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A READING PROGRAM AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A STANDARD TWO-SEMESTER FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF READING IN A STANDARD TWO-SEMESTER FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE IS EMPHASIZED IN A DISCUSSION OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS, PURPOSES, ORGANIZATION, RESEARCH, AND METHODOLOGY OF THE COLLEGE FRESHMAN ENGLISH PROGRAM. INCLUDED IN THE DISCUSSION ARE AN EXAMINATION OF WHAT ENTERING FRESHMEN SHOULD KNOW TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE ENGLISH, A DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER ROLE, SOME CRITICISMS OF COURSES CURRENTLY OFFERED IN MANY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COURSE CONTENT, SEQUENCE, METHODS, AND MATERIALS IN ORDER TO MORE EFFECTIVELY COMBINE RHETORIC AND READING INTO A GOOD FRESHMAN PROGRAM. PERTINENT FINDINGS FROM THE PROJECT ENGLISH STUDIES ARE REPORTED. REFERENCES ARE GIVEN. (LS)

A READING PROGRAM AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A STANDARD TWO-SEMESTER FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE

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No myth exists about the dilemma of the entering college freshman, for by the force of numbers alone, he has, even according to his own voice of protest, become a statistic. Thought by his first-year college instructors, who themselves are often first-year graduate assistants willing to exhibit erudite attacks of "Ph. D. itis," to be victimized by secondary school systems, the freshman is shuffled often to higher learning with usual stereotyped admonitions, such as "Learn your basics well, especially your English; you'll use that all of your life." Seldom is any mention made of reading, even though the freshman and his parents may have had trouble reading and interpreting the college catalog. No cautious note is given about reading, even though in assimilating the varied subject matter of his chosen curriculum, the majority of the freshman's time will be spent in reading--both in class and out of class. Perhaps it is concluded that reading--like morality--is to be learned in high school. Progression or refinement is to be expected but is not necessarily to be desired.

Misconceptions--not myths--do exist about a university's freshman English program, which is often the repository of unsolved academic and administrative articulation problems. Yet lest this paper be but a series of functional digressions, its focus will be on reading. Basic concepts, purposes, organization, methodology, and research: these problems as they pertain to the college freshman English program and particularly to the needed integration of and emphasis on reading in the program will be appraised. The role of the teacher

of freshman English will be noted, for it is this teacher who continues the classroom teaching of reading at the college and university level.

When Sir Francis Bacon suggested in his well-known essay Of Studies that "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man," he not only gave credence to a practiced Renaissance concept but also enunciated a traditionalist point of view that even today governs the objectives of most high school English curricula and of many freshman English programs. Within the past fifteen years, a number of high school-college articulation committees have been formed under the sponsorship and guidance of state departments of education, universities and colleges, and various professional societies. The approaches to articulation problems have been diverse; however, there is some general agreement on what the incoming freshman student should know if he is to succeed in a freshman English program.[1] A glance at these areas of agreement will show an ascendant emphasis on reading.

Essentially, the high school student entering a college English program should be able to read, to think, to understand, and to write. These aims should have been instilled and fostered in the secondary school. It is assumed that the student has read a number of literary works--usually masterpieces--in their original or revised versions; that he has read examples of the major types of literature; that he has learned the utility value of reading. The entering student should be able to think logically so that he might single out major ideas and note supporting minor ideas in time-worn and contemporary prose. He

[1]See, for example, The Challenge of Curricular Change (New York, 1966). This newly published volume contains the papers of the Colloquium of the Challenge of Curricular Change, which was held at Skytop, Pennsylvania, in April, 1965, under the sponsorship of the College Entrance Examination Board and the National Association of Secondary-School Principals. See also "What the Colleges Expect," English Journal, LI (1962), 85-93. Both articles are reports of the NCTE Committee on High School-College Articulation.

should be able to understand the literary-historical relationships of instructor-chosen prose and poetry and as well be able to detect the structure of and author's point of view in prose and poetry. He should be able to identify accepted literary types and genres and should have but little difficulty in defining terms used in critical analysis. He should be able to write--not "creatively" put words on paper--what rhetoricians usually call "four forms of discourse": description, exposition, narration, and persuasion. To these forms may be added analysis. Brevity of thought, step-by-step planning, and mechanics are to be stressed in his writing. Methods of instruction may have changed, but what is expected of the neophyte English student has not changed.[2]

It should be remembered that this paper deals with the "standard two-semester freshman English course." The non-standard quality of the college English program and the diversity of aims of the program have led at least one critic, Warner G. Rice, to suggest that freshman English be abolished.[3] The wisdom of such a step is doubtful, but criticism of many of the philosophies and notions concerning freshman English is in a large measure justified.

At most universitites, freshman English is considered to be a "service" course, based primarily on the concept that English is a skill usable in all courses. The service function is emphasized even further where certain university departments have special freshman English courses limited to enrollment

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[2]Robert S. Hunting, "What We Do Not Expect from High School Graduates," English Journal, XLVII (1958), 145-147; G. R. Carlsen, "From High School into College," English Journal, XLV (1956), 400-405; Alfred R. Grommon, "Coordinating Composition in High School and College," English Journal, XLVIII (1959), 127-131; "An Articulated English Program: A Hypothesis to Test," PMLA, LXXIV (1959), 13-19; Oscar J. Campbell, The Teaching of College English (New York, 1934), pp. 19-33; Herman A Estrin, "Articulation of College and High School English," Improving College and University Teaching, X (1962), 181-182.

[3]Warner G. Rice, "A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English as It Is Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum," College English, XXI (1960), 361-367.

by their majors alone, as, for example, a course entitled, "Freshman English for Engineers." When the service aim of freshman English is carried out, many important parts of the program--reading is a most appropriate example--cannot be taught for their own sakes but must be taught for the sake of use. Administrative use of and belief in initial freshman testing is a second university fallacy, for placement in remedial, "average," or advanced English sections is predicated on machine scores and not on recommendations. Not all fault can be laid to university administrators; the English faculty often needs to update its own philosophies.

University freshman English courses are, in one sense, remedial, for it is maintained that review should take up a third or more of the first semester. This approach, which emphasizes repetition, may be limited to functional grammar and the mechanics of writing. Often, however, the reading program is repetitious, and students who in the spring of the year were reading and analyzing Aristotle's Poetics, Shakespeare's Hamlet, and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter find that they are re-reading and re-analyzing the same works in the fall of the year, the only changes being in classrooms and university-labeled status. Just as the abilities and knowledge of the high school graduate are often ignored, so also are the abilities and knowledge of their freshman English instructors disregarded. Instructors teach according to a syllabus, which often may be so detailed as to provide a not-to-be-violated guide on what to teach and lengthy discussions on units of instruction, books that must be read, and techniques that must be followed in the presentation of material. In this department-imposed regimentation lies a paradox: the program, in itself an example of improvisation and invention, was originated and amended numerous times so that it would be flexible enough to encompass and to challenge almost every student on the campus. Flexibility and challenge in the freshman English

program are vital, just as continuity of instruction and planned incremental sequence of instruction are essential. Deficiencies in the program have been pointed out time and again,[4] and sincere attempts have been made to provide answers for primary and subsidiary problems of high school-college articulation;[5] yet decisions for uniform, meaningful changes do not appear forthcoming. Let us now examine the freshman English program as it is commonly presented.

Although departmental chairmen and directors of freshman English programs admit to trying a variety of approaches in attempting to solve the freshman English problem, the usual first-year, two-semester English course is a combination of rhetoric and reading. In the first semester the student uses a handbook and an essay collection. Emphasis is primarily on composition and a relearning of writing principles. A workbook is often used, and theme writing may be based on uniform, semi-imaginative topics destined to test the student's ability to use verbs properly or to recognize correct subject-verb agreement. Generally, however, a collection of essays is used as the basis for theme topics.

It would be supposed that if writing were stressed in the first semester, reading, or a study of literature, would be stressed in the second semester. This is not always the case. Reading of essays continues, and the student purchases an anthology of literary selections to peruse so that he might develop some sort of critical sense. His reading is also supposed to expose him to ideas that he might use in his themes, in class discussions, or in other classes. Yet, here the need for utility again becomes apparent, and precise, sequential reading may be sublimated to any or all of the following instructional units:

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[4]See, for example, Albert R. Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College (New York, 1963).

[5]Of interest are "Resolutions Adopted at a Seminar of English Department Chairmen Held at Allerton Park, December 2-4, 1962," College English, XXIV (1963), 473-475, and a report on the aftermath found in James R. Squire, "The Profession Faces the Future: Developments Since Allerton Park," College English, XXVI (1964), 38-42.

the use of the library; the techniques of and the writing of a non-literary or a literary research paper; the writing of various types of letters; preparation for and the taking of examinations; the preparation and use of extended outlines; the presentation of oral reports.

Admittedly there may be wide variation in the first-year English program. At the small, community-supported junior college, the student may spend his entire freshman year working on drill, usage, spelling, and composition, with little emphasis on reading. It is believed that if the student is able to write with some degree of correctness, he will not disgrace himself at a larger university, where he will be treated to the literary experience. In contrast, at the large university, the first year of English may be a sort of rhetoric-literature, community-focused freshman orientation to the campus or an initiation in general semantics. Yet these programs, like honors programs, are not widespread.

As diverse as the programs themselves are the reading materials available for freshman English programs. Like the programs, too much may be attempted. Now largely out of vogue are heavy three-in-one textbooks which contain a handbook, several chapters on rhetoric, and general readings. A number of thick anthologies have survived three or more editions primarily because not all English faculty members can find something critically wrong with the range of selections found in a comprehensive anthology. It is interesting to note the increasing use of the word reader in hard-cover titles intended exclusively for freshman use.[6] Subject matter or theme may be the principle of selection for unified collections of readings that magnify student problems or interests. Controlled research anthologies are delving more into student and immediate

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[6]Note Arthur M. Eastman et al., eds., The Norton Reader (New York, 1965); Charles Muscatine and Marlene Griffith, eds., The Borzoi College Reader (New York, 1966); Jerome W. Archer and Joseph Schwartz, eds., A Reader for Writers, 2nd ed. (New York, 1966).

campus problems;[7] however, a variety of titles applicable to literary and social topics may still be found in the guided research series of most publishers. Prepared for even more limited but meaningful appeal are specialized paperbacks on, for example, semantics or language.[8]

The standard two-semester freshman English course should be re-organized so that a reading program which emphasizes both extensive reading and a study of literature is given primary attention. The freshman level, two-semester English course has been tinkered with too long; it is to be doubted that the trend toward further experimentation should be forcefully pursued. Television, teaching machines, programed instruction, increasing or decreasing class size, selectivity in sectioning classes, the use of department-trained readers, new and more expansive methods of individual and group testing: all appear to merit attention in a statistics-oriented society. Yet experimentation does not imply excellence and, indeed, may divert interest from what is of most importance: subject matter. Specifically pertinent to the standard two-semester freshman English program, it is requisite that subject matter be defined and that the focus of subject matter be determined.

These objectives can be realized through a two-semester course that is directed toward reading and the study of literature both in methodology and in practice. The initial half of the first semester should be devoted to composition, not to a re-study of grammar, mechanics, and fundamentals, for such reviewing is little more than a duplication of secondary-school English. Composition, too, is not merely to be a re-teaching. It would be difficult to

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[7]Compare Arthur Waldhorn and Hilda K. Waldhorn, eds., The Rite of Becoming: Stories and Studies of Adolescence (Cleveland, 1966) with Christopher G. Katope and Paul G. Zolbrod, eds., Beyond Berkeley: A Sourcebook in Student Values (Cleveland, 1966).

[8]See Louis B. Salomon, Semantics and Common Sense (New York, 1966) or Alfred M. Bork, ed., Science and Language: Selected Essays (Boston, 1966).

maintain that there is a natural order that can be observed in teaching composition. Yet there are several sensible, logical orders through which clear, acceptable prose may result. If an instructor concentrates on composition in the first half of the semester and does not let composition deteriorate into mere imitation of rhetorical types, he may be able to instill in students the sense of progression that they had hoped for in college.

The second half of the first semester, in which the student will begin a reading program and be introduced to literature, should also be planned so that student progression and sequence of instruction are observed. Equally important are teachability, student comprehensibility, and subject matter selectivity, a principle which often is sublimated in secondary-school programs based on saturation and diffusion. Reading in the second half of the first-semester English course, therefore, should be broken down according to four commonly accepted major literary categories. Students should read three short stories, one novel by a well-known American regional author (for example, Faulkner in the South or Hamlin Garland in the Midwest), ten American-authored poems not over one hundred lines in length (thus following Edgar Allan Poe's critical dictum), and one Shakespearean comedy. It might be noted that there is an imbalance in favor of American literature; however, the short stories may be by British, European, or non-Continental authors.

Major emphasis in the second semester of the freshman English program is to be placed on extensive reading by the student so that he might develop more fully his interpretive and critical powers. This semester should not be over-organized so that it is a survey of English or of American literature based on principles of historical organization; it should not be representative of an interdisciplinary course in which exclusive attention is given to translations of classical and medieval literature and to masterpieces of philosophy.

Instead, the second semester should be a continuation of readings illustrative of the major literary genres, a semester in which the student is exposed to a wide variety of materials and ideas so that he might realize the many-faceted dimensions of reading. The various patternal extensions of major literary types, essential literary principles, and terms peculiar to literary vocabulary are to be noted. William F. Thrall, Addison Hibbard, and C. H. Holman, A Handbook to Literature and M. H. Abrams, Glossary of Literary Terms, are excellent reading-aid guides for these purposes.

The selection of reading material should reflect a balance between classics whose literary excellence is established and contemporary writings. A Greek epic, preferably the Odyssey, one Greek tragedy, and a Shakespearean tragedy provide a unified prelude to three of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and to the first two books of Milton's Paradise Lost. The matter of poetry is covered in a reading of two poems by each of the following authors: Shelley, Keats, Poe, and Whitman. These poets, representative of the English Romantic Movement and of the American Romantic Movement, are weighed against an equal total of eight poems by T. S. Eliot and the American and English Wastelanders. The reading of four short stories by internationally recognized American authors--F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, and William Faulkner, for example--and the study of two contemporary novels, one American and one British, complete the material for the semester.

The time-worn approach to the second semester reading program would be to proceed from simple to complex. However, the choice of material is flexible enough to allow instructor manipulation of material as he sees fit. Chronological sequence is not to be emphasized; yet the competent instructor should not overlook relationships between literary works and the historical and cultural forces that spawned them. Variety and contrast in the presentation of material

should on occasion jostle the student from his day-to-day thoughts and attitudes. There may be student antipathy for certain works, and through the first two books of Paradise Lost, the student may battle as monumentally as does Satan. Yet antipathy can lead to challenge, and challenge can bring respect for a work as an example of literary excellence on its own merits alone.

Aside from those advantages touched on or implied in a reading-oriented freshman English program, there are other equally important academic gains that may be enumerated. First of all, articulation programs become meaningful, for the responsibility for teaching fundamentals of writing will lie directly with the secondary school. The master reading list for both semesters of the college program can remain sufficiently flexible so that what are often termed "bold and daring" approaches to the study of literature will not be discouraged. The act of reading would of necessity come first, not second; rhetoric would logically become the outgrowth of reading. Consequently it should be possible to eliminate such ludicrous approaches to literature as having a student read a Hemingway short story so that he might note Hemingway's use of the period.

The reading approach to freshman English also finds a rational middle ground between "bonehead" English and advanced placement English, thus making the initial year of college English a terminal program. This is an advantage that administrators assuredly favor. In an era of technology, students enrolled in science curricula may be required to complete only twelve hours of English: six hours of freshman English, a three-hour course in advanced grammar or linguistics at the junior level, and a course in technical writing at the junior or the senior level. It is well, then, that in their freshman year, students come to realize the humanizing influence of reading through reading literature for its own sake.

Freshman programs that reflect a preponderance of reading are new neither in concept nor in practice. The approaches used and the results achieved by

Harvard University Professor Reuben A. Brower in his Humanities 6, "Introduction to Literature," are well known.[9] In part, this emphasis placed on reading by private prestige universities of the East is reflected in state-supported universities of the region as well. For example, this fall the University of Pennsylvania instituted English 101, "Prose," and English 102, "Poetry," a one-year course based on the reading approach.[10] The larger problem, however, lies with the majority of universities outside of the fringe of the Ivy League, for they cannot exercise Ivy League selectivity of students.

A reading program for freshman students may be ideal in the planning phase, but the program may fail in the classroom because of ill-trained teachers. Every college administrator is aware of the money-numbers pinch at the freshman level, of the shortage of competent instructors, and of the increasing use of graduate assistants. It is not within the scope of this paper to evaluate these problems at length or to point out what is being done to solve them.[11] Dr. James R. Squire, Director of the National Study of High School English Programs, suggests that an essential weakness of secondary school literary study, which is basically an evaluation of reading, lies in teacher failure to use instructional methods that they have learned:

> Our real quarrel is with the incessant superficiality of much classroom study of literature--with, if you will, the evasion of literature

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[9] See further Reuben A. Brower, The Fields of Light (Oxford, Galaxy Books, 1962) and Reuben A. Brower and Richard Poirier, eds., In Defense of Reading (New York, 1962).

[10] "Prose and Poetry Sequence Will Replace Required Freshman Composition Courses," University of Pennsylvania English Department Newsletter, No. 2 (1966),2.

[11] New awareness of the critical college classroom teaching problem is shown by the National Council of Teachers of English, who in the spring of 1967 will publish twice a year a journal entitled Research in the Teaching of English. The publication is "designed for people regularly conducting or reading research in the teaching of English ('teaching' as broadly conceived)." See "Research in the Teaching of English," College Composition and Communication, XVII (1966), 99.

> represented in too many classrooms . . . . It does seem that some of the important approaches of modern scholarship and teaching methods which have revolutionized college teaching are not yet being widely applied in the schools.[12]

Earlier in this paper, a few suggestions were made on the classroom management of reading material. This problem should be considered further. Perhaps it may be well to examine various modern critical approaches to literature and determine the measure of success that might be achieved through the application of each approach.

Greatest promise for the reading program teacher seems to lie in the techniques employed by the New Critics, for they emphasize undisturbed scrutiny and analysis of the text itself so that its effectiveness, value, and intrinsic artistic maturity may be appraised. The many facets of the New Criticism method, especially well known to American university faculties because of the remembered work done by John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and F. O. Matthiessen, are not really new, but do represent a rebellion against earlier, more restrictive methods. Indeed, an explanation of the background of the rebellious critical concepts of the New Critics may make their dogmas more palatable to another generation of would-be scholars. Yet more important than rebellion, the methodology of the New Critics puts focus on a single reading by demanding that the work be read with care, attaches importance to a broad, individual, imaginative approach, requires a doing away with jargon and abstraction, and in total deals with literary value problems. There are disadvantages--notably a denigration of other methods and a selection of seventeenth century and contemporary material that is best tailored to the methodology of the New Critics. Nevertheless, inherent in the method is sufficient versatility, adaptability, and challenge for the classroom director of a reading program.

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[12] James R. Squire, "The National Study of High School English Programs: Implications for Colleges and Universities," College English, XXVII (1966), 619.

Other critical methods remain, but to be used in the freshman reading program, they should be modified or used with thoughtful discretion. The philological, or "genetic" approach to literature is traditional at a large number of universities. The method accents chronology, facts, sources, and relationships. Orderly pedantic presentation is to be admired, and the philological method is ego-satisfying for upper-level and graduate-level professors. For the freshman, though, the method is lecture-heavy and may create an occasion for overwhelming erudition by some faculty members. The abstract methods of the New Humanists, best represented initially by Harvard's Irving Babbitt and Princeton's Paul Elmer More, are conservative and aristocratic. Their moralism and classical temper may be commended, but not their self-determined austere ethical rationalism. The History of Ideas movement, first solidified in America by A. O. Lovejoy,[13] brings subtlety and extensive ramifications to the reader. Yet ideas are imaginative and suggest value judgments; the history of ideas requires neither. Of outgrown use is the 1930's Depression-born methodology which examined literature primarily for its social or political implications. Few graduate students in history or in English have not read Vernon Parrington's Main Currents of American Thought, 1927-1930. The methodology suggested by Carl Jung's ideas of myth and archetypes applied to literature and the practices of the Neo-Aristotelians of the University of Chicago are worth noting but not evaluating. The currently researched field of modern linguistics offers a number of possibilities, but a final evaluation of their worth cannot be made until there is more unification of linguistic views and more agreement on how to teach classroom-usable linguistic techniques to teachers.[14]

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[13] Arthur O. Lovejoy, Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948).

[14] An interesting summary may be found in Noam Chomsky, "The Current Scene in Linguistics: Present Directions," College English XXVII (1966), 587-595.

That the methods and the materials for an effective freshman reading program are available is evident. It remains for the teacher to adopt and to use them.

Heartening to English faculty members was the establishing of Project English under the sponsorship of the United States Office of Education. Annual reports of past years have divulged a number of diverse trends. The current annual report, which was published in September of this year, is no exception. This report was prepared by Michael F. Shugrue and is a précis of reports prepared by the directors of twenty-five Curriculum Study and Demonstration Centers so that the historical record of the United States Office of Education would be complete through the first month of the current year.[15] The programs sponsored by the Office of Education were of necessity dissimilar in nature, ranging from an application of traditional methods of teaching English to study of special groups, such as the disadvantaged and students who were learning English as a second language. The diversified programs, although designated as segments of Project English, were usually joint efforts of departments of English, psychology, and departments within various university schools of education.

The general areas of agreement merit a concise review. It was determined that instruction in all phases of communication should be sequential and cumulative. The paradox of "flexible rigidity" remains: changes in curriculum design should be made, although there is strong support for the traditional idea of a carefully organized three-year high school communications curriculum, to include day-to-day lesson plans. The necessity of evaluative testing remains.

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[15] Michael F. Shugrue, "New Materials for the Teaching of English: The English Program of the U.S.O.E.," PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 3-38. This is a third account summary of Project English. See also J. N. Hook, "Project English: The First Year," PMLA, LXXVIII (1963), 33-36 and Erwin R. Steinberg, "Research on the Teaching of English under Project English," PMLA LXXIX (1964), 50-76. Of interest also is Robert C. Slack, "A Report on Project English," College English, XXVI (1964), 43-47. The Materials Center of the Modern Language Association, 4 Washington Place, New York, N. Y. 10003 has available the evaluations, syllabi, and bibliographies of the summer institutes associated with Project English.

Current up-to-date materials must be available to classroom teachers. Lip service might be given to the need for a trend towards flexibility, and an amalgamation of communicative subject areas might be promised. However, the teaching of English is still segmented to composition, language and literature. Traditional interest in composition and literature remains; yet new interest is still being generated in studies of structural linguistics, psycholinguistics, and generative and transformational grammar.

True it is that these twenty-five centers took a variety of approaches, but it must not go unnoticed that only four institutions--Carnegie Institute of Technology, The University of Michigan, The University of Nebraska and Syracuse University--in varying degrees investigated the problems of reading. Of these four universities, highest utility value of reading is to be found in the Syracuse University Ten-Film Series on secondary level reading instruction and in the results achieved by the Syracuse University-Jamesville-DeWitt Demonstration Center. The saturation-diffusion program initiated and tested by the Department of English, the Department of Psychology, and the School of Education of The University of Michigan will prove to be of value at the college freshman level. On the basis of this current Project English report, it would seem that the importance of reading is being minimized--not stressed--and that problems which can be solved by statistical processes are the weighing factors in research design.

A most difficult problem concerning the freshman reading program persists. It will not be solved until there is a change in the current philosophy about freshman English. It is not merely a service course, although it is set up to be, nor is it merely a repository of nebulous values. Freshman English is the most important program of any English department, yet always the most poorly taught program. The course is assigned to graduate assistants, to long-tenure

faculty "hangers-on" with the rank of temporary instructor, or to the new Ph. D.'s trying to do research so they might advance up the publish-or-perish ladder. One solution has been to suggest a reduction in load to no more than nine hours, plus other considerations.[16] A reduction in workload may help by relieving the already overburdened graduate assistant or instructor, but it still does not solve the basic problem: excellence of teaching.

In large part it is believed that a university is judged by its great teachers. Yet who ever hears of a great teacher of freshman English? How many merit raises have been given for excellence in teaching freshman reading (literature), rhetoric, and composition? High school-college articulation is welcomed as a subtle exercise in public relations; but perhaps articulation between upper and lower academic ranks in the English faculty would be more meaningful. The great, recognized teachers--those who can generate excitement in a classroom--should teach a freshman English section at least once a year. This should be done not as sackcloth-and-ashes penance or as a means of increasing their own student-teacher ratio to placate a budget-minded Board of Regents, but as a fulfillment of the highest aims of teaching and as a means of adding prestige to the largest program in numbers in the department. Perhaps even the departmental budget committee could revise its thinking and, heretical as it may sound, give merit raises for excellence in the teaching of freshmen. It should be insisted, however, that judgment be done by those who do know how to teach.

To a degree, a measure of contemporary professional sophistication may have to be removed before an effective freshman reading program can be realized. Reading is not an exact science nor a specific skill. It is essentially a humanistic approach to life in which eclecticism and pragmatism are more

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16"The Workload of a College English Teacher: A Proposed Statement of Policy," College English, XXVIII (1966), 55-57.

important than technique. For the college freshman, reading is a study of literature and is still an individual interpretation of the written page and the reaching of conclusions based on reasoned judgments.

Try as we may, there is no way to evade the old truths that reading is, first of all, a source of pleasure and, secondarily, a source of wisdom. Reading is still an attempt to understand--and participate in--an individual recording of human activity. The goals for the reader may not always be clear to him. He may gain a lesson in imaginative or "programed" logic; he may gain an insight into the multifold forces of our culture, "the wisdom of the ages"; he may glean a moral lesson; he may become sensitive to his immediate world or to his fellow man so that in turn he might participate in his world, not isolate himself from it. A planned reading approach to the standard two-semester freshman English program may help the freshman to achieve these goals.