described in inductive and deductive lectures so that the students may develop skills in notetaking while at the same time they are exploring suggestions that will enhance the value of their study time. The terms inductive and deductive are drawn from Systems for Study by Raygor and Work, 1970 (8).

Integration of study skills with reading skills in a relevant situation is a unique characteristic of this course. Skills necessary for reading college texts are taught by the instructor. Students work to develop these skills through guided reading in the excerpts prepared by the faculty. Specific reading skills are:

1. Reading a paragraph to find the main sentence and supporting facts.
2. Reading a chapter. Intensive work on previewing a chapter before it is read, reading the chapter to organize main points and supporting facts, and recalling the most important ideas after reading are emphasized. The habit of making important questions from the chapter is encouraged. Although underlining is not emphasized, it is taught. Students are taught to exercise judgments in differentiating between fact and opinion and to adjust their rates of reading to the varied purposes of their reading.

3. Reading specific parts of a text including title page, table of contents, introduction, preface, appendix, and index.
4. Reading graphic presentations.
5. Vocabulary improvement.
6. The use of reference materials.

Selected reading materials are assigned to students who show weakness in specific skills as indicated by the diagnostic pre-test. These skills include the following:

1. Reading to understand the main idea.
2. Reading for significant facts.
3. Organizing material as one reads.
4. Skimming and scanning.
5. Reading at efficient rates.

Classroom practice in preparing for and taking tests involves lectures by the instructor, actual practice in taking sample tests devised by the faculty, and exercises in taking examinations adapted from Study in Depth by Doris Wilcox Gilbert, 1966 (2).

The course is planned so that reading skills in different disciplines develop naturally.

During the quarter a student who is experiencing difficulty in any course may choose to work individually on tapes, excerpts from texts, and tests related to the course with which he is having difficulty.

It will be apparent from the outline that all facets of this Education 100 course have been designed for maximum coordination. Techniques are presented and discussed theoretically. Then students gain practice in the use of the techniques discussed by means of exercises with the taped lectures and printed excerpts.

These exercises are then followed by careful evaluation of the effectiveness of note-taking and other study techniques in open and free discussion in class. The students' individual time schedules are checked from week to week and serve as a precise measurement to assist the student in determining his individual study requirements. Even the specific skills required for the proper approach to the reading of graphic presentations, and the practical procedures necessary for working rapidly and efficiently in the library are closely integrated with the materials studied elsewhere within the course. Vocabulary improvement emerges naturally from the material of the course, though the treatment of this important matter is not at all marginal. Unity and coherence, structure and proportion are human inventions imposed upon material in an effort to make sense of the chaos that surrounds us in the world of knowledge and experience. To learn and to remember one must establish pattern, and this course, both in content and in format, is premised on this belief.

The course outline suggests the structure of the course as it is taught each quarter; however, the materials are changed from quarter to quarter so as to represent a greater number of areas within these major disciplines of the college.

Course Outline

- 1st Week Explain objectives and course outline.
- Give and graph pretests in reading, study skills, listening, and note-taking.
- Introduce listening skills through lectures and Xerox listening Skills Tapes.
- 2nd Week Explain different formats used in note-taking and discuss note-taking techniques.
- Examine inductive and deductive lecture methods.
- Practice note-taking with deductive and inductive lectures given by the instructor. Inductive Lecture "How to Plan Your Study Area."
Deductive Lecture "Budgeting Your Time."
- Student evaluation of note-taking. The instructor will respond in a give-and-take classroom session to difficulties encountered in note-taking by the students.
- 3rd Week Explore differences between the explanatory and the chronological lecture.
- Practice note-taking on an explanatory lecture taped by the business department. Explanatory Lecture "Three Forms of Business Organizations." Chronological Lecture "The Firing of MacArthur."
- Student and teacher evaluation of notes in a give-and-take session.
- Begin vocabulary work, using students' notes of taped lectures.
- Check students' schedules assigned during first week. Discuss improvements that need to be made.
- 4th Week Introduce skills needed to read effectively paragraphs, chapters,

and specific parts of texts.

Begin to develop these skills through work in excerpts from texts in history and economics related to tapes presented during the week. Continue vocabulary improvement through a study of words selected from the excerpts being used.

Check students' weekly time schedules.

5th Week

Acquaint students with the techniques of study designed to master the essentials of a specific assignment.

Acquaint the student with the techniques of study needed to prepare the student comprehensively for the presentation of wide ranging materials on examinations and in long papers.

Continue to develop reading skills through introducing scientific reading material from the biology excerpt. Teacher and student evaluation of reading skills.

Practice note-taking from taped biology lecture entitled "Characteristics of Mosses, Lichens, and Liverworts."

Continue to develop vocabulary skills.

Check the students' time schedules.

6th Week

Discuss methods used in preparing for and taking objective tests. Study methods of improving test scores through teacher-made exercises of true-false, multiple choice, matching and objective questions.

Prepare for and take sample biology test (objective) over material covered during the fifth week.

Continue vocabulary development.

Check students' time schedules.

7th Week

Discuss methods used in preparing for and taking subjective tests. Practice taking notes from tape prepared by the English department entitled "Writing Better Themes." Use transparencies concerned with the taking of subjective tests.

Guided practice in reading from excerpt of theme writing in English text.

Continue vocabulary development.

Check students' time schedules.

8th Week

Review all skills covered and emphasize methods to use in studying history. Practice reading skills from excerpt of history test, listening and note-taking skills from history tape on "The Treaty of St. Germain." Practice methods of preparing for and taking tests through sample objective and subjective test questions over tape and text.

Continue vocabulary development.

Check students' time schedules.

9th Week

Introduce reading graphic presentations. Discuss:

1. Line graphs
2. Bar graphs
3. Pie charts
4. Statistical maps
5. Organizational charts
6. Pictograms
7. Sociograms

Students select four types of graphs and graph data supplied to them by instructor.

Continue vocabulary development.

Check students' time schedules.

10th Week

Librarian introduces Library of Congress Classification System used at Floyd Junior College through lecture and tour of the library. Various reference books are discussed and displayed. Student research of reference books is conducted through the use of an application type test devised by librarian.

Continue vocabulary development.

Check students' time schedules.

11th Week

Give and graph post tests in reading, study skills, listening, and note-taking.

Summary and evaluation.

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