

A BEFORE AND AFTER STUDY OF READING DIFFICULTIES OF FIRST YEAR TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF ILOILO SCHOOL OF ARTS AND TRADES*

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In this study the major reading difficulties and weaknesses of first year teacher education students of Iloilo School of Arts and Trades were identified. Then the students were given a remedial reading program focussed on these difficulties.

Conducted at ISAT, the study was participated in by fifty-eight students chosen from 298 freshmen of the teacher education department. The English instructor of the five sections was requested to identify the slow readers from each section and she recommended fifty-eight students. Twenty-three students who responded to the invitation to attend the special reading sessions conducted by the researcher became the members of the Remedial Group. For each of the twenty-three, a "twin," or a student who matched him/her in the reading pre-test scores, sex, age and mental ability, was found. These twenty-three "twins" comprised the Comparison Group. The twelve others did not come for

remedial help because they either had conflicts in schedule or lacked time for remedial sessions. Neither group had previously read the materials used for testing their reading skills. The students' ages ranged from 16 to 19 years, and the average was 18 years.

Answers were sought for the following questions:

1. What are the major reading difficulties and weaknesses of first year teacher education students of ISAT?

2. Will a simple but organized remedial reading program, easily set up with the facilities available in schools like ISAT, bring about some significant improvement in the reading abilities of first year teacher education students?

3. What changes will be noted after this remedial reading program is carried out?

4. Will the students be benefited by the remedial techniques and strategies of reading introduced?

* An abstract of a masteral thesis done at Central Philippine University in 1983 for the Master of Arts in English degree.

PROCEDURES USED

1. A preliminary test was first administered on January 3, 1980 to all the fifty-eight students to familiarize the students with the instructions, format and procedures of the tests. In this preliminary test, the students were made to do all the exercises by themselves so that they would do independently the exercises in *Reading for Meaning*, No. 8. After the preliminary test, the test papers were scored to identify the students' difficulties and weaknesses.

2. Six other pre-test exercises similar in format to the preliminary test were given to the students on January 3 and 4, 1980. The first three major errors, (those with three highest frequencies) of each student were identified to enable the researcher to group the students having the same major errors. Students' test papers were also analyzed to identify particular skills in which they were weak. The students' grade levels were also determined.

3. Students having the same three major errors were grouped. Four groups were formed to facilitate the giving of remedial exercises to each group.

4. The Remedial Group of twenty-three students was given remedial reading exercises for three months, about three to four exercises per month. Each student was given ten to twelve remedial reading exercises, four for each major difficulty.

5. Thirty-nine exercises were

given to the Remedial Group during the first three months. Then they were given the first post-test consisting of six exercises. The means of their post-test scores were computed and the significance of the difference between mean pre-test scores and mean post-test scores for each of the skills was determined.

6. A few weeks after the first post-test, the second post-test, consisting of another set of six reading exercises taken from the same book, was given to the Remedial Group. This was done to ascertain whether the students made improvement in their reading scores and to help the researcher compare the persistence of errors of the students in the first and second post-tests.

7. The same first and second post-tests given to the Remedial Group were given to the Comparison Group, ten months after the pre-test was given them. Their mean scores for the pre-test and for the post-test were computed. Also their mean scores for the pre-test 1 and that of the post-test 2 were compared. The difference between the two means of the Remedial Group was compared with the difference between the two means of the Comparison Group. The t-ratio was computed to find out whether the difference between the two differences was big enough or significant.

8. To appraise the mental ability of the students, the *Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability* (Higher Form) was given to all the fifty-eight students. Their IQ's were correlated with the extent of change in the students' new scores.

9. The Registrar's records were looked into for data on the students' age, sex, average grades in all high school and college English subjects for the researcher to assess the scholastic ability of the students under study especially in English.

10. An inventory was given to the students and their answers to this inventory were analyzed to determine the relationship of their other activities and experiences with their performance in reading. On the basis of students' answers to the inventory, the researcher classified the students as those having meager, fair and very rich experiential background.

The study revealed that the Remedial students were from two to three grade levels below their expected reading grade level. The boys in the Remedial Group made significant improvement in the following reading skills, in this order: getting the main idea, getting the facts, choosing the best title, drawing conclusions, getting word meanings, and in making an outline.

The girls in the Remedial Group made significant improvement in the following reading skills, in this order: getting the main idea, choosing the best title, getting the facts, making an outline, getting word meanings, and drawing conclusions.

Neither the boys nor the girls of the Comparison Group made any significant improvement in the six reading skills tested despite the ten-month regular classroom instruction before they were given the post-tests.

On the basis of the findings,

the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers of reading should give help to students with reading difficulties as soon as their reading problems are discovered.

2. Reading materials suited to the age, sex, reading level and mental ability of students should be provided.

3. Teachers should teach students how to use context clues when confronted with unfamiliar words.

4. Schools should provide supervised study periods for students who have reading problems.

5. College English teachers should diagnose students' reading difficulties at the start of the school year.

The following problems have been suggested for further study:

1. A study similar to this done on a wider scale and for a longer period of time.

2. A more refined study to include the use of instruments to measure auditory and phonetic skills of first year college students.

3. A study using a remedial reading program based on interests of remedial students.

4. A study which will identify reading difficulties in the students' native language (Hiligaynon).

5. A study on students' reading skills including inferences, logical relationships and predicting or anticipating outcomes.