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ABSTRACT

The first segment of a long-term educational assessment plan, for which this summary report was compiled, called for a study that would survey the status of the English language arts in the province of British Columbia and serve as a pilot for future assessment programs. This summary presents the highlights of the original three-part report that documented the results of questionnaires completed by over 7,000 teachers and trustees and the results of reading and writing tests taken by nearly 40,000 students in grades 4, 8, and 12. Sections of the summary discuss general background information on the language project, instructional goals and objectives, instructional practices, test results, the accomplishments of the project, and the recommendations of the report as they affect various segments of the educational community. The appendixes provide a guide to the main report, list the people involved and the timetable followed in the project, and present the ranges of acceptable performance as defined by the panel for the fourth grade reading assessment. (NAI)

LANGUAGE B.C.

AN ASSESSMENT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

A PILOT STUDY

SUMMARY REPORT

Submitted to the Learning Assessment Branch of
the British Columbia Department of Education

by the following Survey Team from the University of Victoria

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October 1976

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Foreword

With the quality of education an increasing focus of inquiry, educators and members of the general public are becoming more conscious of the need for comprehensive planning and evaluation. This need arises from the demands which are now being made on education, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the resources required to satisfy these demands cannot be provided unless the greatest care is taken in their allocation and use.

The central principle underlying the provincial assessment programme is that if decisions about education are to be made — changing curriculum, developing professional programmes, allocating resources — these decisions, to be effective, should be based on an understanding of what our youth are learning and what their needs are.

This assessment, which has been termed *LANGUAGE: B.C.*, is intended to serve as a pilot for future assessments. Many procedures have been attempted in the pilot for the first time on a provincial scale: public involvement in the consideration of goals and objectives, sampling techniques employed in the administration of tests, a detailed examination of instructional practices and the development of district reporting options represent some of the activities which have been attempted for the first time. Experiences with this assessment have enabled those persons involved in the development of the study to learn a great deal about the many factors that influence the implementation of a constructive provincial assessment programme.

This Summary Report and the three more detailed parts of the main Report were prepared by the Survey Team which was responsible for the development of questionnaires and tests and the interpretation of data. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the work of Dr. Peter Evanechko and his colleagues at the University of Victoria who together with the members of the Management Committee were most receptive to the suggestions and advice provided by a number of groups and individuals in the province. Special thanks are due to the members of the Joint Committee on Evaluation and the Technical Advisory Committee whose guidance and assistance are most appreciated. The success of this study also depended on the co-operation of educators, citizens and students in every part of the province. Space does not permit personal recognition of the many contributors, but to all who gave of their experience and time, thank you.

Jerry Mussio, Acting Director
Learning Assessment Branch

Preface

The main Report of *LANGUAGE: B.C.*, an assessment of the English Language Arts in the province of British Columbia, runs to over 600 pages in three parts. That Report derives from thousands of pages of computer print-outs, the results of questionnaires completed by over 7,000 teachers and trustees and of reading and writing tests taken by nearly 40,000 students in Grades 4, 8, and 12. The present document summarizes the main Report which is in itself, however, a digest of a massive amount of information. *It would be unfair, then, to use this material as a final statement about LANGUAGE: B.C. without going back to the extensive documentation of the original Report.*

This summary consists of six sections with appendices. Section 1 gives general background information on the *LANGUAGE: B.C.* project, its aims and methods. Sections 2-4 summarize the three sections of the main Report: I. Goals and Objectives; II. Instructional Practices; III. Test Results, Reading and Writing. Section 5, the "Conclusion", assesses the accomplishment of the project, and Section 6 provides a summary of the recommendations of the Report as they affect various segments of the educational community. The appendices provide a guide to the main Report and a list of the people involved in the project. The Survey Team wishes to thank all those who took part for their co-operation and advice.

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1.
Introduction

For many years, legislators and educators have made decisions which have affected the course of education in the province and determined the expenditure of increasingly large sums of money. To this date, the reason for changing educational policy or investing more money in the school system has often been equated with lower drop-out figures, a greater variety of course offerings, or other such indicators. The underlying assumption has been that the quality of education — what students actually learn — is somehow related to such factors.

The lack of information, on a province-wide basis, describing what is being learned in the schools and the quality of that learning has become a major concern to many people within the educational system. In response to this general concern, the Department of Education established a Joint Committee on Evaluation in the fall of 1974 to advise the Department on the development of a long-term assessment plan in British Columbia. About the same time, a team of researchers from the University of Victoria was retained by the Department to conduct a study in the English Language Arts. This study was subsequently launched as a survey of the status of the language arts and as a pilot for future assessment programmes.

The major objectives of the study were to:
1) inform the public about the strengths and weaknesses of the English Language Arts;
2) supply curriculum developers with information on current programmes and needs;
3) provide information to be used in setting priorities and allocating resources;
4) clarify directions for change in teacher education and professional development;
5) raise questions to be examined in depth by educational researchers.

Since many procedures used in this study were attempted for the first time on a provincial scale, another important purpose for *LANGUAGE: B.C.* was that it would serve as a pilot study which would contribute to the development of future assessments.

The Survey Team identified three main components of the study: goals, outcomes, and any discrepancy between them. The first would identify and appraise the desired objectives of the English Language Arts. The outcomes assessment would survey student knowledge and skills as related to the perceived goals; for this purpose, tests in reading at the Grade/Year 4 level and in composition at the Grade/Year 8 and 12 levels were to be developed by the Survey Team and teacher consultants. The discrepancy analysis would attempt to explain any differences between the desired outcomes and the actual achievement by pupils; this analysis would include an examination of methodologies and instructional materials being employed. Eventually these three areas became the three sections of the main Report, with some modification of the "discrepancy analysis" because of the difficultics of assigning specific causes to such differences as well as the limited nature of the student assessment.

In May and June of 1975, the first phase of the project was conducted by means of a series of questionnaires prepared by the Survey Team and distributed to teachers and school trustees. In these booklets, respondents were asked to describe the desirable learning outcomes of the Language Arts; in addition, teachers were asked to describe existing instructional practices employed in their classroooms. Separate questionnaires were prepared for the areas of Kindergarten and secondary English (grades 8, 11, and 12) and for four areas of the elementary Language Arts: reading, oral communication, written language and literature. In addition, a questionnaire adapted from the goals section of the teachers' booklets was prepared and mailed to every school trustee in the province in an attempt to determine the aims of at least one segment of the public.

After pilot studies and revisions, the questionnaires were mailed out to the entire populations of Kindergarten and grade 8, 11, and 12 teachers; a sampling approach was used at grades 1, 3, and 7, so that each teacher of language arts was asked to respond to only one of the four Elementary questionnaires — these results, however, can be taken statistically to apply to the entire population. Of the 9,038 questionnaires mailed out, 7,315 (81%) were completed and returned; the response rate at each level included Kindergarten, 87%; Grade 1, 86%; Grade 3, 84%; Grade 7, 68%;[1] Grade 8, 87%; Grade 11, 88%; and Grade 12, 90%. Of the 500 trustees in the province, 228 (46%) returned completed questionnaires.

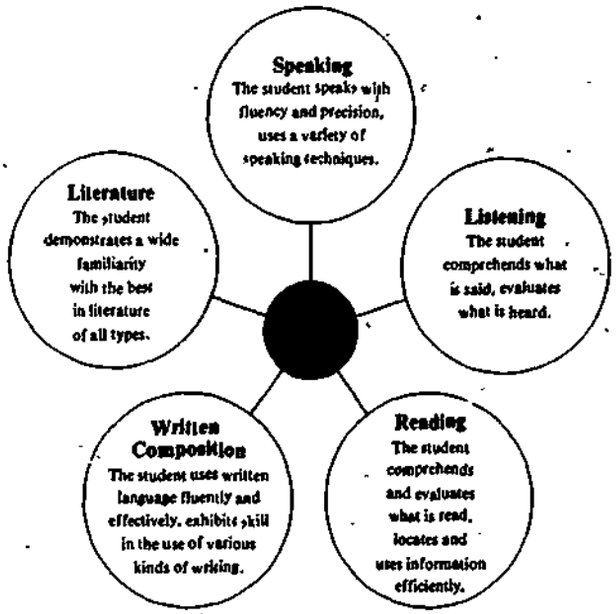
The Survey Team, aware of the limitations inherent in gathering information by the questionnaire

1 It was thought that the relatively low return rate at Grade 7 could be explained by the fact that many Grade 7 teachers who received the Questionnaires were area specialists (for example, music teachers) who do not, in fact, teach Language Arts.

method, took precautions to reduce the effect of such weaknesses. To avoid the problem of insufficient information, the booklets were made as comprehensive as possible by drawing on information from the pilot studies and from teacher consultants as well as from other surveys and the team's own expertise in various areas; write-in responses by the teachers and the trustees were also encouraged. To deal with the problem of inaccurate answers, the Team stressed the importance of the information as well as the maintained anonymity of the respondents. Finally, the extensive piloting procedures helped to lessen or eliminate problems of ambiguous interpretations of statements and questions by respondents.

The second phase of the project took place over a period of ten months beginning in April, 1975. Focussing on the objectives identified by teachers as important in the questionnaires, the Survey Team devised tests that would assess student performance in reading at Grade 4, and in writing at Grades 8 and 12. After several pilot studies in schools throughout the province, the tests were administered in January 1976, to 94% of Grade 4 students (34,626) in the province, and to a random sample of 3,696 Grade 8 and Grade 12 students.

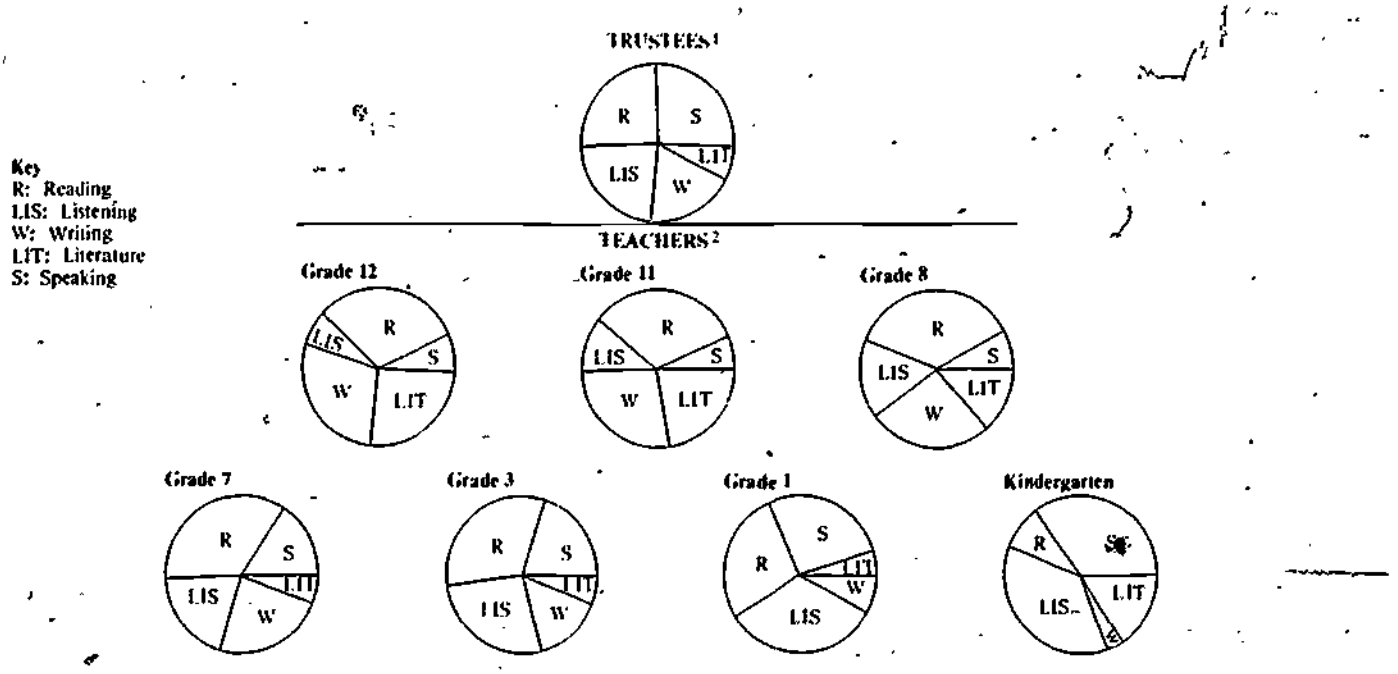
2. Goals and Objectives



A major section of the questionnaire consisted of a list of possible learning outcomes that might be desirable for students to attain at the end of the respective grade level. These objectives were identified from several sources, including Canadian provincial curriculum guides, research and literature in the field, suggestions and comments from teachers on the Management Committee and teachers participating in pilot studies, and the research and conceptualization of members of the Survey Team. Within each area several major skill categories were identified along with a number of subskills which comprised the major category. Teachers were then asked to evaluate the importance of each objective according to a five-point scale ranging from "Essential" to "Of No Importance". The relative importance of each objective was to be "in terms of the knowledge, skill and attitudes that are needed by these students in order to further their individual development and contribute to society in general".

In addition to the special categories in each area, the questionnaires contained several common sections designed to gather information on the same points at each grade level. In one such section, teachers were asked to evaluate five general areas of Language Arts/English — reading, writing, listening, speaking, literature — in terms of their importance at the respective grade levels. School trustees were asked to evaluate these areas in terms of their importance in adult life. Figure 1 summarizes the pattern of re-

Figure 1: Relative Importance of Each Area of the Language Arts



1 Trustees were asked to rank the five goal areas in terms of their importance in adult life.

2 Teachers ranked the five goals in terms of the emphasis that each should receive at the respective grade levels.

sponses. Each circle in the figure is divided according to the relative emphasis assigned to each of the five areas by teachers and trustees. Whereas the oral skills of speaking and listening are reported as most important in Kindergarten, there is a clear movement toward reading, writing, and literature being viewed as most important at the senior grades. Emphasis on the importance of reading is established in Grade 1 and continues through to Grade 12, although speaking and listening skills instruction declines in importance in secondary programmes. Trustees, as a group, felt that speaking, reading and listening skills are most important, followed by writing. The area of literature was ranked lowest of the five by the trustees, though it received strong support from secondary teachers. These responses indicate a need for continuing discussion and clarification of language goals, especially at the secondary level, between the profession and the public.

The following sub-sections summarize the findings in each of the individual booklets which examined the skill areas outlined in Figure 2.

Kindergarten. Teachers felt that the following "affective" outcomes of the Kindergarten experience were of major importance: the development of a positive self-concept which would increase the probability of reading success, the making of the transition from home to school less traumatic, and the possible need to compensate for environmental differences. They also saw the major purpose of Kindergarten as the identification and correction of learning disabilities and the development of language skills so as to lay a foundation for the Language Arts and to improve the chances of success in the primary grades. Finally, teachers felt they must provide a foundation for the Language Arts by developing listening, speaking, auditory and visual discrimination, and psychomotor skills at a basic level.

Figure 2 Skill areas Surveyed in the Questionnaires

1. Kindergarten

- Attitudes and appreciations
- Listening skills
- Speaking skills
- Visual perception
- Motor skills
- Auditory perception

2. Reading (Elementary)

- Enjoyment
- Selection of suitable materials
- Main ideas
- Sequence
- Reading for detail
- Logical reasoning
- Visual memory
- Context clues
- Phonics
- Structural analysis
- Dictionary usage
- Locating information
- Applying appropriate reading skills
- Organizing information effectively

3. Written Language (Elementary)

- Content
- Vocabulary
- Style
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Handwriting

4. Literature (Elementary)

- Understanding Literary Structures (e.g. identifying the theme, retelling the plot)
- Reacting to Literature (e.g. dramatizing an incident from a story)

5. Oral Communication (Elementary)

- Voice skills
- Usage and dialect in speaking
- Fluency and precision in speaking
- Effect of speaking and listening
- Use of speech skills
- Auditory discrimination
- Comprehension in listening
- Evaluation in listening
- Appreciation in listening
- Levels and usage in listening
- Memory in listening

6. Secondary English

- Critical awareness
- Writing
- Literature
- Drama
- Poetry
- Prose
- Speaking and listening
- Reading

Kindergarten teachers also expressed considerable concern over an increasing tendency for their programmes to be made watered-down versions of Grade 1 rather than unique educational experiences. They felt that all children of Kindergarten age, regardless of maturity level, can benefit from the informal experiences and activities of the Kindergarten year. It was thought that more co-ordination of the Kindergarten and primary grade programmes would result in a greater understanding by all teachers of the expectations upon them as well as a more effective transition for the children from one level to another.

Reading (Elementary). In general, the Grade 1 responses indicated that those teachers perhaps have stronger feelings about the reading programme or more precise reading goals than Grade 7 teachers. The overall pattern of response clearly indicates that the reading programme has markedly differing emphases at the three levels surveyed, according to the broad categories of comprehension, word identification, and locating and using information. The development of comprehension skills moves from understanding specifics at the earlier grades to making inferences and judgements in Grade 7; teachers at all three grade levels indicated, for example, that identifying main ideas was important, but at Grade 1 the main focus was on the topic of a picture, at Grade 7 on the topic of a paragraph. A similar pattern could be seen in the areas of Details and Reasoning. The authors of the Report suggest, however, that such a sequential pattern may not be completely effective, and that students should perhaps deal with larger thought units from their earliest experiences.

In the area of Word Identification, teachers at Grades 1 and 3 emphasized the importance of phonics, possibly to such a extent that they may be ignoring or lacking awareness of the problems which can result from emphasizing this skill at the expense of others. The Grade 7 responses to Word Identification skills — which rated all sub-skills as highly important — raised the question as to whether teachers do indeed have a balanced approach to teaching such skills, or whether they are less familiar with the formal methods of reading instruction; further investigation is needed to clarify this problem. Grade 7 teachers, on the other hand, regarded the outcomes in the area of Locating and Using Information as generally the most important in the total reading programme; the focus at Grade 7, then, is clearly on reading for information.

Written Language (Elementary). The ratings of teachers at all three grade levels with respect to written language showed a consistent emphasis on such fundamentals as the selection of an appropriate topic, clear structure, coherence and unity, precision in the use of words, and the use of conventional punctuation. Legible handwriting and correct spelling were also strongly supported by both teachers and trustees, especially at Grade 7. Grade 1 teachers and, to a lesser degree, Grade 3 teachers were not prepared to stress the skills of written language as much as their Grade 7 colleagues. The judgements at all levels stressed mechanical writing skills — punctuation, spelling, and handwriting — while such skills as content, style and grammar were generally not rated as highly.

A knowledge of the uses of punctuation was considered of high importance; indeed, the ability to demonstrate the conventional uses of punctuation was seen as significantly more important than a knowledge of its structure as based upon intonation — the authors thought that equal emphasis should be given to both the theoretical and practical study of punctuation. Spelling, too, was treated in a basic way with the student's learning to spell a basic list of words rated superior to the development and application of spelling principles. In handwriting, legibility was the most important skill, although speed was the only subskill not judged "important" or "essential."

In the other areas of written language, teachers agreed that logical organization, fluency, and the selection of an appropriate topic were the most important elements of content, even more important than originality. With respect to vocabulary, teachers felt that precision and variety of word choice were of crucial importance, and that vocabulary development and enrichment were highly necessary goals of an elementary writing programme. Again, at all three grade levels, teachers considered coherence and unity to be fundamental goals of elementary school writing, although an emphasis on paragraphing quite naturally increased according to grade level. In matters of grammar, teachers gave major importance to clear structure, but failed to perceive the importance of density of meaning — the use of language forms and structures packed with information — which, from a developmental point of view, is an excellent measure of maturity of writing. In general, these results suggest that elementary teachers may be more concerned with matters of form and appearance in writing than with content.

Literature (Elementary). All respondents perceived literature as a topic of importance in a language arts curriculum, although in general, teachers did not favor the formal analysis of literature. Even at Grade 7, where an increasing interest in analytical procedures was evident, the number of procedures endorsed seemed quite limited. Primary teachers perceived the development of a love of literature as a prime goal, whereas intermediate teachers tended to stress the development of reading proficiency. Teachers generally preferred to see a literature programme that involves primarily oral activities, such as describing a character. The relative lack of emphasis on writing as a means of reacting to literature in the early grades, where writing itself is not as important, is predictable, but the idea that dramatic and artistic expression are valid means of communication in Grade 1 but less so in Grade 7 may be worthy of further study.

Grade 7 teachers seem to hold a somewhat more utilitarian view of a literature programme than do the primary teachers, in that they endorse to a significantly greater degree the idea that a successful student become a proficient reader and become more informed about the world around him; conversely, they are significantly less positive regarding such outcomes as becoming more imaginative or developing a love of literature. Teachers at all grade levels, however, stressed that the prime goal of a literature programme should be one of enjoyment and of fostering a positive attitude toward reading. Trustees' responses generally coincide with those of the teachers in that both appreciation of literature and some analysis are endorsed; however, the relatively lower ratings given to expressive abilities related to literature suggest that the[illegible] students to know about it and enjoy it, but [illegible] concerned with whether the students can express their ideas about it. They ranked the development of literature skills between "important" and "of moderate importance", although they did not see the area as being as important as reading, writing, listening or speaking.

Oral Communication (Elementary). On the whole, there was a remarkable degree of agreement among the teachers of all three grades as to the importance of oral communication skills; where variation occurred, it was in the more complex skill areas — such as the development of types and levels of speaking skills — where more complex skills were rated more highly at higher grade levels. In the area of speaking, teachers appeared to perceive the development of

voice skills in somewhat superficial terms by emphasizing enunciation rather than the more complex skills of voice and speech characteristics. Reactions to matters of usage in speaking suggested that accuracy is more important than richness and variation in expression. Fluency and precision in speaking were highly regarded by all respondents while the need to develop variation in types and levels of speaking was relatively poorly regarded, especially by primary teachers. In considering the effects of speaking and listening behaviour, teachers focussed on the importance of verbal language as opposed to the influence of non-verbal messages. Evaluation and application of speech skills were given a comparatively low priority, so it appears that skill application may not be perceived as being as important as skill development.

In the area of listening, teachers at the primary level were highly concerned with the development of simple discrimination of speech sounds while teachers at higher levels saw lesser need for such skills and more for broader listening skills concerned with comprehension of spoken messages. The responses in the general area of listening comprehension skills suggests that teachers feel that these skills develop in spite of the lack of a formal programme. Trustees rated all speaking and listening skills highly, with simple, more conventional and informal goals being rated more important than the more complex and formal objectives; a major difference between trustees and teachers occurred with regard to auditory discrimination (understanding and using different sound patterns and adjusting one's listening to the speaker), valued as highly important by teachers but rated as of least importance by trustees. In general, the objectives of speaking and listening were ranked high, although the results also suggested that teachers and trustees may not have a very clear knowledge of some of the more complex skills necessary to this area.

Secondary. Teachers in Grades 8, 11, and 12 responded to lists of objectives in eight major areas covering secondary school English, rating most of them either "essential", "important" or "of moderate importance". Generally, too, there was little variation among the responses at the three grade levels. The fostering of critical awareness (as, for example, recognizing the techniques of logical argument and persuasion) was deemed an important part of the curriculum, with students being given general exposure at the earlier grades. Teachers also agreed on the importance of basic skills in reading, listening, and speaking, especially those most useful to the "classroom experience" (such as following directions, and formulating and responding to questions), although emphasis on formal practice in oral work seemed somewhat less at the senior levels.

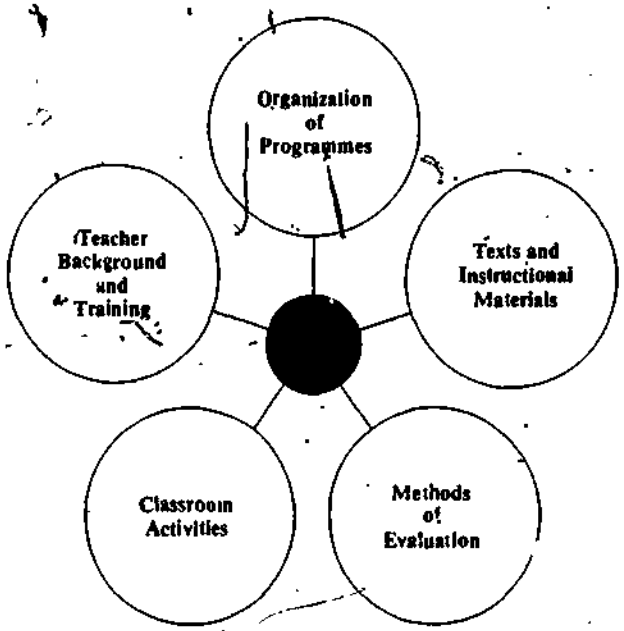
Writing and literature form the staples of the secondary programme, and the teachers were clear in their priorities for these areas. The emphasis in writing was placed on clarity of expression — clear communication — rather than on formal grammar; as in the elementary teachers' responses, the secondary teachers perhaps stressed clarity even over content, since creativity and originality of ideas were not rated as highly as those elements of writing dealing with clarity. Teachers also agreed on the importance of literature in the English programme. The goal of relating literature to the student's own experience was considered most important, while formal critical analysis was not stressed as heavily, although more sophisticated critical and analytical skills were deemed more important in the higher grades. Instruction in drama and oral work in literature received the lowest ratings from Grade 8 and the Grade 11-12 teachers, respectively. Teachers, while indicating their favorable response to the teaching of literature, may, however, be giving lower priority than desirable to goals which help to broaden their students' experiences and to involve them more fully in literature.

Trustees' responses tended to emphasize the basic skills of speaking, reading, listening, and writing without much discrimination between these and more specialized abilities — most of the basic skills were rated as "essential" or "important" by a large percentage of respondents; teachers tended to show more discrimination among various skills and subskills. A lesser concern of the trustees for the study of literature suggests some confusion between the two groups over appropriate aims, such that it might be necessary for the teaching profession to clarify its belief in the importance of the study of literature. That the teachers did agree among themselves on the importance of most of the objectives listed, and that they did discriminate between degrees of high importance, suggests their considerable concern for the teaching of English. However, the remarkable agreement over the value of these objectives in all three grade levels also suggests, especially in dealing with literature, that perhaps more distinction *should* be made between the objectives at various levels; it would seem that the more complex and sophisticated skills of critical or stylistic analysis which might be appro-

priate at the higher grades may not be receiving that emphasis. Moreover, the consistent emphasis on relating literature to personal experience may lead to the exclusion or de-emphasis of other literary approaches which might equally achieve the desired aim of fostering the student's enjoyment of literature.

Conclusion. Over 300 specific desirable objectives for Language Arts/English programmes were identified and evaluated by teachers at seven grade levels and by trustees. Although most of the goals were rated as at least "important", the Survey Team had designed the scale in degrees of importance so that fine discriminations could be made. What emerges, then, is a picture of what teachers at these various levels feel are their instructional priorities and, by extension, of their approaches to teaching various elements of Language Arts/English. In addition to providing an insight into the goals which teachers and trustees feel are important, the responses to the list of objectives should be of value to curriculum developers in establishing priorities and goals at various levels. The re-statement of such goals also should provide teachers themselves with the opportunity to re-evaluate their individual objectives and methods. At any rate, educators and the public should examine — at both local and provincial levels — the rationale for their respective emphases.

3. Instructional Practices



While the ranking of objectives can tell much about how a programme is being carried out, a more obvious method is to ask directly about the methodology in use; the bulk of the teacher questionnaires was devoted to such questions as teacher background and training, organization of the programme, texts and instructional materials employed, methods of evaluation, and the specific activities carried on in the classrooms. Again, instructional practices were identified from several sources, including provincial curriculum guides, research, the expertise of team members, and advice from teachers. Teachers were asked to respond to questions usually according to an "Essential" to "Of No Importance" scale or, in the case of classroom activities, by providing factual answers or subjective opinions on given statements concerning English/Language Arts teaching.

Much significant information came out of the section in which teachers provided details of their training and their feelings about general elements of Language Arts/English programmes.[2] At the elementary level, for instance, there appeared to be considerable gaps in training: 23% of the teachers were without training in the Language Arts, 34% without training in English Literature, 40% without training in Reading. The elementary teacher's need to be a

2 It must be emphasized here, as well as throughout this report, that the responses indicate only a general picture of what teachers think and do, one that does not apply to individual persons or situations.

generalist, required to teach in *all* areas daily, was recognized, but it still seems that considerably more attention must be given at pre-service and in-service levels to the development of an adequate academic base for Elementary Language Arts teachers. In other findings in this section, elementary teachers indicated that they attend several workshops during the year, although they did not, on the average, seem to belong to many professional organizations. Class sizes were a major concern since teachers felt that the reduction of class size was the most needed improvement; classes of 20 or less, which lend themselves most readily to techniques of individualization, amounted to only 17% of those surveyed. Apparently, then, a considerable number of large classes, containing pupils of very diverse levels of ability, are taught primarily by whole-class instructional methods; further investigation should be carried out to determine exactly how inhibiting a factor on effective teaching such situations are. There was little indication of support for or actual implementation of departmentalized instruction — that is, separate instruction of subjects or subject subdivisions — although this form of organization, the method of secondary instruction, would be the prime experience of the student after leaving the elementary school. Some consideration may have to be given to integration in the early stages of secondary education or departmentalization in the late stages of elementary schooling in order to facilitate a smoother transfer of students from elementary to secondary schooling. Finally, elementary teachers listed their main difficulties as excessive class size, lack of time for preparation and consultation, inadequate or inappropriate teacher education, unsuitable textbooks and lack of support and guidance in the carrying out of the programme.

Similar kinds of results were evident in the general information section of the Secondary questionnaire. Classes generally number in the upper twenties, are held mostly in self-contained classrooms, and contain homogeneous groupings of students; usually, some 100 to 140 hours annually are allotted to English instruction. Audio-visual and other supplementary equipment seems generally available, and individual teachers appear to have considerable control over the texts and the nature of the English programme. As a whole, secondary English teachers do not belong to a large number of professional organizations, nor do they attend a great number of conferences or workshops. Almost half of the secondary teachers surveyed, however, indicated that they were members of the B.C. English Teachers' Association, an affiliation which should make that organization a useful means of communicating information on English programmes and ideas to secondary teachers. However, despite the high number of teachers with professional certificates, some important gaps in training appear, especially at the Grade 8 level. Grade 8 teachers, in general, have less experience and less training, whereas they also have larger classes and a heavier student load; moreover, a higher percentage of Grade 8 teachers have only one or two English classes compared to a greater percentage of full-time English teachers in the senior grades. Almost 58% of Grade 8 English teachers have less than six years' experience, and more than a third reported no training in composition — yet this is the level at which the public might expect advanced training in composition to begin. Many Grade 8 teachers commented, as well, that they were teaching English reluctantly, having been directed to the job or having very limited experience.

The other major area of concern is with reading. Formal reading instruction (as well as formal instruction in speaking and listening) does not make up a large part of the secondary language programme, even though many teachers feel that reading ability should possibly determine class make-up and even promotion. All teachers considered reading skills as among the primary aims of the current programme, and they also suggested that only specially trained reading teachers should do remedial work. Yet only about one-quarter of the secondary English teachers have had university training in reading, and only one-half that number have had remedial reading training. These facts suggest that secondary English teachers, especially those of Grade 8, are not being given the help or the training to carry out the job they are expected to do.

The following sections summarize the findings of the six individual questionnaire booklets.

Kindergarten. The questionnaire indicates that the typical Kindergarten class is a heterogeneous group of fewer than 25 children assigned to a self-contained classroom under the guidance of one teacher; there are occasional instances of multi-age groupings, but most teachers oppose this structure on the grounds that it inhibits the achievement of the unique goals of the Kindergarten programme. These goals, in fact, seem to be supported by the methods used in the classrooms. Activities which stress free individual play and involvement with a variety of materials and equipment were preferred over structured lessons in specific skills. Total class participation in literature,

music, painting, and movement education was also emphasized. The importance of developing readiness for beginning reading in Kindergarten, not seen as an important objective in Part I, appears to be accepted to some degree in practice, although most of the teachers felt that the Kindergarten year should not assume the tasks of the first grade. Teachers of this level also emphatically rejected the use of any form of evaluation other than informal observation.

Teachers expressed concern over the size of the classes, the need for more equipment and space, the clarification of the goals of the Kindergarten in the total school programme, and greater access to in-service education as ways in which the programme could be improved. While there was a great desire to keep the Kindergarten programme independent, there was also a feeling that the class and its teacher have often been too isolated from the rest of the Elementary school. The desire for clarification of goals and for more specific direction suggests the need to make the Kindergarten experience an independent but necessary and co-ordinated part of the elementary school experience. The emphasis on in-service training, too, is derived from the feeling of inadequate preparation and perhaps lack of experience. In this area, especially, figures on training were revealing: 38% of the teachers have had no courses in Kindergarten Education, 35% have no courses in Language Arts, 46% have none in Children's Literature, and 50% have none in Reading.

Reading (Elementary). The amount of time devoted to reading instruction decreases over the grades. The proportion of reading time devoted to word-recognition also decreases, meaning that the amount of word-recognition drill time is reduced considerably. In fact, the word-recognition programme changes from a reading to a spelling emphasis through the elementary grades. The methods used to teach reading, however, remain uniform except that oral reading and sight word drill decline in importance whereas reference reading and written book reports increase in importance. Primary teachers make extensive use of the Reading Series guidebooks, as well as library books, teacher-made materials, and (in grades one and three) a basal Reading series. Few schools and/or districts, however, seem to have developed specific reading curricula, and teachers expressed the desire to have a more carefully sequenced reading programme that would allow a greater number of choices and quantity of materials. They also stressed the need for more appropriate training background by indicating a lack of usefulness in the university courses taken.

In methodology, teachers indicated that questioning is the strategy used most often for mastery and application of reading skills; since there is some evidence to indicate that the [illegible] of questioning may be related to pupils' thinking, in-service training should perhaps devote time to improving questioning methods. Other suggestions about methods of teaching reading included the increased use of *non-consumable* teacher-prepared materials, to ease the subsequent preparation burden of teachers, and increased use of self-checking or peer-corrected activities, to ease the marking burden. Teachers indicated that they most often checked pupils' work the same day, often the same period; they felt that day-to-day performance and teacher observation were the most important evaluation techniques. It was found that students generally can read library books which they choose, but often have some difficulty with materials from other areas; mathematics texts seemed easier for students than other subject texts, possibly because of the emphasis on mathematics in the elementary programme. By and large, teachers tend to organize their reading programmes so they can provide extra help for students having difficulty; however, since students may become permanently grouped on the basis of reading achievement, a possibly harmful situation, such organization should be closely monitored. In all, the findings are consistent with the idea that pupils learn to read during the primary grades and read to learn for the remainder of school; also, once word recognition skills are mastered in primary levels, relatively little instruction is needed to maintain them during later school years. However, the need for specific reading programmes seems apparent, especially in the upper levels.

Written Language (Elementary). The average amount of time allocated to written language, spelling, and handwriting suggests adequate treatment. Integrated instruction of Grade 1 made the questionnaire difficult for teachers at that level to complete, but responses indicated that the majority of teachers of Grades 3 and 7 use separate class periods for spelling and handwriting. In ranking the existing goals (as opposed to "ideal" goals), teachers continued to stress the improvement of basic skills; they offered strong support for simple, concise, and correct writing. Teachers would like to improve their teaching in basic areas — vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation — if the time and the resources were at hand. In general, teachers in Grade 7 use texts and

commercially prepared materials more than teachers at other levels; the sources of the curriculum in written language seem to be largely the *B.C. Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1968)* and the various text books available for use in the classroom. Teacher-oriented methods of evaluation, such as marking and conference work, seem to have priority (especially in the upper grades) over pupil-directed activities. In describing factors which inhibit the teaching of written language skills, teachers were critical of the current curriculum guide, of their pre-service training, of in-service teacher education, and of the texts and materials available for work in composition.

Literature (Elementary). Teachers reported that they pursue, in general, a planned but flexible literature programme, including reading aloud to their classes at least three or four times a week. Libraries were reported as having collections of books which have adequate ranges of interest and difficulty, although little attention seemed to be given to making the library (through the use of comfortable furnishings or motivational displays) an inviting or stimulating place to be in. In evaluating classroom texts, teachers felt that, of the six prescribed novels at the Grade 7 level, three were used with some success. However, the sole Canadian novel on the list received the lowest rating of acceptance; several teachers also pointed out the sexist overtones in many books available, noting that only one book on the Grade 7 list has female characters in central roles, whereas the remaining five titles all have a male as the central figure. Some action in revising the list of prescribed books seems warranted.

Teachers reported that their major resources for literature study derive from personal experience, school libraries, and their colleagues; relatively little support was given to the provincial curriculum guides, B.C.T.F. lesson aids, district instructional material centres, and school broadcasts. Teachers felt that their training was perhaps better in this area than in some of the other areas surveyed, but thought there was still considerable room for improvement in pre-service and in-service training. Some diversity of opinion occurred when they were asked about the outcomes of their present programme (as opposed to an ideal one): none of the options listed was fully endorsed by a majority of teachers at all grade levels. Relatively speaking, the teachers favored the ideas that children should become familiar with a wide variety of literature — should meet literature that will help in the development of reading and other cognitive skills and should develop the ability to become discriminating readers. Very few teachers at any level believed that literature should be used to develop an appreciation of cultural heritage. In dealing with activities related to literature, primary teachers tended to favor artistic modes of response — illustrating and responding verbally to stories — while Grade 7 teachers showed a tendency to stress the demonstration of literal understanding. The preferred form of evaluation was again informal observation and participation in discussion; primary teachers, especially, appeared to make a distinction between a student's oral behaviour in making a book report and his participation in discussion, in that the former activity is used significantly less frequently as a basis for evaluation than the latter. The means of improving the elementary literature programme which seemed to receive perhaps more approval than the other areas surveyed was that of increasing the amount of reading material available.

Oral Communication (Elementary). Teachers saw the total Oral Communication programme as falling between "important" and "essential" on the preference scale, although specific skills were often ranked less than "important". Those learning activities in Oral Communication integrated with other curriculum areas were given highest priority as were those based on children's experiences. Generally, however, teachers saw relatively little need for follow-up activities to provide practice and application of skills in Oral Communication; this result suggests that they prefer a highly informal approach to skill development, along with the desire for an integrated approach to the subject. The most popular sources of the curriculum were the teacher's own experiences and ideas from colleagues, while academic training and curriculum guides had relatively less influence. This evidence indicates the importance of local curriculum development, since the area derives chiefly from the experiences of both teachers and children, not just books or courses.

There appears to be a strong need for development or provision of instructional materials designed to build oral communication skills as part of a total language programme. Commercially prepared materials apparently receive frequent use, and this practice reveals a need for prepared programmes and suggests a need for identification and authorization of suitable materials by provincial curriculum committees. Teachers' written comments, on the whole, paralleled the opinions expressed in their objective responses. The integrated approach to developing Speaking and Listening skills was strongly supported, as was the

need for modification of the curriculum either locally or provincially. The development of more carefully sequenced curriculum guides, with fully detailed instructional activities, was seen as a good means of improving the quality of instruction in this area. Likewise, in pre-service training, teachers indicated a need for more and better courses dea' ·s specifically with Oral Communication.

It does seem evident that while the overall goals and objectives are of great importance to the teachers, the more specific skills are of less importance. Teacher comments revealed a variety of largely informal learning activities — such as story telling and discussion — being employed in preference to formal and structured skill development activities. The generally higher rankings given to listening skills as a whole suggests that teachers feel a greater need to develop receptive skills rather than expressive ones; it would appear appropriate to make teachers aware of the reciprocal nature of speaking and listening and of the need to have skills in each developed jointly.

While teachers, then, reported a high preference for all oral skills, they appeared to believe that their application should be practiced through a limited number of behaviours, largely informal, conventional and unstructured. These findings suggest that teachers may not be knowledgeable of other more structured techniques which enable children to practice their developing oral skills. Because formal programmes in oral communication are so limited, so are good quality and valid resources in evaluation. Since not all pupils were seen as performing at appropriate levels of speaking and, especially, listening, teachers appeared, however, to accept the need for a structured developmental programme in Oral Communication.

Secondary. English teaching methods at the secondary level showed considerable variety of approach, although methods involving oral work were reported as being used less frequently, a result corroborating the opinions of teachers in Section 2 of this report that oral responses to literature are of less importance. Too, formal work in reading and listening, as well as in speaking, tended to rank toward the bottom of the most frequent activities even though reading was ranked among the most important activities. Reading instruction, especially, appears to be a by-product of work in imaginative literature and non-fiction (which itself seemed neglected at all levels), rather than an area of specific focus demanding its own materials and methodologies. Non-fiction seems somewhat neglected, perhaps because it may be used more as a stimulus to the writing of compositions than as an aspect of literature worthy of study in itself, perhaps also due to a lack of high quality material. Also ranking near the bottom end of the scale was the method of involving students with literature through visits to live performances; since such a technique would depend upon the location of the school, among other factors, the low rating is not surprising — but the importance of having students react to live performances (such as dramas and poetry readings), suggest that opportunities should be made available not only for the students to travel but for the arts to come to the schools. In methods of evaluation, teachers agreed with their colleagues in the elementary schools that those methods which give the teacher the major responsibility for determining their students' abilities are to be preferred. Many teachers felt that standardized tests might provide reasonably accurate assessments of student work, but agreed that the major type of evaluation should involve teacher observation and teacher-made tests.

A large part of the secondary questionnaire was designed to gather opinion on the prescribed texts and curriculum guides now in use. The responses indicating successful and unsuccessful use of specific texts should provide useful information to curriculum revision committees as well as to new or inexperienced teachers. The major demand at all three grade levels was for good texts for writing and language; teachers at the senior levels, especially, gave high priority to the need for textbooks more suited to instructional needs. There was considerable divergence of opinion over the effectiveness of the literary texts: some were regarded very favorably, but several were unused. Moreover, it appears that the actual range of texts is somewhat limited, both in content and style; indeed, many of the most popular novels, for instance, tend toward the first-person or confessional kind of fiction, which, although they would facilitate the goal of relating literature to the student's own experience and environment, may not develop the great range of possibilities inherent in reading for enjoyment.

Like teachers at other levels, the secondary respondents had little praise for the curriculum guides. These could, however, be an important in-service tool given the fact that they are widely distributed and read. The teachers gave a relatively high rating to the

listing of objectives in the guides — a response suggestive of their own discrimination reported in Section 2 — but indicated a desire for more specific suggestions about methods of attaining those objectives: how to teach, not what to teach for. Such revisions, which might well include space devoted to giving more details about prescribed texts, were among the suggestions teachers made concerning improvement of the programme. Other suggestions follow the patterns of the elementary levels: reduction of class size and more time for preparation and grading. Teachers were also dissatisifed with their pre-service training, although there was no breakdown as to when that training occurred. It seems evident that the university training programme should be reviewed, and that any changes should certainly include specific training in reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills instruction.

Conclusion.

This section of the Report suggests that B.C. teachers use a wide variety of methods in the teaching of Language Arts/English, and that these methods generally relate to what the teachers see as the major objectives of the programme. The information also provides an indication of what is going on in the classrooms, in a general way, of course, and should provide assistance to curriculum developers as well as to teachers themselves as they seek ways to make their teaching more varied and effective. The evaluation of materials, including provincial curriculum guides, should also be of considerable use in revising prescribed text lists and the guides themselves; the lack of effective language texts and materials at almost all levels is perhaps the most evident weakness in current programmes. The results, too, of the general background survey, as well as the dissatisfaction expressed by the teachers themselves, with regard to pre-service university training — which shows apparent inadequacies and unhappiness at all levels — requires that universities should continue to re-evaluate their programmes to ensure that prospective teachers not only receive appropriate training in the content and methods of their specialized fields, but that they have an adequate background in basic skills instruction: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

4.
Test Results

The second phase of *LANGUAGE: B.C.* was conducted in January 1976: a study of pupil performance in selected areas of the Language Arts Programme. Financial limitations meant that only certain parts of the programme could be surveyed, although like the entire *LANGUAGE: B.C.* project, the assessment would serve as a pilot for more extensive surveys. The areas chosen were reading at Grade/Year 4 and composition at Grades/Years 8 and 12, so as to focus on a transition year in the elementary experience and on writing at the end of the elementary and secondary programmes. Plans are now underway to assess reading in Grades 8 and 12 during the 1976-77 school year. Basing questions on the important objectives identified in the questionnaire, the Survey Team, in collaboration with the Management Committee, designed tests to be administered in the schools by classroom teachers. The composition test was administered to a provincial sample of grade 8 and 12 students whereas virtually every grade 4 student in the province participated in the reading assessment. Each school district was given the opportunity to request a summary of the grade 4 reading scores for the district; in view of the sampling procedures used in grades 8 and 12, only province-wide composition results were to be reported. The results were then analyzed and compared with responses to the questionnaire about goals and instructional practices; in addition, through use of background information provided by students, an attempt was made to identify other variables which might affect student performance in these areas. The following discussion summarizes Part III of the main Report, provincial test results in reading and composition.

READING: GRADE/YEAR 4

Drawing on the Grade 3 teachers' responses to instructional goals, especially those reading goals and objectives rated as essential, important, or of moderate importance for pupils completing Year 3, the Survey Team and the Management Committee co-operated in the selection and development of suitable test items for the reading assessment. Several test item banks were examined, including the U.S. National Assessment of Educational Progress, the Instructional Objectives Exchange, and the Objectives and Items Co-operative. Items selected from these sources were appropriately modified and in those areas where items were unavailable, new test items were developed by the Survey Team and teacher consultants.

Items were grouped into two test booklets to reduce the amount of test time required for each pupil; trial studies conducted in classrooms in Victoria and Prince Rupert provided useful revisions before the final booklets were printed. The reading test was based on three domains, or general categories used for grouping related objectives: Word Identification, Comprehension of Prose Materials, and Comprehension of Functional Materials. Each of these domains was specified by a number of objectives (specific learning outcomes). Finally, each objective was measured by a number of test items distributed between the two test booklets. In January, 1976, each Grade/Year 4 pupil in B.C. completed *one* of the two booklets. Classroom teachers conducted all phases of the test. Ninety minutes were allocated for all actvities, including 40 minutes for completion of the test itself — in most cases, however, less than one-half that time was required. A total of 34,626 children were involved — 94% of the entire population in B.C. at that level.

All tests were returned to the B.C. Department of Education Learning Assessment Branch for scoring. No attempt was made to compare B.C. students with students living elsewhere or at another time, because of insufficient data. Instead, the problem was to determine how well children could perform on a representative set of reading tasks and then consider whether that performance is acceptable to members of the profession and the public. Accordingly, in early May, 1976, an interpretive panel of individuals met in Kamloops to review the results of the reading assessment.[3] This group of nine experienced teachers, a professor of reading education, and a parent was provided with outlines of the assessment project and asked to define a satisfactory or acceptable range of performance for each objective. Before seeing any test results, the panel considered the test questions that were used to measure each objective and then determined the range of performance that they would find acceptable for the objective. If, for example, a range of 75-90% correct was defined as acceptable, then a score of *less* than 75% would be indicative of a weakness, and the teacher would take corrective action with any student correctly answering fewer than 75% of the questions. A score of above 90%, on the other hand, would represent a definite strength

3 It is important to note several limitations of the use of such a panel. Most important among these are the subjective nature of the opinions, the lack of representativeness of the group, and the illusion of precision created by assigning numerical values to the ranges of acceptable performance. The comparison between actual results and these intervals must be viewed with caution, since another group might interpret the data differently.

TABLE 1

1976 PROVINCIAL READING ASSESSMENT

PERFORMANCE OF GRADE/YEAR FOUR STUDENTS

Key:
- Domain Performance
- Objective Performance
- Range of Satisfactory Performance as defined by panel

	Average Score (% correct)
DOMAIN 1 — WORD IDENTIFICATION	73.0
Objective	
• Recognizing high frequency words	98.5
• Using Phonic skills (e.g. words that rhyme, vowel sounds)	74.6
• Using structural analysis (e.g. prefixes, suffixes, root words)	61.0
• Using context to determine meaning of a word in a sentence	74.1
• Using a dictionary (e.g. knowledge of alphabetical order; guide words)	56.9
DOMAIN 2 — COMPREHENSION OF PROSE MATERIALS	69.0
Objective	
• Identifying main idea in a paragraph	72.8
• Identifying important details	73.9
• Determining sequence of events	67.1
• Applying logical reasoning skills	70.2
• Determining the purpose for reading a passage	61.2
DOMAIN 3 — COMPREHENSION OF FUNCTIONAL MATERIALS	70.8
Objective	
• Locating information (e.g. using tables of contents)	71.5
• Understanding signs	81.5
• Understanding road maps	59.8
• Understanding product labels	75.9
• Understanding arithmetic story problems	65.5

in that skill area. When consenus had been reached on all of the objectives in a particular domain, the actual provincial results were distributed to the panel and compared with the defined ranges of acceptable performance. Separate district reports on the reading test have been sent upon request to individual school districts who are being encouraged to organize similar panels and to repeat this interpretative process at the local level.

Table 1 provides the average scores for the grade/year 4 population given in percentage figures of correct scores. The bar graph indicates actual student performance for each objective which was determined by computing the average percentage of correct responses to the test items used to measure that objective. The range of satisfactory performance set by the panel for each objective is illustrated by a box. The domain score represents an averaging of all objective scores in the domain; no attempt was made to determine the range of satisfactory performance for the domain as a whole.

In the area of Word Identification (Domain 1), a weakness was noted with dictionary skills; in particular, students seemed to experience difficulties with diacritical markings and the use of guide words. Aside from this weakness, however, the panel was satisfied with the overall performance in the domain of Word Identification. That is, in general, students appear to be acquiring a basic vocabulary; they can use common phonetic skills; they understand parts of words; they appear to be able to determine the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence.

Student performance in the other two domains was also deemed satisfactory. The typical student in British Columbia apparently can read and understand prose materials at an acceptable level of proficiency: Overall, students can identify the main idea in a paragraph; they can relate important details in a paragraph; they can determine sequence of events; they can apply logical reasoning skills. In Domain III, children at this level can satisfactorily use such skills as locating information; understanding signs, road maps and product labels; and understanding arithmetic problems.

The panel cautioned, however, that while they were satisfied with the average scores of the province, the results do not mean that every student is performing at an acceptable level. It was recommended that schools and individual teachers continue to monitor the progress of individual students.

Student Characteristics

A second part of the assessment attempted to define some student characteristics which might be related to performance in reading. Although the individual test booklets were completed anonymously, students did fill in an information sheet which allowed the booklets to be analyzed in terms of the following variables: sex, age, number of schools attended, number of hours of television watched, period of residence in Canada, and language background.

The researchers, however, pointed out that a perceived relationship between performance and a given characteristic does not imply cause and effect. For example, if results show that students who have attended a large number of schools score lower than those who attended fewer schools, these do not imply that the mere transfer from school to school causes student performance to be low. The lowered performance may be due to conditions other than the one being examined, or through some combination of related factors.

Many of the significant differences among various groups were to be expected. Scores according to sex, for instance, indicated that in almost all skill areas measured, the performance of girls exceeded that of the boys: the only exceptions were in dictionary skills, and reading signs and road maps. Previous studies (such as the U.S. National Assessment Program) have also shown that girls at this age level do out-perform boys in reading skills, although the reasons are not entirely clear. Likewise, when the papers were analyzed according to age differences, the results showed that younger students (less than 9 years of age) out-performed older students (over 9). This seeming inconsistency may be due to personal and educational characteristics of the students: the younger group, (approximately 1.7% of the total sample) may be the children occasionally ahead of their grade levels, while the over nine students (some 17.6% of the total) may include those who have learning difficulties and have repeated a grade.

Student performance decreased consistently with an increase in the number of schools attended; this finding seems to corroborate the experiences and opinions of teachers with regard to the negative relationship between frequent moves and the quality of student performance. More than one-half of the students in the sample have changed schools in the first 3 grades, with over one-quarter attending three or more schools, a statistic which suggests that relatively large numbers of children in elementary schools require

special consideration because of mobility-related influences bearing upon them. Dramatic, though expected, shifts in performance also accompanied changes in the variables concerned with place of birth (Canadian/Non-Canadian) and language spoken at home. Students born in Canada who did not speak another language before going to school and who now speak only English at home showed the highest performance, exceeding significantly in all cases the average performance in the province. Their scores were closely followed by those of English-speaking students not born in Canada. Students not born in Canada, able to speak another language before going to school, and who speak another language besides English at home, on the whole, scored significantly lower than the average for the province; however, the longer the students have resided in the country, the closer their scores were to the provincial average. Although other factors, such as self-esteem and socio-economic variables associated with place of birth and use of English in the home may also affect reading performance, it does appear, as might be expected, that children most familiar with the English language and Canadian customs are the most proficient readers of English. These results do suggest, however, that those students who are new to Canada and its culture require special help and consideration.

Interesting results also came from the data concerning the relationship between hours of television watched and performance on the test. There was generally a higher level of performance in reading with a reported increase in television watched up to two hours per day, then a slow decrease to the four or more hours per day category; however, at this highest level of watching, student performance was still equal to or higher than performance in the No Television category. Apparently, then, the act of watching television may not interfere with development of reading skills, as has been often suggested. This finding may be due to the increased interests generated by television and subsequent reading about these interests, or, it may come about as a result of a broadened informational and linguistic basis developed by the child as a result of watching television. Also, there may be no direct cause and effect relationship: children, for example, who have time to watch television may also have much time for reading. But because of the somewhat unexpected pattern, the relationship between television and skill development in reading and other areas of the language arts deserves further examination.

It was noted that over 50% of the Grade 4 students reported that they watch three or more hours of television on school days, equal to at least half of the time they spend in school; only a very small proportion (about 3%) watch no television. Clearly, research should be conducted into the effects of television upon students' intellectual and skill development and into the ways in which this medium could be best employed for educational purposes.

In comparing the results of the Reading Assessment with the teachers' statements of goals and their methods of teaching (Parts I and II of the main Report), it was found that teachers appeared to be meeting their curriculum goals in reading instruction. The performances of the students, judged as acceptable by the panel, suggest that there is an effective programme of instruction at the primary level in all but the area of dictionary skills. Even this deficiency may be a result of the relative newness of this skill area in the experience of Grade/Year 4 students. The fact of adequate performance by the students overall, however, does not mean that all students at this level in all parts of the province are performing reading tasks at a satisfactory level. Students experiencing learning difficulties must continue to be identified and aided to reach their individual potentials.

Composition: Grade/Year 8 and 12

Considerable time was spent in trying to design a test that would accurately assess basic writing skills from a representative and typical sample of students from grades 8 and 12. The test was to be an essay of several paragraphs' length which would measure five specific skill areas (ideas, organization, sentence usage, vocabulary and mechanics); would use an expository mode that would reveal the students' abilities to amplify, explain, and reason; and would use an identical topic to allow for comparisons to be drawn within and between the two groups. After test runs at schools in Saanich, Castlegar, Burnaby and Richmond, a final paper was set and the method of administration determined. Random samples were drawn from across the province, and a survey booklet, containing the topic, paper for writing, and an information sheet, was provided for each student whose anonymity, however, was preserved.

The compositions were to be written during a 90-minute period, which would include the following activities: explanation (10 minutes), pre-writing discussion (20 minutes), writing time (50 minutes), and answering the general information section (10

minutes). Teachers were asked to use the pre-writing discussion as a means of generating ideas and opinions in a general way rather than attempting to focus on the specific topic; guidelines and suggestions for the procedure were presented in the instructions. It was felt that such time, a normal part of most school writing assignments, would put the students more at their ease and allow them to exhibit their typical skills. The directions for both grade levels were: "You are to write a composition (a piece of writing several paragraphs long) in which you tell about the most interesting or exciting thing that you have *seen, heard, read,* or *imagined* in the past few years. You should give reasons and specific examples that will help the reader to understand your topic." The assessment was administered during the week of January 5-9, 1976, to 1,870 students in 76 English 8 classes and 1,826 students in 74 English 12 classes.

During the planning stage, the Survey Team and the Management Committee developed an instrument which was designed to provide objective results from the essentially subjective procedure of evaluating a written essay. Finally, after six major revisions, a marking checklist was devised to identify the five specific writing skills. Each of the major areas included one or more central questions requiring a "yes-no" response, usually as to the skill's effectiveness or acceptability. Finally, each area listed a number of problems or sub-skills which might occur in the essay, to be ticked off as required.

The student compositions were marked by a group of 35 experienced English teachers, with a varied range of age, experience, and geographic location, who had been selected by the Department of Education. They met during the week of February 16-20, 1976, to do the marking. Before then, they had been supplied with copies of the Checklist, a summary of the criteria to be applied, and sample student compositions. The session opened with a morning period spent discussing the Checklist and the criteria, followed by the marking and discussion of three sample papers. The actual grading began that afternoon and went on for three more days. The final day was spent in discussing the methods used, the Checklist, and the student papers, and in making recommendations for changes.

Several efforts were made to maintain consistency among markers, including sessions devoted to common marking of single papers, papers which were duplicated and re-cycled through the markers in a random manner, and constant discussion of standards. A random sub-sample of papers was re-cycled as a check on marker consistency. The statistical results were somewhat disappointing in consistency at the levels of overall evaluation and sub-skill categories, but results for the thirteen questions in the five basic areas which required "yes-no" responses on the parts of the markers were considered, on the whole, acceptable. Several reasons were advanced for inconsistencies between papers that were marked twice, including the complexity of the Checklist, unfamiliarity with its use, difficulties of constant marking over a long stretch of time, and differences in individual standards, in addition, of course, to the essentially subjective nature of marking written work in general. The Survey Team and the Management Committee felt, then, that the results for the thirteen questions would provide a good picture of student performance in writing at the two grade levels.

Tables 2 and 3 provide the percentages of "yes" responses to the thirteen basic statements in the five major areas of composition. (In other words, the bar graphs indicate the percentage of papers judged to be acceptable by the respective marking teams.) "Acceptable" levels of performance were discussed in depth by the teachers, but were determined by each individual according to his or her experience at the grade level at which the paper was being marked. Levels of "sophistication" were used to identify papers which revealed an above-average use of sentence patterns and vocabulary, including precision, variation of interest, and effective and unusual phrasings and word choices; the comparatively low scores might be expected, although the improvement in percentages from Grade 8 to Grade 12 could be considered encouraging, since students were apparently learning more than just basic skills. "Substantiation" (in section 2) refers to the use of appropriate or convincing examples to support or illustrate ideas.

Teachers felt, in their subjective comments on the essays, that the results were generally what might be expected at the respective grade levels. In most areas, at least half and usually more of the students appeared to have mastered basic skills. The fact that over two-thirds of the papers at both grade levels were deemed to have a developed argument or thesis seems encouraging, although the nature of the topic may have contributed to that high ranking, since it suggested a thesis by asking for a discussion of something interesting or exciting. (That the area of clear organizational pattern was rated lower than that of developed argument also raises questions about the

TABLE 2
1976 ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION
Performance of Grade 8 students as Judged by a Grade 8 Marking Team

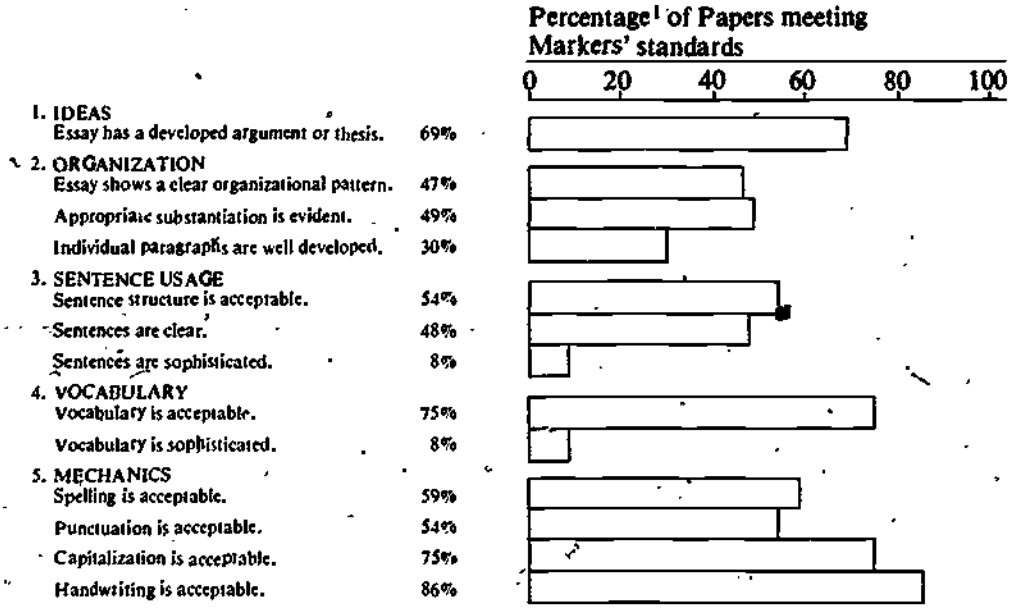
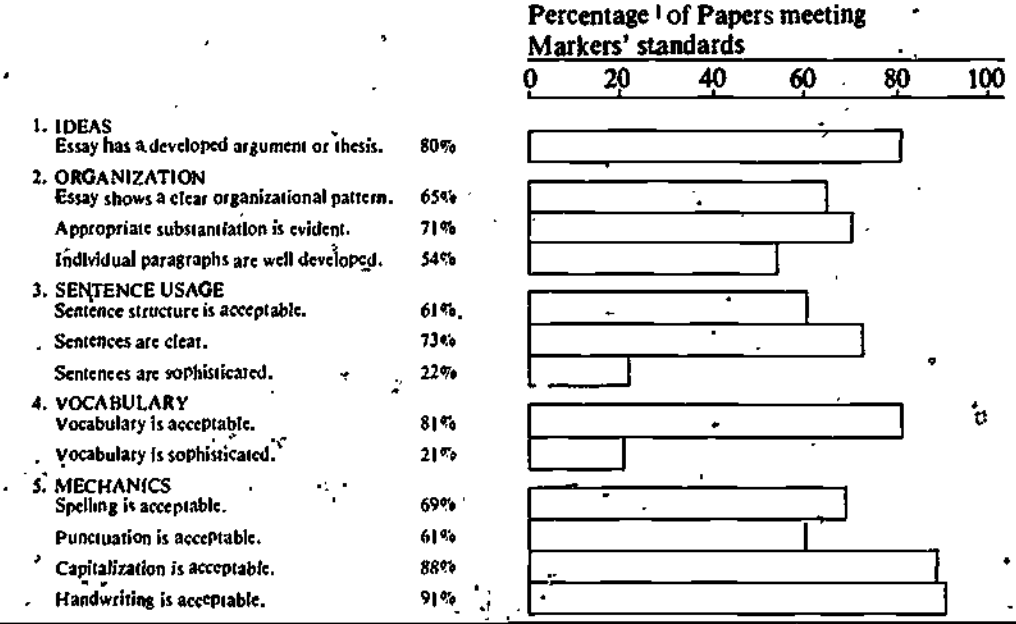


TABLE 3
1976 ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION
Performance of Grade 12 students as Judged by a Grade 12 Marking Team



1 See Part III of the Main Report for information on the standard error and marker consistency associated with these figures.

high incidence of a developed thesis.) The students in both grades demonstrated acceptable vocabulary (in 75-80% of the papers), as well as acceptable capitalization and handwriting (in 75-90% of the papers); these achievements suggest that students have received a good grounding in these basic areas in the elementary grades, and further that vocabulary continues to develop throughout the secondary school years.

The Grade 8 results seem especially promising in that so many of the students (about half) were able to deal with an expository topic by maintaining a developed argument, showing a clear organization and providing appropriate examples. Since Grade 8 students might not be expected to exhibit such skills, normally associated with longer papers, the results appear encouraging. For this reason, too, the relatively low score on developed (expository) paragraphs could be considered as of little importance at this level. What the other scores show is that instruction should focus on sentences, both in clarity and structure, with special attention being paid to fused sentences, subordination/co-ordination, and end punctuation. Expressing ideas in clear sentences should be the prime objective of composition at the Grade 8 level. Attention to spelling instruction might also be stressed in the curriculum — especially since spelling errors are clearly obvious to most readers.

Grade 12 papers show the same kinds of strengths — vocabulary, capitalization, handwriting — along with general improvement (even allowing for higher standards) in most of the other areas. Lack of clarity and coherence is still the most evident weakness, but here the problem occurs at the advanced stage of the paragraph and the entire essay. Although sentence structure has apparently improved, problems with fused sentences and subordination/co-ordination still remain; punctuation errors, however, have become mainly internal as the sentences become more complex. Paragraph development is the lowest of the major skill areas, however, with only slightly more than half the papers being judged acceptable. The major problems identified again have to do with clarity and coherence: transitions and logical development. Work on spelling could also be continued, again for the reason mentioned above.

Each group of papers was marked according to standards for the respective grade level. However, 400 of the Grade 8 papers were distributed randomly among the Grade 12 markers to be evaluated according to Grade 12 standards. (No distinction was made between the two sets of papers.) This procedure, besides providing a useful constant, indicated that clearly different standards are imposed at the two levels, since the grade 8 marks were consistently lower than the Grade 12 papers. The results imply that students continue to meet and even to improve upon those changing standards throughout their secondary school years. Indeed over half the Grade 8 papers met Grade 12 standards of acceptability in the areas of developed argument, substantiation, and sentence structure: this achievement suggests that students throughout the middle secondary years may well be capable of more sophisticated and more intensive work in composition. The high levels of acceptability for handwriting and capitalization also confirm that these skills probably need not be stressed in the secondary grades.

Student Characteristics

As in the reading assessment, scores were analyzed according to various student characteristics. The results, however, were far less clear, although the superiority of females and younger students remained constant. At the Grade 8 level, females scored higher than males in all 13 areas; the difference in percent "yes" scores between the two groups was usually about 10. At the Grade 12 level, females scored higher in all but three areas: developed argument, appropriate substantiation and sophisticated vocabulary. And at both grade levels the younger students, which included the norm for that grade level (8-13 as against 14-16 for Grade 8; 14-17 as against 18 and above at Grade 12), clearly outperformed the older students in every area.

At the Grade 8 level there also seemed to be some possibility of connection between television viewing and achievement in writing. Those students who reported watching an hour or less of television on a school night scored higher than those students who watched 4 hours or more per night in five areas: clear sentences, sophisticated sentence structure, acceptable vocabulary, sophisticated vocabulary and acceptable spelling. The results on the other objectives, except for developed argument and handwriting, followed the same pattern, although the differences were not statistically significant. In any event, there are apparently some differences between a minimum amount of television viewing (one hour or less) and an extreme amount (four hours or more). Perhaps it should be noted that 36% of Grade 8 students indi-

cated that they watched four hours or more per night.

In Grade 12, the results followed the same general pattern, except in the areas of developed argument, capitalization, and handwriting. In general, those students who indicated that they spent an hour or less watching television displayed better writing skills than those who watched for four or more hours, although in this case the latter group represented only nine per cent of the sample. For the record, the viewing time at the senior grade is considerably less than it is at the Grade 8 level, with 26% reporting three or more hours of viewing compared to the 61% of Grade 8 students listing three or more hours per day.

The remainder of the reporting categories produced only very scattered significant differences. For example, Grade 8 students who had attended fewer schools were more frequently judged to have acceptable capitalization skills than those who had attended seven or more schools. Likewise, students born in Canada had clearer sentences than those born elsewhere (at both grade levels). With these exceptions, there were no significant differences according to the number of schools attended or to birth in Canada. Those Grade 8 students from solely Anglophone homes displayed no difference from those who came from homes where another language is spoken. In Grade 12, students coming from homes where only English is spoken scored higher in appropriate substantiation and clear sentences. There were no differences between those students who read a language other than French or English, except in the case of handwriting at the Grade 8 level.

Perhaps more surprising was the lack of differences found among the five variables associated with place of birth and language spoken, although in two of the groups the sample sizes were so small as to make meaningful results impossible to obtain. Further study of these issues may be warranted, but these results should not be regarded as being meaningful in either a positive or negative sense — that is, that differences did not show up here does not necessarily mean that there are no differences.

Obviously, too, the methods of teaching affect student performances, but again it is difficult to assign a clear cause and effect relationship between the two. The goals of writing preferred by teachers — stressing clarity and mechanics — appear to be being partially met, at least. The most important goals included clarity and precision, vocabulary, grammatical writing, and spelling. The overall performance suggest that capitalization, handwriting, and vocabulary are being learned (or, indeed, have been fairly well established by Grade 8). Problems of clarity do persist, however, with half the Grade 8 papers being rated as having unacceptable sentences; by Grade 12, though, almost three-quarters of the papers were rated acceptable in terms of clear sentences. But by this level the major difficulty has become paragraph development, a more complex level of coherence.

Section 3 of this report indicated some problems in the training of teachers, as well as considerable dissatisfaction with and non-use of language texts at all levels. Additional questions concerning methods of instruction in composition elicited the following information: that between 60 and 69% of the teachers assign from ten to thirty essays per year, of at least one to two pages or more; that composition is generally integrated with other elements of the English programme; that formal grammar instruction is not an important and constant concern; and that techniques of instruction in grades 8, 11 and 12 are much the same.

Despite the variety of methods apparently used, there appeared to be some techniques or approaches that were undervalued. Many composition experts believe that in order to *learn* to write well the student *must write* regularly; many also content that the writing should be critically[4] commented upon. While teachers at both grade levels seem to assign a considerable number of compositions, more than half the students write only one piece every two or three weeks. Yet weekly assignments, even at the Grade 12 level where emphasis could be placed upon fully-developed paragraphs, might provide sufficient practice. However, if teachers are to increase the amount of writing practice given their students, they must also (considering the number of students they meet) be given sufficient time to mark those assignments. Certainly, too, more time should be devoted to pre-writing and post-writing discussions of student writing, since any writing assignment, if it is to be meaningful to the student, must include both considerable preparation and subsequent discussion of general strengths and weaknesses. Such methods might be expected to rank much higher in frequency. In addition, the process of writing itself might be more often treated as a skill complete in itself; formal lessons could be devoted to

4 "Critically" should not be taken to mean "negatively", since both positive and negative comments are essential.

the process and results of composition, without considering it as an adjunct to reading and/or literary analysis. Given the general performances on the writing, formal grammatical instruction (in the manner of "prescriptive" grammar lessons and exercises) hardly seems warranted, although some grammatical or rhetorical attention should probably be paid to elements of sentence structure and punctuation at all grade levels. Otherwise, the variety of methods used and the number of additional techniques suggested all indicate that secondary teachers show considerable concern for the teaching of clear and effective writing.

Conclusion. The two assessments show that student reading at Grade 4 is generally acceptable to an interpretive panel, and that student writing at Grades 8 and 12 is generally acceptable to experienced English teachers at those levels, although some aspects of the writing, especially, may be less satisfactory. While the results are average results across the province, and cannot apply to any individual student, they nevertheless present a picture of what the students are doing at those levels and what steps might be taken to improve instruction in areas of apparent weakness or those which may have been rated acceptable in this study but which local groups may still wish to stress. The assessments are, in fact, tests which should provide useful guides to curriculum developers at all levels as well as to teachers themselves as they plan their individual programmes. In addition it becomes clear that the teachers, for the most part, are teaching toward the goals which they perceive as being most important. Hence any modifications in student performances which may be required by the public should also include a full discussion with teachers in order to agree on appropriate goals. The results also suggest several directions for research into variables affecting student performance, most notably in the apparent relationship between television viewing and reading and writing performance. Finally, the writing assessment initiated the development of a marking checklist which many teachers have found extremely useful and which should be refined not only as an instrument for mass marking but also for individual marking to provide students as well as the general public with useful diagnostic information.

5. Conclusion

LANGUAGE: B.C. has investigated the provincial school system's handling of Language Arts and provided a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of these critical aspects of provincial learning programmes: indications of the organization of typical programmes and classes, as well as of average teaching goals and methods at seven of the thirteen grade levels. In addition, of course, the study has provided a diagnostic assessment of the current reading and writing skills of students at three grade levels across the province. Student achievement was found to be generally satisfactory but some areas of weakness were also revealed. It becomes evident that teachers, by and large, have a good idea of their primary objectives and that they incorporate appropriate methods into their classroom activities to achieve those objectives. It is equally clear that many factors are perceived as inhibiting effective Language Arts/English programmes, among them, class size and pupil load, teacher training and background, lack of time for preparation and individual instruction, inadequate texts and materials. Certainly, resources — financial and professional — should be allocated, or re-allocated, to resolve some of these major problems.

Specifically, each of the sixteen chapters of the main Report contains a series of suggestions and recommendations designed to indicate ways in which existing practices might be modified in order that desired learning outcomes might be achieved more efficiently and effectively. These recommendations, over a hundred of them, are summarized in Section 6 of this report. Directed toward all segments of the educational community — including local and provincial curriculum and programme developers, classroom teachers, planners of university and in-service training, trustees, and the lay public — these recommendations range from general suggestions, such as continuing discussions between various groups to determine appropriate goals for student achievement, to specific methods of changing classroom activities, such as the regularization of observation checklists in Kindergarten or the assignment of more written compositions at the secondary level. Among the important recommendations common to several chapters were the needs to investigate the influences of large class size, to provide sufficient academic bases for new teachers (including extensive work, especially, in reading and writing skills instruction), to incorporate more formal work in oral communication (speaking and listening skills) into the curriculum, and to revise provincial curriculum guides so as to make them more useful tools for teachers. In addition, the

recommendations suggest ways in which the total Report itself should be made available to the profession and the public in order both to provide further information and to stimulate discussion.

The study also provides information that carries beyond the schools themselves. Most evident is the need for teacher training institutions to constantly re-evaluate their programmes to ensure that future teachers are receiving the background knowledge — academic, theoretical, and practical — that will be most useful and important to them in the field. The need for continuing education is apparent as well: continuing workshops and, perhaps most important, the continuing interchange of ideas between educators at all levels and between the profession and the public. The data of the survey, and the questions it raises, also offer opportunities for further research in many areas of the Language Arts — research that will lead to further modifications in the educative process. Finally, as a pilot study, LANGUAGE: B.C. has demonstrated the possibilities of a large-scale assessment programme: the development of questionnaires, the assessment of achievement, the interpretation of results, the writing of the reports, and the constant interchange between teachers at all levels and the public have provided insight into the nature of producing such a survey; those experiences should make the designing and administering of future projects easier and more effective.

In these achievements, then, LANGUAGE: B.C. has fulfilled its major functions. But it remains only a beginning. Its data must be used, its information passed on, its recommendations implemented. In these ways, and through the co-operation of educators, students, and public — all teachers and learners — can the educational system be modified and improved.

6. Summary of Recommendations

The authors of the main Report made over 110 recommendations of both specific and general natures in the "Interpretations and Implications" sections of the respective chapters. These recommendations are summarized below in point form according to various category groupings; the figures in parentheses indicate the location of the recommendation (part and chapter number) in the main Report where further discussion and elaboration can be found.

Curriculum Guides. Because teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the usefulness of the present provincial curriculum guides, but also indicated their possible importance as a tool for aiding instruction, the Report includes recommendations that future revision committees:

- include in future guides the learning outcomes in each of the six areas of the study which were identified and regarded favorably by teachers and trustees;
- consider that these objectives be ranked according to levels of importance at each grade level (I.7);
- include more information on the content and intended use of prescribed texts (II.7);
- provide more specific information and direction in methodology in the areas of elementary literature (II.5), oral communication (II.6), and written language (II.4), and secondary English, especially at the Grade 8 level (II.7);
- emphasize the development from simple skills of speaking and listening to the more complex ones in oral communication (I.6);
- develop specific programmes for Kindergarten and Oral Communication instruction within the context of the Language Arts programme (I.2, II.2, I.6, II.6);
- emphasize, in literature programmes, the development of related oral expressive activities (I.5).

Local Administration and Organization. Recognizing that many of the difficulties perceived by teachers derive from the actual organization of the English/Language Arts programmes, authors of the Report urge schools and districts to:

- provide adequate space, equipment, and materials for Kindergarten teaching so as to allow for children to have involvement with their environment and with concrete materials (II.2);
- investigate the problems and needs of "mature" children for whom less than a full year of Kindergarten is sufficient (II.2);
- develop appropriate "transition experiences" in terms of classroom organization at the upper

elementary level to prepare students for the secondary school experience (II.1);
— continue to upgrade library service by ensuring that libraries are available to all students, that they be made attractive and stimulating places for students to be in, and that more, fully-trained librarians be employed (II.5);
— pay continuing and increased attention to the long-standing problems which teachers see as inhibiting the effectiveness of their Language Arts programmes: excessive class size; lack of time for preparation, marking, and individualized instruction; inadequate or inappropriate teacher education and texts; and lack of public and/or administrative support (II.1);
— ensure that only teachers with appropriate training and experience be hired, especially in the areas of Kindergarten (II.2) and reading instruction (all);
— see that Grade 8 teachers whose main specialty is not English not be assigned to English classes (II.7, III.2).

Local Curriculum Development. Realizing the importance of goals, performance levels, and curricula being designed to meet local needs, the authors of the Report suggest that local schools and districts:
— attempt to incorporate specific Kindergarten programmes as fully as possible into the school system (II.2);
— attempt to develop simple, basic, objective-referenced practice materials, as well as manipulative or non-text materials;
— take the initiative in developing local curricula by encouraging staffs to discuss year-by-year and group-by-group expectations, so that appropriate performance levels can be established for student achievement (III.1 and throughout).

Provincial Programme Development. Noting the responsibilities of the Department of Education to provide general guidelines and information, the authors urge the Department to:
— review texts on a regular basis to identify unsuccessful or inappropriate books so as to use texts and the funds allocated for texts most efficiently (II.5, II.7);
— give immediate attention to the provision of good texts dealing with written and oral language at all levels (II.6, II.7, III.2, and throughout);
— continue to develop an assessment programme by developing a bank of test items to assess objectives so that curriculum changes can focus on the specific weaknesses at each grade level (III);
— continue to refine the Marking Checklist as a tool for both mass and individual diagnostic evaluation of written composition (III.2).

Classroom Activities (Elementary). Although the Report suggests that elementary teachers are generally teaching toward the objectives to which they have given priority, the authors also encourage teachers to continue to re-examine their goals and methods. Specifically, teachers are urged to:
— investigate information regarding the importance of higher level thinking activities in reading, and consider the possible dangers of over-emphasis on phonics instruction (I.3);
— take opportunities to learn more about methods of teaching complex skills of writing (I.4) and oral communication (I.6);
— examine their literature programmes to ensure that prime objectives (developing a love of literature, a proficiency in reading, an ability to make wise choices from among available books) are being met, that their own perceptions as to what constitutes a valid form of response to literature are broad enough, and that they have sufficient information about word identification skills (I.3, I.5);
— plan skill and concept development in reading so as to provide for an appropriate sequence and degree of learning (III.1);
— explore and expand the range of reading materials available, perhaps by supplementing basal readers with class libraries, by preparing non-consumable materials, by encouraging greater library use, and by attempting to obtain paperback books (II.3);
— work to lessen the effects of permanent achievement groupings by increasing the use of other organizational strategies (II.3);
— work to improve their questioning techniques in order to help students locate and understand content materials, especially in the sciences and social sciences (II.3);
— ensure that they are providing students with the opportunities to share the experiences of books and to hear books read aloud regularly (II.5);
— evaluate and become familiar with oral skills instruction so that it can become a clear part of the total language programme (I.6, II.6);
— regularize observation checklists to accommodate the effective goals of the Kindergarten and the cognitive goals which are pre-requisite for success in Grade 1 (II.2);
— give special attention as necessary to students who come from a non-English speaking background

and to those whose families are highly mobile, many of whom may need special materials and instruction (III.1).

Classroom Activities (Secondary). It was noted that secondary teachers have clear priorities and methods which generally suited their students' needs. However, they are also encouraged to:

- put greater stress upon a student's creative involvement in literature — the writing and speaking of poetry and drama — and upon critical analysis and historical background investigation as ways of increasing enjoyment (I.7);
- make more and regular written assignments at all levels, *providing* that they be given more time to correct them (III.2);
- focus on weaknesses identified at the grade levels tested: sentence clarity and development, and punctuation at grade 8, sentence structure and paragraph development at grade 12 (III.2);
- attempt to increase opportunities for students to attend live performances of literary events (II.7);
- devote more emphasis to writing and rhetoric as a unique subject of instruction (III.2);
- devote more emphasis to non-fiction, oral work, and reading skills instruction (II.7);
- devote more time in the teaching of composition to pre-writing discussions and post-writing instructional sessions, and to explore methods of using the massive television experience of students (III.2);
- give special attention as necessary to students in the sub-categories identified in Section 4 of this report (i.e. those from a non-English speaking background) who may need special materials and instruction (III.2);
- stress literature as a means of *broadening* the student's experience (I.7);
- stress the quality and originality of ideas in composition, as well as the mechanics and correctness of expression (I.7).

University Preparation. Since teachers expressed unhappiness with their professional training, Universities are encouraged to:

- ensure that teachers have appropriate academic backgrounds (II.1), as well as necessary training in oral communication (I.6, II.6); reading, listening, and speaking skills instruction at the secondary level (II.7); reading, writing, and literature at the elementary level (II.3, II.4, II.5, II.7); children's literature (II.5); and Kindergarten (II.2);
- ensure that the Kindergarten teacher either be knowledgeable about processes of diagnosing and correcting learning problems or that adequate supporting services be available (II.2);
- constantly examine reading programmes to ensure that future teachers are trained in both the theory and practice of developmental reading (III.1);
- ensure that secondary teacher education emphasize the importance of literature as language to be heard and spoken as well as read (I.7);
- explore ways of increasing the internship component of pre-service training (II.5).

In-Service. Recognizing the need for continuing education and development of the profession, the authors suggest:

- that professional organizations be encouraged to make more efforts to increase membership and to develop workshops as more effective ways of disseminating professional and academic information (II.1);
- that school boards provide and schedule in-service opportunities as a required part of the professional development of Kindergarten teachers (II.2);
- that administrators ensure that teachers and teachers' aides have sufficient pre-service and in-service training in composition, rhetoric, and linguistics (III.2);
- that teachers become involved in a continuing dialogue about written language (II.4) and reading innovations (III.1) which would make use of local opinion so as to formulate agreed sets of expectations about student performance by drawing upon the experience of all those concerned with the education of children (II.4);
- that resource centres containing new materials and sources for developing written language skills be made available (II.4), while the low use of B.C.T.F. lesson aids and existing district educational centres be investigated in an attempt to find ways of increasing their use and usefulness (II.5).

Research and Development. The Report raises many questions requiring further in-depth study; among them, the authors recommend for immediate attention:

- the development of procedures and materials to emphasize the application of oral communication skills (II.6);
- the development of local professional programmes to clarify and suggest objectives, and to formulate appropriate instructional practices and assessment procedures (III.1);
- continued research concerning the effects of the

various student characteristics, such as language background and television viewing habits, on reading and writing performance (III);
— continued analysis of the Report itself which could yield further information (III).

Distribution of Information. Finally, the authors noted that several difficulties seem to arise from lack of communication among teachers themselves and among all elements of the educational community, including students and public; hence the Report suggests:
— that many detailed sections of the Report, especially those concerning instructional practices, goals and text information, be made available for professional and public use;
— that trustees and the lay public be given comprehensive information on oral communication skills (I.6), the objectives of reading programmes (I.3), and the importance and validity of the study of literature (I.7), so as to make clear the reasons why these areas and their more complex skills should be emphasized *in addition* to basic skills instruction;
— that teachers be assured that they appear, in general, to have developed a logical and consistent relationship between desired learning outcomes and the methods and procedures to meet them (II.5, and throughout), although the priorities of some goals should be constantly re-examined;
— that the relevant information concerning student variables and their effects on reading (III.1) and the diagnostic assessment of student writing (III.2) be made available to teachers and the public so that further development of goals and objectives for language skills can be made;
— that such diagnostic assessment take place on a regular basis (III);
— and that the Report and its data be made available for continued and more detailed research.

Appendix A – Guide to the LANGUAGE: B.C. Main Report

The following abbreviated Tables of Contents to the three major parts of the LANGUAGE: B.C. Report are provided as a means of facilitating the reader's search for more specific information.

Part I. Goals

Part II. Instructional Practices

Part III. Test Results: Reading (Year/Grade 4) and Writing (Year/Grade 8 and 12)

Note: The individual chapters in Parts I and II are each preceded by abstracts prepared by the authors. The "Interpretations and Implications" sections contain the major recommendations which derive from preceding discussions.

Appendix B – Contributors to LANGUAGE: B.C.

Survey Team

All from the University of Victoria, the Survey Team devised the Questionnaires and Tests, interpreted the data, and wrote the chapters of the Report as indicated.

Dr. Peter Evanechko (Chairman), Faculty of Education
(General Introduction, Oral Communication, Reading Assessment)

Dr. Robert Armstrong, Faculty of Education
(Written Language)

Dr. Jean Dey, Faculty of Education
(Kindergarten)

Dr. Terry Johnson, Faculty of Education
(Literature)

Dr. Kerry Quorn, Faculty of Education
(Reading)

Dr. Nelson Smith, Department of English
(Secondary, Writing Assessment, Summary Report)

Assistance was also provided by Dr. Richard H.J. Monk and Dr. W. John Harker of the Faculty of Education.

Management Committee

The Management Committee advised, commented on, and gave final approval to the questionnaires, tests, procedures, and various drafts of the Report.

Mr. Robert Aitken, Alpha Secondary School, Burnaby

Mrs. Olga M. Bowes, Department of Education

Dr. Jean Dey, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria

Dr. Peter Evanechko, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria

Mr. J. Alex Holm, Consultant, Department of Education

Mr. Wesley Knapp, B.C. Teachers Federation, Professional Development Division

Miss Theresa Kratzer, Queen Mary Elementary, North Vancouver

Mrs. Viviane McClelland, Consultant, Richmond School District

Mr. John McVicar, Delview Junior Secondary, Delta

Dr. Jerry Mussio (Chairman), Department of Education

Mrs. Doreen Radcliff, Co-ordinator, Primary and Pre-School, Victoria School District

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee, which prepared an assessment planning booklet for the Department of Education, advised the Survey Team in the early stages of the assessment and also provided statistical advice in the later stages of the pilot study.

Dr. Todd Rogers (Chairman), Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Dr. Walter Muir, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria

Dr. Robert F. Conroy, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Dr. Marvin F. Wideen, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Dr. Jerry Mussio, Department of Education

Joint Committee on Evaluation

This committee was formed in July 1974 for the purpose of advising the Department of Education on the development of a long-range provincial assessment plan.

Mrs. Dorthy Behnke, B.C. School Trustees' Association*

Mrs. Olga M. Bowes, Department of Education (Recorder)*

Mr. John Church, B.C. Teachers Federation*

Prof. Frank Cunningham, Simon Fraser University*

Mrs. Judith Doyle, B.C. Teachers' Federation

Mrs. Ann Edworthy, B.C. School Trustees' Association*

Ms. Heidi Garnett, B.C. Teachers' Federation*

Ms. Dorothy Glass, B.C. Teachers' Federation*

Mrs. Redina Hamilton, B.C. School Trustees' Association*

Mr. Joe Harrison, B.C. Teachers' Federation*

Mrs. Randi Hawkes, B.C. Teachers' Federation*

Mr. J. Alex Holm, Department of Education*

Mr. J. Terry McBurney, Department of Education*

Dr. Graham Mallett, B.C. Teachers' Federation

Dr. Jerry Mussio (Chairman), Department of Education*

Mr. Alan Nicholls, B.C. School Trustees' Association*

Mr. David Rivers, B.C. School Trustees' Association*

Dr. Todd Rogers, University of British Columbia

Dr. George Smith, Department of Education

Dr. Marsha Trew, B.C. School Trustees' Association

Mr. Douglas Weicker, School District Superintendents' Association*

* member of the 1976 committee

Review Panel

The Language Assessment Review Panel acted as an independent group to criticize and review reports prepared by the Survey Team. Their participation; however, was concerned with matters of clarity in the drafts and does not imply endorsement of content.

Dr. N. Mary Ashworth, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Mr. Donn M. Barrieau, Reading Co-ordinator, Vancouver

Mrs. Betty G. Clark, School Board Member, Burnaby

Mrs. D. Dagg, School Board Member, West Vancouver

Mr. Norman Haug, Lynnmour Elementary School, North Vancouver

Mr. Laurie Joseph, Nicholson Elementary School, Golden

Mr. Alan Legg, Rosedale Junior Secondary School, Chilliwack

Dr. John McGechaen, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Dr. Clifford Pennock, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Interpretive Panel –

The Interpretive Panel served to establish levels of acceptable performance for the Reading Assessment.

Miss Susan Bristow, Clemitson Elementary School, Kamloops

Mrs. Jean Ferguson, Coldstream Elementary School, Vernon

Mrs. Marjorie A. Fulton, Primary Consultant, Vernon

Mrs. Donna Greenstreet, Mundy Road Elementary School, Coquitlam

Mrs. Cheryl Hearn, Parkcrest Elementary School, Kamloops

Mr. Alex Holm, Consultant, Department of Education

Mrs. Jean Lukas, Parent, Kamloops

Dr. Jerry Mussio, Acting Director, Learning Assessment, Department of Education

Mrs. Bernice A. Pasin, Lakeview Heights Elementary School, Kelowna

Mr. Ray Silver, Glen Elementary School, Coquitlam

Mr. James W. Smith, Spences Bridge Elementary School, South Cariboo

Dr. Tory Westermark, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Marking Team

The Marking Team scored the results of the Writing Assessment and evaluated the experience and the Marking Checklist.

Grade 8

Teachers from Elementary and Junior Secondary Schools

Mr. John McVicar (Chairman), Delta
Mrs. Lorna Brown, Prince George
Miss Anne Clemens, Coquitlam
Mrs. Elaine Clemons, Vancouver
Mr. Gerald A. Holt, Surrey
Mr. Gary E. Jacobi, Victoria
Mr. Peter MacDonald, Nanaimo
Mr. Bernard J. McCabe, Maple Ridge
Miss D.M. McIntyre, Richmond
Ms. Helen Matthews, Vancouver
Ms. Alice B. Njaa, Burnaby
Mr. James D. O'Connell, Victoria
Mr. David Phillips, Terrace
Mr. Roy Ritchie, Burnaby
Mr. Charles Ryan, North Vancouver
Mr. John Wensveen, Delta
Miss Jamesetta Work, New Westminster

Grade 12

Teachers from Senior Secondary Schools

Mr. Robert Aitken (Chairman), Burnaby
Mr. Jamie Bertie, Victoria
Mr. Howard Cross, North Vancouver
Mr. Warren Damer, Kamloops
Mr. Donald Dashwood-Jones, West Vancouver
Mr. Ward H. Eby, Coquitlam
Mr. Barre J. Eyre, Peace River North
Mr. Mike Green, Richmond
Mr. John Hannah, New Westminster
Mr. Jim Henderson, North Vancouver
Mr. Bruce Hunter, Nelson
Mr. Rolland Jones, Victoria
Ms. Joyanne Landers, Abbotsford
Ms. Iris McIntyre, Burnaby
Mr. Robert M. Overgaard, Victoria
Mr. Frank Shepherd, Department of Education
Mrs. Nancy Tindall, Terrace
Mrs. Heather Van Holderbeke, Prince George
Mr. Jim Wright, North Vancouver

Appendix C — Timetable for LANGUAGE: B.C.

Background research for Questionnaire	1974 — September
Designing of Questionnaires	September - December
Pilot Studies in Sooke	1975 — January
Revision of Questionnaires	February - March
Distribution of Questionnaires	May - June
Designing of Assessment Surveys	September - November
Preparation of Part I of Report	September - November
Pilot Studies of Tests	November
Revision and submission of Part I	December
Revision of Assessments	November
Printing and Distribution of Reading Assessment	December
Printing and Distribution of Writing Assessment	December
Reading Assessment in Schools	1976 — January
Writing Assessment in Schools	January
Preparation of Part II	February - April
Marking of Compositions (Vancouver Marking Team)	February
Evaluation of Reading Results (Kamloops Panel)	May
Revision and Submission of Part II	May - June
Preparation of Part III	May - June
Revision and submission of Part III	June - August
Preparation of Summary Report	July - August
Revision and submission of Summary Report	August
Publication of Reports	October

Appendix D

RESULTS OF GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

Ranges of Acceptable Performance as defined by panel

	Average Score (% Correct)	Range of Acceptable Performance as Defined by Panel
DOMAIN 1 — WORD IDENTIFICATION	73.0	
Objective		
1.1 Recognizing high frequency words	98.5	80-100
1.2 Using Phonics skills (e.g. words that rhyme, vowel sounds)	74.6	60-79
1.3 Using structural analysis (e.g. prefixes, suffixes, root words, and compound words)	61.0	60-76
1.4 Using context to determine meaning of a word in a sentence	74.1	59-77
1.5 Using a dictionary (e.g. knowledge of alphabetical order, guide words)	56.9	59-76
DOMAIN 2 — COMPREHENSION OF PROSE MATERIALS	69.0	
Objective		
2.1 Identifying main idea in a paragraph	72.8	61-78
2.2 Identifying important details	73.9	61-78
2.3 Determining sequence of events	67.1	62-80
2.4 Applying logical reasoning skills	70.2	56-76
2.5 Determining the purpose for reading a passage	61.2	56-76
DOMAIN 3 — COMPREHENSION OF FUNCTIONAL MATERIALS	70.8	
Objective		
3.1 Locating information (e.g. using tables of contents)	71.5	69-86
3.2 Understanding signs	81.5	74-90
3.3 Understanding road maps	59.8	55-73
3.4 Understanding product labels	75.9	64-80
3.5 Understanding arithmetic story problems	65.5	62-78