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ABSTRACT
                 A four-day workshop designed to acquaint faculty
members with teaching strategies for combining basic reading skills
in English composition was evaluated as very effective by the seven
workshop participants. The evaluation results indicated that
interdisciplinary staff development seminars can be beneficial to
faculty from varied content areas. Recommendations developing from
this seminar relative to the teaching of special students include the
following: (1) the ultimate responsibility for teaching special
students should be left to academic departments rather than
nonacademic or service level agencies within the university; (2)
basic reading-study achievement levels of all special students should
be evaluated on entrance, interim, and exit bases; (3) faculty
interested in developing and maintaining instructional programs for
special students should be identified and organized; and (4)
specialized staff development seminars should be available to all
departments within the university. The efficient utilization of
available faculty expertise is essential if colleges are to develop
inexpensive staff development programs. (MM)

Staff Development for University Level
English Faculty: Improving the
Teaching of Reading and Writing

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Background

The effectiveness of college reading improvement programs has
been reflected in numerous studies (Carter and McGinnis, 1967;
Entwisle, 1960; Guildord, 1976; Mayfield, 1977; Maxwell, 1971, 1972;
Power, 1976; and Tillman, 1972). Comparisons between selected variables,
such as grade point average and success in reading improvement courses,
have also been reported (Fairbanks, 1974). However, most published
reports have considered reading and study skills more often than not,
separate from content subjects. Direct instruction combining instruc-
tion in reading/content areas is relatively new. However, as early
as 1942, Artley reported comparisons between reading comprehension and
content materials. It has been within the last decade that serious
attention as to techniques for content reading have appeared with
frequency (Bergman, 1977; Kratz, 1970; Plamer, 1975; Robinson, 1975;
and Swalm, 1972). More specifically, the literature contains recent
evidence to indicate the usefulness of reading/English related instruc-
tion and particularily composition and reading (Balasa, 1977; Coomer, 1974;
Earlet and Manzo, 1976; Sanderlin, 1977; and Shepherd, 1974).

The Program

Within the past five years more attention and programs have been
directed toward academically marginal undergraduate students. At Memphis
State University this concern is evidenced in offering both credit and
non-credit reading improvement courses, library facilities for self-help
and language improvement, funded projects for aiding reading/content

skills development (e.g. Learning Assistance Program, 1976-77) and most importantly the Educational Support Program. These and other efforts represent an institutional commitment to serving an expanding audience now enrolled as full or part-time students. The current proposal is designed to further extend university commitments to maintain both quality instruction and enrollments.

During the period from May 11 through May 14, seven faculty members from the English Department participated in twenty six hours of seminar meetings provided through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Reading Center. Each training session provided application level instruction on topics relating reading improvement and English with special attention to composition skills. The major purpose of the sessions was to acquaint faculty participants with teaching strategies appropriate for combining basic reading skills in English composition. A daily outline of topical content appears in Table I.

Table I
(Seminar Schedule)

May 10   Welcome
         Discussion of objectives, evaluation techniques and participant
            needs
         The Reading Process
         Measuring Reading Competency (formal and informal techniques)

*May 11 Assessment techniques continues (GII, cloze, IRI, standarized)
         Readability Assessment Strategies
         Word Study Techniques (vocabulary and word analysis techniques)

*May 12 Developing Meaning Skills (questioning, thinking and evaluating)
         Introducing a Textbook
         Dictionary Usage

*May 13 General Strategies for Improving Reading/Writing
         Directed Reading-Thinking Activities
         Projection of Program Needs
         Evaluation

*Textbooks used in ENGL 1101 were   needed for these sessions.

Sessions were from 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-3:30 with breaks taken as needed.

Source and Collection of Data

The sample included seven faculty members from the English Department, College of Arts and Sciences. Two instruments were used to evaluate the project: (1) information from participant ratings of the seminar sessions and (2) results from a pre-post test of reading/writing study strategies. While participant attendance was voluntary, one hundred percent attendance was maintained throughout the week. Participant ratings on an opinionnaire were used as an indication of satisfaction with the training sessions.

Results

Participant ratings, comments and demographic data concerning the participants appear in Table II. For items 5-12 a mean score of 4.3 was obtained with a range from a maximum of 5 (items 9 and 10) to a low of 3.1 on item 11.

Table.II

READING/WRITING SEMINAR
EVALUATION FORM

1. Sex __5__ Female __2__ Male

2. Age __3__ Less than 35 __4__ 35 and over

3. Formal Education ____ Bachelor's __6__ Master's ____ Specialist __1__ Doctorat

4. Teaching Experience __1__ Less than 5 years __1__ 5-10 years __1__ More than 10 y

. . . .

Directions: You may agree or disagree with the following statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers so feel free to express your feelings. Please reflect your own opinion about these items by circling the answer that best describes how you feel. Also, a blank is provided after each statement for any written comments that you may care to make.

5. Adequate space was provided for the meetings.
   (5) ✗   (4)   (3)   (2)   (1)
   Strongly   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
   Agree   Disagree

Comments: __4.7__

None

6. The participants had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the content of the meeting.

Strongly ✗   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
Agree   Disagree

Comments: 4.7

1. A strong point of these meetings was the freedom with which ideas could be discussed and the format could be altered to the material relevant to our needs.

2. There was good interaction between the group and group leader.

3. Though the instructor had a plan for the course, participants were encouraged to ask for information and to make suggestions.

7. The content of the meetings was relevant to my needs.

Strongly   Ag✗ee   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
                                                                       Disagree

Comments: 4.0

1. I hope so. If the content is not relevant, then the fault will be mine.

2. Many practical suggestions for classroom use and much information about programs was given out.

3. I am not yet sure how I will use what I have learned but I believe that an understanding of how students learn to read is important.

4. While I do not see a way to use everything taught, I have a much greater awareness of the reading program, and I believe that I can use this awareness to benefit my students. I am also taking home exercises, etc. that I can use or alter for my classes.

8. The content of the workshop was such that it answered questions that concerned me relative to my job.

Strongly   Ag✗ee   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
Agree   Disagree

Comments: 4.0

1. I discovered that I am not alone or without resources.

2. I learned most about readability of material. Too, some of the exercises used to teach reading can be adapted to the teaching of writing.

3. I became aware of the relationships between reading skills and the teaching of composition.

4. Raised as many questions as it answered. The problem is one of rethinking the concepts to apply them to teaching composition.

5. But still the area of connection between poor reading and poor writing is uncertain. We are heading in the right direction.

9. Adequate lines of communication were established between the seminar leader and the participants.

Strongly   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
Agree   Disagree

Comments: 5.0

1. The workshop was kept informal and any questions was treated rather than ignored. There was ample time given to discussion.

2. Reaction from class members was frequent.

3. The class was very open and pleasant.

10. There was evidence of adequate planning and preparation for the meetings.

Strongly   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
Agree   Disagree

Comments: 5.0

1. We were supplied with a syllabus on the front end and those points were covered.

2. Many good handouts.

3. Thank you for the time spent preparing all the material that you distributed to us.

11. The overall time period of four days was sufficient for what was covered.

Strongly   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly
Agree   Disagree

Comments: 3.1

1. Disagree, only because I think Mr. Rakes has much more to than time permitted.

2. Many questions were raised that might lead to more ideas than we had time to formulate.

3. I would like to have the seminar run two weeks.

12. My overall rating of the seminar sessions is: 4.0

Very
High   High   Medium   Low   Very
                                                 Low

13. Identify the greatest overall strengths of the meetings.

1. Effort to establish practical plans for future use; freedom of interchange; mutual support of two departments; amount of material covered; excellence of presentation.

2. The seminar leader's skills and personality were the highlights of the meetings.

3. The interaction between departments -- Knowledge of other work being done in the University and other courses our students are involved in.

4. Well planned.

5. Presentation of materials; demonstration of materials; attempt at connecting the reading material to the discipline of English. I have some new ideas about writing exercises.

6. Mr. Rakes' intelligence and knowledge of the subject; his ability to communicate effectively; and his incredible energy and enthusiasm. The combination of humor with facts was excellent. I have found some good ideas for assignments in writing.

7. Atmosphere of informality (give and take learning situations). Interesting; lots of good ideas that could be reworked and applied to my teaching situation.

14. Identify the greatest overall weaknesses of the meetings.

1. I am not comfortable with the type of organization (used. I have trouble seeing the relationship between individual topics and overall organization of the reading field.

2. Occasionally, the purposes of using some very interesting teaching devices might have been stressed more.

3. The amount of material and the rapidity of the presentation sometimes cause confusion.

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4. Occasionally a need to tie the material together in review.

5. Well, since the connection between reading and writing
   is underexplored, the meetings left me with only a
   better understanding of how to gauge reading errors.
   The connection between the skills of reading and
   writing are still not clear enough. But this type
   of meeting is a step in the right direction? We must
   do this more often.

6. My own weariness and post-semester depression.

On a sixteen item pre-post test the mean entry level score was
16.6. At the conclusion of the session post scores averaged 78.6
percent higher with a mean score of 95.2. The excellent post test
scores on the content test and very positive participant ratings of the
seminar reflect, in general, a successful program. Table III reports
a t value of 13.12 for the test scores which indicates a significant
difference in pre-post test scores at the .0001 level.

Table III

T-Test on Pre-Post Test Scores

	Pre	Post	t value
Mean	16.643	95.243	13.108
Std. Dev.	10.767	6.561	

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Discussion and Recommendations

Results from the project indicate very definite progress in
providing practical staff development experiences. The small scale
project discussed in this report supports the view that interdisciplinary
staff development seminars can be beneficial to all faculty involved as
well as providing improved learning opportunities for university students.
Specialized training of university faculties should result in better
learning for all students.

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The following recommendations are made relative to the teaching of special students at Memphis State University.

1. The teaching of special client groups must be considered a valued, rewarded and intergal enterprise at this institution. Ultimate responsibility should be left to academic departments not non-academic or purely service level agencies within the university.

2. Sufficient staff development seminars, individualized materials and facultities should be available if special students are to be given a realistic opportunity to successfully meet University academic standards.

3. Attention should be given to surveying basic reading-study achievement levels of all special students on an entrance, interum and exit basis.

4. A core of faculty interested in developing and maintaining appropriate instructional programs for special students should be identified and organized so as to make faulty resources readily available to students.

5. Follow-up sessions should be conducted during the Fall, 1977 academic semester. Those instructors teaching ELED 1201, Reading and Study Skills For University Students, should serve as facilitators.

6. Additional specialized staff development seminars should be available to all departments within the University.

The efficient utilization of available faculty expertise is essential if colleges are to develop inexpensive staff development programs. Better teaching can result from shared knowledge and identification of mutual instructional problems. Cross-campus efforts which directly involve faculty members in interdepartmental instructional improvement

represent a potentially powerful source of self-improvement for all

institutions. Particularly on a large campus such as Memphis State

University, an on-going program should be established.

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