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Designing an English program to close the startling discrepancy between high educational aims and current teaching practices requires a delineation of learning objectives. A rationale that would achieve a clarification of goals should be based on a sound theory of the learning process and be guided by the writings of such educational philosophers and psychologists as Robert Mager, Benjamin Bloom, David Krathwohl, John Dewey, and Foster McMurray. This study would prepare curriculum designers to (1) determine realistic behavioral and cognitive learning objectives, (2) effect, through discovering and organizing their own goals and values, internally consistent and readily demonstrable curriculum decisions, and (3) base their selection of curricular materials on an understanding of the learning process in a democracy, the school's function as a social institution, and the subject matter of English. (JB)

The Growing Edges of Secondary English

Essays by the Experienced Teacher Fellows at the University of Illinois 1966-1967

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A RATIONALE FOR CURRICULUM DECISIONS

by DIANE P. SHUGERT

Mrs. Shugert received her B.A. and M.A.T.E. degrees from the University of Illinois. She taught history and English at Joliet Township High School—Central in Joliet, Illinois, and is currently teaching English at Hartford Community College, Hartford, Connecticut. *In this paper she discusses the need for useful and clear statements of objectives for the English program. She believes that for such statements to be useful they must be grounded in a firm rationale, and she presents some methods for arriving at such a rationale.*

Whether our function in public education is that of English teacher, department chairman, supervisor, or parent, we are besieged by appeals to adopt new techniques and new ideas, to familiarize ourselves with the latest theories of language and learning so that we may improve our curricula and our methods. Compounding the attack is the fact that every new idea casts into doubt our old methods, our traditional curricula. In order to evaluate either the old or the new, in order to decide what we want to teach and how we want to teach it, we must know what we value; we must know what ends we want our curriculum and methods to serve. And we must know those ends certainly both to justify keeping the old and to justify adopting the new. Most of the writers in this book suggest that we change what we are doing in our departments because advancements in language, rhetoric, and literary theories or in the techniques of teacher education, departmental organization, instructional design, and public relations can help us to improve the quality of instruction in various ways. That is, simply, they feel that those new systems will help us to carry out the aims that educators and English teachers wish to advance.

But what are those aims? The educational aims stated formally in texts seem to have little relevance to our decisions. Theorizing about ends and goals appears both time-consuming and futile, so we tend to rely upon our "experienced intuitions" and to think that we have our objectives "well in mind" as we attend to our immediate problems. Yet preoccupation with the immediacies of what we are doing may lead us away from whatever we had intended to do. In our concern with brush technique we may forget what we are painting. Squire and Applebee, who studied outstanding English programs in 158 high schools, suggest that we are unaware of the reasons for

teaching as we do and that, therefore, we often do not teach what we say we are teaching—or what we want to teach. They were startled by "the discrepancy between goals identified by teachers and principals and emphasis reported by observers of classroom teaching."[1] Some of their comments about literature programs seem especially significant: "Despite their obvious commitment to literature, teachers of English seem to have reached no clear consensus concerning the purposes of instruction in literature. In more than a few schools the assumptions underlying overall means and ends are too seldom examined" (p. 153). Squire and Applebee felt that a good literature program reflected "the deep recognition by a single faculty as a unified whole that literature contributes essentially to the education of each student. . . . It is this inner conviction of the importance of literature which seems to be the corollary of clear understanding of purpose, and it is too often lacking in English departments" (p. 154).

Just as it is impossible to recommend with force a book we've not read or not thought about, so it is difficult to promote objectives we've not examined and not understood. Careful, systematic, and rational examination of and construction of learning objectives is essential if we are to evaluate methods and curricula with any hope of success. If we are to make intelligent decisions concerning the adoption or rejection of new ideas, we must understand the principles which determine our choices. Furthermore, we must be able to support the principles and decisions so that we may act wholeheartedly to carry them out.

This paper, then, will be about establishing and clarifying the objectives of an English program. First: What form should objectives take? Second: What methods are available for establishing or clarifying objectives? What sort of help may we expect from each approach? Third, and the major part of the paper: How do we judge whether our objectives are good? What rationale—what sorts of principles—do we accept or need as justification for objectives? From what sources and in what way are we to construct our rationale? I do not intend to establish in this paper a neat set of goals for an English program. Rather, I hope to provide some techniques and some ideas which a

[1] James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee, *A Study of English Programs in Selected High Schools Which Consistently Educate Outstanding Students in English*, USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1994 (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois, 1966), p. 366. Published as *High School English Instruction Today: The National Study of High School English Programs* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968). Citations to this work will refer to page numbers in the original project report.

teacher or a department can use in the construction and evaluation of goals. Establishing valid objectives for English programs is a difficult, rigorous process and, by its very nature, one which is never completed. Fortunately, the process is both cooperative and cumulative; if the aims we construct are valid, we not only convince ourselves to accept them, we make it easier to convince others.

FORM OF OBJECTIVES

We need to state objectives explicitly and to write them down. Writing them directs attention to them in a way that formulating them in the back of the mind does not. Once written, they are available to the writer and to others. They can be arranged to show their interrelationships. They can be consulted when curricula and methods are being planned. They can be amended after some time has passed. If work with objectives is to be consistent, if it is to help a department to achieve consensus, and if it is to be cumulative, there must be a record showing what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

The way that objectives are stated, the form into which they are cast, is not important in itself. It is important, however, that they be stated in some way that is helpful to us in solving our problems. Since our primary concern is with what students should learn, we usually find it helpful to direct our attention to that concern by stating objectives in terms of the students. That is, we would say, "The student should be familiar with the forms and conventions of the novel," rather than, "The teacher should teach the forms and conventions of the novel." I will formulate all the objectives I use in this paper in terms of the student.

In addition I have found it useful to make some further distinctions. So far I have used *aims* and *objectives* interchangeably. From now on, I shall use *aims* to refer to those broad statements of purpose which often apply to outcomes intended for the whole of education. Aims sometimes are not stated in terms of the student. For example, "One purpose of English education is to help everyone to further awareness of patterns of language as an aesthetic component in the world of experience" is an aim. I shall use *objectives* to refer to more specific statements of purpose. They usually describe intended outcomes in terms of some change in the student. A statement such as "The student should understand that the language of his literature text is related to the language of comic books" is an objective. As objectives become more general, they merge with aims. *Behavioral*

objectives will refer to those statements of purpose which describe outcomes in terms of some change in the student's *observable actions.* An example of a behavioral objective is "The student should be able to pick the name of his literature anthology from a list of comic book titles without consulting his neighbor or the cover of his text." Another way of putting the distinction is to say that all three refer to some difference that we intend education will make in a learner but that we cannot test whether the learner has achieved an aim or an objective and we can test whether he has achieved a behavioral objective. This differentiation among aims, objectives, and behavioral objectives is made primarily because it is useful for this paper, but educational literature supports the distinction to some extent in that people who are concerned with testing tend to speak of objectives, while people who are concerned with intent and theory tend to speak of aims.

Finally, if we are to evaluate aims and objectives, we must examine the complex of reasons which support them. Insofar as that complex of reasons is orderly, consistent within itself, and responsive to what we know and value, it may be called a *rationale.* I cannot cite an example of a rationale for English programs, because there is no complete one. No one has yet attempted to construct a rationale for the total English program although bits and pieces of a rationale have been formulated for individual curricula and specific projects. Yet all four—behavioral objectives, objectives, aims, and rationale—are necessary, and all deserve our attention, for objectives are evaluated by aims, aims are validated by reasons, and reasons must be ordered so they consistently embody our values.

METHODS FOR CLARIFYING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Two methods are commonly used to establish and to clarify aims and objectives. Both are useful; both seek to make our intentions more clear and thus more communicable; both advise us to begin with some aim or objective which we believe we accept. Using the first method, we attempt to clarify aims and objectives by ordering them and making them more testable. This method is grounded in the assumption that when we can describe specifically the changes we hope will take place in the learner and when we can classify those changes in some significant way, we can then communicate our intentions more effectively. It is based on the assumption that once we know what we intend in terms of what we expect the learner to do, we can control our actions and our teaching so that our expectations

will be fulfilled. The second method endeavors to make aims and objectives meaningful by constructing a rationale for them—by examining the reasons we have for holding such aims. One of the assumptions of this method is that when we know *why* we advocate some aim, we know better what the aim means. This second approach is also intended to help us to discard some objectives and to act vigorously to retain or to establish others. Because very little concerning the construction and function of educational rationale is available, I will deal with that more fully in the section entitled "Rationale: Justification of Objectives."

Constructing Behavioral Objectives

Some material using the first method has been published, however, and we should certainly take advantage of it so long as we are aware of its purposes and limitations. *Preparing Instructional Objectives* by Robert F. Mager is designed to clarify objectives by stating them "clearly and unequivocally." [2] In practice this means communicating our instructional intent through behavioral objectives because only observable actions of students are clear and unequivocal; these can be measured and tested. According to Mager, if I say that the student should know how point of view functions in poetry, there is no guarantee that anyone knows exactly what I mean. Further, how shall I test whether the student has reached the state I desire? What student behavior would we accept as showing that he "knows"? Since we have not specified the necessary student behavior which is the end result of our teaching, how can we determine that our methods have been successful? Suppose, on the other hand, I construct a behavioral objective: When given an unfamiliar poem of sixteen lines or less, within an hour the student should be able to write an essay which identifies the poem's governing point of view and which points out some of the effects that point of view has on other elements of the poem's structure (syntax, metaphor, theme, etc.). According to Mager, everyone knows what my objective means because everyone can see what student behavior I intend. From this particular behavioral objective we can infer some activities which will lead to its achievement. Before a student can be successful, we will have to teach him some things about essay writing and about elements of poetic structure as well as about point of view.

[2] Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 1.

In the terms of Mager's book, the best objective is the objective which communicates intent most clearly. Intent is communicated best by writing behavioral objectives which contain their tests within them. Mager summarizes those principles in this way:

1. An objective will communicate your intent to the degree you have described what the learner will be DOING when demonstrating his achievement and how you will know he is doing it.
2. To describe terminal behavior (what the learner will be DOING):
   a. Identify and name the overall behavior act.
   b. Define the important conditions under which the behavior is to occur (*givens* and/or restrictions and limitations).
   c. Define the criterion of acceptable performance. [p. 53]

I shall emphasize here that Mager is explicitly not concerned in this book with whether our objective is worthwhile—with whether we *ought* to have a particular objective at all. He is concerned solely with stating objectives so that they communicate our intent.

Constructing behavioral objectives for all aspects of the English curriculum would have some good effects. First, it would require us to think far more carefully about our objectives than we usually do. Second, it might help us to construct learning situations which relate more directly to the performance we expect from the student. Third, it would make certain intents more communicable. Fourth, it would enable us to show learners exactly what is expected of them.

Mager's method has definite and severe limitations, however. First, it cannot help us to determine whether an objective is worth having. It does not answer questions of this sort: *Should* a student know anything about the function of point of view in poetry? Mager himself places that restriction upon his book: "This book is NOT about . . . *which* objectives should be selected" (p. x). Second, his method is best suited to stating objectives for skills learning because the learning of skills obviously ends in testable behavior. The method is extremely complex and inefficient when applied to some other types of learning. Third, Mager's approach is limited in a way that he does not seem to recognize. Everyone could agree that "when clearly defined goals are lacking, it is impossible to evaluate a course or program efficiently, and there is no sound basis for selecting appropriate materials, content, or instructional methods" (p. 3). But it is questionable whether the only—or even the most satisfactory—way to "clearly defined goals" is to construct all of them to "denote *measurable* attitudes *observable* in the graduate of the program" (p. 3).

Mager does believe that the "good" objective is the behavioral objective. That belief is highly questionable and may even be damaging

for two reasons. One difficulty is that Mager's method is backwards. In using it one asks, "What is the test?" and then, from the test, one works back to what must be taught so that the student can pass the test. Surely the first question is "What should the student learn?" After that question has been answered, it is appropriate to ask, "What sort of test would indicate that the student has learned?"

Mager's belief in behavioral objectives as the sole means for assigning meaning to objectives is dangerous for another reason. It is dangerous because it is false. The actual connections between aims, objectives, and behavioral objectives are inferential rather than existential. Aims often seem vague because we determine our *aims* by asking big questions like: What effects do we intend the learner's education to have on the whole of the learner's life? Then, to determine *objectives* for our English program, we ask: What should the student learn from our subject and in what way should he learn it that could have an effect on him in the direction our aims intend? Then, to determine *behavioral objectives,* we ask: What observable actions of the student might indicate that he has learned what we intend him to learn? It is not the case that each aim is a bunch of objectives and each objective is a bunch of behavioral objectives. We cannot dissect the body of an aim to reveal the tissues of objectives of which the aim is made, nor can we put the tissue of an objective under a microscope and find there the cells of behavioral objectives. Rather, we infer objectives from aims and behavioral objectives from objectives. The three have different functions. They are understood in the context of each other, but they do not *compose* each other. For that reason we are not overly concerned about the student's achievement of any single behavioral objective. It is necessary that we know what behavior we expect from a student, but this behavior is not always observable. A behavioral objective is important only insofar as it relates to some objective or aim, and part of its meaning is derived from that relationship.

When we construct behavioral objectives with due respect for their limitations, they do help us to communicate our educational intents. But they are not substitutes for aims and objectives, and constructing behavioral objectives is only one way we make clear which aims and objectives we support. Mager shows us how best to state behavioral objectives, but only we can determine the use to which they should be put.

Most teachers have studied some psychology, and many are familiar with analyses of the learning process which are based solely

upon that part of the learner's behavior which has been apparent to the observer: in other words, upon the learner's overt behavior. Most generalizations about experiments with rats have their origins in rats' overt behavior, for example. Because we find it so difficult to experiment with human learning situations and because the results of our teachings often seem nebulous and inconclusive, a system like Mager's seems attractive to us in that it is simple, practical, and definite. But there are outcomes of human learning which may be described as behavior but which are not evident to an observer, and our attitude towards both the construction of objectives and the testing of their achievement must take those outcomes into account. Thinking is as much a fact as acting is. Since psychologists do not agree about the relationship between the behaviors which rats exhibit in learning situations and the behaviors which people exhibit in learning situations, we cannot base our objectives on the idea that overt behaviors have the same significance for human learning that they have for rat learning. We who are not psychologists should not appropriate their materials indiscriminately.

Classifying Objectives

A much more sophisticated approach to the clarification of objectives is that used by Benjamin S. Bloom, David R. Krathwohl, and others in their *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.*[3]

Bloom and Krathwohl's technique has been to gather educational objectives available in their own experience and in educational literature, to analyze them in terms of the student behaviors (not always overt) which they appear to intend, and to subdivide the intended behaviors according to levels of increasing complexity (in the cognitive domain) or of increasing internalization (in the affective domain). The criteria of complexity and internalization were derived from the study of the objectives themselves. Bloom and Krathwohl then attempt to define the subdivisions so that communication about the objectives and their testing procedures is possible.[4] For each subdivision they provide sample objectives from several subject matter fields and items designed to test whether the student has reached the level of complexity or internalization which the objectives intend.

[3] *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals;* Benjamin S. Bloom, *Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956); David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, Bertram B. Masia, *Handbook II: Affective Domain* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964).

[4] *Handbook I*, p. 15; *Handbook II*, pp. 26–29.

This classification system with its wealth of exemplars directs our attention to the quality of response which we expect from the learner; therefore, one of its uses is as a means of evaluating curricula now in use. By classifying objectives, we can see fairly easily whether our stated objectives require highly complex responses from our students. If we find that *most* of our objectives require complex responses, some criticisms of the curriculum and its objectives are implied. For example, (1) We might be omitting necessary intermediate learnings, learnings of less complexity which are essential if the student is to achieve the more complex; (2) We might have a poor program for the slow student; (3) If our test items are not so complex as our objectives, then the test items cannot reveal whether the students are achieving the objectives we have set. Once we have classified what we have included in objectives, we become aware of things we have omitted. We may *wish* to omit those things, but in that case we at least know what we have done, and the system has helped to prevent oversights.

Clarifying objectives through hierarchical classification is also useful in developing sequence. That the *Taxonomy* can be utilized for English sequences is amply demonstrated in Sandra Clark's paper in this collection. For further explanation of the *Taxonomy*'s construction and uses for sequence, see Mrs. Clark's paper and the taxonomy itself.

The *Taxonomy*'s great usefulness is, in the last analysis, the result of its intellectual integrity. Its authors are fully conscious of the purposes and limitations of their work, and we too must be conscious of them in order to use the work wisely. First, Bloom and Krathwohl, although they are primarily interested in testing, do not equate test items with objectives. The students' overt behaviors are related to objectives and may be used to test whether students have reached objectives, but these behaviors are not the objectives themselves. Second, Bloom and Krathwohl make no claim that the categories of more complex cognitive behaviors are merely the sum of the simpler behaviors. Their claim is more practical and is based upon educational practices rather than upon a single psychological approach:

> One may take the Gestalt point of view that the complex behavior is more than the sum of the simpler behaviors, or one may view the complex behavior as being completely analyzable into simpler components. But either way, so long as the simpler behaviors may be viewed as components of the more complex behaviors, we can view the educational process as one of building on the simpler behavior. [*Handbook I,* p. 16]

Neither do they claim that the listed objectives are objectives we *should* have. They say instead that analysis of objectives now in use shows that we *do* have certain aims. Whether we can justify having those aims is another question. Finally, although they planned the *Taxonomy* to be as neutral as possible, they recognize that its hierarchical structure is not neutral, but they feel that the nature of presently held objectives does embody an hierarchical intent. That is, we do aim that the student should move from simpler and less internalized behaviors to more complex and more internalized behaviors as the result of his education.

The *Taxonomy's* stated uses are four: (1) to be comprehensive, to categorize all objectives now in use; (2) to make intents communicable; (3) to stimulate thought about educational problems; and (4) to organize the literature (*Handbook I*, pp. 21–22). It is not a fault, then, that the cognitive handbook is more immediately useful than is the affective handbook. We as educators have been more concerned with and more precise about knowledge which students are to gain than about ways students are to feel. Because the *Taxonomy* classifies objectives we now have, and because our affective objectives are less clear than our cognitive objectives, there is more room for doubt about the validity of the affective handbook. Yet, for the same reasons, the classifications of the affective domain should serve to stimulate thought about an area which has received too little of our attention.

Further, it is not a fault that Bloom and Krathwohl make no claim that the *Taxonomy* determines the value of the classified objectives. As Bloom says in *Handbook I:*

> The emphasis in the Handbook is on obtaining evidence on the extent to which desired and intended behaviors have been learned by the student. It is outside the scope of the task we have set ourselves to properly treat the matter of determining the appropriate value to be placed on the different degrees of achievement of the objectives of instruction. [p. 13]
>
> What is needed is a larger synthetic theory of learning than at present seems to be available. We are of the opinion that our method of ordering educational outcomes will make it possible to define the range of phenomena for which such a theory must account. . . . this is an extremely complex problem. . . . [pp. 17–18]

We must be as precise as possible about this because it is very important. Whether or not we *ought* in all cases to strive towards the highest degree of complexity in the cognitive domain and of internalization in the affective domain is not the province of handbooks. If we analyze our own curriculum and find that we have no affective objectives or no complex cognitive objectives, we may or may not have bad objec-

tives or a bad curriculum. Whether our objectives are wisely held is not determined by the *Taxonomy*. Such value judgments would be the province of a philosophy of education which would include Bloom and Krathwohl's "larger synthetic theory of learning." We defeat the purposes of the taxonomists themselves if we use their work as a rigid authority for establishing values rather than as a tool for clarifying objectives and tests. It cannot and should not serve as a substitute for a rationale. On the contrary, it serves to emphasize the necessity for rationale.

RATIONALE: JUSTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

How, then, do we provide an acceptable defense for any objective that we might want to propose? An important part of the method of defense is to begin with the objective itself and to proceed from that to its support. That procedure may seem simple-minded or confusing at first, but it keeps the discussion down-to-earth, and it keeps the discussion centered on our own problems and not on someone else's. Centering our theorizing on some specific objective for an English program keeps us from spinning webs of rhetoric about the nature of reality. It also keeps us from taking swipes at the history department, the physical education department, and the school down the road.

Let us suppose a department is discussing this objective: The student should come to an understanding of the nature of the English language. In recent years, that objective (as John Mayher's paper in this volume suggests) has had a corollary: The student should come to an understanding of some of the principles of transformational grammar. At some point in the departmental discussion, Teacher X usually suggests that we conduct an experiment or that we read about experiments others have conducted. Teacher X's assumptions are that if we can determine that students who have studied transformational grammar are able to write better or that if all students in such-and-such classes were able to learn transformational principles A, B, and C, we know whether the objective is a good one. Those assumptions are false. In the first place, as a glance at experimental literature would show, there are so many variables within real human learning situations that it is usually impossible to show conclusively that one variable (e.g., transformational grammar) has caused a specific learning outcome. In the second place, we evaluate results of experiments in the light of our objectives: objectives are not evaluated by experiment. Even if no student had learned anything about transformational grammar or about composition in the course of the experiment,

that result in no way negates the objective. Perhaps the wrong parts of the grammar were taught; perhaps they were taught poorly; perhaps younger (or older) students would have learned better; and so on. The objective is just as good as it ever was, even though the behavioral objectives or the methods of teaching may have been faulty.

Another way we try to validate objectives is by surveying the student population of our particular school either by predicting the population's future or by analyzing its past. That is effective only in establishing minimal behavioral objectives. When we try to survey the student's probable futures, we discover only that we can predict the future no better than anyone else. Some who plan to go to college won't go; others who don't plan to go will go. Jobs available today in our own community may not be available tomorrow or in another town. Specific predictions are uncertain at best, and at worst they encourage a kind of occupational stratification that is inconsistent with democratic principles. Twenty years ago such surveys would have indicated that most Negro students should be provided with only minimal skills since opportunities for further education and better jobs were scarce. Surveys of the students' present capabilities and their past experiences can be helpful in delineating minimal requirements—pass/fail behavioral objectives. Obviously, we do not expect the slowest students to be able to construct a generative grammar or two during the Christmas vacation. But that does not mean that they should not come to understand their language better or that *some* principles of transformational grammar might not help them to that understanding. What minimal level of understanding we intend the student to have may depend a great deal upon the student's background, but what direction we intend his learning to take and what maximum level his learning should reach are dependent on considerations of another sort.

Sources for the Rationale

There appear to be four sources which we must consult, refine, and make consistent with each other in order to provide a rationale for English objectives. We must have clear ideas about (1) the nature of our subject matter, (2) the function of the school as a social institution, (3) the nature of the learning process, and (4) the nature of democracy. When I say we "must," I mean that those are the areas relevant to our discussion and that reasons based in those four areas are, in fact, sufficient to convince others and ourselves of the validity of our objectives. To put it another way, those are the areas of our common concern as English educators. One may not agree with a

colleague's ideas about the nature of the learning process, but both would agree that ideas about how people learn are relevant to a discussion of what should be taught.

Furthermore, there are sources we need not consult. Reasons which are based upon a particular school of philosophy or a particular psychological or sociological school of thought do not, in practice, carry conviction. Those are areas separate from our common educational enterprise, and we consider them to be matters of private conviction and eternal controversy rather than bases for consensus and action. Bloom and Krathwohl avoided the Gestalt-associationist controversy by basing their taxonomy on those materials which educators agree are relevant. We can follow their example. We are sufficiently divided in matters of purely educational concern; there is no need to become involved in the controversies of other domains. Let's argue about our own problems. They are much more important to us, and we are more likely to find solutions to them.

Nature of the Subject of English

The way that our concepts of the nature of our subject matter can change our teaching objectives can be illustrated through the two possible objectives I listed earlier: (1) The student should come to an understanding of the nature of the English language, and (2) The student should come to an understanding of some of the principles of transformational grammar. Many medieval and eighteenth century grammarians derived their ideas of English from the grammar of Latin. If English did not accord with the Latinate grammar, then English was assumed to be imperfect or degenerate. So long as English was thought of in that way, little attempt was made to discover or to describe the actual workings of the language. The concern was rather to halt the process of degeneration, to formulate rules about English that would make it more like Latin. Teachers who tried to impose the Latinate grammar upon student speech patterns and composition habits thought all deviations from that grammar were equally in error. Spoken and written language patterns, usage variations, and language structure were not distinguished from each other. The goal was not for students to understand the language but solely for them to write and speak "correctly." The more recent study of dialectology, language history, and syntax has revealed, however, that the English spoken and written by educated people conforms to its own rules and is influenced by social and historical events.

Studies of the relationship between language learning and composition learning have shown that the two—though interrelated and overlapping—are not quite the same thing. Thus knowledge of modern linguistics, especially of the structuralists' approaches to language, directed our attention to the importance of examining the nature of English. That was a factor in the creation of the first objective as a goal distinct from other goals about usage and composition. (Usage and composition objectives were not abandoned, but the rationale for them was changed.)

There is no doubt that the materials of our discipline provide the raw materials from which we fashion the stuff of the curriculum. Indeed, we are accustomed to citing the linguists, the literary critics, and the rhetoricians as authority for curriculum content and methodology. That is as it should be. No one can ever again defend the idea that students should learn schoolroom, textbook grammar on the grounds that it offers an adequate approach to the English language. We know too much about language to accept such a defense. Because students cannot learn much about English unless English teachers know the resources of their discipline, we recognize that the English teacher should have studied his subject thoroughly and should continue to study it throughout his career.

Precisely because the content of our curriculum is drawn from the disciplines of linguistics, literary criticism, and rhetoric, we cannot solve our educational problems simply by studying those disciplines. In their foreword to a book of essays on the relationship between the structure of knowledge and the curriculum, G. W. Ford and Lawrence Pugno assert that "those concerned with the curriculum of the schools must in some way maintain close contacts with scholars in the disciplines so that the nature and contributions of the disciplines are accurately reflected. But . . . full knowledge of the disciplines associated with the school subjects is insufficient for defining the curriculum—other factors must be considered." [5] Factors other than subject matter must be considered because within our discipline there is too much knowledge, much of it far too refined and complex to be of interest to anyone other than English specialists.

Above all, much of the knowledge is controversial. It is controversial in that English specialists disagree about its validity. If students are to understand the nature of their language, whose theory of language should they be taught? Linguists have not agreed that any *one*

[5] G. W. Ford and Lawrence Pugno, eds., *The Structure of Knowledge and the Curriculum* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964), p. 4.

theory of language is best. If students are to have some understanding of the relationship between form and subject in literature, should Cleanth Brooks' or Northrop Frye's or Aristotle's ideas about that relationship be taught? Like the linguists, the experts in literary criticism are divided in their opinions about the usefulness and accuracy of various approaches to their discipline.

We have tended to answer questions of controversy in one of two ways. The first is to decide to teach only those things the experts agree upon. The second is to settle the controversy ourselves by deciding that one body of knowledge, one set of concepts, is clearly right. Both answers misrepresent our subject matter, and neither answer is helpful in reaching consensus. Controversy will always exist at the growing edge of literary and linguistic study. If we wait to teach anything until all controversy is ended, we will teach nothing.

We must know our discipline so that we will be aware of the materials at our disposal and of legitimate controversy about those materials, but, so long as there is disagreement among intelligent men of good will who are experts in the fields of English, we must expect to make decisions about what students should learn on some basis other than subject matter alone.

Function of the Schools as a Social Institution

One way to make choices among controversial materials is to choose those materials according to some concept of the school as a social institution. (I again use *controversial* in this section to mean simply those materials about which English specialists disagree: that is, materials such as the structural or transformational approaches to grammar.) What do we intend the school to do? Why do we have schools at all? If we think that school exists to teach the one true or right or unifying moral and philosophical view of the world, then we must choose to teach that part of our subject matter which best supports that philosophical world view. For example, we might choose Aristotle's view from among the many approaches to literature on the grounds that Aristotle emphasizes literature as an imitation of some action or idea which exists in a real or a perfect world. The idea of literature as imitation lends itself to certain philosophical world views. We might reject Cleanth Brooks' approach to literature because it concentrates upon a poem as an entity, a thing which has reference primarily to itself. Our argument—when based on one world view—would be something like this: We are primarily concerned that our students learn the correct moral approach to their world. Any interpretation of litera-

ture which separates the literary work from the judgments about good and evil which are applicable to human action is contrary to our moral purpose and ought not to be taught. Thus we choose between controversial points of view about literature because one side of the controversy accords with our world view. That view of the school's function has not been one that most educators or that our democratic society has accepted, however, because in order to affirm one world view we have to decide that one world view is better than all the rest. Such affirmations we have quite properly left to denominational schools.

There is general agreement that the school exists as a distinct institution in order to transmit those parts of the society's resources—logical, scientific, ethical, etc.—that are highly sophisticated and worthy of study. They are sophisticated in that they are the complex products of man's thought and ingenuity. They are taught in formal school because they would cease to exist if they were not taught and because we think they are of value to those who learn them. If that were not the case, if everyone could learn about literature, linguistics, science, mathematics, etc., at his mother's knee, then a separate school would be unnecessary. That the materials of the English curriculum are a highly sophisticated part of the society's resources is not in dispute. Our students certainly do not learn composition or literary criticism at home.

If we accept as our educational intent the function of the school as the transmitting of society's highly sophisticated resources, then some implications for choices among controversial curricular materials are evident. One implication is that, if we ignore legitimate controversy by choosing one opinion and teaching that opinion as agreed fact, we do more than behave undemocratically or misrepresent our discipline—we destroy the discipline. Some of the materials of English are controversial. If the refined materials of English are not taught in schools, then the materials may cease to exist because no one knows about them. Therefore, if we choose to teach only a side in the controversies which are at the growing edge of English, we destroy the other sides by not transmitting them. We kill the very thing we have taken such pains to nourish.

Our alternative courses of action must be courses which are consistent with our educational intent. One would be to teach whatever controversial materials we choose in such a way that we can stress their common core of agreement. For example, both transformational and structural grammar are bodies of intellectual concepts which attempt to describe language. We could teach our students about the nature of such concepts, and we could teach either structural or transformational

grammar so as to emphasize that they are concepts which attempt to organize our observations of language.

A second course would be to stress the method by which people have arrived at controversial concepts. For example, the linguistic descriptions advanced by structural and transformational grammarians differ because the grammars are constructed to describe certain phenomena. Both grammars apply to language, but each stresses certain aspects of the language over other aspects. We could structure the language curriculum so that its emphasis is upon the language—the phenomenon—itself. Trying to describe the way language works could lead students directly into the controversy: when they stress some things they observe, they derive structural concepts; when they stress others, they derive transformational concepts. If the core of the language program is phenomena which language theories try to explain, then students can better see the relationships between the theories and the phenomena.

A third course would be to choose on the basis of expediency. Thus we choose to teach structural grammar rather than transformational grammar simply because our teachers know structural grammar or because we have texts for structural grammar. Expediency is at best only a temporary solution, however. It is incumbent upon us to learn transformational grammar and to construct appropriate teaching materials so that we can have a better reason for teaching structural grammar than that we are too ignorant of linguistics to do otherwise. In any case, we are true to our subject and to our educative intent when we are honest with our students. They should know that there is controversy about language and literature. The existence of controversy is itself a fact concerning English; therefore, it too should be transmitted.

No matter what course we choose to follow, our understanding of the nature and function of the school requires that we recognize that we have not ended the controversy merely by making teaching decisions. Linguists are the linguistic specialists. Literary critics are the specialists in criticism. If they cannot settle their differences, how can we presume to do so? Also, since our specific selections from among controversial materials cannot be defended as true or right or final, we must permit diversity of choice. If some teacher knows transformational grammar, understands the controversial nature of his knowledge, can teach it so that agreed educative outcomes result for students, has developed materials and techniques for teaching it—if he has done all those things, then his reasons for teaching transformational

grammar are as good as or better than our reasons for teaching structural grammar.

The reasons for advocating those courses of action in teaching grammar apply with equal force to the teaching of literature and composition. It is significant that choices made by appeal to the function of the school misrepresent the materials we teach less than do choices made without conscious consultation of our concept of the function of the school. Our understanding, refinement, and application of an educational aim thus are responsive to what we know of our subject matter. In addition, our reasons gain strength by virtue of their consistency. If examination of the nature of the learning process and the nature of democratic education leads to conclusions which are consistent with the conclusions we reach from an examination of the function of the school, then we have a rationale for our choices which enables us wholeheartedly to put our choices into action.

Nature of the Learning Process

Earlier, in my comments about the usefulness of the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives,* I quoted Benjamin Bloom's statement that a better synthetic theory of learning is needed than any that is presently available. Bloom and his associates felt that no single psychological theory could account "for the varieties of behaviors represented in the educational objectives [they] attempted to classify" (*Handbook I,* p. 17). However, the kind of learning theory that psychologists seek to develop and the kind of analysis of the learning process which we need in order to establish our objectives are quite different. They are different because the problems which concern psychologists are different from the problems which concern educators. Thus psychologists may experiment and theorize about the role heredity plays in determining a person's ability to learn, but educators are not primarily concerned with that problem. Educators can agree that a student should have the opportunity to learn up to his capacity and that we will determine the student's capacity by means other than a theory about the origins of his capacity. For our educational purposes it is more useful for us to analyze what the result of learning the sophisticated resources of society should be—that is, to describe what difference we hope and intend that school learning will make in a person's life. Then we can attempt to teach school materials by some method that will help the student to utilize them as we intend.

There is disagreement about the specific effects that being educated has on a person's behavior. No one is willing to say flatly that

when a person's education has "taken" it leads to his getting a better job, his voting regularly, his enjoying differential calculus, or his enjoying poetry. It is obvious that a person could have a fine education and could profit greatly from that education without achieving any single, specific end that we might name. Yet we do agree about less specific results that we intend learning to have. If we direct our attention to establishing what a person does to achieve a more general end upon which we agree, we thereby develop an analysis of the learning process which we can use to plan specific curriculums and methods.

I think we could all agree that one desirable result of learning the highly sophisticated resources of society is that such learning—if it has been effective—helps a person to behave more intelligently. The kind of behavior that we describe as "intelligent" depends to some extent, of course, on the kinds of behavior that we admire. If we admire cooperativeness and feel that a person must be cooperative in order to succeed, then we say that a person is being intelligent when he learns to cooperate with others. If we think that a person can achieve greatness by following his independent inclinations, then we call his independent behavior intelligent, and so on. When we try to determine just what is characteristically intelligent about even the behaviors we admire, however, we realize that our first generalizations were not sufficiently refined. No matter how much we admire cooperativeness, no matter how necessary we feel cooperativeness is to success, we recognize that there are times when to cooperate is to behave unintelligently. We need to describe the intelligent behavior that school learning promotes so that the circumstances in which the behavior takes place are taken into account. Fortunately, we have help in constructing more sophisticated descriptions, for educational philosophy presents several analyses of intelligent behavior that educators have found useful.

Dewey on Intelligence

One influential analysis of the method of intelligence was formulated by John Dewey. Most of us are familiar with the five-step process which Dewey proposed as the description of intelligence in action: (1) A problem arises in the learner's environment; (2) In order to solve the problem, the learner marshals his resources and draws upon whatever resources society and his environment have to offer; (3) The learner formulates an hypothesis about the solution to the problem; (4) The learner acts in accordance with the hypothesis; (5) Either the hypothesized change in the environment takes place and the learner's

problem is solved, or it does not take place and the process begins anew. In either case, at step five the learner has or has not verified his hypothesis, and we may say that he has learned—that is, he knows whether his hypothesis was correct. The refined materials which it is the school's function to transmit are utilized by the learner at step two, as instruments for the solution of the problem. Every intelligent act is also an act of learning. According to Dewey, a learner uses society's resources intelligently when he selects them in order to solve a problem in his own environment. The school's method of promoting the intelligent behavior that Dewey described would be to involve the student in solving his own problems and to teach him the materials which the school transmits as necessary means for solving those problems.

I think the problem-solving techniques suggested by Dewey's theory and used in school are sufficiently widespread that I need not present them in detail. Most teachers would agree that Dewey's analysis of the method of intelligence has been useful in that it directed our attention to the necessity for teaching students how to *use* school materials. Yet Dewey's analysis has not often been used to support the curriculum of the secondary school. One reason that it has not been used is that it does not explain why people learn materials that are relatively remote from their immediate problems, and much of the material which the school transmits (and which we think it *should* transmit) is remote from those problems. Very few of a student's immediate problems are solved when he learns to analyze poetry or sentence structure. Nevertheless, students do learn to do those things and many other things like them. Furthermore, it is clear that to learn *only* those things which solve our immediate problems is to be *un*intelligent.

Dewey, too, recognized that people often learn things that seem irrelevant to their personal concerns, and he thought that, when people do so, they behave intelligently. So to explain such learning he suggested that it is motivated by the pure desire for knowledge. However, that explanation does not account for the fact that people are selective in the things they learn; no one seeks "pure knowledge" in every field. English teachers learn many things beyond a "practical" minimum about literature and language, but few of us know more about electronics than the mechanics of the television knob and some vague ideas about waves and antennas.

McMurray on Intelligence

Since we think that the school should promote intelligent behavior, we must have some analysis of learning which accounts for the reasons

that people learn the materials which the school functions to transmit. Professor Foster McMurray, in lectures at the University of Illinois, has developed an analysis of intelligent behavior which has many implications for the curriculum of the secondary school. The theoretical foundation of his analysis is quite different from Dewey's, but McMurray's analysis presents an explanation of intelligent problem-solving which includes many of Dewey's contributions.

To begin with, McMurray suggests that the sophisticated materials which the school transmits are used intelligently when the student uses them to "control his relations with environment to gain more of good and less of preventable bad outcomes."[6] Most immediately, a person is motivated to learn the nature of his environment so that he can assign a value to it: so that he can determine whether it is helpful, harmful, or neutral in relation to his concerns. Even when a person is sleeping, a strange noise—or lack of noises—will waken him because he must assess its value. This basic, constant level of motivation is important to educators because through it teachers can gain a student's attention; when we present a new element in the environment, the student will attend to it sufficiently to evaluate it. But that motivation is minimal. Without further motivation a student will not expend the effort necessary to learn complex school materials. If we introduce a poem, the student will attend, but not enough to study the poem and to learn from it and about it as we intend him to do.

McMurray agrees with Dewey that a student learns in order to solve problems, but McMurray says that the student's continuing problem is to determine what his purpose should be in regard to his environment, i.e., whether he should accept it, reject it, or ignore it. In our culture many factors which are not directly observable influence the value of the student's environment. Those factors are part of the highly sophisticated materials transmitted by the school. Thus, our purpose in school is to help the student to solve his *continuing* problem by making available to him the resources of the culture so that he can evaluate his environment better and so that he will have the means to act in accordance with that evaluation.

There are many ways that the school can help students to have access to society's resources, but I am here concerned primarily with motivation and with the teaching of English. Further refinement of McMurray's theory shows the sources for the student's desire and effort

[6] Foster McMurray, "Pragmatism in Music Education," in *Basic Concepts in Music Education: The Fifty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education,* Part I (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1958), p. 41.

to learn complex materials which, at first, appear to be remote from his immediate problems. To illustrate the way further refinement of Professor McMurray's analysis of intelligent behavior applies to establishing goals for the English curriculum, I shall examine a real curriculum problem and show how Professor McMurray's description of the nature of the learning process is relevant to supporting a solution. Whatever faults that solution may have are my own, but any merit it may have is due to its origin in Professor McMurray's thought.

We are presently engaged in a controversy concerning the teaching of language. We are attempting to decide what contribution transformational grammar can make to students' understanding of language, whether that contribution is sufficient to justify students' learning transformational grammar in the secondary school, and, if that contribution justifies students' learning the grammar, what aspects of the grammar the students should learn and by what methods and to what ends they should be taught. In earlier sections I have shown why teaching transformational grammar cannot be justified solely by appeal to the subject matter of our discipline. Learning transformational grammar can forward some of the educational aims suggested by a theory of the learning process, however.

A. *The theory.* We like to think that the learning process is a pleasant experience. Yet a more careful examination of the process discloses that learning is hard work and that it increases our tensions. As we learn and become more aware of the forces which affect us, we become aware of more dangers and problems. Why, then, do we feel that learning is worthwhile? Why is it intelligent to learn? What are the rewards of learning school materials which make up for the energy the student uses to learn and the tensions which follow learning? One of the greatest rewards is that the student gains confidence in his ability to assess and to control his environment. That confidence is of three kinds. The first is *confidence of location.* If the student's education is effective, he becomes more confident that he is "up to" the modern world, the world that surrounds him. The second is *confidence of command.* If the student's education is effective, he becomes more confident that he can appropriate the resources of civilization for his own purposes. The third is *confidence of opportunity.* If the student's education is effective, he becomes more confident that he has had a chance to try his hand at various kinds of learning.

B. *Relationship of theory to an objective.* Since the ideas in the preceding paragraph are taken from Professor McMurray's analysis of intelligent behavior, part of their validity lies in their being consis-

tent with that complete analysis. But another part of their validity lies in our feeling that they account for our own experience. I feel that they do describe my experience with learning; therefore I accept them. We might state them as objectives for language education in this way: a student's learning transformational grammar should result in his having increased confidence of location, command, and opportunity.

C. *Justification of curricular materials in terms of the objectives.* In order to learn transformational grammar, students work directly with one of the most pervasive and influential forces of their or anyone's environment, their language. Application of even the simplest concepts of transformational grammar makes the student aware of those forces (confidence of location) and to some extent enables him to understand and to control those forces through linguistic analysis, one of the resources of civilization (confidence of command). He learns some of the terminology and some of the rationale of the discipline of linguistics, and, above all, he learns that linguistics exists and that its syntactic insights and methods are available for his use if he should need them (confidence of command). Within a program organized primarily around learning language skills and learning aesthetic approaches to language, he is given an opportunity to study language as a phenomenon capable of engaging scientific inquiry (confidence of opportunity). Because a transformational grammar can be designed to describe any language, even the student who speaks only a subdialect of English can work directly with his own language (confidence of opportunity). Thus he, too, can gain some confidences of location, command, and opportunity. Those concepts from transformational grammar which lead to these confidences are the concepts which the students should learn. The method for teaching transformational grammar should focus on knowledge about and control of the student's own language rather than on refinements of transformational theory.

Naturally, a more refined and complete analysis of the desired ends of learning than mine (paragraph A) would provide more thorough support for objectives which this theory suggests (paragraph B) and for materials and methods which we might want to defend (paragraph C). The same type of argument could be used to support the methods of teaching structural grammar, for example. All that is required for such support is that the teaching of the material be consistent with the intelligent behavior we intend to promote. My purpose here has been only to show that an analysis of what it means to learn is relevant to defining the objectives and problems of English teaching.

Nature of Democracy

One procedure for using democratic aims to establish educational objectives has been to show that, if a student learns what we intend he shall by studying English, he will then exhibit behaviors consistent with our ideas of a good citizen: he will desire to participate in the political processes of the society, he will recognize the virtues of co-operation, he will respect the rights of others, and so on. One such specific objective often advanced indirectly in our classes is that the student should know how to work in a group and should like to do so. Many of the methods presently being advocated for more efficient and successful learning do appeal to democratic aims for support. Yet such procedure is, in its effects, antidemocratic, because it requires that we describe the behaviors and beliefs of a good citizen. We are not really willing to describe them, for to do so would mean that we should have to impose our beliefs upon others. That imposition is better suited to the nature of a totalitarian society than to that of a democracy.

Furthermore, I think most English teachers are aware that a student could learn to read literature or to analyze the deep structure of a sentence or to write a good composition without ever exhibiting any of the specific behaviors we would list as evidence of good citizenship. He *might* become a better citizen, but there is no certainty that he will. Despite that awareness, however, some of our aims for teaching literature, especially for teaching literary themes, still tend to be couched in terms of *specific* democratic values we hope the student will adopt. For example, one objective sometimes given for some particular thematic approach to literature is that the student should come to believe in the dignity and worth of the individual. Since some contemporary literature presents the opposite theme, we would then have to counteract the literature's effects either by not teaching that literature or by denigrating the validity of its theme. That is not to say that I place a low value upon individual dignity. I mean rather that it is very easy to misrepresent our subject matter when we justify the teaching of it on grounds external to the educative process.

Foster McMurray has stated a democratic aim for education which was first proposed by John Dewey but which has been given little attention by educators even though it describes a concept often embodied in much of the school curriculum: "The democratic aim is to encourage those kinds of learning that show promise of increased capacity for further learning, that is, further learning just as further learning and not towards such external goals as can be described

specifically in noneducational terms."[7] Professor McMurray adds that this special, democratic aim affects our attitudes towards the function of the school in that we no longer believe that the purpose of transmitting our culture is to force the present to conform to tradition. The democratic aim also affects our attitudes towards the nature of the learning process in that we believe the personal benefit to the student of that transmitted culture is not to enable him to become one of a cultured elite (p. 40). That statement of the democratic aim for education seems more consistent with the educational ideas we value most highly than do statements which describe more specific democratic behaviors as intended outcomes of our teaching.

If we review the sources for a rationale to justify and to evaluate educational aims for English curricula and methods, we find that most of us would accept objectives supported by a rationale based on our common educative enterprise; that is, we would accept objectives which we derive from the nature of our subject matter, of the school's function, of the learning process, and of democracy itself. That rationale helps us to clarify our intents, and the construction of a rationale is the only means we have for ordering our values and making them self-consistent so that we may have confidence in acting in accord with those values. Such a rationale would by no means end controversy concerning curricula and methods, but it would assure that, when we argue, we argue about our common problems rather than about matters over which we have no control and about which we have no claim to expertise. Such a rationale would even encourage variety in our approaches to curricular and methodological problems because we would be checked from establishing objectives dogmatically and because we could tolerate many curriculum materials and many methods so long as they are designed to carry out our common educational intents. Although understanding our reasons and values is a complicated task which demands from us a great deal of energy and good will, we can be helped in our efforts by the cumulative nature of the work and by the selective use of materials from other educators and from educational philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 40.