ENGLISH METHODS COURSES IN TEXAS: PREPARATION FOR THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Martha L. Erwin, B.M.
Denton, Texas
August, 1988

This study analyzes the congruence between the objectives of secondary-level English methods courses in Texas universities and the objectives of the state-mandated high school curriculum (the essential elements) in language arts. A questionnaire was used to obtain information from 26 English methods instructors at 22 universities in Texas. The data obtained from these questionnaires reveal that these instructors strongly emphasize preparing prospective English teachers to teach the essential elements of composition. Other significant findings include: (1) the lack of emphasis in the English methods course on strategies for teaching the essential elements of language, when those elements are unrelated to composition, and (2) the lack of uniformity which characterizes the organization of the English methods course at major Texas universities.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................ iv

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ...................................... 1
II. REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE .................... 3
III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY ....................... 18
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ............................ 22
V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
   FURTHER RESEARCH .................................. 48

APPENDIX

A. QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVER LETTER .................. 53
B. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES NINE
   THROUGH TWELVE ..................................... 60
C. RESPONSES RECEIVED ON SECTION II OF QUESTIONNAIRE 65

WORKS CONSULTED ..................................... 69
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Characteristics of the Secondary-Level English Methods Course at 22 Texas Universities

Table 2 - Characteristics of the 26 Instructors of the Secondary-Level English Methods Courses at 22 Texas Universities

Table 3 - Rank Order and Percentages of Average and Above Average Emphasis on 30 Essential Elements in English Methods Courses in Texas

Table 4 - Rank Order and Percentages of Average and Above Average Overall Emphasis on Composition, Language, and Literature Teaching Strategies in the English Methods Course

Table 5 - Instructors' Level of Satisfaction with Six Aspects of Teaching the Secondary Level English Methods Course
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

How do Texas universities prepare prospective English teachers to teach high school English? The curriculum for Texas public schools known as the essential elements specifies particular objectives to be taught in English classes and in the other subject areas. But it is not clear to what extent the goals of the curriculum in teacher education reflect the goals of the essential elements. Has the standardized English curriculum in Texas public schools resulted in a standardized method of preparing Texas's English teachers?

This study examines the preparation that English teachers receive in the secondary-level English methods courses offered at Texas universities that train significant numbers of teachers. The main purpose of the study is to analyze the level of emphasis in these methods courses on strategies for teaching the essential elements of language arts. In addition, the study seeks to answer the following questions concerning the secondary-level English methods course and the instructors who teach the course:
1) Are all the English methods courses at major Texas universities organized in a similar manner?
2) Do the instructors share similar educational backgrounds?
3) What topics other than those related to teaching the state-mandated curriculum do these instructors emphasize in the methods course?
4) In general, are these instructors satisfied with various aspects of teaching the course?
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

While allocating day-to-day responsibilities in the area of public education to the State Board of Education, the Texas Legislature has the power to direct the course of public schools in the state. As an elected body, the members of the Legislature are naturally sensitive to public pressure. In the last two decades, that pressure nationwide has been to reform both the method of teacher preparation and the content of the public school curriculum (A Nation Prepared; Tomorrow's Teachers).

A major source of inspiration for curricular reform has been the idea of "accountability" in education—the desire to measure what students do know and compare that to a standard of what they should know. The trend toward accountability was not only general for education but also specific for teachers. According to a recent poll, a majority of Americans believes that "prospective teachers should be required to pass state board examinations to prove their knowledge in the subjects they plan to teach." Also, the public rates the performance of a teacher's students on standardized tests as the most important
criterion for determining whether that teacher should receive merit pay (Gallup 32, 34).

As a result of the pressure to reform education and the desire to make every student and teacher in Texas accountable for the same body of knowledge, state officials enacted a number of reforms. Among these reforms was a mandate for the creation of a standardized curriculum to be followed in all of the state's public schools. In 1979, the 66th Legislature directed the State Board of Education to formulate a "realistic and relevant statement of desired elements to be included in a well-balanced curriculum" and to come up with a method to "ensure that virtually all students master these basic or essential elements" (Texas). In taking this action, Texas was conforming to a nationwide trend toward taking control of the public school curriculum away from local school districts (Farrell, "Reflections" 89). During the development of this curriculum, input from the public as well as from the education establishment was solicited; in 1980, the Curriculum Study Panel heard testimony from citizens at public hearings and from an advisory committee that included laypersons. In 1981, the essential elements, a curriculum designating "essential" skills and concepts in each subject area, were formulated. By law, all public school districts in Texas must require their teachers to
adhere to this curriculum when planning instruction (Texas Education Agency).

The standardized test that was developed to ensure mastery of the essential elements by students is the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) test. And to assure that prospective teachers are competent to teach the curriculum, they must pass the Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET) prior to certification. This exam includes both professional and subject-area knowledge, and questions in the latter area are based on the essential elements. Therefore, all teachers in Texas public schools are responsible for mastering and teaching the essential elements. Although local school districts may ask teachers to supplement this basic curriculum, teachers may not delete or ignore the essential elements when planning and carrying out instruction.

The curriculum outlines a uniform set of goals for all public school students in Texas, and the ExCET designates a minimum level of competency for Texas's teachers. However, the means for achieving these goals for both students and teachers have been left to the discretion of local school districts and the universities that train teachers. In other words, just how English teachers should go about teaching students to "recognize irony in a literary selection," and how teacher educators should prepare their
students to become those teachers are matters which the Legislature left to the "experts." School officials and teachers undoubtedly concur with the legislators' reluctance to dictate teaching methods. However, by not specifying any means for achieving the set of prescribed ends found in the essential elements, reformers may have fostered an educational system that is not as uniform as was intended.

In the early 1970s, English teachers were concerned about the wisdom of applying behavioral objectives to subjects in the humanities. To this debate, George Henry contributed the warning that a singleminded focus on results, as described in behavioral objectives, implies "that there are many equally good means to an end; or that ends give clues to means. . . ("An Overview" 18). He argued that one cannot assume that "stating a behavioral end very well . . . will in itself . . . suggest appropriate behavior as means, on the part of both the pupil and the teacher" (19). In fact, he saw already "an overabundance of planned curricula but no planned instruction," resulting in "wide cleavage everywhere in English between instruction and the curriculum" (20).

Henry's observation may well apply to the current situation in Texas, wherein teachers required to teach the essential elements use a variety of strategies to achieve the results specified by this curriculum. Teacher
educators are accorded even more freedom in training future teachers; while instructional specialists in public school districts may recommend or prescribe particular teaching strategies, the typical university faculty member teaches by any method he or she chooses. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that

the course content that prospective and practicing teachers have an opportunity to learn is highly unstable and individualistic. The variation among and within courses and workshops at different institutions, as well as in the same institutions over brief periods of time, achieves almost infinite variety. (Lanier and Little 546)

One wonders to what extent a "highly unstable and individualistic" education prepares teachers in Texas for a standardized curriculum like the essential elements.

This study investigates the content of only one course out of the approximately twenty-seven hours of "professional development" in the teacher education curriculum. The focus on the English methods course is justified, even though the State Board of Education, which sets minimum standards for teacher certification in Texas, does not require prospective teachers to take a content-specific methods course. Despite this lack of official recognition, the English methods course was investigated
because of its significance, both theoretical and practical, for English teachers.

The English methods course occupies a controversial as well as significant position in the curriculum. The present system of teacher education involves a "shared responsibility across departments or schools," but this "sharing" is characterized by a lack of integration and cooperation (Lanier and Little 529). Lee Shulman of Stanford University, in an interview with a nationally-syndicated newspaper columnist, blames many of the problems with teacher education on this"

"organizational division" that assigns "one end of that division--the arts and sciences department--the responsibility for teaching content and . . . the departments of education the responsibility of teaching how to teach, and neither worries much about the other."

(Raspberry)

Some English professors will admit to feeling indifferent toward students who plan to teach high school: Almost twenty years ago, Smith commented on the "disdain shown by many college English department faculty for preparation of teachers" (9). There is little evidence that these attitudes have changed: "Often we [college English professors] know little and care less about English in the elementary or high schools" (Stewart 235; see also
This situation places a special burden on the English methods course, which must maintain a middle-ground position, addressing issues in both education and the subject-area and attempting to bridge that "organizational division" Shulman deplores.

The primary subject matter of the English methods course is that synthesis of content-area knowledge and methodology that teaching in the public schools requires. In college, prospective English teachers take English courses taught by professors who focus on their particular specialty--usually one historical period in literature or one brand of literary criticism--but who may ignore what Henry calls "general education" ("English" 84). According to Culler, even graduate students in English, most of whom are headed for university teaching, receive an overly-specialized education that does not prepare them for today's undergraduates (their future students), in whose culture literature occupies only a "marginal" position (213). At the undergraduate level, where one finds a majority of the prospective high school teachers, Kincaid observes that "English majors emerge with little idea of what they have studied or of what constitutes the discipline or its assumptions" (11); Henry sees "obvious defects of the English major" to prepare teachers "to bring inert English subject matter to life" ("English" 83).
Unfortunately, these "defects" are not remedied by education courses. In the general methods courses designed for teachers in any field, students encounter abstract pedagogical concepts and skills but rarely apply them to the meaningful context of a specific subject area. The English methods course, however, teaches strategies for teaching English, and thus performs a "focusing function," particularly critical to an interdisciplinary field like English: "Methods courses explore the very interconnections of our disciplines by asking why and how and how we know" (McCracken 4). For Smith, the purpose of the methods course is to show "the prospective teacher how his previous English courses connect and how his knowledge can be made pertinent to the students he will teach" (19). An English methods course that fulfills this function should offer the most direct preparation for teaching English in Texas public schools.

Another reason for focusing on the English methods course derives from a practical source--teachers. Many practicing teachers identify the methods course, along with student teaching, as their "most important or valuable experiences in helping them to become successful teachers" (Pigge 51; Committee on National Interest 44). However, they also wish that these courses, and their college training in general, would have included more emphasis on practical teaching strategies (Oftedahl 158-59; Huling and Hall 10; Lanier and Little 541).
Lanier and Little's extensive review of research on teacher education offers a final rationale for focusing on the English methods course in assessing teacher preparation in Texas. They believe that research suggests that methods teachers are more important variables in teacher preparation than are their students, the prospective teachers; yet, there is little available research, either of a descriptive or evaluative nature, on methods courses or their teachers (528). Oftedahl, who conducted a study of English methods teachers in the Midwest, also comments on the "paucity of research describing the [methods] courses and their relationship to teaching" (152). Given the theoretical and practical significance of the course, the lack of research attention is puzzling.

One explanation may be the attitude of the methods teachers themselves toward what they do, an attitude that leaves them reluctant to identify themselves as a coherent and unified professional group. Many methods teachers resist identification as teacher educators, preferring to ally themselves with their academic-area colleagues (Lanier and Little 529). In fact, the methods course is often taught by "subject matter professors who may or may not have any background in teaching methods" (Huiling and Hall 8).

Not only are the methods instructors an amorphous group, but the methods courses may also be unpredictable
Two researchers who studied social studies methods courses found a startling lack of congruence between the course objectives identified by the instructors and the attributes these same instructors believed are characteristic of successful teachers (Katz and Raths). In attempting to account for this discrepancy, the researchers suggested that these "instructors believe that what contributes significantly to successful teaching are dispositions and other personal qualities which, in fact, cannot be taught in methods classes" (15; emphasis added). Henry's warning about separating ends from means seems relevant here. The goal of teacher education—training successful teachers—is clear. But if methods instructors lack confidence that what they do contributes toward that goal (or if they sense that their students lack that confidence), they may believe that an individualistic, even eccentric, course content will do no harm. Previous studies of English methods courses have found that course content is left largely to the discretion of the instructor (Boyle 143-44) and that that content varies widely (Hipple 229).

Not all instructors of methods courses display the ambivalence toward their work described above. In contrast to Katz and Rath's findings, a survey of English methods instructors in nine midwestern states revealed that they believe they include in their courses what English teachers
need to know (Oftedahl). However, as noted earlier, the practicing English teachers who participated in Oftedahl's study did not share the methods instructors' enthusiasm about the value of their courses: "Teachers wanted more attention focused on the how of teaching"; they saw little use for the inclusion of more abstract, philosophical topics related to English teaching" (158).

The very existence of content-specific methods courses such as English methods derives from a controversial assumption in teacher education that successful teachers need to have more than just knowledge of their subject area. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) fully subscribes to this assumption:

The preservice teacher education program should initiate and develop certain knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and attitudes which will be the foundation for the teacher's subsequent professional career--for the English language arts teacher as scholar, decision-maker, and agent of curriculum change. (NCTE 10)

Shulman defines three "categories of knowledge" necessary for teachers: "(a) subject matter content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge" (9). English teachers, for example, not only need to be writers themselves but also need to be familiar with strategies for teaching their students how to
write; they also must be able to evaluate the variety of materials available for use in writing instruction. Critics of this philosophy of teacher education (who include some methods teachers themselves, according to Katz and Raths) challenge the necessity for training in methodology; these critics want prospective English teachers to concentrate on Shulman's first category of knowledge and enroll in more hours of upper-division English in college. Teaching strategies could then be learned on the job.

In this apprenticeship model of teacher education, future teachers also learn classroom strategies from their college English professors "who model fine teaching and who understand the pedagogy of their material" (Tomorrow's Teachers 16). Learning how to teach from experience and by watching and imitating other teachers is the oldest and least deliberate method of teacher preparation. Lanier and Little warn that this method encourages a conservative teaching style, wherein preservation of the status quo takes precedence over adjustment to the needs of a particular teaching situation (551). Defenders of methods courses further argue that college professors often provide inappropriate role models for prospective high school teachers who will soon face "hordes of culturally deprived youth" (Henry, "English" 83). Stewart admits that "poor performance by classroom teachers may be as much the fault
of college professors in the disciplines as of education professors" (235). Clift, who compared a group of students planning to teach high school English with a group of English majors interested only in teaching in college, concluded that the latter group, with no coursework in education and no experience working with students, may develop a schemata for teaching and learning English that has a strong orientation to the text and the context of literature, but virtually no orientation to the reader. (234)

Without this "orientation to the reader," new teachers in particular will not easily anticipate or recognize the difficulties their students experience with literature. According to Killian, experienced English teachers who have worked with student teachers complain that their charges have "a tendency to present material in a format inappropriate for young students" (138); the experienced teachers attribute this tendency to the students' inclination "to model their own teaching of literature on the lecture styles of their college professors . . . " (139). The same problem occurs in writing instruction, where the student teachers fail to adapt their teaching to "a manageable level for adolescents" (139).

Despite this evidence that an English major is not necessarily prepared to be an English teacher, and that
the problem with methods courses is that they do not fulfill their purpose well enough, Lynne Cheney, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, attacks "the widespread system of teacher certification based on completion of college-based training programs" (Cheney). She bases her dissatisfaction on the colleges' insistence that students take education courses. Even more disturbing to her is the practice of allowing prospective teachers to major in education rather than in their teaching field (a practice which the writers and supporters of both the Carnegie and the Holmes report want to disallow). Cheney contends that this system of teacher preparation overemphasizes methodology at the expense of content, and her views have gained widespread public acceptance. Raspberry sees a "national consensus" that education courses are a waste of time for adults who are knowledgeable in their field; he notes support for the idea that would-be teachers should be allowed to "skip teacher preparation and move directly from their former workplaces to the classroom."

To recruit intelligent, enthusiastic adults and place them directly into a typical urban public school is an appealing but simplistic solution to the problem of attracting better-qualified teachers. The public school classroom is a unique environment, having little in common with the usual adult "workplace." Even if an adult
regularly supervises and trains other employees, he or she could not expect to use the same set of strategies for supervising and training a classroom of children, many of whom are in class only because of compulsory attendance laws. The controversy, therefore, is not so much about whether training in methodology is necessary but about where the training should be acquired--through direct instruction in the college classroom or via on-the-job observation and experience.

Whatever the theoretical/practical arguments, the present system in Texas does not provide an apprenticeship period for new teachers; from their first day on the job, they teach with little supervision or guidance. And, what they must teach are the essential elements. For new English teachers in Texas, the English methods course is the main source for strategies for teaching the essential elements; the content of this course thus bears investigation.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In comparing the content of secondary-level English methods courses with the state-mandated curriculum for language arts, the only unknown factors are the methods courses. The state disseminates the essential elements, and, through standardized testing, holds teachers and students accountable for their mastery. In contrast, no standardized curriculum exists for the colleges and universities that train teachers; the content of English methods courses may vary from one institution to the next.¹ Therefore, a questionnaire was used to gather information about the content of secondary-level English methods courses in Texas. (A copy of the questionnaire and the accompanying cover letter is attached as Appendix A.)

¹Senate Bill 994 passed in 1987, however, will require content-area methods courses to consist of no more than 40% methodology; the balance of the course must be content (Simms).
Prior to beginning the study it was necessary to: (1) determine the specific items the study should include, (2) develop the questionnaire, and (3) choose the sample population.

Since the study focuses on preparation for teaching the essential elements of language arts for grades nine through twelve, most of the study items are taken directly from this curriculum, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B. To avoid a lengthy questionnaire, the curriculum items were edited to eliminate repetition of objectives across grade levels. According to this curriculum, language arts consists of concepts and skills in four areas: writing, language, literature, and reading. In practice, however, most high school English teachers do not devote much instructional time to teaching reading skills. High school students reading below grade level may be placed in reading courses, but these courses are taught by a certified reading instructor who may or may not be an English teacher as well. Education departments in Texas universities offer reading methods courses for training these reading teachers. Therefore, the essential elements of reading were eliminated from the study items. Also, one or two objectives were reworded for the sake of brevity. Therefore, the study items
pertaining to the essential elements of language arts for grades nine through twelve are a condensed and edited version of the state-mandated curriculum.

The items pertaining to the essential elements make up the major portion of the questionnaire; previous studies in this area suggested additional items related to: (1) course objectives not related to the essential elements, (2) data concerning the course and the instructor, and (3) attitudes of the instructors toward teaching the course.

Following the selection of the study items, a questionnaire was developed; with assistance from the major professor the questionnaire was revised and then prepared for mailing. On February 15, 1988, the questionnaire was mailed to 23 instructors at 22 Texas universities. Instructors' names were obtained by telephone from the department (either English or education) offering the course. About two weeks later, as a result of information obtained from the first group of returned questionnaires, questionnaires were mailed to three additional instructors at those universities offering a two-semester English methods course taught by different instructors.

The sample population consists of instructors of English methods courses at those Texas universities
meeting two criteria: (1) Each university has a TEA-approved program for teacher preparation in high school English, and (2) each university sent more than 100 students to the ExCET exam in February, 1987. The second criterion, designed to limit the sample population to methods instructors responsible for training significant numbers of teachers, eliminated well over half of the 64 universities meeting the first criterion. About six universities meeting both criteria were eliminated after it was learned from conversations with university officials that the university either does not offer an English methods course or offers it infrequently.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the congruence between the content of secondary-level English methods courses at 22 selected universities in Texas and the state-mandated objectives in language arts for public schools, known as the essential elements of language arts (see Appendix B). A questionnaire was used to gather information about course content from 26 methods instructors at the selected universities.

Of the 26 questionnaires mailed, 26 were returned; 21 were returned within the first 2 weeks of the mailing date, and the remaining 5 questionnaires were returned after 1 follow-up letter was sent. The unusually high response rate and the speed of response indicate that these instructors have a high level of interest in the study topic. Several respondents supplied more information than the questionnaire required--two instructors wrote personal letters describing their course content in detail, and three respondents sent copies of their syllabi--indicating a gratifying willingness to share their experiences in teaching the course.
The information obtained from the four sections of the questionnaire is reported below.

Results from Section I of the Questionnaire

Table 1 reports the methods of organizing the secondary-level English methods course at the 22 universities that make up the sample population.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Secondary-Level English Methods Course at 22 Texas Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offered as a one-semester course</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered as a two-semester course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required for prospective English teachers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional for English teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 22 universities represented by the 26 respondents, only 3 universities (14%) offer prospective English teachers a two-semester English methods course, while 19 universities (86%) allot the course one semester. Twenty-two respondents (85%) teach at a university that requires prospective English teachers to take the methods course, while four instructors (15%) teach where the course is optional for prospective teachers.
Table 2 presents the data reported by the 26 methods instructors at these universities concerning their educational background and their familiarity with the essential elements.

Table 2
Characteristics of the 26 Instructors of the Secondary-Level English Methods Course at 22 Texas Universities

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree is in English</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree is in English education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree is in education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches in English department</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches in education department</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is familiar with the essential elements</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not familiar with the essential elements</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 26 respondents, 13 (50%) received their highest degree in English, 10 (38%) in English education, and 3 (12%) in education. The 13 instructors with degrees in English all teach the English methods course within the English department; 4 English education professors teach in education departments and 6 teach in English departments;
of the 3 instructors with advanced degrees in education, 2 teach in an English department and 1 in an education department.

Twenty-two respondents (85%) indicated that they were familiar with the essential elements of language arts, while the responses of two instructors were ambiguous. Two instructors (8%) admitted that they were not familiar with the essential elements.

Discussion

The data concerning the organization of the secondary-level English methods course at 22 selected Texas universities reveal a course structure that is not uniform. The policies of these universities differ in regard to: (1) whether or not prospective teachers are required to take the course, (2) which department offers the course, (3) whether the objectives of the course need to be covered in one or two semesters, and (4) which area of the content of high school English is judged as deserving of the most instructional time.

Four (18%) of the twenty-two universities do not require their students planning to teach high school English to take the English methods course. While this is not a large percentage of the sample population, one should remember that several universities that met the two criteria for the sample population (an accredited program
of English teacher education and a significant population of students entering teaching) do not offer an English methods course or have not done so for several years; and therefore, these universities were excluded from the study. Consequently, a number of new English teachers in Texas did not have the opportunity to take a content-specific methods course.

The rationale for a university's not offering the course was not investigated in this study; however, there are several possible explanations. As noted earlier, the Texas Education Agency does not require the course for secondary certification, so each university decides whether or not to offer the course and if it should be required of their students. Some universities that train teachers may have a consistently small number of students planning to teach high school English, making it economically unfeasible to offer the course consistently. Also, the literature suggests that there is a shortage of qualified faculty members interested in teaching the course; there may in fact be a consensus at the university that the course is not useful for prospective teachers. However, given the practical as well as theoretical significance of a content-specific methods course for prospective teachers that was noted in the literature (Oftedahl; Huling and Hall; Henry; Pigge), the optional status of the course at any of the universities in the sample population is surprising.
Further explanation of the structure of the English methods courses that do exist reveals that some universities attach particular significance to instruction in composition. Two of the nineteen universities that offer a one-semester English methods course in the education department also require students to take an additional semester of composition methods offered by the English department. And, at one of these nineteen universities, the subject matter of the English methods course is the teaching of writing only. At the three universities offering a two-semester English methods course, students take one semester of methods of teaching literature and one semester of methods of teaching composition, both taught in the English department. Thus, the policies of five (23%) of the twenty-two universities surveyed suggest a particular emphasis on training high school English teachers in methods of teaching composition; only three universities (14%) allocate an equal amount of instructional time to methods of teaching literature. A course in teaching language—methods of teaching the grammar, syntax, and historical/sociological aspects of English—does not exist at any of the universities surveyed.

Along with the methods of organizing the course, the academic specialties of the methods instructors also vary among these 22 universities. The faculty members teaching
the course may have advanced degrees in either English, English education, or education; this typical diversity in the educational background of methods instructors was noted in the literature (Huling and Hall; Lanier and Little). This study did not investigate how a difference in the professional training of the instructor affects course content, but several sources (Clift; Henry; Stewart; Killian) suggest that instructors who identify themselves with the education profession have a very different orientation toward both the material they teach and their students, when compared with those who think of themselves as teachers of "content." The latter tend to be less cognizant of the need for anticipating and planning for psychological and cultural barriers that affect many high school students' experience with the material they encounter in English classes. A Ph.D. in English, who may never have taught outside a university setting, may not be able to prepare future teachers for these troublesome exigencies.

The failure to integrate the roles of the two departments--the content-area and education--in teacher education, as noted by Shulman, undoubtedly contributes to the inconsistencies in Texas universities in both the organization of the English methods course and the assignment of faculty to teach the course. These inconsistencies also reflect conflicting opinions among
university administrators and faculty members (echoed by commentators from outside the university) as to the efficacy of classroom training in methodology for teachers. In Texas universities, the range of opinion on this subject varies from the extreme of universities that do not offer the course at all to a very few universities that require two semesters of an English methods course. The effect of these inconsistencies on the quality of the pool of new English teachers in Texas is uncertain. Obviously, however, some new English teachers in Texas receive much more direct instruction in methods of teaching English than others. The following section discusses the extent to which this instruction concerns the essential elements of language arts.

Results from Section II of the Questionnaire

In this section, methods instructors indicated the level of emphasis (above average, average, or slight) in their course on strategies for teaching the essential elements listed. If the instructor did not cover a topic in the class, he or she could so indicate by checking either "not included but covered in another required course" or "not included in your course or another course."

Appendix C shows the number of responses received in each response category in Section II. Table 3 below reports, for each topic, the number of responses from the
"average emphasis" and "above average or heavy emphasis" category combined and expressed as a percentage of all responses; the topics are listed in rank order according to these percentages. Each essential element ranking from one through seven received an average or above average level of emphasis by more than 50% of the methods instructors in the sample population. Thus, Table 3 provides a general picture of the relative emphasis on strategies for teaching the essential elements in secondary English methods classes in Texas.

In Table 3, the letters in parentheses preceding each topic denote the category in which it appears in the state curriculum: "C" stands for topics in composition, "La" for language topics, and "L" for topics in literature. When two letters precede a topic, the first is the category assigned in the curriculum; the second letter indicates that the choice of category seemed arbitrary, and that concept or skill belongs in either or both categories listed. For example, "producing a variety of sentence

Because a combination of two response categories was used for determining rank order, some topics receive equal ranking.
"types and structures" is a "language" skill used during "composition."

Table 3
Rank Order and Percentages of Average and Above Average Emphasis on 30 Essential Elements of Language Arts in English Methods Courses in Texas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(C) Revising compositions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Evaluating a composition's content and proofreading for errors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Using the writing process to plan and generate writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Making rhetorical choices based on audience, purpose, and form</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Evaluating and proofreading one's own writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La/C) Producing a variety of sentence types and structures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La/C) Varying word and sentence choice according to audience, purpose</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Writing in a variety of forms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Recognizing point of view, symbols, and theme in literary selections</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Identifying irony, tone, mood, and allusion in literary selections</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Analyzing grammatical structure of sentences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Recognizing major differences among literary genres</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La/C) Selecting appropriate words to convey meaning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Recognizing recurring themes in literary selections</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Using basic literary terminology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Writing literary analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Recognizing cultural attitudes and customs in literary selections</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Expanding vocabulary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Using oral language effectively in variety of situations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Writing a research paper</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Using the library to collect information</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Identifying basic sound devices and figurative language</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La/C) Using all parts of speech effectively in sentences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Recognizing major authors, periods, forms, and works in American and British literature</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Li) Distinguishing between language used denotatively and connotatively in literary selections</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Describing history and major features of American dialects</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Recognizing sociological functions of language</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Demonstrating facility with word analogies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Describing major features of origins and development of English</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La) Recognizing meanings and uses of colloquialism, slang, idiom, and jargon</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data reveal that instructors of secondary-level English methods courses in Texas strongly emphasize strategies for teaching the essential elements of composition. Eight of the nine topics that rank from one to seven are in either the composition or language/composition category. Only one literature topic
receives this degree of emphasis by methods instructors. The only composition topics receiving less than average emphasis by more than 50% of the methods instructors pertain to strategies for teaching students to write literary analysis or a research paper.

Instructors of methods courses emphasize least the topics having to do with strategies for teaching the history of the language and its sociolinguistic characteristics. Specific topics in strategies for teaching literature generally fall in the middle range of the rank order.

Table 4 (shown on the following page) shows the percentage of responses in the average and above-average categories and the resulting rank order for overall emphasis on strategies for teaching the essential elements of composition, language, and literature.

Overwhelmingly, respondents (84%) report that, overall, they emphasize strategies for teaching composition in their methods courses, while slightly more than half (52%) emphasize strategies for teaching language. Overall emphasis on strategies for teaching literature ranks last, with fewer than half (44%) of the respondents reporting at least average emphasis.
Table 4

Rank Order and Percentages of Average and Above Average Overall Emphasis on Composition, Language, and Literature Teaching Strategies in the English Methods Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for teaching composition</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for teaching language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for teaching literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The strong emphasis on strategies for teaching writing in these English methods courses is not surprising, given the nationwide perception in the last several years that students' writing skills are poor; this followed an earlier concern about their reading skills. The TEAMS test requires a writing sample of elementary and secondary students, and at the university level, many instructors in a variety of disciplines have added a writing component to their classes. The emphasis on writing instruction can also be attributed to the proliferation of research in composition theory and pedagogy that began in the 1960s.

Clearly, these methods teachers believe that preparing their students to teach the essential elements of writing is an important component of the English methods course. Equally clear is the relative insignificance these
instructors attach to the essential elements of language that are not related to composition. Methods teachers either believe that these topics are covered elsewhere in a prospective teacher's curriculum, or they do not cover them for some other reason.

A possible explanation for the fact that literature strategies rate last in overall emphasis is that the methods teachers perceive that their students' subject-area coursework (consisting primarily of literature courses) gives them at least minimal preparation for teaching literature. Of course, this "preparation" consists of hours of watching their college professors teach literature, but most of these students have had much less exposure, even in this indirect manner, to any method of teaching composition.

A closer scrutiny of the essential elements in writing and literature suggests another possibility for this emphasis on composition. The concepts and skills identified as "essential" in literature are described as behaviors consisting of low-level cognitive objectives--"recognizing, identifying, distinguishing between"--while the essential elements of composition require students to perform more complex activities--"using, writing, revising, and evaluating." The wording of these objectives promotes a more active role for students and teachers when studying writing than when studying literature. This apparent bias
toward composition may stem from an emphasis on pragmatic goals in education: writing is a useful "tool" that students "use" to communicate. In contrast, utilitarian reasons for studying literature are more difficult to formulate, particularly when curriculum writers insist on separating the study of literature from the study of composition.

Results from Section III of the Questionnaire

In this section the instructors listed topics that they include in their methods courses and that they consider essential for training English teachers, but that are not strategies for teaching the essential elements listed in the previous section. The instructors were asked to include in this list only those topics that receive at least average emphasis in their courses, as compared with all other topics. One respondent left this section blank, while one instructor, in lieu of listing topics, sent copies of materials and sample lessons used; another referred the researcher to the syllabus for the course. The subject matter of the materials and sample lessons supplied were interpreted as particular topics covered in that instructor's course, as were the objectives listed on the syllabus of the other instructor; these interpretations are included in the list of topics below.
Below is a list of topics mentioned by at least one respondent; topics cited by more than one respondent appear first and in rank order under each category, and the number of citations appears in parentheses. The items were grouped into categories following receipt of all the responses.

An asterisk next to a topic denotes a subject that deals exclusively with the content of English rather than with the methodology of teaching English. Wording of the entries follows as closely as possible that of the respondent (except in the cases of the two instructors noted above); however, in order to illustrate the recurrence of some topics among these respondents it was necessary to recast the many references to, for example, having students write, into a general heading like "course has a substantial writing requirement."

Topics in Composition

Course has a substantial writing requirement for

students (8)*

Holistic and other techniques of evaluation of

composition (4)

Designing writing assignments or "prompts" (3)

The role of cognitive development in developing writing

skills (2)

A review of writing mechanics (2)*
Theoretical bases of teaching writing (2)
Peer evaluation of composition (2)
Conferencing
Student workshop groups
Understanding how to use writing to explore ideas
Types of argument (Toulmin, Rogerian)
Inventing argument

Topics in Language

Types of grammar (traditional, structural, transformational) (2)*
A review of grammar and mechanics (2)*
Measures of syntactic maturity
Elements of syntax in the teaching of grammar
Approaches to language development for ESL and second-dialect students

Topics in Literature

Teaching adolescent literature (5) (one respondent specified designing "book modules")
Various approaches to teaching literature (2)
A review of literature likely to be included in high school texts (2)*
A review of literary terminology and major authors*
Explication of various literary genres*
Composing original poems*
Asking questions about literature
Values in literature
Transactional theory of teaching literature
Understanding the reading of literature as a performance
Assessing growth in students' literary appreciation
Ways to illustrate and develop interrelationships among literary genres, history, art, and film

Topics in Reading

Teaching reading at the secondary level
Understanding the reading process
Assessment of growth in reading
Understanding the interrelationship of reading and writing
Corrective and developmental reading techniques
Understanding how to read like a writer
Reading skills*

General Pedagogical and Professional Topics

Lesson, unit planning (8) (one respondent specified planning using the essential elements, two specified lesson plans in literature)
Evaluation, grading practices (5)
Classroom management (3)
Practice teaching (3)
An analysis of teaching methods (3)
Presentations by teachers of successful teaching methods (3)

Test construction (2)

NCTE, other professional organizations (2)

Bibliographical and other sources for the English teacher (2)

Integrating the English curriculum (2)

The ExCET test in secondary English (2)

Censorship/"appropriateness" of supplementary reading material (2)

The relationship of the English teacher to the discipline and the profession

Student teaching

Types of teachers

Research on teacher effectiveness, ethics and professionalism

Texas Teacher Appraisal System

Preparing instructional objectives

Organizing a presentation, steps to follow for teaching skills

Introduction and closure, reinforcement, teaching via feedback

Writing a philosophy of English

Writing a theory of English instruction

Recognizing individual differences among learners

Collaborative learning techniques
Availability of supplemental instructional materials
Regional service centers
Use of audio-visual equipment, including computers
Using popular culture to teach English
TEAMS, TASP, other standardized tests that affect teaching of English
Preparing for UIL competition
Teaching for different reading levels

Topics in composition were mentioned 28 times, topics in language 7 times, literature topics 18 times, topics in reading 7 times, and general pedagogical and professional topics were mentioned 56 times by the respondents.

Discussion

Drawing conclusions from open-ended responses, like those elicited in Section III, is problematic. Some instructors may have failed to mention topics that they do emphasize, but that they did not recall when they were completing the questionnaire. Moreover, the element of bias, which is inherent in reporting one's own behavior, may have caused some respondents to list topics that they believe they should cover or that they often plan to cover, but which, because of time or other constraints, receive
little or no emphasis. The following generalizations should be considered in light of the preceding limitations.

In addition to emphasizing strategies for teaching composition in the English methods course, many of the instructors surveyed require a good deal of writing from their students. One respondent commented that he conducts his course as a "workshop to model the best methods of teaching writing." Another instructor's comment probably best explains why prospective English teachers are required to write: "The best writing teacher is a writer herself/himself." A final comment reveals a more pessimistic attitude: "Some of the prospective teachers still have major problems with spelling and punctuation."

Direct instruction in other areas of the content of English also occurs in many English methods courses; there were nine different content-related topics mentioned by twenty instructors. In at least one instructor's class, the content of English is apparently all that is taught. This instructor described his methods course as essentially a review of high school English and commented that he tells students: "I cannot teach them how to teach; I can only remind them of the tools they use in their trade"; he further stated that "knowledge is method." In this section of the questionnaire three other instructors also denied that they teach a methods course, stating that theirs was primarily a course in the content of English. These
instructors echo the sentiments of public office-holders like Cheney, the college administrators who contributed to the Holmes Group report, and many professors in academic area departments, all of whom claim that learning how to teach consists of learning one's subject thoroughly from good teachers.

In addition to strategies for teaching the essential elements and direct instruction in the content of English, many English methods courses include a number of general pedagogical topics (31 different topics of this nature were mentioned, including lesson planning, methods of evaluation, classroom management, and test construction) that are presumably covered in the general methods course required of prospective teachers. The inclusion of these topics in the English methods course probably does not mean the instructors unnecessarily repeat instruction found elsewhere in the teacher education curriculum. Instead, it reflects the instructors' conviction that students need to apply these abstract pedagogical concepts to the subject matter they will be teaching--they need to practice making up grammar tests, for example, and handling behavior problems that may arise when students evaluate each other's compositions.

Finally, theoretical and philosophical issues relating to the teaching of English--for example, why a particular method of teaching might be appropriate, how students
learn, what is the value of English for students—were mentioned many times as receiving at least average emphasis by English methods instructors. As noted earlier, teachers participating in Oftedahl’s survey saw little use for these topics, but Shulman and Lanier and Little stress the importance of preparing teachers to be influential participants in all aspects of the education system. They need to be competent not only in their subject, but also in evaluating the variety of teaching methods, materials, and curricula they will encounter.

Results from Section IV of the Questionnaire:

In this final section of the questionnaire, the instructors indicated their level of satisfaction with six different aspects of teaching the course. The results from this section are reported below in Table 5. Two instructors who responded to the survey left this section blank; therefore, the total number of respondents for this section is 24.

The responses indicate that an overwhelming majority (83%) of English methods instructors in Texas feels satisfied with the prospective English teachers who are their students and with the level of professional support from within their departments. A smaller majority (67%) is satisfied with the level of interaction with local school districts, and slightly more than half of the 24
Table 5

Instructors' Level of Satisfaction with Six Aspects of Teaching the Secondary Level English Methods Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1(^a)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Percentage(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to cover objectives of course</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of available textbooks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional support from within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>department</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of students who enroll</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination with rest of teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education program</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with local school districts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)1=Very satisfied; 2=Moderately satisfied; 3=Moderately dissatisfied; 4=Very dissatisfied

\(^b\)Percentage of instructors indicating "moderately satisfied" or "very satisfied" combined
instructors responding to this section feels at least moderate satisfaction with the time they have to cover course objectives and the quality of available textbooks in the field (58% and 54% respectively).

Discussion

As a group, the instructors surveyed do not express strong dissatisfaction with any of these aspects of teaching the course. A particularly encouraging indicator is the level of satisfaction with students and colleagues, since the literature had suggested that professional satisfaction was not generally at a high level with methods instructors. More puzzling, given the number of different issues identified as receiving emphasis, is the degree of satisfaction felt by more than half of the methods instructors with the amount of time they have to cover course objectives. This is perhaps indicative of a "this is the way it has to be" attitude. The factor receiving the lowest satisfaction rating is textbook quality. Interestingly, all respondents who specified the textbook they use named J. N. Hook's *The Teaching of High School English*. 
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The primary focus of this study was on the level of emphasis in secondary-level English methods courses in Texas on strategies for teaching the essential elements of language arts. The researcher assumed that the level of emphasis would indicate whether or not this particular course in the teacher education curriculum prepares prospective high school English teachers in Texas to teach the state-mandated curriculum. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study.

Most of the instructors of secondary-level English methods courses at selected Texas universities strongly emphasize preparing their students to teach the essential elements of composition, when composition is defined as expository prose not involving literary analysis or outside research. Most of these instructors also emphasize preparation to teach the essential elements of language, when those language skills transfer directly to students' writing. Fewer instructors emphasize strategies for
teaching the essential elements of literature, and most de-emphasize preparing their students to teach language skills unrelated to composition.

These findings suggest that many new English teachers in Texas are prepared to teach high school students the writing skills and concepts specified by the essential elements. It would be interesting to see whether this emphasis by teacher educators on strategies for teaching writing produces new English teachers who exhibit confidence and effectiveness in teaching writing, and if it also results in improvement in secondary students' writing skills.

This study also sought information concerning the structure of the methods course, the instructors' educational background, the methods course content unrelated to the state curriculum, and the level of satisfaction felt by instructors of the course. The following conclusions can be drawn.

The secondary-level English methods course is offered and organized in a somewhat arbitrary manner at major Texas universities. Since not all universities that train teachers offer the course, some prospective English teachers receive no instruction in English methods. Moreover, not all universities that offer the English methods course make it a requirement for their students preparing to teach English. At universities where the
course is offered, the English methods course may be taught in the English or the education department, and it may be a one-semester or a two-semester course, with some universities allocating more instructional time to methods of teaching composition. Therefore, some new English teachers in Texas have had no coursework in English methods, while other teachers have spent two semesters learning strategies for teaching English. Some new teachers have had particularly intensive exposure to strategies for teaching composition, while others have had none.

The inconsistency with which the course is organized by Texas universities reflects a lack of consensus as to the best method of training teachers; follow-up studies comparing the performance of new English teachers not taking an English methods course with those who take a one- or two-semester course in English methods would help to determine if the course should be required of every new English teacher. It would also be interesting to learn in which area of the essential elements--composition, literature, or language--new English teachers feel that they would have benefitted from more instruction in methods prior to beginning to teach.

The instructors of the English methods course specialize in one of three different disciplines--English, English education, or education--and may teach under the
aegis of either the English or the education department. A minority of the instructors is unfamiliar with the state-mandated curriculum in language arts. A significant finding is that the instructors surveyed do not all agree about the purpose of the English methods course. Some of the instructors deny that they teach methodology and describe their course as one with primary or sole emphasis on content. Apparently, future English teachers taking the methods course with these instructors do not receive instruction in strategies for teaching English (except indirectly, through watching the instructor teach) but instead experience another English course. The elimination of either content or methodology from the English methods course would seem to negate the purpose of the course as a synthesis of these two elements and result in a course that adds nothing new or useful to an already required regimen of English and general education courses.

Many English methods instructors in Texas also introduce their students to theoretical and philosophical issues underlying the teaching and learning of English. This practice accords with recommendations from professional educators but does not rate highly with teachers themselves.

English methods instructors at 22 selected Texas universities are generally satisfied with the level of support they receive from within their department, the
quality of students who enroll in the course, and the level of interaction they have with local school districts. They express somewhat less satisfaction with the time they have to cover course objectives and the level of coordination with the rest of the teacher education program, and they are least satisfied with the quality of available textbooks for use in an English methods course. A valuable research study would question methods teachers as to what deficiencies they note in these textbooks and what material they would like to see included in an ideal methods text.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVER LETTER
I recently spoke with a representative of your department, who told me that you teach at __________. I am gathering data for my master's thesis, titled "English Methods Courses in Texas: Preparation for the Essential Elements," to be done under the supervision of Dr. June H. Schlessinger of the English Department at North Texas State University. I would greatly appreciate your helping me with this study by taking the time to fill out the attached questionnaire. The purpose of the study is to describe the content of secondary-level English methods courses in Texas universities and to compare that content with the objectives of the state-mandated curriculum for high school English.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete; I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience in returning it. Of course, timely collection of this information will be of great help to me in completing this study, and I would very much appreciate receiving your questionnaire as soon as possible. After I complete the data collection and interpretation, I will send you a summary of the results of the study.

Please be assured that in reporting the results there will be no identification of any respondent or any particular institution.

If you have any questions, please call me collect at (214) 416-0978. Again, thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Martha Erwin

ME/me
ENCLOSURES
DEAR PROFESSORS: I would very much appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Martha L. Erwin
1605 Milam Way
Carrollton, TX 75006

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To compare the content of English methods courses in Texas universities with the objectives of the essential elements.

SECTION I:

Please check the appropriate box following each question:

1. How many credit hours is the English methods course you teach?
   - [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7 or more

2. In which field did you receive your highest degree?
   - [ ] English  [ ] Education  [ ] English Ed.  [ ] Other (Specify) ____________________________

3. At your university is the English methods course you teach required for students preparing to teach high school English?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

4. At your university are any additional English methods courses required for students planning to teach high school English?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No  If yes, please list the course name(s):

5. Are you familiar with the state curriculum for language arts, known as the essential elements?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No
SECTION II:

Below is a list of skills and concepts in composition, language, and literature, which comprise the curriculum of high school English in Texas. Please check the appropriate box indicating whether or not you teach your students strategies for teaching each skill and the extent to which you emphasize this topic (as compared to all other topics you cover in your methods course).

1. **TOPICS IN COMPOSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Above average or heavy emphasis</th>
<th>Average emphasis</th>
<th>Slight emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the writing process to plan and generate writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in a variety of forms, such as narration, description, exposition, and persuasion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making rhetorical choices based on audience, purpose, and form.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the library to collect information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a research paper.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating a composition's content and proofreading for errors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating and proofreading one's own writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing literary analysis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OVERALL EMPHASIS on strategies for teaching composition**

2. **TOPICS IN LANGUAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Above average or heavy emphasis</th>
<th>Average emphasis</th>
<th>Slight emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producing a variety of sentence types and structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing the grammatical structure of sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting appropriate words to convey meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Varying word and sentence choice according to audience and purpose. □ □ □ □
Using all parts of speech effectively in sentences. □ □ □ □
Expanding vocabulary. □ □ □ □
Recognizing the meanings and uses of colloquialism, slang, idiom, and jargon. □ □ □ □
Describing the history and major features of American dialects. □ □ □ □
Recognizing the sociological functions of language. □ □ □ □
Demonstrating facility with word analogies. □ □ □ □
Describing the major features of the origins and development of the English language. □ □ □ □
Using oral language effectively in a variety of situations. □ □ □ □

OVERALL EMPHASIS on strategies for teaching language □ □ □ □

3. TOPICS IN LITERATURE

Recognizing the major differences among literary genres. □ □ □ □
Identifying basic sound devices and figurative language. □ □ □ □
Recognizing point of view, symbols, and theme in literary selections. □ □ □ □
Recognizing cultural attitudes and customs in literary selections. □ □ □ □
Using basic literary terminology. □ □ □ □
Identifying irony, tone, mood, and allusion in literary selections. □ □ □ □
Recognizing the major authors, periods, forms, and works in American and British literature. □ □ □ □ □

Recognizing recurring themes in literary selections. □ □ □ □ □

Distinguishing between language used denotatively and connotatively in literary selections. □ □ □ □ □

OVERALL EMPHASIS on strategies for teaching literature □ □ □ □ □

SECTION III:

In the space below please list any topics you include in your methods course which are not represented in the list above, but which you believe are essential in training English teachers. These topics will be ones which receive at least an average amount of emphasis in your course, compared with all other topics.
Finally, please indicate your level of satisfaction with particular aspects of teaching the English methods course by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Moderately satisfied</th>
<th>Moderately dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Amount of time you have to cover course objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality of available textbooks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of professional support from within your department.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quality of students who enroll in the course.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Level of coordination with other courses in the teacher education program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Level of interaction with the local school districts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF LANGUAGE ARTS,

GRADES NINE THROUGH TWELVE
Chapter 75 Curriculum

Subchapter D. Essential Elements—Grades Nine-12

Essential Elements For English Language Arts; Other Languages; Mathematics; Science; Health; Physical Education; Fine Arts; Social Studies, Texas And United States History; Economics With Emphasis On The Free Enterprise System And Its Benefits; And Business Education

State Board of Education Rules

§75.61 English Language Arts

(a) English I (1 unit). English I shall include the following essential elements:

(1) Writing concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
   (A) use the composing process to plan and generate writing;
   (B) write descriptive, narrative, and expository paragraphs;
   (C) write multiple-paragraph compositions incorporating information from sources other than personal experience;
   (D) write informative discourse of a variety of types;
   (E) write persuasive discourse of a variety of types;
   (F) use the forms and conventions of written language appropriately;
   (G) evaluate content, organization, topic development, appropriate transition, clarity of language, and appropriate word and sentence choice according to the purpose and audience for which the piece is intended; and
   (H) proofread written work for punctuation, spelling, grammatical and syntactical errors, paragraph indentation, margins, and legibility of writing.

(2) Language concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
   (A) produce well-formed simple, compound, and complex sentences;
   (B) choose appropriate words to convey intended meaning;
   (C) use all parts of speech effectively in sentences;
   (D) recognize the meanings and uses of colloquialism, slang, idiom, and jargon; and
   (E) use oral language effectively in a variety of situations.

(3) Literature concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
   (A) recognize the major differences among poems, short stories, plays, and nonfiction;
   (B) identify basic sound devices and figurative language;
   (C) recognize point of view in literary selections;
(D) recognize cultural attitudes and customs in literary selections; and
(E) use basic literary terminology.

(4) Reading concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) determine word meanings by contextual clues;
(B) use advanced dictionaries for determining word meaning;
(C) expand vocabulary;
(D) identify the stated or implied main idea of a selection;
(E) recognize relevant details;
(F) identify the sequential order of events;
(G) perceive cause and effect relationships;
(H) distinguish between fact and nonfact;
(I) draw conclusions and make inferences;
(J) predict outcomes and future actions;
(K) follow directions involving substeps;
(L) interpret diagrams, graphs, and statistical illustrations;
(M) use format and organization of a book;
(N) use reference materials such as atlas, encyclopedia, almanac, bibliography; and
(O) vary rate of reading according to purpose.

(b) English II (1 unit). English II shall include the following essential elements:

(1) Writing concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) use the composing process to plan and generate writing;
(B) write descriptive, narrative, and expository paragraphs of increasing length and complexity;
(C) write multiple-paragraph compositions incorporating outside information with documentation;
(D) write informative discourse of a variety of types;
(E) write persuasive discourse of a variety of types;
(F) write literary discourse of a variety of types including character sketches, stories;
(G) use a variety of sentence structures including simple, compound, and complex;
(H) use the forms and conventions of written language appropriately;
(I) evaluate content, organization, topic development, appropriate transition, clarity of language, and appropriate word and sentence choice according to the purpose and audience for which the piece is intended; and
(J) proofread written work for punctuation, spelling, grammatical and syntactical errors, paragraph indentation, margins, and legibility of writing.

(2) Language concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) produce well-formed simple, compound, and complex sentences;
(B) choose appropriate words to convey intended meaning;
(C) use all parts of speech effectively in sentences;
(D) use oral language effectively in a variety of situations;
(E) recognize the meanings and appropriate uses of colloquialism, slang, idiom, and jargon;
(F) vary word and sentence choice for purpose and audience; and
(G) produce sentences that convey coordinate and subordinate ideas appropriately.

(3) Literature concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) recognize the major differences among poems, short stories, novels, plays, and nonfiction;
(B) identify basic sound devices and figurative language;
(C) recognize point of view in literary selections;
(D) identify use of basic symbols in literary selections;
(E) recognize the development of an overall theme in a literary work; and
(F) use basic literary terminology.

(4) Reading concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) expand vocabulary;
(B) select main idea of a selection;
(C) recognize relevant details;
(D) arrange events in sequential order;
(E) differentiate between fact and nonfact;
(F) make inferences and draw conclusions;
(G) evaluate and make judgments;
(H) perceive cause and effect relationships;
(I) use selected sections of advanced and special dictionaries;
(J) use reference materials including atlas, encyclopedias, almanac, bibliography;
(K) read complex maps, charts, tables;
(L) use parts of a book including footnotes, appendices, cross references;
(M) follow complex directions; and
(N) adjust reading rate according to purpose.

(c) English III (1 unit). English III shall include the following essential elements:

(1) Writing concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:
(A) use the composing process to plan and generate writing;
(B) refine sentences and paragraphs into compositions exhibiting unity, clarity, and coherence;
(C) write longer compositions incorporating outside information with documentation;
(D) write a variety of forms of informative and persuasive discourse;
(E) write at least one form of literary discourse;
(F) make rhetorical choices based on audience, purpose, and form;
use the forms and conventions of written language appropriately;

revise written work for content, organization, topic development, appropriate transition, clarity of language, and appropriate word and sentence choice according to the purpose and audience for which a piece is written;

proofread written work for internal punctuation, spelling, grammatical and syntactical errors, paragraph indentation, margins, and legibility of writing; and

evaluate one's own writing as well as that of others.

(2) Language concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:

produce well-formed simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences;

choose appropriate words to convey intended meaning;

analyze the grammatical structure of sentences;

use oral language effectively in a variety of situations;

describe the history and major features of American dialects;

recognize the sociological functions of language; and

demonstrate facility with word analogies and other forms of advanced vocabulary development.

(3) Literature concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:

recognize the major authors, periods, forms, and works in American literature;

distinguish between language used denotatively and connotatively in literary selections;

recognize the major types of figurative language and sound devices;

identify irony, tone, mood, allusion, and symbolism in literary selections;

recognize characteristics of literary selections; and

use literary terminology appropriately.

(4) Reading concepts and skills. The student shall be provided opportunities to:

use advanced dictionaries in determining pronunciations and meanings of words;

express main idea in one sentence;

distinguish between fact and opinion, grounded and ungrounded belief, and rational thought and rationalization;

perceive cause and effect relationships;

evaluate the author's point of view;

follow complex directions;

use specialized references independently;

interpret complex maps, charts, and tables;

use parts of a book appropriately; and

adjust reading procedures, techniques, and rate according to the purpose.
APPENDIX C

RESPONSES RECEIVED ON SECTION II

OF QUESTIONNAIRE
A total of less than twenty-six responses to an item indicates that one or more respondents did not answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. TOPICS IN COMPOSITION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the writing process to plan and generate writing.</td>
<td>1 3 3 4 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in a variety of forms, such as narration, description, exposition, and persuasion.</td>
<td>0 4 7 5 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making rhetorical choices based on audience, purpose, and form.</td>
<td>1 5 2 5 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the library to collect information</td>
<td>4 8 6 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a research paper.</td>
<td>4 8 5 6 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating a composition's content and proofreading for errors.</td>
<td>1 3 3 11 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating and proofreading one's own writing.</td>
<td>0 4 4 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing literary analysis.</td>
<td>2 7 6 8 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising compositions.</td>
<td>0 4 2 4 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL EMPHASIS on strategies for teaching composition</strong></td>
<td>0 3 1 8 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. TOPICS IN LANGUAGE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producing a variety of sentence types and structures.</td>
<td>0 6 3 12 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing the grammatical structure of sentences.</td>
<td>0 7 7 8 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting appropriate words to convey meaning.</td>
<td>1 6 7 7 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. TOPICS IN LITERATURE

Recognizing the major differences among literary genres.

Identifying basic sound devices and figurative language.

Recognizing point of view, symbols, and theme in literary selections.

Recognizing cultural attitudes and customs in literary selections.

Using basic literary terminology.

Identifying irony, tone, mood, and allusion in literary selections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the major authors, periods, forms, and works in American and British literature.</td>
<td>Above average or heavy emphasis</td>
<td>3:13:2:5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing recurring themes in literary selections.</td>
<td>Average emphasis</td>
<td>2:11:1:8:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing between language used denotatively and connotatively in literary selections.</td>
<td>Slight emphasis</td>
<td>2:6:10:3:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL EMPHASIS on strategies for teaching literature</strong></td>
<td>Not included or covered in another required course</td>
<td>2:5:6:5:6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKS CONSULTED


A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the the 21st Century.


