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REPORT OF MR. RAYMOND A. HICKEL, VISITING FRENCH CURRICULUM SPECIALIST IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1964-1965.

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A SUMMARY IS GIVEN OF THE YEAR'S WORK OF A FRENCH CURRICULUM SPECIALIST, ASSIGNED UNDER THE FULBRIGHT-HAYES ACT PROGRAM TO WORK IN THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PLYMOUTH STATE COLLEGE. THE REPORT BRIEFLY DESCRIBES HIS ACTIVITIES AT THE COLLEGE AS CONSULTANT IN THE FLES PROGRAM OF THE LABORATORY SCHOOL, AS WRITER OF A NEW COURSE IN FRENCH CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE, AS LIAISON BETWEEN FRENCH AND AMERICAN STUDENTS, AS PUBLIC LECTURER, AND AS GENERAL PARTICIPATOR IN CLASSES AND SEMINARS. FOR THE STATE, HE CONDUCTED WORKSHOPS, ADDRESSED PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND VISITED SCHOOLS TO OBSERVE THE TEACHING OF FRENCH. THE REPORT INCLUDES HIS GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE TEACHING OF FRENCH, INCLUDING A SUMMARY OF HIS OBSERVATIONS OF THE STATE'S SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, COURSES, AND TEACHING METHODS. IN ADDITION, HE OUTLINES A FOUR-LEVEL SEQUENCE OF LANGUAGE STUDY, AND DETAILS PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SEVERAL KINDS OF METHODS, AIDS, AND CLASS ACTIVITIES, AND FOR TEACHING CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION. (AS)

# Report of

# MR. RAYMOND A. HICKEL

## VISITING
## FRENCH CURRICULUM
## SPECIALIST



## IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1964-1965

The New Hampshire State Department of Education was fortunate indeed to have been chosen to receive the services of a Visiting French Curriculum Specialist for the school year 1964-65. That this person should have been Mr. Raymond A. Hickel added intellectual stature to an already important experiment. Mr. Hickel gave more of himself to the program than could reasonably be expected of any person and he left with us a strong impression of professional devotion.

We wish to thank Mr. Hickel for l. .ing with us a testimony of his work in New Hampshire as well as his impressions of what he saw in our classrooms. We are grateful for his keen observations and feel certain that his influence will continue to be felt through his Report.

Paul E. Farnum
*Commissioner of Education*

# Report of Mr. Raymond A. Hickel, Visiting French Curriculum Specialist In New Hampshire, 1964-1965

My services to the State Department of Education were made available thanks to a Fulbright-Hays Act Program, No. GV 186, arranged by the United States Office of Education. The weekly schedule was established by agreement between Mr. P. Paul Parent, State Director of Foreign Language Education and Dr. Madie W. Barrett, Head of the Modern Language Department at Plymouth State College of the University of New Hampshire. It was agreed that I would work every Monday and Wednesday for Plymouth State College, every Tuesday and Thursday for the State Department. Friday was to be left open for use by either of the parties. Saturday could be used for workshops. The cooperation was ideal and, as there turned out to be more work to do throughout the State visiting schools and consulting with teachers of French than at Plymouth State College, the French Department at the College had my regular participation on Mondays and Wednesdays only.

## *Participation at Plymouth State College*

It was essentially a team-teaching situation with Dr. M. W. Barrett. My share consisted of:

a—*writing, recording and commenting upon* (in the classroom—French 202) *an original course in French civilization and culture,* in the anthropological and sociological sense. Describing everyday life in Epinal, the small capital of the Vosges Department, the aim of the course was to present French provincial urban ways and means. Used in connection with Professor Wylie's "Village en Vaucluse", a study in country life, it provided a wider scope for comparison with similar American situations, particularly in New England. In several instances we had student visitors from high schools in the State. The script and the tapes will be available to all teachers of French in the State, upon request.

b—*helping students* with their study of French by working with them in small conversation groups.

c—*observing and actively participating* in the FLES program in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades of the Laboratory school, either during the TV

presentation or the follow-up periods; also consulting with student teachers engaged in such programs and participating in local workshops in connection with the program.

d—*helping to establish "twinning" contracts between* Plymouth State College and the upper grades of Epinal lycées by means of an exchange of tapes and letters.

e—*occasional participation in other classes and seminars,* as invited by social studies or education professors (about six times).

f—with the help of my wife, *organizing a series of eight public lectures* entitled "Focus on France" with projection of films, debates and various educational side activities.

g—generally speaking *acting as an informant* on France and the French, both formally and in informal discussions with colleagues, whose professional life I shared as far as time and schedule allowed (faculty meetings, etc.).

## *Participation at State Level*

The aim was to teach a maximum of teachers of French for person-to-person contacts, both as a language and curriculum specialist and as a native informant yet always as a colleague and fellow educator. This was generally achieved by:

a—*conducting (or participating in) eleven workshops* held in key locations, mostly on Saturdays.

b—*being present and/or speaking at meetings* of professional associations, civic groups and committees, in no fewer than twenty-nine instances, including my participation at the MLA Conference in New York City in December and the Northeast Conference in April and my work for parts of the State Language Curriculum Guide.

c—*visiting schools,* observing the teaching of French, speaking to students in assemblies or class-rooms, consulting with teachers and administrators about their local curriculum.

I visited 6 Elementary Schools with FLES programs
10 Private Schools (all levels)
55 Public Junior and Senior High Schools and Approved Academies

If one includes four return visits, this makes a total of seventy-five visits. (See list next page.)

d—*diverse related activities,* such as a TV interview on WENH-TV, at the University, Durham, New Hampshire.

So I think I formed a good picture of the teaching of French in the State of New Hampshire, upon which I will now comment.

*List of Schools Visited in* 1964-65

A—COLLEGES:

Franconia College
Mount St. Mary, Hooksett
Keene State College
St. Anselm's, Manchester

B—HIGH SCHOOLS and ACADEMIES:

Alton
Andover (Proctor Academy)
Ashland
Berlin (Public and Notre Dame)
Bristol
Claremont (Junior High and Senior High)
Colebrook
Concord (Public, St. Paul's, and Bishop Brady)
Conway
Derry (Pinkerton Academy)
Dover (Public and St. Thomas)
Enfield (LaSalette Seminary)
Exeter (Public and Phillips)
Franklin
Groveton
Goffstown
Gorham (Public and St. Mary's)
Hampton (Winnacunnet)
Hanover
Hillsboro—Deering
Hollis
Jaffrey
Keene
Kittery (Me.) (Traip Academy)
Kingston (Sanborn Seminary)
Lancaster
Laconia (Junior High and Senior High)
Lebanon (Junior High and Senior High)
Littleton
Meredith (Inter-Lakes Coop.)
Manchester (Central, Memorial, West, St. Anthony)
Mascoma Valley Regional
Milford
Monadnock Regional
Nashua
New Ipswich (Appleton Academy)
Penacook
Peterborough
Pittsburg
Pittsfield
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Rochester
Salem (Woodbury High)
Somersworth
Tilton-Northfield
Warner
Whitefield
Wilton
Wolfeboro

C—ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

Amherst
Hampton
Norwich (Vt.)
Seabrook
Sullivan
Plymouth

## *General Comments on the Teaching of French*

Another part of this report will offer practical hints applicable to class-room situations. The following is an attempt at summarizing observations and offering tentative suggestions toward a possible upgrading of some situations.

### A—*Teachers*

The overall impression is good. There is plenty of experience and zeal. Some teachers are really outstanding in their field and the great majority do their best. Apparent incompetence is very rare and limited. The only really surprising element resides in the diversity of backgrounds. Whereas some teachers combine academic excellence, college degrees in keeping with the teaching of foreign languages in general (and French in particular) and degrees in education and/or student supervision, others have been trained in quite a different branch of activity and turned to teaching French with only three or four years of previous acquaintance with the language. On the other hand, it is strange to discover that native speakers, with excellent French educational background and even teaching experience, encounter certification problems. Teaching is a professional activity and formal training is extremely important; it seems however that in the field of foreign languages in particular, formal recognition of education diplomas granted in those foreign countries whose languages are taught, could be given more consideration. Likewise, a thorough knowledge of the language and cultural background is essential and some consideration should be given to certifying people with near-native proficiency after satisfactory completion of an accelerated teacher-training program, such as could be offered in a state-approved series of workshops or at Institutes.

Teachers of French Canadian background, even two or three generations remote, are a great asset to the teaching of French in this State and should be encouraged—even financially—to participate in Institutes and Summer Courses in France to give them a first-hand knowledge of the country. So-called "Parisian French" is often overemphasized. A regional accent is, to a limited extent, permissible and an even "charming" part of an individual's personality. However, there are a certain number of basic phonetic and syntactic rules that should be observed as "Standard French", the accepted means of communication throughout the educated world of francophones—and a minimum of vocabulary with generally accepted meaning and connotation to be known. It is also to be wished that, in the hiring and dismissal of teachers only professional elements should be considered, exclusively of other local considerations or strictly personal matters. The professional quality of a teacher of French should be evaluated by professional people highly competent in the field of the language considered, as well as in the general field of education.

B—*Teaching aids*

Nearly all the high schools visited had *language laboratories,* and proper praise and credit should be given for the real financial effort made by most communities toward providing adequate facilities. A certain number of teachers, however, do not seem fully to avail themselves of all the opportunities. Laboratories are at their best for drilling exercises. If properly conducted, such activity is quite a strain on the student and should be limited to about twenty minutes per period. Whereas the proper and frequent use of the laboratory is highly recommended, the use of the lab room for regular classes should be avoided whenever possible. The privacy of a booth serves a purpose for individual work; it defeats the purpose of collective teaching in a regular class situation.

*Handbooks,* manuals, text and series, as well as supplementary readers, are varied and generally intelligently used. The good teacher soon knows the qualities and deficiencies of each series and does add what is missing, using a "traditional" text with an audio-lingual approach and, conversely, providing some extra grammatical or cultural comments where the "basic dialogue" is found wanting.

*Visual aids* are perhaps too often neglected. An ideal contextual method calls for visual support, be it a rough sketch on the board, a picture, a postcard, a slide, a filmstrip or a map. Further suggestions are made elsewhere in this report.

C—Students and Courses Offered

French, in most high schools, is an elective subject. One may regret that all students at secondary level are not exposed to one modern foreign language. Theoretically, students who elect a subject can be expected to be more interested and eager to learn.

However, exposition to a foreign way of expression can be invaluable in breaking the monocultural environment and broadening a student's mind. This is why, though we understand it, we do not recommend the policy adopted by some schools to provide only the "college-bound" students with language courses. Offering various "streams", catering differently to the "slow" ones and to the "fast" ones is a better solution whenever applicable and provided it creates no hard feelings or psychological complications. As a matter of fact, the best results are usually found in school systems where the foreign language is offered at an early age and to the whole age-group (FLES programs in particular are highly commendable wherever follow-up can be adequately provided). Indeed, the study of a foreign language can help some students reveal undiscovered abilities. Psychologists, and scientists have discovered that an "uncommitted" part of the human cortex at age eight seems to indicate that this is the right age to begin the study of a foreign language. Sounds heard and reproduced correctly at an early age will not be lost

and the effectiveness of later appropriate teaching is increased. However, there should be no gap between the first audio-oral approach and the more complex formal teaching in high school.

An effective program should be continuous, progressive and sequential. In other words, where FLES is offered, Foreign Language courses should be offered in junior high to review, consolidate and systematize what has been learned at the elementary level.

The division of the study in high school of a foreign language is traditionally into four levels. This does not necessarily mean four years (grades 9 to 12). In grades 7 and 8 half a period a day can be devoted to bridging the gap with FLES, or to offer French I to real beginners. In grades 9 and 10 we would keep the traditional one-period-a-day pattern, and respectively offer French II and III. French IV would then be offered in grades 11 and 12, every other day for a full period—an ideal situation for students capable of handling library assignments on the "off" days. Thus, French would be offered throughout high school, without requiring more teaching time, thereby providing students with instruction in the foreign language up to their entrance into college. Since language is behavior as well as factual knowledge, such "spreading out" can help a great deal in forming and developing speech habits. Language learning is a slow process even in the mother tongue and no teacher, no student and no method (despite commercial claims) should be expected to work miracles within too short a period of time.

## D—*Methodology*

Teaching a modern foreign language is essentially helping the student to develop four skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. To evaluate progress it is essential to test the student's knowledge frequently.

We must bear in mind that some people have a better "auditive" memory, others a better "visual" memory and we should cater to both. Moreover, a child in the grade school will not usually resent an almost endless repetition drill, whereas the teen-ager may revolt against "being mistaken for a parrot", and lose interest. This is why the audio-oral approach, which has been stressed recently to the point of being considered as a sort of "party line", is at its best in FLES programs.

For older students, it still has a message. Let first things come first: new structures, and new words—always presented in a simple but coherent context—should be met orally first. This prevents mispronunciations due to spelling. Yet the reading and writing stages should not be unduly postponed. Though grammar should not be learned for its

own sake (1), it is not a bad thing to guide the student's observation and to help him rationalize — rediscover rules — provided they are real and not misleading. It is better to memorize characteristic examples than abstract rules. The ultimate aim is to make our students able to discuss freely on almost any simple subject in the target language in such a way that they can understand a foreign speaker, be understood by him, and sum up the conversation in writing without glaring mistakes.

Our time in the language classroom being limited, we should offer as much spoken French as possible during the period, avoiding the use of English except for emergencies, short situational explanations, equivalencies (when in so doing we avoid wasting time or creating an ambiguity or a confusion) and, in the upper levels, accurate, precise situations made real with the help of visual aids or artificial "props". Such situations should be culturally authentic, for the cultural background is part and parcel of language. Language is behavior: it is also tradition as well as communication.

Every student must have an opportunity to speak every time, and also to be corrected if necessary, tactfully but firmly invited to repeat in a better way.

The different types of drills, exercises and assignments will be discussed later, as we want this part of the report to be confined to the essential principles. Before we pass on to the next heading, I would like to emphasize that if guidelines are necessary for the beginning teacher, they should not be considered as imperative for the good, experienced teacher, who must be given a full opportunity to follow his/her own inclinations. A good teacher is conscious of his responsibilities and aware of the importance of the human contact and personal touch. This is why, of the classes I saw given by some outstanding teachers I am proud to have met in this State, no two were alike. Yet, they all had one thing in common: the students liked French, were eager to speak it and did so with surprising correctness. This is the only criterion of success—and it had not been achieved by a miracle, but by a constant search on the part of these teachers for what could be best of all the proposed "methods" in a given situation.

E—*Examples of a four-level sequence*

(Inspired by the LACONIA syllabus)

N. B. Language and Civilization are *integrated* in the classroom.

(1) It is to be regretted that the teacher of French has too often to explain about a grammatical terminology which should have been acquired in the mother tongue!

LEVEL I—50% of the time devoted to listening-comprehension.

*Language*: —Audio-lingual training in basic vocabulary and structures, including everyday idioms. Dialogues.
—Reading and writing (copying and short dictations) gradually introduced.

*Civilization*:—Everyday life of the French people, particularly from the point of view of school students.

LEVEL II

*Language*:—Revision of Level I, with new presentation of materials.
—Recombination.
—Introduction of more complex structures. Normal speed.
—Drills become more difficult.
—Conjugations to be fully mastered (all usual tenses, questions and answers).
—Approximate proportions of time:

| | |
|---|---|
| Listening | 30% |
| Reading | 35% |
| Writing | 15% |
| Speaking | 20% |

—Short, carefully prepared compositions as early as the second semester.

*Civilizations*— Institutions and their impact on daily life.
—The French in the World. How French culture influenced others.
—Geographical and historical notions, illustrated by *texts*.

LEVEL III

*Language*:—Audio-oral skills are not abandoned, but used in "lecture expliquée" and "explication de texte" techniques.
—General review of grammar.
—Summing-up and reporting to other students of assigned extensive readings.
—Study of various styles.
—The art of taking notes in French.

*Civilization*:—Historical development of the French civilization, culture and language.
—The ways of life across the centuries from Gaul to the present time.
—Introduction to the fine arts in France.
—The French contributions to science and technology.

(Students are given individual projects to prepare in the library. They report to others. The general discussion is conducted in French. The necessary vocabulary is supplied in advance).
From time to time: projection of films with a French sound track.

Level IV—Everything is strictly conducted in French.

The basis of the course is Literature (explication de texte). Half the texts are chosen in modern French, as expression of "contemporary" culture (from Hugo to Camus, for instance) Half is an *introduction* (only!) to a history of literature briefly mentioning the beginning and dwelling more extensively on the XVIIth Century onwards.

Writing of letters on precise topics.
"dissertations" on given subjects or literary points.
Cultural *problems* are discussed by cross-examination and comparison.

Earphones for simultaneous translation.

This sequence is purely indicative. It would be well suited to a six or seven year program as discussed in paragraph C above. Level III andIV students could be encouraged to have correspondents in French-speaking countries and exchange letters and tapes with them. Experience proves that only a small proportion of personal exchanges are really successful; this is why we would rather suggest a class-to-class twinning between several French-speaking countries. Materials could then circulate, for instance, between Quebec—New Hampshire—Madagascar—Tahiti and Lorraine.

Full use of existing programs such as the "Experiment in International Living" should be made, both to send "ambassadors" abroad and to invite a young French-speaking informant. However, some organizations are purely commercial and unsatisfactory. Be sure to conduct an inquiry before you decide.

## *Discussion of methodological details*

### A—*Use of drills to develop speaking skills*

The first thing to do is to get our students to LISTEN puposefully, associating sound and meaning. Repetition of the model, by itself, does not work miracles. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the meaning is grasped and that the groups of sounds are correctly heard.

*Model-imitation drills* are basically of two types:

1—*Listen-repeat.* The choral repeat (either by the whole class or by groups, rows, etc.) has its pros and cons. It encourages the shy ones, but makes "make-believe" a welcome possibility for the lazy ones. However trained the teacher's ear, it is difficult to make out individual mistakes in a chorus and we run the risk of encouraging a faulty pronunciation by unwittingly allowing its repetition.

Choral repeat also saves time, but individuals have to be checked upon systematically and several times during a period, especially at the very beginning.

2—Listen-act-describe action ("Levez-vous!"—"je me lève")

Not only can the "actor" describe his own action, but one of the bystanders can also report about this action to the third person. With variations in numbers and speakers, conjugation can be introduced in a live manner. Be sure, however, to keep full control of the situation. Such a drill can hardly be prolonged without serious risks of confusion. This type of execise is obviously to be gradually abandoned as students mature and become more self-conscious.

*Question-answer practice* should aim at expanding the answer gradually. We can be happy with a simple "Il fait mauvais" as a beginner's reply to the traditional "Quel temps fait-il?" Later, we should encourage additional details: "Il fait froid: hier il a neigé. Cette nuit, il s'est formé du verglas".

The students must also have a chance to ask the questions, either to the teacher, or to the class in general, or to one particular classmate. *Chain-practice* helps a great deal,but five or six times the same question can be considered a reasonable limit.

*Directed dialogue* ("Dites-moi que..." "Invitez X à faire ceci...") provides a good incentive, but some structures can offer grammatical pitfalls: let us make sure the rejoinder is obvious before we propose something to beginners. Later, on the contrary, we can juggle with alternating easy and complicated injunctions to keep students alert. *Non-verbal clues,* (such as showing a book, putting it down on the desk, etc., and asking pupils to describe the actions), are also effective if the action is simple and cannot be misinterpreted.

Very often we want to work with the basic situational dialogue found in the handbook. A good way to do so is to explain the contents first, making full use of all the visual aids we can think of then have the students listen silently, then listen and repeat. The next step is the reinforcement of learning through response drills and directed dialogue. However, we must always bear in mind that the ultimate aim is to free the student from what he has learned by heart and make him able to use words and idioms and structures in different contexts. We can encourage our students to do so by helping them *combine* elements acquired in Unit 2 with elements borrowed from, say, Units 5 and 6. Soon, relatively "free conversation" is attainable within the context of certain experiences; gradually, controls will diminish as the students' acquisition of linguistic content is expanded.

The *logical steps* seem to be: prepared dialogue, pattern practice, controlled dialogue, additional vocabulary in pattern drills, "free" dialogue.

B—*Pattern drills to present structural points*

The easiest is the *repetition drill.* The problems are the same as those previously discussed. Then come:

*transformation drills,* where we ask a singular to be turned into a plural, an affirmative into a negative, a comparative into a superlative. Needless to say, the structures given as patterns must be normative. Two examples before we invite students to carry on are better than one. It is often a good idea to work both ways and to have plurals turned into singulars immediately after having turned singulars into plurals. With advanced students and with fair warning, we can introduce exceptions, so as to avoid the drill becoming too mechanical.

The next step: *Substitution drills* (a pronoun for a noun, for instance). Here we must make quite sure that it does not entail further complications that our students know nothing about yet. This type of drill is particularly effective to practice "y" and "en". *Integration drills* aim at combining two independent clauses into one sentence. They are useful toward the teaching of stylistics.

Example: Voici le restaurant. Je vais dîner dans ce restaurant.

Expected response: Voici le restaurant où je vais dîner.

Stylistics and composition can be helped with *expansion drills* (adding new elements to a basic clause) or their reverse: *contraction drills* (reduction to the basic clause). In both cases, beware of exaggerations and use your sense of æsthetics and restraint. Such situations can, with imaginative students, easily slip out of hand. *Patterned response drills* (where the question suggests a choice of two answers) or *cued response drills* (the one-word cue being given *before* or *after* the question) are fully effective if *one* construction only is really acceptable.

From time to time, as a game rather than as a formal exercise, one may combine several types of drills and organize a sort of contest between two or three teams. For instance: how would you pass, step by step, in seven stages, from: "Je voudrais chercher mon ami" to "Louis vient de recontrer sa fiancée"? The various solutions provide an opportunity for vocabulary review within the same basic structure.

C—*Notes on teaching reading and writing*

Let us first of all deal with *phonetic symbols.* If we choose any system, let it be the *International* one, as used by Daniel Jones. To my mind, it is useless to teach it "actively" at high school level. However, *passive recognition of the symbols* might be a great help to students checking words in a dictionary or an encyclopedia, and should therefore be encouraged.

The ultimate form of reading *is the intensive reading, intended to* develop the ability to understand the written language (with a certain percentage of guesswork, as when we read a highly technical article in our language) without the mediation of English. Beyond the "active vocabulary", always ready for the four skills, reading builds a "passive" or rather "recognitional" vocabulary. The steps in developing reading skills seem to be (a) *reading aloud,* first some materials already acquired audio-orally, then other materials; (b) *reading silently,* and words in a different order, then other materials; (c) *reading silently,* and then working on the text orally; (d) reading more and more as an *individual assignment. In the first stages,* it is essential that all difficulties be explained beforehand. Reading can then provide a transition to the written (printed) word after a careful *verbal review of contents.* An overhead projector can be used for the first few lessons, in order to concentrate the attention and actually associate sound and syllable then breath-group. Likewise, the projector can be of service for "SPOT" dictations (a ready-made text that is to be simply *copied,* as seen and heard at the same time, but with blanks to be filled from listening only). Copying and spot dictations later followed by longer and longer conventional dictations provide the first step in *the teaching of writing* in French. Needless to say, the spelling must have been studied beforehand. Never allow for guesswork at levels I and II and only very seldom at later stages. The ultimate goal in writing is free composition and library "dissertation"—but this calls for long gradual training.

D—*Notes on audio-visual aids*

Having had some responsibility for the writing of a chapter on this subject in the recently published State Guide, I will refer interested readers to it and be content here with a few odd remarks.

In addition to what is contained therein relative to the *Overhead Projector,* I would like to call attention to its versatility, thanks to its acetate roll on which you can write or draw things in advance (an advantage over the chalk-board), and to the possibility of using overlays, particularly to make things gradually appear on a map, or to explain a structure. If your school has a modern photocopy machine, here is your chance to produce your own material at relatively low cost and soon constitute a valuable collection of aids.

A *Still Projector* for slides and filmstrips, regularly used in connection with methods such as "Voix et Images de France", can also prove quite effective if used now and then in about the same way: to provide "visual food" for talk, create environment. A projected picture does focus the attention better than a paper or cardboard illustration, and is better suited for teamwork observation. Remote control allows you a great freedom of movement in the classroom. Slides can be programmed in advance

and then offer more flexibility than filmstrips. An *opaque projector* should not be purchased. But if there is one available in the school, it can be very handy to show photos and postcards, and pages from various books of our personal library. Its drawback is the quasi-necessity to be in a darkened room, which poses problems (not necessarily of discipline, but of curtains!).

*Film projectors* are available in most schools. You can have films with French sound tracks, free of charge, from the Canadian Consulate-General in Boston and, at a nominal fee, from FACSEA, the French Cultural Services in New York City (972 5th Ave.)

*Radio and TV* in New Hampshire can help the French teacher. In Coos County and the north of Grafton County, French speaking TV signals from Canada can be easily received with an appropiate antenna. In the rest of the State, WENH-TV, Channel 11, provides the "Parlons Français FLES series, part of which can be used at Level I in high school. Radio-Canada in Montreal has excellent announcers, whose French is perfect. Any good radio set can pick it up anywhere, in the State. Ask your dealer how to plug your tape-recorder in if an interesting broadcast is due when school is off. I would particularly recommend news bulletins and magazine-type broadcasts at Levels III and IV as a basis for discussion. If you are a short-wave fan, France itself has fine broadcasting for you, usually at late hours; but you might want to record some for your advanced students.

*Records and tapes* available on the market are so numerous that it is futile even to try and discuss them. Just one piece of advice: listen to several samples rather than to the salesman's glib talk. Some are useful and excellent, others are really poor. And, after all, the school budget is limited.

E) *French "realia" and extracurricular activities*

The majority of French teachers in New Hampshire enjoy a room of their own and most of them have decorated it with taste and talent. Posters, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings are not only there to create an "atmosphere", but also to be used for reference. One item is essential: a map of France. Surprisingly, it was missing in several classrooms I visited. In too many others, the only map available shows "French provinces"—a situation anterior to 1792. True, the French still refer to the provinces with relation to holidays and in informal situations. True again, the departmental division (still the only official administrative pattern) is felt outdated, the units being too small in this space age. Why not then have a physical map, showing plains, mountain ranges and major rivers and cities, with the political subdivisions simply outlined and not overstressed? There are several types on the market.

A good many teachers have patiently collected a series of "props" with a French flavor (sent to them from overseas by colleagues or relatives,

when actually used: dolls, matchboxes, car models, textbooks, road-maps, parking "discs", railroad schedules using the twenty-four hour system, theatre tickets and programs and sundry pedagogically valuable knick-knacks. This is a highly commendable practice. (Incidentally, I had to buy two extra trunks to take my American "loot" back to my classroom and to my French colleagues) or brought back from that "trip-of-a-lifetime") and they are excellent

Some schools subscribe to French publications, either those especially intended for school use, or magazines and newspapers. It is a good idea in both cases. I do not think that subscribing to a *daily* newspaper, coming by surface mail and therefore three to five weeks stale when it arrives, is of real interest at high school level. I would rather recommend the airmail weekly editions of either "Le Figaro" (Center-Right) or "Le Monde" (Center-Left and the favorite among the French teaching profession in general). "L'Express" is roughly the equivalent of "Time" and "Paris-Match" of "Life"—Girls may be interested in such weeklies as "L'Echo de la Mode" (carrying all sorts of features besides fashion) or "Elle", "Marie France" and other such magazines. Boys could enjoy "Top-Réalités-Jeunesse". There are literally scores of Literary Reviews to choose from, for college-bound seniors in particular. For general reference (vocabulary as well as availability of commodities and cost of living) we suggest a mail-order department store catalogue, such as "Manufrance's" (equivalent to Sears').

Some schools have a French club. May I suggest that it would be extra fun from time to time to conduct those activities "à la français" with French recipes for cakes and cookies, songs and games, French teenage "music" (?!) as a background, making it a point to speak French only for at least part of the meeting. And how about a "French lunch period" at a special table in the cafeteria, once in a while? Stamp collecting can be one way of combining serious learning about culture (all those commemorative issues!) and pleasure, and one more opening for pen-pals. Why not expand the original "dialogues" into a "dramatic production" of selected scenes from Molière and Marivaux to Beaumarchais and Musset and even Ionesco and Anouilh, presenting them to the whole school and PTA in French, but with English comments in between?

In this space age, a field trip to France the week before graduation is perhaps not too remote a dream, particularly when one thinks of the number of routine NATO flights with nearly empty planes. Yet, to remain realistic in this present time, a bus trip to Quebec is quite within reasonable budget limits!

F—*Pedagogical remarks and hints*

(1) *The "explication de texte" technique*
(A time-honored French "recipe")

1) Select an excerpt about twenty lines long.
2) Engage in question-answer practice on the preceding passage (if any).
3) Eliminate difficulties one by one, prior to any reading:
   —Explore the meaning of words and idioms by means of a directed dialogue, synonyms and antonyms.
   —Help the class to find key sentences showing the meaning clearly.
   —Write them on the blackboard: The students will copy them later.
   —Have one or two students re-utilize the new expressions in sentences of their own.
4) Place the text in its literary, cultural and "actual" context, with student participation.
5) Read the text.
6) Ask the students to summarize and find the leading ideas.

They must always use *complete* sentences, however short and simple. UP TO THIS POINT, THE STUDENTS' BOOKS HAVE BEEN CLOSED.

7) Invite students to open their books, and read text yourself a second time.
8) Ask students to read aloud, and, of course correct their reading.
9) "Explore" the text thoroughly from every possible angle (language, prosody style, ideas, philosophy, psychology, etc.) by means of questions and answers.
10) Get into one or two points of grammar found or suggested in the text and use this review for a few sentences of "thème d'imitation".
11) Help the students to translate with precision and accuracy (only a few lines near perfection rather than bungling the twenty lines for want of time).
12) Invite a "dramatization" if applicable.
13) Use the last few minutes of the period for a transcription of notes into the student's notebooks.

.2) *A few common mistakes and slips of the tongue*

| *AVOID SAYING:* | *SAY:* |
|---|---|
| Le mardi le février | Le mardi 9 février...<br>(if you begin a sentence)<br>*OR*: Mardi, le 9 février. (Date) |
| Allons à la chambre 10 | Allons *salle* 10 |
| Qu'est-ce que ce sont? | Qu'est-ce que c'est? |
| La mademoiselle | La demoiselle, la jeune fille. |
| Tournez à la page 10 | Prenez page 10 |
| Un voyage à la lune | Un voyage *dans* la lune |
| Un voyage à la Côte d"Azur | Un voyage *sur* la Côte d'Azur |
| Le soleil se lève dans l'Est | Le soleil se lève *à* l'Est |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sur l'équipe de ski | *Dans* l'équipe de ski |
| Sur l'île de la Cité | *Dans* l'île de la Cité |
| | .. *était* appelé |
| Paris est appelé autrefois Lutèce | Paris autrefois Lutèce |
| | s'appelait |
| Qu'avez-*vous* donné à *ta* mère? | Qu'as-*tu* donné à *ta* mère? |
| (to one individual) | ou qu'avez-*vous* donné à *votre* mère? |
| Voyez France: le plus pittoresque | Visitez *la* France: le plus pittoresque |
| pays dans tous les mondes | pays au monde |
| Donnez-moi vos *papiers* | Remettez-moi vos *copies* |
| Une copie de ce livre | Un *exemplaire* de ce livre |
| La partie de Sganarelle | Le *rôle* de Sganarelle |
| Préférer mieux | Aimer mieux—préférer |
| Prendre un examen, un degré | Passer (subir) un examen |
| | Obtenir un diplôme |
| Gradué de tel Collège | Diplômé de telle Université |
| Nous avons quelques minutes | Il nous reste quelques minutes |
| laissées | |
| La question prochaine | La question suivante |
| De qui est cette valise? | À qui est cette valise? |
| Décrirer. | Décrire. |

(3) *A few useful idioms for the classroom*

"Mes enfants"
"Jeunes Gens"....."Mesdemoiselles" (pas: "classe!")
Ouvrez vos livres, page....; prenez page....; fermez vos livres
Laissez vos livres fermés
Asseyez-vous; levez-vous
Remettez-moi (Rendez-moi) vos copies (vos devoirs)
Nous allons faire une interrogation écrite, (une dictée)
Un tel, ouvrez (ou: fermez) la fenêtre, s'il vous plaît.
Baissez le(s) store(s). Remontez le(s) store(s).
Allumez l'électricité. Eteignez.
Baissez le chauffage. Vérifiez le thermostat.

Branchez (débranchez) la prise de courant
- du tourne-disque
- de l'électrophone
- de la radio
- de la télévision
- du magnétophone

Mettez la bande magnétique en place sur vos appareils.
Tournez le bouton sur telle position.
Ne profitez pas de mon absence pour bavarder!
Je vous remercie de votre attention.
Vous pouvez disposer.

## *The teaching of culture and civilization*

Giving a clear definition of "culture" and "civilization" is not a simple task. Humanists, anthropologists and sociologists are somewhat at variance. It is too easy just to oppose "civilized people" to "barbarians", and there are fine civilizations which have very little to do with what we call Western Civilization—of which both Americans and French are members. Let us say broadly that the teaching of French civilization would deal with the way French society has been and still is developing intellectually, ethically, industrially and politically in the widest acceptance of each of the terms.

When we come to "culture", we are even more embarrassed. As teachers we are in the humanistic tradition, but as we deal with language, our methods are those of behaviorists. We are just at the crossroads of two definitions of "culture": that of the total way of life and social inheritance and its impact on both the individual and the nation and that of the values of the cultural heirloom, worth fighting for and handing down from one generation to another. In fact Culture (with a capital C, that of writers, poets, composers, painters, sculptors, architects and scientists) does not conflict with culture (with a small c). They influence each other, insofar as the formative years are steeped in an education that reflects Culture and, conversely, as artists describe a way of life in their own way. As language teachers, we are not usually expected to lecture formally on the country's civilization and culture, but as we study dialogues at Level I and even more as we get into extracts of journalistic or literary productions, we constantly come across words with a background and connotations different from what a literal translation would suggest, and frequent allusions to institutions, habits and customs different from ours. This is why it is imperative for the language teacher to have a thorough knowledge of the country or countries whose language he/she teaches. A few examples to illustrate this point: (a) the word "bus". For the British, it is likely to envoke the city double-decker, to the Parisian the sleek green vehicle with a platform at the back, to the American student either the yellow bus that takes him to school everyday, blocking traffic in both directions at everyone of its stops—or the fast air-conditioned coach running hundreds of miles along expressways ...(b) How are you going to interpret "lycéen" and "baccalauréat", if you do not know the European system of education where, generally, undergraduate "college" education is divided between the upper forms of some high schools and the preparatory year of a University, mostly concerned with postgraduate work? Moreover, "Secondary" schooling usually starts at 11 or 12. Think of the gross misinterpretation of statistics you are up to if you compare enrollment in U. S. colleges and in European Universities without taking the differences into account. It might be flattering, but quite misleading and deceptive. Ex-

planations are necessary to compensate for the lack of an exact equivalency, and you are probably the only member of the school staff qualified to offer such explanations because you have easier access to foreign literature, magazines and newspapers—and reference books on your desk. (*) For instance: Guy Michaud: Guide France, Hachette, 301 Madison Avenue, New York 10017.

Nobody expects the foreign language teacher to be a propagandist for the foreign country. But he has a role as an informant and must be in sympathy with the people whose language and culture he knows and teaches. His lessons describe and explain ways of life, emotional reactions as well as basic institutions, through language habits and by way of logical consequence contribute to better international understanding by helping the student to acquire openmindedness and an ability to discover the human values in the alien ways. The language teacher is not above and beyond the call of duty when he dispels the common clichés and prejudices by presenting facts and a different angle from which to look at the rest of the world, seen through foreign eyes. I would think poorly of my own teaching if I only selected carefully chosen passages in Steinbeck, Dreiser, Beecher-Stowe or even contemporary American magazines to present an image of America flattering the common misconceptions too many people entertain in Europe about theUnited States: the six-shooter is the best argument, all the negroes are persecuted, businessmen munching gum and with their feet on their desk actually rule local and international affairs by lobbying and corruption, teenage dating means wild parties with cocktails by the dozen and scandalous happenings in luxurious parked cars, etc.,etc. Because I specialized in Anglo-American civilization and literature when I chose to teach English, I know better than that. And I do not feel I betray my country and become "a valet of Washington" when I present my students with a somewhat different picture! Likewise, my dear colleagues, I expect a similar attitude from you toward the French. And when, from the back of some classrooms, I hear the good clichés served once more and apparently taken for granted, it makes my heart bleed! French babies are not weaned on wine. You can drink the water that flows from the faucet—except on trains where a sign warns you not to do so and, under war conditions, when pipes have been blown up. French economy is not exclusively based on selling champagne at exorbitant prices and lace with or without Folie-Bergères girls underneath.

Our ideals of democracy are as old as yours and if they have been implemented in a different way, they neverless condition most of our reactions. An approach to a country through its language should do away with stereotypes; it does not have to be a rosy picture either; let it be a broad-minded appraisal of facts through several cross-references—adapted, of course, to the age and maturity of our students.

We are not teachers of history, geography, economics or fine arts. Our foremost preoccupation is teaching the language. That is granted; yet we will never do our job properly without a sound background that touches on history, geography, economics or the arts. Their influence on language and literature is too great. We do not teach French history as such, but show the continuity of the melting-pot the country has been ever since prehistoric times. ("Who discovered France?" a wide-eyed, eager third grader asked me once. "The Flintstones" was the answer). How the Roman rule of Gaul is still present in French law as well as in the language is more important a fact than the story of Vercingetorix. The long-range meaning of Clovis' baptism on the impact of the Catholic church, both by its actions and the reactions it caused along the centuries in church/state relationship is of more import than the episode itself.

How feudalism served its purpose and had then to be fought by a strengthened central power must be understood if one is to realize why the French see a source of progress and freedom in a centralized, rather than a local, system of government. The unique coincidence in time of the Renaissance and the Reformation in France may explain a good many things that happened thereafter in the literary, philosophical and political fields. The far-reaching consequences of the repeal of the Edict of Nantes are of more interest than the list of battles fought by Louis XIV. The inter-influence of the American and the French Revolutions are seldom given enough emphasis, nor are French explorations in Canada and Louisiana. How the Republic came to be the only acceptable form of democracy in France is as thrilling a study as the forging of the American nation in winning the West. The burden of three wars fought on her own territory in seventy years must be fully realized if one is to understand French problems and policies.

Such is the indispensible look at history that throws a light on the texts we study as testimonies: only a common reference to the same tragedy can help us understand Hemingway and Malraux. And the same can apply to a more remote past—or to geographical data. Daudet cannot be explained without some knowledge of Provence: neither can Faulkner without the deep South as a background.

Only in realizing through works like Zola's what capitalism used to be in France not so long ago and what conditions were for the working people during the so-called "golden years" of the turn of the century, can one understand the political struggles that, through dark and enthusiastic days in terror, brought about France's present course, carefully steering mid-way between socialism and free enterprise, between a fully parliamentary and a fully presidential regime. One has to read the wartime writers to be aware of the comradeship of the Underground movements that made possible, for a short while after V.E. Day, the sitting together in Parliament of the worst political enemies: comm-

unists, socialists and Christian Democrats—long enough to vote these social laws which place France ahead of all nations in that respect, without the loss of any of the basic liberties. The "Sécurité Sociale" system is probably typical. It is criticized by everybody for opposite reasons, but no political party, however conservative, dares advocate its repeal. It has guaranteed full medical, dental and pharmaceutical coverage to every salaried person and his/her family without socializing medicine. It has boosted the population by granting family allowances, and has bettered a retirement scheme already on the books since 1911. Such fringe benefits have to be taken into account when evaluating French living standards. Gross national product is not the only figure to consider.

Culture with a capital C can be found in scores of good books. This is why I dispense here with a list of suggested names and topics about arts and literature. Colleagues interested in the every-day-life of an ordinary teacher's family in a medium-sized provincial city can ask the French department at Plymouth State College for a series of sixteen scripts and tapes.