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THE LAY READER PROGRAM IN ACTION.

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IN 1960, THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH CONDUCTED AN INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN TWO LAY-READER PROGRAMS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL--(1) A PROGRAM AT RACINE IN ITS FIRST FULL SEMESTER IN WHICH LAY READERS CORRECTED AND EVALUATED, BUT DID NOT GRADE, APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE THEMES FROM SELECTED CLASSES; AND (2) A PROGRAM AT SHEBOYGAN IN ITS FOURTH SEMESTER IN WHICH LAY READERS CORRECTED, EVALUATED, AND TENTATIVELY GRADED ALL THEMES FROM SELECTED CLASSES. BOTH PROGRAMS REQUIRED TEACHERS TO REVIEW THE READERS' EVALUATIONS BEFORE THE COMPOSITIONS WERE RETURNED TO STUDENTS, AND RESTRICTED LAY READERS TO COURSES FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS. IN GENERAL, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND READERS FAVORED THE PROGRAMS BECAUSE THEY LED TO MORE FREQUENT STUDENT WRITING, PROVIDED CRITICISM FROM A SECOND VIEWPOINT, AND AIDED THE STUDENT IN PREPARING FOR MORE RIGOROUS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN COLLEGE. IMPORTANT ASPECTS FOR SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMS WERE--(1) CONTACT BETWEEN THE LAY READERS AND THEIR CLASSES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORM OF CONFERENCES, (2) GOOD RAPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG TEACHER, READER, AND STUDENT CONCERNING THE CRITERIA FOR GRADING THEMES, AND (3) THE PROMPT RETURN OF PAPERS, ENABLING STUDENTS TO SEE CORRECTIONS ON ONE THEME BEFORE WRITING ANOTHER. GENERALLY, ALL PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT THE ASSIGNING OF FINAL GRADES TO PAPERS SHOULD REMAIN THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY. ALTHOUGH NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR SMALLER CLASSES AND CLASS LOADS, AND NOT AFFECTING REGULAR CLASSES OF TERMINAL STUDENTS WHERE THE REAL BURDEN OF THEME-CORRECTING LIES, THE LAY-READER PROGRAMS PROVED TO BE EFFECTIVE IN ENRICHING THE CURRICULUM FOR SUPERIOR STUDENTS. THIS ARTICLE APPEARS AS "WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH SPECIAL BULLETIN NO. 1," NOVEMBER 1960. (DL)

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# THE LAY READER PROGRAM IN ACTION

The use of lay readers by teachers of English began in 1957 when Newton High School in Massachusetts undertook "Contract Correcting" in the School and University Program for Research and Development (SUPRAD) under the Cooperative Research Program of the U. S. Office of Health, Education and Welfare. The project sought to discover whether the use of lay readers would encourage more frequent and varied theme assignments while freeing teachers' time for other aspects of English. A year later, Educational Testing Service launched a project to determine whether lay readers could be used without significant loss of improvement in writing. With preliminary reports from both projects favorable, other schools, aware that teachers meeting over 175 students daily could not maintain adequate writing programs, began to use lay readers.

In 1959, the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English authorized me to study two Wisconsin programs — Racine, an independent venture, and Sheboygan, a former ETS center. This I did through interviews and comprehensive questionnaires. I found the Racine program still experimental in its first full semester and Sheboygan program no longer experimental in its fourth semester. The following reports, part of the Council's continuing study, reveal the procedures, problems, and human reactions in two successful programs at very different stages of development. The Racine report is based on responses of seven teachers, eight readers, and five classes totaling 148 students, whereas the Sheboygan report includes fourteen teachers, fourteen readers, and three sophomore, three junior and three senior classes of 247 students.

Both programs serve only college-bound students, who most urgently need systematic intensive writing. Neither is a substitute for the only answer to crushing teacher loads — four classes of 100 students. A significant SUPRAD finding confirms my own opinion — that lay reader programs work best with college-bound students. They are, therefore, a specialized means of enrichment. As such, they will be useful even if the 100-student load becomes standard because they foster professional growth among teachers, who must review procedures and provide leadership in a fresh context; and intellectual and emotional maturity in many, many students, who must realize that, in daily life, readers, some very discriminating, are the inevitable judges of writing.

—Dr. Virginia M. Burke
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

# IN RACINE, WISCONSIN

Racine high school students may think of a lay reader as the person "behind the marks", "an intelligent person who sincerely wants to help us" or "the unknown godlike creature passing judgment' on their themes. They may view her as a "cool bookworm" or a "good source of information". Whether they see her as a challenge, a threat or an inspiration, most students believe she has something to offer to their education.

To local administrator's and teachers, the lay reader is a valuable community resource — usually a retired teacher or a housewife with a college degree — a competent person who makes possible an intensive writing program for college-bound students and brings a fresh viewpoint to theme evaluation.

Upon the recommendation of Mr. John Maxwell, Consultant in Language Arts, the Racine Board of Education approved, for the spring of 1959, a seven-week experiment using five teachers, five readers and eight classes of Advanced Senior English. The program was broadened in the fall to include ten teachers. ten readers and about nineteen classes of Advanced English. Further expansion this semester has opened the program to 25-30 sophomore, junior and senior Advanced classes. From the outset, the program was officially presented as a means of increasing the amount of writing, especially for college-bound students, without forcing teachers to weaken other aspects of English or neglect writing in their other classes. The Racine program, then, is in no sense an answer to the nagging problem of teacher load; rather, it is one of many current enrichment plans for superior students.

Setting up a full semester's program in September, 1959, required four major steps. Persons responding to an advertisement in the *Journal-Times* were interviewed, their references were checked, and they took parts A and B of the Cooperative English Test, Higher Level (Educational Testing Service) and wrote an impromptu theme. School authorities then selected some readers for immediate use and designated another group for use in late, expansion. The third step was to make up teacher-reader teams. In this particular program, readers often work for more than one teacher. The fourth step, orienting readers, was carried out by teachers, department chairmen, and consultants who conducted two sessions of theme evaluation.

Readers are expected to handle no more than half the themes for classes writing 16-18 per semester. Readers and teachers keep in touch by phone, in writing and in person. Most readers are asked to indicate errors and write comments, a few are asked to suggest grades, and one or two actually grade papers. Readers are paid as follows: Class I papers, to 200 words, $.15; Class II, to 500 words, $.25; Class III, to 1,000 words, $.50; Class IV, over 1,000, $.75.

Reactions from readers are favorable. Readers believe the program is designed to permit more varied and intensive writing and to relieve teachers of paper work so as to permit some reallocation of time. All readers (one opinion

qualified) think the program is succeeding. They enjoy it because they like to keep in touch with teenagers, they are interested in writing, and they can earn money at home. They believe they are performing a useful service which teachers appreciate, and they think that the greatest advantage of the program to students is a "second person's viewpoint".

Seven readers are satisfied with the guidance given them and six found the theme evaluation sessions helpful. Three would prefer working for one teacher only. Six could handle more work than they have been given, and six are willing to assign grades to papers. Several say they see improvement in students' writing. The only significant suggestion for improving the program comes from three readers who think the pay scale too low. Seven believe the program is worth continuing and wish to continue in it.

Teachers see the program's prime values in permitting them to assign 5-9 more themes than formerly, providing for more detailed comments on themes, and contributing a challenge and a fresh point of view. Minor values: teachers take more care in giving theme assignments, they are able to give more varied assignments and the program puts writing on a broader, more realistic base. All teachers notice some improvement in students' attitudes toward writing and in their writing as well. Six teachers agree with their readers' evaluations most of the time and several are pleased to see that readers' comments often reinforce their own. A few teachers wish papers could be processed more quickly, and five would prefer to work with one reader only.

Three teachers state that readers save time for them but four disagree. Teachers are expected to recheck all papers in order to review readers' evaluations; in addition, they must handle all revisions and keep the extra records entailed by increased theme assignments. While some may be able to work out slight reallocation of time, they rarely save any; in fact, some maintain their work has increased.

When teachers were asked to suggest two or three immediate improvements, they stated that one reader would be better than two per teacher, themes should be processed more promptly, and readers might be used for Regular classes where the drudgery of paper reading lies. They list three substitutes for the present program: clerical help; readers for Regular classes; and, most important, a four-class load of 25-30 students per class. One teacher would welcome clerical help as a supplement to the present program. Nevertheless, seven teachers (two opinions qualified) feel that the program is worth continuing and wish to stay in it.

Slightly over-two-thirds of the 148 students surveyed have clear notions of the program's aims. Responses fall into three groups: first are those explicitly stating the relationship between aid to teachers and benefits to students: use of teacher time for preparing other class activities (33); more writing (25); more extensive theme evaluation (5). In the second group are students who state no relationships but who see the program's values for them: a second person's viewpoint (15); more writing (14); more extensive theme evaluation

(14). The third group consists of those who see the program merely in terms of relieving teachers of heavy burdens or keeping costs down by using lay readers instead of reducing class size. Quite a few "negative" students are in this group, but when their questionnaires are reviewed, it becomes clear that the wholly negative students are a very small percentage of the total 148.

Seven students believe they have been asked to write too many themes; 37 say they have not had time to see or revise one paper before writing another. Since 35 of these wrote 16-18 themes during the semester, it is possible that requiring more than 15 themes brings the program to the point of diminishing returns and student and teacher exhaustion. When 16-18 themes per student must be processed for 30-35 students in a semester, themes cannot be returned as quickly as students and teachers might wish, and the concept of progressive learning in a sequential writing experience is likely to be blurred. Anxieties of students, readers and teachers indicate that all groups are aware of the need for preserving the double principle of an effective writing program: learning to write by writing and learning through revising before attempting a new writing task.

Two out of five classes report that they have seen or met their reader, and one reports that she spoke briefly on theme evaluation. Many students in other classes do not know who their reader is. A policy matter arises here because, if readers are to remain objective, they must be protected from over-anxious students and parents; but, at the same time, fear of the "unknown god-like creature passing judgment" on their themes may create negative attitudes in students. Twenty-eight students whose reader spoke to the class report strong positive reactions. Seventy-one students in other classes believe their readers should speak briefly to their groups. Their reasons? So students can see what she is like, gain confidence, and learn what she looks for in themes and what her concept of good writing style is.

According to 115 students, their teachers and readers use approximately the same correction symbols, and 105 students feel that teachers and readers have the same general point of view on theme evaluation. Among students who disagree, one difference appears to be between two methods of evaluation: (1) indicating a weakness without correcting it but giving a handbook reference for it; (2) actually editing or rewriting, sometimes without identfying the weakness or providing handbook reference. A second difference, one of emphasis, shows up when students maintain that readers concentrate on mechanics to the exclusion of content, overall organization, and the like. Whether to be a revisionist and proof reader or a guide is a question of concern to all teachers. Practice in the profession is not standardized; indeed, it probably cannot be and should not be, but any discussion of theme evaluation should center on selecting the method which most actively enlists the thought and labors of students on revisions and which provides a balanced evaluation of their work.

Two classes report that readers grade their papers, with one class almost unanimously in favor of this and opinion in the other equally divided. In the three classes whose readers do not grade papers, 32 students think they should, 48 do not, and 15 are undecided. Objections to readers grading papers include

comments that the reader is too hard, she doesn't know the student's capacity, she may not be entirely familiar with the context of the assignment, and the teacher alone has the right to grade. With seventy-two students willing to have readers grade papers, even though some students do not know their readers, it seems likely that when reader-teacher teams have established clear working relationships and readers have had adequate guidance, and when students' anxieties have been reduced by actually meeting readers, readers can be expected to grade papers and most students will accept their doing so.

One hundred and twenty-eight students are usually able to understand readers' symbols and comments. Since teachers willingly interpret these as need arises and since most teacher-reader teams use the same set of symbols and handbook references, there seems to be no real problem here. Among students who did not always understand symbols and comments, confusion came when readers wrote illegibly, used unknown or unclear symbols, and went too deeply into structural matters, often introducing ideas students had not yet encountered.

Students are more flexible than one might suppose — ready to adjust to change when they see real value in it. When they were asked to choose one of five plans for theme evaluation, only 30 held out for having their teachers read all themes; 57 chose to have some read by the teacher and others by both reader and teacher; 43 chose cautiously — all read by both; and 13 wanted some read by the teacher and others by the reader. Only 10 students believe their readers are easier on themes than their teachers; 66 see little difference, and 72 students declare the reader is harder. Yet of these 72, only 18 want all papers read by the teacher alone, whereas 22 want all read by both and 23 want some read by the teacher and others by both.

Many students see positive effects of this program on their work. Sixty state that they now watch sentence structure more carefully, do more dictionary work, and organize, proofread, and revise more carefully. Twenty-seven prepare papers more carefully for readers than for teachers because readers have "more time" for analysis, grade more strictly, expect more, and make students feel the need for full, clear communication. Fifteen students mention the real value of "a second viewpoint". Many state that their attitudes have not changed because they have always liked writing and have worked hard at it. Only 15 students confess they are discouraged, chiefly because their themes are dismembered, corrections are sometimes "picky", and positive comments are few.

Students would like to see some improvements in the program. Many wish their readers might speak to classes and hold conferences with individuals. They wish teachers and readers would consistently use the same correction symbols and they'd like themes returned more promptly. While they are often willing for readers to grade themes, they do not want *all* papers turned over to readers. Many do not object to grading by competent readers so long as teachers review results. They apparently approve of the team idea, but they insist on clear three-way understandings and sound working relationships.

Students' final reactions are a tribute to the care administrators and teachers have taken in developing the program and to the success of most teacher-

reader teams. Only 11 students think the program is not accomplishing its aims; 121 believe that it is; the rest are undecided. Eighty-eight have gained new benefits; 56 have not, among them, students who see the program merely as an aid to teachers. One hundred and nineteen believe the program is worth continuing and 102 prefer to be in a class having a reader.

The lay reader program in Racine, in this last phase of its experimental period, is a plan for enriching writing experience for superior students. As such, it is working well. Minor operational problems can readily be smoothed out. The program's values are clear and convincing: at least one-third increase in writing, a valuable second opinion on writing, and strong motivation for college-bound students. Student reaction is favorable, as is reader reaction, and teachers recognized the value of the program too. This plan takes writing out of the "exercise" category and out of the "I write the way I feel" and "You know what I mean even if I don't exactly say it" fantasies and makes it a serious business of communication. Teachers have always striven to do this, but a second person's opinion is a stimulating device to awaken students to the real demands of communication.

The Racine program was not designed to solve serious problems created by too many classes of too many students per English teacher. It provides some relief, but only for teachers whose readers serve two or three of their classes and for teachers with combinations of English and another subject requiring less paper work. Overwhelming work loads for those teaching only English continue to pose a crucial problem to which the four-class load of 25 students per class is the best solution short of extensive reorganization of the teaching of English in high schools.

## IN SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

The lay reader program in Sheboygan, now in its fifth full semester, began under the auspices of Educational Testing Service with money from the Fund for the Advancement of Education. Sheboygan was one of thirty-two school systems invited to participate in a project which called for sixteen systems experimenting with lay readers and sixteen comparable systems serving as controls. ETS hopes to show, in its forthcoming final report, that many teachers have been relieved by lay readers of heavy paper-reading responsibilities without significant loss in improvement in students' writing.

Nine teachers, with a total of sixteen classes, and eight lay readers, chosen from a panel of sixteen carefully screened applicants, initiated the program in the fall of 1958. Rate of pay was $.25 for a paper of average length, $.10 for

revisions, and $1.50 per hour for conferences with students and teachers and for term papers. A theme a week was the pace for most classes, and teachers could ask readers to handle all themes with the understanding that these would be subject to review. In the fall of 1959 Mr. R. J. Bromley, Curriculum Coordinator, and the Sheboygan Board of Education, believing the program worth continuing at local expense, expanded it to include sixteen teachers and fourteen readers for all sophomore, junior and senior classes of college-bound students.

ETS sponsorship brought real advantages to the program and obviated a number of pitfalls, such as hiring readers on individual recommendation or as a result of special pressure. Readers were hired only if they passed with some distinction a battery of tests (including tests of vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation), could write an acceptable composition, and could promise to be present from time to time for conferences, a feature basic to the program. Participating teachers were given some leeway in choosing their partners to insure congenial teams. Since the pay rate, uniform for all systems in the project, allowed for conferences and for checking corrected and revised papers, readers gained status through their follow-up work and were in close touch with their teachers' opinions and students' reactions. They were encouraged to attach to each theme a slip with a suggested grade, though teachers reserved the right to assign the final grade. Two other obvious advantages of ETS sponsorship were the prestige of ETS, which furnished an excellent basis for local promotion, and financial help from the Fund, which argued well that the program was worth trying.

The fourteen readers (including one substitute who felt she had not had enough experience to fill out her questionnaire completely) agree that the program is achieving its purposes and is worth continuing, and they all wish to continue in it. They see many values for the teacher, but chiefly they see that the teacher has help with extra paper work (6), can require more written work (4), and can spend more time on other aspects of the English program (4). Greatest benefit to students is more frequent practice in writing with more opportunity for developing skills and style (10); other values: a second point of view (4), more critical evaluation of papers (3), and more intensive preparation for college writing requirements (3). While these readers surely appreciate the chance to earn money at home, this is not a major value of the program to them, and it is significant that when they were requested to suggest improvements, there appeared only one reference to money, the suggestion that more money was needed to expand the program. The three chief values of the program for readers are its intellectual challenge (9), pleasure in rendering useful service (6), and stimulating contact with young people (5). Significant, too, is the fact that there was no clustering of responses to the question of how to improve the program. Though three readers would like closer contact with theme assignments and two would like more interesting and creative topics for students to write about, all other responses were single and widely scattered. For those who may be wondering whether this program invites regimentation and undue conformity, the following comment is pertinent: "I think one valuable aspect of this program is its apparent flexibility. No two teachers handle

it exactly alike but use it in the way they consider advantageous to their own peculiar demands and objectives."

The double thread running through all data from readers is the fine degree of integration in most reader-teacher teams and in student-reader relationships. Twelve readers feel that they have been given enough of the context out of which theme assignments grew and thirteen have found that they and their teachers usually agree on evaluations. Readers list and commend the following devices and experiences which have oriented them to their duties and given them a realistic gauge of their effectiveness: regular conferences with their teachers; use of a standard set of correction symbols; a prescribed form for manuscript style; special directions in handling particular writing problems their classes have been studying; inspection of a set of themes corrected by their teachers; evaluation of two or three themes with their teachers; checking their suggested grades against their teachers' final decisions; teachers' comments on their work; and student reactions in conference to their written and oral comments. While an occasional teacher restricts a reader to marking errors only in the conventions or the mechanics of writing, most teachers have given readers responsibility for the theme as a whole and have encouraged them to suggest grades, whether split or single. This practice not only enhances readers' status but trains them rapidly in making sound judgments which they may check against teachers' opinions. Statements like the following indicate the close working relationship which has developed in many reader-teacher teams: "I have a conference with the teacher each time the papers are returned;" and "My teacher and I have discussed our aims . . . very thoroughly."

Contact between readers and their classes is well developed in most instances. Eight readers have handled more than half or all of the themes assigned to their classes, exclusive of book reports and short papers. Twelve readers have met their classes, eleven have talked to them about their views on writing and twelve have conducted individual conferences with students. Several readers feel that conferences are the crux of the program. As one reader puts it, "The personal relationship between the lay reader and the students is an important one. Red-inked anonymous remarks on their papers could prove annoying to the students without the followup conversation with the reader, during which the reader has an opportunity to explain himself, encourage the writer, and establish a rapport which may lead the writer to write more fluently . . . knowing the reader is sympathetic in his criticism." Eleven readers have been seeing revisions of papers and eleven have been suggesting grades while two others would be willing to suggest grades if requested. Twelve readers have noted improvement in the writing of many students.

For the most part, reactions from the fourteen teachers included in this study are positive, some enthusiastic. The success of the program, says one teacher, hinges entirely on *good* lay readers and on cooperation between teachers and readers. There is strong feeling among the teachers that lay readers are most useful for superior students. The following comments are illustrative: "Only the better students regard the plan as an opportunity to improve their writing;" and "The better students and more ambitious ones don't object" The

poorer ones and the "ones who lack drive and try to get by tend to dislike the program even more as it goes along because they are being caught." Chief values of the program to students, teachers believe, are the opportunity for more writing (6), a second person's opinion (4), and longer comments on papers (3). It is significant that there was no clustering of suggestions for improving the program. When asked to suggest other plans that might serve as well or better, several teachers called for a four-class load of twenty-five students per class, clerical help for routine chores, and reduction of extra-curricular responsibilities. Of the fourteen teachers responding, twelve believe the program is worth continuing, thirteen wish to continue in it, and twelve think other teachers would be interested in participating in the event of program expansion.

Teachers' responses to detailed questions tend to confirm those of readers. Ten teachers have been able to assign ten or more themes per semester with a high of 25-30. Seven teachers have doubled theme assignments and twelve believe that readers have saved time for them. Twelve state that their readers have been invited to suggest grades and all feel that they and their readers generally agree on theme valuations. All state that students usually understand readers' comments and symbols as well as theirs. In short, there seem to be no serious disagreements in the data from teachers or between their responses and those of readers. Negative attitudes in both sets of data are slight.

Of the 247 students surveyed, 87% believe that the program is achieving its purposes as they understand them. Analysis of the 230 responses to the question of why the program was started discloses three distinct groups — two positive, one negative. The ninety-three students in the first group see the program as designed primarily for their benefit. Their comments range from the simple statement, "To help us write better," to the thoughtful remark, "To give us more experience in writing so that we will be better prepared to write themes or essays in college." The ninety-six students in the second group show a real grasp of the two-way value of the program for themselves and their teachers. Typical is the following comment: "To give students more practice in writing and yet not tax the teacher unduly." One unusual response in this group shows how well some students understand the program's aims: "Our teachers today do not have the time to read and correct many themes for their students. However, writing is so important to the student that there are some who feel this should be done. Therefore, the lay readers were organized to help the teacher with the additional number of themes." The forty-one students in the third group view the program remotely as an aid to the teacher, and some are not at all convinced that teacher couldn't handle all the work herself. Comments such as, "To take the load of correcting papers off the teacher," and "So that teachers would not have to work so hard," are typical. Factors accounting for these negative reactions are complex, and without a knowledge of the individuals concerned they remain obscure. It is a safe guess, however, that these responses reflect — among other things — inability to keep up with a college-bound group, unwillingness to work, and emotional immaturity — three problems familiar to persons working with high school youth; it is equally safe to infer that some responses reflect such specific matters as dissatisfaction with a particular reader, disappointment at low grades, strong preference for the teacher, and dislike for writing. If we assume that whether or not a student likes certain features of an educational program, he is pleased to know that it has

been designed for his benefit, and if we agree that responses in the second group described above show considerable understanding of the program's aims, then 82% of the respondents are reacting in healthy positive fashion. This figure tallies well with the 88% of students who believe the program is worth continuing and the 79% who wish to continue in it.

On the whole, students seem well satisfied with the way their themes are handled. Ninety-two per cent state that both reader and teacher have the same set of correction symbols and 79% believe that both have the same point of view on theme evaluation, though one student claims his reader is "a tiger on grammar" and half the students in one class seem to perceive sharp differences of opinion between their reader and their teacher. Eighty-nine per cent state that they usually understand readers' comments and symbols, and 78% understand the readers' comments and symbols as well as the teachers'. But only 59% feel that their themes are returned more quickly or as quickly in this program than previously, and several included faster service on themes in their suggestions for improvement. Students have here identified one of the annoying problems in the mechanics of such programs, a problem for which there seems to be no ready solution. If students are assigned a theme a week, the reader must receive them from the teacher, evaluate them, often make notes based on them to help the teacher, and return them to the teacher who must review them, add comments, and assign and record grades. Only then can they be returned to students who by this time are embarked upon the next theme.

Sixty-nine per cent of the students say they have derived benefits from this program that would be otherwise unavailable. The benefits they list, both varied and thoughtfully stated, range from the reserved, "I have probably learned to write somewhat better," to specific remarks like the following two: "Impartial grades, useful comments, and improved sentence structure;" and "You learn that your writing can be interpreted in a different way by different people. You get more than one viewpoint."

Forty-seven per cent of the students state that their interest in writing has increased since the advent of lay readers. When we keep in mind that many of these superior students have always liked writing, this figure becomes significant. Reasons for their increased interest include pleasure in conducting research projects, learning more about how to write, increased ease in writing through more practice, and the value of a second person's point of view. These responses are duplicated and elaborated in student responses to the question of how the experience of having a reader has changed their attitudes toward writing and leave no doubt that the reader-teacher team can, in a way impossible for the teacher alone, stimulate and challenge those students who are intellectually and emotionally ready to improve writing skills. In describing their change in attitudes, students state that they take more time and care in their writing (63); enjoy writing now (24); are more aware of errors (24); are stimulated by seeing actual improvement in their work (19); value a second person's opinion (14); find it easier to write (12); understand the writing process better (12); have become more interested in writing (11); and see its importance (8).

When asked what immediate improvements they would make in the program if they had a free hand, seventy-two students called for more frequent reader-student contact. They would have readers speak to classes and conduct conferences more than once a semester, and a few even went so far as to sug-

gest assigning two readers to a class so that students could have more individual attention.

Students' second suggestion for improvement (twenty-five responses) is for more varied and interesting topics. Several readers expressed the same wish. Mr. R. J. Bromley, who met frequently with his readers and teachers during the first year of the experimental program to learn their problems and suggestions, identified this particular problem early in 1959 and recommended "a consistent plan of assigned written material. This plan should be based on a three or four year period and should move to greater difficulty of asignment as students become more mature." High school English departments all over the country are now working on this problem with a view to enriching and strengthening writing experiences without endangering student and teacher morale and creativity through rigid prescription in a lock-step pattern.

The Sheboygan program seems to be quite free of the jurisdictional problems which often besets projects involving teams. Readers were given to understand at the outset that the teacher is the final authority, but at the same time they were granted status through meeting their classes, suggesting grades, and conducting conferences. Readers, teachers, and students alike are well aware of the jurisdictional factor. Several readers and teachers point out that there is only slight variation in grading but, as one reader puts it, "High school youngsters seem to object to grades given by persons not on the faculty." A teacher's comment provides an interesting paralliel: "We generally agree on the grade, but apparently the students feel better about it when I have made the final decision. Personally I would let the lay reader do the grading." Student concern over the jurisdictional factor is probably at its peak when they enter the program. According to one teacher, "The students felt that the reader did not know them well enough and couldn't judge their work fairly. However, they were assured that I personally read each paper and placed the grade. They felt better."

Students know that teachers will be giving their final grades in the course; hence they are anxious for the teacher to keep track of their work. Yet when they were given five choices in theme grading, only twenty-three students held out for all grading of themes by the teacher alone. Better than half the students do not mind having the reader suggest the grade, but at the same time they are not willing to hand over this task to the reader. Seventy-two per cent want both reader and teacher to pass on their papers. From student comments one gets the impression that youngsters appreciate having two opinions, have great respect for readers' judgment, but recognize, as do readers and teachers, that the responsibility for final judgment rests with the teacher. One also senses that if students feel their reader-teacher teams have good working relationships and about the same point of view on theme evaluation, they are generally willing to grant the reader the status she deserves. But when they sense great discrepancies in viewpoint, in grading or in standards, or when they have not had enough contact with the reader, or when they are either unable or unwilling to keep the pace set in this program, they become confused, upset, and hostile. These reactions underline the necessity of careful selection of readers as well as the importance of sound working relations and effective communication between the members of the team.

The data in this study clearly show that the Sheboygan program is soundly

established and effective and that it has the strong support of teachers, readers, and students. It could expand in two directions. First, it could include ninth grade students (and seventh and eighth grade students, for that matter) whose abilities and goals mark them as college-bound. Even so, it would continue to be what most lay reader programs are at present — enrichment plans for superior students who need to face the realities of communication and master skills and style. Second, it could dip into regular classes of students who are mainly terminal. As several teachers point out, here is where the real burden of paper reading lies. Students in these classes, however, are not likely to need so much concentration on writing as college-bound students do, and for such classes it might be wiser to relieve teachers by providing clerical help for routine tasks and experimenting with learning machines, when these become available, in an effort to improve mechanics of writing, conventions of usage, and elementary matters of style as rapidly as possible.