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THE READERS' DIGEST THERAPY: AN APPROACH TO TEACHING
COLLEGE ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate Studies and Applied Research
GREGORIO ARANETA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION
Victoneta Park, Malabon
Metro Manila

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY MAJOR IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

By

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1992



APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled "THE READERS' DIGEST THERAPY: AN APPROACH TO TEACHING COLLEGE ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS", prepared and submitted by CORAZON D. VICARIO in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY MAJOR IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is with great appreciation and a deep sense of gratitude that the author of this study acknowledges the assistance given by the following:

Dr. Aida J. Ayco, dissertation adviser; Dr. Antonio C. Pizarro, Dean, Graduate Studies and Applied Research, GAUF; Dr. Paz C. Astudillo, Dr. Andres M. Leabres, Dr. Nenita P. Macatulad, Dr. Ma. Corazon V. Tadena and Dr. Cecilia G. Villanueva, for their generosity with professional knowledge and time;

Prof. Zita G. Balagot for promptly and efficiently doing the statistical computations of this study;

Professors Rose Barrameda, Olive Cawed, Zeny Mabahague, Lilian Peña and Nellie Asuncion, for their cooperation and understanding;

Mrs. Aida P. Calaramo, Graduate School Secretary, Miss Minerva Abando, Graduate School Librarian and her staff, Mrs. Fely Dador, University Librarian;

The students involved in this study, and everyone who has helped to actualize this work.

For Prof. Billy T. Vicario, her husband, team mate, mentor and friend, who has given intellectual, moral emotional and physical support every step of the way;

Their children Anne and Mark, for whose sake she did her best as student to give a good example;



Her mother, Mrs. Felicidad V. Dimazana, and the memory of her late beloved father, Dr. Damaso A. Dimazana, for whom she finished the doctoral program to fulfill a promise;

For her professors and classmates in the Graduate Studies and Applied Research, interaction with whom has been stimulating, challenging, fruitful, rejuvenating and enjoyable;

For God, the Father Almighty, who has always made her cup to flow over with joy,

This humble work is dedicated.

C. D. V.



ABSTRACT

Title : THE READERS' DIGEST THERAPY: AN
APPROACH TO TEACHING COLLEGE ENGLISH
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Degree Conferred : DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT

Year : 1992

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to investigate the effect of a home reading program on the subjects' performance in SRA Reading Comprehension tests. Specifically it compared the following:

(1) The pretest and post test scores of the control and the experimental groups to find out if improvement in reading comprehension had occurred within each treatment group at the end of the experimental period. (2) The gains in score of the control groups and the experimental groups to find out in which group improvement was bigger. (3) The mean gains in score of Subgroups High, Average and Low from the control



groups, compared with their counterpart subgroups from the experimental groups to find out which subgroup achieved higher. (4) The mean gains in score of Subgroups High, Average and Low within the control groups and within the experimental groups to find out how students with high, average and low reading comprehension skills responded to their particular treatments.

Procedure

Two simultaneous experiments were done, involving English 2 and English 1 classes, on two successive semesters. The classes were divided into experimental and control sections. In the control classes, the focus was on grammar and composition writing for English 1 and English 2 respectively. In the experimental sections, emphasis was on exposing the students to the English language by means of a home reading program using back issues of the Readers' Digest as reading materials.

In both experiments, twenty students were drawn from the control sections by matching them with 20 students from the experimental classes on the bases of pretest scores and gender. Although all the members of the control and the experimental classes went thru all the activities prescribed for their respective treatments, only the matched pairs of students were considered as subjects of the study.



SRA Reading Comprehension tests were administered as pretests to the classes under study, one week after the start of the semester, and as post tests one week before the end of the term. Frequency of correct answers was used as a score. The mean difference between pretests and post tests, or the mean gains in score served as the "achievement" in reading comprehension of the subjects of the study. T-tests and F-tests were used to establish levels of significance in the gains in score or achievements of the groups being compared.

Findings

The results of the study were as follows: (1) The gains in score achieved by both control and experimental groups were highly significant. (2) The experimental groups exceeded the gains in score made by the control groups to a highly significant degree. (3) The gains in score made by Subgroups High, Average and Low from the experimental groups were significantly higher than the achievements of their counterpart subgroups from the control sections. (4) There were no significant differences in the gains in score made by the three subgroups within each treatment group, with the exception of Subgroups Low from Experimental Group 2.

Conclusions

In the light of the preceding findings, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) All the eight classes involved in the two experiments improved significantly in their



reading comprehension skills at the end of the experimental period. Hence it could be stated that within one semester, the students' initial reading comprehension level could be improved significantly, either thru the Readers' Digest Therapy, or thru the grammar and composition approach. (2) Improvement in reading comprehension gained by the experimental groups was significantly higher than that of the control groups. This implied that teaching English 1 and 2 using the Readers' Digest Therapy was more effective than thru the traditional grammar and composition approach. (3) Students with initially high, average and Low reading comprehension skills improved significantly higher than their respective counterparts from the control groups. This implied that the Readers' Digest Therapy was more effective for use with any kind of student. (4) Students in both experimental and control groups tended to respond to their respective treatments in the same degree, regardless of whether they had initially high, average or low reading comprehension skills.

The findings of this study implied that a home reading program was effective in developing the students' reading comprehension skill, and this observation held true regardless of whether the students had high, average or low reading comprehension skills to start with. The teaching of English 1 and 2 at GAUF should perhaps be re-studied.



Recommendations

Recommendations based on this study are made as follows:

- (1) A shift in emphasis should be made from grammar and composition to reading in the teaching of English 1 and 2.
- (2) Home reading should be made an integral part of the syllabi of English 1 and 2.
- (3) A university reading improvement program should be required for freshmen who fail in an English entrance exam, prior to enrollment in regular college English courses.
- (4) A course in Developmental Reading should be added to the freshmen curriculum. If this is not possible, English 1 and 2 should be treated more as reading classes rather than as grammar and composition courses.
- (5) The DECS should perhaps re-evaluate the course contents of English 1 and 2 to make them more relevant to current needs.
- (6) Professors teaching English should direct class activities towards maximum exposure of the students to the English language.
- (7) A reading club should be organized university-wide, to build up interest in reading.
- (8) A reading center separate and independent from the University Library should be set up. Any member of the GAUF Community should be able to borrow reading materials from this center, in exchange for a book or periodical which are to be left at the Center for others to borrow.
- (9) The Readers' Digest should be included in the list of the University's subscriptions.
- (10) Another



study should be done to assess the effectiveness of a reading program in helping the students to become adept in the English language. This study should be conducted in other colleges and universities, involving a bigger number of students and faculty members.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
APPROVAL SHEET	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xviii

CHAPTER

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Introduction	1
Conceptual Framework	6
Statement of the Problem	7
Hypotheses	10
Significance of the Study	11
Scope and Delimitation of the Study	13
Definition of Terms	13

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED STUDIES

Review of Literature	17
Review of Related Studies	33
Foreign Related Studies	35
Justification of the Study	39



3. METHOD OF STUDY AND SOURCES OF DATA

The Research Design	40
The Subjects of the Study	41
Instruments Used	44
Procedure	46
Sources of Data	52
Treatment of Data	54

4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Experiment 1

The Pre-Tests and Post-Tests of Control Group 1	56
The Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group 1.	57
Post Test Scores of Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1	60
The Gains in Score of Subgroup High from Control Group 1 and Experiment Group 1	63
The Gains in Score 1 Subgroup Average from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	64
The Gains in Score of Subgroup Low from Control Group 1 and Expe- rimental Group 1	66
The Gains in Score 1 Subgroup High, Average and Low within Control Group 1	70
The Gains in Score of Subgroups 1 Year Average and Low within Experimental Group 1	71



Experiment 2

The Pretest and Post Test Scores of Control Group 2	75
The Pretest and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group 2	76
The Mean Gains in Score of Control Group 2 and Experimental Group 2	78
The Mean Gains in Score of Subgroup High from the Control and the Experimental Group	80
The Gains in Score of Subgroups Average from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2	84
The Gains in Score of Subgroup Low from Control Group 2 and Experimental Group 2	85
The Gains in Score of Subgroup High Group and Low Control Group 2	87
The Gains on Score of Subgroups High Average and Low from Experimental Group 2	91

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary	100
Findings	102
Conclusions	105
Recommendations	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109
APPENDICES	110
CURRICULUM VITAE	127



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. The Mean Pretest and Post Test Scores (in %) of Control Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	56
2. The Mean Pre-Test and Post Test Score (in %) of Experimental Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	60
3. The Mean Gains in Score (in %) of Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	61
4. The Gains in Score (%) of Experimental Subgroup High Pretest Score and their Counterparts from Control Group 1	63
5. The Mean Gains in Score of Subgroup Average from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	64
6. The Mean Gains in Score of Subgroup Low Pretest Scores from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	68
7. The Gains in Score (in %) Among three Subgroupings (High, Average and Low) within Control Group 1	70
8. The Gains in Score (in %) in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test Among Three Subgroupings (High, Average and Low) within Experimental Group 1	73
9. The Pre-test and Post Test Mean Scores of Control Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	75
10. The Mean Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	76



	Page
11. The Mean Gain in Score (in %) of Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	78
12. The Gains in Score of Subgroup High Score from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2	82
13. The Gains in Score Post Test Scores in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	84
14. The Gains in Score of Subgroup Low from Experimental Group 2 and from Control Group 2	85
15. The Gains in Score of Subgroups High, Average and Low within Control Group 2	89
16. The Gains in Score of Subgroups High, Average and Low within Experimental Group 2	91



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Control Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	58
2. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Experimental Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	59
3. The Post Test Scores of Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1	62
4. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High from Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1	65
5. The Post Test Scores of Subgroup Average from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	67
6. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups Low from Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1	69
7. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High, Average and Low within Control Group 1	72
8. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High, Average and Low within Experimental Group 1	74
9. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Control Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	77
10. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	79
11. The Post-Test Scores of Control Group 2 and Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	81



Figure	Page
12. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2 and their Pre-Test Scores	83
13. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups Average from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2 and their Pre-Test Scores	86
14. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups Low from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2 and their Pre-Test Scores	88
15. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High, Average and Low within Control Group 2	90
16. The Post Test Scores of Subgroups High, Average and Low from Experi- mental Group 2	92



LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A. The Post Test, Pre-Test and Gains in Score of Experimental Group 1 and Control Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	113
B. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Control Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	114
C. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Experimental Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	115
D. The Gains in Score (in %) of Control Group 1 and Experimental Group 1 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 2	116
E. The Gains in Score of Subgroup High from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	117
F. The Gains in Score of Subgroups Average from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	118
G. The Gains in Score of Subgroups Low from Control Group 1 and from Experimental Group 1	119
H. The Pre-Test, Post Test and Gains in Score of Control Group 2 and Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1 . . .	120
I. The Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of Control Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1 . . .	121
J. The Pre-Test and Post Test Score of Experimental Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	122



Appendix

Page

K.	The Gains in Score of Experimental Group 2 and Control Group 2 in the SRA Reading Comprehension Test for English 1	123
L.	The Gains in Score of Subgroups High from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2	124
M.	The Gains in Score of Subgroups Average from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2	125
N.	The Gains in Score of Subgroups Low from Control Group 2 and from Experimental Group 2	126