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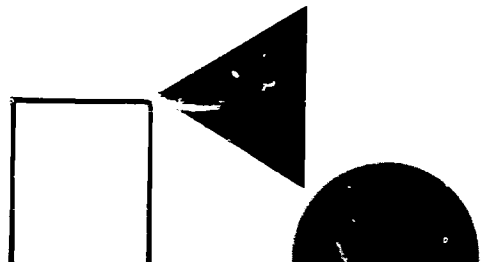
ABSTRACT

Guidelines presented in this publication offer an impetus and direction which may be necessary for implementing change in the English curriculum. Factors discussed include the teacher's attitudes toward teaching, sources of professional stimulation for teachers, the content (language and literature) and teaching methods of the English course, specific procedures to be followed in curriculum development, and changes necessary in teacher education programs which should provide for continuing education. (JM)

# CREATING A LANGUAGE LEARNING DESIGN



# *Guidelines for Developing Programs in English Language Arts Kindergarten—Grade 12*

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## A WARNING TO THE READER

Do not read the following pages unless:

- --you believe that learning to use language is one of the most important purposes of school instruction . . .
- --you are willing to be exposed to a view of instruction in the native language that may be new to you . . .
- --you agree that a discussion of teaching should be both engaging and instructive . . .
- --you can assume an obligation to think about the ideas expressed here long after you have finished the first reading.

If you can do these things, you may read with profit, whether you be elementary, secondary, or college teacher, school administrator, or, just a friend of education.

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# FOREWORD

This publication of Guidelines for Developing Programs in English Language Arts comes as a result of growing nationwide concern about present programs of instruction. Most educational publications today refer in some way to the "New English," but it is not always clear what this means in a third or an eighth or an eleventh grade classroom.

A Statewide English Language Arts Advisory Committee to the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has been actively engaged in the work of developing this publication for nearly two years. The central purpose of these Guidelines is to help local schools identify the direction in which instruction in English Language Arts must inevitably go.

The underlying assumptions herein presented demand change. But change is not an automatic condition; change is not achieved with the publication of a bulletin such as this. Change is the result of local and individual commitment to a series of basic philosophical assumptions about the nature and purpose of language and literature and about the nature and purpose of English Language Arts instruction in the schools.

It is clear that the responsibility of curriculum development rests directly upon those who implement such curriculum. The responsibility of providing imaginative and sound leadership in the area of curriculum and instruction has become the central goal of the State Office of Public Instruction.

Implicit in this kind of publication is the understanding that here is a suggestion for curriculum and instruction; not just any suggestion, for it comes as a result of careful study and sound thought and experience in the field, but a suggestion none the less. It remains the task of the local school to develop its own unique program.

We are indebted to the advisory committee for the fine work represented here and to the schools and districts that have contributed to its work.

LOUIS BRUNO
*State Superintendent*
*of Public Instruction*

## INTRODUCTION

This guide is addressed to those who would work change in their teaching of English. Of necessity, local change is the result chiefly of local, individual action. It is the purpose of this publication, then, to offer the impetus and direction for such action. These guidelines are, of course, more representative than exhaustive; they imply more than they state. Rather than a course of study, this book should be thought of as a map of the terrain one might follow in traveling from *status quo* to altered situation.

Varied influences have been at work in recent years which force one to question present programs of curriculum and instruction in English. Not all of these voices agree in content, method, or direction. Confronted by such diverse pressures, local teachers must make choices on the basis of local goals and local capabilities after they have familiarized themselves with the alternative presented. No one outside the specific situation can do more than focus attention on what appear to be acceptable possibilities and responsible directions.

While preparing this guide, the Statewide English Language Arts Advisory Committee found it necessary to reexamine its own assumptions about the nature and function of language and literature as well as the purposes of instruction in these fields. The committee assumes that local individuals and groups will find a similar need and benefit from such a task. Only by identifying fundamental assumptions can we establish relevant goals and objectives by which instruction can be measured.

This publication, then, attempts to clarify those possibilities and directions the committee feels compelled to present as a result of the fundamental assumptions it has come to agree upon.

*Setting: In his moments of introspection, a teacher*

# SOLILOQUY

*(for separate voices)*

*A secondary school teacher*

*When I first thought of becoming an English teacher, what were my reasons for thinking that an enviable or worthwhile occupation? Did I imagine myself a part of some great humanistic tradition: steeping myself in the literature of past and present, finding touchstones for culture, becoming a link between the best of past civilizations and the occupants of future civilizations? I suppose that in my more*

*examines his beliefs about teaching and admits his doubts. His own interior voice struggles to articulate his situation.*

*An*
*elementary*
*school*
*teacher*

*Why did I become an elementary school teacher? I'm sure my reasons were different from what they are now. Basically, I suppose, it was because I like kids. They don't bug me—most of the time, anyway. I can get interested in their wild ideas, their spats with each other, their childish (!) behavior and still remain an adult. I get pleasure out of watching them grow and out of the many little ways that I can help them grow. Yet I can never really be sure they are growing inside—becoming more adept intellectually and emotionally—because of what I do. That's the*

*A secondary school teacher*

*An elementary school teacher*

*elevated and fanciful moments such thoughts occurred to me. Yet, I note the common and curious tendency to separate elevated thoughts from actualities. As a successful college student, a law-abiding citizen, a more or less socially conscious individual, I looked for an occupation that had dignity, some potential for social service, and a decent income. English teaching—that's a job with built-in negative stereotypes—shriveled old maids, Miss Groby, parsing sentences, **Silas Marner**, required book reports, tedium. But it's also a job that is apparently valued. English, the only subject that is required of all kids from beginning of school through college. It makes plain common sense to know how to use the native language. Yes, to use the native language. The main aim turns out to be greater skill in using language. Literature is a kind of frill, or so it seems to many teachers of other subjects and certainly to the public. So, I've been caught in a trap—the utilitarian need to produce people who use the language well (but*

*maddening dilemma that faces every teacher, I guess. The kids grow physically, all right, and their behavior does change in various ways between September and June. But how much of it have I affected? And what **should** I try to affect? That latter question may be more of a dilemma than I and my fellow teachers usually dare admit. What determines what we teach and for that matter, what does **teach** really mean? Should we be aiming to implant the "basic skills" of reading, writing, and arithmetic mainly, with other things like imagination, problem-solving, ways of perceiving the world, happiness—more like extras? I've heard other teachers and administrators say that kids can't think until they are older (like adolescent?) and elementary grades should concentrate on the fundamentals. After they have mastered them, the building-block theory goes, they can get to the thought processes and the freer kinds of expression. A lot of people believe that. Lots of parents sure do. But there are flaws in that view. Contradictions.*

*A secondary school teacher*

*does that mean just better spelling and punctuation and handwriting?) versus literature which I see as the most powerful means of rendering experience in words. Can I reconcile the two? As I look around me I see every evidence that reconciliation has not happened. The textbook-anthologies present literature in snippets with study questions that limit response and almost guarantee superficiality of reading and deadening of kids' interest. The language books lay out stuff* **about** *language—grammar mostly—in the most stultifying manner. Dummy sentences. Irrelevant categories. Foolish drills. Other teachers somehow think that I alone can cure the persistent and flagrant errors that they see in kids' writing and speaking. After all, I teach English and they teach biology or shop or history. My job is to whip kids into some kind of state of respectability as far as ordinary language is concerned. But if I do that, and only that, I am selling out. I know, fundamently, that this stuff in the language books is based upon*

*An elementary school teacher*

*Non sequiturs. Let's see. What is most basic to children's learning? What are the real fundamentals? I think it must be something like a feeling of confidence that one is a worthwhile human being who can speak a language, manipulate himself physically, get satisfaction from doing things with other people. School ought to reinforce these kinds of realizations; it shouldn't break them down for any child; and for any children in whom they aren't very well developed it should build them up. Now how do reading skills, writing, "correct English" and things like that fit in? I find that at least 50 percent of my time is spent working with English language arts. The textbooks, curriculum guides, and the expectations that I sense in most adults seem to suggest that these things must be taught and achieved up to some predetermined standard by every student. By the time kids get through elementary school they ought to speak standard English, know the parts of speech, be well on the way to correct spelling, observe the most*

*A secondary school teacher*

*myth or ignorance or cobwebbed precedent. I truly feel trapped. And if I am honest with myself, I know that the kids I am teaching for the most part find English a burden and a bore. I must except those times when discussion got going about the issue of justice or the prevalence of evil or the debasement of language by advertisers. Then, some of the essence of what English is came through and could be felt by even the dullest ones in the class. Why can't every English class connect in that relevant and immediate way? Why can't I—or someone—work out some plans for English so that everything is seen to be relevant by the kids? So that textbooks and curriculum guides and whatever else they give me to teach with matters to them and to me. I want to help produce kids who see connections between experience and language, who see literature as not only "the best that has been thought and said" but also as gut-touching, mind-tingling, me-affecting. Kids who write because they have something to say to somebody and who talk with me and each other, not just to follow*

*An elementary school teacher*

*common punctuation rules, make neat margins, and handwrite legibly. And especially they ought to learn how to read. I find next year's teacher starting all over again with the parts of speech, spelling and punctuation rules almost as if the kids had never heard of them. But how necessary are they, really? I'm not sure. At least when I put them against what seems to be an opposing set of aims, I begin to doubt their importance. I think of reading in particular. In fact, I'm worried about the oppressive emphasis on teaching students how to read—in many classrooms, this completely overlooks the total language development of students. Learning to read for what? What does it seem to those little kids in grades one and two that they are supposed to read for? Certainly, those graded readers can't interest them much. And do they really get anything like emotional or spiritual satisfaction out of anything else they typically read in schools. I doubt it. Literature, for example. Is it a prominent part of each school day? Not in many classrooms I know about. Then, there are people who*

*A secondary school teacher*

*textbook rules or to tick off assignments that fill boxes and slots with checkmarks or some other kind of symbol. These things are not happening to kids now, not to most of them. Despite all the talk about individualizing instruction, making assignments more meaningful, appealing to the varied interests and abilities of kids the main concern at my school still seems to be getting kids ready for college. Somehow, it's assumed that what's good for the best students is good for all. Yet each day I see a few more faces dulled by the routines of getting them ready for something they are not interested in or even able to do. They groan, they lag. I groan, I lag.*

*An elementary school teacher*

*urge us to include creative writing, creative drama, free and imaginative art expressions in many forms. These things always seem like dessert in classrooms, though, not a central concern. We put them in only if there is time left from the "important" things. I guess it must be just intuitive, but I strongly suspect that the old-fashioned "fundmentals" aren't going to do much in helping develop that feeling of confidence in oneself that I've been thinking about. They're more likely to destroy it, as we can see every day in many classrooms. When I get to thinking like this, I realize that I have conflicting allegiances. It hurts.*

*(The voices merge.)*

I am strong because I persist. I persist because I must—money and respect and conscience drive me. Yet, I am fundamentally dissatisfied. I am not true to myself if I do not probe that dissatisfaction, talk with others, do something about myself and the situation I find myself in. What is that something? Where can I begin? Let me ask some questions.

# DIALOGUE

*Setting: The conscientious teacher reads professional journals and books about English teaching, attends regional and national conferences, and talks with other teachers of English about his work. From these sources, he gets ideas which sometimes coincide, sometimes contradict, and sometimes overlap. Fragments of these ideas provide a continuous mental dialogue from which he must find coherence.*

*As I look at curriculum guides in English and at textbooks, I see English as a bundle of fragments —bits and pieces of knowledge about literary history, authors' lives, parts of speech, ought-to's about daily usage, specific literary works. Is there anything that unites English?*

. . . English is language, literature, and composition. It excludes peripheral matters like telephone etiquette, vocational guidance units, and quasi-psychology. English is a discipline which can be seen as a tripod, each part relating to the other but serving to exclude the extraneous. If the English teacher will define his discipline and operate within it, he can find integrity and unity for his work.

. . . English has no unique subject matter. The only thing that gives it shape and structure is the fact that language is a system. It is a symbolic hierarchy which starts with our codification of immediate sense experience and moves to a structure which resembles the structure of the mind rather than the given structure of Nature.

English is unitary. Language in operation—the dynamism of language in use, uttered by real people who care about what they are saying, focused on sense experience or on ideas that are immediate and relevant to the language-users —is the core. Second-order abstractions about language, pre-formulated rules or slots, have little relevance. Everything that is said *about* language in a classroom must arise out of the situation in that classroom.

*Hey! Wait a minute! I can't buy all three of those—they aren't consistent. Let me work on that third answer.*

*If English must be unitary and immediate, how can I use a textbook? The major values of textbooks seem to be their selection of information that is needed by students, their arrangement of it in logical order, and their provision of illustrative and practice material. Selection, arrangement, and practice are important in a teacher's arsenal, are they not? They are part of the discipline of learning. If I abandon a textbook, will I not also chance confusion and chaos?*

. . . Junk all the textbooks!

. . . A solid textbook, devised by experts—both scholars and practicing teachers—provides the order and sequence essential to the logical presentation and study of the discipline of English. Students and teachers alike need the structure which such textbooks furnish. Without a specific coverage of material, each teacher is simply left to his own devices and students suffer as a result.

Selection, arrangement, and practice are indeed important, but they are a function of scene. Each scene is created by a special set of circumstances which include most prominently the particular set of learners. The teacher, the one nominally in charge, both affects and is affected by the scene. Thus, even though he may wish to use a textbook, he cannot effectively ignore the infringement of the particular scene upon whatever order is imposed by the textbook. If he selects and uses the textbook wisely, it becomes one of several elements that affect the scene. "Scene" suggests background for action, for some confrontation between characters in a play or people in real life, especially if viewed with some detachment by a spectator.

*When I view myself in the classroom with any detachment, I catch glimpses of an actor. I play a role that is partially of my own making and partly forced upon me by expectations of my kids, their parents, the administrators. I'm not sure about that role. It often seems artificial. What is the proper role of an English teacher?*

. . . He is a responder. Every time a student speaks to him in the classroom, he is for the moment in a dynamic relationship. If he sets the tone and the shape of that relationship by assuming the Olympian stance, he responds in one-way fashion: he has superior knowledge and judgment, therefore all good comes from him to his students.

. . . He is a transmitter, one who transmits knowledge and information to the student receiver. Presumably he knows what is essential to his students. This approach presupposes that information can be packaged—that it can be measured into more or less equal portions—and that the student is essentially a recipient or consumer rather than a producer of knowledge.

. . . He is a nudger. When he nudges, he moves someone firmly but gently, choosing his manner of nudging and target for nudging with caution but often being uncertain of the effect. To nudge is often a better way of getting movement than to drag or to pull. He can see better the directions of possible movement, and he needn't use so much force. Or again, in the same spirit, he is a stimulator and an arbiter of conflict. Contradictory? Only apparently. Conflict is the essence of dramatic action. If he sees his classroom as the scene of continuous drama, he will note that drama can bring interest, involvement, momentum. Conflict, then, becomes the core of everything: not only does it motivate the literary form called drama but also does it actuate the most lyric of poems, the most prosaic of essays, and the most ordinary of conversations. Conflict may take violent forms, transcending (or subverting) words. Or we may all learn from each other how to comprehend and cope with conflict. In his classroom he must have conflict, even when he must get it started by some arbitrary means. And he must somehow create situations that help everyone in that scene to see constructive uses for conflict.

*If I see myself as the nudger or as the stimulator-arbiter and if I see the classroom as a scene for action and confrontation, don't class discussions provide this very action?*

. . . Discussion is a waste of time and an embarrassing punishment for students and teacher alike. If the "things to be taught" are thought of as facts, and if we think of English as consisting of a body of knowledge about the language and the literature expressed in that language, then discussion has limited usefulness. We can defend it on the grounds that the student will remember better these facts if he "discusses" them, but implicit here is the assumption that no real change takes place in the student as a consequence of learning something—except perhaps that he becomes a little fuller of things known.

. . . There is so much to teach about language, and so little time to do it, that the teacher can ill afford time for discussion. After all, language structures are like any other science—and discussion, while it may tell the teacher what the students think about, adds little to the body of knowledge to be learned. So with literature too—the student learns to interpret works by hearing his teacher's interpretations. Discussion can confuse this process. Typically, such discussions stray off the topic at hand to one of the many everyday concerns of the student.

. . . Discussion is more than question and answer; it is a dynamic interchange between two or more people. Discussion is investigative, exploratory and, therefore, instructive. What one says determines and conditions the response of the other. As the playwright cannot give just *any* response to *any* statement, so in real life our experiences determine how we respond verbally and provoke further responses. In such use of language the students and teacher can both see and demonstrate the multi-faceted character of language. Speakers in a discussion can be crude or subtle; they can move the discussion in unpredicted directions; and they grow in their language competence. Most important, all are involved in what is happening.

*Well, it sounds as though I am to reduce classroom activities to talking. Is that right?*

Mere talk is not the answer. Talk which comes as a result of a commitment to subject, a clear purpose for talk, and an identifiable audience in mind—this provides an operational setting in which honest and meaningful talk can occur. The student must experience the bringing of vague impressions and feelings to a conscious, verbal level. He must experience the fight for the "right word." He must attempt to come to terms with an idea or concept in the most concrete way—communicating to himself and to others his perception, in words, of that idea or concept. He must experiment with the effect of words on others. He learns the significance of choosing a word from the variety of alternatives open to him by the very process of exchanging views on relevant issues with his peers.

*All of this is pretty hard to pin down. I am constantly pressured to grade students and evaluate their work. How does grading and evaluation fit into this picture?*

. . . Retain grades. We must continue to give grades. Colleges and universities expect them—why, parents, employers, even the students demand them. Grades provide the source for competition—a basic need in the classroom. Finally, grades have motivational uses as well.

. . . Grading is immoral. When the teacher assigns a grade to a student, he is actually grading the student's parents; he is grading the particular combination of genes the student has received. Grading assumes the student product to be a standard model—one of many which are closely similar, if not identical.

Evaluation of student achievement is essential; grading student achievement is not. Comparative grading is the very antithesis of belief in individual differences. If learning is seen as growth from one point to another, can a student reasonably fail a year of growth? Clearly, new criteria are needed to make rational and humane this business of evaluation.

*I realize that I must, through my own effort, reconcile these conflicting beliefs. Yet, I must not deny the value of listening to someone who has already apparently attained that reconciliation.*

# MONOLOGUE

*Setting: The teacher listens to an impersonal (but not formidable) voice which speaks forcefully and with a consistent, identifiable point of view about the way English should be taught.*

Even for the professional teacher of English, English is undefinable. If to define is to set limits that mark off a term, then it either has no limits or its limits are uncertain. This may seem a scandalous admission in a time when many subjects in school and college curricula are undergoing careful examination: when their purposes and content are being scrutinized for modernity, accuracy, and relevance. Yet, this is not to admit that English, for all its slipperiness of definition, is in question as an appropriate area of study for people at all levels of education. What is in question, however, is the relationship of English to the student at any level.

An approximation of the "content" of English—the subject matter or focus for study—is language and literature. English, it is assumed, is the native language of most students. Beyond natural fluency in the native language, some analytical knowledge about the language, and certainly greater skill in speaking and writing than most people attain on their own, is expected. Literature is less widely valued as useful knowledge; its acceptance in school curricula seems to be justified on bases ranging from a kind of cultural ornamentation to attunement with the greatness of spirit and vision that good literature embodies. These loose definitions of the content of English suggest a loose relationship to students: they will become more skillful in using their native language, and they will begin to comprehend and absorb their literary heritage.

This loose relationship of subject matter to student tends to obscure, for many teachers and probably for most of the public, one of the fundamental assumptions on which English instruction is based. That assumption is this: if students are placed in classes where English, as defined here, is taught, they will somehow acquire the desired skills and knowledge. Even allowing for teachers who are inept in one way or another, it is assumed that something inherent in the exposure-to-English process will have a beneficial effect. (What other assumption could there be when assignments to teach English are sometimes made solely on the basis of the teacher's ability to speak English?)

Perceptive teachers of English have been aware for most of their professional lives that this is a wildly fallacious assumption. English does not "take" with most students; they become more skillful or sensitive in their use of language almost in spite of formal English instruction. Their most significant instruction comes from their urgent need to use language for survival and sanity in their self-created worlds. Those worlds are constantly being shaped and mediated by language—language used to serve immediate needs and to accomplish self-determined ends. The English teacher accomplishes significant instruction only when he somehow—often accidentally—penetrates each student's world with something that affects his language or the abstractions which his language expresses.

So, the central question now is: how can the teacher of English penetrate each student's world more often and more helpfully? Or, in broader terms, how can students accomplish growth through English? The new assumption to replace the old one would be: if students are placed in classes where English, in spite of its undefinability, becomes immediate and touches student's lives (their NOW lives rather than their future lives), they will increase their power with language and their participation in literature.

To pursue the implications of the new assumption is to overturn almost every notion about what we do as teachers and how English gets learned. Very few English classes in the nation—at elementary, secondary, or college levels—could remain the same if the new assumption were fully acted upon.

The keystone for the classrooms in which this assumption is accepted is *language learned in operation.* This idea is in distinct contrast to nearly all current practice which could be subsumed under the heading "dummy runs." Dummy runs include: the many kinds of practice exercises which are designed to fix dialectical choices; the compositions written to conform to rules about paragraph or essay development; the speeches given to demonstrate mastery of a particular pattern or oratorical purpose; the manufactured questions about a literary work which are designed to analyze plot or character development or other generalizations about literary genres. All of these are dummy runs because they were conceived by someone who is not present in the situation in which language is now being used and by someone who could not have shared the experience of the particular group of students at hand. To learn language in operation may be to use many of these same ideas, kinds of language specimens, or literary works. But the orientation of students and teacher to these materials would be quite different.

One starts with the recognition that each person, whatever his age, makes his own world in the deepest sense. All of us share the same external, representational world which is outside of us. Language, the means of communication that we share, allows us to exchange our responses to the external world. Each of us has a different experience of it, but to the extent that we trust each other we can use language to combine our impressions of the world. In doing that, we constantly seek to bring order and composure to our inner selves—never a static order, rather a plastic balance between seemingly durable belief and value systems and the alien, initially frightening images of what might be. When the balance becomes permanent, neurosis looms. As long as the balance remains plastic, growth, challenge, and the satisfaction of seeking are possible.

Since each person makes his own world and uses language conspicuously in doing so, the English teacher has no place to begin and end his work than with the particular students whom he meets. He can start with few preconceptions about what their experience will have been or about where they should be at the end of any given period in his classroom. In the most literal sense, the teacher cannot know where his classes will go or what will happen to the students in them. The best he can hope for is that shared experience with language—shared by other students and by a teacher who is aware of the more complex uses of language—will allow each student to reach other levels of language awareness and to attain some new insights into his own ordering of the world he experiences.

If the teacher of English is willing to begin his work with the student's experience, then, of course, he must find ways of knowing that experience and of capitalizing on it for whatever instruction he will offer. To say this is perhaps to suggest a planless, haphazard English class. Since students' experiences will likely be highly varied and probably will not correspond very closely to kinds of experiences that English teachers have typically welcomed, one can imagine an apparently artless combination of frivolity, camaraderie, and formlessness. Language would be in operation in such a class, but the spectator might doubt that anything important was being accomplished. By traditional measures, this would be legitimate doubt. Indeed, that raises another issue: what assurance does anyone have that such an English class is worthwhile? The answer is that there is no positive assurance—just as there is no assurance that anything worthwhile is happening in traditional English classes. All of the tests presently in use have little value for measuring the most important uses of language. Assessment for English must be performed with different criteria and means than are now commonly used.

Four major consequences of the language-in-operation view have just been summarized:

1. Students' experience is the core of the class.
2. The atmosphere of the English class is free and open.
3. Subject matter and skills practice cluster around the core of experience but do not control or dominate it.
4. Assessment for English will be performed in new ways.

Each of these consequences needs exploration.

Most teachers will probably agree that a major purpose of education is to help students cope with experience—at least experience in later life—more skillfully and confidently. That is to say, the educated citizen is one who is literate, makes reasoned choices, assumes his fair share of responsibility. English has been seen as contributing to these goals, but its contributions have usually been based upon vicarious or delayed application of the language

skills. To focus English instruction more upon immediate experience demands literature to which students can respond readily, without the intervention of forced, prefabricated contexts of simulated emotions. It demands language problems which involve distinctions with demonstrable consequences. It demands practice with language skills that directly affect an audience. Nothing can be offered solely on the grounds that it may be useful later; it must be useful or interesting or compelling now. Maybe it will also be useful later, but no one can be sure of that.

In using students' present experiences, the teacher incurs conflict. In any situation that involves language, some kind of conflict is present. At higher intellectual levels, conflict will take the form of dialectic which may lead to insight and synthesis. At lower levels, it may be disputation which merely reveals opposing opinions or disagreement about fact. In any case, it is the conflict which makes the language situation dynamic--which draws participants into involvement. So conflict is to be desired, not minimized, because it is the energizer of the situation; it makes language necessary and gives the participants an opportunity to take one more step toward effective use and control of language.

The usual way of controlling conflict is to impose more restrictions, particularly external restrictions, because conflict upsets established ways of doing things. It is often untidy and rouses emotions. Decorum is hard to preserve in a classroom swept by conflict. But if conflict can produce upset, so can it produce growth. Therefore, the atmosphere in the English classroom must be free and open so that conflict can readily develop. Correspondingly, the atmosphere must be free and open so that everyone present can learn how to derive nourishment rather than divisiveness out of conflict. When divisiveness leads to hostility, prejudice, and overt forms of violence, then clearly it is harmful. The constant struggle that every human being must undertake individually and collectively is to avert these results of conflict.

The major means of learning control of conflict through language is talk. Just talk. Not speech-making or essay-writing, though they have a place in the deliberative stages of learning control. Talk means informal oral exchange among interested communicants. It moves back and forth around the class, not centering itself for long with any one person, including the teacher. Recitation is not talk in this sense. Lecturing is not talk. Because there is dynamism in talk, talking students may be thinking students. They are more likely than constantly listening students to be forced into revisions of their ideas, their sentence structures, and their word choices. If these revisions lead to greater complexity and precision of thought, language has been used to order experience more maturely.

An English teacher who actively encourages his students to talk about things in ways that matter to them and who does not run from conflict is an adventurer. Most of his equipment is in his head. His intellectual baggage includes extensive knowledge about language and literature. His powers of critical thought are honed to a fine edge. He responds to startling ideas eagerly and receptively, though he remains always the skeptic. He also has the emotional strength to recharge himself quickly when the emotions that surround conflict drain him. In short, the English teacher will venture with his students into territory that can never be fully expored or charted before the journey. Previous journeys with other classes will have helped him prepare for the predictable rigors of travel, but they can never assure future safe and uneventful trips.

**As any traveler who leave established highways knows, the ability to improvise is essential. He must make do with whatever is at hand. The teacher in this new kind of classroom must quickly learn to improvise; if he cannot improvise, he cannot survive. Who can say how one learns to be a good improviser? Perhaps we can only say what qualities are associated with improvisation and then look for conditions that will encourage development of these qualities.**

Spontaneity. A teacher allows his self-generated responses and ideas to surface. He adopts whatever restraints seem natural to him as a mature individual without preoccupying himself with fulfilling a mode of behavior which he imagines is expected. If he is a really skilled and self-confident teacher, he will probably be both participant and spectator in everything he does in the classroom. As participant, his responses are genuinely spontaneous, but as spectator he delicately assesses the expression and effect of his spontaneity. In other words, he remains in responsible control of his responses.

Intuition. Many of a teacher's most important judgments are made by an intuitive grasp of the situation. Practice in analyzing the many components that make up a class in school is no doubt helpful, but the most crucial decisions have to be made quickly, when there is too little time for analysis. Furthermore, any classroom with human beings in it is too complex for complete analysis. Intuition must be trusted to substitute for analysis or to transcend it.

Trust. Perhaps one can convey knowledge to others without really trusting them, but a teacher who expects to improvise cannot lack trust in his students. It may amount to expectation of good results; confidence in the underlying rightness of the situation; commitment to eventual realization of value; or all of these.

Serendipity. According to Horace Walpole who invented the word, serendipity is a faculty or a gift. Maybe, like the other qualities listed, it is a given and not a gotten. But in little ways, most teachers have been delighted with finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for; when not actively in search of fortunate discoveries, they have happened upon them. English teachers and classes in the new mode will be serendipitous.

The free and open atmosphere of the English classroom, then, demands a teacher-improviser. And a teacher-improviser is vulnerable. His demeanor and tactics will be so different from the accustomed behavior of teachers that he will seem a maverick. As long as he remains a maverick in a school, he can expect open and veiled attack, ridicule, disdain. If his vulnerability is not to be his undoing, he must ally himself with other teacher-improvisers, at least among the English teachers. A group of teachers who agree upon assumptions and whose classroom practices reflect underlying consistency in point of view may develop the conditions necessary to improvisation.

In an English classroom where improvising is the style, "curriculum" must be redefined. Heretofore, the written curriculum has consisted of lists of skills, facts, concepts, or literary works, each apportioned to level. Textbooks were chosen to correspond as closely as possible to this written curriculum (where textbooks did not, in fact, *become* the curriculum). The theory has been that continuity in learning is necessary and that teachers must know which parts of the continuum they are responsible for emphasizing. Acting upon the new assumption of course demolishes such a curriculum or such a use of it. English with language-in-operation as the focus cannot be hampered by any inflexible predetermination of placement of subject matter or skills. Nor can English get along without subject matter and skills.

The effect and the form of most curriculum guides in English has been to compartmentalize. Compartments of knowledge or of skills seem to make teachable units and to bring order to learning. Determined by principles of logic, they seem to offer hope that education in English will have solidity. Thus, if students are moved through the compartments, acquiring the contents of each as fully as possible, they may be assured of competence in English when they emerge from the last compartment. There are at least two major flaws in this reasoning.

We have no way of being sure that we have selected the labels or the contents for the compartments which correspond most closely to the desired product. We may select certain literary works and certain skills of speaking or writing, for example, but we cannot be sure that a thorough study of them will result in a predetermined kind of performance. Their "rightness" is far from inevitable or verifiable.

Furthermore, compartmentalized knowledge and skills may bear little relationship to the ways people learn. Much as we might desire increments of learning language to occur by some definable logical principle, we do not know that they occur so. Even if there were some direct relationship, the compartments tend to be inert. When the teacher tries to get students to move through a system of compartments, the system supplants the contents. It is an abstraction imposed for convenience, and since it is unrelated to the ways people actually learn, it must remain abstract and inert. The only way to keep the contents of the compartments alive and active is to force each student to make his own system of ordering. Thus, we arrive at the fundamental principle: the student must order his own experience.

The new curriculum guides (or designs or extrapolations) will have to look different. They will suggest an underlying pattern of language development, consistent with what is known about normal sequences in learning language, and they will propose possible ways of clustering subject matter and skills practice around cores of experience. They will not be limiting or prescriptive or dogmatic in any way. Their principal trait will be fecundity.

A teacher who consults a new curriculum guide might have one or more of the following motives:

—he wants to see how other teachers started from some core (an event, a literary work, an idea) and moved to related readings, activities, tangible products

—he wants to see what kinds of resources are available in his school or community that he might draw into his class

—he wants to check his understanding and observations of normal language development against others' observations

—he wants to see what language performance objectives have been established in his school or district as long-range aims

—he wants to see how he can effectively describe the language performance of his students so that his descriptions will be consistent with other teachers' descriptions.

The fecundity of the new English guide should leave each English teacher amazed at the possibilities for teaching language that had not previously occurred to him. The "real" curriculum, though, will always be—as it always has been—what each teacher does daily in his classroom.

Even with this kind of curriculum guide, the English teacher appears to be adrift until he meets his classes. He cannot have the single textbooks ordered, the composition assignments made out; he will have no unit plans, no cherished or favorite lesson plans from previous years; in a sense, he can do little but quiver with expectation. But he *is* prepared. His deep knowledge of language and literature, his experience with and his sensitivity to the dynamics of the classroom, and his determination to plan with other teachers constitute his only and best preparation.

"Deep knowledge of language and literature" may seem an ominous phrase. It may suggest depths of scholarship unbecoming in public school teachers—unbecoming because of its irrelevance. Rather, the suggestion should be of depth and accuracy of insight. In language, for example, the teacher will not be burdened by folkloristic views of language such as cluster around "correctness." When he uses this term, he will be aware of the complex gloss provided by modern linguistic science and will always match it with the reality of language used in a particular situation. There is no non-

contextual accuracy in speaking of "correctness." In literature, the teacher will not deny the complexities of interpretation. Reduction of a literary work to a single interpretation or to any form of dogmatism, even with the youngest readers, is wrong. Literature embodies values in prismatic combinations; viewing them always leads to ambiguities and valid differences of opinion. Students must learn to read literature with the expectation of ambiguity, many of the same kinds of ambiguity that surround "real" life. An English teacher, though he be more sophisticated in his literary judgments, does no service to his pupils if he offers his own interpretations of a literary work as superior or more valid. Even if his judgment could clearly be shown to be superior in all cases, his interpretation would remain second-hand for students. Theirs is not to receive interpretations but to make them.

**And what will be the results of all of this? How will the teacher evaluate his own success and the competence of his students in using language?**

Assessment will be no easier than it has ever been. It can be more accurate and useful than it has been.

The first task will be for teachers to learn how to describe the uses of language. Using consistent means, they will take samples of oral and written performance in language. With a new shorthand or compression method, they will put into tangible form the ways in which each student is using language. (The description will include ideational content, organization, syntax, diction, and characteristics of delivery such as style, fluency, and audience effect.) Next, teachers will place these language samples

against the long-term language performance objectives for the school district. This comparison will allow them to assign an approximation stage to each student which will show something of the quality of his performance. The approximation stage will be only a rough indication of a student's language development, however. The main interest for teachers and parents should be in the description of each student's present powers with language.

No student who passes through the succession of experiences suggested here emerges finished with language. Obviously, he is going to continue using language for just as vital reasons as he began it. If the school has done right by him, none of his "English instruction" will ever seem remote from the needs he perceived for using language. So far as he is capable of sorting out the influences that worked upon him for twelve or sixteen years, he will see English teachers as people who helped him understand what it means to be human.

# COLLOQUY

*Setting: The teacher considers how teachers in a local school district can create a modern English curriculum.*

## Creating A New Language Learning Design

Imagine yourself in a medium-sized school district—Perseverance City—where you are a teacher. The assistant superintendent in Perseverance Schools has decided that some work must be done to produce a curriculum guide in language arts. The time is 1955, a time when "language arts" means that we want to emphasize the communication skills and that we want to get away from the meaningless grammar exercises and stodgy, shopworn literary selection that have driven students into stupefying tedium or even violent revulsion against "English" classes.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT *(to a carefully selected "vertical" committee of teachers from each grade, elementary through secondary; teachers who are known to be interested in improving children's use of the English language):* As you know, we are due for a textbook selection in language arts within the next three years. In consultation with the superintendent and the principals in Perseverance, I have decided that we must have a written course of study for language arts. We have relied on our texts to determine what we would teach, and, as you know, we have selected textbook series that would give us thorough coverage throughout the grades. But this practice seems to undermine our own responsibility to define our community's own needs and to prepare our students for college work. I think that a language arts course of study that we devise ourselves will allow us to define our needs and to select new textbooks accordingly.

MISS ROSEWOOD *(a fourth grade teacher):* I think that is a wonderful idea. I have a friend who teaches in the Summit Schools where they have a lovely curriculum guide for language arts. The teachers worked very hard to define their objectives and to divide up the skills for each grade level. The guide they produced is just lovely. My friend is so proud of it.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, I have seen the Summit guide. In fact, I have asked their superintendent to send us five copies so that you can all study it. I've also gathered guides from several other districts in this state. They will, I'm sure, be very helpful to you in the planning of our guide. Some of the newer methods of duplicating and binding have been used in these guides so that they are quite attractive. I think our school board would be very happy to see us produce something equally attractive. We need to be able to show our patrons that we have a fine program in the language arts because we have been getting some rather pointed questions.

MR. DARKLING (an eighth grade teacher): Just how do you plan for us to produce this guide? Will we have released time from classes to work on it?

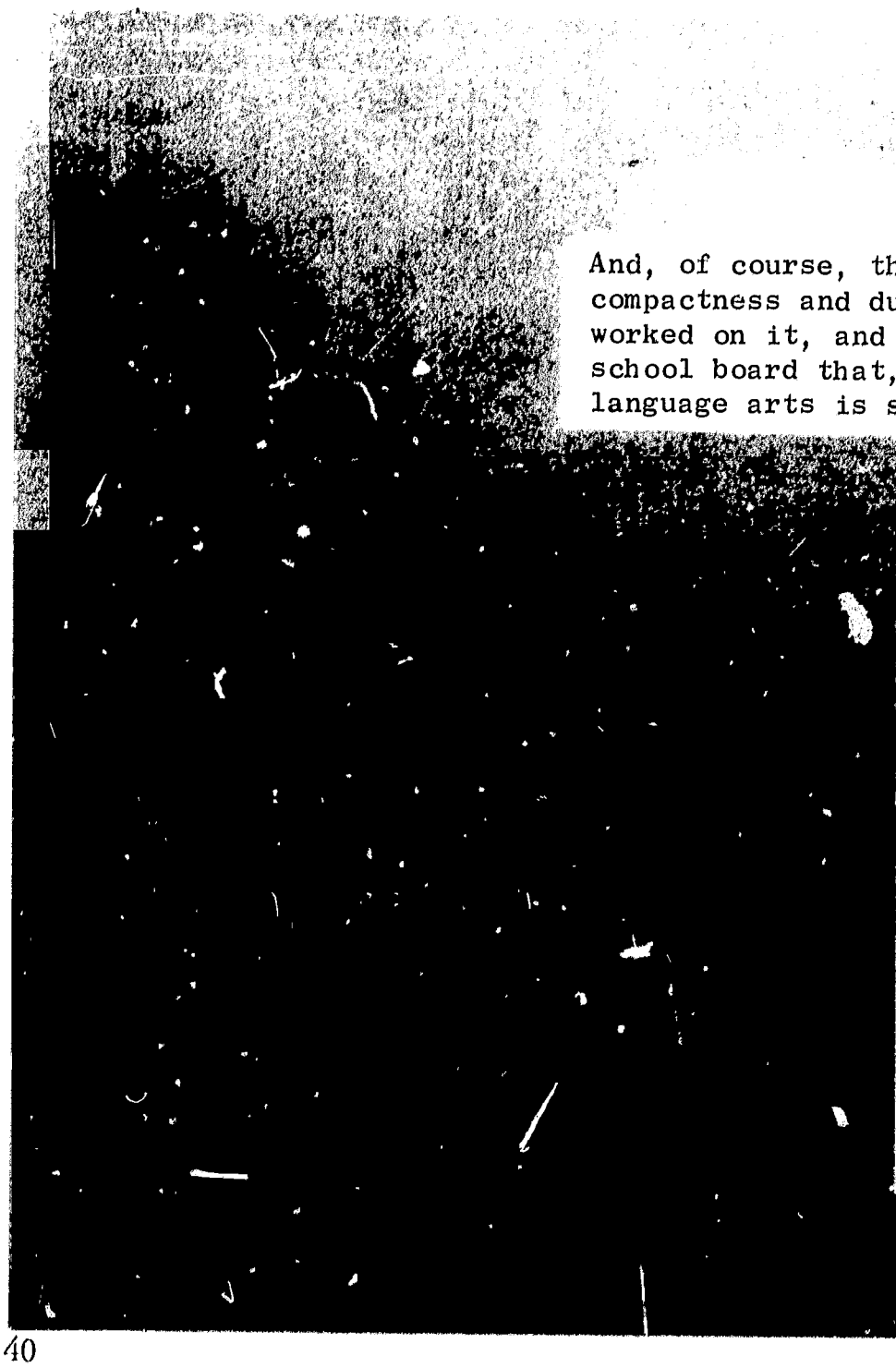
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT: I wish I could say yes to that last question. As you know, we have a very tight budget. I have managed to get a small allotment in next year's budget for each of you to have two or three half-days off for work on the guide, and of course we will have money for an attractive printing job. But I am afraid that most of the work on the guide will have to be done after school. For that purpose we will be setting up regular meetings of this committee on one day each month, and then each of you will meet with other teachers in horizontal grade level groups more often than that. I know this is a difficult way to work, but we just have no alternatives. I'm sure all of you are aware of our budgetary restrictions, but I know you believe this job is so important that we must do it in spite of these restrictions.

The conversation continues as the assistant superintendent outlines the schedules and procedures that he has set up for producing a curriculum guide. If teachers are skeptical about the value or feasibility of the undertaking, they conceal that response and resign themselves to time-consuming and energy-draining work. Some are openly enthusiastic because they have long thought that the single textbook approach to teaching language was too rigid and stifling to a teacher's imagination. Many of them have practically ignored the textbook anyway and have engaged children in language activities that were exciting and varied. Yet they realize the possible value in bringing some order to

language instruction and to having defined objectives. Therefore, the response to the assistant superintendent's leadership is positive; they hope that this effort to produce a language arts guide will support what they are doing and perhaps suggest further improvements that they can make in their classes.

More than one year later the language arts curriculum guide is finally written. Laborious searches through the collection of guides from other districts have yielded a composite set of objectives. Overall objectives for the school district program resemble these in scope and vagueness: "To improve children's communicative skill"; "To give students a sense of their literary heritage"; "To develop a sense of pride in using correct English." Many of the objectives can hardly be argued against because they are on the side of virtue and if attained in every high school graduate would lead to genuine pride in the efficacy of the school program.

The guide assigns specific language skills and facts about language and literature to each grade level. A teacher who studied the guide in preparation for teaching at any level would know exactly what his students were supposed to have learned the year before, and he would know what he should teach in the year ahead. The implication for his use of textbooks is that he should select those portions of the book that will best serve the skills assigned his grade.



And, of course, the guide is attractively and permanently bound. Its compactness and durability make it an object of pride to those who worked on it, and it is visible evidence for administrators and school board that, through their leadership, a modern program in the language arts is soon to be a reality in Perseverance City.

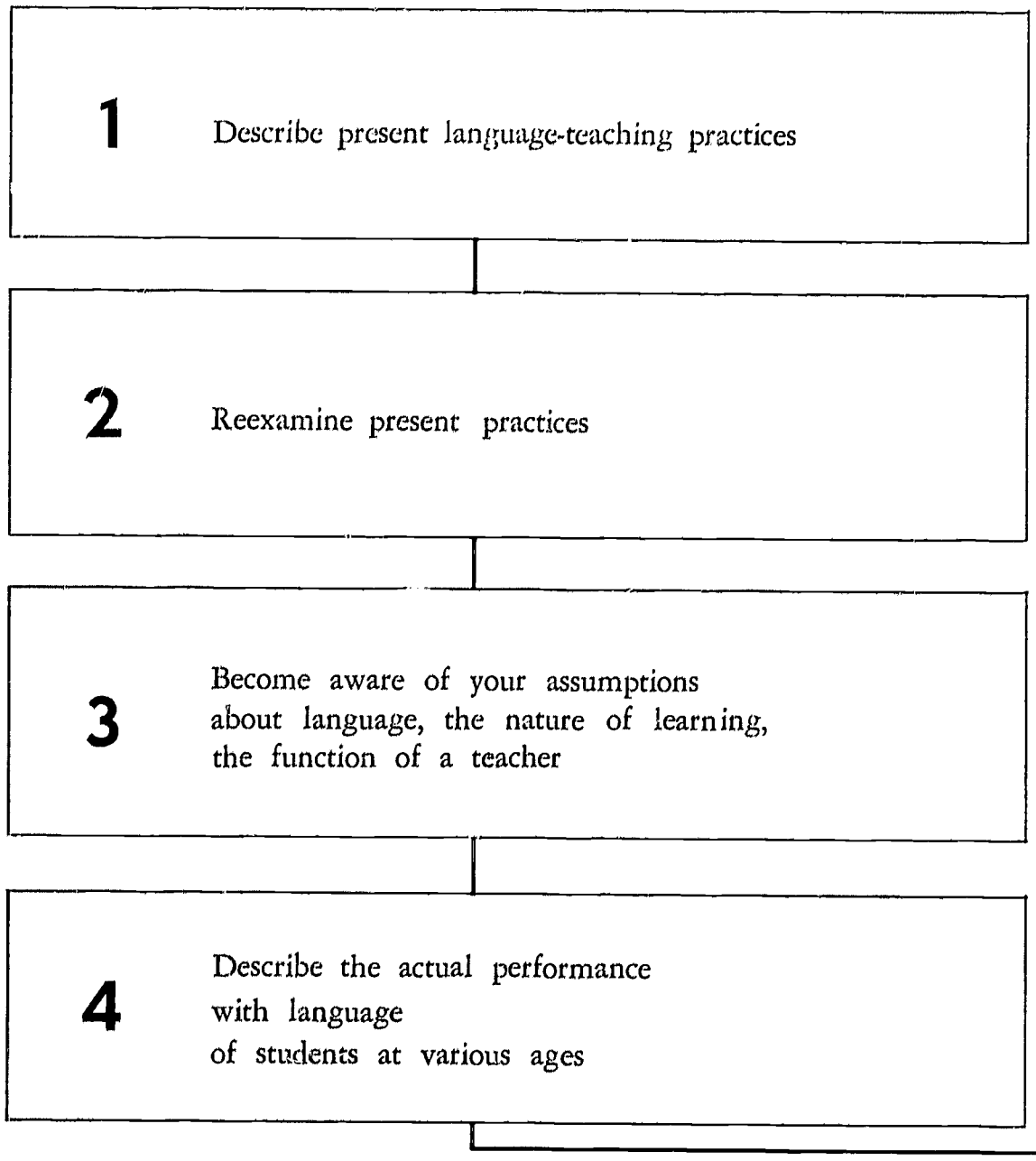
But the evidence is grossly misleading! The greater weight of evidence from school districts all over the nation suggests that efforts to produce a single, bound, written curriculum guide for language study are largely misdirected. Dust quickly settles on copies of the guide. They disappear under piles of more ephemeral matter on teachers' desks. They get filed in cupboards and in professional libraries, seldom to be opened by the teachers whom they are designed to assist.

The major value in working on such a guide accrues *in the very process* of working on it. The discussions surrounding purposes of teaching language, selection of objectives, relationships between day-to-day class experiences and broader aims of instruction, selection of materials and activities for children's practice with language: these are the heart of the matter. The continuous dialogue among the teachers who are producing the guide is the source and end of greatest value. The "real" curriculum is what each teacher does daily in his classroom—and what he does daily should be affected by the dialogue that he has with colleagues.

Designing a modern language learning program, then, means describing a process, not a written, bound product. Writing down and duplicating certain results of this process will be helpful or necessary, but most of the writing will be fugitive and subject to frequent revision. It will be like the written history of modern times—constantly needing updating.

If we replace "curriculum guide" by a term which will suggest our emphasis upon the *process of planning* and upon the *language performance of children and young people,* perhaps the term "language learning design" will serve. This phrase may suggest a certain patterning of experiences and instruction in language, a certain cohesiveness and order that applies both to the language teachers and to the students who are engaged in the unending process of learning to use language. The steps which follow suggest a reasoned order of professional activity and a maximum use of observations of students' actual use of language. They are applicable in school districts of any size; their effective use requires initiative and imagination from the teachers in each district rather than obeisance to pronouncements of other school districts, colleges, or state agencies.

# DEVELOPING A LANGUAGE



# LEARNING DESIGN

**5** State hoped-for language performance abilities (in the form of objectives)

**6** Create a reservoir of ideas and activities for classroom development of language performance

**7** Sequence the activities to match language performance, classroom activities, and language performance objectives

**8** Create new procedures and forms for evaluation of language performance

Key to symbols:

▬ *some of the questions to be asked*

▲ *possible procedural steps*

● *sources of aid from books, pamphlets, and periodicals*

## 1

### Describe present language-teaching practices

▬ Is the present program largely aimed at preparing students to do the work expected at higher levels?

Is knowledge about language considered to be a requisite to better use of language?

To what degree do textbooks determine what is taught about language?

Is language learning thought to be achieved best through close attention to separate categories such as vocabulary, spelling, grammar, reading, literature, speech?

▲ Hold one concentrated session (perhaps two hours) with teachers from various levels for representative answers to the questions; tape record the session and produce a condensed written version for later reference and discussion.

## 2

### Become aware of your assumptions about language, the nature of learning, the function of a teacher

■ Is language synonymous with communication?

Is the most important value of language its capacity for helping us to order experience?

If language reveals the nature of the man, is "correct usage" the major criterion?

Is language best learned by systematically replacing inappropriate language responses by approved forms?

What are the relative degrees of importance to be placed on "practical," everyday language efficiently versus self-understanding through language?

Is the teacher's chief responsibility to help his students find delight in using language?

▲ Suggest that each teacher (preferably teachers of all subjects in which verbal language plays any important role) formulate his assumptions in writing; sort and categorize the assumptions; provide copies to each teacher and encourage continual examination, discussion, and reformulation of them.


● Allen, Harold B. (ed.). *Readings in Applied Linguistics.* Second Edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964.

Anderson, Wallace L., and Stageberg, Norman. *Introductory Readings on Language.* Revised Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

Everts, Eldonna L. (ed.). *Dimensions of Dialect.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

Marckwardt, Albert H. *Language and Language Learning.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

Piaget, Jean. *Language and Thought of the Child.* Third Edition. New York: Humanities Press, 1959.

Dixon, John. *Growth Through English.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Moffett, James. *Drama: What Is Happening?* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

....., *Teaching the Universe of Discourse.* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Whitehead, Frank. *The Disappearing Dais: A Study of Principles and Practice of English Teaching.* London: Chotto and Windus, 1966.

*Key to symbols, page 48*

# 3

## Reexamine present practices

■ How do the assumptions revealed in the previous stage correspond to present language teaching practices? Are there contradictions or important omissions?

Do current instructional materials suit the most widely held assumptions of teachers?

▲ In districts with language supervisors or coordinators, hold several meetings of small groups of teachers for intensive discussion.

In other districts, invite a consultant from a college or university, another school district, or the state office to lead such a discussion; supply him well before the first meeting with materials derived from the first two steps.

● Frazier, Alexander. *Ends and Issues in the Teaching of English.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966.

Corbin, Richard. *The Teaching of Writing in our Schools.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Goldstein, Miriam B. *The Teaching of Language in our Schools.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

# 4

## Describe the actual performance with language of students at various ages

What do you observe as normal or typical performance (both oral and written) in each of the following categories:

pronunciation/spelling
diction (i.e., choice of words)
syntax (sentence structure)
coherence among several sentences
purpose of a given utterance
tone (speaker's or writer's attitude toward his audience)
persuasiveness (effect upon the intended audience)

▲ Tape record students' talk, both inside and outside of school if possible; transcribe samples.

Collect samples of writing produced in school for various purposes and types of assignments.

Apply the descriptive categories to achieve a representative description covering all school levels.

Ascertain what you consider to be strengths and weaknesses in students' present use of language.


Loban, Walter. *The Language of Elementary School Children*. Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963.

. . . . . *Problems in Oral English*. Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers in English, 1966.

Macdonald, James B., and Leeper, Robert R. (eds.). *Language and Meaning*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NEA), 1966.

*Key to symbols, page 48*

# 5

## State hoped-for language performance abilities (in the form of objectives)

■ Considering the community and any conditions that may be unique in affecting language use, what are the language abilities that graduates should have?

Do you need a minimum list of objectives that can reasonably be achieved by all graduates and another list of objectives that suggests greater sophistication in language?

▲ Reexamine whatever lists of objectives are available in existing curriculum or textbook materials; determine whether they are stated specifically enough to be truly useful; also determine whether they describe actual performance with language rather than vague and unobservable goals.

Use collections of objectives that have been prepared separately from any particular curriculum guide or textbook.

Decide whether the information produced in steps 2 and 4 suggest objectives.

● Mager, Robert F. *Preparing Instructional Objectives.* Palo Alto, California: Fearon Publishing Company, 1962.

Lazarus, Arnold, and Knudson, Rozanne. *Selected Objectives for the English Language Arts, Grades 7-12.* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1967.

# 6

## Create a reservoir of ideas and activities for classroom development of language performance

● What are teachers now doing that seems most likely to develop the abilities with language stated in the objectives?

If teachers are encouraged to improvise and make maximum use of their imaginations, what new activities can they develop that might energize language use?

How can teachers stimulate each other and plan together so that new ideas about learning language proliferate?

▲ Encourage a removal of the shackles of precedent and habit in language teaching.

Set up a place for teachers to talk freely and continually about their teaching procedures.

Provide ways for teachers to visit each others' classrooms (and in other districts) while language activities are going on.

Use video tapes and tape recordings to make students' language responses sharable.


Dixon, John. *Growth Through English.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Moffett, James. *Drama: What Is Happening?* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

..... *Student Centered English Curriculum, K-13.* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

..... *Teaching the Universe of Discourse,* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Barnes, Douglas (ed.). *Drama in the English Classroom.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

Summerfield, Geoffrey (ed.). *Creativity in English.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

*Key to symbols, page 48*

# 7

## Sequence the activities to match language performance, classroom activities, and language performance objectives

■ What seem to be some of the combinations of typical performance and classroom activities that are most likely to improve language abilities?

Are teachers' expectations at given levels varying markedly?

Are some activities suitable at several levels with certain alterations for maturity?

▲ Use the services of the district language coordinator or of consultants.

Produce tentative statements about sequence in loose leaf form.

● Macdonald, James B., and Leeper, Robert R. (eds.). *Language and Meaning.* Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NEA), 1966.

Loban, Walter. *The Language of Elementary School Children.* Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963.

# 8

## Create new procedures and forms for evaluation of language performance

Give thorough reconsideration to the purposes and techniques for assessment of language competence. Study the desirability of defining normal sequences of language development and of comparing each individual's performance to those sequences. Such a practice may reduce arbitrariness of expectations and allow reasoned and well-supported judgments to be made.

In order to define and describe sequences, many samples of students' language products need to be drawn and analyzed at several levels of generalization. For example, students' ways of appealing to various audiences need to be described and categorized; other elements for study include ways of attaining purposes, organizational structures, sentence construction, word choice, levels of formality, tonal devices, and conventions of oral and written language.

Following is a sample of one element for observation and description—sentence variety. It is by no means the most important aspect of students' use of language, though it readily lends itself to quantifiable study. The very ease of quantifiability should be a warning, however, to avoid overemphasis on statistical procedures and on minuteness of detail.

Sentence variety

General assessment
all sentences alike
hint of sentence variety
effective sentence variety

Sentence kinds
simple
compound
complex
compound-complex

Sentence types
loose
periodic
balanced

Elements of variety
subject-verb-comp. form
introductory phrases
subordinate clause
variation in sentence length
varied sentence openings
  adverb
  adjective
  participle
  prepositional phrase

The assessment procedure proposed here will obviously require large and complex efforts by teachers concerned about children's language development. Because of this difficulty, regional cooperation among several school districts should be considered. Such cooperation is likely to make this suggestion feasible; it should not, however, be regarded as a standardized or authoritarian testing program. Its aim is not to prescribe a single standard of performance which would then be applied in all classrooms, but rather to help teachers formulate defensible bases for their judgments.

Since this suggestion cannot be acted upon quickly or by individual teachers, an interim proposal for assessment of language performance seems necessary. It will serve as an alternative to the system presently in operation in many schools, namely, giving letter grades for every assignment, particularly those done in writing by students. The following procedure is recommended:

1. Do not grade each assignment with a letter or number; instead, see that student's oral and written work is responded to by other students and occasionally by the teacher. These responses should be directed both to what the student has said and to the way in which he has said it. A realization of the interdependence of form and content must predominate over a preoccupation with either form or content alone.
2. Retain several samples of students' language performance (papers and tape or videotape recordings) in a file.
3. Keep a cumulative check list of language performance abilities, stressing assets rather than defects.
4. If the traditional letter-grading system must still be used for reporting progress at quarter, semester, or year intervals, use the samples and the check list as the basis for assessment of performance in *all* language performance, not just written work.

ASCD Yearbook. *Evaluation as Feedback and Guide.* Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NEA), 1967.

Mager, Robert F. *Preparing Instructional Objectives.* Palo Alto, California: Fearon Publishing Company, 1962.

Setting: Every cause has an effect; every action has a reaction

# EPILOGUE

The modern English curriculum demands changes in English teacher preparation programs.

The changes in the teaching of language and literature urged in these guidelines cannot await a new generation of teachers educated in different ways. Teachers now in the profession, using the resources of their experience, supplemented by inservice programs, printed literature, and carefully planned workshops, can effect changes in both attitude and practice. Many teachers, free of ancient erroneous assumptions, textbooks, and curriculum guides, are going to find the new assumptions and new practices are more in accord with their actual teaching experiences than were the college teachers' assertions about what language and literature teaching should be or what textbooks and guides tried to force it to be. The freedom to teach as experience dictates may indeed prove to be the real key to effective teaching; and teachers can now undertake to do in their classrooms what they long suspected should have been done. A new set of goals and a new conception of the educational practices effective in accomplishing those goals will restore the excitement to teaching as the teacher, like his students, becomes involved in a dynamic process of learning and teaching as opposed to a set of routine activities which produce boredom in their repetition. The opportunity and challenge to try something new and worthwhile will more than offset the temporary insecurity resulting from giving up old props and supports; and the price of new freedom will seem small if it removes from teaching the present sense of futility and frustration.

As attitudes and practices change among teachers now in the classrooms, the teacher education programs of colleges and universities will also be forced to change. English departments must assume a much greater responsibility for teacher education. The single course labeled "Methods of Teaching English" and devoted mainly to textbook evaluation and the construction of lesson plans is not adequate. It is clear too that one all-purpose course in curriculum, elementary or secondary, is not sufficient for the education of a skilled teacher of language and literature. When both departments, English and Education, look hard at the real task before them and seek the means for performing that task, new patterns of teacher education will emerge.

For one thing, it is apparent that knowledge not now available in either department is necessary for the new generation of teachers. They must know well how human

beings really develop their language capacities, and this knowledge must come from studies in the social sciences. Future teachers must also know more about student personality and behavior than is currently available in the Introduction to Psychology required of all teachers. If language teachers can best succeed by becoming improvisers in the classroom, then a deeper knowledge of the growth and development of students is necessary. If literature is a basic resource for the teacher and student in developing a capacity for expression, then teachers must combine with their deep grasp of literature an understanding of how that resource can best be used; and this knowlege cannot be gained unless college literature courses are taught with attention to the needs of future teachers.

The new teacher education programs, then, must look beyond present course patterns and structures. Probably we can expect that English departments will play a greater role in teacher education, as they come to recognize that English teacher preparation is a primary function. Not only will courses be developed which are taught specifically for future English teachers, but departments will take greater interest in advising prospective teachers about relevant studies outside the subject matter department. Because a variety of studies can contribute to the new conception of teaching, we might well see a breadth in the education of teachers which will restore something of the ideal of liberal arts education.

Departments of Education will also play a role in this redesign. For their part, teachers of Education courses, as they become aware of the need for new kinds of knowledge and skills, can help develop new courses or adapt present courses to language and literature teachers. Above all, the present separation and isolation of the two departments should not continue. And as cooperation between them develops, a new coherent pattern of education becomes possible.

Moreover, colleges and universities should come to realize that, with a new conception of language, literature and teaching in which change and development are givens, the education of a teacher cannot end with graduation. As knowledge increases, and as practices become more sophisticated, the need for continuing education is even greater than now; and the role of the higher schools in this process is self-evident.