"Yes, Virginia, There is Learning Taking Place."

It's All in the Approach - Course Builder™, PT, and Thee

Claudia E. McDade, A. Jane Barnes,
John M. Brown, and Patti Doeltz

This session provided an overview of the Computer-Based Precision Learning System™ and student learning success strategies at Jacksonville State University's Center for Individualized Instruction, featuring a hands-on approach to discovering learning the PT-CAI Center way. Practical PT learning approaches in areas of study skills, English and writing, quantitative skills, psychology, reading (rate/comprehension), and ACT preparation were presented and shared, including examples of various PT learning strategies and interventions with implementation techniques. The Center team, McDade, Barnes, Brown, and Doeltz, presented the Center for Individualized Instruction's instructional - learning strategies, ranging from using the Computer-Based Precision Learning System™ to developing probe-practice sheets and SAFMEDS. Standard Celeration Charted data, both individual learner and collective summary, exemplifying PT-CBI strategies that work (in the areas of psychology, reading, writing, and algebra), were shared and discussed with session attendees.

The accompanying Charts illustrate some Precision Teaching interventions used in the Center for Individualized Instruction. Students in a freshman orientation seminar were asked to construct SAFMEDS from a list of 130 common words found frequently in freshmen level textbooks (e.g., braggadocio, genre, imbue, inferential, plethora). Chart 1 is a summary of Jane Barnes’ section’s pre-test and post-tests in which they were given a sample from the 130 words and asked to write a brief definition of as many as possible in 5 minutes. Chart 2 indicates the SAFMEDS performances of each member of the class. A freshman student with severe cerebral palsy in Claudia McDade’s section is highlighted in Chart 3. His performance also indicated biweekly, one minute silent novel reading passages, followed by one minute writing of complete thoughts from the passage (i.e., a comprehension task). While all other students in the class improved their comprehension fluencies, the cerebral palsy student’s slope remained fairly flat because he could not write fluently.

In a developmental writing class students are given rate-based pre-and post-tests on major error identification, definitions of homonyms (e.g., your--you’re, patience--patients, some--sum) from which they construct sentences, as well as parts of speech identification. John Brown’s developmental writing classes are illustrated in Charts 4--6. Pre and post major error identification performances are presented in Chart 4. Chart 5 is a summary of one of John Brown’s developmental writing sections on pre- and post-tests of homonym definitions and appropriate sentences. Daily practice of a variety of Precision Teaching strategies contributed to the pre versus post-test improvements on parts of speech identification in Chart 6.

In Spring, 1992, students used the Computer-Based Precision Learning System™ in courses from the Departments of Anthropology, Learning Skills, and Psychology. A typical student performance on the system in PSY 335: Theories of Personality, covering thirteen theorists, is shown in Chart 7.

About half of the approximately 4000 students who use the Center for Individualized Instruction yearly come for tutoring. Patti Doeltz, graduate assistant, supervises tutoring activities. Her work with one student in Psychology 201 using SAFMEDS is illustrated in Chart 8. The student maintained above average grades in all courses except Psychology 201. The student was shown how to make SAFMEDS by utilizing key words and phrases within each chapter, and how to chart his own progress on the Standard Celeration Chart. He attended tutoring sessions 3 times a week for 4 weeks with each session lasting for 60 minutes. He was timed on his SAFMEDS for 1 minute at the end of each tutoring session. Even though the words, chapters, and SAFMEDS changed each week, by using his own SAFMEDS and by charting his own progress, the student’s study habits as well as his grades greatly improved.

Staff of the Center for Individualized Instruction includes Dr. Claudia McDade, Director, Jane Barnes, Assistant Director, John Brown, Instructor, and Patti Doeltz, Graduate Assistant. For further information contact them at Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL 36265-9288 or (205) 782-5570.

42
READING RATE

THOUGHTS FROM READING

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