

REVIEW OF ANALYTIC TEACHING IN THE FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

Fall Semester 1982-83

INITIATING ANALYTIC TEACHING IN THE FIRST GRADE

Introducing a new program to first graders presents many challenges and even more rewards.

The school year began with twenty-six bright, bewildered, alert, daydreaming, aggressive, shy children. After a summer course in analytical teaching. I was eager to begin putting into practice all that I had learned.

I began by giving a pre-test to my class and to another first grade class which would be the control group. The test was bewildering to most of the children. Its length caused some to give playful answers rather than thoughtful answers toward the end.

With the test behind us I began to read the story *Rebecca* to the class and to use the accompanying activities. Regular classroom activities are generally conducted in a rather structured atmosphere. Pushing the furniture back to sit in a circle in the middle of the room created too much stimulation and took something away from our first session. Next year I will try conducting our first session outside in our P.E. circle which the class is more accustomed to assuming. Then we can later move our sessions into the regular classroom.

The children were most receptive to the story of *Rebecca*. They thought the story was funny. I began by reading several pages of the story and then re-reading the first lesson and doing the first exercise. Each time we had a session I re-read the part of the story we had previously done, and we reviewed our discussions and activities briefly. This seemed to bring the story together for the class and to serve as an attention getter for those who had a difficult time settling down and concentrating.

The outgoing children have been eager participants

and many of the activities have been helpful in bringing out some reserved personalities. However, I still observed that the very shy ones allowed themselves to get lost in the shuffle and quickly fell into the habit of choosing not to comment when they were given an opportunity. This is a problem we are still working to solve. In the future I plan to involve these children in small group activities and encourage them to report to the class at a later session.

Another problem has been keeping the discussion "on track." When talking about elephants, thoughts often turned to the pets at home and other unrelated subjects. I found myself restating the previous "on track" conversations over and over.

Some of the activities seem to be over the children's heads, but perhaps with more experience I can make them more meaningful.

One of the best activities was the session concerning actuality/possibility/probability. This lesson went over well, and some children make reference to it still.

Other activities that made lasting impressions on the class were the sessions involving the problems of kissing a frog to turn him into a prince and the experiences that revolved around making a crazy thought crazier. These created an excellent atmosphere for stimulating imagination and using creative reasoning skills.

I have been impressed with the expanding vocabulary and the growing ability to express thoughts. This growth has carried over into other areas of learning.

I am anxious to see the results of the posttests, and I am curious to see if our experience will better enable my students to handle such tests as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

These are many indications that the class is benefiting from our analytic teaching activities and I feel that I am gaining better insight and techniques in sharpening the reasoning skills of my young class.

Doris Hughes

