

Research Into Appropriate Reading Aids Is Discussed at U

A major difficulty for Eskimo and Indian students in remote areas of Alaska is the process of learning to read.

To help find a way of eliminating this difficulty, a group of educational researchers opened a two-day conference last week on the University of Alaska campus.

The conference is sponsored by the university's new Alaska Rural School Project and by the Northwest Regional Research Laboratory.

The conferees' principal objective will be to determine whether a set of reading materials can be prepared that would fit the needs of Eskimo and Indian students in the culturally atypical and isolated schools of rural Alaska.

Existing reading aids for young children have been traditionally prepared by publishers for middle class students. The aids have failed to appeal to ethnically different Eskimo and Indian children.

The subjects contained in the materials, educators contend, do not fall within the interest range or experience of these children.

Conferees will try to identify

the largest groups of ethnically different students. They then will study the environment in which they live and determine what characteristics the groups might have in common.

The researchers were welcomed to the conference by Dr. Charles K. Ray, dean of the College of Behavioral Sciences and Education.

Frank Damell, executive officer of the Alaska Rural School Project, introduced the sponsoring agencies.

Participants include Mrs. Winifred Lande of the Alaska State Department of Education; Dr. Gerald Dykstra of the University of Hawaii; Dr. Benjamin L. Simmons of the Oregon State Department of Education; Nora Sullivan of the Indian Affairs Agency, Department of Education in Prince Rupert and Warren I. Tiffany of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Juneau.

In addition to Damell and Dr. Ray, University of Alaska personnel attending the conference include Dr. Patrick S. Duffy and Arnold Granville of the Alaska Rural School Project and Dr. William J. Loyens, assistant professor in the department of anthropology and geography.