NEA participates in Afro Biocentennial Symposium

WASHINGTON, Parren J. Mitchell (D-Md. delivered the opening address at a major symposium on Jan. 15 to discuss the 1976 bicentennial celebration with specific emphasis on the role of black Americans and their contributions to the nation's history. The symposium took place at the National Education Association's headquarters here.

Nearly two dozen distinguished black scholars and authors discussed the many facets of black American history, and how best to commemorate black contributions to this nation. The symposium was sponsored by the Afro American Bicentennial Corporation (ABC) and the National Park Service.

In announcing NEA's participation in the symposium, Dr. Sam M. Lambert, executive secretary of the 1.1 million-member teachers association, expressed "stong stupport for the concept of teaching Americans the true history of their past and the role of minority groups in establishing the world's greatest democracy."

Lambert added: "We must glory in our diversity, take pride in our ability to create one unified nation with the support and contributions of many races, creeds and colors.

"No other profession is better able to teach the true history of our country and its peoples than the teaching profession, and I feel sure that our members will eagerly pursue that goal."

Two members of the NEA headquarters staff joined the other participants in arriving at conclusions on how best to commemorate the black heritage as a feature of the American Revolution Bicentennial through the medium of historic sites and buildings.

Representing NEA at the day-long symposium were Dr. Elizabeth Bouey-Yates, coordinator for the Committee for International Relations, and recently named special assistant for internal human relations, and Dr. J. Rupert Picott, assistant director for the National Higher Education Association Membership Division, and immediate past president of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

REP. PARREN J. MITCHELL (D-Md.), second from left, is seen discussing the upcoming Bicentennial celebration. At far left, Dr. Wade Wilson, President of Cheyney State College, Cheyney, Pa., and member of the NEA executive committee; Mitchell; Samuel B. Ethridge, NEA assistant executive secretary for teacher rights; George W. Jones, director NEA center for human relations, and Vincent DeForest, executive president of Afro-American Bicentennial Commission.

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In addition, the recent adoption of a city-wide $124 million Capital Improvement Program which includes new school construction, expansion and renovation of present buildings, plus other facility improvements over the next six years.

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Teaching Reading Methods May Vary

WASHINGTON — Of the many methods of teaching reading to children, no one way is the best. Children learn best when methods are fitted to their own special needs and interests.

The methods used to teach reading in your school will depend upon school policy, materials available, and how the teachers have been trained. Following are some of the current methods used to teach reading.

In the basal reading approach children are given a series of several books in kindergarten and first grade. Some series now have games, filmstrips, and records to complement the books. Many have workbooks which enable the pupils to practice skills introduced by the teacher.

The basal series provides for a flexible teaching program. The teacher can tie in other subjects — science, social studies, literature — for practicing and reinforcing reading skills. She supervises the student as he completes his workbook. These drills help her find the areas in which she can most help the child.

• • •

The language-experience approach relates listening, speaking, reading and writing to the child's everyday experiences. Early in the program the whole class dictates a story about an experience they have had together. Later, children work in small groups or on their own.

Teachers, teachers' aides and older children write down the children's stories so they can read and reread them to learn basic reading skills. Skills are taught as they are needed to read the stories dictated, so the child sees the "pay off" for learning them immediately.

With this approach the children's interest is usually very high because they use their own experiences for reading material. They learn that what is said can be written, what is written can be read, and what is read can be heard by others.

Individualized reading programs are geared to the special needs of each child. In this method teachers usually use basal readers or the language-experience approach to teach basic reading skills. Then children may select the books they want to read aloud to a friend or to themselves. Each week the teacher meets with the child to discuss the book he is reading.

She listens to him read, and makes a record of his progress and problems. If a child needs more help he will work with the teacher more often. This approach allows a variety of methods to be used according to each child's needs.

In programmed instruction children work with a workbook or a computer at their own rate of progress. There is a lot of repetition and an emphasis on the child helping himself. The child must work drills correctly in each step of the program before he moves to the next, and he is told immediately if his answer is right or wrong.

Learning is therefore reinforced and the child can pace himself, understanding and correcting his own mistakes.

Although teachers in the program can spend more time with small groups and individuals, programmed instruction at present deals with only a few of the skills needed for learning to read.

The words in color approach uses the relationship between sounds and symbols. Forty-seven different colors on 21 drill charts represent the different sounds of English. Each sound is learned separately and is then blended with others to make words. For this method to work, pupils must be able to distinguish colors as well as to hear sound differences.

After pupils learn most of the basic sounds, they begin to work with a story reader.

The Initial Teaching Alphabet is a set of 44 characters. Twenty-four are from the English alphabet (x and q are missing). Fourteen are combinations of letters, and the remaining ones are invented symbols that represent sounds of the same letter.

There are many different ways of using i.t.a. Stories children are encouraged to real a lot and write down and basal readers are often used in the lessons. The their experiences. A gradual switch to using the regular alphabet usually takes place at the end of the first or beginning of second grade.

$100,000 in aid for A&T State

GREENSBORO, N.C. — A and T State University has received more than $100,000 in federal funds to upgrade the university's offering in the social sciences.

Dr. Will Scott, chairman of the Department of Sociology and Social Services, said the funds will assist A and T's programs in social work, child welfare, rehabilitation and problem of the aging.

One of the grants, for $53,794, was awarded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to help the University identify, select, recruit, and educate black students for positions of leadership in social work in the South.

A federal report two years ago showed that the government had awarded more than $66,222,000 for programs of medical services, public welfare, community services and problems of the aging.

A and T will also share in a grant of $50,000 from HEW. These funds will support a committee of black educators to serve as an advisory committee to HEW's department of Social and Rehabilitation Service.

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