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THIS FIRST ISSUE OF THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "BREAKTHROUGH" SERIES ANNOUNCES CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IDEAS AND PRACTICES TO HELP SCHOOL SYSTEMS SELECT CURRICULUM MATERIALS. IT IS WRITTEN BY AND DIRECTED PRIMARILY TOWARD ENGLISH TEACHERS. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES ARE INCLUDED--"A NEW RESPECT FOR ENGLISH" BY ELAINE E. LIMBAUGH, "INITIATING CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM" BY DOROTHY E. HOLLOWAY, "COORDINATING CURRICULUM EFFORTS" BY EDWARD E. KAISER, "JUNIOR HIGH LITERATURE" BY MARIAN L. DINNIS, "JUNIOR HIGH LINGUISTICS" BY DOROTHY C. OLSON, "LINGUISTICS AND COMPOSITION" BY C. J. SIMPSON, "RHETORIC IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL" BY EDWARD P. J. CORBETT AND RUTH ANDERSON, "DIALECT AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE" BY LLOYD R. RICHARDS, AND "DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AS A GOAL OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH CURRICULUM" BY ARLENE HEIMER AND JANET SCHACK. (RD)

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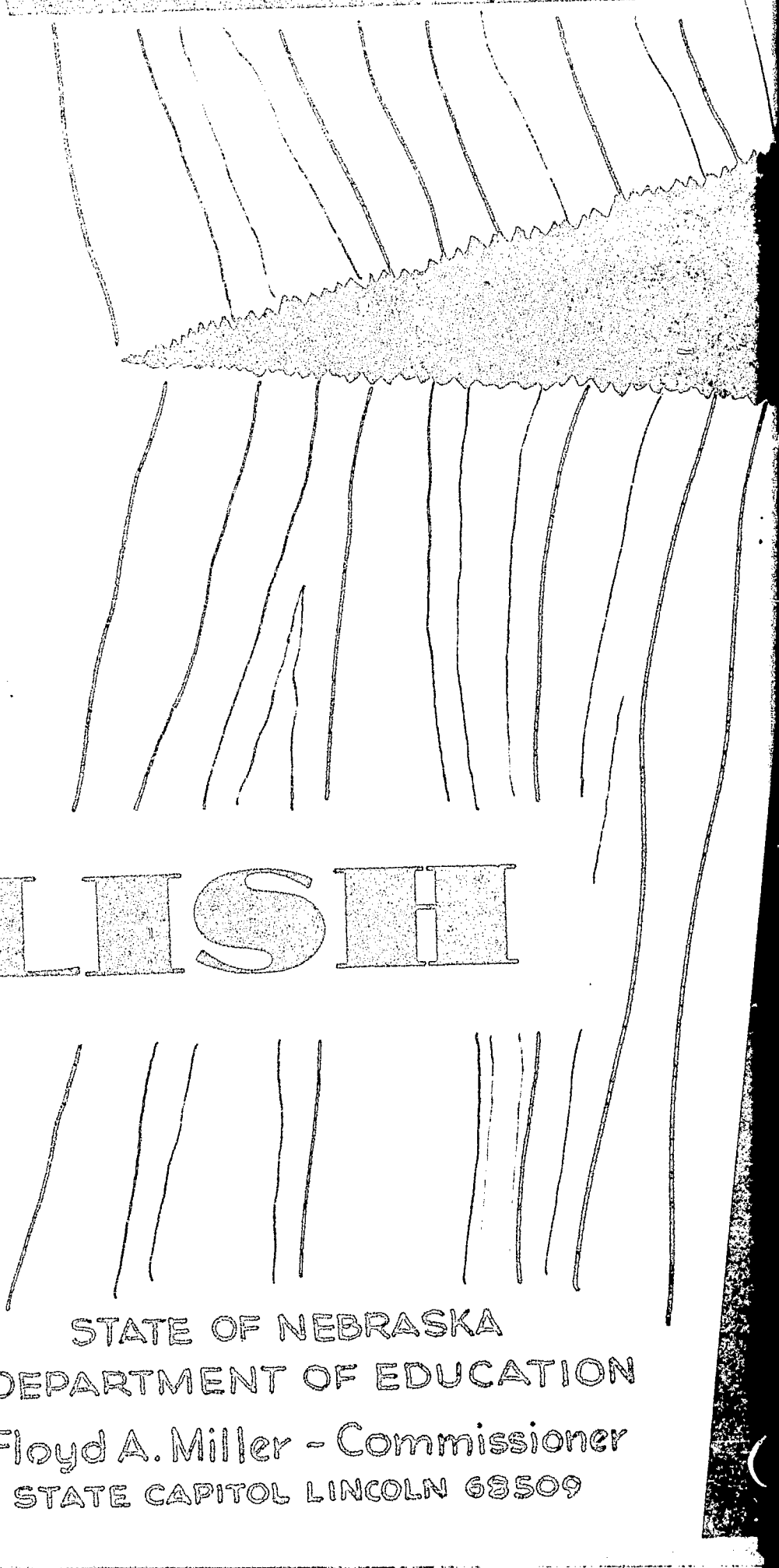

ENGLISH

STATE OF NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Floyd A. Miller - Commissioner
STATE CAPITOL LINCOLN 68509

"BREAKTHROUGH"

IN

ENGLISH

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Issued By
State of Nebraska
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The Division of Instructional Services
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"Breakthrough" No. 1

May, 1966

FOREWORD

Those of us who have had many contacts with teachers down through the years clearly recognize the good practice and strong dedication to effective teaching that prevails in our Nebraska schools. English teachers are no exception.

Probably no cross section of teachers evaluate themselves more often and search for better methods than do English teachers. Therefore, we think it is appropriate that this first issue of "Breakthrough" is intended primarily for and written by English teachers.

We are indebted to the teachers who have managed to find time to write an article for this issue of "Breakthrough." While the program or activity each describes cannot be predicted to be acceptable or workable for every English teacher, the enthusiasm for the success of the approach by each contributor deserves the attention of all of us. The Department of Education is pleased to recognize a rather select group of English teachers through this initial publication of "Breakthrough." At the same time we realize that many others probably have a similar contribution to make if an opportunity were provided. Perhaps in future issues we can have the privilege of publishing other articles.

It is our earnest desire to publish other issues of "Breakthrough" from time to time in other subject matter and activity areas where curriculum development is taking place. Your suggestions for subsequent issues of "Breakthrough" are sought in guiding the Department of Education to compile thinking and good practice which will be helpful to you and your school system. If "Breakthrough" helps you in your selection of curriculum materials, we shall be very pleased.

Floyd A. Miller
Commissioner of Education

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A NEW RESPECT FOR ENGLISH

By Elaine E. Limbaugh, Westside Senior High School, Omaha

"I don't envy you teaching English to Johnny. I never really liked English when I was in school."

"Did you say you teach English? I had better watch my language. English was my poorest subject."

"Why do we have to learn this? What good will it do?"

How many times have we as teachers of English had to "field" such rebuffs from parents, friends, or our own students? Remarks such as these suggest an ambivalence toward English that is disconcerting. While most people sense the necessity of the English class, few apparently have absorbed its worth. There is also the nagging implication that we as English teachers have committed ourselves to something less than a worthwhile concern with literary and linguistic sophistication. After awhile we may come to view those stacks of unread papers with a kind of disenchantment. When a whole generation of former English students can recall their days in the English classroom with no more than a good-humored contempt, and the English teacher knows only too well the reluctant student can "get on" in his materialistic society without mastering the verbal or the footnote, the situation must be viewed as symptomatic of a fundamental problem.

The problem, I feel, is due to the broad scope of our subject. Diversity may cause us to lose sight of the province of the English class and lead to an involvement with detail that viewed from the teacher's side of the desk contributes nobly to the whole of what we call English. Unfortunately, this is not a view many of our students can be expected to attain. Unmindful of our central core of unity, we move with dedication from spelling to the novel, to the adverbial clause, to **Macbeth.** As important as these are individually, they are not sources of unity for the

curriculum as a whole. In our search for articulation and motivation we become lost in a labyrinth of methods, tests, aids and textbooks. All too often we have allowed the textbook makers to plan our curriculum for us. I recall an education course where we spent several weeks examining textbooks, noting in detail such things as time lines, illustrations, study questions, and chronological development. Never once was it pointed out, nor did we think to suggest that the books we examined were merely resources to use in planning our curriculum. Never once was the core of unity around which we could utilize these textbooks defined. Most of us had very foggy notions of the province of the English class. We were well stocked with techniques for teaching spelling, punctuation and the novel, but our success was not to spring from these. Our success was to come out of those days that we touched upon real human experiences, placing the apostrophe, the essay or the direct object in a meaningful context.

Our core of unity is not to be found in skills and processes. There is unity to be found in our humanistic function. Jerome Bruner in his book **Process of Education** says: "The curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that give structure to that subject. Teaching specific topics or skills without making clear their context in the broader fundamental structure of a field of knowledge is uneconomical." Perhaps most people sense the necessity of the English class out of a vague realization that the English class affords our principal education in the humanities. If we can agree that the general province of English is literature and the English language, it becomes apparent that the underlying structure of our subject is to be found in ideas, concepts and propositions about human experience. Basic relationships of man, such as man and nature, man versus himself, man versus other men, man and his civilization, or man and deity are fundamental in human experience and the themes which emerge present numerous possibilities in the English classroom.

Ninth and tenth grade students can align with man's view of nature through selected works from primitive to modern times. They find real interest in man as a leader in **Profiles in Courage, The Prince** and **Julius**

Caesar. Man's concern with conduct can be the premise in such works as **The Return of the Native** or **The Pearl,** while **Dr. Faustus, Oedipus Rex** and **The Emperor Jones** provide opportunities to investigate man's picture of moral law. Within these themes, language and rhetoric lessons are given a meaningful context.

Eleventh and twelfth grade students can move to a more sophisticated treatment of fundamental humanistic concepts. Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman provide students with the idealistic views of man concerned with integrity and the discovery of self in a democratic setting. Man's need to define sin and the punishment for sin can be seen in **Billy Budd, The Scarlet Letter,** and **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.** These themes promote understanding of the essay, free verse, allegory, satire and irony as living techniques in human expression and experience. The English writers provide investigation into man's quest for justice, vengeance, courage or identification through **Hamlet, Gulliver's Travels** and **Paradise Lost.** World literature can take the student into the realms of man and his universe or cosmic perspectives through **The Divine Comedy, Antigone** or **The Book of Job.** These themes can be built around the principle literary genres. Advanced composition in the senior year is not a tedious "theme a week" but a human endeavor when approached through the essays of Huxley, Sainte-Beuve or Bacon; the short stories of Poe or Stockton and the novels of Hugo, Tolstoy and Thackeray. Upon examining the works of these "composers" who had something to say about the human condition, the elements of language, style, and structure become vital tools.

When the emphasis is on human experience, the skills and processes take on meaning and the underlying unit is not merely sensed but known. The student is led to "discover" inductively and the course in literature becomes an experience in literature rather than information about literature. The student is aware of having touched upon something real—something he can use to discover his own identity in a nervous and uncertain world. It is in this humanistic capacity that the teacher of English can move most effectively and in doing so fashion a new respect for English.

INITIATING CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

SIDNEY JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SIDNEY, NEBRASKA

By Dorothy E. Holloway, Sidney Senior High School

Perhaps the first step which any school wishing to make extensive changes in an English program should consider is the organization and installation of some type of administrative machinery to make the change possible. Such machinery is necessary to insure progress in changing, planning, and supervising.

With this in mind, all teachers involved in teaching English from Levels K-12 in the Sidney School System met in an in-service meeting to determine what changes if any were needed and how to bring such changes about. Having decided that change was needed, the first step then taken was to organize a language arts committee which embraced teachers of English from all grade levels. The group elected officers and went to work gathering and studying curriculum. This bit of research was followed by study and more in-service meetings wherein explanations, demonstrations, and overviews were made by special committees and resource people.

The result of this preliminary examination was our decision to adopt the **Nebraska English Curriculum,** for it seemed to us much more comprehensive, complete, and articulated than the number of other plans we studied. After having decided upon a specific program, we were eager to prepare ourselves to teach the materials supporting the curriculum. Some members of our faculty attended the Curriculum Development Center at the University of Nebraska and came back to give initial guidance and help to the rest of the English faculty. Because the change was brought about in a democratic way, our faculty have been willing to

support the new program and have done much to study and work with the curriculum on their own initiative.

At this time we began to feel that our large K-12 Language Arts Committee should be divided to facilitate handling the new program. We therefore divided into two sub-committees: one to give direction to the elementary program and one to the secondary, retaining the K-12 organization as a unifying factor. Now the elementary committee works with the elementary coordinator to unify, inform, and guide the elementary program while the secondary committee works with the secondary English chairman to achieve the same purpose. These division committees meet monthly, keep minutes, make recommendations for improving instruction, and keep the instruction moving toward a unified whole. The K-12 group regularly meets three times a year unless special programs are added. Its function is to insure coordination and articulation in the program and to provide worthwhile in-service programs not only for the English department but for the entire school and community. We feel the latter function has been important in that it has provided a way for English teachers to present their program and their cause aright to both faculty members in other areas and to the community.

In addition to the above described administrative procedure, we have found that our boys and girls, especially on the senior high level, needed and wanted additional instruction in reading and reading-related skills. Perhaps this need and desire is only temporary and will be cared for after several years with the curriculum and when the young students have become conditioned through vocabulary and more challenging reading assignments. However, for the past five years we have felt, and still feel, that instruction should be given in these basic skills on the secondary level. Our talented youngsters need and want specific training in reading and reading skills, **training designed to develop.** Our less-talented boys and girls need and want specific training to help them overcome deficiencies in reading and study skills, or remedial training. This we are attempting to do through special classes scheduled outside the English program.

We also feel that our student body should have ample opportunity to explore our fine literary heritage even beyond the enrichment offered

by the curriculum. We also wish to develop refinement in reading tastes. To do this we have organized a listening library and reading club. Our listening library includes recordings and filmstrips of many poems, plays, and stories not included in the curriculum. The library is located in one of the English rooms and is open each evening after classes are dismissed. Many students come for enjoyment and take away each time a little better refinement in reading taste. Our reading club invites the student to become an active part in his enrichment program.

COORDINATING CURRICULUM EFFORTS

By Edward E. Kaiser, Hastings Senior High School

The revolution in education during the past five years has reached the point of an explosive nature and its implications for the future are almost staggering to the imagination. English education has indeed been in the thick of things. Perhaps no subject area has been so completely examined to get at the heart of what is important and essential. The search is a continuous one to ferret out those aspects of English teaching at all levels which will produce an articulated approach to our work.

At Hastings Senior High School we were of the opinion that three areas needed most immediate attention. These are:

1. The teacher of English
2. The curriculum for English
3. The proper placement of the pupils in the English program

The Teacher of English

Two areas considered in our self-appraisal included the academic preparation of the teacher of English and the preparation in professional education. We discovered a range of teaching experience from one to several years. The majority of teachers were trained in traditional methods of teaching English and were practicing as such. A cold self-examination on the part of English teachers revealed a natural insecure feeling about a new way of doing things. The fact that old ways were not necessarily producing the best results was stimulus enough to consider other ways. Four of the eleven staff members have attended English Institutes under the auspices of NDEA. This experience has most certainly focused their attention on the current problems inherent in the teaching of English. One staff member was privileged to be a member of two curriculum

institutes at the University of Nebraska, which were held as a result of a grant from the Woods Foundation. We feel these institutes were of inestimable value and hope to have the remainder of our staff seek instruction and training in future English Institutes.

To keep abreast of things on a continuing basis, we have established an English departmental center which contains periodicals, curriculum materials from several sources, a library of basic references, books on curriculum and method, selected books on reading, selected books on composition, speech, and rhetoric, selected books on literature, specialized books on the mass media, aids for selecting books for adolescents, and specialized books on language. We are proud of our professional English center and use it constantly to gain new knowledge and exchange ideas with our immediate classrooms that have proved successful. We recognized immediately that some sound philosophy and method of evaluation will be needed to give direction to our work. We also plan to have some controlled research with various ability groups working with some new curriculum materials. We like to feel that an informed teacher will plan his work better and be a better classroom teacher.

The Curriculum for English

Does the English curriculum at Hastings Senior High School meet the needs of all the students? Here again a departmental appraisal was in order to determine existing program in terms of the goals of the school and community. We discovered that too much reliance upon single language texts and literature anthologies strangled rather than stirred the imaginations and efforts of the student body. Immediately coming to the forefront was the perennial problem of articulated instruction in English at all levels. With a view to the future work toward goals of articulation in the total school system, it was decided to do as much as possible to articulate at least the grades of the senior high school. This led to a serious appraisal of the resources readily available to us. In Nebraska we were indeed fortunate to find considerable aid from the Nebraska Curriculum for English as formulated by the Nebraska Curriculum Development Center. The wealth of material available for teacher enrichment is prolific. The many methods suggested for the teaching of the

materials to students also spurred the energetic teacher to the realization that much can be done to enhance the teaching of English.

We have for some time accepted the basic notion that English instruction most properly must involve an integrated consideration of language, literature, and composition. We are using some of the curriculum materials in all of the senior high grades. We have found they work best with college preparatory students. We have also found that grade designations for the curriculum materials are not necessarily appropriate for our purposes. What may be designated for grade nine very often works well in grade ten. It is in this way that we can meet the problem of individual differences.

Those teachers who have attended English Institutes were able to examine curriculum materials from other centers in the United States thus adding to the vast storehouse of materials available for examination. We have moved away from single texts and do use a variety of printed materials, notably the paperback. We have formulated curriculum materials of our own to use with certain groups. We have set guidelines for our curriculum in the senior high school but have purposely left it flexible enough to encourage experimentation. Change takes place when warranted. The ever-present need for suitable evaluation techniques applies to curriculum as it does in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

The Proper Placement of Pupils in the English Program

It is not our purpose to wage a continuous debate of the question to group or not to group students according to ability. For our purposes in English, we have found it desirable to group our students in three ability groups. We immediately recognized the need for differentiated materials in each of these groups which led to the curriculum efforts mentioned above. To simply group students and rely on the same curriculum materials to effect desirable learning is to invite disappointment. The two most important considerations in selecting materials must rest with effective analysis of reading ability and the environmental background of the student. We must establish as early as possible in the pupil's educational program whether he needs a terminal type (grade 12)

English program or a program which will allow him to adjust readily to the type of curriculum needed for success in institutions of higher learning. Because a student does change in the educational process and often shows need for change in grouping, we are always on the alert to move people from one grouping to another. We are during the current year using ETV in grade eleven with two ability groups and will at the close of the school year appraise its value in terms of its effectiveness as an aid in the total work of the classroom teacher.

We would indeed be remiss if we did not make mention of the fact that the success or failure rests entirely upon the cooperative efforts of teachers, administrators, school boards, and the community at large. We are fortunate in Hastings to have a receptive atmosphere in which to do our work.

We as English teachers in Hastings Senior High School are both optimistic and pessimistic about the direction of our work. We know that ways must be found to allow the already busy teacher time to do professional reading as part of his continuing education. We know that ways must be found to solve the problems of teacher load in order to properly devote the needed time to the formulation of proper materials to be used in the classroom. We recognize the need for well-organized programs of in-service training. (In this respect we are currently following the Project English programs on ETV.) Teaching English is hard work and it requires special dedication to meet the inevitable challenges of the future.

JUNIOR HIGH LITERATURE

By Marian L. Dinnis, Minden High School

In a day when the professional standing of teaching seems to be in some jeopardy (to the extent that legislation is at hand to clarify the issue), the prestige of the English teacher in comparison with his co-workers is at an all-time high. Despite the current emphasis on mathematics and science, most educators and even laymen regard the English teacher as the "key" teacher in a school system with only the kindergarten teacher offering keen competition for the number one spot. When one adds to this acclaim the well-recognized fact that the junior high teacher occupies a strategic position, bridging the gap between childhood and early adulthood, the teacher of junior high English emerges as a VIP.

Unfortunately a careful analysis of the situation reveals the sad truth that although he is admired, he is many times admired for the wrong reasons. The parent, the administrator, and frequently even the English teacher himself consider the job important because "everyone needs to know how to spell," or because "you can't get through college without being able to write well." Without questioning the truth of the above assertions, and of others in a similar vein, I venture to advance the idea that the real importance of the junior high teacher of English is dependent upon criteria of quite a different order.

The classroom is not primarily a place to assimilate facts, but much more significantly, a place to learn values. Probably no spot in the entire school curriculum lends itself as completely to this goal as the study of literature. The discovery of values is the end product, not the first goal, of the teaching of literature. However, if it is not kept in mind as an end goal, the teacher of literature can easily become side-tracked into the teaching of materials which cannot be justified for inclusion in the junior high curriculum.

It is impossible to teach well without being aware of the goals we hope to achieve. Certainly the first goal of reading literature would be a basic understanding or comprehension of the materials read. This goal would be no different from that of the social studies or science teacher, who must also have as his first goal comprehension of the materials read. Since this is true, it should be obvious that "reading" and "literature" are two different areas, the first being a necessary skill in any subject matter, the latter belonging specifically to the teacher of English. The teacher of reading and the teacher of literature might well be the same person; however, reading and literature are not the same disciplines, and it is essential that the teacher of either subject recognize which hat he is wearing.

A second goal for the teaching of literature is an appreciation of the materials read. Appreciation implies an emotional as well as intellectual response. It further implies that selections for inclusion in the junior high curriculum must be based on their high literary value, since only a sentimental emotional response can be evoked from materials of second-rate worth. Here again the teacher must guard against a temptation to assume that only those of high intellectual capacity are capable of adequate emotional response. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We sell our average and low-ability students short if we deprive them of literary selections of high quality. They may not be able to read as many selections, they may need more help in interpreting those they do read, but they should not be given an inferior product.

A third goal of the literature program is an understanding of experiences which are of universal appeal, or to put it more simply, an awareness of values. Mankind has always struggled with the following questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my relation to God? What is my relation to other men? A good literature program will help junior high students deal with these questions.

Every literature teacher in Nebraska should be aware of the work being done by the Nebraska Curriculum Development Center at the University of Nebraska. Every English teacher should have in his possession

a copy of **A Curriculum for English** which is a publication of the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English and can be ordered from that organization.

This book, along with the new publication of the College Entrance Examination Board, **Freedom and Discipline in English,** a report of the Commission on English, should give teachers of literature the sense of direction which in many instances has been lacking.

A first glance at the literature program recommended by the Curriculum Center leaves one a bit shocked at the difficulty of the offerings. However, this program is now in the middle of its fifth year of experimental use, and it appears to have proved itself, at least to the extent of warranting consideration by the teachers of the state. Edith Hamilton's **Mythology** in seventh grade, Stephen Crane's **The Red Badge of Courage** in the eighth grade, **The Odyssey** in the ninth grade may sound like impossible undertakings. However, teachers who have worked with these materials have found them not only possible but also vehicles which are in accord with the stated goals for teaching literature.

The following suggestions are stated here in the hope that they will be of help to junior high teachers of literature:

1. Distinguish between the teaching of reading and the teaching of literature. Both are important, but they are not the same.
2. Read aloud to your pupils, with the boys and girls following along in their own texts. Always begin a long or a difficult work by helping students into the story in this way. The less capable the class, the more of this kind of help will be needed.
3. Relate the content of your course to the literature which has preceded it, and point it toward the literature which will follow.
4. Having arrived at a core curriculum for your school, feel free to deviate from it as the situation at hand requires.
5. Be enthusiastic. The statement that "the love of literature is caught, not taught," may be trite, but it also is true.
6. The most important accomplishment of a junior high literature

program is the development of a favorable attitude toward literature. Only avid readers make inroads upon the vast quantities of good books available to people today.

7. Remember that teaching is an art. Instruction is not enough (or in some instances it can be too much) in the field of literature.
8. Whenever possible, teach whole works in preference to snippets.
9. Use paperbacks to replace or to supplement anthologies.
10. Use composition assignments as an outgrowth of the literature read.

Junior high teachers of literature can help bring order into the chaos of their discipline if they will ask themselves these questions: What are the goals of the junior high program in literature? What content shall I use in order to implement these goals? What methods shall I use to present this content? There is a purpose in the teaching of literature. If we hope to arrive we must chart the course.

A Curriculum for English
The Nebraska Council of Teachers of English
Andrews Hall 221
The University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508, Attention of the Executive Secretary
Price $3.50 (postage paid)

Freedom and Discipline in English
College Entrance Examination
Publications Order Office
Box 592
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
Price $2.75 (clothbound), $1.75 (paperbound)

JUNIOR HIGH LINGUISTICS

By Dorothy C. Olson, Everett Junior High School, Lincoln

Linguistics is a broad, scholarly, thought-provoking, enticing study; junior high school linguistics can be just that, too.

Before outlining the possible content for a linguistics curriculum, attention might be paid to linguistics as a concept study. Many critics of contemporary education rightfully castigate schools for training students in content-centered courses which are not always utilitarian. English teachers could help to counteract such criticism by emphasizing linguistic concepts.

Development of concepts about language, which, to human existence, is second in importance only to physical sustenance, provides the student with humane knowledge, which might also, hopefully, have carry-over into the skills area of composition and the criticism area of literature.

Important concepts about language basic to linguistic study in the junior high school might include:

1. Speech is THE language; written language is a secondary form of the language which requires certain refinements.
2. English is a syntactical, not an inflectional language such as Latin, although English does retain some inflectional suffixes, and they appear with certain regularity.
3. English sentences follow rigorous patterns. It is through expansion, transformation, subordination, and coordination of these patterns that the richness and style of the English language emerge.
4. English, or any language, is viable; it lives, and grows, and dies.

5. Because of this viability, no one word has only one definition, and no one meaning has only one word to express it.
6. Words can be classified or described according to different criteria: semantic or lexical distinctions, functions in sentences, forms of words, and syntax.

The content of a junior high linguistics curriculum may build upon linguistic experiences in the grade school years, or it may build upon traditional grammar exposure. Linguistics is not completely incompatible with traditional grammar; after all, they are both working with the same phenomena—the English language. Linguistics describes language more exhaustively, and more honestly than does traditional grammar. It describes every facet of language and this description is based upon the language as it is actually spoken and used. Linguistic approaches are historical, comparative, and descriptive, these names being explanatory in themselves. The linguists discuss the following areas of scholarship, all of them teachable in the junior high school years:

The **history of the language** is an investigation of Old English, its development to Middle English and subsequently to Modern English; in other words, the heritage of language, providing basic, useful understandings about spellings, current definitions, and pronunciations.

The history of the language is an appropriate precursor to the study of **dialect,** either regional or social dialect, in which sounds, selection of words, and syntax may vary from one area to another, and from one social class to another. If the linguist—or the junior high school student—is to consider usage, whether to say "it is I" or "between you and me," he would assign it to the area of dialect, and the appropriateness of choice.

Since language is essentially the spoken language, the study of sounds, the sounds which are utilized in English, is important; this is called **phonology.**

Lexicography is the study of the methods of the dictionary maker. The lexicographer-linguist records language as it is actually used, as the spoken word or as the written word in current periodicals and

books. Thus **Webster's Third International** has moved toward the ideal of no usage labels, only the current (as of the date of publication) pronunciation and definition.

Morphology has to do with the forms of words, and their classifications—nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, open classes of words, to which new words are constantly being added. These are juxtaposed to structure or function words, closed classes of words, to which no new words are being added. Students are interested in discovering that no new prepositions, verb-determiners (auxiliary or helping verbs), intensifiers (very, too, quite, etc.), conjunctions, relative pronouns, noun-determiners (the, a, an, my, your, our, their) are being added to the English language. Form class words can be classified according to inflectional suffixes, derivational affixes, or syntax within the sentence.

Syntax is the study of the arrangement of words into English sentences. After a student has studied morphology, he is impressed with the importance of syntax to English; it is the most conclusive determinant of the form class of a word. The words **A geese the marshes flock hovered over low-lying of** must be systematically and syntactically arranged, **A flock of geese hovered over the low-lying marshes,** in order to have meaning. The structural linguist—and again, the junior high student—can observe a minimum of four sentence patterns for basic, kernel English sentences: Noun - Verb; Noun - Verb - Adjective; Noun - Verb - Noun; Noun - Verb - Noun - Noun. This set of basic sentence patterns may be refined, distinguishing types of verbs involved, transitive and intransitive verbs, be verbs and linking verbs.

Meaning and its ramifications fall in the area of **semantics,** the study of meaning wherein specific and general words, concrete and abstract ones, implications, denotations and connotations, reports and judgments are considered.

The foregoing outlined areas can be organized, adapted, and taught to junior high school students, and they learn them eagerly.

LINGUISTICS AND COMPOSITION

By C. J. Simpson, Omaha Central High School

The composition student is inclined to believe that any utterance he has composed is not susceptible to change; or, if he can be persuaded to accept the idea as an hypothesis, he does not know what changes are possible or how they can be made. We can change his attitude by teaching him ways to change what he has written, which are based on linguistic analyses of syntax. Four different methods that we can teach him for changing his expression are **substitution, elimination, addition,** and **transformation.** The four terms are useful at different levels of sophistication and maturity. It might be both simpler and wiser to teach a ten- to twelve-year-old some of the several substitutions for a noun before introducing the more complex idea of transforming one kind of structure into another. In either case, the result should be improved variety, accuracy, clarity, specificity, and felicity of expression.

The student may acquire the virtue of economy in the use of language by learning how to eliminate the redundant, irrelevant, and puffy. We must be cautious, however, in ourselves excising what seems redundant or irrelevant from student writing. For example, I have often had a sentence like this: "Macbeth was a man who wanted to be king," or in a slightly different version, "Macbeth was the kind of a man who wanted to be king." My first impulse, a strong one, is to cancel "was the kind of a man who," leaving "Macbeth wanted to be king" as a precise, economical statement, clearly saying all that the student was trying to say. But second-thought recommends constraint. Of the two versions of the sentence, the longer seems the poorer, in being more excessive; but actually, by coming closer to achieving the writer's intention, it is the better. The words, "**the kind of** a man," suggest that he was trying to say something more than that Macbeth wanted to be king. He was trying

to say something about the nature of Macbeth—to communicate a psychological understanding. Simply to cancel the offending expression or to charge the writer with an error in sentence structure is to condemn him for trying to add something significant to the bare statement of fact.

Another resource for improving writing is the principle of addition. From this principle the student can learn a good deal about manipulating the language, about both the reasons for and the ways of doing it. He can learn that, contrary to received opinion, it is the modifier—what one **adds** to the noun, the verb, and the main clause—that is most important in the sentence. It is these additions that furnish the necessary information, the specific details, the relevant supporting evidence to round out and fill up the sentence to make it meaningful, clear, and convincing. He can also learn an important general characteristic of writing—the fact that as thought is structured in language, the movement generally, though not exclusively, is from the general to the specific. "The basic fact for observation is the tripartite articulation of utterance in formal prose: that is, first [there is] the nucleus of predicated subject (the main clause); second, the specification of context by adjectival, phrasal, and clausal modification; and third, the arrangement or composition, by order and explicit connection." It is these phenomena of structure in discourse that account for the principle of addition and that make the additions significant.

Finally, the student can learn to manipulate a variety of modifying structures at varying levels of specificity as additions to the bare statements in the sentences he composes. The multi-level sentences which result afford excellent opportunities for studying the structures of the modifying elements, and for understanding the concepts of coordination, parallelism, subordination, and modification.

To make use of any of the many options provided by substitution, elimination, and addition requires some basis for making choices among them. Assuming that the requirements of syntax and semantics are met, some of the choices will be governed by the conventions of usage and diction; but most of them will be governed by the principles of rhetoric,

for the choice of effective materials and the shaping and ordering of them into whole compositions are rhetorical functions. In this way, rhetoric helps to bridge the abyss between linguistics and composition, a wide gap that some insist has no crossing. We pass from the area of linguistics over into the field of rhetoric when we cease to think of the phenomena. The teacher can find that there is presently available a large number of curriculum materials, books, and theoretical articles illustrating in more detail possibilities for the application of linguistics to the teaching of composition.

SUGGESTED READING:

Josephine Miles (University of California at Berkley). "What We Compose," CCC., October, 1963, p. 9.

Paul M. Postal (MIT), "Underlying and Superficial Linguistic Structure," **Harvard Educational Review**, Spring, 1964, pp. 258-259.

H. A. Gleason, Jr., (Hartford Seminary Foundation), "What Is English?" CCC., October, 1962, pp. 6-7.

Harold B. Allen, (University of Minnesota), "Linguistics and Written Composition," **Language, Linguistics, and School Programs**, Proceedings of the Spring Institutes, 1963, of the NCTE, p. 87.

Jackson Burgess (University of California at Berkley), "Sentence by Sentence," CCC., December, 1963, p. 259.

RHETORIC IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

By Edward P. J. Corbett, Creighton University, and
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In his book, **The Aims of Education,** Alfred North Whitehead conceives of education as a cyclic process involving the stage of romance, the stage of precision, and the stage of generalization. "The whole period of growth from infancy to manhood," he says, "forms one grand cycle. Its stage of romance stretches across the first dozen years of life, its stage of precision comprises the whole school period of secondary education, and its stage of generalization is the period of entrance into manhood."

In the recently published **Freedom and Discipline in English (1965),** the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board suggests that Whitehead's cyclic view of education might well serve as the pattern for the teaching of composition in the schools. The Commission puts it this way:

> In composition the early years might concentrate on what, in the best sense, is creative writing—not writing aimed to create artistic forms or works of art, but writing aimed primarily at expression, at discovery of the self and the world. The next stage might concentrate on the discipline of form—on those matters of arrangement, logic, and conventional correctness that make up the body of most books on composition. And in the third stage, which in Whitehead's cycle is a return to freedom, teachers might promote the comprehensive view of composition which combines the pleasure and freedom of the first with the instruction and discipline of the second. This third stage should witness the development of style, as the first stage witnesses the development of invention, and the second of methods of arrangement and form. (p. 90)

This pattern strikes me as being a realistic and productive rationale for the composition course. Clearly, the success of such a progression depends largely on a well-articulated curriculum from the kindergarten through the first year of college. The curriculum units in English prepared by the Nebraska Curriculum Development Center provide this kind of integrated, progressive program for the schools, and if that curriculum is widely adopted in Nebraska schools, we may be able for the first time to institute a course in composition that makes sense and produces results.

The student in the senior high school is on the threshold of Whitehead's third stage. He should be confronted now with the more sophisticated problems of the composition process—a concern for the whole composition, a concern for the strategies of expository and persuasive discourse, a concern for the efficacy of style in his attempts to inform and influence his fellowmen. He should continue to be held accountable for the conventions of spelling, punctuation, and grammar, but he should now be made increasingly aware of the power of ideas when they have been soundly conceived, skillfully arranged, and elegantly expressed.

If he is to acquire this awareness, he must be grounded in some kind of rhetorical theory which will guide him in discovering something to say, in arranging his material in the most cogent way, and in expressing what he has discovered and arranged, clearly, vividly, and gracefully. The stage of discovery is concerned primarily with matter; the stages of arrangement and style are concerned primarily with form. And he must be made to see that although matter and form are distinct they are also integrally related.

What rhetoric can do for the student is to give him a set of norms or criteria for making the best choices from the available matter and form.

These norms can be found in one or more of the following reference points:

A. The kind of discourse in which he is engaged.

Just as in imaginative literature certain demands of matter and

form are made on the author by the genre in which he is engaged—lyric, sonnet, satire, familiar essay, short story—so in non-fictional prose certain demands will be determined for the author by the kind of discourse in which he is engaged—exposition, argumentation, description. Allied to this is the criterion of purpose. Is his general purpose to inform, to persuade, to move, or to entertain his audience?

B. The subject matter about which he is writing.

Consideration of subject matter will determine how much he needs to inform himself about the matter before he can begin to write; will force him to determine what his attitude toward the subject matter is; will help him set the tone of his discourse; and will force him to delimit the subject to fit the limitations of time or space set for him.

C. The audience to whom the discourse is directed.

Audience is often the chief determinant of the means chosen to effect one's end. Consideration of the audience will force the student to ascertain his audience and to attune himself to their frequency.

D. The competencies and personality of the speaker or writer.

This norm is tied up with Aristotle's **ethos,** the ethical appeal—with the image of himself that the speaker or writer wants to project in order to inspire the confidence and trust of his audience. This consideration will force the student to know himself so that his reach will not exceed his grasp and so that the image he projects will not work against the other means he has elected to effect his purpose.

Students in the senior high school are capable, I think, of dealing with such sophisticated criteria and applying them to what they read and to what they write. I would suggest that in the junior year the student should concentrate on learning these rhetorical norms by imitation—that is, by studying how accomplished writers have made their choices of strategies in the light of these norms. In his senior year then, he should

concentrate on the writing of connected discourse, using these norms to guide his own choices.

This may seem to be an overly ambitious program for the senior high school, but in view of the accelerated maturity of our students and the sounder training they are now getting in the early years of their schooling, such a program is not hopelessly unrealistic. If you make them walk, they will plod; if you make them run, they will sprint.

DIALECT AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE

By Lloyd R. Richards, Supervisor of English, Omaha Public Schools

Study dialect in the English program??

A unit on dialect will widen the student's understanding of language, deepen his appreciation of writers who have used dialect to enrich their work, help him to understand and accept the variations in regional speech patterns, and have a more complete understanding of the sounds he himself makes. It might have been just as well if the teachers in Missouri who took umbrage at Dizzy Dean's linguistic delinquencies had just "set back and enjoyed them" instead of trying to ban him from the air.

Had the King in THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN spoken the "King's" English instead of the dialect of the river traffic, he might have suited the taste of the cultivated middle-class, but he would have lost all his charm. Surely, "It warn't my fault I warn't born a duke, it ain't your fault you warn't born a king— so what's the use to worry?" is just as clear and far more colorful than had the speech been run through a language wringer to extract all the unprescribed juices.

A teacher who takes matters so seriously as to be completely intolerant of the speech patterns of his students is missing something both interesting and valuable to language learning. She would do better to make a tape recording in the interest of dialect research, translate the sounds into written patterns, and then show the student how his patterns compare to those of the standard dialect he must learn if he expects to "do business" with the "advantaged."

Instead of taking a student with language problems through a meaningless course of verb conjugations, noun identifications, and clause analyses, it would seem to be much more logical to approach the problem as

the acquisition of a second dialect in much the same way we might teach English as a second language.

To evaluate his own dialect, a student must be made aware of the sounds he makes, and this can easily be done with a tape recording. He should then be shown how his sounds would appear in written patterns, and those patterns should be analyzed with as much consideration as we would give to those we would substitute for them. Since the sounds he makes have served him well in his own particular environment, there is no reason—either educational or humanitarian—why they should be held up to ridicule or censure. The purpose is to understand them as well as we understand the sounds or written patterns we are asking him to learn.

The next step would be to show how the written patterns that reflect the student's dialect would appear in standard dialect. The King's speech so translated would appear as follows:

"It warn't my fault I warn't born a duke, it ain't
was not was not is not
your fault you warn't born a king—so what's the
were not what is
use to worry?"

This kind of activity might result in three discoveries: 1) that the really troublesome errors in a sub-level dialect are minimal; 2) that basically, the student's grammar is quite commendable; and 3) that his problems are not at all insurmountable.

> "I ain't got my books wit' me!" said a breathless student as he narrowly beat the tardy bell.
> "You ain't got your books wit' ya?" said the teacher.
> "No, I ain't got 'em wit' me," repeated the student without a touch of arrogance, resentment, or recognition of the fact his teacher had usurped his dialect.

"I ain't got my books wit' me," is, perhaps, somewhat thornier than the King's English in **Huck Finn,** but the grammar is quite clear, and so is the meaning. **Ain't** is conjugated:

I ain't	we ain't
you ain't	you ain't
he ain't	they ain't

all very neat, precise, and admirably uniform. In some ways it is more convenient than the allomorph that appears in "I haven't, you haven't, he **hasn't.**" A comparison of dialects would reveal the characteristics of the standard dialect as opposed to the student's:

I ain't got my books wit' me.
haven't with
or don't have
or I do not have my books.

The last step in the series of activities would be to translate the standard dialect back into sound, and the student should do this with the tape recorder. Then he should listen to the two sets of sounds he has made and draw comparisons between them.

When you consider the power of language in relation to the cultural and spiritual values, the social and family ties that bind people together, what reaction is to be expected from a boy or girl who is informed that his native speech is faulty, inadequate, and completely unacceptable in the school environment? One reaction we can surely expect is the rejection of the environment which is hostile to his entire experience with language.

It is my belief that no student is going to be induced to give up his native speech patterns because of the questionable appeal of memorizing the parts of speech, conjugations, and phrasal structures. His curiosity might be stimulated if the strange dialect he is asked to learn is presented as only another way of saying the same thing, a way that carries prestige along with certain social and economic blessings in the world of trade and commerce. A challenge is then offered to see whether he can get the "hang" of the thing.

DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AS A GOAL OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH CURRICULUM

By Arlene Heimer, Prescott Elementary School, Lincoln, and
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Four basic concepts of language, as stated by James B. McMillan, are that (1) language is speech, (2) language has system, (3) language has variety, and (4) language changes. (6:140) These fundamental understandings about language offer a basis for English language curricula at all levels. Yet many English programs have been based upon assumptions which are diametrically opposed to these concepts.

"Language" as a subject of the elementary school curriculum has often been primarily concerned with "correct" word forms and rules for punctuation and capitalization. The idea of a single unchanging standard of correctness is contrary to the knowledge that language has variety and language changes. (5,8) The emphasis upon the conventions of written expression ignores the fact that speech is primary and that writing is only a recording of speech.

During recent years, elementary school textbooks have given more attention than formerly to oral expression. The functional approach with its emphasis upon communication has recognized the primacy of spoken language. Despite this increased attention to one aspect of the nature of language, there has been continued neglect of another aspect, language structure. (3) As Dr. Squire has expressed it, "We have spent so much time on the **what** in communication that we have sometimes overlooked the **how.**" (10:535-536)

An understanding of language structure is regarded by some linguists as a means to more effective communication. (9:4) Apart from any

utilitarian value it may have, knowledge about language structure is of value in and for itself as is any other scientific knowledge. (2:28-29) It is important, therefore, that elementary school children begin to become consciously aware of the sound (phonological), word formation (morphological), and word order (syntactical) systems which studies have shown most children to be using automatically by the time they enter school. (4:46, 11:102, 106)

That "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (1:33) is being proven with different bodies of knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is no exception. It must not be assumed, though, that either linguistic matters or the new emphases of other disciplines can be presented to children in the same forms in which they are presented to those at more advanced educational levels. Instead, methods and devices which have proven effective in teaching children should be employed to help them arrive at concepts which have not heretofore been considered within their realm of understanding.

Children can be led step by step to observations and generalizations about the structure of the language they encounter daily in conversation, literature, textbooks, newspapers, and television programs. Games, puzzles, charts, bulletin boards, films, records, and other audio-visual materials can be used to develop language concepts. Scrambled sentence games and puzzles, for example, can make children more aware of syntactical possibilities. A four-line staff can be used to chart the pitch pattern of words in a sequence, thus supplying for the child a graphic representation of intonation. Without memorizing definitions, children can develop an acquaintance with form classes. Nonsense sentences can help them to observe inflectional endings and functions of words in sentences. (7)

Language variety and change, as well as language structure, can become matters of curiosity for children. When their interest is aroused, they ask and attempt to answer such questions as "How did language begin?" "Do other languages use the same sounds our language uses?" and "Why do people in different parts of our country speak differently?" Older children learn to consult the dictionary to find out how words are

being used and how present forms originated. They find the making of word origin charts a fascinating activity.

Experimentation is proving that children are capable of learning basic language concepts when the methods and materials used are those suited to their level of learning. It is also showing that children enjoy learning about their language. If results of current experiments are given consideration, the future holds promise of English programs which will help children to learn **about** language as well as to learn to use it effectively.

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