Reading in the Two-Year College: Focused Access to Selected Topics (FAST) Bibliography No. 5.

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This 24-item annotated bibliography of journal articles and monographs from the ERIC database is designed to assist two-year college faculty and administrators by answering questions and providing new ideas for the successful conduct of their reading instruction program. The items date from 1983 to 1988 and are arranged in the following categories: (1) an overview; (2) remedial reading instruction; (3) methods and media for teachers; (4) literature in the two-year college; and (5) computer-assisted instruction. (RS)
Reading in the Two-Year College
by Margaret Haining Cowles

More than one-half of all college students and nearly one-half of all college faculty in the United States attend or work at two-year colleges; yet two-year colleges are seldom the sole focus of media attention. With increasing national attention on specialized literacies, the two-year college and its career-focused student deserve increasing attention from reading specialists, other educators, and the public. Two-year colleges are often the scene of the most effective development in catch-up, remedial instructional programs and techniques; and they also tend to be the site of highly innovative and experimental yet practical teaching and of meaningful evaluations of reading instruction.

ERIC/RCS presents this FAST Bib on reading in two-year colleges in recognition of the importance of the role played by these institutions and of the high standards of professionals who work in them. It is hoped that the resources cited here can assist two-year college faculty and administrators by answering questions and providing new ideas for the successful conduct of their reading instruction programs.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the FAST Bib format. The ED numbers for sources included in Resources in Education have been included to enable the user to go directly to microfiche collections, order from the ERIC Document Reproductive Service (EDRS), or go to RIE for the full abstract on those sources not available through EDRS. The citations to journals are from the Current Index to Journals in Education, and these articles can be acquired most economically from library collections or through interlibrary loans. Reprint services are also available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and from the Original Article Tearsheet Service (OATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

Those documents available through EDRS can be purchased for $1.94 for 1-25 pages. Microfiche are available for $.82 per title up to five cards and $.16 for each additional card (96 pages per card). Contact ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; (703) 823-0505 or (800) 227-3742.

An overview
Remedial reading instruction


A survey of first-year community college students in New York City enrolled in remedial reading indicated that a slight majority of the students were women, that 54% of them were foreign born, and that a high percentage of them were taking the course in order to get higher paying jobs and to gain admission to college as regular students. Findings suggest that the remedial reading instructors be reevaluated to see if it matches students' expectations.


Provides a personal account of tutoring an illiterate community college student athlete. Discusses the problem of finding appropriate reading materials for adults with low skill levels. Traces the tutored student's progress, problems, and decisions for future education.


Describes a study of 14 reading improvement students and their instructors regarding their view of the students' reading deficiencies and the focus of the instruction. Reveals that instruction did not address the needs perceived by either the teacher or the student.


Describes activities to promote the integration of the right and left hemispheres of the brain that improve the attitudes of remedial readers.


Reports the results of a study in which community college students were found to be unable to summarize adequately without considerable training.

Methods and media for teachers


Describes a self-paced program which uses a controlled reading paper, print material, and fluency training films to teach adult students to read with improved comprehension and increasing instructional materials are organized sequentially in reference to the basal, prescriptive, and syntactical steps necessary for adequate skills development. Potential students are given a battery of reading tests to determine their particular skills deficiencies, and an individualized program is prescribed for each student.


Developmental program instructors at the Community College of Philadelphia have created materials which integrate thinking, reading, and writing, which teach standards of English usage through the study of the history of English, and which use drama and film to explore language attitudes. Experiential learning—involving students in acting out scenes from plays, attending professional theatrical performances, visiting museums, and reading aloud to children—is based on intensive exploration of themes such as Afro-American heritage, classics in Western European culture, and the diversity within Third World cultures.


Results of a study in Florida confirmed that junior college students writing structural responses reached higher levels of inferential comprehension than students who only read or wrote opinion responses, suggesting that the Structural-Response Instructional Model is a pragmatic way to use writing to increase students' understanding of written discourse and to increase their reasoning skills.


Students at Bishop State Junior College (Alabama) who admitted to reading out-of-class assignments only occasionally due to the degree of difficulty of the reading were given analytical exercises designed specifically for studying textbooks, poems, short stories, and novels. Of 511 students responding to an assessment item, 427 found the exercises helpful for reading comprehension.

Literature in the two-year college


Twenty-one papers presented at "The Future of Literature in the Community College" conference are included in these proceedings. Selected titles are: 1) 'The Value of Literature in the Community College Curriculum: One Credo, Several Courses,' by Carole Barrett; 2) 'Beyond the Parson's Field: Third World Literature in the Community College Classroom,' by Judith Hall; 3) 'The Word Must Fit the Need: Using Video and Film to Teach Literature in the Community College,' by Robin Herndojler; 4) 'Literature—An Indivisible Aid in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills to Remedial or Developmental Level Community College Students,' by La FACIAN Kozma and Catherine Wingfield; and 5) 'Teaching Writing through Literature: Toward the Acquisition of a Knowledge Base,' by Rose Anna Mueller.


Arguments that sophomore English students cannot and will read if offered assistance and literary offerings worth their attention. Suggests a course built around post-World War II American literature, since today's students can relate to the language used and to the contemporary issues raised in these novels.


Describes a community college project which incorporates literature into course content outside the English department to enhance students' ability to respond to subject matter and develop critical thinking skills.

Sommers, Jeffrey, and Palmer, Virginia Ellis. "Bringing the campus, the community, and the study of litera-
Computer-assisted instruction


A computer in a basic reading and writing class can help the instructor do more with greater ease and in less time. While problems such as user resistance, few relevant programs, and difficulties in measuring gains have not been resolved, several uses for the computer have been developed. These include provision of diagnostic data, electronic gradebooks, student-teacher communication by electronic mail, sharing of essays among classmates, and reduction of paperwork.


Discusses advantages of computer-assisted instruction in a community college writing/reading curriculum. Using word processing software, students write reports, themes, and essays on the microcomputer. Other software is used for learning vocabulary, grammar, reading rate and comprehension. Includes problems to avoid to ensure success.


Describes the process by which an individualized instruction reading test program was developed.

Patterson, Becky. "Evaluating microcomputer software for a community college reading/writing center." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Western College Reading and Learning Association, 1983. 11 pp. [ED 233 691]

Following a brief discussion of the problems related to current software evaluation forms, a detailed list of general guidelines for evaluating reading and writing software is presented. The guidelines cover educational soundness of the software, its ability to utilize microcomputer capabilities, and its validity for educational, rather than personal, use.


A mail survey of two-year colleges was conducted to identify types of hardware and software used and ways in which computers are used to teach reading. Responses from 181 two-year colleges with developmental programs indicated that computer use in reading instruction is increasing, with a wide variety of software in use, mostly on Apple computers, and that computers were being used most commonly to provide drill and practice with tutoring. A list of software packages frequently used is included.

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