

Education 472 - Language Arts

Intersession, Summer 1977.

Instructor: Paul Clements

This course is offered to people interested in developing a lively language arts curriculum for children at the elementary/intermediate grade levels.

Through a series of mainly practical workshops, the course will explore the topics outlined below. Additionally, it can cover items of interest raised by students during course sessions.

The work will be based on the assumption that children use language (write, talk and think) most effectively when they have something to say and someone to whom to say it. That 'someone' need not always be the teacher, although it is the teacher who will invariably provide the stimulus for effective communication.

The course will be concerned with the fostering in children of an enjoyment and excitement in the use of the language. In order to achieve this, teachers must discover their own enthusiasm for the possibilities of words. The course will stress, therefore, the development of the teacher's (or student teacher's) own resources, as well as providing opportunity for work in curriculum content, teaching methods and other practical classroom techniques.

Although there can be no hard and fast rules for the division of time in each of the course sessions, it is expected that, overall, the course will be structured around three major blocks of activity:

- 1: First hand student participation in the processes making up what we call language arts. This will involve work in writing, improvised drama, group discussion and so on.
- 2: Study of specific topics related to the development of professional expertise in language arts - an individual (and quite possibly, tentative) philosophy of English teaching which will determine curriculum content and classroom practice.
- 3: Work on individual or group projects and assignments, study sessions etc.

The topics to be covered will include:

CREATIVE OR PERSONAL WRITING

Language, experience and the use of the imagination; stages in the process of creative writing, from idea to first draft and beyond; criteria for the evaluation of composition.

'CLEAN' ENGLISH

Fostering clarity of thought and expression; the conventions of speaking and writing, including elements of usage, spelling, punctuation etc; receiving ideas and listening.

DEVELOPMENTAL DRAMA

What is it ? Relevance to child development; its possibilities in the classroom; techniques of teaching; related oral work.

LITERATURE

Most obviously poetry and prose for children; also, other experiences of language offered for children and other sources which investigate the ideas which lie between people - comics, television, movies, etc. Teacher as storyteller.

DEVELOPMENTAL READING

The act of reading; development of reading programmes; keeping abreast of the reading levels of individual children; teaching reading.

GRAMMAR & USAGE

What's 'correct' and why. The structure of language. The appropriateness of direct teaching of language.

EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITY

While it is understood that each student's own commitments will determine how far he or she is able to participate in any extra-mural activities, it is hoped that through the course people will be able to attend together events such as theatre performances, exhibitions and other cultural (or even not-so-cultural) affairs.

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There is no obligatory pre-reading but the following texts will be referred to and are warmly recommended:

- CLEGG J.D. (Ed) *The Excitement of Writing*
Schloken, N.
- HOARD, Marjorie *The Education of the Poetic Spirit*
Heinemann, London, 1949
- MOFFETT, James *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*
Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1968
- MOFFETT, James *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum K-13*
Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1973.
- PENNER, P.G. & McCONNELL R. *Learning Language*
MacMillan of Canada, 1977
- WAY, B. *Development Through Drama*
Longmans, London, 1967.