

Tape Recording Educational Materials for Secondary Handicapped Students

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■ In recent years there has been a concerted effort on the part of advocacy groups, legislators, and the courts to demand that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped learners be educated with students who are not handicapped. This concept, commonly referred to as the least restrictive alternative, has been embodied in Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Although the humanistic goals of the act are admirable, the regulations of the law present special education and regular classroom teachers with an educational dilemma. In order to appropriately integrate secondary level mild and moderately handicapped learners into the mainstream of regular education, teachers need the availability of techniques that:

1. Are appropriate for the cognitive, physical, and sensory characteristics of handicapped learners.
2. Effectively present the curriculum.
3. Maximize learning experiences for the students.

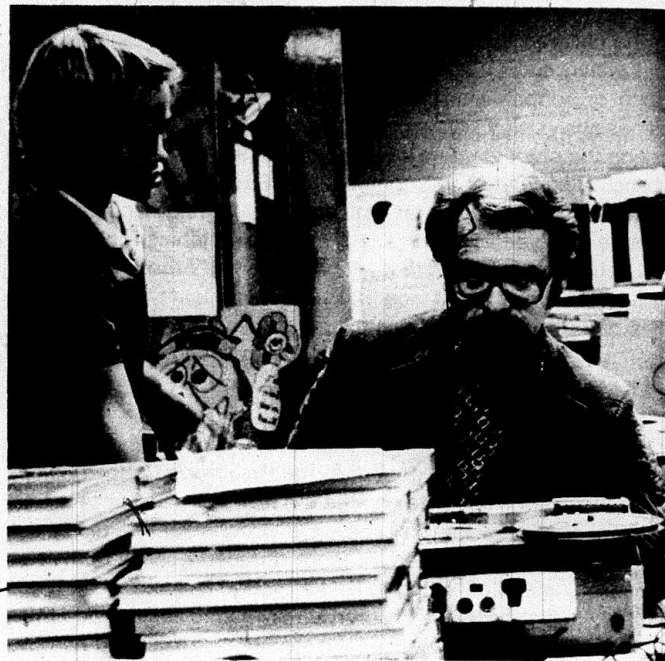
While the availability of such techniques is limited, the tape recording of text material is a widely used procedure that meets the above requirements. Tape recorded reading assignments minimize students' reading deficits and thereby allow them to stay current with class assignments and to supplement the information presented in classroom lectures. Nonetheless, to ensure that students receive maximum benefits from taped materials, tapes must be prepared so that they minimize student learning through effective organization and presentation.

The purpose of this article is to describe six principles that underlie the effective use of tapes in delivering content material to handicapped learners in secondary schools.

WHY TAPE TEXT MATERIALS?

The development and use of tapes to deliver content materials provide teachers with a technique that compensates for the specific disabilities of a handicapped learner and the curriculum

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demands of the school. Many handicapped learners evidence skill deficits in the basic subject matter areas of reading, spelling, and writing. A handicapped youngster at the high school level may read in a word by word manner with a minimum or text organization. Although the student may approximate functional reading competency, these skills are seldom adequate for meeting the curriculum demands of secondary schools where, for the most part, content is presented in a lecture format and through reading assignments. The handicapped youngster who evidences minimum note taking and reading skills will have great difficulty in using these skills to comprehend, learn, and master new content material. These students require techniques that can circumvent or lessen the effect of their skill deficits.

The level of cognitive development of many secondary handicapped learners is often greater than suggested by their skill development level. A 10th grade student who cannot read *A Tale of Two Cities*, for example, may be able to comprehend the delicate interaction of characters and events if he or she sees the movie. This situation implies that for many mainstreamed handicapped learners at the secondary level, teachers may emphasize the acquisition of content which is more appropriate to their cognitive development level than their level of skill development. Clearly, many handicapped learners can comprehend and learn complex information if their skill deficits are avoided or their effects lessened. The development and use of taped materials provide teachers with a technique by which appropriate content material can be acquired while the youngsters' weaknesses are circumvented or minimized.

The effective use of tapes to deliver content materials to handicapped youngsters, however, requires much more than merely taping verbatim from a book or a lecture. Effective use of taped content material includes:

1. Decisions concerning what is to be taped.
2. Use of taped materials to teach text usage and study skills.

* Before preparing or using recorded material with a particular student, an analysis of the student's listening capabilities should be conducted.

