

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 043 606

TE 001 982

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TITLE Research Memorandum on Minilessons: Planning and Analyzing Multicomponent English Lessons.
PUB DATE Apr 70
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented to the Conference on English Education, Des Moines, Iowa, April 1970

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC-\$1.35
DESCRIPTORS Course Organization, Effective Teaching, *English Instruction, Evaluation Techniques, Language Arts, *Lesson Plans, *Microteaching, Practicum Supervision, Protocol Materials, Teacher Education, Teacher Evaluation, Teacher Role, *Teaching Models, Teaching Skills, Teaching Techniques, Unit Plan. Verbal Communication

ABSTRACT

A specific scheme is provided for the teacher trainee, the experienced teacher, and the supervisor to assist in organizing and evaluating multicomponent English lessons. Based on the premise that effective instructional moves must be pre-structured and time sequences left flexible, 12 specific lesson/teaching strategies are offered to extend the author's theory that lessons should be sufficiently standard to be applied to all English instruction from kindergarten through graduate study and yet flexible enough to improve the instructional efficiency and judgment of the individual language arts teacher (See ED 030 639). These 12 "minilessons" are designated as development, review, drill, test, individual and group research, independent study, guided reading, practice, discussion, enrichment, culmination, and procedural, with each lesson option containing both information (know-that) and application (know-how) in the same general outline--lead, development, and summary-evaluation. Materials include a list of points to be used in evaluating English teaching performance, a diagram of the relationship of the components of the English curriculum, a selected bibliography of other readings to aid in planning multicomponent lessons and in analyzing teacher behavior. (JB)

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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM ON MINILESSONS:
PLANNING AND ANALYZING MULTICOMPONENT ENGLISH LESSONS

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Paper presented to the Conference on English Education,
Des Moines, Iowa, April, 1970.

ED0 43606

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to the many students and experienced teachers/supervisors who have tested New Design methodology in the last eight years. Recently Mrs. Melanie Spears and Brother Andrew Jackowski, student teachers at District of Columbia Teachers College, graciously served as actors in the videotape on planning and analyzing formal lessons.

Special mention is due to Leon Roettner and Grayson Mattingly of Videofarms, Inc. (515 Kirby Hill Road, Washington, D. C. 20022) who produced the videotapes demonstrating New Design teaching.

The author is further indebted to Eric Document Reproduction Services (4936 Fairmont Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014) for their outstanding promptness in sending needed research reprints.

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RESEARCH MEMO ON MINILESSONS:

PLANNING AND ANALYZING MULTICOMPONENT ENGLISH LESSONS

This brief memorandum assists English teachers and supervisors in the organization and evaluation of multicomponent English lessons. Thirteen lesson strategies, twelve formal and one procedural, are offered as options in the selection of what to do with K-college groups of English students. Individualization of instruction is implicit in each option so that the choice of a particular lesson covers a total group of students (both urban and suburban) for a module of 3 to 50 minutes.¹

In this Memorandum, a minilesson is construed to be a miniature lesson: each of twelve formal lessons has identifiable form as well as thematic unity. Various parts of a lesson can be shortened or lengthened ad libitum, but the structural alignment cannot be changed. Lesson types cannot be compounded in the same period, but standard teaching/learning activities can be used wherever necessary. A lesson begins and ends in one period: materials must be packaged in discrete parts so that non-attenders are maximally helped in a single period.

¹For a complete description of research controls established to test these lessons, see Mary Columbro Rodgers, A Clinical Module as Matrix of New Design Methodology: Final Report on the Trinity/Lincoln/Ford Research Project (Washington, D. C.: Trinity College Xerox Services, 1967).

The target skill related to the use of minilessons in teacher training is the improvement of teacher judgment: given a particular group of students assembled for English instruction, the teacher must quickly select the best way to effect total language arts (English) competency on the part of the learners. A second important objective is the improvement of instructional efficiency, specifically, quickness and confidence in using twelve standard lesson procedures. This efficiency also includes skill in composing subject matter and in using a variety of procedures so that high-level pupil interest and involvement can be sustained.

Instructional efficiency further involves the ability to use three basic teaching styles: informing, tutoring, valuing. It also includes ease and specificity in lesson planning so that block plans suffice for daily instructional preparation, and unit plans consist of three-week sequences of day-to-day formal lessons.²

The overall objectives, then, of using minilessons with English teacher trainers are the development of judgment and improvement of efficiency in the use of standard procedures.

²For a series of units written and tested by preservice teachers, see Rodgers, (ed.), New Design Units, 1968, Self-Integrated English Teaching. A second volume, 1969, stressing multicomponent strategies might also prove useful to English teachers new to the discipline. The latest volume, New Design Units, 1970, Recursive English Teaching, is also a series of tested units built as three-week sequences of formal lesson strategies. Selections from all volumes are available from the editor.

PLANNING MULTICOMPONENT LESSONS

The Subject Matter

In terms of its design methodology a lesson is multicomponent if the subject matter is from more than one of the four major components of English. (See following diagrams.)³ Two or more = multicomponent.

Research has shown that urban students do better (in demonstrable language arts competency) when at least one of the multicomponents crosses the center line of the diagram. Thus, the best lessons are those which include both information (know-that) and application (know-how) in the same period. THE MODEL MINILESSON MUST SHOW THIS CROSS-COMPONING.

The nature of the materials chosen, the length of the instructional period, and the knowledge and creativity of the teacher are factors which influence the maximum number of English components used in any lesson. Our research has not yet shown how many components are too many, and precisely what patterns of componing are best at each grade level. We do have videotapes with analyses of graduate interns using eleven to sixteen components with considerable consistency with urban children in grades 7 and 8.⁴

³Mary Columbro Rodgers, New Design in the Teaching of English (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1968).

⁴Mary Columbro Rodgers, Research and Experiment in the Teaching of English (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1971).

Rodgers, New Design in the Teaching of English
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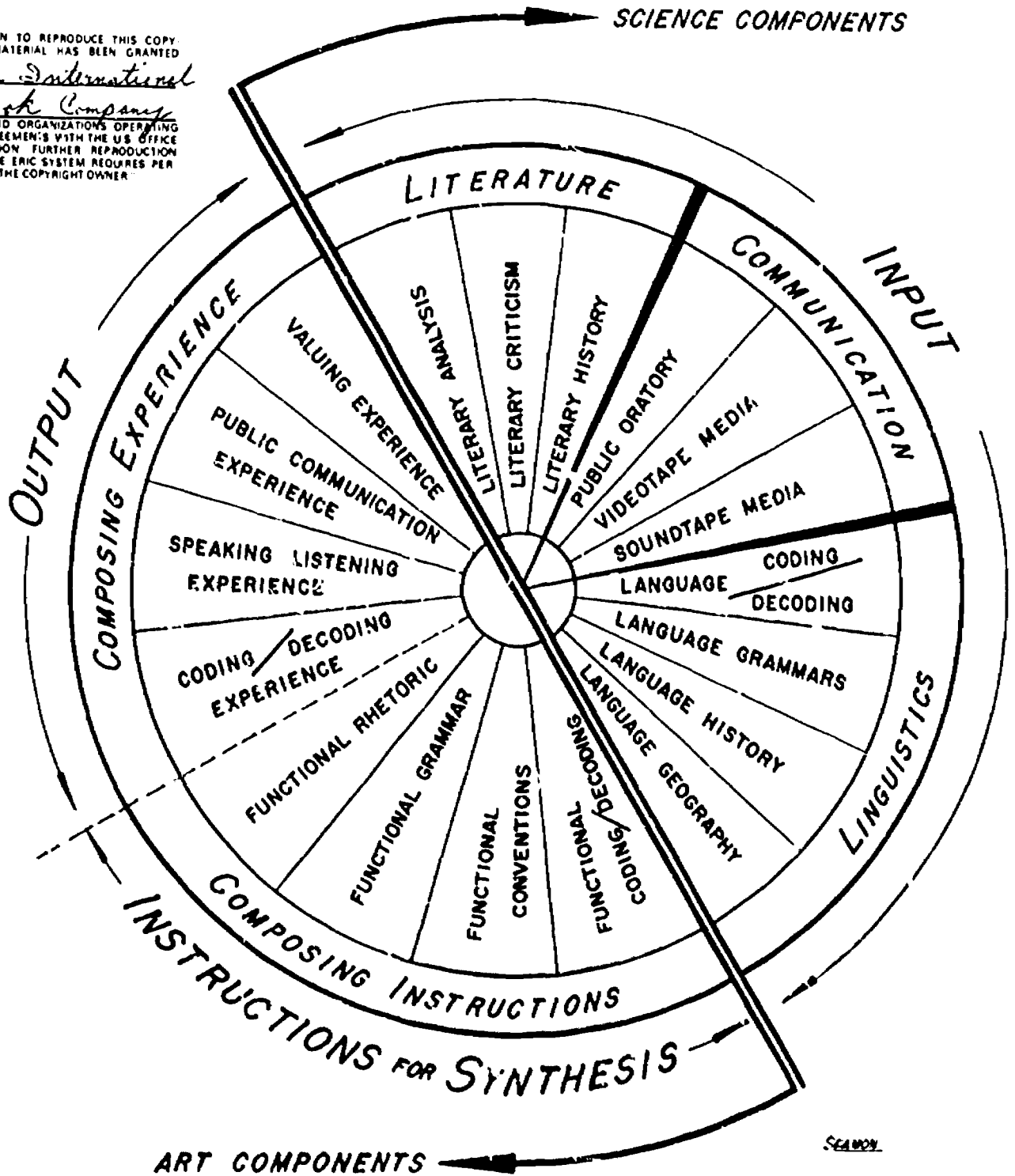


FIGURE 13: THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM
IN TECHNICAL TERMS

In controlled situations, preservice teachers tend to average five components per lesson when lessons are an average of twenty minutes in length.⁵ In ordinary field situations, preservice teachers tend to do more componing rather than less.⁶ Student teachers generally demonstrate understanding and skill in multi-componing within a nine-week (4 hours per week) instructional sequence.

Specifying Subject Matter

The minilesson in English is a successful instructional strategy to the extent that it is specific. Young teachers need direction in finding what to teach out of or off of available materials. These TEACHING POINTS become the subject of a lesson and are further specified in the objectives of a lesson. It is in terms of subject/objectives that an appropriate teaching procedure (type of lesson) is selected.

Coherence effected by the logical relatedness of subject, type, objectives, and procedure makes the strategy fundamentally efficient or less efficient. Multicomponing, then, is done within the framework of the formal lesson type selected. Each formal lesson has its own pattern for the inclusion of possible components, just as it has its own built-in verbal interaction pattern.

⁵See A Clinical Module, "Intern Performance," pp. 12-14, for details.

⁶Ibid.

Precisely what the young teacher needs to learn is the pattern and the potential of each formal lesson so that he can astutely decide what to put into a lesson and when to use it.

Planning multicomponent lessons, then, means that the trainee needs both a precise knowledge of his total discipline (18 components) and an exact knowledge of formal lesson strategies.

Twelve Standard Teaching Strategies

The novice English teacher has twelve options in selecting a procedure to implement some teaching point he wishes to make.⁷ These standardized procedures, regardless of their length, have thematic unity and identifiable form.⁸ Some are best-suited for teaching/learning objectives related to know-that information; others are best-suited for know-how skills. A brief summary follows:

1. Development Lesson: Used to present new material to students. Includes demonstrations, student interaction, audiovisual helps.
2. Review Lesson: Used to reinforce material previously taught. Often employs a work sheet or board exercise of some kind. A set of questions requiring students to read and find answers is a simple and effective strategy.

⁷These options are distillations of procedures used by experienced English teachers (5 years average English teaching experience).

⁸Mary Columbro Rodgers, New Design, op. cit., pp. 20-32.

3. Drill Lesson: Used to insure quick, perfect recall on facts and bits of knowledge. Always marked by speed; frequently done as a game; can be written or oral.
4. Test Lesson: Used to check degree of student performance. Can be objective, essay, motor, or combination. Often effective in oral form.
5. Individual Research Lesson: Used to challenge information-gathering skill of individual students: each gets a separate problem to look up; then reports to class.
6. Group Research Lesson: Used to put interest groups to work in gathering information. Group leader receives the problem; group works cooperatively, someone or team reporting to class.
7. Independent Study Lesson: Used to give whole class time to get information on some points. Questions or problems are the same for all; materials in hand are same for all.
8. Guided Reading Lesson: Used to insure mastery of difficult material. Usually done orally: teacher asks a question hinting where answer is found; students read silently and then give answer out loud.
9. Practice Lesson: Used to develop skills. The skill is identified, the appropriate practice exercise is given out, the teacher watches and helps when needed while students practice.
10. Discussion Lesson: Used to hear results of research lessons or some other prepared material. Some structured discussion techniques include individual talks (reports), panel discussion, symposium, debate, informal group discussion, discussion 66, and others.

11. Enrichment Lesson: Used to broaden and deepen student's knowledge and feeling. Usually transcends textbook and classroom: includes field trips, outside speakers (a congressman), films, creative experiences (roleplaying, perhaps), and others.
12. Culmination Lesson: Used to reinforce concepts, skills, and affective behaviors taught in a particular unit. An audience situation is provided for the demonstration of various things learned.

All these lessons have the same general outline: lead, development, summary/evaluation.

The lead focuses the students' attention on the task at hand and serves as motivation when necessary. Oftentimes, the teacher communicates the lesson's objectives to the students and solicits their cooperation. The development takes a different shape, depending on the kind of lesson in use. (In the practice lesson, for example, the teacher, at this point, simply presents the materials to be used for practice: in the test lesson, the test is distributed.)

Every lesson ends with some assessment of learning. Sometimes the assessment is based on the teacher's observation. Oftentimes, the evaluation takes the form of a short quiz or a written response to a key question. At other times, the teacher can ask students to express what they have learned and/or how they have performed generally. No lesson is considered complete unless some valuing activity takes place: it is in the verbal tags used here by teacher and student that a good deal of the affective content of a lesson is made explicit.

The following outlines may be useful to teachers/supervisors interested in distinguishing the various kinds of lessons used in the English classroom.⁹

DEVELOPMENT LESSON

1. Lead
2. Presentation
3. Explanation
4. Summary and evaluative remarks

DRILL LESSON

1. Lead
2. Statement of objective
3. Outline of procedure
4. Use of materials
5. Oral or written evaluation

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH LESSON

1. Lead
2. Presentation of questions or problems to individuals
3. Individuals go to work
4. Evaluative remarks

GUIDED READING LESSON (for difficult material)

1. Lead
2. Presentation of topic to be covered
3. Oral questions (teacher waits until students find answer in text; they read it)
4. Summary and evaluation

PRACTICE LESSON

1. Statement of skills
2. Practice of skills
3. Evaluation

REVIEW LESSON

1. Lead
2. Presentation of oral or written questions
3. Quiz
4. Summary and evaluative remarks

TEST LESSON

1. Lead
2. Directions
3. Use of test device
4. Oral or written check-up

GROUP RESEARCH LESSON

1. Lead
2. Division into groups
3. Presentation of questions or problems to groups
4. Groups go to work
5. Evaluative remarks

INDEPENDENT STUDY LESSON

1. Lead
2. Statement of work to be done by entire class
3. Specific directions
4. Class goes to work
5. Oral or written evaluation

DISCUSSION LESSON

1. Statement of technique to be used (implies preteaching technique)
2. Statement of material to be discussed
3. Discussion
4. Evaluation and response

⁹Mary Columbo Rodgers, New Design, op. cit., pp. 21-24.

ENRICHMENT LESSON**(for use with pupil presentations)**

1. Statement of topic
2. Presentation of verbal art product
3. Teacher summary
4. Group evaluation and response

CULMINATION LESSON

1. Statement of procedure
2. Student presentation of planned program
3. Evaluation by teacher and/or audience

The Procedural Lesson

When teachers have a variety of tasks to perform such as returning test papers, checking-in homework, distributing materials for a new unit, and similar disconnected teaching/learning activities, a procedural lesson can be used. This type is not a formal strategy because it is formless and because it lacks thematic unity. Such a strategy, however, can be used in minilesson practice because it fits genuine classroom exigencies and because its use preserves the integrity of the other formal lessons.

In planning multicomponent minilessons, then, the young teacher meshes his knowledge of the multicomponent English discipline with his understanding of formal lesson procedures.

ANALYZING MULTICOMPONENT ENGLISH LESSONS

Analyzing Written Lesson Plans

If plans are written in the STOP format, analysis by professor or supervisor is quickly accomplished. A teaching strategy is excellent to the extent that coherence is established from subject to objectives, to type of lesson selected, to procedure. In analyzing procedure, the MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL MOVES must be pre-structured, whereas time sequences must be flexible.

In the commercial planbooks used by teachers, an entire lesson can be condensed into several inches of space. When teachers are familiar with the standard procedure of a development, test, or practice lesson, for example, the simple notation DEVELOPMENT or TEST or PRACTICE will recall the entire procedure of that particular formal lesson.

To judge the astuteness of a written block plan, a professor or supervisor needs to see at least the subject, objectives, and type of lesson selected.

In preservice training courses, student teachers can sometimes learn the formal procedures so well that detailed STOP plans become unnecessary. A decision to require STOP and/or block plans from preservice teachers will usually depend on the overall verbal efficiency of the student teacher and the length of the instructional period.

Analyzing English Teaching Performance

The following checkpoints have been valuable in examining teacher behavior:

A. New Design Teaching

- ___1. Coherence between lesson planned and lesson performed
- ___2. Fidelity to procedure (predetermined instructional moves)
- ___3. Timing
- ___4. "Multicomponence"
- ___5. Self-integration of subject matter

B. General English Teaching Behaviors

- ___1. 50-50 input/output
- ___2. Pupil/pupil communication
- ___3. Student leadership
- ___4. Non-verbal efficiency
- ___5. Movement in space

Videotaping has been the most efficient protocol device used in our research; audiotape, the second most efficient; supervisory observations with notetaking and conferences, the least efficient. For gross general behaviors (maintaining classroom control), direct supervisory feedback seems to be adequate. In the close analysis of VERBAL INTERACTION PATTERNS, however, videotaping is indispensable because it records the intricacies of verbal interaction and freezes the whole situation for continuous analysis.

Modifying Verbal Behavior

To improve teaching, improve what the teacher says. This is the maxim that gives coherence to the careful analysis of every sentence that is spoken by teacher and pupil in classroom instruction.

In teaching the discipline of English where both the modality of the discipline and the mode of communication are verbal, the CONTENT ANALYSIS of verbal behavior has been significantly fruitful.¹⁰ Teachers tend to consider their verbal behavior as a highly personal attribute, and consequently demonstrate keen interest in improving it.¹¹ After English trainees demonstrate a knowledge of correct STRUCTURAL procedures, serious attention can be given to the content or verbality of each lesson. Since teachers no longer write scripts for their daily lessons, content analysis can only be done via audio or videotape.

Research Tabulation on English Teaching

To gather exact data on English teaching performance, a blank wheel (see diagram included in this brochure) is used. Every utterance of teacher and pupil is categorized as pertaining directly to one of the eighteen English components, and a mark is

¹⁰The author is indebted to Bellack, Kliebard, Flanders, Amidon, Hough, Galloway, et al. for the groundwork on interaction analysis in teaching. The Rodgers system is a refinement and specification of general interaction analysis techniques for use in content analysis of English teaching only.

¹¹Mary Columbro Rodgers, "Supervision and Action Research," in Robert R. Leeper (ed.), Supervision: Emerging Profession (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1969), p. 102.

made in the appropriate place on the tab sheet. If an utterance has no relationship to the lesson (My, but it's hot in here!), it is tabulated outside the wheel as a non-English tag. General teaching instructions such as Ready? Begin. are interpreted as applying to the matter at hand...the work sheet on pronouns, the reading test, or whatever is in the lesson. When no relationship can be established between utterance and activity, the comment is tabulated as non-English. Discipline tags (Marvin, please move quickly.) and valuing tags (I like your diction there, Bob.) are handled in the same way.

In cases of doubt, the intention (purpose) of the utterance determines its category. Student teachers seem to enjoy clarifying utterances according to what they call their "deep structure."

When students work silently or when the teacher writes on the board, the videotape times the activity. The number of revolutions (recorded on the machine) are multiplied by 2.43 (average utterances per revolution) and recorded in the appropriate space.¹² If only verbality is being considered, silent work can be ignored.

A tabulation of verbal content, then, will give a picture of what the teacher and students are talking about. The verballity of

¹²Since the speed of videotape revolutions changes according to the amount of tape on a reel, the author will provide a formula for correction to interested researchers.

a given lesson must be related to the stated objective for that lesson. Thus, if a teacher said he was showing how a poet uses metaphor to make ideas concrete, a tab sheet that recorded his use of 47 tags on linguistic geography would be somewhat startling. Furthermore, the verballity of a given lesson must be appropriate to the formal structure of that lesson. For example, in a practice lesson, there should be little talking by anyone. If the idea is to practice a particular skill, then the lesson analysis should show practice work rather than long explanations by the teacher. On the other hand, a discussion lesson can be presumed to be continuous verbal interaction.

It seems that one of the factors creating the basic differences among the twelve formal lessons is the implied pattern of verballity. Thus, novice teachers need to understand and use formal lessons correctly before their teaching is carefully analyzed for content.

Content analysis gives simple, specific, and visible feedback to teachers, and it has had dramatic success in effecting changes in teacher behavior. It must be remembered, however, that analysis for general teaching behaviors precedes highly specialized verbal interaction analysis. If student teachers' minilessons show that they have not grasped some fundamental teacher behaviors, these can be watched at the same time that content analysis is done.

In tabulating the content talk of English lessons, it might be necessary to distinguish between teacher and student talk by using a stroke for the teacher and a zero for the student, for example.

Most student teachers understand and use the Flanders emphasis of more pupil talk and more student-initiated questions after approximately ten hours of instruction; however, a few need continuing attention to this point.

Since verbal expression is infinitely perfectible, content analysis of English teaching can also be used with experienced teachers. One skill which young teachers find difficult to develop (because of their limited repertory of English materials) is the skill of teaching only English in any lesson. In New Design methodology, interaction analysis promotes self-integrated English lessons as well as multicomponent ones. Experienced teachers seem to enjoy the challenge of keeping all their English content (even the subject matter of sentences used for grammatical study) within the English discipline.

SUMMARY: PLANNING AND ANALYZING MULTICOMPONENT LESSONS

Minilessons are valuable to the extent that they are structured. Prestructured lessons (formal lesson procedures) are efficient because they have built-in expectations and because they are directly related to standard teaching/learning exigencies in the English classroom.

The use of formal lessons promotes both good judgment and efficiency in instructional planning. Young teachers can use time-tried strategies and enjoy success from their first day of teaching: they can also plan creative lessons in a modicum of time because the formal structures include standard procedures and can be prepared in either STOP format or in commercial block planbooks.¹³

Efficiency in planning saves time needed to specify subject matter and objectives. In analyzing minilessons in written form

¹³D. C. Teachers College is developing its own planbook for student teachers. The spiral composite includes blockplan spaces, attendance sheets for students, progress sheets for students, and blank lined pages for entry of teacher's detailed plans, outlines, handouts, and similar teaching materials. A special feature is the inclusion of tab sheets on which teachers can record their verbal profiles from their own analysis of audio or video tapes.

and later in performance, the point is to look for coherence between subject and objective and to see if appropriate verbal behavior is used in implementation.

Videotaping English lessons and tabulating every utterance quickly shows the teacher whether he and his students are off or on the point.

Because skill in multicomponing and self-integrating English lessons is always perfectible, experienced teachers and supervisors, as well as novices, enjoy planning, performing, and analyzing English teaching strategies.

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