This monograph outlines a course in the study of nonverbal or graphic symbols in communication, of language as symbols and of symbols within language. Performance objectives for the students are: (1) giving examples of the use of nonverbal and/or graphic communication symbols; (2) deducing that people assign different meanings to the same work and confuse the symbol with reality; (3) interpreting the role of figurative language in communication; and (4) analyzing symbolic elements in language and the confusion of symbol with reality. The rationale for the course is that, since many people tend to confuse symbols with reality, study of both verbal and nonverbal symbols may lead to clearer communication. Numerous teaching strategies for each of the performance objectives are supplemented with a bibliography of student and teacher resources: textbooks, Dade County films, rental films, filmstrips, records, slide-tapes, audio-tapes, transparencies, contemporary films, professional books, and periodicals. (Author/DI)
AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM
DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Symbology

5114.69
5115.69
5116.69
5187.09

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION • 1971
SYMBOLOGY

5114.69
5115.69
5116.69
5187.09

English, Vocabulary

Written by Barbara Lamb
for the
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
1971
DADE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. William Lehman, Chairman
Mr. G. Holmes Braddock, Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Ethel Beckham
Mrs. Crutcher Harrison
Mrs. Anna Brenner Meyers
Dr. Ben Sheppard
Mr. William H. Turner

Dr. E. L. Whigham, Superintendent of Schools
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida 33132

Published by the Dade County School Board
COURSE TITLE: SYNOLOGY

I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

A. After examining the use of nonverbal and/or graphic symbols in communication, the student will give examples.

B. The student will deduce that people assign different meanings to the same word and confuse the symbol with reality.

C. Through discussion, the student will interpret the role of figurative language in communication.

D. The student will analyze the symbolic elements in language and the confusion of symbol with reality.
II. COURSE CONTENT

A. Rationale

Many persons live in unreal worlds of words. In this world life is very simple and uncomplicated since everything is divided into right and wrong, we and they, etc. In the real world, though, this is not true. Words change meanings from person to person, from use to use, from culture to culture, from group to group. In addition, people confuse the symbol with reality. A student interested only in getting a diploma and who cares little for the education is confusing a symbol (the diploma) with reality (the education). A person who completely breaks himself by trying to get the symbols of wealth or a man who does not eat well in order to have an expensive car is confusing symbols with reality.

In addition to realizing the existence of these kinds of symbols, students should also realize that words are symbols. The word cup is not the thing, only the name of the thing. Even though our mental picture of a cup may differ, the general idea is the same. Man must use symbols, but he should not allow his man-made symbols to use him.

Many times we fail to realize that a thing isn't always what its word seems to say. In a town the "best people" may be disgusting snobs. In one situation a dollar sign could suggest savings and thrift or in another situation it could suggest greed. The word dog in "a dog is man's best friend" is quite different from the same word as it is used in the poem "The Highwayman"----shot down like a dog.

There are other methods of communicating besides words. Communication of this type is "nonverbal" and in many instances is more effective than words, but even this kind of communication has its pitfalls. To communicate accurately, be sure that your words mean approximately the same to your listener or reader as they do to you.

B. Range of subject matter

One of the main purposes of this course is to help make students aware of the symbolic elements in language so that they can learn to communicate better. Concepts included in the course are:

1. Nonverbal and graphic symbols in communication

2. Types of nonverbal communication
3. Words serve as symbols
4. Figurative language
5. Differences in figurative and literal meanings of words and phrases
6. Operation of symbols in our lives
7. Differences in symbols and nonverbal communication from country to country, culture to culture, group to group, person to person
8. The use of symbols and symbology in literature, film, advertising, etc.
9. Confusion of symbol with reality

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. Objective A

After examining the use of nonverbal and/or graphic symbols in communication, the student will give examples.

1. Have student demonstrate a code to the class (semaphore, sign language of the deaf, etc.) after discussing with them what a code is.
2. Have students demonstrate signals used in sports after discussing what signals are.
3. Have students draw a sign that would warn someone of the danger of low-flying airplanes regardless of the language he speaks.
4. Discuss with students what nonverbal symbols or graphic symbols are.
5. Show the film CONCRETE POETRY to discuss how concrete poetry uses words for communication.
6. Have students list the various methods of nonverbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, jewels, codes, sign language, pictures, music, and art.
7. Show to students a group of nonverbal symbols that are illustrated on transparencies. Have students assign meanings. Some suggestions of transparencies to use are "Communication," "Nonverbal Symbols," and selected ones from Semantics.

8. Have students examine a group of nonverbal or graphic symbols for meaning citing what group is associated with each. Some examples:

\[ E = \text{me}^2 \quad + \quad \text{N} \quad \text{hear} \]
\[ \text{O} \quad \text{W} \quad \text{E} \quad \$ \quad \text{skull & crossbones} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{eagle} \]

9. Have students identify the major symbols that represent some of the countries of the world.

10. Have students catalog examples of symbols that they wear, carry, or display. Have them decide or explain what the purpose of the symbol is and what it really indicates.

11. Have students pantomime or demonstrate a code, a symbol, or a signal. Students in class should classify and explain. Previous to this discussion, the teacher should have discussed the difference among the three with students.

12. Show the film Orpheon. The film shows how animated circles and the tone and inflection in sounds of the human voice create images and word ideas in humorous nonverbal communication.

13. Have students go around their neighborhood or school and find as many symbols as they can. Bring list to class and compare and discuss.

14. Discuss with students the meaning of status symbol. What are some symbols of status?

15. Discuss symbols used or displayed by different kinds of people and group them as symbols used by adults, by teenagers, by doctors, by men, by women, by religions or others. Discuss the effects of these symbols on other groups.

16. Make transparencies that illustrate verbal and nonverbal symbols and ask students to name the referents for each.
17. Show the film *The Critic* and discuss the use of non-verbal symbols in the film.

18. Have students assign meanings or symbols to a list of words or phrases and to a group of nonverbal symbols.

19. Have students examine a group of cartoons and try to translate them into writing. Decide which medium is more effective and why.

20. Have students list five symbols that they encounter everyday in or around school. They should state what they think each represents.

21. Ask students to make a list of all the symbols they see on their way to school. Do they understand them all? Have them try to classify the symbols.

22. Have reports on the new symbols that have developed recently such as the peace symbol.

23. Discuss with students the difference between private and public symbols. Have students list two or three of their own private symbols and explain to others how they began.

24. Lead a discussion about superstitions that show a confusion of the symbol and reality. Ask students to give examples.

25. Discuss with students the symbolic meaning of the numbers 3, 7, and 13, such as in fables, charms, superstitions, etc.

26. Point out that symbols are chosen arbitrarily and will differ from culture to culture. Ask students to explain some examples of this concept such as: bowing in oriental countries; saluting in the military; wedding ring placement; wearing white or black for mourning; prices marked on goods in markets; catching a bridal bouquet; walking under a ladder.

27. Ask students to invent some symbols for messages—gestures or actions—describe the symbol and the messages they represent; teach them to a small group of friends and use them for a few days. Then see if either can guess what they are communicating.
28. Ask students to watch a TV Program with the volume down. When they finish they should write a summary of the plot, indicating how gestures, facial expressions and other nonverbal signals enabled them to follow the story. They should compare their findings with those of another student who watched the same program.

29. Have students name or list five different symbols that have no apparent connection with the reality they represent. Have them write the usual meaning of each symbol and then try to create a new symbol that would suggest the reality of each meaning.

30. Show a film that relates to allegory, metaphor, symbolism, personification, and discuss the figurative language involved.

31. Have students read "The Necklace" and decide what the necklace symbolizes at the beginning and at the end of the story.

32. Ask students to read "The Lottery" and decide to what extent symbols play a role in the ritual described in the story. Are they private or public?

33. Have students write about a ritual they might establish and discuss the symbols they would use.

34. Ask students what abstract concepts could be symbolized by the following: the ticking of a clock, an intersection in the road, a smoldering fire, a clump of tangled brush, a single flower growing amid rocks.

35. Have students explain how they would create and use a literary symbol for each of the following: a character to symbolize conformity; an object to symbolize a desire in life; an action to symbolize civil disobedience; an object to symbolize victory; a character to symbolize intolerance.

36. Have students read "Communication among All People Everywhere" by Margaret Mead and Rudolph Modley for an understanding of glyphs.

37. Have students devise their own international glyphs for a school, for quiet, for a police officer. Compare their glyphs to see if there are any similarities.
B. Objective B

The student will deduce that people assign different meanings to the same word and confuse the symbol with reality.

1. Ask students to draw a picture of a hat, a dog, and/or a cup. Have students pass pictures in and then show to the rest of the class for a comparison of the difference in interpretations. This will illustrate that common words do not have common meanings and that words are only symbols for the thing the word stands for.

2. Ask students to read "Everything Has a Name" from THE STORY OF HELEN KELLER which gives the account of her first recognition of word as symbol. Discuss. View a film about Helen Keller for the same purpose.

3. Have a group of students or the drama department put on a dramatic reading or act out scenes from THE MIRACLE WORKER, in which Annie Sullivan communicates with the young Helen Keller.

4. Have students think of as many uses of the word language as they can. Discuss the meaning of each. Examples: language of flowers, arts, physics, love, power, diplomacy; English language; whistling, bird, monkey, fancy, medical, sign, written, spoken language.

5. Discuss with students the idea that language is arbitrary and that essentially identical sounds are frequently assigned very different meanings in different languages (such as pere in French and pear in English) or even within one language (such as so, sew, sow).

6. Discuss with students the idea of word as symbol and the relationship between the unimportant symbol and the important object.

7. Have students list as many things, feelings, and ideas as they can for the names of five objects. Some suggestions are pot, an X, fire, water, grass, a snake.

8. Ask students to list some of the objects and forms of behavior which symbolize a group of ideas or attitudes. Example: love of God, love of country, love of fellow man, individuality, conformity.
9. Discuss with students the meaning of a signal reaction—reacting to words as if they were the things which they represent. Have them describe a situation in which a signal reaction would be inappropriate and one in which a signal reaction would be appropriate.

10. Ask students to identify what the following conventional symbols might represent: sun, winter, moon, road, bridge, autumn, laurel, red, lion, sunrise, tinsel, crown, flag, drum.

11. Lead a discussion about superstitions that show a confusion of the symbol and reality. Ask students to give examples.

12. Ask students to invent some symbols for messages—gestures, actions, or words—describe the symbol and the messages they represent; they should teach them to a small group of friends and use them for a few days. Then see if the rest of the class can guess what they are communicating.

13. Have students name or list five different symbols that have no apparent connection with the reality they represent. Have them write the usual meaning of each symbol and then try to create a new symbol that would suggest the reality of each meaning.

14. Have students show how word or words are treated as though they were real things rather than symbols. Examples: a. When I see the word pepper, I feel like sneezing. b. Giraffes are well named. The word always reminds me of their long necks. c. I shudder when I see the word eel. d. When I saw strawberry shortcake on the menu, my mouth watered. e. Don't say school; that's a fighting word to me!

15. Have students find and bring to class examples of advertisements which are based on the assumption that words are things. Ask students to show and explain their example to class. Discuss.

16. Have students explain under what circumstances a group of items is a symbol and when it is not. Example: star—symbol when it stands for something such as on the U. S. flag. Not a symbol when it is the object itself, a heavenly body.
17. Lead a discussion of the idea that labeling or classifying an object in no way changes the reality of the object. Have students choose someone and think of all the ways in which this person could be labeled. Do the labels change the person in any way?

18. Have students examine a group of names given to characters by novelists and playwrights that help the reader decide what sort of people they are. What descriptive value do the names have? Examples: Mrs. Slipshop, Amelia Roper, M·lly Braxen, Mr. Feathernest, Lydia Languish. Also, have students find examples of names of characters found in literature that have become a part of our language and have symbolic meaning such as Babbitt.

19. Have a discussion on why people change their names and why certain names have been chosen for products.

20. Have selected students read "Social Aspects of Language: Class, Taboos, Politics" in The Gift of Tongues and report on ideas presented.

C. Objective C

Through discussion, the student will interpret the role of figurative language in communication.

1. Have students make a list of examples of different kinds of figurative language. Have them decide where or when their examples would be effective.

2. Lead a class discussion of figurative and literal language. Illustrate through transparencies or show filmstrips of examples.

3. Give students a group of sentences containing figurative language. Lead a discussion of the literal and figurative meaning.

4. Give students sentences in which similes are found. Ask them what is suggested through a multiple choice exercise. Example: The houses sat like toads along the hill. a. something squat and ugly b. something that eats flies c. something that lives near water. Do the same kind of exercise with metaphors but ask what is being compared. Example: I am a human being; please do not spindle, fold, or mutilate me. a. a target b. a computer card c. a paper airplane.
5. Give students a group of figurative expressions for which they are to find meanings or origins and report their findings. Some examples might be: draw in your horns; flash in the pan; look a gift horse in the mouth; tempest in a teapot; dark horse.

6. Have students look in Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable to find other well-known figurative expressions and report to rest of class.

7. Give students a group of sentences containing similes and metaphors. Have students point them out, tell what two things are being compared, and explain how each adds to the sense.

8. Have students bring in examples of figures of speech that they found in outside reading. They should be ready to explain what is being compared and tell why the figures are effective.

9. Have students compare the effectiveness of a literal with a figurative phrase. Some examples are: had covered—had silver-plated, had gilded, had whitewashed, had tinselled; walked—sailed, ploughed, strutted, swept; hung over—curtained, shrouded, smoke screened; rose suddenly—skyrocketed, spiraled. Have them write sentences in which they use each of the expressions.

10. Give students a group of sentences in which one word or phrase is used in a literal sense and then used in a figurative sense. Have them point out each use and discuss the two meanings.

11. Have students compare the figurative language used by a sportscaster with the literal meaning. Examples: "The line dug itself in." "The ball carrier was buried by the defensive line."

12. Have students bring to class the lyrics of a popular song which contains words that seem to have no literal meanings. Discuss possible interpretations of the song.

13. Have students choose one of the following ideas about language and in a composition develop it.

   a. The word is not the thing.
   b. Communication may be nonverbal—gestures, facial expressions, symbols.
   c. Language influences the way in which we see and interpret reality.
   d. Figurative language is an important element in the growth and extension of language.
D. Objective D

The student will analyze the symbolic elements in language and the confusion of symbol with reality.

1. Have the class make a list of what they consider the 25 ugliest and the 25 most beautiful words in the language and analyze why they chose those particular words.

2. Explain how man still makes new words because of sound symbolism (clatter, click, snore, snort). Then have the students examine a list of words to determine which words are examples of this process.

3. Divide the class into groups: One group develops an incident to be told in pictograms; one group develops a set of symbols for logograms and writes a message to be transmitted; one group develops an ideogram chart and writes a message to be transmitted; one group develops a set of phonograms and writes a message to be transmitted; one group develops a cipher or code of signs and writes a message to be transmitted. Have each group explain its method of written communication and present the sample message written by this method with the word translation underneath. Transparencies would be most useful for the illustrations, otherwise dittos could be given to each class member.

4. Have students assign meanings or symbols to a list of words or phrases.

5. Have students determine the usual meaning of a list of symbols. Some examples are sunrise, tinsel, red, white, crown, lion, flag, drum.

6. Have students research the symbolic meaning of a group of names which are taken from mythology or ancient literature. Some examples are Narcissus, Arcadia, Pan, Tantalus, the Lotus Eaters, Mercury, Lethe, cloud-cuckoo-land.

7. Have students relate an anecdote in which a word is used that has no referent. Rest of class asks questions about the word until they discover meaning.

8. Have students examine several accounts of the creation of the world. What symbols are found in them? Are the same objects and processes identified with good and evil?
9. Have students write an essay discussing grading symbols. Read to rest of class.

10. Show a non-dialogue film. Examine symbols and effectiveness. Did the film communicate? Why or why not?

11. Have student read Erich Fromm's essay on symbols from "The Forgotten Language." Discuss the concepts contained in the essay.

12. Discuss the three categories of symbols—universal, accidental, and conventional. Have students think of examples. Refer to Fromm's essay.

13. Have a student give a report on color symbolism.

14. Have students write a word that they think of when a color is mentioned. Compare answers.

15. Have students list as many different ways of symbolizing as they can, both verbal and nonverbal.

16. Show the soundstrip "Language and Common Understandings" from "Linguistic Backgrounds of English, Group 2" to illustrate how ideas translated into written words, speech, gestures, visual symbols convey meaning.

17. Show the soundstrip "Symbols and Everyday Language" from "Linguistic Background to English, Group 2." It defines, categorizes, and shows evolution of symbols in our language.

18. Ask students to think of as many examples of names given to athletic teams as they can. Why were these names chosen?

19. Have students make a list of as many intercultural symbols as they can think of and then discuss with the students.

20. Ask students to explain what each of the following symbols might stand for to a person seeking them and to give reasons why that person would desire it. People act as though the symbol were more important than the real thing it represents: having the whitest teeth; being a class officer or student council officer; being on the superior honor roll; being tapped for NHS; having the longest hair or the most unusual moustache in school; wearing the "in" fashions; owning the best sportscar, vacationing in places outside the U.S. every year.
21. Have students analyze a group of current advertisements in one field—cigarettes, TV sets, cars, men's or women's clothing—to find the chief selling points which the copywriter wishes to impress upon his readers and to see how he uses language to make them wish to buy his product. What are the words now most fashionable among the writers of advertisements for a certain class of product? Why would these words be used?

22. Have students compare ads in magazines that appeal to teenagers with those that appeal to adults. Do the ads rely on the same kinds of symbols? Have students write one or two paragraphs explaining the types of products advertised, the symbols used in the ads, the promises they imply, and the type of audience each one is attempting to reach.

23. Discuss with students the idea that certain verbal and nonverbal symbols are recurrent in a society and help determine attitudes. Some symbols to use are key, wine, roses, eagles, colors, cross, Star of David, swastika.

24. Have students list situations for which white or black is an "appropriate" color. Then list situations in which the usual symbolic meanings of white and black are reversed.

25. Show a film that contains no dialogue but does contain symbolic meaning, such as NEIGHBORS, TWO MEN AND A WARDROBE, THE HUNTER AND THE FOREST, THE DEER AND THE FOREST. Have students point out the symbols and discuss the meaning of these symbols to them.

26. Take a class survey of what certain colors suggest to the students and compare answers.

27. Ask students to be ready to identify person or thing to which a group of allusions refers and to explain how each adds to the meaning of a sentence. Have them use the allusions in a sentence of their own.

28. Ask students to watch in their reading and in conversation for allusions to contemporary people and things. They are to note two which they think are especially effective. Ask them to write the sentence in which the allusion was used, give the sources, and identify the person or thing referred to. Have the examples read in class and discuss the effectiveness.
29. Ask students to write a paragraph or a poem describing the face of someone by talking about it as if it were something other than a face.

30. Ask selected students to read the chapter "Symbols" by Hayakawa from The Language of Man, Book 6 and report their findings to the class through a panel discussion.

31. Have students write an essay on the following: "What They Really Mean"--a selection of words from current advertisements, political appeals, and so forth with the student's own satirical definitions.

32. Have students examine a poem such as "Mr. Flood's Party," "War Is Kind," "The Road Not Taken" for the symbols used to create the tone and the symbolic significance of specific words and images in the poem.

33. Have students read The Metamorphosis by Kafka as an example of man's attempt to use the symbolism of language to express his feelings about his relationship to his environment.

34. After reading Kafka's short novel, students should describe three or four aspects of Gregor's behavior or events in his metamorphosis which they think have important symbolic significance, and interpret their symbolic meanings.
IV. RESOURCES

A. State-adopted textbooks


B. Non-state-adopted resources


C. Media resources

1. Dade County films

   *Communication Skills: Exchange of Ideas* 1-011701
   *The Deer and the Forest* 1-13872
   *Do Words Ever Fool You* 1-01216
   *The Hand* 1-13819
   *The Hunter and the Forest* 1-10223
   *Junkyard* 1-05864
   *Language of the Mute Swan* 1-10371
   *Language and Nationalism* 1-31855
   *Neighbors* 1-05861
   *Not By Words Alone* 1-31852
   *A Place in the Sun* 1-05840
   *Two Men and a Wardrobe* 1-13839

2. Rental Films

   Brandon Films, Inc.

   *The Colt*. 42 min.
   *The Golden Fish*. 20 min.
   *Run*. 16 min.
3. Filmstrips

**Communication--from Stone Age to Space Age.** Universal Education and Visual Arts, 6 color filmstrips.

**Language.** Guidance Associates, 1970. 2 color filmstrips and 2 records or cassettes.

**Linguistic Backgrounds of English, Groups 1 and 2.** Society for Visual Education. 12 color filmstrips, 6 records or cassettes and guides.

**Understanding Your Language.** Society for Visual Education. 6 color filmstrips, 3 records or cassettes, and guides.

4. Records

**Developing Language Arts Skills.** Educational Record Sales. 2-12 in. 33 1/3 rpm.

**Spoken English.** Scott Foresman. 2-12 in. 33 1/3 rpm.

5. Slide-Tapes

**An Attitude Toward Life:** "Patterns." Dade County number 3-60075.

**Humor in the Personal Essay:** "On Skating." Dade County number 3-60076.

**Religion and Superstition:** "Painted History of the Delaware Indians." Dade County number 3-60068.

6. Tapes-Audio

**Listen and Read Tapes.** "The Connotative Power of Words." Educational Development Lab.

**Listen and Read Tapes.** "Figurative Language." Educational Development Lab.

**Listen and Read Tapes.** "Words and Your Senses." Educational Development Lab.

7. Transparencies

"Communication." E-11-2065. Dade County Department of Educational Media.


8. Contemporary Films

The Corral. 12 min.
Helen Keller and Her Story. 45 min.
Hypothese Beta. 7 min.
Orphoeon. 8 min.
String Bean. 17 min.
This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Message. 53 min.
Thursday's Children. 22 min.

Bailey Film Associates

Signs. 11 min.

IBM

Introduction to Feedback. 12 min.

Mass Media Ministries

Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?

"What's Slang?" E-11-2565. Dade County Department of Educational Media.

"Words of Peace." E-11-2365. Dade County Department of Educational Media.
V. TEACHER RESOURCES

A. Textbooks


B. Professional Books and Periodicals


Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key*.


Quine, Willard V. *Word and Object*.


C. Media Resources

Just What Is General Semantics? NET.

Person to Person Communication. McMurray-Gold. 13 min. color. Dade County number 1-10063.

Why Do People Misunderstand Each Other? NET.