

AN EVALUATION OF THE METHODS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING
ENGLISH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF TEXAS AS REPORTED
IN THE TEXAS OUTLOOK, 1925-1940

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

This thesis is the report of an investigation to determine and to evaluate the methods and the philosophy of the teaching of English in the secondary schools of Texas. Since a questionnaire approach was deemed to be inadvisable in this instance because of the vastness of the project under consideration, the writer decided that the most comprehensive and authentic source of data on the teaching of English in the secondary schools of Texas would be The Texas Outlook, a monthly publication, which is the official organ of the Texas State Teachers' Association. The study was arbitrarily limited to a survey of practices in recent years -- that is, from 1925 to 1940. Every issue of The Texas Outlook during this fifteen-year period was examined for relevant material.

Procedure

The first step in the collection and assimilation of data for this study was the perusal of numbers of books and magazine articles published since 1925 in an effort to

develop an adequate background of information in the field of the philosophy and teaching of English in the public secondary schools of the United States. Another purpose in mind at this time was the building up of a list of criteria which could be utilized as comparative media in the process of evaluating the philosophy and teaching of English in the secondary schools of Texas. These criteria were accumulated from a number of sources, and were later applied to the data relating to the Texas schools.

After having engaged in an extensive study of books and periodicals dealing with the teaching of English in general -- a survey which cannot, however, be called an exhaustive one because of the abundance of material -- the writer carefully examined all issues of The Texas Outlook from 1925 to 1940 for the purpose of discovering how English is taught in the secondary schools of Texas. Every article that appeared during this period was read if it seemed to have a remote bearing or a close connection with the project under consideration. It is recognized, of course, that comparatively few of the teachers of English in Texas ever do any writing to describe their philosophies and procedures in the classroom. However, it stands to reason that the articles in The Texas Outlook which are written by teachers in the field are representative of the philosophies and techniques that are employed in the Texas schools at large, and are, therefore, fair samples of what English teachers

in the state are doing along the line of methods of instruction.

Organization

Chapter I of this thesis is in reality an introduction to the study, and includes a statement of the problem under investigation, a description of the procedure used, and a brief outline of the plan of organization for the material.

Chapter II is a survey of methods in the teaching of English in the secondary schools of the United States. In this chapter are included discussions, from professional literature, of the traditional and the modern subject-matter fields of English, of the traditional and the modern methods of teaching literature, and of the traditional and the modern methods of teaching grammar and composition. Throughout the chapter appear bits of educational philosophy that have been or now are influential in shaping the ideals and techniques of instruction in English.

Chapter III presents data on methods of teaching English in the secondary schools of Texas as reported in The Texas Outlook from 1925 to 1940. In this chapter such topics as the following are discussed: aims and objectives in the teaching of English in Texas schools, the function of English in the curriculum, integration of English with other subject-matter fields, methods of teaching literature, and methods of teaching grammar and composition.

Chapter III also includes an evaluation of the teaching of English in Texas secondary schools on the basis of procedures recommended by authorities in the field. Herein the philosophies and procedures utilized in Texas schools are compared with those discussed in Chapter II as recommended by educators. Chapter III contains an evaluation of the philosophies and techniques of the Texas schools on the basis of those recommended by the authorities, which have been accepted, for the purpose of this study, as valid criteria. Similarities and contrasts are pointed out between the criteria and the practices in Texas secondary schools.

Chapter IV presents conclusions that appear to be warranted by the findings of this study, and recommendations pointing to a more effective use of English in the secondary schools of Texas.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE UNITED STATES

Philosophy

Rapidly being discarded is the idea that the curriculum is a mosaic of isolated and unrelated segments of subject matter to be mastered by the learners. Instead, the curriculum is regarded as a series of pupil experiences with reputable subject matter -- with any and all inter-related phases of subject matter. It is now recognized that habits, skills, and attitudes are not developed through the learning of subject matter, but through the repeated responses of pupils as they work with subject matter in meaningful experiences. The curriculum consists mainly of patterns of action through which pupils are directed in their learning and living. Teachers are not appraisers of finished pupil products, but they are, instead, the directors of the processes of production.¹ The curriculum today is regarded as "a body of guided experiences paralleling

¹R. L. Lyman, The Enrichment of the English Curriculum, p. 2.

present and future out-of-school experiences."² Everything in the classroom should proceed in the light of this conception. The school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities which have long been the teacher's chief concern.³

The total curriculum of the modern progressive school is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes what it can when and as it can. The function of English in the experience program is obvious: to provide adequate means of communication (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), such as are necessary in experiencing various types of intercourse and association with other persons, and to provide indirect (vicarious) experiences in situations in which direct (actual) experiences are impossible or undesirable.⁴

Language is much more than a medium of expression: it is a condition and a vital tool in the thinking process itself. Thought, structure, and style belong to all other subject-matter departments as much as they do to the English department. The capacity to handle language effectively can never be the result of protracted drill in the mechanical elements of correct grammar -- a type of drill

²Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English, An Experience Curriculum in English, p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 12.

⁴Ibid., p. 4.

which is usually considered as belonging peculiarly to the English department. A growing command of oral and written expression can be attained only as the pupil progresses in information, intelligence, breadth of view, and social attainments; that is, in general culture. An individual's ability in the art of expression never advances beyond his cultural level. In the light of this statement, all the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum.⁵

English is versatile. . . . There seem to be three possibilities for organizing this field, each possible according to the type of work that is being done in the individual schools: English may be handled as a separate subject, with her face lifted, with a new permanent wave, and with a becoming lipstick -- in other words, English may be, and long since has been in many schools, revived and rejuvenated so that her contribution to the richer, fuller experiences of the pupils is outstanding; next, English may be the handmaiden of the social sciences, the fine arts, and all other fields with a place in the new plans; and, lastly, she may be a co-partner, walking graciously with all other workers, at times taking the lead, at times working hand in hand with leaders from other groups.⁶

English, in the new conception of its rightful function, may properly be regarded as a way of life for the pupils and teachers who work with it. Naturally, teachers are becoming increasingly concerned with what the English

⁵Lyman, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶E. Louise Noyes, "English and the New Education," California Journal of Secondary Education, XI (October, 1936), 344.

program does, and is capable of doing, to young people. The building of attitudes is far more important than the acquisition of knowledge and information. The pupils' interests are being recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula. In composition, for instance, teachers are coming to realize that writing which is vital and worthwhile is that which is enjoyed and that which serves purposes that are recognized by the pupils themselves. This philosophy of composition is much to be preferred to that which stresses mechanics primarily.⁷ X If it is to conform to the modern concepts of progressive education, an effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom.⁸ This, in a word, is the functional concept of the teaching of English,^{Step} of which more will be said later in the course of this chapter.

To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects, although any one of the three may be given primary emphasis at certain times. It goes without saying, however,

⁷O. S. Hubbard, "A County Focuss on Its English Curriculum," California Journal of Secondary Education, XV (November, 1940), 421-422.

⁸Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 4.

that these elements are closely interrelated, and cannot be dealt with independently. The study of good literature is of considerable value in teaching the mechanics of the language, whereas one must know something of language structure in order to derive the highest profit from a reading of literature. And a knowledge of both language and literature is indispensable to a speaker, whether he be an amateur in an English classroom or a professional orator on the lecture platform.

Since language is the usual means of communication among human beings, it is and should be the basis of all study in schools. Unless people possess a mastery of a means of communication, all other phases of education are meaningless. Studies in English will help the American boy and girl to come into their rightful heritage -- "a feeling of security in the use of the English language, and the habit of reading good literature for leisure hours as well as for utilitarian purposes."¹⁰

It is obvious that the foregoing paragraphs imply at least four fundamental aims in the teaching of English in secondary schools, which aims may be summarized as (1) knowledge and appreciation of literature, (2) ability to write, (3) ability to speak, and (4) ability to think. Conscientious efforts should be made in all of these four directions,

⁹E. A. Cross and Elizabeth Carney, Teaching English in High Schools, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰Ibid., p. vi.

for efficiency in each of them is a direct contribution to the important business of fitting the pupil for life.¹¹

The primary aim in English teaching today is leaning definitely toward preparation of the pupil for practical and pleasurable living. This at least is the theoretical aim which appears repeatedly in printed courses of study throughout the nation. Actual practice, however, is only slowly making progress toward its realization.¹² *VII 512 Page 15*

Today the changing trends in English instruction represent a shift in emphasis in the three primary fields of the English curriculum: (1) in composition, a shift from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness, which have become the comprehensive aim of progressive teachers of composition in helping pupils to think clearly and to transmit their thoughts effectively to others; (2) in literature, a shift from survey and analysis of "classics" to abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations, which are definitely expanded by contact with new types of literature through a plan of free reading; and (3) in oral English, a shift from formal speech (oratory, elocution, and forensics) to instruction in informal, everyday speech situations -- conversation, discussion, informal speech-making, social courtesies, oral

¹¹Clarence Stratton, The Teaching of English in the High School, pp. 2, 17.

¹²Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 29.

appraisal of newspapers, books, magazines, movies, and radio. Pupils do not go through life burdened with mechanics of grammar, but they do write letters and short informal essays on various topics which require clear thinking and effective expression. They seldom read the classics after they are loosed from the requirements of the school curriculum, but they do devour magazines and contemporary fiction. They almost never have to deliver orations, but they all converse and discuss many times a day. The implications here are clear in so far as present-day aims and trends in the teaching of English are concerned.¹³

The teacher of English, in beginning her work with any class, should first find out what the pupils know and should then build the teaching program around the results of the tests for knowledge. Probably tests that the teacher herself devises are preferable to standardized objective tests, since the teacher can more adequately suit the test to the pupils.¹⁴ The data made available to the teacher by these knowledge-survey tests are valuable in modern experimental courses in English, for the teacher must aid each pupil to develop himself at his own natural rate, and must assist him in integrating what he learns at school, at home, and at large in his community. The English teacher must be busy

¹³Emery Stoops, "Changing Frontier in English Instruction," California Journal of Secondary Education, X (October, 1935), 444.

¹⁴Dorothy Dakin, Talks to Beginning Teachers of English, p. 341.

in so shaping, directly and indirectly, the minds, interests, and abilities of her pupils that these potential citizens will uphold rather than disparage or menace those democratic ideals in society that are enthusiastically upheld, and toward which mankind aspires.¹⁵ Stop

Although the aims of English instruction must necessarily be stated in a general manner, they must be applied individually, not collectively, to the pupils involved. Pupils are different, and must be motivated by different techniques and objectives. To the English teacher Mirrielees offers the following advice about dealing with individual differences:

Break your class up into groups. Make of your classroom a workshop with occasional class meetings. On days when you meet to help the mediocre, excuse the brighter pupils. Let these brighter ones prepare reports, rehearse a play, plan a cinema production, read a book for comparison, or do one of a dozen things that will throw light on the general topic under discussion and increase the pupil's power of using the library, organizing material, and cooperating with other pupils in a common enterprise. Or allow them time for reading done for its own sake. Often teachers underestimate the intrinsic interest of books. Afraid to trust to the charm of a given novel, they encourage readings for some future activity such as a dramatization of the material. This may be an excellent idea when its purpose is to interest the pupil in reading, but many students can and do enjoy wide reading without the bait of a future activity. When such is the case, the activity becomes perfunctory and, therefore, a serious waste of time.¹⁶

¹⁵Lucia B. Mirrielees, Teaching Composition and Literature in Junior and Senior High School, p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 388.

Teachers who are in sympathy with the spirit of individual instruction and who are trained in its techniques are needed to teach boys and girls enrolled in the modern school. Subject matter is not at all the chief interest of these teachers, since the expanding personalities of the boys and girls represent their principal concern. The textbook is not of primary importance. For the pupils, the curriculum is a program of meaningful activities, always flexible and never final. In this fact rests the challenge of the modern curriculum,¹⁷ of which experience is the keynote.

Experience is the best of all schools. Certainly no one learns so thoroughly, and few learn so rapidly, in any other. And experience need not be a dear school, if it is competently organized and is conducted by a capable teacher who illuminates each situation in prospect and in retrospect. School and college curriculums should consist of experiences. The school of experience is the only one which will develop the flexibility and power of self-direction requisite for successful living in our age of swift industrial, social, and economic change. To inculcate authoritarian beliefs, fixed rules of conduct, unreasoned and therefore stubborn attitudes, is to set our youth in futile and fatal conflict with the forces of modern life. By meeting situations, modifying conditions, and adapting themselves to the unchangeable, our boys and girls will learn to live in a dynamic and evolving world. Today, more than ever, the curriculum should consist of experiences.¹⁸

The English classroom can be transformed into a laboratory or workshop where each pupil is working at his own

¹⁷Essie Chamberlain, "Meeting Student Needs by a Planned Program in English," English Journal, XXIX (February, 1940), 103.

¹⁸Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 3.

rate of progress. If this is done, the classroom is no longer a place where pupils meet to answer questions in order to convince the teacher that the lesson has been studied or reading has been done. Instead, the room may easily become a place where ideas are of paramount importance, where teacher and pupils bring together material related to some problem (the unit of work) -- material which can be read, or acted, or written, or merely discussed, but which is closely related to the lives of the pupils, to their everyday experiences, and to the fundamental problems of the present day.¹⁹

In any class in English, even in one conducted solely as a series of experience activities, it is necessary to have practice periods for the acquisition of proficiency in using many of the particular forms of organized speech and writing. These periods of practice should be closely related to the occasions when the given factors involved are to be used in functional situations.²⁰ For instance, if an activity in progress requires the writing of letters, and if the pupils are found to be deficient in this skill, the proper thing to do is to take time off to learn how to write the kind of letter demanded by the present situation. Overteaching, however, should be carefully avoided, for it will kill interest in the activity itself. Neither should

¹⁹Mirrielees, op. cit., p. 22.

the teacher think that because she has once taught how a particular kind of letter should be written, she is forever absolved from all further responsibility in this connection. Much learning is done by repetition.²⁰

The most important thing in any English class is to set up a series of lifelike, purposive activities so that language usage may function naturally. In these activities formal textbooks in language and composition will be of little help except in teaching fundamentals, for most of them deal with forms rather than with usage of the language. A good plan is to relate the teaching of language to some definite content subject, such as the social studies, which demands the functional use of language. If this procedure happens not to be advisable under given circumstances, it is always possible to develop a series of intrinsically worthwhile content activities in the English class itself.

here [All of the processes or techniques, such as letter writing, outlining, research, note taking, vocabulary enrichment, spelling, the improvement of sentence structure, and so on, may be utilized as accessories in carrying out the fundamental activities. In any worthwhile activity a great amount of reading, conversation, note taking, outlining, oral reporting, and perhaps interviewing and letter writing is required. These needs create a desire for the

²⁰W. B. Featherstone, "How Can We Do a Better Job in English Language Instruction?" California Journal of Secondary Education, X (March, 1935), 209.

effective use of all necessary techniques, and hence the habit of using correct forms and procedures is more easily established through present meaningful usage than through class drill apart from any felt need.²¹

Here English is not an isolated subject, to be confined to the English classroom for one period a day, five days a week. It is a fundamental tool which is necessary to the complete understanding of all subjects. Many pupils fail in arithmetic because they cannot read the problems understandingly. Many others, for the same reason, get little from history or from other subjects. These same pupils will have further difficulties in such activities as giving directions, carrying on a conversation, applying for a position, mastering secretarial work, and so on, because they will not be able to use the English composition they have been taught so laboriously in the classroom. Teachers of English should recognize their responsibility toward other departments in the school and plan their procedures accordingly. [√]Such a philosophy will make English practical to the pupil, and will help him to see that it is something that he can use everywhere, any time, and not merely in the English classroom.²²

Some schools are making an interesting and worthwhile departure by correlating English classes with music and art

²¹Ibid., pp. 207-208.

²²Dakin, op. cit., p. 12.

and other subjects. For example, the English class visits the music class for an hour of ballads or symphonies, and learns that music, too, tells stories, and that it has background, setting, and characterization similar to literature. Then the class is encouraged to read the stories that serve as a basis for the music and also to read biographies of the composers. Illustrated talks by pupils or teachers in the art department can be given about the art and customs of any particular period or country that the English class happens to be studying. In all such cases of integration the English classes can reciprocate with material on literary interests that will be of interest to pupils in other subject-matter fields. Classes in American history and American literature, or in English history and English literature, can work profitably together and carry on simultaneous learnings and projects that are closely interrelated. A comprehensive program of reading can be easily mapped out, including such phases as historical background of literature, historical novels, social and political problems, current history and literature, biography, and science.²³ Stop Page 7

In general, a modern program of English should be designed to serve such individual and group needs as the following:

²³Hubbard, op. cit., p. 424.

1. Rich variety of experience to enrich activities involving various types of expression, such as writing and speaking.
2. Frequent opportunities for oral and written expression, which should be based upon interests rather than enforced through more or less rigid compulsion.
3. Program of directed reading and study that in time may give the pupil the power to direct his own reading for profit and pleasure.
4. Help in solving youth's problems of the present day.
5. Aids in the development of wholesome personality.
6. Guidance in vocational interests.
7. Opportunities for the development of standards of citizenship.
8. Emphasis on English as social living.
9. Methods of appraisal suited to the instruction given.
10. Greater informality in methods and procedures.²⁴

Something of the nature of the challenge that confronts modern teachers of English is implied in the following excerpt:

Just as teachers of the social studies find themselves giving instruction in history, government, economics, social relations, geography, and the like, so the teacher of English may be faced with the problem of leading boys and girls into an understanding of, and liking for, literature in its many phases;

²⁴Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 102.

for instance, the forms of prose narrative, such as the short story, the romantic novel, the realistic novel, and the adventure or mystery story. Or they may be the several kinds of drama, or the various forms of poetry, or biography, or the essay. Or again, there is a host of problems dealing with the use of the language itself. . . .

It falls to the lot of the language teacher to see to it that the pupils have learned to read, to spell, to grasp the meaning of the words they speak or read, to construct sentences in their speaking and writing, to make brief, plain speeches, to write social and business letters, to write ordinary explanations, and to make reports in writing -- perhaps even to write simple essays, stories, narratives, or possibly poems. Reading, Speaking, and Writing are the essential elements which the language teachers assume responsibility for. In their beginnings these are skills, and are taught and learned like other less complex skills, such as typing, sawing and planing, and weaving.

The study of Literature, the other half of the English teacher's responsibility, always deals with an art instead of a skill. Literature is an art, like painting and music; but because it is developed either in very simple or in complex ways, by all who create it or read it, literature is not usually recognized as an art in the same class with painting or sculpture.²⁵

Grammar

One educator, in pointing out that "bread is the staff of life" and that "English is the bread of the curriculum," proceeds to ask, "How can the pupil live without English?"²⁶ It is necessary to reading, to speaking, to thinking, to studying, to the transmission of thoughts, and to the very existence of society. One paramount purpose of language study, then, is "the anchoring of words to the realities

²⁵Cross and Carney, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

²⁶Noyes, op. cit., p. 344.

for which they stand."²⁷ These realities can be analyzed only in terms of things and of people and their feelings and relationships.

What is needed is language teaching that will be applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used. These situations themselves are so legion, so unforeseen, and so unforeseeable, that they can never be duplicated exactly in the schoolroom. Only if English teaching is based upon sound principles can it provide the pupil with the ability to communicate effectively and to think accurately with words in any situation that may arise.²⁸ A competent teaching of English provides the pupil with the power and the desire to use words effectively in all of his activities in and out of the school. English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom. No matter how hard modern educators try, they can never succeed in bringing all of life's activities into the schoolroom; nor is it desirable that such should be done. It is not even possible nor desirable to bring into the English classroom all of the activities which, in modern civilization, involve language. If this could be done, there would doubtless be a danger that the pupils would be taught a set of

²⁷Louis C. Zahner, "English, a Language," English Journal, XXIX (June, 1940), 474.

²⁸Ibid., p. 473.

stock responses to be made in particular situations instead of being taught how to develop habits of effective communication and straight thinking.²⁹ ✓ STOP

There is a present trend to the effect that the intricacies of grammar should all but be eliminated from the procedures used in teaching pupils of low ability. [Instead, ^{thus} grammar is being made practical and functional for everyone in the more progressive schools, and particularly for those pupils who have difficulty in mastering even the fundamentals of grammar. Formal grammar is becoming an oddity instead of a commonplace, and conventional theme-writing is likewise definitely on the decline.³⁰

Some educators believe that grammar should not be taught, but acquired through drill and exposure to correct forms; another group holds that grammar should be thoroughly mastered, as preparation for college and as mental training; whereas a third . . . maintains it should be taught, but from a functional point of view.³¹

Many educators believe that grammar should be taught in each year of high school, despite the fact that many schools provide for its teaching only in the first and second years, with possibly a review in the fourth year. Grammar should be taught slowly and progressively, with constant emphasis upon and application to writing. If minimum

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Carol Hovious, "Incipient Revolution in English," California Journal of Secondary Education, X (March, 1935), 221.

³¹Dakin, op. cit., p. 36.

essentials in grammar are worked out for the four years of high school, one's teaching can be based firmly upon them. But it should be remembered that minimum essentials should be but a basis for teaching, since they ordinarily meet the immediate needs of only the lower quartile of pupils in the class. The other pupils can easily, for the most part, master the minimum essentials without a great amount of effort, and should be encouraged to expand their work as far beyond the minimum requirements as they can successfully go.³²

If the English teacher believes that all skills can be taught in concentrated doses in a given term or semester, and that these skills, thus taught, will function adequately throughout all the other weeks, semesters, and years of the pupil's school experience, she is working under a false belief. English skills cannot be taught that way. Rather, "the teaching of skills must be persistent, distributed, incidental, and continuously related to the social situations in which they function as tools."³³

The purposes which grammar can serve should determine the content and method of instruction in grammar. Scientific investigations have not been convincing as to the effectiveness of grammar in the correction of errors in usage in speech and writing. Available scientific evidence as to the

³²Ibid., pp. 38-39.

³³Featherstone, op. cit., p. 207.

value of grammar does not warrant its existence as a prominent or even as a distinct feature of the course of study. On the other hand, of course, in the work of producing better sentences and more coherent paragraphs, pupils must manipulate and understand the various elements in the sentence, and should gain clearer concepts of these elements through working with them. These concepts, as they emerge, present excellent opportunities for an understanding of their grammatical implications, so that the pupils may be equipped with labels and processes to aid them in utilizing these same concepts on future occasions.³⁴

✓ The type of grammar referred to in the preceding paragraph is known as practical or functional grammar, which is taught and learned for immediate use in lifelike experiences and activities. This kind of grammar contains no abstract generalizations about grammatical facts that are not needed in the present situation. It is entirely informal, but it may be quite systematic. It is incidental to and instrumental in the improvement of sentences and of general speaking and writing ability, but in no sense is it accidental or haphazard. Grammar, when it is taught in this way, is certain to be practical, because it is learned not merely for use but in use. Moreover, no time at all has been taken to teach it separately as grammar, but it is

³⁴Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 228.

merely a by-product of other work that needs to be done.³⁵

Mirrielees, in defining functional grammar to would-be teachers of English, asserts:

It means, as the name implies, the teaching of those forms in grammar that are essential to the pupil who would express his thoughts correctly. But it means something more definite than that. It means the teaching of only those grammatical forms without a knowledge of which the pupil is unable to know whether a sentence is or is not correct. If you subscribe to the idea that you will teach functional grammar only, and if you follow that belief and practice consistently, you pledge yourself to three things:

1. You will eliminate much formal grammar that has cluttered and confused the brains of past generations of pupils.
2. You will, if you are intelligent, change grammar drill from a process of memory to a process of thinking.
3. You will show your pupils at the end of each drill period how the grammar work for that day can and should function in their own speech and writing.³⁶

Word-building is a process which should go on constantly in every kind of class or school situation, rather than exclusively in class periods set aside specifically for word-study, vocabulary drill, or some other such activity. Pupils should be made dictionary-conscious. The practical way for school boys and girls to increase their vocabularies is to read a great deal and to listen with intelligence and discrimination as educated persons talk in their presence. Most frequently the meaning of a word is made clear by its association in the sentence with other words. Pupils and

³⁵Ibid., p. 229.

³⁶Mirrielees, op. cit., p. 82.

teachers should be constantly following up words that are giving trouble in reading because the pupils do not understand their meanings in the connections in which they are found. Most pupils can be taught to do effective reading if careful attention to the meanings of words and their arrangements in sentences is given throughout the school years. To neglect to give this valuable attention is inexcusable negligence. Reading is the most important of all educational tools. The child who does not learn to read well cannot hope to go very far with his education.³⁷

Spelling should be taught throughout the four years of high school -- directly in the first two years, indirectly in the third and fourth years. Direct teaching of spelling implies that a certain definite amount of time should be devoted to teaching definite lists of words, which may be prepared by the school staff, thus making possible an emphatic treatment of the words that are most frequently misspelled by the pupils concerned, or else lists may be taken from textbooks or spellers. The indirect method of teaching spelling consists of pointing out errors in spelling and having pupils correct them. In this procedure there is no general class drill, but the individual pupil is given credit for possessing sufficient energy and interest to correct his mistakes after they have been pointed out to him.³⁸

³⁷Cross and Carney, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

³⁸Dakin, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

The following list of rules for the effective teaching of spelling should be of help to the teacher:

1. Awaken your pupils to discontent with their former careless spelling.
2. Arouse in them a sense of their own responsibility for spelling all the words in their themes correctly (a sense of responsibility termed "spelling conscience").
3. Show them the necessity for keeping a personal list of all their misspelled words upon which, from time to time, you will test them.
4. Teach them how to study a word intelligently.
5. Provide them, through tests before they have studied their lists, with a knowledge of what words they do and do not know.
6. And supply tests of spelling -- spelling words in interesting sentences and paragraphs -- frequently enough and with sufficient repetition of the same words so that the correct forms may become fixed.³⁹

Literature

In an unsettled world, our schools and colleges are confronted with the demand that they prepare the student directly for living. He must be helped to develop the intellectual and emotional capacities for a happy and socially useful life. He must be given the knowledge, the habits, the flexibility, that will enable him to meet unprecedented and unpredictable problems. He needs to understand himself; he needs to work out harmonious relationships with other people. Above all, he must achieve some philosophy, some inner center from which to view in perspective the shifting society about him; he will influence for good or ill its future development. To have pragmatic value, any knowledge about man and society that schools can give him must be assimilated into the stream of his actual life.

Nor does the student require preparation only for some future way of life. Even during his school years, he is very much part of the larger world, meeting the impact of its social and economic troubles, adjusting to adults who bear the marks of its successes and failures, discovering the possibilities

³⁹Mirrielees, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

it holds open to him. As he plays his minor youthful role now, he is creating the personality and ideals that will pattern his later major role as an adult.⁴⁰

Literature, as one of the fine arts, is a powerful means of vicarious experience. It is conceivable that the future of civilization rests with the artist, for it is possible that only artistic modes of expression can bring about the mutual understanding which is essential to social integration and cooperation. Art may well be expected to make clear what mere reason cannot comprehend.

Teachers of English are today called upon to accept and to carry out the social point of view, to subordinate all other aims to the social aim, and to evaluate in the light of social criteria all that is done in the English program. English teachers have spent, and are still spending, much time and energy in an attempt to familiarize young America with standard literature whose intrinsic literary qualities entitle it to worshipful admiration. Many have subscribed to a conception of culture in which the educated man is one who is equipped and content to go off into a convenient corner with a book and to be supremely happy in his utter disregard of other living persons.⁴¹

⁴⁰Louise M. Rosenblatt, Literature as Exploration, pp. 3-4.

⁴¹H. H. Ryan, "Interpreting the Social Aims in the English Program," English Journal, XXIX (January, 1940), 31-32.

Literature is most meaningful when it is utilized as supplementary material to actual life and classroom experiences. Its chief value, however, rests in its role of provider of vicarious experience for the reader. The literature curriculum should consist of experiences with and through stories, poems, plays, essays, and books of information or discussion addressed to the general reader. The usual out-of-school experiences with literature include choosing what to read, the actual process of reading, and voluntary discussion of what has been read. Experiences through literature include imagining the sounds, sights, social situations, and so on, which the author has described and feeling the emotions which accompany them. If these are to be the literary activities in which pupils are and will be engaged, the teacher's supreme duty is to help them to do these things as well as possible. The best procedure doubtless is to make it possible and pleasant for the pupils to have these desirable experiences while they are in school under the direction of such guidance as will lead to the best and most satisfactory performance of these activities with literature.⁴²

It goes without saying that many real-life experiences (marriage and all types of emotional experiences, for example) cannot be brought into the classroom. Such types

⁴²Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 17.

of experience, which for one reason or another young people cannot or should not have in actuality but which they must be prepared to have later, should be offered to pupils indirectly through literature.⁴³

It has been said that the twofold task of modern education is

1. To supply youth with the tools and knowledge necessary for a scientifically objective, critical appraisal of accepted opinion, in order that they may be liberated from anachronistic emotional attitudes destructive of human values.

2. To help such emancipated youth create new emotional drives strong enough to counteract out-moded automatic responses and predispose the individual toward working out a basis for more fruitful living.⁴⁴

Obviously the materials of literature -- poetry, short stories, novels, dramas, history, biography, movies -- can make powerful and significant contributions to both phases of the educational process mentioned above. This fact is ably verified by many educators, following experimentation and research. One educator asserts that "the really important things in the education of youth cannot be taught in the formal didactic manner; they are things which are experienced, absorbed, incorporated into the personality through emotional and esthetic experiences."⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., pp. 3-4. ⁴⁴Rosenblatt, op. cit., p. 212.

⁴⁵Lawrence K. Frank, "Some Aspects of Education for Home and Family Life," Journal of Home Economics, XXIII (March, 1931), 214, as quoted by Rosenblatt, op. cit., p. 214.

At present there is operative in education a perceptible idea that literature should be taught in order to broaden the understanding and interests of pupils. The aim to develop a lasting desire to read and to set up standards which will enable pupils to evaluate what they read is generally recognized. Study of classics still persists, but there is a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type or theme of literature may be emphasized. The English room is changing from one of desks and chairs to one of maps, pictures, tables, a stage, and a classroom library. In the more progressive schools the entire English program is showing a marked tendency toward reading that has a social aim.⁴⁶

Teachers of literature readily admit that they deal directly and inevitably with human relations, with the diversified experiences of human beings in their many personal and social relations. The very subject matter of literature is nothing more nor less than a kaleidoscopic panorama of human beings' experiences in relation with one another. Literature is the record of all that man has thought, felt, created, and accomplished.⁴⁷

. . . individual English instructors or departments are endeavoring to enrich the reading-literature curriculum. The narrow curriculum to which earlier generations have been subjected, consisting in the intensive study of a few literary masterpieces, is

⁴⁶Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 28.

⁴⁷Rosenblatt, op. cit., p. 5.

being widely supplemented, and often in the lower grades of the high school supplanted, by extensive reading of a natural sort. By the organization of courses adapted to the capacities of individuals and groups, by the selection of reading materials that are close to the life-interests of the present day, by the development of plans designed to promote pupil initiative in the choice of readings, by the abolishing of stilted book reports and the substitution therefor of interest-compelling forms of reporting on reading accomplished -- by these and related methods, progressive English departments are making experiences with good books far more natural and life-like.⁴⁸

The teacher of literature needs to keep ever in mind the central fact that through all of her efforts she should be constantly striving to help each individual pupil to discover the pleasures and satisfactions of literature for himself. Fundamentally, then, the teacher's job is to promote a fruitful interrelationship between the individual book or poem or play and the individual pupil. Naturally, the teacher's problem is constantly fluctuating, but ever dynamic, since it must take into consideration the infinite series of possible interrelationships between individual minds and individual works of art.⁴⁹

Literature should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should purposefully be taught as an integral part of the pupil's life. Teachers should be concerned about teaching their pupils to read both for exact information and for sheer enjoyment.⁵⁰ Today, incidentally, much more time is being devoted to reading that is personally desirable

⁴⁸Lyman, op. cit., p. 56.

⁴⁹Rosenblatt, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

⁵⁰Mirrielees, op. cit., p. 307.

and interesting, and less to the classics. Extensive and guided free-reading programs are being inaugurated. English is being regarded as a tool to be used in oral and written expression, and the trend is definitely toward a unified program of English in which literature and language study will not be separated but will be developed as parallel interests. The general tendency in the teaching of composition seems to be toward a reduction of the time for formal composition and an increase of emphasis upon informal communication by both speech and writing, and upon an extensive reading of literature. In spite of these wholesome trends, however, it is believed by authorities that too much time is still being devoted to the teaching of form, grammar drills, and punctuation, and not enough to thoughtful observation and to communication of ideas to others.⁵¹

Since the value of literature, beyond the immediate one of pleasure, is in the enlargement of the individual by means of indirect experience, the more directions the enlargement takes the more valuable the literature will prove.⁵²

Today many teachers are realizing that the traditional and exclusive diet of "classics" has not produced the desired effect of causing pupils to want to read for pleasure; in fact, it has often been repulsive to them and has caused them to dislike reading of any kind. Often pupils have the

⁵¹Cross and Carney, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

⁵²Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 20.

attitude that anything that is assigned is a chore, and they forthwith determine not to like it. Recognizing this fact, progressive English teachers are trying to change reading to a pleasure by encouraging voluntary reading.

A workable plan for developing appreciation of literature and enjoyment of reading may be summarized as follows:

1. Freshman year: an orientation experience in general literature instead of standard procedure with classics. Pupils may read anything they want to, the only requirement being that each one should read about fifteen hundred pages each semester. No formal recitations are required, but short informal written reports including a statement about the author, the setting, the theme, and the most interesting incident are usually a requisite. Sometimes pupils are encouraged to give oral summaries of their reading. The purpose of this free-reading plan is to cause the pupils to like to read.

2. Sophomore year: free reading limited to classics, among which pupils may choose to read at least two of the recognized "best" books, which must be by different authors. Oral reports are given. Whereas in most instances the freshman reads for himself and solely for his own enjoyment, the sophomore is expected to share his reading experiences with the class. In units on biography and short stories, the pupils have complete freedom of choice outside the field of the classics.

3. Junior and senior years: elective course in the reading and discussion of contemporary literature. The fact that a pupil elects to enroll in the course presupposes an interest in reading. The semester's work is divided into nine different units of two weeks each, dealing respectively with free-choice readings on travel and adventure; economics, current history, or sociology; historical novels; plays; regional or problem novels; applied science; biography; poetry; and art.⁵³

As is indicated in the above outline, it is believed by modern educators that pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves what they will read. In classroom reading, required literature should be minimized; while in outside or home reading it should be practically abolished. It is unfortunate for the pupil if he graduates from high school without ever having read a sentimental, improbable, fantastic, or badly written book. Boys and girls should be permitted to make choices between good and poor books while friendly teachers are still available to help them in the establishment of standards.⁵⁴

The Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English recommends that the teaching of literature should be based upon the conception that each pupil should be given experiences that have intrinsic value for

⁵³Hubbard, op. cit., pp. 422-423.

⁵⁴Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 21.

him now. Experiences are defined in keeping with Dewey's concepts; that is, they are described as meeting situations, doing something about them, and taking the consequences. Since all pupils in the same grade or even in the same intelligence-quotient group do not possess a readiness for the same experiences, the literature course must be highly flexible, so that the teacher can readily choose or recommend material in keeping with the personality of the pupils and with the social situation in each class. Pupils should often be encouraged to make their own choices of what they will read as regular class work, and almost always they should be allowed to exercise freedom in outside reading. Compulsion is not a satisfactory method of developing the reading habit, for abundant evidence has been made available by research specialists to the effect that pupils will read more in school and after graduation if in school they read under stimulation and guidance rather than under a system of specific requirements.⁵⁵

Reading, since it is deriving meaning from written or printed symbols, is clearly a tool and a skill used only as a part of and for the sake of some larger activity. For this reason reading should be practiced in school as a phase of study or of the enjoyment of literature, rather than in isolation as a skill to be mastered for its own

⁵⁵Holland D. Roberts, "English Curriculum Commission Completes Work," California Journal of Secondary Education, X (November, 1935), 513.

sake. Instruction in reading should be regarded and practiced as part of the work in such subject-matter fields as geography, history, science, and literature, whether these are studied separately as distinct subjects or integrated through general activity projects. When instruction in reading must eventually be separated from the class meetings devoted to the various subjects, the interests already aroused and the problems already raised should be carried over, fortified and enhanced by appropriate reading material. If, for example, the geography lesson has inspired curiosity about the methods of cotton production, the reading lesson may be planned for the purpose of gathering material on this topic, first from the geography text and then from any other available books, pamphlets, or magazines.⁵⁶

The use of newspapers and magazines for the development of style in composition, for the acquisition of knowledge of current affairs, and for enjoyment can be made a highly profitable and pleasant phase of the reading program in current literature.⁵⁷

Many teachers recommend the practice of group reading based upon interest inventories. Members of the class are divided into sections for the purpose of being associated with other pupils whose interests are similar, as disclosed by the interest inventories. Each group does reading

⁵⁶Curriculum Commission, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵⁷Cross and Carney, op. cit., pp. 499-511.

in a definite field. The pupils in each group select a chairman, to whom each member of the group returns his opinion of the books in his section that he has read. The chairman, in turn, reports these reactions to the class as a whole. Each chairman tries to "sell" the books of his section to pupils of other sections.⁵⁸

Many schools no longer confront the pupils with formal book lists, a set number of pages that must be read, and established tests to be taken over the reading. Variety is provided in the manner of reporting on the reading that the pupils have accomplished. Sometimes dummy microphones are used -- or real ones in schools fortunate enough to have radio or public-address installations -- and pupils imitate radio reviewers. Sometimes pupils pretend to be writers of newspaper columns and review books in the manner assumed by professional reviewers who use the newspaper as their medium. For study purposes all types of book-review supplements in magazines and newspapers may be used with profit.⁵⁹ A novel idea for rendering book reports, which is used with enthusiasm by some teachers, is the preparation of a mimeographed newspaper, with a title appropriate to the book being reported on. From among the pupils various heads of departments may be selected, such as editor-in-chief, news editor, desk editor, sports editor, humor

⁵⁸Hubbard, op. cit., p. 424.

⁵⁹Ibid.

editor, society editor, city editor, reporters, office manager, and business manager, whose duties are to supervise the preparation and publication of their respective sections of the news sheet. Each manager has assistants, so that everyone in the class has some duty. The newspaper will contain imaginative stories based upon incidents, characters, or descriptive materials in the book. This scheme provides an interesting means of reviewing the book, of cooperative effort, and of practice in interpretative writing and in composition in general. Similarly, pupils may all work together in preparing a typewritten book, containing articles on the historical phases of the novel, an estimate of the various characters, a description of certain scenes, something about the author, and other relevant material. The book may be made more interesting and attractive if it is illustrated by drawings or by pictures taken from magazines. For still further variety in reporting on books, pupils may enjoy assuming the roles of characters and telling or writing, in the form of letters, of significant events in their experiences. Considerable imagination and character insight are often manifest. Again, pupils can prepare character sketches of various kinds, or they might like to prepare imaginary journals, in which some character is made to relate his day-by-day experiences in

adventures or crises, all based, of course, upon the book itself.⁶⁰

In general, there are two types of reading common to pupils in secondary schools and to adults in out-of-school life. These types are defined by the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English as follows:

Work reading, by and large, seeks information; recreational reading seeks entertainment. Work reading is done for some use, theoretical or practical, to be made of the content; recreational reading is done for present satisfaction. The reason for making the distinction is that the reader's procedure, and therefore the teacher's also, varies with the purpose. The pupils are not to be drilled on the distinction; they are simply to be habituated in behavior appropriate to the differing situations.⁶¹

A present trend in the field of English is to correlate, in so far as possible, literature and composition, to the end that they may strengthen each other and be united in purpose instead of remaining diverse and separate as the two principal elements in English instruction. Pupils are led to discover that normal reading provides adequate occasions for practice in writing and speaking. This work of correlation does not mean that composition is a side issue of the literature course. It does not imply that all compositions or even a substantial proportion of them should be based upon subjects inspired by a study of literature; nor does it presuppose that all books read should be dissected for the study of rhetorical elements. However, an

⁶⁰Dakin, op. cit., pp. 287-288.

⁶¹Curriculum Commission, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

intimate relationship between the two phases of English brings about greater efficiency and a saving of time, since effort expended on one of the factors may be made to serve the other also. Each phase of English may readily be made to enrich and motivate the other.⁶²

Although this section of the chapter is designed to deal with literature more or less in general, much of what has been said up to now is particularly applicable to the novel and the short story. Perhaps at this point, in summary, it should be pointed out that special pains should be taken with the introduction of any novel read, for much depends upon arousing the imagination and the interest of pupils and upon helping them to understand the opening sections of the novel, which are often the most involved and complicated portions. Dramatic techniques can be applied to advantage in introducing the pupils to the book. Other pupils would possibly be more deeply impressed by a summary of the book up to a certain climactic point, for if the summary is well presented, they will be eager to read the book for themselves to discover how it all "turns out."⁶³ The teacher should be willing and able to use a different method of approach for every book that she wishes her pupils to read, and often, particularly if she wishes to introduce the book by means of drama, she can enlist the help of a

⁶²Lyman, op. cit., p. 98.

⁶³Dakin, op. cit., p. 286.

number of children in appealing to the interest of the class as a whole.

All too often "serious" reading such as biography, history, essays, and economics is made no part of the English curriculum in the secondary school. History and economics may well be adequately taken care of in classes in the social-studies field, but biography and essays are especially appropriate for emphasis in the English class, since most essays and many modern biographies are invaluable in the development of personality and in perfecting an appreciation of beautiful literary style. Something of the function of biography is hinted at in the following excerpt:

The life of anyone, be he prince or peasant, falls into several great divisions: ancestry and birth; childhood and early education; young manhood; maturity; decline and death. Any biography read can be apportioned in this manner for an understanding of the facts of the subject's existence; but class discussion should concern itself with far more than this. What are the achievements of this man or woman? How permanent have they been? How significant to their period? To those succeeding? What outstanding personal qualities are revealed? What preconceived notions are removed? What information gained? What new ideas received? Biography should be thought of and taught as the record of human aspiration and achievement.⁶⁴

As a summary of the present section, the following concepts of the value and function of literature in human experience are quoted from Rosenblatt's work on Literature as Exploration:

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 302.

(1) The experience of literature helps to develop the kind of imagination most needed in a democracy -- the ability to understand the personality and needs of others and to envisage the possible effect of our own actions upon the lives of others. (2) Literature acts also as one of the social agencies through which the culturally accepted images of behavior, the constellations of emotional attitudes clustering about different relationships, and the culturally accepted social and moral standards, are transmitted. (3) In our heterogeneous democratic society, literature can enlighten the adolescent concerning the wide diversity of possible ways of life, possible patterns of relationship, and possible social and moral philosophies, from which he is free to choose. (4) Literature may thus also offer him a means of carrying on imaginatively some of the trial-and-error eliminations of patterns of behavior necessary for a sound choice. (5) Literary experiences may help the reader to see his own personality and problems objectively, and thus to understand and manage them better. (6) Through contact with the diversity of personalities and the varied experiences of his fellow-men expressed in literature, the adolescent reader may also be freed from the neurotic fears and obsessions of guilt that often accompany the feeling that somehow he is unique and queer. (7) Literature also may suggest socially accepted channels of expression for emotional drives that might otherwise take an anti-social form.⁶⁵

Poetry

While the teaching of poetry is still regarded as a bugbear by many teachers, many others are convinced that much of the dislike which many pupils have for poetry is due to their failure or inability to understand it, which in turn is largely the result of the teacher's inadequate procedures. Pupils almost invariably dislike what they do not understand.⁶⁶ Many teachers have proved that pupils

⁶⁵Rosenblatt, op. cit., pp. 263-264.

⁶⁶Dakin, op. cit., p. 38.

are likely to produce better poetry than any other type of composition if they are but given a few constructive suggestions as to how to proceed, and if a little appreciation of the results of their efforts is shown.

Some teachers attempt to develop an appreciation of poetry through both study and original composition. Since most pupils are interested in folk ballads, this is often the best place to begin original effort and to cultivate real poetic appreciation. It is often advisable for the class as a whole to cooperate in writing several original ballads on themes suggested by the pupils themselves. The teacher may serve as a guide and an adviser in making constructive suggestions and in leading the class to criticize its own productions. Later may come individual effort in the field of ballad composition, followed by more difficult poetic forms. Much profit can usually be obtained by class discussion of each individual production; but, of course, if it is to be helpful, such discussion must be carefully guided and conducted in the spirit of tolerance, understanding, and broad-mindedness. Many teachers note decided improvement, after each attempt at writing poetry, in the appreciations and understanding of poetry being studied in class.

Some schools sponsor a poetry club in which members meet to read and discuss original poems. Such clubs often come to fill a real place in the community, for they can

furnish poems for many different occasions, in and out of school, and thus the members can develop a new appreciation of poetry when they compose it for a purpose and experience it in its functional capacity. One of the values of such clubs is the inspiration they offer to pupils to do better and more conscientious work.⁶⁷

If pupils are required to read, memorize, and recite poems which are meaningless to them, the teacher is engaging in "pernicious teaching." Every high school is crowded with boys and girls who have memorized many poems without the slightest idea of what the lines or stanzas, or even the poem as a whole, mean. Yet pupils are looked at askance by teachers if they dare to say that they do not like poetry. How can they be expected to like it? However, they usually are under the impression that they should pretend to like it in order to placate the teacher's wrath and to help their grades, and for this reason they sometimes declare that they "like it pretty well," and hope that the teacher will never discover their true attitude.⁶⁸

Memorization should be used sparingly. Perhaps ideally it should be included, if at all, as a minor requirement in a contract plan of teaching. If memory work is required, the pupil should be permitted to choose his own lines or passages, with the requirement, of course, that the passage

⁶⁷Hubbard, op. cit., p. 422.

⁶⁸Stratton, op. cit., p. 57.

he selects shall be complete as to thought and structure. Certainly, memorization should never be required as a means of punishment. How can pupils be expected to develop a love for poetry if it is forced upon them as a means of punishment? If memory work is required, how is the teacher to know whether a pupil has learned his lines? Recitation would be an ideal way if all pupils could quote their passages understandingly and forcefully. But pupil recitation usually results in the "murder" of some of the sublimest lines in all literature and in the consequent boredom and listlessness of the class. For this reason, memory passages should perhaps be written by the pupil, with the requirement, of course, that the proper form must be observed, thus providing some training in language and punctuation as well as in poetry. Possibly a still better plan, with the exception that it does not allow much range of choice in the selection of passages, is for the teacher to list a number of famous or outstanding passages in the poem being studied and ask the pupils to place and interpret them. Careful analysis of a passage usually results in its memorization, and a desired objective will have been attained painlessly and effectively by all concerned.⁶⁹

The teacher should try to find for her group the poems that they can read, visualize, emotionally respond to, and consequently get pleasure from.

⁶⁹Dakin, op. cit., pp. 233-234.

This poetry should not be immature, sentimental doggerel or verse about nothing at all; but it should be an honest, truthful, artistic expression of emotional experiences in rhythmical form. The poems presented should demonstrate strength, virility, power of imagery, vision, and good taste. The imagery is concrete in real poetry, not just a play on the emotions. The best poets allow the reader to take care of his own emotions and center their attentions upon picturing things and experiences truthfully. If boys and girls are given the best in poetry, they will grow in their consciousness of what good poetry is and so will find another means of gaining intellectual pleasure.⁷⁰

. . . the teacher may provide opportunity for the pupil's oral reading of poetry. This should not be overdone, but if the boy or girl is to be able to find the music in poetry for himself or herself, he or she must be able to read poetry aloud effectively. The gain in correct pronunciation of words and in acquiring a wider vocabulary will add materially to the appreciation. Some teachers and pupils dislike the experience of hearing a boy or girl read a lovely poem badly. But how else is he to learn to read it? As a rule, before the pupil attempts to read a poem aloud, it will have been read by the teacher and studied by the class. The pupil also should have practiced reading the poem before he tries to read it to others. The teacher may arrange to have pupil-coaches in small groups to help to drill other boys and girls in oral reading, or she may listen to the reading herself.⁷¹

What may seem to the adult the simplest lyric may be based upon an assumption, a detail of knowledge, an interpretation of life quite beyond or outside the pupil's experience. The conscientious teacher will by experiencing the second phase of his nature -- the vicarious participation in the mental growth of his pupils -- strive to anticipate difficulties arising from the impact of novel ideas and prepare clear, interesting explanations of them. In this manner the teaching of poetry may be made for both instructor and taught, a vitally valuable and fascinating part of the teaching of English.⁷²

⁷⁰Cross and Carney, op. cit., pp. 443-444.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 443.

⁷²Stratton, op. cit., p. 78.

Often rich learnings accrue from class discussions regarding the meaning of a poem and its application to everyday situations or emotions. The poem comes to life for the pupils if they can be made to see its connection with commonplace human experiences. The teacher should be the guide in the effort to link poetry up to life, to ordinary experiences, for the hoped-for purpose of giving the pupil an increased understanding of human emotions.⁷³ Pupils must be taught to read poetry in the light of their own experiences -- to re-create for themselves the experiences recounted in the poem.⁷⁴

Fundamental aims in the teaching of poetry may be summarized as follows:

1. To help the pupils to read simply constructed good verse easily and understandingly.

2. To help the pupils to recognize good poetry, to distinguish between mere verse and those poems that appeal to the imagination and touch the emotions of the reader or the listener.

3. To make the pupils acquainted with the greater poets and with the poetic works that are included among the outstanding literary productions of the world.

To know about the construction of various poetic forms

⁷³Dakin, op. cit., p. 232.

⁷⁴Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 442.

is also a satisfying experience to some pupils in every class, who should be given an opportunity to explore this interest; but knowledge of construction cannot be classed as a major aim in the teaching of poetry.⁷⁵

Drama

Any drama should be taught from the acting point of view; that is, pupils should visualize it, trying to think of it as if it were being enacted before them on the stage, instead of looking upon it as a piece of literature to be read or, worse, to be studied. Of course, visualizing the written word requires imagination on the part of teacher and pupils. But the sheer "aliveness" of drama is an aid to imagination and often causes drama to become favorite reading with pupils.

A powerful incentive to the study of drama may be provided by a bit of dramatization. For instance, the teacher may enlist the cooperation of a few of the pupils with dramatic ability, who plan and present as a drama one or more of the most striking scenes from a play. After such an introduction as this, the class will be eager to read the play. As the teacher and the class study the play together, other scenes may be acted either extemporaneously or after considerable thought and practice; and even into the mere class reading of the play, many elements of dramatic visualization

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 434.

can be inserted by teacher and pupils. With a little thought and discussion, the characters can be transformed into real people. Comprehensive study questions, to be used as the class proceeds in its reading of the play, will make a worthwhile contribution to the pupils' understanding of and interest in the drama itself.⁷⁶

Real, living human beings who, by their acts and words, portray a mood, reveal a crisis, re-create a period, vivify history, expound a thesis -- that is drama, close, indeed, as its history bears witness, to the life experiences of our race. Particularly significant should it be to your pupils in their quest for new experience and understanding; lead them gladly toward this interpretation of human emotion.⁷⁷

The statement that character is molded by reading is no longer news. Even more vividly than literature, the movie screen, as a highly specialized phase of drama, has worked its way into human behavior. Visual presentation of facts, character traits, and ideals of conduct (or their opposites) in movies tends to produce a strikingly better understanding and retention of the facts presented than a parallel presentation through the printed page. Moreover, feelings, emotions, and sympathies receive through the motion picture a tremendously powerful stimulus which the average reader cannot supply for himself. Of course, it is to be deplored that movies provide many unwholesome influences and arouse many uncommendable emotions; but, on the other hand, movies

⁷⁶Dakin, op. cit., pp. 261-264.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 260.

may be as powerful a factor for good as for bad. Wholesome movies should be utilized by English teachers to aid in the development of character, of correct grammar, of ability to speak clearly and effectively, and to appreciate the drama. When possible -- and it often is -- books and their movie versions should be experienced concurrently for dramatic effect.⁷⁸

Other features of drama which may be utilized by the English class in developing an appreciation of and an interest in drama are the radio and recordings, whose educational possibilities are now merely being pricked. Ahead are almost unlimited resources of this type.

Creative Expression

Only through experience in actual, normal communication can the art of communication be mastered; and mere practice in speaking and writing is of little value unless it springs directly from real communication and results immediately in further communication. For instance, when pupils are preparing an assembly program, they recognize the need for good voices, distinct enunciation, correct pronunciation, and correct grammar, and are eager for drill to improve these abilities. On the other hand, drill in voice, enunciation, pronunciation, and correct grammar in its various phases of usage is of little worth if pupils lack the desire and the determination to improve.

⁷⁸Hovious, op. cit., p. 222.

Make-believe letters and other ordinary "themes" do not draw out the pupil's full power nor do they prepare him to meet emotional and moral elements in the real situations of life. "Classroom experience that is itself real and is as close as possible to the reality of extra-school and post-school life, without deception or pretense, must be the actual basis of any realistic curriculum."⁷⁹

Because of the fact that the principal objective of creative expression in school is the individual pupil's joyous and complete realization of the values inherent in his own personal experiences, creative expression should be put on the same plane as communication or literature, as a major phase of every pupil's work every year.⁸⁰

Themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication. The need for self-expression includes all sorts of writing involving personal elements -- narratives, descriptions, arguments, some varieties of exposition, friendly letters, and so on. The need for communication consists chiefly of the so-called utilitarian types of writing, such as business letters, reports, and minutes of meetings. Both of these needs should be given equal emphasis, since they have a place in everyday life. A writer, if he is to be successful in self-expression and in communication, must be careful in his arrangement

⁷⁹Curriculum Commission, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 6.

of material and in his diction, and must give special attention to clarity and effectiveness. The aim for written composition should be the expression of ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness. This aim is in harmony with the conception of a theme that has just been outlined. The teacher, through wise and sympathetic direction and guidance, can cause pupils to realize that they all have had and are constantly having experiences that are interesting, significant, and helpful to others. Any discussion of these experiences falls short in effectiveness if it is not planned with care and expressed with correctness. In written composition, as in all else, practice makes for proficiency.⁸¹

The ability to write develops accuracy of expression. It is an aid in acquiring ability to read. It helps to strengthen judgment and sharpen appreciation. Of our three vocabularies -- writing, speaking, reading -- it increases the smallest -- the one used in writing. It corroborates judgment by placing opinions in the cold, defined form of black letters upon white paper. It makes a permanent record, the significance of which tempers statement as one grows in years and experience with men.⁸²

The best subjects for both written and oral composition will come from the pupils' real or imagined or vicarious experiences, and from the work of all the classes of the school. The fields of the social studies, art, science,

⁸¹Dakin, op. cit., p. 138.

⁸²Stratton, op. cit., p. 205.

and history, particularly, are able to contribute interesting ideas for work in composition.⁸³

The objectives to be kept in mind for work in creative expression have been summarized as follows:

1. To help pupils recognize the value of their own experiences and activities.
2. To expand the range of pupils' experiences.
3. To improve the quality of pupils' experiences by encouraging more discriminating observation.
4. To aid pupils to fit words to the details of experience.
5. To help discover suitable forms for the transmission of experience to others.⁸⁴

Creative expression is the translation of experience into words. It occurs when a person recognizes the dignity of his own experience, and when he imposes upon his experience the discipline of expression in an effort to share it with others. Creative expression is differentiated from other forms of composition by the absence of an external or utilitarian motive, by the fact that it is done primarily for its own sake, and proceeds from experience which is recognized as possessing intrinsic rather than "practical" value. Business letters, news items, reports of investigations, debates -- all these forms of composition have some external reason for being, have a motive of practical use, of objective writing with value. In creative expression, on the other hand, the reason for transferring the experience lies not in some material benefit to be attained by the writer or the speaker, but in his pleasure and interest in the experience itself.

⁸³Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 257.

⁸⁴Curriculum Commission, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

. . . Expression becomes increasingly creative as the emphasis is placed upon the interpretation of the writer's own experience.⁸⁵

"Creative writing" is a term used by LaBrant to refer to "written composition for which the writer has determined his own subject, the form in which he presents it, and the length of the product." So conceived, writing offers the child not only an avenue through which he may record significant events or activities, but it provides also a channel through which he may share his experiences with an interested group. Accordingly, the amount and quality of writing are dependent upon the richness and variety of experience.

To enable each child to find personal satisfaction through creative writing is indeed a problem for the teacher. . . . Some of these children will have little to express, record, or communicate because their background of experience is inadequate or because their sensitivity to the world about them is limited and undeveloped. To increase the sensitivity of children to their immediate environment is a task which requires unusual skill and resourcefulness on the part of teachers. However, the problem of increasing children's sensitivity will be recognized as basic in promoting creative expression.

We shall recognize also the need for encouraging creative pursuits in a society in which opportunities for spontaneous activity are few. . . . It is a commonplace among psychiatrists that creative expression is an outlet which is almost an imperative for health in our mechanized society. In fact, the hygienic values of creative expression are being emphasized by hygienists and educators alike, and an effort is being made to incorporate creative activities in the curriculum in the modern school.⁸⁶

The following objectives for creative expression in the secondary school indicate that builders of the courses of study in English should return with their pupils to the essential source of expression -- emotional and intellectual

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 110.

⁸⁶Paul Witty, "Motivating Creative Expression through Writing," English Journal, XXIX (March, 1940), 188-189.

stimulation through experience -- and there discover the normal activities of social and business life in which correctness and form of expression find their only valid reason for existence:

1. To arrange situations through which pupils may develop the power to express themselves clearly and accurately. (This cannot be done, of course, unless provision is made for the teaching of the simple mechanics.)
2. To help pupils to think logically and to write courteously, that is, to express themselves simply, using effective English so that the reader may understand what has been written.
3. To lead pupils to investigate and to weigh experience.⁸⁷

The composition teacher should guide her pupils in checking their papers in rough draft before they are copied to hand in. Some plan such as the following will be helpful as a guide to the pupils in doing this checking and revision:

1. What am I trying to say?
2. Do my sentences enlarge upon this idea in a clear and logical manner?
3. Do I hold to a certain mood in each paragraph?
4. Are all my sentences effective and correct in form and construction?
5. Are my sentences interesting?
6. Do my verbs rise up to greet the reader?

⁸⁷Dora V. Smith, Instruction in English, p. 23, as quoted by Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 250.

7. Have I punctuated and spelled correctly?

8. Does each paragraph, or page, or does the entire composition make a good-looking picture or pattern?⁸⁸

Despite all care in pre-checking of papers, however, some errors are likely to be found in the final copy of the manuscripts when they reach the teacher. Among the steps commonly included in a campaign against a serious, persistent error are the following:

1. Observation of the speech and writing of the class to determine which pupils need drill, and the kind needed.

2. Pre-test to discover whether the pupils know what the correct usage is.

3. Clear oral or printed explanation, based upon examples, of the critical point of points being considered.

4. Pupils' reading aloud of correct sentences to give abundant practice in using the forms to be learned.

5. Practice in error recognition, error correction, blank filling, or crossing out the incorrect.

6. Using the correct expressions in original sentences or paragraphs.

7. Mastery test to measure achievement and ability invariably to select correct forms.

8. Follow-up to prevent exceptions and to insure habit formation.

⁸⁸Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 263.

Training in these matters should be individual, of course, or pupils who have established the desired habit should be excused from class practice. Exercises serve to make the pupil sensitive of his own errors. If such practice is accompanied by interest and zeal, when the practice is a means for achieving some desired end, when a strong sense of personal satisfaction accompanies or follows the practice, learning and habit formation result.⁸⁹

The teacher should carefully read and mark every theme, indicating in the margin, beside the line in which they occur, the types of errors that have been made. The teacher should never make the actual correction, but should require the pupil to do so. It is never wise to allow even the best pupils to read and mark the themes of other pupils, for only an experienced reader and error-detective can discover mistakes with any degree of accuracy. To one who is skilled in reading themes, errors seem to leap from the page, but the inexperienced reader will never see many of the mistakes.

In addition to marking the errors, the teacher should write, at the end of the theme, some brief comment as to its worth, some reference to the type of errors made, and constructive criticism that will aid the pupil in producing a better piece of work when the time comes for his next theme.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Curriculum Commission, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

⁹⁰Dakin, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

. . . progressive English departments are enlarging the scope of their language-composition work in various ways: (1) for the traditional curriculum they are substituting a curriculum of activities which closely parallel the activities of daily life; (2) in some instances pupils are being trained in suitable cycles or sequences of functional activities through several school years in what might be called a cumulative maintenance program; (3) many courses are being adjusted to meet individual needs; (4) self-appraisal and initiative are being cultivated; (5) suitable forms of publicity for pupil work are being devised; (6) course sequences in accord with pupil attainments are in some cases supplanting sequences of school years or grades; and (7) plans are being devised which enable pupils to advance at their individual rates of progress.

Progressive instructional methods are promoting natural writing and speaking: (1) real communications are sent through the mail; (2) pupils assist one another in writing and speaking; (3) provision is made for co-operative group work; and (4) motivation for adequate English is provided by clubs and publications.⁹¹

Because occasions for speaking are coming to be more numerous than heretofore, and because occasions for making speeches or talks are more varied in type and more difficult to meet than are occasions calling for written communication, it is coming to be recommended that pupils be given fully as much school experience in spoken as in written composition.⁹² (The present trend is away from } *stant*
the development of skill in addressing an audience and in } *g*
debate, and instead, more emphasis is being placed upon
oral composition in connection with informal conversation,
explanation, and discussion. Letter writing, however, is

⁹¹Lyman, op. cit., p. 97.

⁹²Roberts, op. cit., p. 513.

being accorded considerable attention in the light of social need.⁹³

Oral composition is "accurate, and, if possible, effective expression arising from the demands of everyday life." Any of the multitudinous speech activities in which people engage can be brought into consideration as oral composition unless they are oral reading of materials previously prepared. The English class should train pupils to speak lucidly, accurately, and forcefully, and to read clearly and naturally, with due regard for meaning. Training in dramatic reading is a duty of the speech department, and should not be required of the teacher of English.

The emphasis and the aim in oral composition are very similar to those in written composition. The processes involved in written composition, the organization of material, and the accurate and forceful portrayal of thought are also applicable to oral composition. The general aim remains the same as for written work -- to aid the pupil in expressing his ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness. Incidental aims include the development of poise in appearing before and addressing a group of people and the cultivation of accurate expression and of skill in the organization of materials and of thoughts. Any

⁹³Cross and Carney, op. cit., p. 27.

worthwhile topic provides practice in the management of material and in forceful delivery.⁹⁴

Criteria for the Teaching of English

As was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the survey of professional literature in the field of the teaching of English serves the purpose of providing criteria for use in the evaluation of the philosophy and methods of teaching English in the secondary schools of Texas. In the preceding pages of the present chapter has been presented a general but not exhaustive survey of literature in this field. At this point the writer will proceed to list certain criteria based upon the material in the foregoing pages. These criteria are classified in the same manner as was used for the survey of literature, including philosophy, grammar, literature, poetry, drama, and creative expression. For convenience in referring to them later in the thesis, the criteria are numbered consecutively throughout the list.

Philosophy. -- The following criteria in the field of the philosophy of teaching English are taken directly from the relevant professional literature surveyed in the early part of the present chapter:

1. The English curriculum today is regarded as a body

⁹⁴Dakin, op. cit., pp. 185-187.

of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences and activities.

2. The school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities related to bodies of subject matter.

3. The total curriculum of the modern progressive schools is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes what it can when and as it can.

4. The function of English in the experience program of the school is obvious: (1) to provide adequate means of communication (speaking, writing, listening, and reading) such as are necessary in experiencing various types of intercourse with other persons, and (2) to provide indirect (vicarious) experiences in situations in which direct (actual) experiences are impossible or undesirable.

5. All of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of effective English curricula.

6. Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula.

7. An effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom.

8. To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects.

9. The four fundamental aims of English in the secondary school may be summarized as follows: (1) knowledge and appreciation of literature, (2) ability to write, (3) ability to speak, and (4) ability to think.

10. Today the present trend in composition is a shift of emphasis from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness.

11. In literature, emphasis is being transferred from a detailed study of certain "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure, wholly in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations.

12. In oral English, emphasis is being shifted from such formal types of speech as oratory, elocution, and forensics to instruction in informal, everyday speech situations such as conversation, informal speech-making, discussion, social courtesies, oral appraisal of newspapers, books, magazines, movies, and radio.

13. The English teacher, in beginning her work with any class, should first find out what the pupils know and do not know, and then proceed to build her program of instruction and her calendar of activities on the basis of the knowledge and interests of the class members.

14. Any effective program in English, whether in literature, grammar, or composition, must give consideration to individual differences in interest and ability.

15. The curriculum in the modern school is a program of meaningful activities, never final and always flexible.

16. The English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress.

17. In any class in English, even in one conducted solely as a series of experience activities, it is necessary to have practice periods for the acquisition of proficiency in using many of the forms of organized speech and writing. These periods of practice should be closely related to the occasions when the particular factors involved are to be used in functional situations.

18. The most important thing in any class in English is to set up a series of lifelike, purposive activities so that language usage may function naturally and meaningfully.

19. English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum.

↓ Grammar. -- The survey of literature in the foregoing pages of this chapter supports the following criteria in the teaching of grammar in the secondary school:

20. Language teaching should be made applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used.

21. English must be taught as a practical thing that

is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom.

22. In the more progressive schools, grammar is being made practical and functional for everyone.

23. Formal grammar is becoming an oddity instead of a commonplace.

24. Conventional theme-writing is definitely on the decline in modern English classrooms.

25. The teaching of skills must be persistent, distributed, incidental, and continuously related to the social situations in which they function as tools.

26. Functional grammar is incidental to and instrumental in the improvement of sentences and of general speaking and writing ability, but in no sense is it accidental or haphazard.

27. Functional grammar is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use.

28. Pupils should be made dictionary-conscious.

29. Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively.

30. Spelling should be taught throughout the four years of high school -- directly in the first two years and indirectly in the third and fourth years.

31. Pupils should in some way be made conscious of their responsibility for spelling correctly all the words in their written work.

32. Pupils should form lists of misspelled words and study them until they can spell all of the words correctly.

Literature. -- The following criteria are especially applicable to the teaching of literature:

33. Literature is a powerful means of vicarious experience.

34. Literature is most meaningful when it is utilized as supplementary material to actual life and classroom experiences.

35. There is at present a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type or theme of literature may be emphasized.

36. In the more progressive schools the entire English program is slowly tending toward reading that has a social aim.

37. Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and of groups.

38. Literature should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should be taught purposefully as an integral part of the pupil's life.

39. Teachers should be concerned about teaching their pupils to read both for exact information and for sheer enjoyment.

40. Pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves what they will read.

41. The teaching of literature should be based upon the conception that each pupil should be given experiences in reading that have intrinsic value for him now.

42. Newspapers and magazines can play an important, interesting, and significant part in the literature program of the secondary school.

43. Book reports on what has been read can easily be made interesting and profitable by the introduction of novel methods of presentation.

44. A present trend is toward the correlation of literature and composition. Pupils are led to discover that normal reading provides adequate occasions for practice in writing and speaking.

45. The teacher should plan a careful introduction to any piece of literature before the class sets in to study it. She should use various methods for motivating their interest in the work.

46. Biography can be interesting and valuable if it is properly motivated in connection with pupil interests and activities.

Poetry. -- In the teaching of poetry the following criteria have been implied by professional literature referred to in foregoing pages:

47. Widespread dislike of poetry on the part of pupils is usually due to their inability to understand it.

The teacher can aid materially in developing an understanding and a liking for poetry.

48. Often a deeper appreciation of poetry can be fostered if the pupils are encouraged to write original poetry along with their study of famous poetic works.

49. Class cooperation in the writing of poems is often worthwhile in developing appreciation of poetry. Constructive criticism by classmates and by the teacher should be given both for group and individual poetic efforts.

50. Memorization should be used sparingly.

51. Pupils should be encouraged to read poetry orally.

52. Teachers should supply their pupils with poems that they can read, visualize, emotionally respond to, and consequently get pleasure from.

53. Poems come to life for pupils if they can be made to see their connection with commonplace human experiences. Class discussions regarding the meaning of a poem and its application to everyday situations or emotions often result in rich learning.

54. Pupils should be taught to read poetry in the light of their own experiences -- to re-create for themselves the experiences recounted in the poem.

Drama. -- The following criteria are pointed out for the teaching of drama in secondary schools:

55. All drama should be taught from the acting point of view; that is, pupils should visualize it, trying to think of it as if it were before them on the stage.

56. Dramatization of outstanding scenes from a play, or of the whole play itself, is a splendid way of creating interest in and appreciation of drama.

57. The interrelationship of drama and real life should be made clear to all pupils. With a little thought and discussion, characters can be transformed into real people and events can take on added significance.

58. Comprehensive study questions, to be used as the class proceeds in its reading of the play, will make a worthwhile contribution to the pupils' understanding of and interest in the drama itself.

59. Wholesome movies should be utilized by English teachers in the development of character, of correct grammar, of ability to speak clearly and effectively and to appreciate the drama.

60. When possible, books and their movie versions should be experienced concurrently by pupils.

61. The radio and recordings possess many possibilities in the teaching of drama and of language.

Creative expression. -- The following criteria for the teaching of creative expression are pointed out:

62. Themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication.

63. Self-expression includes all sorts of writing or speaking involving personal elements -- narratives, descriptions, conversations, arguments, some varieties of

exposition, friendly letters, and so on.

64. The aim for written composition and for oral composition is fundamentally the same: the expression of ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness.

65. The best subjects for both written and oral composition come from the pupils' real, imagined, or vicarious experiences.

66. Creative expression is differentiated from other forms of composition by the absence of an external or utilitarian motive, by the fact that it is done primarily for its own sake, and proceeds from experiences which are recognized as possessing intrinsic rather than "practical" values.

67. Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group.

68. Errors in written work should be pointed out by the teacher and corrected by the pupil.

69. Progressive instructional methods and philosophies are promoting, in the modern school, natural writing and speaking: real communications are sent through the mail, pupils assist one another in writing and speaking, provision is made for cooperative group work, and motivation for adequate English is provided by clubs and publications.

70. Pupils should be given fully as much instruction and practice in oral as in written composition.

71. In its new concept, oral composition is accurate and, if possible, effective expression arising from the demands of everyday life.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE SECONDARY
SCHOOLS OF TEXAS AS REPORTED IN THE TEXAS OUTLOOK, 1925-
1940, AND AN EVALUATION OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY
CONFORM TO PROCEDURES AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH RECOMMENDED BY
AUTHORITIES IN THE FIELD

In the preceding chapter, a survey of authoritative opinion relating to methods and philosophy in the teaching of English in secondary schools has been compiled. In the present chapter, the writer undertakes to formulate a representative presentation of methods and procedures in the teaching of English in the secondary schools of Texas as reported in the official monthly organ of the Texas State Teachers' Association for the years 1925-1940. The procedures and philosophies in use in Texas schools are evaluated in terms of the authoritative ones set forth in the preceding chapter. The procedures and the philosophy of authorities in the field of teaching English have previously been condensed in the form of seventy-one criteria designed to serve as a basis for the evaluation now to be

undertaken. Throughout the present chapter, numbers in parentheses refer to the numbered criteria found on pages 60-69 of this manuscript. Instances of similarity and of dissimilarity will be pointed out between the criteria and the procedures employed in Texas secondary schools.

Objectives

The subject in the school curriculum that is called English is the indispensable basis for much of the rest of the work of the schools. It may readily be made to express itself through living in natural ways of happiness and service and thus prove to be vital and alive to pupils.¹ The subject matter, itself, aside from its arrangement, its organization, and its method of treatment, is often uninteresting and unconnected with life.² One reason for the division between English and life is that English work frequently has no definite aim. It is true, of course, that most English teachers hold to the general aim of improving the pupils' writing and speaking ability, and of developing a wholesome taste and appreciation in reading material, but the child often does not have even this indefinite aim; and if he does, the forcefulness of its appeal is to be seriously questioned. The pupil, for the most part, is interested in the immediate present, whereas the teacher is often primarily

¹George F. Cassell, "English and Its Value to Our Schools," Texas Outlook, XIV (August, 1940), 43.

²Marjorie B. Peacock, "The Socialization of English," Texas Outlook, XI (July, 1927), 36.

concerned with the future; and the problem of so combining these two points of view that they will seem one, and of putting them into terms which the pupil can comprehend and appreciate, is not easily solved. Yet a meaningful aim is essential. Too much of the work in English is merely a hodge-podge of unrelated subject matter, from which the pupils can derive no definite impression and certainly no lasting values. Unfortunately, pupils often cannot recognize anything in their English work that is even remotely connected with their busy, purposeful lives outside of school.³

The first statement in the preceding paragraph conforms to the criterion (7) to the effect that an effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom. The fact brought out above that English subject matter is often uninteresting and unrelated to the pupils' life experiences goes counter to the criterion (1) which states that the English curriculum today is regarded as a body of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences and activities.

Strangely, English is far from being the subject most closely connected with the pupil's everyday life, and is often, in fact, one of the subjects farthest from it.

³Ibid.

One cause of this serious divorcement of English and life is the home influence, which may be either the best friend of a subject or its worst enemy. In relation to English, all too often, the home is the latter. The average child idealizes his home, and certainly no one would wish him to do otherwise; yet the standards which the average home holds forth in reading, in composition, and in grammar are so far below the standards upheld by the school that a conflict is inevitable. By stressing the valuable things which the home may contribute to the English work, and by tactfully minimizing the conflict, the teacher may help to bring about a more wholesome and cooperative relationship between the two.⁴ Here criterion (5) is applicable; it states that all of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum. Certainly the home is a significant agent for the development and expansion of mental and social life, and especially of the latter.

Efforts to connect subject matter with life are worth serious consideration and are to be commended wherever and whenever they are attempted. Such efforts justify themselves with both immediate and future results, which are indeed large and satisfactory in view of the time and energy expended.⁵ This thought conforms to the criterion (2) to the

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

effect that the school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities related to bodies of subject matter.

With the world about us in a state of flux, with social and economic problems clamoring for solution, with specters of unrest and unemployment casting shadows on our very hearthstones -- in short, with history of tremendous importance in the making everywhere about us, the teacher of English can no longer go his academic way, serene and unconcerned, teaching verbs and participles, characterization, and dramatic construction.⁶

According to one criterion (13), the English teacher, in beginning her work with any class, should first find all the evidence she can as to what the pupils do and do not know, and then proceed to build her program of instruction and her calendar of activities on the basis of the knowledge, interests, and needs of the class members. The above quotation readily conforms to this criterion.

The teacher's objectives in the teaching of English have been stated by one Texas writer as follows:

1. Awaken the pupil to an appreciation of the need for and the practical value of English study. Criterion (9) is readily applicable to this aim.
2. Help the pupil to develop a mastery of English as a tool. Criterion (26) supports this aim.
3. Give the child right attitudes toward the material

⁶Kathryn Pollok, "Current Issues in the English Curriculum," Texas Outlook, XXIII (June, 1939), 17.

included in the study of English. Criterion (4) may be applied here.

4. Show the pupil the possibilities of English, not only as a tool but as a means of culture -- of preparation for richer, fuller living.⁷ Criteria (5), (7), (9), and (18) have either a direct or an indirect bearing upon this objective.

Let us, then, as teachers, . . . strive to cultivate the intellect; and let us as teachers of English in particular see to it that when a student has something to say he be permitted to say it. Let us not, to be sure, be satisfied with or tolerant of any clumsy or muddled expression. Let us impress upon him that when an idea is worthy of uttering, that utterance should be worthy of the idea.⁸

One criterion (10) has it that the present trend in English teaching is a shift from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness. The aim for both oral and written composition is fundamentally the same -- the expression of ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness (64). Progressive instructional methods are promoting, in the modern school, natural writing and speaking (69). All of these criteria are applicable to the above quotation.

The general fundamental objectives of English are those of all teaching: " . . . to establish certain habits; to create certain attitudes; to impart certain information; to

⁷Rose Sharp Brewer, "Some Objectives in High School English," Texas Outlook, XIII (June, 1929), 9-10.

⁸David Lee Clark, "Our Grammar, Like Caesar's Wife, Should Be Above Suspicion," Texas Outlook, XVII (September, 1933), 13.

inspire certain ideals."⁹ Criterion (9) is definitely in conformity to this statement.

According to another writer, the high school recognizes three primary aims, or paramount ends, in the teaching of English:

1. To train the pupil to express himself in good English either in conversation or in formal address.

2. To train every pupil to write English sentences correct in form, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and sentence structure.

3. To develop whatever talent for appreciation of good literature the pupil may have and to give him that discriminating taste that will enable him to prefer the best.

There are several minor aims: clear thinking, so that the pupil will be enabled to assemble his sentences into paragraphs, vigorous in diction and logical in relation; to give further training to those talented in particular ways, such as public speaking, business English, journalism, short-story writing, dramatics.¹⁰

To the first aim quoted above, criterion (12) is applicable; to the second aim, criteria (20, 21, 26, and 31) are in direct conformity; to the third aim, criteria (9, 34, and 38) are especially related. Criteria (4, 7, and 12) are in direct conformity to certain parts of the minor aims listed above.

The English teacher must attempt to aid each pupil in the formation of good English habits (14). If this is done only in the English class, however, the effort is futile in

⁹Brewer, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰R. L. Paschal, "English Teaching in the High School," Texas Outlook, XII (June, 1928), 24.

a large measure (19). The habit of using good English must be purposefully encouraged and developed in each individual if it is to become strong and vital enough to cause him to use acceptable English at all times, in every class in which he speaks or writes (7, 19, 21, 22). The development of this English consciousness can be aided in numerous ways, but the following seems to be the most successful:

When a pupil presents a piece of written work to a teacher in some subject-matter field other than English, and the other teacher discovers that the work is deficient in the essentials of English, let this teacher pass the paper on to the pupil's English teachers, who will call him in for a conference. Together, the pupil and the teacher examine the paper and discuss the quality of English used, and the pupil sees at once that he has been negligent in the use of the principles he has learned in his English class. He knows now that his English teacher knows of his negligence, and that she is determined to do something about it. He begins to realize that good English must be used in every class, that it is a tool for all other subjects. This individual attention from his English teacher will likely aid the pupil in cultivating the habit of using correct forms in writing and speaking. The teacher in his other subject, up to this time, will have said nothing to him about his English errors, but as his papers improve, a compliment from this teacher

will do much to lead him to greater effort toward improvement. His English teacher should have frequent conferences with him, which should always be pleasant and helpful. The pupil must be made to realize that the teacher wants to aid, and not to criticize.¹¹

If the student comes to college with proper respect for English, with a feeling that he has merely grazed the surface of a vital field of great practical value; if he has such upstanding self-respect that he scorns to use as his own the ideas of others; if he has absolute mastery of basal technique; if he knows how to evaluate what he reads, and go to sources for materials; if he has come to find satisfaction in self-expression, has learned to write that he may speak effectively; if he has so learned to read that he thinks independently; if he has this preparation, he will be in a position to get all that college can give him. A student so equipped will meet whatever demands are put upon him in college or in life. Such training is permanent, but it is so plastic that life can complete it. No English teacher has ever yet achieved perfectly such objectives. No one ever will. Striving for them, one learns only the glory of the imperfect. For Stevenson is right: "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor."¹²

One Texas English teacher has written that it is worthwhile for teachers to know and to keep constantly in mind such principles as she calls the "ten commandments for the high school English teacher." Because of their interest and value for the teacher, these "commandments" are here quoted in full:

1. Thou shalt remember that they have forgotten many things; the words they mastered in the seventh grade, the words they spelled glibly in the eighth, the parts of speech which others taught them to

¹¹Mary M. Gwyn, "Individualizing English," Texas Outlook, XXII (July, 1938), 11.

¹²Brewer, op. cit., p. 35.

identify, before thee -- yea, verily, even that a period marks the end of a sentence, that hardly is pure gold, and not hardly a brass-copper alloy -- even all these have they forgotten, and many others.

2. Thou shalt remember to be patient in review, for thou wilt find it needful soon to travel slowly with them once again upon the road they trod before with others; yea, thou must indeed be patient, though the shining new road beckons from ahead, and though it seems at times that thou art standing still, nor even making progress on the old roadway.

3. Thou shalt remember that the troubled hours which they spend on sentences that try their skill are not in vain, for truly, only thus can they become masters of the wearisome nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, and the like.

4. Thou shalt remember that they needs must use the written English and the spoken words, that both must be allotted the due regard and time; that those things which are pleasing to them will be better told, and neither thou nor they bored in the telling.

5. Thou shalt remember that one good theme, composed with care and motivated well, has far more value to thee than a dozen themes done in careless fashion. For a composition which is of the classroom, where thou canst tell them of the principles they needs must use, where thou canst assist them over stumbling blocks, and where general recognition of good work is possible, is better far than themes which are assigned mechanically, written without interest or care, and marked impersonally by thee.

6. Thou shalt remember that whatsoever thou wishest done well must needs be motivated, that a subject chosen from that which interests is reason enough for writing on it.

7. Thou shalt remember that they needs must learn the ways in which to show divisions of the thought, that they must learn the reasons for the marks they scatter with superb impartiality because they make the page look well.

8. Thou shalt remember always that when they leave thee, they will find it necessary to write many letters; therefore thou shouldst teach them to write commendably. Thou shalt permit them neither stationery colored like the sunset nor inks as brilliant as the rainbow.

9. Thou shalt remember that they will spend many hours at leisure occupations when they leave the school and thee, and that it is thy privilege and thy duty to teach them worthy ways in which to pass this idle time. Thou shalt teach them, then, the love of

literature, to take such great delight in worthy books that our less admirable demands upon their time will go unheeded because of thee, who taught them to give their hours and thoughts to "Kings' Treasuries."

10. Thou shalt remember that at all times wilt thou be asked for reasons, that thy every action shall call forth a question. Seek ye, therefore, accuracy in all things, self-assurance in all thy doings. And fail not to know the wherefore of thine own doings -- for it will be required of thee many times.¹³

Not all of these "commandments" are conformable to any of the criteria being employed in this study, but certain direct or indirect relationships or implications are perceptible. Among these are the following: commandment one is supported by criteria (17, 25, 26); commandment two, by criteria (17, 25, 26); commandment three, by criteria (17, 25); commandment four, by criteria (6, 14, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70); commandment five, by criteria (6, 10, 64); commandment six, by criterion (6); commandment seven, by criterion (17); commandment eight, by criterion (63); commandment nine, by criteria (9, 11, 38, 41, 42); and commandment ten, by criterion (13).

Needless to say, the environment in which English is taught has some bearing upon the effectiveness of the teaching. An ideal English room should possess all the conveniences necessary to accommodate the routine of classroom activity, but it also should have something more to contribute to harmonious surroundings which in turn make for a

¹³Dorothy Kaufman, "Ten Commandments for the High School English Teacher," Texas Outlook, XIV (August, 1930), 58.

fuller development of the pupils' intellectual faculties and hence the richness of their thought powers. The pupil should be surrounded by wholesome influences and environments to aid the development of his best talents. With careful planning, it is entirely possible to combine, in a large measure, the poetic with the prose of life, even in an English classroom.

Among the equipment which is worthwhile if not necessary in the English classroom may be mentioned the following:

Ordinary furnishings: movable arm chairs for pupils, teacher's desk and chair, window shades, blackboards, blackboard erasers, wastebasket, pencil sharpener.

Useful furnishings: reading tables and chairs, filing cabinet, card-index cabinet, open bookcase, closed cabinet for notebooks and projects, magazine rack, typewriter, duplicating machine, bulletin board.

Special equipment: at least two standard dictionaries, projectoscope, pictures for the projectoscope, maps, phonograph and records.

Decorations: curtains, window boxes, wall pictures.

The phonograph and records are explained by the fact that some pupils learn most readily through the ear. For this reason the ideal English room should have a portable phonograph and appropriate records. Educational records of various kinds are now on the market, and it is easy to find

those which can be profitably correlated with the study of literature and the teaching of phonetics.¹⁴ Although this writer does not mention the fact, a radio could likewise be used to advantage in the English classroom (61).

Another Texas teacher, in discussing the English classroom, which she calls the English "laboratory," insists that it should be a large room equipped with tables, chairs, books, magazines, a comfortable reading nook furnished with easy chairs and adequate lighting, and filing cabinets, bulletin boards, and so on. The class period should be either a work period or a time for class discussion. When a new unit is launched, the pupils gather at the front of the room in arm-chairs and desks for preliminary explanations, assignments, and general discussion of plans and aims. In working out the unit, they gather in congenial groups or work alone, according to their preference or to the nature of the work they are doing. They are allowed freedom of movement as the need arises. At all times they have freedom of access to dictionaries, reference books, classroom library and magazine files, the bulletin board, filing cabinets, and their own notebooks and projects in the filing cabinets. All assignments are posted on the bulletin board, together with the date when they are due. Work must be in on time, but the order and the time of doing

¹⁴Anna Lena Wirz, "Ideal English Room for High Schools," Texas Outlook, XVI (March, 1932), 32-33.

it are optional, within certain limitations. Hence many varied activities are going on simultaneously during the work periods. The teacher, during the work periods, is an adviser, spending her time chiefly in conferences. As difficulties arise, they are worked out in collaboration. Laggards and idlers must be inspired and sometimes forced to renewed effort, but the freedom of activity and the informality of the environment make the work less irksome even for this type of pupil.

These activities continue for several days, until the time set for group discussion. At this time the pupils gather again at the front of the room for a round-table discussion of common problems. At a specified date, a test over the unit is given, but pupils think of it not so much as a test as a gauge of their progress and development in ability to think clearly and accurately and to express their thoughts in a clear, forceful, effective manner.

For its success, any laboratory depends upon the laboratory approach for all problems; but, of course, there must also be some suitable equipment. An English laboratory with plenty of working space and with facilities for elementary research and exploration pays rich dividends in pupil alertness and in an interested consciousness of the worthwhile activities of the English class.¹⁵

¹⁵Mable Scheide, "The English Laboratory," Texas Outlook, XIX (May, 1935), 24-25.

According to criterion (16), the English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress. The two descriptions of English laboratories in Texas high schools, reported in preceding paragraphs, conform admirably to this criterion.

Grammar and Composition

According to the principal of a large city high school in Texas, pupils will learn good habits of English only by long, persistent, well-regulated drill. When teachers have supplied this, they will have done all that can justly be expected of them. A few pupils will be beyond hope, but high school teachers, if they follow this procedure, will not often be humiliated by the bad English of a pupil when he becomes a college freshman or when he enters the business world.¹⁶ Although the emphasis which this educator places upon drill would not be countenanced by the authorities consulted in the second chapter of this study, it receives some support from criteria (17, 25), which state that it is necessary to have practice periods for the acquisition of proficiency in using many of the forms of organized speech and writing, and that the teaching of skills must be persistent, distributed, incidental, and continuously related to the social situations in which they function as tools.

¹⁶Paschal, op. cit., p. 24.

Every young person hopes to improve himself economically and socially during his lifetime. One of the duties of the English teacher is to build upon this hope a determination to be unhindered by incorrect speech and punctuation when opportunity knocks; for, as must be proved to the pupil, a correct, cultured form of expression is one of the first requirements for entrance into any sort of social position, as well as being practically an essential to any worthwhile economic advancement. Today there are more trained applicants for positions than there are positions available, and if two persons of equal ability make application for a job, one of whom uses faulty, incoherent speech, it is the applicant with correct and accepted speech who is employed, even though the other may possess greater native ability.¹⁷ Criteria (21, 21, 22) are directly applicable to the preceding statements which have to do with the practicability of English. These criteria assert the fact that language teaching should be made applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used; that English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using all the time and not merely in the English classroom; and that in the more progressive schools, grammar is being made practical and functional for everyone.

No pupil can write intelligently until he has been

¹⁷Peacock, op. cit., p. 37.

rather thoroughly grounded in the fundamental principles of English grammar. He must know the parts of speech and their function in the sentence; he should be able to distinguish between a phrase and a clause; he should be thoroughly drilled in such important matters as parallel structure, coordination, and subordination; he has to know something about tenses and their function in the correct and forceful expression of ideas; and he should be familiar with the various forms of the most frequently used irregular verbs.¹⁸ Criteria (17, 25, 26) are related to the above statements. They have to do with the necessity of correct usages in English.

Although, a number of years ago, formal grammar was the accepted practice in American schools, it is now recognized as one of the most deadening of all influences in English work. This statement is in direct conformity to the criterion (23) which states that formal grammar is becoming an oddity instead of a commonplace. Functional grammar is, of course, necessary and valuable, and has the distinct advantage of being presented for the purpose of filling a distinct, recognized need; but the endless, detailed analysis of words and sentences that has no practical purpose and attains no functional end is doubtless inexcusable and certainly a profligate waste of valuable time and energy. The

¹⁸Clark, op. cit., p. 14.

only pupils who do not loathe it are those few who find it easy, and these are, in the main, the comparatively few whose home training and environment have been such that correct grammar comes naturally to them. To the other pupils, formal grammar is merely a lifeless, difficult, boring way of passing time.¹⁹

Although the trend today is toward the liberalization of requirements and the broadening of opportunities, not everything in English can be left to chance.

Widening the horizons of the young students need not supplant emphasis on matters fundamental to correctness of writing and speaking. An essential objective of the English teacher must be the teaching of correct forms in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Attainment of correctness should, indeed, lead to appreciation of correctness, which is a form of accuracy, in the written and spoken expressions of others. Thus will the colors in the scenes presented to the young observer seem richer and even, perhaps, more glorious than he could have dreamed of before. Accuracy, as the mark of the good craftsman, will, it is hoped, appear to him as one of those highly desired things of life.²⁰

Criteria (17, 25, 26, 31) can be considered as applicable to the philosophy expressed in the above quoted paragraph.

All work in grammar should be functional rather than formal so that it will at least have the appeal of necessity. But, by careful motivation, grammar may be even more closely connected with life. In rhetoric, for example, the pupil may be led to see that there is a word in the English

¹⁹Peacock, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁰Mary S. Estill, "Widening Youth's Horizons through the English Class," Texas Outlook, XVIII (December, 1934), 20-21.

language which exactly expresses the thought he has in mind, and that the use of any other word, which only approximates his meaning, is indicative of a careless and slovenly way of thinking. The pupil may be made to realize, too, that the careful selection of words constitutes one of the finest disciplines for the mind, because it clarifies thought as no other device will do. People frequently have the experience of being quite sure that they understand a thing until they attempt to explain it to someone else, and then of finding, to their chagrin, that they know very little about it. But if one goes over his subject carefully in a search for appropriate terms in which to express it, he will thereafter be entirely capable of passing his knowledge on to others.²¹ All of the criteria which have to do with the advantages of functional grammars and with the art of clear and effective expression of thought are conformable to the philosophy expressed in the fore part of this paragraph. These criteria include (4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27, and 63).

Grammar must not be divorced from actual composition.

Its bearing upon coherent expression must be constantly impressed upon the young mind; in other words, the student must be led to view grammar not as an end in itself, but as a forceful means -- an indispensable means, indeed -- of achieving a greater end -- the clear expression of thought.²²

Criteria (62, 64) having to do with composition and its

²¹Peacock, op. cit., p. 37. ²²Clark, op. cit., p. 14.

relation to composition and self-expression and with the expression of ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness, bear a relationship to the above quotation.

Much has been said and written about the methods that should be used in the teaching of English composition. It is generally agreed, however, that any method which will interest the pupils to the extent that they enter into the class work with a definite and appealing purpose in view, and wholeheartedly carry the work to completion in its natural setting, will bring worthwhile results.²³ Criteria (26, 27) seem to have some bearing upon these statements, although the relationship is not well defined.

One teacher of English in a Texas high school points out the following present-day trends in the teaching of composition. Numbers in parentheses refer to the criteria which are applicable to the respective trends:

1. For the first time in the history of the teaching of English, the time allotment given to high school composition is approximately equal to that devoted to the study of literature (44).

2. Oral composition receives increasing emphasis yearly, and is given a generous share of the additional time allotted to composition work (12, 70).

²³Edwin D. Martin, "Socializing English Composition," Texas Outlook, XII (October, 1928), 63.

3. An increasing conscious effort to relate composition to the present life and interests of the pupil is one of the most significant of present-day trends in the teaching of composition. Subjects for composition are taken immediately from the pupil's work in all school subjects and from a wide range of school and out-of-school activities (6, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 65, 67, 69, 71).

4. Pupils are given opportunities to talk and write almost daily (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 18, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67).

5. Emphasis is increasingly placed on the constructive side of composition (2, 6, 10, 12, 24, 62, 67, 69).

6. Formal composition is on the decline, and definite methods are being perfected for combatting errors in written and spoken composition (10, 12, 23, 24, 27, 31, 32, 68).

7. Instead of the everything-at-a-time type of instruction, the emphasis now is upon the teaching of a few fundamentals of grammar and rhetoric each year, according to a progressive plan (18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 67, 70, 71).

8. Pupils are encouraged more and more to set their own standards of value and achievement (66).

9. Pupils are trained in self-criticism and self-correction (31, 32, 68).

10. New teaching ideals stress self-help methods (28, 29).

11. Creative and original work is encouraged (10, 18, 24, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69).

12. There is increasing emphasis on the importance of wholehearted cooperation from the teachers of all subjects in the teaching of English composition²⁴ (3, 7, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22).

The object of the school is to educate, to train the intellect. In the cultivation of the intellect, it is thought that counts; and in thinking, it is the organization of thought that greatly matters. One may logically say, then, that the chief function of a course in writing is to develop in the writer the ability to do clear and coherent thinking and to express that thinking in forceful and correct language. An important, though secondary, aim is to inspire in the young writer an impelling desire to put his thinking into imperishable form. The first-mentioned aim should be, of course, the primary one for high-school work in composition. Teaching should be both instructive, constructive, and inspirational. Teachers should make an effort at the earliest possible moment to discover and to weed out the young people who possess unusual native ability and separate them from the average mass of pupils whose work likely will never advance beyond the mediocre in quality. Assignments in composition should be different for those who

²⁴ J. Lawrence Eason, "Present-day Trends in Teaching High-School Composition," Texas Outlook, XVI (April, 1932), 25-26.

are unusually able in composition work. They should be given opportunity to execute projects in composition which will challenge their abilities and awaken their interests.²⁵ Criteria (4, 9, 10, 14) apply in this instance.

In setting forth her concepts of the aims of English composition, one writer asserts that the procedures in connection with the teaching of composition should strive

1. To fix the habit of correct use of English composition in speaking and in writing by cultivating the pupil's ear and eye so that he shall be sensitive to mistakes; by stressing the importance of correct English in social life; and by emphasizing its market value in the business world. . . .

2. To fix the habit of accurate expression of thought so that the pupil will say what he means in the clearest possible way, by developing the power of concentration and the habit of clear thinking before speaking.²⁶

Criteria (5, 7, 12, 18, 27) are concerned here.

As a rule, written themes, according to Boley, "do not usually evoke much thinking. They are done merely as an act of submission to the teacher's requirements."²⁷ In conformity to this statement, criterion (10) has it that the present shift of emphasis from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness is significant, whereas criterion (24) states the concept that conventional theme-teaching and theme-writing are definitely on the decline in modern English classrooms. Boley, through actual experiments in his

²⁵Clark, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁶Sarah E. Simons, English Problems in the Solving, quoted by T. Reginald Boley, "Relation of Oral Expression to Written Expression," Texas Outlook, XVI (September, 1932), 28.

²⁷Boley, op. cit., p. 28.

composition classes, learned that the pupil's thought as well as his method of expression tended to improve perceptibly if a class discussion was held preceding the initiation of work on the written composition.²⁸ This finding is supported by criterion (62), to the effect that themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication.

While one writer declares that the great crying need of the present is more English in practice and less in theory only,²⁹ another is convinced that frequent themes should be insisted upon throughout the four years of high school.³⁰ These thoughts revert directly to the doctrine of functional grammar, which is supported by criteria (2, 7, 8, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 65, 66).

Formal themes are, and rightly, the bane of many a pupil's existence.

For one thing, they have absolutely no connection with life. The pupil knows he will never write one after he leaves school. He knows they are useless as well as uninteresting, a mere group of sentences thrown together in the hope that they will meet with the teacher's approval. The subjects, too, are distinctly dull. The pupil begins in the third or fourth grade to write upon such exciting topics as "My Favorite Game," "Thanksgiving at Grandmother's," or "The Picnic I Attended This Summer," and in all probability he is still writing about them at the expiration of his high school career. The wonder is, not that the themes are not better, but that they are not utterly impossible. . . .

²⁸Ibid., p. 37.

²⁹Brewer, op. cit., p. 9.

³⁰Clark, op. cit., p. 13.

Formal themes, in my opinion, should be dispensed with, and in their place should be substituted letters, and papers expressing personal opinions on varied and interesting subjects. For example, in teaching the writing of news stories, I did not depend upon local happenings of more or less commonplace sorts, but had the pupils use the material in Poe's "Purloined Letter," and in several of Aesop's Fables. The practice acquired in fitting this varied subject matter to the news-story form was worth much more than the writing of more prosaic facts, and also aroused a real interest in the class. In another instance, I had the pupils write to friends, telling the story of the "Book of Ruth," and insisted that they invent some plausible excuse for relating it. The results, in interest and ingenuity, were excellent.³¹

Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula (6); language teaching should be made applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used (20); English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom (21); formal grammar is becoming an oddity instead of a commonplace (23); conventional theme-writing is definitely on the decline in modern English classrooms (24); themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication (62); self-expression includes all sorts of writing or speaking involving personal elements -- narratives, descriptions, conversations, arguments, some varieties of exposition, friendly letters, and so on (63).

³¹Peacock, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

When the time came to assign semester themes, one Texas teacher made to her class the proposition that instead of following the usual procedure of each pupil's writing on a separate topic, the pupils might like to organize themselves into groups in order to delve more deeply into subjects of mutual interest. After the pupils had done their own grouping, each group selected a chairman from among the members and chose a subject from a list of topics prepared by the teacher, or else selected an entirely new project. A number of English class periods were required for group consultation, adoption of a plan of attack upon the problem, and working out a tentative outline. After the outline had been approved by the teacher, each member of the group assumed responsibility for working out some phase of the project. Material was collected from every available source; then the papers were written in preliminary form, and were read, discussed, and criticized within the group. Often the teacher's opinions and suggestions were solicited in settling points about which uncertainty was manifest.

When all groups had completed their respective projects, all of the finished products were displayed and discussed by the class as a whole. A group project entitled "A Study of England's Genius: William Shakespeare," was judged best by the class. As a reward for the group of pupils who had collaborated in this unit, the project was bound and placed in the school library. Of course, it is

difficult to measure the results of a project of this kind, but enthusiastic interest prevailed, and group work was attacked with zeal and determination. Through group collaboration, individual ability was fostered, recognized, and emphatically encouraged.³² One criterion (16) states that the English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress. That is exactly what was done in the project described above. To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects (8). Conventional theme-writing is definitely on the decline in modern English classrooms (24). Themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication (62). Self-expression includes all forms of writing and speaking involving personal elements (63). Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula (6). Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group (67). Provision should be made for cooperative group work (69).

The high-seventh grade of one large junior high school in a Texas city gets thrills out of writing books. The

³²Mrs. A. F. Rasar, "Recent Tendencies in the Teaching of High School Literature," Texas Outlook, XIX (May, 1935), 19-20.

children's books are not long ones, but they have all of the parts that longer works have, and pupils strive to use proper forms throughout by using published books as guides.

The class confers and formulates, with the teacher's guidance, a list of questions and instructions for using them. Talking these questions and procedures over, the group plans its method of attack. Equipped with their questions and notebooks, the pupils go out into industry, business, offices, and other places where men and women work at occupations in which the pupils themselves are interested. They carry on conversations with the men and women whom they interview, making sure that all of their questions are adequately answered, and take all the notes that seem to be necessary on the conversations and on the work or business they have observed. All of this information, generously supplemented by other material taken from books, magazines, and other sources, is written up into chapters as a cooperative project engaged in by the entire class. The best books are bound together in one large volume and placed in the school library to be used by pupils who, in the future, may wish to study occupations. The names of the writers who prepare the best books or chapters, together with a description of the type of work each has done, are published in the daily newspapers of the city. This fact constitutes a challenge to the pupils to produce the best work of which they are capable, and they have accepted it

as such. Pupils, their parents, and the community at large have taken much interest in this project.³³ This activity is conformable to certain of the criteria being utilized in this study. The English curriculum today is regarded as a body of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences and activities (1). The school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities related to bodies of subject matter (2). The total curriculum of the modern progressive school is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes the material that it can when and as it can (3). All of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum (5). Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula (6). An effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom (7). To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently

³³Ernest S. Rambo, "Book Writing in Junior High School," Texas Outlook, XIX (February, 1935), 6.

in classroom procedures and projects (8). Any effective program in English, whether in literature, grammar, or composition, must give consideration to individual differences in interest and ability (14). The English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress (16). The most important thing in any English class is to set up a series of lifelike, purposive activities so that language usage may function naturally and meaningfully (18). English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom (21). In the more progressive schools, grammar is being made practical and functional for everyone (22). Functional grammar is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use (27). The best subjects for both written and oral composition come from the pupils' real, imagined, or vicarious experiences (65). Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group (67). Provision should be made for cooperative group work (69).

The positive encouragement of creative work in our public school system is an admirable phase of the problem of modern educational philosophy. The creative spirit as manifest in the history of culture may take many angles, not the least of which is poetry. In our public schools of today original creative work has taken its place on an equality with the study of literature; and the particular type of creative ability that turns toward poetry is encouraged along with that ability

in which the pupil is regularly trained -- the writing of clear, lucid prose in themes, essays, and technical papers.³⁴

This quotation from a Texas educator calls to mind certain of the criteria which form the basis of the present evaluation of English procedures and philosophies employed in Texas secondary schools. Often a deeper appreciation of poetry can be fostered if the pupils are encouraged to write original poetry along with their study of famous poetic works (48). Class cooperation in the writing of poems is often worthwhile in developing appreciation of poetry. Constructive criticism by classmates and by the teacher should be given both for group and individual poetic efforts (49). Poems come to life for pupils if they can be made to see their connection with commonplace human experiences. Class discussions regarding the meaning of a poem and its application to everyday situations or emotions often result in rich learnings, appreciations, and understandings (53).

Needless to say, too often high-school pupils look upon correct speech only as a means of producing themes that will be given a passing grade. Once the theme is accepted, they see little need for correct speech until the next theme is assigned. This is unfortunate, for if one's knowledge of correct speech is not put into practice, little of it

³⁴Everett Gillis, "Training the Young Poet," Texas Outlook, XXIII (January, 1939), 40.

will be long retained. Certain criteria (7, 20, 21, 27, 63) apply here.

The experiences of many educators point to the fact that when greater progress is made in oral mastery, there will be a corresponding advancement in the quality of written work. This statement is, of course, reversible in implication. It goes without saying that not everyone who uses correct speech will be a great writer, nor will every correct writer by and by become a great orator. But a clear relationship exists nevertheless. Teachers, in both oral and written composition, should strive for a mastery of the actual use of language, rather than a mastery of the knowledge of how to use it.

Pupils should recognize the relationship between what is learned in school and what will be needed later in life. Correct oral speech contributes much to a mastery of the facts of language -- contributes more, in fact, than correct writing, although each certainly supplements the other to a certain extent. "The better use of the spoken language one has, the better can one fit himself into the activities of a democratic society."³⁵ Certain criteria (1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 20, 21, 27, 70) are applicable to these statements.

Oral composition must precede satisfactory written composition. To emphasize writing more than speaking is inconsistent with sound pedagogy. . . . Thought has a stronger and closer

³⁵Boley, op. cit., p. 28.

association with speech than with writing. Correct spoken English demands clear thinking; requires logical arrangement of ideas; reacts favorably upon the student in many tributary ways by increasing self-confidence, his legitimate conversational powers; it relieves timidity, and, taught properly, it relieves written work of its horrors.³⁶

To this quotation, certain criteria (8, 9, 12, 18, 67, 70, 71) are obviously related in their direct implications.

Every pupil should be required to express himself in his speech thoroughly and accurately on every occasion. This opportunity must begin in the classroom. Every class is a fine place for a laboratory. Each teacher in a school should have a pride in directing students to a better use of English.³⁷

In connection with these statements, certain criteria (4, 5, 7, 16, 25, 26, 27, 68) are clearly implicated in the underlying philosophy expressed.

From oral work there are many good results. The speaker receives profit; the listener receives profit, too. The speaker trains himself to think before a group of eager listeners. And the listener trains himself to be a better listener, which is not an undesired accomplishment.³⁸

Criteria (9, 12, 18, 63, 64) are related to the thoughts expressed in this short quotation.

One ninth-grade English class began a unit on drama by a study of the background of the play, As You Like It, of Shakespeare as a dramatic artist, of the Elizabethan theater and stage performances, and of Elizabethan costumes. Then came the actual reading and discussion in class of the play itself. The teacher was careful to keep uppermost in the

³⁶Mississippi State Course of Study, quoted by Boley, op. cit., p. 28.

³⁷Boley, op. cit., p.28.

³⁸Ibid.

pupils' minds the thought that, ideally, the play is to be seen and heard, and not read. As the study progressed, the group noted character development, new words, and difficult or unfamiliar allusions.

When the reading was about half completed, the class began discussing the possibility of dramatizing the play. Lengthy discussions were held regarding all that would have to be done should the group undertake such a project. After the class had decided to proceed with a dramatic effort, each pupil was asked to write on paper the part he desired to assume in the proposed project: committee work, actors, actresses, and so on. If the pupil preferred to act in the play, he was requested to list his first and second choice of parts. As far as possible, each child was allowed to do what he asked to do, although the try-outs for parts caused certain changes to be made in the personnel of the acting cast. Ten committees were found to be necessary: typing, costumes, stage, lighting, make-up, poster, invitation, program, properties, curtains. The varied duties which fell to the several committees provided excellent opportunities for integration and correlation of abilities, interests, and subject-matter fields.

To defray the cost of the project, a small admission was charged. About two hundred persons were present, all of whom had been sent written invitations. The audience was selected with care, since the drama would not, of

course, be a polished production; and invitations were sent only to those who, it was believed, would be appreciative of amateur efforts. The play was an unqualified success.

According to the teacher who directed the project, the following major values accrued from the undertaking: (1) it gave each pupil a thorough understanding and a deeper appreciation of this one of Shakespeare's plays; (2) it provided an opportunity for experimentation in dramatic production; (3) it furnished an opportunity for creative activity, which is truly the end and the aim of the modern school; and (4) it made possible valuable correlations between the English, the home economics, and the commercial departments of the school.³⁹ Certain of the criteria are readily applicable to the activity which has just been described. The total curriculum of the modern progressive schools is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes what it can when and as it can (3). Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula (6). To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects (8). The English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop

³⁹Josephine Lumpkin, "Shakespeare on the Stage," Texas Outlook, XXI (December, 1937), 34.

where each pupil works at his own rate of progress (16). English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum (19). The teacher should plan a careful introduction to any piece of literature before the class sets in to study it. She should use various methods for motivating their interest in the work (45). All drama should be taught from the acting point of view; that is, pupils should visualize it, trying to think of it as if it were before them on the stage (55). Dramatization of outstanding scenes from a play, or of the whole play itself, is a splendid way of creating interest in and appreciation of drama (56). The interrelationship of drama and real life should be made clear to all pupils. With a little thought and discussion, characters can be transformed into real people and events can take on added significance (57).

Since letters are the form of composition most frequently utilized by the majority of people, they are worth a large amount of time in the English classroom. One of the most compelling duties of the English teacher is to teach the common social and business forms of letters so thoroughly that the pupil will use them instinctively; and to train him to write an interesting social letter is no less important. A letter should express the writer's personality. Pupils should be made to feel that their letters are their ambassadors to those to whom they write, and that

they should strive to make them worthy representatives of their own personalities. The subject matter of the social letter should be selected with the interests of the recipient in mind. The letter should be interspersed with a running flow of comment such as the writer would use if he were talking with his friend face to face. The recipient cares much more for the writer's reactions to the events he is speaking of than for the bare news items that too often crowd out the personality of the writer.⁴⁰ These statements on letter writing conform either directly or indirectly to several criteria. All of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum (5). Today the present trend in composition is a shift of emphasis from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness (10). The curriculum is a program of meaningful activities, never final and always flexible (15). Functional grammar is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use (27). Self-expression includes all sorts of writing or speaking involving personal elements -- narratives, descriptions, conversations, arguments, some varieties of exposition, friendly letters, and so on (63). The best subjects for both written and oral composition come from

⁴⁰Peacock, op. cit., p. 37.

the pupils' real, imagined, or vicarious experiences (65). Creative expression is differentiated from other forms of composition by the absence of an external or utilitarian motive, by the fact that it is done primarily for its own sake, and proceeds from experiences which are recognized as possessing intrinsic rather than "practical" value (66). Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group (67).

One of the most practical methods for teaching the principles of English in functional situations is the offering of a course in journalism in the high school. Of course, one unfortunate characteristic of such a course is that it is almost always an elective and hence enrolls only comparatively few of the pupils of the school; and these tend to be the ones who are least in need of such training as a course in journalism supplies.

One writer states that a course in journalism in the secondary school has a twofold aim: (1) to develop the pupil's powers of expression by using material from everyday life, and (2) to develop in the pupil the habit of reading worthwhile newspapers and magazines and thus training him for a better type of citizenship.⁴¹ Certain criteria (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 42, 63, 64, 65) find a ready application to the twofold aim of journalism as expressed in the words above.

⁴¹Hollie D. Walker, "Why a Course in Journalism in High School?" Texas Outlook, XIV (June, 1930), 24.

The pupil who has disliked English is not the only one who may be expected to profit by a course in journalism. Some of the best English students may take advantage of the opportunity offered by journalism to write more frequently and to write about the life around them. To develop the talents of these pupils, as well as to win the laggards, is one of the aims of journalism in the secondary school. Occasionally the teacher discovers a pupil with unusual ability and originality in the line of writing, and if this be the case, it is certainly never amiss for the teacher to make an effort to fan into flame the spark of ambition and to hold before the pupil the possibility of his becoming a writer if he is willing to pay in the form of intellectual effort to make his dreams come true.⁴² Criteria (63, 64, 65, 67) dealing with self-expression and with certain phases of creative effort are related either intimately or remotely to these concepts.

In many schools the study of current events is recognized as part of the work in English. Much of the training in the preparation of outlines and in the making of oral or written reports has been enlivened and given a purpose by being linked with the teaching of current events. In the integration of current events, one of the most valuable adjuncts is the daily newspaper. Used as a textbook, it becomes the most interesting device for the correlation of all

⁴²Ibid.

the varied routines of study. Newspapers are studied in class, reports are given, and the style of writing in the newspaper is discussed. A section on the blackboard may be reserved for the pupils' "newspaper vocabulary," to which scores of new words likely will be added each week. A large placard or bulletin board can be used as a "who's who" for the posting of articles about prominent men and women in all fields of endeavor, so the pupils may become familiar with what these people are doing.⁴³ One criterion (42) states that newspapers and magazines can play an important, interesting, and significant role in the literature program of the secondary school.

The integration of current events with the study of English has the following salutary effects:

- (1) The child learns to use the tools of language.
- (2) He develops an appreciation of the importance and continuity of current history.
- (3) It develops in him creative ability.
- (4) He learns the value of correct expression and practices it in speech and writing.
- (5) He begins to appreciate the significance of man's physical and spiritual development.
- (6) There dawns upon him the significance of art, literature, and music as they affect his mental and spiritual growth.⁴⁴

Newspaper study provides numerous diversified means of English expression. Children, if they do not already possess it, can easily be led to develop a deep-seated interest in various phases of the newspaper, such as editorials,

⁴³Andrew Hunt, "Current Events in the Teaching of English," Texas Outlook, XXII (September, 1938), 62.

⁴⁴Ibid.

contemporary happenings, current events, cartoons, sports news, "Believe It or Not" cartoons, etc. The use of such material is motivated by an underlying purpose to make the study of English so interesting that the pupil will assimilate its grammatical and rhetorical phases. In integrated activities, subject matter no longer exists as subject matter, but becomes a tool or a phase of the material needed in the development of skills, in the solution of problems, and in the development of appreciation.⁴⁵ One criterion (19) points out that English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum. Two additional criteria (42, 43) state that newspapers and magazines can play an important, interesting, and significant role in the literature program of the secondary school; and that reports on what has been read can easily be made interesting and profitable by the introduction of novel methods of presentation.

If commercially published newspapers are valuable for use in the school program in providing vicarious experiences and in assisting the pupil in formulating worthwhile habits and appreciations in the field of composition, it goes without saying that the school paper furnishes significant and interesting opportunities for pupils to put their knowledge of English into practice. There should be

⁴⁵Ibid.

faculty sponsors to supervise the project, to point out errors in spelling, punctuation, and style (see criterion 68), and to insist upon accurate revision. Nothing helps the pupil so much in the formation of correct English habits as actual work of this kind, which is practical and interesting and carried on under expert guidance.⁴⁶

Many pupils who put forth little effort in a traditional English class will work hard to write an acceptable article for the school paper. An appeal to the pupil's desire to "appear in print" may not, in itself, be a particularly commendable motive, but if working zealously to write about what is happening around him wins the enthusiasm of the pupil who thought he hated English, and if he discovers that he must know something about sentence structure and punctuation in order to get his article printed, surely the school or the teacher will be justified in changing things a bit to rouse him to effort. After all, good English is good English, wherever it is found.⁴⁷ It appears that certain criteria (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 19, 26, 27, 63, 64, 69) are directly applicable to the school newspaper as a project in the field of English.

In one Texas high school, early in the school year, a Press Club was formed in the interest of the promotion of

⁴⁶O. D. Wyatt, "The School Paper and Extra Curricular Activities," Texas Outlook, XII (June, 1928), 33-34.

⁴⁷Walker, op. cit., p. 24.

the school publication. The editor and the business manager of this paper were selected from the club. The paper, a monthly, was financed through advertisements sold by the business manager, so that no subscription fee was charged the students for the paper, which was given to every person in school, thus serving as a community organ.

English teachers of the school, working with the editor, each month submitted to their English classes a list of topics for news items, editorials, sports events, social occasions, club meetings, and so on, which would be needed for the next issue of the paper. Tentative titles of all the articles were written on the blackboard. Two or three students volunteered or were assigned to each article, with the general understanding that the best article on each subject would be published in the paper. When possible, pupils were permitted to write on the topic in which their interest was greatest, but in some instances where this was not practicable, assignments were made similar to those given the staff of a daily newspaper, commercially published.

Knowing their news articles, editorials, and essays might possibly be used in the high-school paper, the pupils took much more interest in their composition work. In fact, they hardly realized that they were writing compositions. Of course, many articles had to be returned for corrections and possibly for complete rewriting; and in this way the pupils

realized the importance of their doing their best work in writing for the paper.

It is doubtful that the assigned theme is of much value. Usually the pupils heartily dislike it, and teachers regard the work of grading as a necessary evil. But in the new type of composition work, the pupil attacks the task wholeheartedly and is willing to put his best effort into completing the project, because he can perceive its practicality. On the other hand, the teacher enjoys reading the material for the paper. The editor does the proofreading after the teacher has seen the material.

This method of teaching English composition socializes the English work. In reality, it is a project, which is sometimes defined as "a problematic act carried to completion in its natural setting."⁴⁸ Criterion (69) is of particular significance in relation to this newspaper project, for it states that progressive instructional methods are promoting, in the modern school, natural writing and speaking: real communications are sent through the mail, pupils assist one another in writing and speaking, provision is made for cooperative group work, and motivation for adequate English is provided by clubs and publications. Also applicable in varying degrees of conformity are certain other criteria (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 19, 24, 26, 27, 63, 64).

⁴⁸Martin, op. cit., pp. 63, 70.

Certain tangible and intangible results of the integration of English with current events and with the newspaper in general are to be noted. Among the tangible results are to be reckoned the following (numbers in parentheses indicate criteria to which the statements conform):

1. A decidedly expanded vocabulary, since pupils are encouraged to look up unfamiliar words (28, 32).
2. A mastery of some of the principles of correct spelling (30, 31, 32).
3. Writing reviews of articles or short stories (43).
4. Preparation of compositions based upon interesting episodes reported in newspapers or magazines (33, 34, 42, 44).

Among the intangible results are the following:

1. Development in the pupil of an intelligent understanding of basic human problems and a sense of tolerance (5).
2. Growth of a cooperative appreciation, which enables the purpose to be seen as a meaningful whole whose parts are perceptibly interdependent (69).
3. Increasing intelligence and a greater degree of group adjustment, since the processes involved in interactive and cooperative adjustment and endeavor build personality and character as well as integration of effort⁴⁹ (5, 69).

⁴⁹Hunt, op. cit., p. 62.

Literature and Reading

In the present age of rapid living there is a great need for a stimulus to help awaken the minds of young people to the rich possibilities for pleasure and profit that reside within books. Some teachers even need to be reminded of the importance of arousing in the minds of boys and girls a wholesome curiosity about books, the habit of turning to books for information and for pleasure, and a desire to possess books.

The teacher's responsibility in connection with books is tremendous. Human beings, the pupils, are sent to the teacher and, having received instruction and guidance over a period of time, they are expected to have developed and to possess a thinking mind, to be able to think, reason, act, and make for themselves a place in the world in which they live. What a task this makes for the teacher! Her duty and responsibility are great, for they have to do with the shaping and influencing of character and life. Books are essential tools to be used by the teacher and the pupil in the accomplishment of this objective.

It is said that skilled workmen in any trade are known by the kind of tools they possess, by the condition in which they keep them, and by the manner in which they use them. Since books are the tools of the teacher, it is her business to know how to select the right ones, how to have

them ready for easy access, and how to direct pupils into correct habits of using them. Many teachers who have confined their reading to a narrow path are unable to lead their pupils in the acquisition of literary tastes. Outstanding teachers are those who possess a great fund of knowledge and informational material, who know how to use it effectively, to help their pupils to think for themselves, and to form their own wholesome habits. Directly or indirectly, such teachers acquired these abilities from books; and it is only such teachers who are able to supply their pupils with the incentive to become real investigators for themselves.⁵⁰ Obviously, a few criteria (4, 8, 9, 29, 34, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46) discover conformity here.

Every teacher has the opportunity to encourage a wider use of good books. Some day a boy or girl while reading a good book may catch a vision and have unlocked a door of opportunity which will mean a successful and useful life. He may, by the reading of good books, accumulate a greater fund of knowledge, develop into a better thinker, become a more efficient worker. But best of all, he may find real friends in books, friends who will never fail him and who will give him enduring satisfaction throughout life. . . .

A school library is a laboratory for every child in the school, and in every subject in the curriculum. Without this laboratory equipment the student and teacher are as much handicapped as the one who starts to build a house with few tools and little material.⁵¹

Certain criteria (9, 11, 14, 16, 29, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41) are

⁵⁰Henry L. Cecil, "Motivating Good Book Habits," Texas Outlook, XII (October, 1928), 46.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 47.

noticeably related to the principles mentioned in the above quotation.

Although the school library is singularly important in providing books for the pupils and teachers, if rightly utilized, it often is somewhat inadequate in supplying their needs and in fostering their interests. It should be noted that every public library contains many books that may appropriately supplement the material in the school library. In assigning reading in the public library, teachers should always acquaint the librarian, a few days before the reading is to be done, of the type of material that will be needed, so that all of it may be grouped and ready for immediate use when the pupils arrive. Part of the training in reading which pupils should receive directly during their school years is the efficient use and the frequent visitation of the public library.⁵² Although none of the criteria applies intimately to the public library, it appears that the criteria mentioned in the preceding paragraph (9, 11, 14, 16, 29, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41) have at least some slight connection with the use of the public library.

Three general aims for the teaching of literature in the secondary school have been stated in the following manner by one Texas teacher:

1. To evolve a combination of desirable interests to be cultivated and excellent, attractive literature to be read.

⁵²Ibid.

2. To establish the habits of finding pleasure and profit in fine, worthy literature.

3. To derive such values as are for the betterment of the individual, and through his betterment the betterment of the social group.⁵³

Certain criteria (9, 11, 37, 39) exert a relationship here that is obvious and significant. The primary thought to be derived from the related criteria and from the three aims in literature quoted above is that the pupil must be taught "to associate literature with life for the more effectual study of both."⁵⁴ The teacher who does not impart to her pupils "that sublimation of knowledge and experience which is the end-product of true education"⁵⁵ is not giving enough to her pupils. Under proper guidance and a sharing of experiences, literature becomes a truly fine study of life, giving the pupil an intimate familiarity and a feeling of kinship with the great of other eras, and causing him to be able to have, vicariously, the rich experiences that literature brings to him. Literature is a powerful means of vicarious experience (33). Literature is most meaningful when it is utilized as supplementary material to actual life and classroom experiences (34). In developing an acquaintance with the great of other eras, biography can be interesting

⁵³Mrs. Clio Newton, "A Criterion for Evaluating Literature Offered in the Senior High School," Texas Outlook, XIX (August, 1935), 17.

⁵⁴Pollok, op. cit., p. 17.

⁵⁵Brewer, op. cit., p. 10.

and valuable if it is properly motivated in connection with pupil interests and activities (46).

When literature rings true to life, thought in regard to that literature is thought in regard to life. Such experiences as reading literature and thinking of this literature in relation to its progressive portrayal of life make pupils better citizens of the social whirl of today. Always in the minds of teachers and pupils should be the question of whether the literature being read is representative of life.⁵⁶ Literature should be regarded as a powerful means of vicarious experience (33). It should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should be taught purposefully as an integral part of the pupil's life (38).

Interesting reading materials should be chosen, of course, and the next step is to connect the material with the world that the child knows. He must be shown that a book, whether written fifty or two thousand years ago, is concerned with the lives of human beings similar in all respects without exception to those who live today, and that such minor matters as dress, morals, and deportment should not be permitted to overshadow the fundamentals of human nature, which remain virtually stable throughout the ages. The pupil must be led to realize that the men and women with whom he associates every day are, at least at

⁵⁶Pollok, op. cit., p. 18.

heart, the same kind of people as those weird and shadowy figures who populate the classics.⁵⁷ One of the fundamental aims of English in the secondary school is the development of a knowledge and an appreciation of literature (9). In literature, emphasis is being transferred from a detailed study of certain "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations (11). Literature should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should be taught purposefully as an integral part of the pupil's life (38).

One of the most important factors in connection with the teaching of wholesome literature is skill in the selection of items to be read. One Texas teacher has submitted some criteria to serve as guides in the selection of reading material:

1. The term literature should be broadly defined to include well-written material in science, history, biography, and other fields closely related to life.
2. Children's interests as revealed by scientific studies should guide in selecting literature for study and reading for leisure.
3. Literature chosen for senior high school children should be wide in variety to take care of individual differences in interests and tastes.
4. There should be included in the reading suitable materials which reflect the interests, tastes, and vital issues of the generation in which they are to be used, and seek to interpret them.
5. Since comprehension is the basis of literary appreciation, the literature chosen for any grade should be within the scientifically determined comprehensibility of the students of that grade.

⁵⁷Peacock, op. cit., p. 37.

6. Since, as Thorndike has pointed out, there may be within one grade as many as five different grade levels of reading comprehension ability, the literature chosen for any one grade should provide for these individual differences.

7. Since physical make-up of a book has a tendency to determine the degree of interest in that book, consideration should be given to the hygienic character of any book to be read or studied intensively.⁵⁸

Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively (29). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (37). Teachers should be concerned about teaching their pupils to read both for exact information and for sheer enjoyment (39). The teaching of literature should be based upon the conception that each pupil should be given experiences in reading that have intrinsic value for him now (41).

English teachers are too prone to follow the "literary tradition" that they have inherited. To teachers of English, one such teacher in a Texas high school writes:

How many of you, when you are choosing a poem or novel for classroom work, select something which you were forced to digest, and which, as it did you no harm, you feel to be duty bound to prescribe for your pupils? How often we seem to cling to the old theory of the bitter medicines being beneficial, and strive to correct any symptoms of interest in the pupils by a liberal supply of literature as dry as the proverbial dust. Of course, we, with our trained literary tastes, can see in every writing which has lived something of value, something which carries an appeal, but we have no reason to expect our pupils to be as broad and selfless in their interests. They desire an appeal to their immediate environment, to their life outside of school, and it is our duty to provide it. In all

⁵⁸Newton, op. cit., p. 18.

the vast realm of literature there is much which is of vital interest, and which throbs with the spirit of youth.⁵⁹

Also applicable to this quotation are those criteria (29, 37, 39, 41) mentioned in connection with the preceding one. Another criterion (11), however, should be added, which states that in literature, emphasis is being transferred from a detailed study of certain "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations.

Paschal, the principal of a large high school in one of Texas' larger cities, is not enthusiastic about the trend to abandon the classics. In support of his opinion he asserts:

There is a danger in the teaching of literature in the high schools: too large a part of the reading should not be contemporary fiction. We sin against our pupils if we do not form their taste so that they can appreciate Homer and Milton, Addison and DeQuincey. It is not necessary that a man be dead a thousand years or even a hundred before we can pronounce his work good; occasionally we have a poet like Tennyson, so pure in soul, so high in thought, so passionate for truth, so clear in vision, so melodious in diction, that we hail him as great. We must remember, however, that contemporary judgment is not often reliable: Ben Jonson in his time was esteemed a greater dramatist than Shakespeare.⁶⁰

This contention is in direct opposition to the criterion (11) quoted above, to the effect that emphasis is shifting from the "classics" to a rich program of abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations.

⁵⁹Peacock, op. cit., p. 36. ⁶⁰Paschal, op. cit., p. 24.

In recent years the highly popular unit method of teaching literature has made significant contributions to the desired new breadth in the liberalized program of free reading. The unit method of instruction unifies literature more or less according to thought, theme, or idea, and enhances the intrinsic value inherent in wide reading.⁶¹ One criterion (35) has it that at present there is a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type or theme of literature may be emphasized.

Basar It is obvious that the success of the present unit method of teaching literature is sufficient evidence that English can be made practical, constructive, and creative. (1) Because of their use of student interest in play, sports, hobbies, and varied forms of recreational ability, the unit projects help to shift educational emphasis from living to escape life to living to create it. (2) Because of their many inspirations to student self-analysis, honesty, fair play, consideration of neighbors, values of mutual aid and suggestions in the classroom and out, and because of their centering attention upon noble acts in the lives of men and women presented in the literature units, the projects emphasize spiritual values worthy of appreciation and emulation. (3) By inviting free expression of opinion and by arousing consciousness to social and civic problems, the projects make students feel something of their growing responsibility as future citizens of an increasingly complex world. From the information gained thereby, students will cease to be Pollyannas, blinded to the existence of realities, and will learn that life goes hand in hand with responsibilities. (4) Through their repeated utilization of the facts and tools of subjects other than English, the projects give many opportunities for correlation of high school subjects, especially of art, typewriting, Latin, Greek, history, manual training, and geography. (5) Students are encouraged to think about the

⁶¹Rasar, op. cit., p. 19.

years after high school, and their responsibility in planning to live them adequately. Upon being encouraged to discuss their life work and interests in vocations with their parents, they are led to think in practical terms of required preparations for such plans, of the demands of college entrance, and of other allied problems so vital to high school youth.⁶²

Several of the criteria are relevant in this instance. The English curriculum today is regarded as a body of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences and activities (1). The school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities related to bodies of subject matter (2). The total curriculum of the modern progressive schools is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes what it can when and as it can (3). Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, and experiential English curricula (6). An effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom (7). English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum (19). There is at present a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type or theme of literature may

⁶²Ibid., p. 20.

be emphasized (35). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (37).

The literature classes may be organized on the same basis as the study clubs of our community. Pupils will be expected to write essays or prepare talks on the various phases of the work. If a child can write an essay and read it well, he makes progress. But if he prepares for a talk, he will put forth a greater effort to have a ready use of his material as well as a good way of telling the listeners what he has learned. These reports should always be given from the front of the room. This will function in almost every class in the school. It will demand the attention of the teacher. But our business is to train boys and girls and not to cover a given course of study.⁶³

Criterion (8) asserts that to be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects. According to criterion (12), emphasis in oral English is being shifted from such formal types of speech as oratory, elocution, and forensics to instruction in informal, everyday speech situations such as conversation, informal speech-making, discussion, social courtesies, oral appraisal of newspapers, books, magazines, movies, and radio. Criterion (7) states that pupils should be given fully as much instruction and practice in oral as in written composition.

It is difficult to prepare lessons which will provide for the individual worker a thorough searching of his experience and an enriching of that experience in preparation for writing a theme. It is the task of the teacher to formulate for every pupil a course

⁶³Boley, op. cit., p. 28.

of suitable experiences in literature -- a tour designed to guide him through those areas of literature which promise to give him or rather to open up to him rich and diversified experiences. And these experiences for every boy and girl should have the full flavor and the high values of life experiences. The students, according to their abilities, are to be led into and through all the literary situations that occur frequently, so that they may acquire some measure of interest and skill in dealing with literature that is needed in modern life.⁶⁴

Criterion (11), having to do with the shift in emphasis from the "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations, is applicable here, as is that portion of criterion (9) having reference to the development of appreciation of literature. Criterion (44) states that a present trend is toward the correlation of literature and composition. Pupils are led to discover that normal reading provides adequate occasions for practice in writing and speaking.

The high school course in literature too seldom begins with themes or subjects which are taken from current life, although that is exactly where all courses should begin. If the course begins with sports, popular science, or something else readily recognizable as the pupils' interest, it is highly possible that any pupil can be led not only to an interest in other things that are going on about him, but also to an interest in literary masterpieces produced in the past.

⁶⁴Pollok, op. cit., p. 17.

Once interest has been aroused by means of current reading and by the pupil's efforts through his own interests, the interest can be easily widened to embrace every phase of modern life. Now the pupil will likely develop a love of reading to acquaint himself with the contemporary scene, and will look upon it as a means of communication with other human beings, and not as a pedantic assignment. Contemporary interests can be pointed toward similar or identical interests in the past, and before he knows it the pupil may find himself reading past literature as avidly as present.⁶⁵ Applicable here are criteria (6, 37) having to do with the role of pupils' interests in the English curriculum; criterion (14), which refers to the function of individual differences in interest and ability; criterion (18), having to do with lifelike, purposeful activities; criterion (34), which deals with literature as supplementary material in life and classroom experiences; criterion (36), which states that in the more progressive schools, the entire English program is tending toward reading that has a social aim; and criterion (42), which relates to the use of newspapers and magazines in the English class.

They Required reading, as was practiced in former days -- and even today by some teachers -- made very little allowance for individual taste, turned the class into a factory; and the result, in the main, was a thorough dislike, on the part of the pupils, for the books which had been forced upon them. Of

⁶⁵Ottis Vaughan Koen, "Plan for a High School Reading Course," Texas Outlook, XIX (July, 1935), 36.

course, the teacher must help cultivate the reading tastes of pupils; but in this cultivation there is a type or several types of reading which are distinctly pleasurable.⁶⁶

These types can be utilized as bases for units; but every unit should include some functional use of various types of literature, some of which the pupil may not enjoy, in an effort to cultivate wider understandings and appreciations. Certain criteria (6, 14, 16, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45) have meaning in relation to the principles mentioned in the above quotation.

Abundant evidence exists to support the surprising statement that the students who have been trained in a meticulous analysis of a few selected classics almost invariably fail to achieve as much success in college English as do those with a breadth of literary experience which has resulted from higher standards of appreciation and an ability to approach intelligently, broadmindedly, and inquisitively that body of literature with which they are still to become acquainted. If all this be true, then "teachers of English must create, somehow, in the pupils a desire to do extensive reading, freely, if they expect to produce pupils with a lively concern for continued good reading under their own direction."⁶⁷ This paragraph is in keeping with criterion (11), which has to do with the

⁶⁶Rasar, op. cit., p. 19.

⁶⁷Ibid.

tendency away from the "classics" and toward a program of abundant reading for pleasure designed around the pupils' interests and appreciations.

At this point it seems appropriate to enter into a brief discussion of a procedure which has been referred to previously -- free reading. The fundamental objective of free reading -- to teach the pupil to learn to like to read -- can be attained only when every pupil in the class reads for the sole reason that it is his own desire to do so. The activity of free reading, its motivation, and its objective become interdependent phases of the pupil's appreciation of the act of reading. In recognition of the value of intrinsic motivation in learning, the teacher of free reading teaches the pupil to read by first leading, not driving, him to like to read. By making the pupil's experiences and associations with reading pleasant, she is enabled to do this.⁶⁸ Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively (29). Literature should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should be taught purposefully as an integral part of the pupil's life (38). Teachers should be concerned about teaching their pupils to read both for exact information and for sheer enjoyment (39). Pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves

⁶⁸Well Cramer LaGrone, "Free Reading," Texas Outlook, XXI (June, 1937), 19.

what they will read (40). The teaching of literature should be based upon the conception that each pupil should be given experiences in reading that have intrinsic value for him now (41).

Part The setup in free reading is briefly this: the reading room for each reading class contains many books and other reading materials of various kinds and of various levels of reading difficulty. In this way free reading attempts to adapt its materials to individual differences in interests and in reading abilities. In the free reading period the pupils are allowed a free choice as to what they read; they do not study, or read orally, or do reference reading, or perform any work-type activity; free reading is intended to be without a work element. There is none of the ritual of the traditional classroom -- no themes, no book reports, no definite reading assignments, no formal vocabulary drills, and no tests except such objective standardized tests as may be a part of the school's testing program.

Free reading does not mean setting aside a period in the school program wherein children are required to read assignments in history one day, in English another, and to read out of reading textbooks the rest of the time. Neither does it mean a reading class in which the teacher assigns stories in textbooks for four days and allows the pupil to choose his own story on the fifth day. Nor does it consist of the privilege to check out books from a central library after school. Such policies are not equivalent to, nor a substitute for, free reading.

Free reading is a procedure which may incorporate all of the techniques of diagnostic and remedial teaching, and at the same time, tends to prevent the development of further reading problems, so many of which have resulted from a lack of pupil motivation accompanying the school's failure to adjust the various aspects of its program to the individual needs of the pupil.⁶⁹

The English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own

⁶⁹Ibid.

rate of progress (16). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (6, 37). Pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves what they will read (40).

In a report prepared a few years ago by the Committee on Uniform English Requirements for College Entrance in the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, the recommendation was made that the reading of no single classic be required of all members of any class. Instead, this group of eminent educators took a definite stand for breadth in reading. High school English teachers were exhorted to impress upon their pupils the fact that there have been other notable English dramatists besides Shakespeare, and that great poets have lived and died since Tennyson.⁷⁰ This action is in direct conformity with criterion (11), which concerns the fact that emphasis is being transferred from the "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure based upon the pupils' interests and appreciations.

After having conducted several detailed experiments in free reading among many classes of pupils enrolled in secondary schools, one Texas teacher arrived at three significant conclusions regarding free reading, to wit:

- (1) that free reading is a very effective technique in adapting reading to individual differences in terms of interests and abilities;
- (2) that free reading is a very valuable procedure in leading pupils

⁷⁰Rasar, op. cit., p. 19.

to like to read and in bringing about a consequent better social adjustment to the school program; and (3) that free reading is an effective activity in the . . . high school in bringing about marked progress in reading.⁷¹

A few of the criteria are applicable to these conclusions relating to the function of free reading. All of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum (5). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (6, 37). Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively (29).

A university professor asserts that the pupil "should be encouraged to read ten books to every one that is hanged, drawn, and quartered in the classroom. It is better for him to read and enjoy a dozen of Shakespeare's plays than it is to tear one or two to shreds."⁷² Here again the reference is obviously to the criterion (11) which has to do with a shift of emphasis from the "classics" to reading for pleasure.

For a month a junior high school teacher struggled along with a class of twenty pupils, about half of whom were doing extremely unsatisfactory work, apparently because of inability to read. Standardized reading tests disclosed the fact that nine of the twenty pupils ranked more than

⁷¹LaGrone, op. cit., p. 21.

⁷²Clark, op. cit., p. 13.

two grades below their grade classification in reading ability. The teacher divided the class into two groups -- good readers and poor readers -- on the basis of the tests. The good readers were supplied with a list of forty-five books, fifteen of which they were expected to read and report on. Except for occasional oral reports, the good readers were excused from the regular reading class period, and were permitted to read at that time from their booklist. A month before school was out, the group had finished the fifteen required books; then they were free to read whatever they liked from the library. By the time school was out, they were reading eagerly from a wide range of literary interests.

The regular reading period became a class in remedial reading for the nine poor readers. At first, they were given readers and stories appropriate for lower grades. They read together and tested themselves every day; soon they began to see the results and liked the feeling of achievement. As frequently as possible, the teacher gave personal help to each one in the group. Gradually the pupils progressed to more difficult reading; they began to realize, with the teacher's help, what their reading problems were, and became determined to improve their difficulties. The teacher employed Gates' plan as described in his book, The Improvement of Reading. Three weeks before the date of promotion, the entire class was given a

standardized reading test, and now only two of the twenty pupils fell below their grade level in reading ability.

To even things up, the forty-five books from which the good readers had already read at least fifteen each were made available to the nine remedial-reading pupils during the summer vacation. Before school opened in the fall, each of these nine pupils had read and reported on at least fifteen of these books and, when school got under way, were allowed to go on to the next grade with their classmates.⁷³ Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively (29). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (37). Teachers should be concerned with teaching their pupils to read for exact information and for sheer enjoyment (39). Pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves what they will read (40).

In an effort to discover some means of increasing pupils' interest in and appreciation of reading, and to enable them to become better readers, an English teacher suggested to her class that the pupils have a library period twice a week. They were delighted, since the school schedule had never permitted such a luxury as a library period. The teacher enlisted the cooperation of the librarian, and 263 books suitable for the group were assembled

⁷³Mrs. A. V. Yeager, "A Pleasant Reading Program That Gave Results," Texas Outlook, XV (October, 1931), 70.

and made readily accessible. Within a few months the number of books had grown to over five hundred, since many additional volumes had been bought, borrowed, or donated. Besides, many reference books and magazines were available. Facilities were provided for both recreational reading and reading for information.

Each pupil had a reading chart, which was checked each day according to eye movements and other reading habits. On each chart were posted the titles of the books read. The charts were all placed on the bulletin board in the group's reading corner.

Every Friday the group had English Club day, for emphasis upon spoken English. Because of the reading program, this was often a day for giving book reports. From this activity at least two perceptible results were outstanding: (1) pupils became acquainted with a large variety of literature through hearing many stories reviewed, and many of them were inspired to broaden the field of their own reading; and (2) each pupil had opportunity to learn to speak acceptably before an audience of his fellows.

During the library period the teacher conferred with the pupils regarding their reading difficulties, and often had them read aloud to her so that she might be of more help to them.

The outcomes of this method of teaching indicate numerous special benefits to both pupils and teacher:

For the pupil it (1) creates interest, (2) does not hold fast and slow students to the same reading level, (3) affords a surplus of interesting material, (4) forms good reading habits that are so important during leisure hours, and (5) does away completely with the old stereotyped form of assigning "page so and so." The teacher (1) becomes acquainted with many new books, (2) is released from the monotony of routine teaching, (3) has a real opportunity to work with individual pupils, and (4) has the satisfaction of knowing that pupils are reading extensively and are enjoying reading.⁷⁴

Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively (29). There is at present a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type of theme of literature may be emphasized (35). Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups (37). Newspapers and magazines can play an important, interesting, and significant role in the literature program of the secondary school (42). Book reports on what has been read can easily be made interesting and profitable by the introduction of novel methods of presentation (43). Motivation for adequate English is provided by clubs and publications (69). Pupils should be given fully as much instruction and practice in oral as in written composition (70).

Correlation and Integration

When teachers of English and teachers of other subjects realize fully that English is first of all a tool to be mastered for the purpose of meeting

⁷⁴Mrs. Maurice Justice, "Library Reading Versus Reading Lessons," Texas Outlook, XXIII (January, 1939), 16.

all the pupil's real language needs in and outside of school, then effective and unstinting cooperation of all departments is much more likely to be secured.⁷⁵

Criterion (19) states that English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum.

Good English should be a matter of concern to every teacher in the school. If the English teacher is forced to fight the battle alone, without assistance or support from her colleagues in other subject-matter fields, she will never win in the struggle for good English habits. Every teacher should make it his or her business to insist upon correct English every time the pupil opens his mouth or sets his pen to paper. This is the only way to inculcate good English habits, to make correct language functional. Lapses in usage are as bad in the science or the arithmetic class as in the English class. They are fatal to the aims of English. James asserts that one drop of the ball on which a girl is winding thread will unwind more than she can wind back again in many turns. The help of every teacher in the school must be enlisted in the effort to make English functional.⁷⁶ An examination reveals that several criteria are applicable at this point. An effective program of school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English

⁷⁵Eason, op. cit., p. 26.

⁷⁶Paschal, op. cit., p. 24.

classroom (7). English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum (19). Language teaching should be made applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used (20). English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom (21). Functional grammar is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use (27). Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group (67). In its new concept, oral composition is accurate and, if possible, effective expression arising from the demands of everyday life (71).

"Teaching mastery of English as a tool is the serious business of the English classroom."⁷⁷ The student who has had practical courses in English knows how to carry out instructions and to plan all of his work; he can plan and execute a laboratory experiment and write it up correctly; he knows how to read his mathematics problems understandingly, how to learn the idiom and structure of a foreign language, how to select and evaluate his reading, how to set forth his views and defend them. Such training may be applied in many situations in life, since it is readily transferable to meet given needs. The same criteria (7, 19, 20, 21, 27, 67, 71) mentioned in the preceding paragraph are also applicable here.

⁷⁷Brewer, op. cit., p. 10.

Much good work in oral English is now done in every department of the modern, progressive high school. History teachers, for instance, assign subjects, usually broad in scope, or permit pupils to select their own topics, on which the pupils make oral reports. The training in organization of thought and in the practice of public speaking that goes along with exercises of this kind is of great value. In social-studies classes, reports on current events are also of much benefit in the improvement of oral English, as are reports in science classes on inventions and scientific discoveries. Similar values in written English are fostered in other subject-matter fields in which written reports or term papers or projects are required.⁷⁸ In addition to the seven criteria (7, 19, 20, 21, 27, 67, 71) mentioned above, which are applicable here also, criterion (70) should be considered in its relationship at this point. It states that pupils should be given fully as much instruction in oral as in written composition.

Somewhat in summary of the material on correlation and integration, the following excerpt is taken from an article written by a Texas teacher who conducts classes in English and in civics:

Particularly fortunate have I been to present a course in civics open to high school seniors and juniors, for in this manner I am able to find pupil interests of a practical nature, which I may utilize

⁷⁸Paschal, op. cit., p. 24.

in the English work. Indeed, my contention is that English must include good citizenship, and civics must embrace good English. Through the work common to both classes comes the information regarding and practice in parliamentary procedure, which leads a pupil to see that he must subordinate the expression of his own ideas to the good of the body as a whole. Also, he sees that he is doing those things which men and women in his city council, his state legislature, and his federal congress do in their public meetings. He learns that he must express reasons for his opinions and express them clearly, or his classmates will immediately call his hand and present proof to show that his statements were worth nothing. He learns that he has a definite role in his government -- local and state, that he must read consistently and understandingly regarding public affairs, and that he must express himself clearly regarding weaknesses as well as strong points in a democratic commonwealth. Surely these are aims for the English pupils and surely they are not unattainable in a practical fashion.⁷⁹

Summary

A summary of the extent to which the seventy-one criteria introduced in the second chapter of this study were found to be applicable to procedures and philosophies in the teaching of English in the secondary schools of Texas, the present section will undertake to present the relationship in the clearest manner possible; that is, to show the number of times practices in the Texas schools were found to be conformable to the various criteria. Two of the criteria were utilized twenty times each in the analysis of material on procedures in secondary schools of Texas as reported in The Texas Outlook, 1925-1940. Eight of the seventy-one criteria were discovered to be inapplicable

⁷⁹Estill, op. cit., p. 20.

in this study. In the following list it is proposed to introduce the criteria in the order of their descent from the most frequently conformable to the least frequently conformable. The criteria are given numbers consistent with those used on pages 60-69 of this thesis. The numbers in parentheses throughout the following list refer to the number of times the various criteria were found to be applicable to procedures and philosophies in the teaching of English in Texas secondary schools.

Criterion 7 (20). -- An effective program in school English must make adequate provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities into actual practice in worthwhile activities beyond the confines of the English classroom.

Criterion 9 (20). -- The four fundamental aims of English in the secondary school may be summarized as follows: (1) knowledge and appreciation of literature, (2) ability to write, (3) ability to speak, and (4) ability to think.

Criterion 6 (17). -- Pupils' interests should be recognized and capitalized upon in the planning of worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curricula.

Criterion 27 (17). -- Functional grammar is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use.

Criterion 21 (16). -- English must be taught as a practical thing that is worth using at all times and not merely in the English classroom.

Criterion 12 (14). -- In oral English, emphasis is being shifted from such formal types of speech as oratory, elocution, and forensics to instruction in informal, everyday speech situations such as conversations, informal speech-making, discussion, social courtesies, oral appraisal of newspapers, magazines, books, movies, and radio.

Criterion 18 (14). -- The most important thing in any English class is to set up a series of lifelike, purposive activities so that language usage may function naturally and meaningfully.

Criterion 63 (14). -- Self-expression includes all sorts of writing or speaking involving personal elements -- narratives, descriptions, conversations, arguments, some varieties of exposition, friendly letters, and so on.

Criterion 5 (13). -- All of the processes which expand and develop mental and social life -- in short, all the elements of a total education -- must be considered as fundamental phases of the English curriculum.

Criterion 19 (13). -- English can profitably be correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum.

Criterion 20 (13). -- Language teaching should be made applicable to all of the situations of life in which words are used.

Criterion 26 (13). -- Functional grammar is incidental to and instrumental in the improvement of sentences and of

general speaking and writing ability, but in no sense is it accidental or haphazard.

Criterion 67 (13). -- Creative expression is a means of sharing experiences with an interested group.

Criterion 37 (12). -- Reading should be adapted to the abilities and interests of individuals and groups.

Criterion 11 (11). -- In literature, emphasis is being transferred from a detailed study of certain "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure in keeping with the pupils' interests and appreciations.

Criterion 64 (11). -- The aim for written composition and for oral composition is fundamentally the same: the expression of ideas with clarity and with some degree of effectiveness.

Criterion 69 (11). -- Progressive instructional methods are promoting, in the modern school, natural writing and speaking: real communications are sent through the mail, pupils assist one another in writing and speaking, provision is made for cooperative group work, and motivation for adequate English is provided by clubs and publications.

Criterion 8 (11). -- To be most effective, the three chief elements of English study -- reading, speaking, and writing -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects.

Criterion 4 (10). -- The function of English in the experience program of the school is obvious: (1) to provide

adequate means of communication (speaking, writing, listening, and reading) such as are necessary in experiencing various types of intercourse with other persons, and (2) to provide indirect (vicarious) experiences in situations in which direct (actual) experiences are impossible or undesirable.

Criterion 10 (10). -- Today the present trend in composition is a shift of emphasis from mechanics to clear thinking and creativeness.

Criterion 29 (10). -- Pupils should be taught to read understandingly, rapidly, and effectively.

Criterion 14 (9). -- Any effective program in English, whether in literature, grammar, or composition, must give consideration to individual differences in interest and ability.

Criterion 16 (9). -- The English classroom can profitably be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress.

Criterion 22 (9). -- In the more progressive schools, grammar is being made practical and functional for everyone.

Criterion 39 (9). -- Teachers should be concerned about teaching their pupils to read both for exact information and for sheer enjoyment.

Criterion 17 (8). -- In any class in English, even in one conducted solely as a series of experience activities, it is necessary to have practice periods for the acquisition

of proficiency in using many of the forms of organized speech and writing. These periods of practice should be closely related to the occasions when the particular factors involved are to be used in functional situations.

Criterion 24 (8). -- Conventional theme-writing is definitely on the decline in modern English classrooms.

Criterion 34 (8). -- Literature is most meaningful when it is utilized as supplementary material to actual life and classroom experiences.

Criterion 38 (8). -- Literature should be thought of in terms of life experiences, and should be taught purposefully as an integral part of the pupil's life.

Criterion 41 (8). -- The teaching of literature should be based upon the conception that each pupil should be given experiences in reading that have intrinsic value for him now.

Criterion 65 (8). -- The best subjects for both written and oral composition come from the pupils' real, imagined, or vicarious experiences.

Criterion 70 (8). -- Pupils should be given fully as much instruction and practice in oral as in written composition.

Criterion 2 (7). -- The school must in some way manage to bring about a functional combination of the dynamic experiences of active life and the intellectual activities related to bodies of subject matter.

Criterion 25 (7). -- The teaching of skills must be

persistent, distributed, incidental, and continuously related to the social situations in which they function as tools.

Criterion 42 (7). -- Newspapers and magazines can play an important, interesting, and significant role in the literature program of the secondary school.

Criterion 62 (7). -- Themes are pieces of writing arising from the need for self-expression and communication.

Criterion 3 (6). -- The total curriculum of the modern progressive schools is one of experience, to which each subject-matter field contributes what it can when and as it can.

Criterion 33 (6). -- Literature is a powerful means of vicarious experience.

Criterion 66 (6). -- Creative expression is differentiated from other forms of composition by the absence of an external or utilitarian motive, by the fact that it is done primarily for its own sake, and proceeds from experiences which are recognized as possessing intrinsic value rather than "practical" value.

Criterion 71 (6). -- In its new concept, oral composition is accurate and, if possible, effective expression arising from the demands of everyday life.

Criterion 31 (5). -- Pupils should in some way be made conscious of their responsibility for spelling correctly all the words in their written work.

Criterion 1 (4). -- The English curriculum today is regarded as a body of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences and activities.

Criterion 23 (4). -- Formal grammar is becoming an oddity instead of a commonplace.

Criterion 32 (4). -- Pupils should form lists of misspelled words and study them until they can spell all of the words correctly.

Criterion 40 (4). -- Pupils should frequently have the valuable experience of choosing for themselves what they will read.

Criterion 68 (4). -- Errors in written work should be pointed out by the teacher and corrected by the pupil.

Criterion 28 (3). -- Pupils should be made dictionary-conscious.

Criterion 35 (3). -- There is at present a steady trend toward wide reading based upon the unit method, in which type or theme of literature may be emphasized.

Criterion 43 (3). -- Book reports on what has been read can easily be made interesting and profitable by the introduction of novel methods of presentation.

Criterion 44 (3). -- A present trend is toward the correlation of literature and composition. Pupils are led to discover that normal reading provides adequate occasions for practice in writing and speaking.

Criterion 45 (3). -- The teacher should plan a careful

introduction to any piece of literature before the class sets in to study it. She should use various methods for motivating their interest in the work.

Criterion 13 (2). -- The English teacher, in beginning her work with any class, should first find out what the pupils know and do not know, and then proceed to build her program of instruction and her calendar of activities on the basis of the knowledge and interests of the class members.

Criterion 15 (2). -- The curriculum is a program of meaningful activities, never final and always flexible.

Criterion 30 (2). -- Spelling should be taught throughout the four years of high school -- directly in the first two years and indirectly in the third and fourth years.

Criterion 46 (2). -- Biography can be interesting and valuable if it is properly motivated in connection with pupil interests and activities.

Criterion 36 (1). -- In the more progressive schools the entire English program is slowly tending toward reading that has a social aim.

Criterion 48 (1). -- Often a deeper appreciation of poetry can be fostered if the pupils are encouraged to write original poetry along with their study of famous poetic works.

Criterion 49 (1). -- Class cooperation in the writing of poems is often worthwhile in developing appreciation of

poetry. Constructive criticism by classmates and by the teacher should be given both for group and individual poetic efforts.

Criterion 53 (1). -- Poems come to life for pupils if they can be made to see their connection with commonplace human experiences. Class discussions regarding the meaning of a poem and its application to everyday situations and emotions often result in rich learnings.

Criterion 55 (1). -- All drama should be taught from the acting point of view; that is, pupils should visualize it, trying to think of it as if it were before them on the stage.

Criterion 56 (1). -- Dramatization of outstanding scenes from a play, or of the whole play itself, is a splendid way of creating interest in and appreciation of drama.

Criterion 57 (1). -- The interrelationship of drama and real life should be made clear to all pupils. With a little thought and discussion, characters can be transformed into real people and events can take on added significance.

Criterion 61 (1). -- The radio and recordings possess many possibilities in the teaching of drama and of language.

Criterion 47 (0). -- Widespread dislike of poetry on the part of pupils is usually due to their inability to understand it. The teacher can aid materially in developing an understanding and a liking for poetry.

Criterion 50 (0). -- Memorization should be used sparingly.

Criterion 51 (O). -- Pupils should be encouraged to read poetry orally.

Criterion 52 (O). -- Teachers should supply their pupils with poems that they can read, visualize, emotionally respond to, and consequently get pleasure from.

Criterion 54 (O). -- Pupils should be taught to read poetry in the light of their own experiences -- to re-create for themselves the experiences recounted in the poem.

Criterion 58 (O). -- Comprehensive study questions, to be used as the class proceeds in its reading of the play, will make a worthwhile contribution to the pupils' understanding of and interest in the drama itself.

Criterion 59 (O). -- Wholesome movies should be utilized by English teachers in the development of character, of correct grammar, of ability to speak clearly and effectively and to appreciate the drama.

Criterion 60 (O). -- When possible, books and their movie versions should be experienced concurrently by pupils.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

An examination of the data which comprise this study points out justification for the following conclusions:

1. To be effective, a program of school English must carry literary and linguistic activities beyond the confines of the English classroom and into every phase of the school work. Teachers should strive to give pupils an appreciation of the fact that correct English is designed for use at all times in all of life's activities and situations.

2. The interests and abilities of the individual pupils should be recognized and capitalized upon in planning and executing a worthwhile, meaningful, experiential English curriculum.

3. Formal grammar is definitely on its way out of the school program, and should be sped on its way. Functional grammar, which is taking its place, is certain to be practical, for it is learned not merely for use but in use.

4. Oral English should be given fully as much emphasis as written English. In oral English the trend is away from

formal types of speech and toward informal, everyday speech situations.

5. English can be profitably correlated and integrated with other subject-matter fields in the curriculum, and at all times should be so utilized.

6. In literature, emphasis is being transferred from a detailed study of certain "classics" to a program of abundant reading for pleasure in accordance with the pupils' interests and appreciations.

7. Reading, speaking, and writing -- the three primary elements of English study -- should all go along concurrently in classroom procedures and projects.

8. The English classroom can, with profit, be transformed into a laboratory or a workshop where each pupil works at his own rate of progress upon projects that are closely related to his own interests and abilities.

9. Drill and practice, in reasonable quantities, are necessary in learning the fundamentals of grammar; but care must be taken that all drill is functional and practical.

10. If the articles appearing in The Texas Outlook can be accepted as representative of what is being done in the secondary schools of this state, the conclusion is warranted that procedures and philosophies in the teaching of English in Texas high schools conform acceptably and rather closely, in the main, to the standards formulated by authorities in the field of English teaching.

11. Texas secondary schools are particularly strong in conforming to those criteria having to do with the practical value of English in all school and out-of-school activities, with the substitution of functional grammar for formal grammar, with meaningful composition work growing out of the pupils' interests, experiences, and abilities, with the integration and correlation of English with work in the other subject-matter fields, and with the present trend toward free reading and a minimum of emphasis upon the "classics."

12. Articles in The Texas Outlook indicate that English teachers in Texas high schools are alert in their efforts to motivate worthwhile activities involving practice in reading and in oral and written composition.

13. The weakest phases of the English program in Texas high schools are those dealing with the study of poetry and drama. Few articles were found on these topics, and few indeed were the criteria which were applicable in these instances.

Recommendations

On the basis of the data assembled for this study, the writer feels adequately supported in suggesting the following recommendations for the consideration of English teachers in Texas secondary schools:

1. Too great an effort cannot be expended in making all the work in the field of English practical, meaningful,

functional, and interesting. Individual differences should be recognized, and the English program should be flexible enough to take into consideration the abilities, interests, and needs of each individual pupil.

2. There is always room for a larger amount of integration and correlation of English with other studies. / The English teacher should be ever on the alert to discover new opportunities for cooperative effort in causing English to function meaningfully throughout all the facets of the pupil's school experience.

3. More emphasis should, in the light of experimentation, be given to oral and written composition which has a meaning to the pupil and grows out of his needs, interests, and experiences. Fully as much time should be given to oral composition as to written work. Both should be entirely creative.

4. The "classics" should be pushed still farther into the background. By no means should they be discarded altogether, but there is ample evidence to recommend that fully as much emphasis should be given to contemporary literature as to classical writings.

5. Since many teachers still persist in presenting drama and poetry in the traditional, uninteresting manner, it is suggested that every teacher discover new ways of bringing these rich studies to the attention and appreciation of

the pupil. Opportunities for meaningful experiences in these fields are virtually unlimited.

6. English should be intimately woven into the fabric of the pupil's life experiences to enable him to engage in correct usage at all times and to cultivate lasting appreciation for all that is meaningful and worthwhile in literature, language, and life.

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