

USE OF A COLLEGE DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM AS A PRACTICUM SITE FOR PROSPECTIVE SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHERS

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The purpose of this paper is to report on the use of a college developmental reading program as a practicum site for graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in two College of Education courses: Teaching Reading in the Contents Areas and Reading Improvement in Secondary Schools. The two students used in the study described in the accompanying paper, "Changes in Preservice Teachers' Conception of the Reading Process: A Focus on Comprehension" by Amspaugh, DeSalvo, and Laine, were randomly selected from the winter quarter, 1984, practicum students who chose to use the Reading and Study Program as their practicum site. Their specific Reading Program assignments and practicum requirements will be described.

The Reading and Study Program as Practicum Site

In the University College — University of Cincinnati, students are openly admitted. This is, they need meet no specific requirements in order to be formally admitted to University College. Approximately eighty five percent of entering freshmen are from the local area high schools. Their high school grade point averages tend to be lower than their counterparts who are admitted into four year colleges in the University of Cincinnati. Many are first generation college students. The Reading and Study Program, along with other developmental programs, provide the intervention and support students need in order to move successfully through the two year program for either transfer to a four year program or completion of an Associate's Degree within the University College.

The Reading and Study Program is offered as a practicum site choice for the field experience, Practicum in Secondary Reading, which supplements the reading courses: Teaching Reading in the Content Areas and Reading Improvement in Secondary Schools. Several area high school reading programs are also offered as practicum sites. Because the Reading and Study Program is part of the University, its location and

schedule make it a convenient practicum site. Also, the Reading Program's students' reading levels are similar to the reading level of students in the high school practicums. It is during the winter and spring quarters that students are accepted as practicum interns in the Program because that is when the two accompanying courses are taught.

A ten week summer testing program screens approximately one third of the entering freshmen in University College into the Program each year. This number of students who enroll in the Reading Program's courses each fall vary between three hundred and fifty and four hundred students. The criteria for admission into the Reading Program is scoring under the 12th grade reading level on the Degrees of Reading Power Test.

In the fall, approximately sixteen sections of Effective Reading I are offered to the identified students. Each course meets three times a week for fifty minutes and is offered for two credits. A course limit of twenty students insures that individualization of instruction in group settings can occur in the courses. Also offered each fall quarter are six sections of paired reading courses. Three reading courses are paired with Psychology I; the other three courses are paired with Human Motivation, one of the three courses in a series of courses consisting of Human Motivation, Human Development, and Human Relations. During winter quarter approximately twelve sections of Effective Reading II are offered along with six sections of paired reading courses. Three reading courses are paired with Psychology II; the other three are paired with Human Development. During spring quarter, approximately eight sections of Effective Reading III are offered along with three sections of paired reading courses. These reading courses are paired with Human Relations.

Two persistent problems in the Program led to the development of paired classes in the Reading and Study Program. One, students screened into the developmental program took the non-paired reading course simultaneously with the content course in their declared major. A typical student reading at a low high school level, therefore, would likely also be taking courses in Psychology, Sociology, History, or the Fine Arts. The textbooks used for these courses are more difficult than the instructional reading level of the students. Also, the developmental students lacked the necessary study skills to enable them to effectively organize material, study in their textbooks, and prepare for tests.

The second problem in the Program is that many of the students view taking the reading course for three sequential quarters as a deterrent to progress in their chosen field of study. Thus, they do not re-enroll for Effective Reading after the first quarter they are tested into the program, fall quarter. Through examining the quarterly reading gains of our students, it had been ascertained that the majority need a year of developmental reading. If they do not complete this year, it is doubtful that they can successfully complete courses in their majors because their success depends so greatly on their effectiveness in reading textbooks and using study skills.

To alleviate these two problems paired courses were organized and implemented beginning in the fall of 1982.

The two randomly selected practicum students were assigned to the Program's two full-time faculty courses during winter quarter, 1984. One practicum student (Carol) was assigned

to one of the reading sections paired with Psychology II; the other practicum student (Mary) was assigned to an Effective Reading II section.

A description of their practicum assignments and responsibilities follow after TABLE I — Differences in Practicum Site Courses.

Table I
Differences in Practicum Site Courses

	Non-Paired Course Mary	Paired Course Carol
Course Entry	Results of summer testing using the degrees of reading power test makes course enrollment mandatory. All 10 students were developmental students.	Voluntary enrollment in the course — some developmental students. Twenty (20) students total 15 were developmental students 5 were reading appropriately.
Course Credit	2 hours credit — course met Tues.-Thurs. early afternoon for 1½ hours.	2 hours credit — course met late morning Mon.-Wed.-Fri. for 50 minutes each course period.
Course Organization	Reading and study skills applied to all students' content courses taken that quarter.	Reading and study skills applied to Psychology II — the paired content course. Psychology II topics 1. Thought and language 2. Motivation 3. Emotion 4. Intelligence and creativity 5. Personality 6. Adjustment
Specific Skills	Vocabulary Skills Structural Analysis Contextual Clue Analysis Dictionary Use Comprehension Skills Literal details and concepts Inferential details and concepts Main idea identification Study Skills Time Management	Study Skills Time Management Notetaking System Textbook Reading Techniques Test Preparation Procedures Reading Rate Flexibility Comprehension Main idea identification Other Skills Writing skills Values Clarification
Intern Activities	1) Individual tutoring with two students that included choral reading, dictionary exercises, word attack practice (in context) with structural analysis.	1) Develop study guides for chapters in the Psychology textbook containing a section of key words and questions that guided students through their Psychology textbook.

2) Small group direction giving for vocabulary and comprehension activities in workbook used.

3) Directed discussion of main ideas of short reading selections in students' workbooks.

4) Check student work with individual students.

2) Taught writing skills through daily journals and writing a short research paper in Psychology.

Presented information on study skills such as SQ3R.

Cornell notetaking system made up worksheets for students to use.

4) Used values clarification activities such as prioritizing limited resources and defending stances on current issues to allow students to develop critical thinking skills and work in small groups.

Description of Internship in a Paired Reading Course

Carol interned in one of the three sections paired with Psychology II during winter quarter. The course met for three fifty minute periods each week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Psychology II is the second segment of a required course (Psychology I-II) for approximately one third of the associate degree and program transfer students in University College. As such, each Psychology II lecture course has approximately sixty students in it. These sixty students make three sections of twenty students each in the paired reading courses. In the course in which Carol interned, of the twenty total students, fifteen were developmental students and five students were reading at the college level.

In the paired courses, the primary emphasis is on the knowledge of and ability to use study skills. These skills include time management, notetaking techniques, textbook reading techniques, test preparation, and increasing the flexibility of reading rate. Vocabulary and comprehension skills are also taught in the course as these are areas in which the student show deficiencies. Students are graded on their ability to use the study skills taught in the paired course with their psychology course. Course assignments consist of making a weekly and quarterly study schedule, using the Cornell Notetaking System in the psychology course lecture, using the SQ3R system in studying psychology textbook chapters, unlocking unknown vocabulary words in the textbook, using text preparation procedures for the quizzes and tests, and varying the students' reading rate to match their reading purpose. The paired course uses a textbook, *Study For Success* by Meredith and Joyce Gall, which is a skills oriented approach to gaining the knowledge of and ability to use study skills.

Because the paired course was new, a variety of activities were tried consisting of those listed above and others. The other activities consisted of writing activities, the development of study guides for the psychology textbook, and values clarification activities. The course was organized in a fairly traditional manner with minimal lecture, some discussion, and a heavy use of group work on assignments.

Carol was primarily involved with these activities during her practicum assignment:

1) She helped develop worksheets (study guides) for each chapter in the student's psychology textbook. Those guides contained a vocabulary section of key words plus outline questions that assisted students in reading through the psychology material.

2) She helped develop their writing skills. As one activity, students were assigned to write a small research paper wherein they had to design a small experiment, observe it, and write it in report format. Each week students kept a journal of the activities they worked on in class.

3) She used values clarification activities to help students develop critical thinking skills while working in small groups. One such activity was a situation of a plane that had crashed in the Swiss Alps. There was not enough food for all the remaining survivors. Solutions to the problem had to be suggested by the group.

4) She developed mini-lectures on traditional study skills such as the SQ3R technique, the Cornell Notetaking System, time management techniques, and other ways to effectively use their textbooks.

Description of Internship in a (Non-Paired) Effective Reading Course

Mary interned in a Tuesday-Thursday early afternoon Effective Reading II course. Ten students were enrolled in the course, a low number for one of the Effective Reading courses. The ten student all had completed the prerequisite, Effective Reading I, the previous quarter. These students were not typical of the reading level heterogeneity found in other courses; eight of them were in the lowest reading range typically found in the program (middle school level and under). The other two students read at a normal level for a college developmental reading program. Because of the small number of students in the course and their skill levels, they were organized into groups of two or three students for instruction. The instruction was intensive individual practice in reading and study skills reinforced by completion of the computer modules KERNEL and Vocabulary Skills Laboratory.

In the Effective Reading II course, the primary emphasis is on the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills. The emphasis for this class in vocabulary development was on the structural analysis of words, contextual clue analysis, word meanings from Greek and Latin roots, and dictionary skills. Reading comprehension skills consisted of the development of literal facts, inferential facts, topic and main idea development, and paragraph development and organization. Usually, study skills are emphasized in Effective Reading II. In this course, because of the low reading scores, study skills were not emphasized.

Mary was therefore primarily involved with these activities during her practicum assignment:

1) She individually tutored outside of the course hours with two of the lowest reading students in the group. She designed a variety of activities including choral reading, oral practice in pronouncing words, dictionary exercises, and diary or journal writing.

2) She gave directions for short vocabulary exercises that were in the practice book which were primarily practice in

vocabulary (structural analysis, context clues).

3) She led discussions of main ideas after short reading selections were ready by the students.

Conclusions

The nature of the practicum experience had some effect upon the student's broadening of experience as evidenced by the changes in their semantic maps. Although Mary and Carol each had a different practicum experience in terms of the class and instructor, it is apparent that each of them gained many insights about the reading process as depicted in their individual semantic maps. Because the two practicum experiences were very different experiences for the two students, it would be difficult to determine an equal baseline from which changes in the conceptualization of reading can be ascertained.

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