

Release on Receipt

UMD NEWS SERVICE  
724-8801, Ext. 210  
March 13, 1968

Duluth--- A one-quarter, no-credit course is helping UMD students to 'make the grade' in their other college classes.

Titled the "College Reading Skills Program," it's offered by the UMD Reading Clinic and presents techniques to improve reading and study skills.

By taking the course, most students have improved their reading comprehension, enriched their vocabularies and increased their reading rate. In many cases the end result is better grades in other courses.

Taken on a voluntary basis, the course presents no extra cost to regularly enrolled students.

Participants listen to presentations by instructors and then seek to apply suggested techniques as they work on individually programmed reading assignments. Textbooks and workbooks are provided.

They are allowed to spend extra hours using lab materials and equipment such as controlled readers, reading pacers and the tachistoscope, a device that projects printed phrases on a screen.

Students also take periodic tests to assess their progress. Careful studies made by Clinic personnel show an average of 10 to 25% improvement in comprehension, and reading rate increases averaging 100-200 words per minute among students taking the course fall quarter.

Those enrolled in the program range from freshman to graduate student. 'Many are students with strong academic averages, but who still are aware of a need for more effective reading skills,' said Dr. Vernon Simula, Clinic Director.

(more)

Since its beginning six years ago, the Reading Clinic has grown to offer a variety of services. Begun only as a reading course for UMD students, it now includes summer reading clinics and consultative services to public schools, a reading methods materials library for student teachers and individualized instruction for college students with more serious reading and spelling deficiencies.

The Clinic was started by the UMD counseling office to help UMD students requesting additional reading instruction. Mrs. Mabel Barnaby, then psychometrist for counseling and now an instructor at the Clinic, began by teaching the course to small groups.

In 1965, several rooms in the Education Building were remodeled for use by the Clinic. Four persons now assist in the instruction: Simula, Mrs. Barnaby, Mrs. Verna Norha and Ronald Mortaloni.

Mrs. Barnaby cited two reasons for the reading course and its success over the years. "It's simply that 90% of all college work involves reading and students find themselves faced with accelerated study situations upon entering the University," she said.

She added that housewives and servicemen returning to college often take the course to refresh their reading and study skills.

The chief goal of the reading program, according to Simula, is to help individuals become better students. "Effective and efficient reading skills are indispensable for meeting the demands of an expanding and rigorous college program of studies," he noted.