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ABSTRACT

Written for students pursuing graduate study, this chronological table lists landmark publications in the secondary English curriculum occurring between 1893 and 1971. For each of the 27 milestones--e.g., "Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies" (1893), "Teaching Creative Writing" by Lawrence Conrad (1937), "The Uses of English" by Herbert Muller (1967)--title and sponsorship are listed and tenets are discussed. (TS)

ICTE

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"MILESTONES"

Way back in 1971 Lou Ann Bleakley prepared a chronological table of "milestones" in the secondary English curriculum. She concerned herself with those "milestones" occurring between 1893 through 1971. In early 1972 she added several items in order to bring the listing up to date for publication. The Indiana Council, however, could not publish it at that time. And here it is now in 1974!

At the time Ms. Bleakley prepared the listing, she was a student in an English language arts seminar, conducted by Dr. Arnold Lazarus, at Purdue University. At Purdue Ms. Bleakley was pursuing a doctoral program in English Education and was a teaching assistant in the English Department.

Ms. Bleakley holds a master's degree in English from the University of Notre Dame. She taught high school English for nine years and served as a department chairman for three years.

Since the ICTE Occasional Paper should reflect scholarship and research beyond what would normally appear in the Council's other publication, the editor feels that "milestones" may be valuable to those members of the Council who are pursuing graduate study. For those who have finished their graduate study, "milestones" will serve as a reminder of the cycles the teaching of English has undergone.

Charles Blaney
Editor

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MILESTONES
IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH CURRICULUM
IN THE UNITED STATES

1893

Title: Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies

Sponsorship: The National Council of the National Education Association (NEA)

Tenets: The study of English should be allotted as much time as the study of Latin. Every subject should contribute to training in English skills. The English curriculum includes rhetoric, English language, and English literature. English should be taught for five days a week for four years; it should include both the study of literature (three hours a week) and training in expression of thought (including rhetoric, one hour a week, third year; grammar, one hour a week, fourth year). Well-qualified, enthusiastic teachers should staff the department.

1894-1900

Title: Recommendations of the National Conference on Uniform Requirements in English; the establishment of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB)¹

Sponsorship: Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland; The National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English, CEEB

Tenets: The college entrance examination should be based on certain masterpieces of English literature. Candidates should be permitted some outside reading. Each of the books read should be representative literature and as a whole the books should span literature from the Elizabethan Age to the present.

1911-1912

Title: The English Journal, Vol. 1 (1912); the inauguration of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

Sponsorship: The National Council of Teachers of English; NEA-English Round Table's Committee on College-Entrance Requirements

Tenets: The English teachers of the country need a well-organized national society of a representative and permanent character and an effective medium of expression.

1912

Title: Modifications of College Entrance Requirements in English reported to NEA by James F. Hosis

Sponsorship: The National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English; CEEB: influence of NEA and NCTE

Tenets: The requirements and examination in literature are separated from the requirements and examination in grammar and composition. The lists of books for reading and study are lengthened; high school teachers have more freedom of choice; colleges urged to set examinations not based on specified books. Pupils submit certificates from principals indicating books read in high school. High schools are urged to maintain four-year courses in English.

1917

Title: The Hosis Report: Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools -- James F. Hosis

Sponsorship: NEA's National Joint Committee on English (membership from The Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education's English Department and The Committee on College-Entrance Requirements/NCTE)

Tenets: The college preparatory function of the high school is a minor one, The chief problem of articulation is not how to connect the high school with the college but with the elementary school. Make the high school a school for the children of all the people. Make sure that each pupil is permitted to enjoy and profit by the typical experiences that the English course is peculiarly fitted to provide. A four-year sequence in English should be provided. Good habits of thought and expression should be encouraged in all classes; the value of extra classroom activities should be seen. English must be regarded as social in content and social in method of acquirement. English can train for efficiency and for enjoyment of leisure. Success in English is conditioned by certain material and personal factors; the most important are: the number and size of classes, the library and other equipment, and the preparation of the teacher.

1932

Title: Instruction in English -- Dora V. Smith

Sponsorship: United States Office of Education's (USOE) National Survey of Secondary Education

Tenets: Questions regarding the English curriculum, based on the current status of English instruction, must be posed for consideration. (A forerunner of The Basic Issues Conference, 1958-1959)

1932

Title: Current English Usage -- Sterling A. Leonard

Sponsorship: NCTE's Essentials Committee

Tenets: A survey of current English usage suggests that the teacher avoid dogmatic usage requirements and rigid, prescriptive rules of grammar; actual current usage is a better criterion.

1935

Title: An Experience Curriculum in English - W. Wilbur Hatfield

Sponsorship: NCTE's Curriculum Commission

Tenets: The ideal curriculum consists of well-selected experiences involving pupil activity. The program of experiences must be well balanced; creative expression must be on the same footing as communication or literature. Techniques are essential instruments; they must be cumulative. The program of experiences must be orderly in terms of units chosen. Experiences must be adapted to the needs and capacities of individual learners. The English curriculum must be seen as a body of guided experiences paralleling present and future out-of-school experiences; the program aims to use the intellectual activities to facilitate and interpret dynamic experience.

1936

Title: A Correlated Curriculum - Ruth Mary Weeks²

Sponsorship: NCTE's Committee on Correlation

Tenets: Deal with the student as a dynamic whole. Utilizing the project method, involve the student in posing problems of immediate significance to himself, and in devising and using means for their solution. Experiences with literature can be related to and integrated with other subjects; some of the goals of other subject areas can be attained through literature

1937

Title: Teaching Creative Writing - Lawrence H. Conrad

Sponsorship: The Progressive Education Association's (PEA) Commission on the Secondary School Curriculum

Tenets: The secondary school program should provide some time for creative writing. Writing is creative when the source of the material is within the student's real or imaginative experience; it is free in the sense that the student has chosen his own material and is seeking his own most adequate form of expression.

1938

Title: Facts About Current English Usage - Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott

Sponsorship: NCTE

Tenets: This analysis, based on recognized dictionaries, grammars and usage books, should dispose of the journalistic cry of heresy and radicalism raised against the Leonard report (1932). A survey of fact rather than of opinion would seem to indicate that Leonard's figures are conservative; this would imply that many usage rules taught in schools are outmoded and basically wrong-headed.

1938

Title: Literature as Exploration - Louise M. Rosenblatt

Sponsorship: PEA's Commission on Human Relations

Tenets: All literary experience, all teaching, and all learning are living and personal in nature. Literature is for the reader the medium of exploration; the experience of literature is not a passive process but a form of intense personal activity.

1940

Title: American English Grammar - Charles C. Fries

Sponsorship: NCTE with support from The Modern Language Association (MLA) and The Linguistic Society of America

Tenets: The real grammar of present-day English is not taught in our schools; we must agree upon what kind of grammar the schools should teach. Teaching must be based upon an accurate, realistic description of the actual practices of informal Standard English; eliminate from the program matters of dispute for which there is any considerable usage. Stimulate and provide equipment for the observation of actual usage by students.

1940

Title: Language in General Education: A Report of the Committee on the Function of English in General Education

Sponsorship: PEA's Commission on Secondary School Curriculum

Tenets: A knowledge of the structure of English comes not through a study of Anglicized Latin grammar but through the habit of complete interpretation of the meanings of the thing read, acquired by practice in examining words in their context (functional approach).

1942

Title: The Story of the Eight-Year Study - Wilford M. Aikin; the culminating report of a twelve-year study

Sponsorship: PEA's Commission on the Relation of School and College

Tenets: Secondary schools can be trusted with a greater measure of freedom than college requirements now permit. Every student should achieve competence in the essential skills of communication -- reading, writing, oral expression -- and in the use of quantitative concepts and symbols. Inert subject matter should give way to content that is alive and pertinent to problems of youth and modern civilization. The common, recurring concerns of American youth should give content and form to the curriculum.

1942

Title: "Basic Aims for English Instruction in American Schools"

Sponsorship: NCTE's Basic Aims Committee

Tenets: Increasingly free and effective interchange of ideas is vital to life in a democracy. English uses literature of both past and present to illumine the contemporary scene. American literature should receive major emphasis. A study of the motion picture and radio is indispensable in the English program. The goals of instruction in English are basically the same for all, but the heights to be attained and the materials to be used vary according to the individual. The development of social understanding through literature requires reading materials within the comprehension, the social intelligence, and the emotional range of students. Teachers with special training are needed for effective instruction in the language arts.

1952--1956

Title: The English Language Arts, The English Language Arts in the Secondary School

Sponsorship: NCTE's Commission on the English Curriculum

Tenets: Any curriculum in language arts must be based upon an understanding of the adolescent and his world. The language arts program should be planned cooperatively by all persons concerned with putting it into action; the design must be of adequate scope and sequence and must provide for evaluation. The language arts and skills can be related effectively through the unit approach. Only the teacher who has experienced literature widely can hope to motivate students to discovery through literature. Learning to write calls for constant writing by the student and direct teaching and evaluating by the teacher. The student should develop language power in the social situation in which it is used.

1959

Title: The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English

Sponsorship: MLA, NCTE, American Studies Association, (ASA), College English Association (CEA)

Tenets: The positional declarations of the Basic Aims Committee need to be re-opened in question form: What is "English"? Can basic programs in English be devised that are sequential and cumulative from kindergarten through graduate school? At what levels is coverage of the field important? Can reliable and valid tests be devised for the various levels of a basic program in English? How should the basic program be modified to accommodate students' varying interests and abilities? What obligation has the English teacher to teach the reading of factual prose? How should writing be taught? What is the relation between learning to write and the reading of imaginative literature? ...and a knowledge of the structure of the language? Are national standards for student writing feasible?

What is the responsibility of the English teacher for the student's ability to express himself orally? What effects do class size and teacher load have on student achievement in English? What are the potential contributions of modern technology to the teaching of English? How can English teachers enlist the aid of others to make their program more effective? What knowledge of literature and language and what training in methodology does the future secondary English teacher need? How can we achieve articulation of teaching and teacher training at all levels?

1960

Title: The Process of Education - Jerome S. Bruner; because of the extent of the problem, the report is not limited exclusively to the teaching of science.

Sponsorship: The Woods Hole Conference (Education Committee of the National Academy of Sciences)

Tenets: Students should be given an understanding of the fundamental structure of the subject; to grasp the structure of a subject is to understand it in a way that permits many things to be related to it meaningfully. The foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form: the basic ideas that give form to life and literature are as simple as they are powerful, hence, the English curriculum should be a "spiral" built around the great issues, principles and values of central social concern. Intuitive thinking, the intellectual technique of arriving at plausible but tentative formulations without going through the analytic steps, is a much-neglected and essential feature of productive thinking. The teacher's task as communicator, model, and identification figure can be supported by a wide use of a variety of devices that expand experience, clarify it, and give it personal significance.

1961.....

Title: Project English³

Sponsorship: USOE's Cooperative Research Branch

Tenets: Establishment of English curriculum study centers and research projects seems essential: -to attempt to answer the big unanswered questions, especially, how to develop curriculum patterns that are sequential; -to find ways of increasing the knowledge and competence of today's teacher -to improve present teacher preparation programs; -to facilitate dissemination of information of the teaching and learning of English.

1961

Title: The National Interest and the Teaching of English: A Report on the Status of the Profession

Sponsorship: NCTE's Committee on National Interest, MLA, ASA, CEA, The American Council of Learned Societies, and The American Council on Education

Tenets: Bold and immediate action must be undertaken on a national scale to improve the status of English teaching as indicated in this report (e.g., only 40-60% of secondary English teachers have completed college majors in English). These constitute the major goals: Focus instruction in English upon the study of language, literature, and composition. Educate teachers to the developmental and sequential nature of the study; institute a national program for encouraging articulation of English studies through all levels. Improve present preparatory programs for teachers of English. Improve the preparation of practicing English teachers. Improve the services and supplies available to English teachers. Encourage significant research about the teaching of English. Recruit and prepare more teachers of English.

1964

Title: The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English: A Report on the Status of the Profession

Sponsorship: NCTE's Committee on National Interest

Tenets: Inadequacies in preservice preparation and in inservice education still exist; however notable efforts have been initiated, viz. Project English (USOE, 1961---) and CEEB institutes (1961-5). Provisions must be made to cope with existing inadequacies in English supervision and instructional leadership. 76% of English teachers surveyed indicate that institutes are an important way to promote in-service education (n.b.: NDEA Institutes, 1964-8; EPDA Institutes, 1969---).

1964

Title: High School Departments of English: Their Organization, Administration, and Supervision - "Recommendations"

Sponsorship: NCTE and USOE

Tenets: The English department should maintain a professional library, housed in an English center. Adequate professional and clerical help should be available to the department. Suitable books should be available in classroom libraries. Provision should be made for adequate departmental coordination, with released time for teachers involved in curriculum planning. Provision should be made for adequate coordination throughout the district. The English faculty should collaborate in curriculum planning and textbook selection. The English chairman should assume more leadership in teacher assigning and supervising in providing for inservice training, and in informing the public about the teaching of English.

1964

Title: Understanding Media, The Extensions of Man - Marshall McLuhan

Sponsorship: Research funded by The National Association of Educational Broadcasters and USOE

Tenets: Our human senses configure the awareness and experience of each of us. All media are extensions of our human senses. The medium is the message, for it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human-association and action. Automation is information, a way of thinking, a way of doing; it can put an end to the present patterns of fragmented unrelation of subjects in our school curricula: education can acquire depth and interrelation. Automation makes liberal education mandatory; man is free from fragmentary specialism as never before, but also involved in the total social process as never before. The social and educational patterns latent in automation are those of self-employment and artistic autonomy. Mass media are "mass" not just in terms of audience size, but in terms of an instant inclusive embrace: everybody becomes involved in them at the same time.

1965

Title: Freedom and Discipline: the culmination of five years' work; Planning/ Summer Institutes, 1961-1965

Sponsorship: CEEB's Commission on English

Tenets: It is recommended that: The scope of the English program be defined as the study of language, literature, and composition, written and oral, and that matters not clearly related to such study be excluded from it. The English curriculum of a school (or system) be the result of cooperative planning by the teachers and represent a clearly defined sequence of study. Significant data of students' performance be accumulated in individual folders and passed on from year to year to successive teachers. Professional standards be tightened to insure better preparation in subject matter and the study of pedagogical processes. The English teacher be assigned no more than four classes a day, with average class size of not more than twenty-five pupils, and be responsible for not more than one extracurricular activity. Provision be made for adequate space, equipment and clerical assistance.

1967

Title: The Uses of English: Guidelines for the Teaching of English from The Anglo-American Conference at Dartmouth College - Herbert J. Muller

Sponsorship: MLA, NCTE, and The National Association for the Teaching of English (United Kingdom)

Tenets: The study of language and literature can and should contribute more directly than any other major subject to the realization of both our common humanity and our personal identity. English teachers need to have a sound, conscious knowledge of the language; there remains the unanswerable question of just when, what, and how much to teach about the language. The teacher should make or keep literature alive (as it naturally is for little children), as he assists them to read with more understanding or to achieve "proficiency." Teachers of literature should select books embodying diverse visions of life and beliefs about values, and then question, discuss, and explore them with the students; this would lead to an awareness of moral complexity, ambiguity and paradox.

Composition is of value in development of the student; through learning how to order and shape his experience he learns more about life and himself. The starting point in teaching discourse is "drama": the interaction between the persons. Good creative writing is a product of thought and hard work, not merely of imagination; creative writing is likely to improve skills in reading, stimulate a desire to read and heighten pleasure in literature. Drama, i.e., creative activities beginning with mime or pantomime and improvisation simply for the sake of the children's own education, should be made an integral part of the entire English curriculum. Collaboration of teachers within the profession and public support for English study are essential to the improvement of English teaching.

1969

Title: Growth through English: A Report Based on the Dartmouth Seminar 1966 - John Dixon

Sponsorship: The National Association for the Teaching of English (United Kingdom), NCTE, and MLA

Tenets: Language is learnt in operation. Students can meet as participants to share their encounters with life, moving freely between dialogue and monologue--between talk, drama, and writing. Through reading, students, experiencing the role of spectator, can draw from the artist and thinker new insights into life. A unitary not fragmentary approach to English integrates the four central activities--talk, drama, reading and writing. The testing point for a model of English based on experience and language in operation will be its account of knowledge and of programs. Bodies of knowledge are useful as frames of reference for action, freeing students from disabling conceptions and leading students to a sense of themselves as organizers of experience in the act of speaking, writing, or reading. The English program must recognize the natural need for a sense of order and sequence; improvisation can thrive only within a framework that expresses an underlying pattern of development but does not impose a static, external curriculum. English teachers locally, nationally, and internationally must: -review critically examinations in English and grading practices; -seek alternatives to the traditional classroom; -consider individualizing progress within a heterogeneous class. Each teacher must learn himself and develop with his students as he explores experience based work.

1970

Title: On Writing Behavioral Objectives for English - edited by John Maxwell and Anthony Tovatt

Sponsorship: NCTE's Commission on the English Curriculum

Tenets: Although major benefits might arise from the writing of behavioral objectives for English there is need for caution: the process poses problems in semantics, philosophy, psychology, measurement, and pedagogy. Is a subject like English, which aims partly toward emotional response or aesthetics or the creation of novel utterances, amenable to analyses which presume that all learning results in overt, observable behavior?

1972

Title: Handbook of Representative Performance Objectives in English: Grades 9-12
-- J. N. Hook et al.

Sponsorship: USOE's Bureau of Research and the Tri-University Project on Behavioral Objectives in English

Tenets: To utilize performance objectives successfully, the English teacher must understand the basic theory and potential uses and misuses of performance objectives. Performance objectives are statements about desirable outcomes of educational interaction and are phrased in terms of what learners should be able to do as a result of the interaction. The components of the interaction may be three: the learner, the materials, and the teacher. Performance objectives must: -consider context (learner's maturity, ability, and experience; and the broad goal of which the performance objective is one part); -contain implicitly criteria for measurement and evaluation; -over-all, consider cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Abuses of performance objectives in English include: choice of trivial objectives, failure to relate objectives to larger goals, over-insistence upon mathematical measurement, failure to allow for individual exploration, poorly thought-out use and hasty implementation of performance objectives. The use of performance objectives implies that: -English is a process, not a thing; -the process can usually best be learned inductively; -learning must be centered on the student--on what the student does, not what the teacher does or what the content "means". Representative performance objectives in English can be stated in these areas: -sending and receiving non-verbal messages; -speaking and listening; -language; -reading and responding to literature by valuing, describing, discovering relationships, discriminating, inferring, and evaluating; -writing; -exploring the mass media.

¹As related by James F. Hoscic in Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools, (Washington, D. C. : Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 2, Government Printing Office, 1917).

²Taken from Robert C. Pooley, "English," in Encyclopedia of Educational Research, third edition, ed. Chester W. Harris (New York: Macmillan, 1960) and from William H. Evans and Jerry L. Walker, New Trends in the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

³As stated by J. N. Hook (Coordinator for Project English: USOE), "Project English: The First Year," The Situation of English: 1963, reprinted from PMLA, September, 1963, (New York: MLA, 1963).

Unless indicated the "tenets" are quoted, paraphrased, or inferred from the works cited.