MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

FOCUS REFORMING THE CURRICULUM

FORUM CENSORSHIP AND MORALITY

First Issue of Academic Year 68-69

Numbered: Volume IV, No. 3

Fall, 1968

MCTE

minnesota council of teachers of english

minnesota english journal

Published by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

VOLUME IV, NO. 3 FALL, 1968

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preamblings

This Fall issue represents at least an approximation of what we regard as the objective of the MEJ, that it serve the teachers of Minnesota in a way that the national journals on which it is modeled can not. The focus of two groups of articles is on our own state's reevaluation and change of its traditional patterns of English education in order to improve this education. We are particularly pleased at a role that allows us to display the happy results of state-wide cooperation by the State Department of Education, individual educational institutions, and the professional associations of English teachers, the MCTE and MCEE. We are eager to publish whatever will strengthen these bonds and will stimulate the administrations of independent school districts to appreciate and support the passion of our drive to revitalize the truths of our profession. As we struggle through old curricula we come into a Platonic calm: it is not that the old truths are discovered to be lies, but that they have to be translated into the language of our own age.

The program of preparing undergraduates for careers as English teachers, which is carried out by over twenty institutions within the state, will be seriously hampered should a pending State Board regulation be approved. This regulation would require of cooperating teachers the "completion of a minimum of a three quarter-hour course in the supervision of student teaching conducted by an approved teacher education institution." We are not objecting to the proposition that those teachers who supervise student teachers should have some special instruction in how to go about this job, but we are convinced that there are more ways than one to achieve the objective of improved supervision (e.g. in-service courses). Our own Council on English Education might consider sponsoring a work-shop on this subject. We would regret the loss of

many teachers who are now competently supervising student teachers, who might well balk at the proposed demand that they take a course in how to do it. We urge English teachers throughout the state to stand against the restrictive nature of this regulation.

Prophecies of future issues: more on Censorship by Sy Yesner and Ervin Gaines, Director of the Minneapolis Public Library; a stimulating article on rhetoric by Dudley Flamm of St. Olaf College; a display of graceful scholarship by students at Minnesota's private colleges; a selection of compositions by elementary and high school students; a practical, useful article on teaching literature in the junior high school by John Streed of Minnetonka East Junior High School; an encouraging account, by Professors David Harrington and Elmer Suderman, of an English faculty seminar, or how the English department of Gustavus Adolphus talks across the barriers of a common specialization; excerpts from the log of a student teacher and his cooperating teacher; and much else.

focus on reforming the curriculum

MINNESOTA'S OWN NEW PROJECT IN ENGLISH

I. I HAVE A DREAM

By GERALD L. KINCAID

Language Arts Consultant, Minnesota State Department of Education

Bang! Zing! Lead against flesh and a man dies! This may be routine in Vietnam; but when it happened here on April 4, 1968, to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the event was followed immediately by civilians rioting, looting, and burning!

Then most of our nation went into mourning for the next five days in tribute to a man who had dedicated his life to preaching non-violence. Yet he met a violent death which stimulated more violence.

During the next five days, television and newspapers devoted most of their time and space to the subject. The airwaves and newsprint were filled with drama and suspense, with tragedy and conflict, with eloquent prose and poetry. "I have a dream . . ." we heard over and over again.

What does all of this have to do with English teachers and the teaching of English? Nothing at all, if we were to judge from the talk that went on at an all-day meeting of English supervisors on Saturday, April 6, 1968. And that meeting dealt entirely with the inservice education of English teachers.

Are English teachers, and those who work with them, so insensitive and inhumane that they are oblivious to the living drama and tragedy, to the overwhelming poignancy and bitter hatred swirling about their heads? Not really! But with five classes a day and a study hall to supervise, plus extra-curricular activities to direct, they have become confined within the four walls of the classrooms and the two covers of their textbooks to the extent many of them are out of touch with the world in which they live!

Can all of this be changed? Can English teachers be brought back into touch with reality? Certainly, they can! In fact, they must!

I have a dream -- given the money, the manpower, and the cooperation of local school administrators -- that some day all English teachers will spend a minimum of one day each week keeping in touch with reality -- that some day all English teachers in all of our schools will sit down together for at least a half day each week to determine how to make their subject relevant to their students in today's world -- that they will interact creatively, stimulating each other to greater and greater heights of creativity

for the benefit of mankind -- and that these same teachers will work in solitude during another half day each week, working out practical applications of the creative ideas stimulated during the interaction sessions -- for their own students in their own classes!

I have a dream -- of a day when English teachers will help their studetns inquire into the use and misuse of language in human affairs -- instead of teaching grammar as such -- of a day when English teachers will use literature to help each student inquire into the problems that concern him at the moment -- instead of teaching the novel, the short story, poetry, etc. -- of a day when all teachers will have their students use writing every day to develop their learning and thinking powers, instead of writing boring compositions for bored English teachers to correct and return.

I have a dream -- of a day when the teacher will spend his time outside the "School day" being a part of his total world, his community, his state, his nation, his world -- for only then will he be aware of the drama and suspense, of the tragedy and conflict, of the eloquent prose and poetry all about him; only then will he be able to make his classroom relevant for his students and himself!

Then the English class will become the most exciting, the most stimulating, the most popular class in the school -- it will become a class where students will be inquiring into use and misuse of language in human affairs, in their own lives and in the lives of others, through first-hand experiences, and vicariously through today's literature as well as that of the past. Yes, I have a dream -- of a day when the creative act of learning will dominate most of the student's school experiences -- when the joy of the creative act will make the school day the most exciting part of the student's life.

I have a dream -- given the money, the manpower and the cooperation of local school administrators -- of a day when we can bring the most stimulating, and most creative and innovative practices and happenings from all over the world to all English teachers in their own schools, via TV, to further stimulate and provoke their creative powers during their half day of interaction time.

Yes, I have a dream -- of a day when school administrators are more concerned about the humanity inside their schools than with bricks and mortar holding the buildings together -- when English teachers are more concerned about the humanity inside their classrooms than with the humanities inside their textbooks.

These dreams are based upon the following premises:

1. Today's world is a challenge to man's creative potential; his very survival may demand the fullest development and utilization of that potential.

2. Man's greatest self-fulfillment results from the fullest development and utilization of his creative potential.

3. The fullest development and utilization of man's creative potential requires three conditions.
   a. An ample opportunity to interact with his world.
   b. An ample opportunity to interact with his fellow workers.
   c. An ample opportunity for solitude in order to cogitate over his outside stimulations and to determine their applications to his own situations.

4. The State Department must help provide such opportunities for school administrators so they can provide such opportunities for their teachers, so they can provide such opportunities for their students.

I believe these dreams are realistic. In fact, a start has been made toward their realization. The English teachers in the Junior High School at Ely have been working together from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. every Friday since January. At Benson, the entire Junior-Senior High School English staff have been spending each Wednesday working together since April 3 -- with plans to continue throughout the coming year. Such changes require money, manpower, and cooperation of local school administrators. But a start has been made. Our inservice program last fall was for the purpose of developing leadership at the local level.

Let us not be afaid to dream nor afraid to work to make our dreams come true. For without dreams, there may be no tomorrow worth living in.

II. FOUR REPORTS ON THE PROJECT BY DIRECTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

REPORT ONE

By HAROLD FITTERER

Professor of English at Mankato State, and director of the Project at Robbinsdale

If one totals the number of NDEA institutes in English, the Project English programs, NCTE Workshops, and local, state, and regional workshops, the numerous efforts to focus on the problems of teaching language arts become apparent.

Of recent and particular interest to teachers of language arts is the program carried out during 1967-68 under the auspices of the Minnesota State Department of Education's Administrative funds

under Title III, NDEA. I say of particular interest because the format of this program demonstrates a considerable variance from most of the projects recently carried out. Precisely, the Minnesota State Department's Project focused on bringing together teachers from across the state to determine the kinds of directions which language arts teaching should take in the secondary-school, in view of the students of this and following decades.

The project was conceived in the belief that, if teachers of Language Arts are given the opportunity to come together to talk about their discipline and its problems, then those same teachers, through perceptive discussion and analysis of their discipline, can conceptualize about the various areas which they teach, and thus better perform their tasks.

This is precisely what the Minnesota project attempted to do. By late Spring of 1967, 25 teachers had been selected, representing, roughly, 25 geographic locations throughout the state. These teachers were chosen geographically so that they could, later, direct 25 centers for conceptualizing about the language arts. The teachers chosen for the directing group were all previous participants in one or more NDEA institutes. By using the NDEA institutes for a selective basis, most of the selection criteria for this new group could be bypassed. After meeting for a week in August, these teachers were commissioned to direct the programs in their respective geographic areas for an additional 25 teachers. Theoretically, then, 625-650 language arts teachers were involved in the program. (As it was, about 450 teachers completed the program.)

The major portion of the program personnel made up what I choose to call the participants. These teachers were chosen by their administrators as showing particular skill and interest in the professional development of their fields. Where possible, one teacher per school system was selected, although in the larger schools, such restrictions did not seem plausible and were not followed.

The design of the program, then, was simple: 25 teachers would meet for one week to determine how they could best conduct in-service workshops for the teachers of their own geographic area. The workshop centers would develop their programs through ten weekly three-hour sessions in the Fall of 1967. (Depending upon one's particular orientation--and I suspect experience--with teachers of Language Arts, the thought of 625 English teachers meeting simultaneously over a period of ten weeks in a single state can be viewed as thrilling or appalling.)

In August, the 25 directing teachers met at a State Camp in central Minnesota under the direction of Dr. Gerald Kincaid, Minnesota State Language Arts Consultant, author of the program for NDEA, Title III funds. Working for five days, they attempted

to put themselves through the kind of program which they believed would be beneficial for the members of their particular workshops. Charged with the responsibility of defining their discipline, the total group was divided into five smaller groups. Occasionally, for purposes of analysis and criticism, and to make it easier to give directions about the state-wide program, the individual groups came together as a whole. During that week, the groups attacked the following problems in sequence: Under what philosophy of education should we be teaching? What does that philosophy of education demand from departments of English and Language arts? How can the divisions of the discipline best begin to satisfy those demands? How do the various areas of literature, mass media, language, and composition serve to satisfy those demands?

In the approach to the problems of the discipline, all groups decided to abandon textbooks and publications, and attempt to determine primary concepts, first about the total discipline, then about the various divisions. Typical of the conceptions about the discipline were statements like the following: "The need for effective communication among people and peoples may be the most critical need of contemporary human beings"; or "Wise decisions must be and can only be made with an understanding of the past actions of man as those actions can serve as a sounding board for contemporary cognitives, as those decisions of the contemporary moment must be projected for future implications," and so on.

Turning the general concepts of the discipline to the various divisions--language, composition, literature, mass media, and so on--the groups attempted to determine major statements about the divisions which (1) would seem to be true, and (2) would be conceivable in the minds of students in the classroom. What this really meant was a turning of attention to the "why" of language arts instead of to the "what." That is to say, of primary concern was whether an idea about literature, for example, was worthwhile in the first place. If it was, then the attention could turn to "what" in literature might best be used to develop and confirm the idea. The same procedure was used with all divisions of the discipline. The attention at all times focused on statements which could be formulated, which students could be directed to formulate for themselves. The same procedure was followed by the geographic centers during the ten-week program.

Reviewed, then, one might summarize the intentions of the project as an attempt to reconceptualize the discipline in terms of today's students--adding, deleting, expanding the various aspects of the several divisions insofar as those divisions could be oriented to the conceptualizations. (Doubtless, this focus of attention ranks highest among the memories of the participants and possibly highest among the possible achievements of the project.)

Several distinctions should be made between the director group and the participant groups, so that a fuller evaluation of the project, its advantages and shortcomings, might possibly be made. First, those of us in the director group were together, continuously, for the entire time. Our attention was not divided between classroom duties and responsibility to the project. That factor, alone, permitted a focal attention which was impossible to gain in the participating groups. Also, our meetings were held during a time of the year when we were not committed to any other duties. Finally, the directors' conference had a unifying and directional effect which is impossible to overlook: we had to prepare a program which could be implemented in our own workshops. This latter factor, I believe, forced a positive direction on our work which was motivating in a different way from any such possible factor in the individual workshops.

The separate workshops, on the other hand, harbored quite opposite conditions. Those teachers met for only three hours at a time, during the routine of daily teaching, without any time release for their activity. Fatigue, itself, had to be an undeniable problem. In addition, many sessions just began to "move" when the clock called attention to the duties which contracts insisted came before the work of the project. This situation meant that many hours were lost in reestablishing progression levels, a condition which the directors' group was able to transcend. Finally, the members who came to the workshop meetings were not committed to any kind of required "product" and therefore a sense of urgency was lacking. This reality resulted in the entire project representing an introductory process without the same kind of "finishing" experienced by the directors' group. Nonetheless, this lack of urgency probably permitted a more relaxed and--who really knows?--perhaps a more perceptive development of some of the concepts.

Several conclusions are justified, I believe from the experiment.

(1) Teachers of language arts are interested in reassessing their discipline.

(2) Teachers from different schools and geographic areas can come together and work out mutual problems. (This, obviously, has been proved through college summer programs and Institutes.)

(3) Disparateness of personnel can enhance curriculum work and development.

(4) Experienced teachers are, naturally, more able to perceive and assess the relevance of their discipline when adequate time is provided for this activity.

(5) The Language Arts discipline(s) might do well to restructure content and method in view of conceptualizations about the nature of a late-20th-century world.

(6) Traditional views continue to dominate curriculum change, despite partially-admitted needs to change.

(7) Teachers who are willing to devote their time to curriculum work want specific and continuous direction, a quality which the directors' group tried, purposely, to avoid so as to reduce dominance tendencies.

A questionnaire was completed by each participant at the close of the final session. The results are generalized as follows:

(1) Most participants had attempted something new in their classrooms as a result of the program.

(2) Most participants were attempting to make their subject more relevant to the students.

(3) Most participants considered the project of more value to them as teachers than any college course they had ever taken.

It would, of course, be easy to conclude that the Project was the "cause" of the first two. If it was, then, one might conclude that such results, in themselves, justify such a project. As one of the directors of this project, as a participant in NDEA Institutes, and as a member of many professional workshops, this author insists that such results are not unique to the particular project. Rather, one should probably conclude that this and any effort to motivate teachers for more effective teaching is worthwhile because it invariably contributes to their effectiveness.

The third result is a puzzling one at first, especially within the context where the answer was solicited and in view of some of the conclusions which one might, wrongly it seems, draw from the result. One should keep in mind that (1) the question, presented to only those who had completed the project (several teachers had dropped out), might have drawn a particular reaction which was partially imbedded in a desire to please the directors of the various centers. (2) Too, there is no way of assessing the degree to which the answer was a reinforcement device for personal persistence. These disclaimers, of course, are only fringe possibilities.

The most significant assessment of the relation of the answer to the project must consider the individuals who answered. All were seasoned teachers, frequently far removed from college classes which are, by nature, less directed to the problems dealt with by the project. Furthermore, few college classes can afford

the luxury of indefinite, loosely structured probing of a subject field, unless all of the class members have the experience and "intuitive" understanding of that field, yielded by years of trial and error, successes and failures, satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Pointedly, the two situations are not similar enough for any valid conclusions to be drawn.

A reasonable attempt to assess the sucess of the Minnesota Project should be directed at recognizing that: (1) Teachers in Minnesota are concerned with reassessing the task of language arts; (2) Teachers of language arts are willing to join forces for reassessment and redirection; and (3) The project should be seen as only a beginning of a long and tedious task.

The Minnesota Project should not be evaluated on the basis of a comparison with the task of colleges to provide preliminary course work. Neither should it be considered a panacea for solving the problems in the field. Hopefully, it may have made a beginning--a very worthwhile beginning--toward awakening teachers and administrators to the need to work more intensely toward solving the problems in the local areas. Hopefully, too, the project may have made its contribution--along with teachers who have participated in all the other efforts to improve language arts--toward developing more leaders and strengthened lines under and along which the problems might become more solvable.

REPORT TWO

By MARY K. BISSELL
Bemidji State College,
Project director at Bemidji

When we arrived at the project planning center in late August we were convinced that in one week we were going to clarify and solve some of the problems we, as English teachers, faced in our classrooms. Our first hang-up was deciding where to begin. With composition? But that included related areas such as grammar. With curriculum? But that led to justification of our choice of teaching units. And somewhere in the questioning of why one teaches what one does, someone asked, "Why teach English at all?" The reply was another question, even more basic, "Why educate?"

Those questions, deceivingly simple, provided a place to begin. Writing in groups of five, we listed all the anwers suggested. Some answers were full of educational jargon; some answers were the old standards. Each participant vociferously defended his favorite. The result was the following set of statements:

1. Education is essential to human survival.
2. Communication is primary to human survival.
3. English is the study of the processes of communication
4. All communication depends on a system of symbols.
5. Symbols are arbitrary signs.
6. Arbitrariness of symbols can lead to variability of meaning.
7. Communication depends upon the mutual agreement of sender and receiver between symbol and referent.
8. The process of learning is more important than learning facts.
9. Students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process.
10. Success in learning stimulates learning.
11. Learning is a creative process.
12. Immediacy and relevancy are essential to learning.
13. To teach is to stimulate the student to demand information for his survival.

By the time we had formulated the above statements, half of our week had passed. During our shouting, arguing, and compromising, we had thoroughly convinced each other of those thirteen statements. Our very involvement had changed our minds.

The next consideration was how to spread our enthusiasm to other English teachers. How could we structure our discoveries to pass on to them a similar experience? We each agreed to meet for ten two and one-half hour sessions with selected teachers from our area. With time running out, we frantically tried to decide what we wanted to accomplish and how we could best accomplish it. Above all, the classes would have to actively involve the teacher-participants.

In December, having held our allotted ten meetings, the twenty-five of us got together to evaluate the classes we had organized throughout the state. We also met to consider our future needs.

Although our success varied from class to class, most of us felt that the participants had at least developed an awareness of the concepts we had articulated. All the classes used the same evaluation form at the end of the ten weeks. Seventy-five per cent of the participants considered this program of more value to them as teachers than any previous experience. Ninety-eight per cent indicated that this program affected the content and methods being used in their own classroom.

There were other worthwhile results. For some participants, the meetings provided the impetus to try new student-centered activities in the classroom. For many, the class provided a chance to share with eager listeners some of the creative activities they had tried. The week between meetings gave participants a chance to experiment with their ideas. The success of these classroom tests confirmed what we were doing at our weekly

meetings. What we did proved that teachers, too, learn best when they are actively involved in the problem solving process.

We must overcome our present fear of expressing our problems and needs to our administrators. We must convince them that we need school time to work on curriculum. We must accept the challenge to develop for each Minnesota school a plan of study which can effectively meet the needs of its varied students. And we must accept the reality that any curriculum must be continually reevaluated and modified as student needs change. It is proper that this curriculum should be developed by the people who are in the classrooms and know firsthand the problems involved. Finally, we must establish a greater degree of cooperation with our area colleges. If we are going to move away from a literature-centered curriculum, then colleges must adapt their course offerings so that new teachers are adequately prepared. These needs require that we develop local leaders who are knowledgeable and articulate.

REPORT THREE

By MRS. RUTH LYSNE
English teacher at Faribault High School
and Project director at Waseca

The opening of school the Fall of 1967 filled me with conflicting emotions. I was anticipating teaching in my classes a reorganized curriculum based on the concepts about the study of communications which had been developed at the week-long planning session by those of us who were to direct the Inservice Training Program for the State Department of Education at various locations later that fall. I was also a bit nervous at the idea of me, with only seven years of teaching experience and no Master's degree, directing thirty teachers, some of whom might have advanced degrees and a lifetime of experience, in a program designed to develop them as leaders in curriculum development in their own school systems. What sustained me and reinforced my belief in the validity of the concepts we directors had formulated at the planning session was what happened in my classroom during the month preceding the start of the Inservice Training Program in the Fall, and what continued to happen there as I directed the program. For the first time in my teaching career practically every student in both my high ability and low-average ability English 12 sections seemed to be actively involved in language study, and I could see some measurable improvement occurring in the language behavior. This was occurring for many formerly uninterested boys simply because they were actively confronting the material offered them. What had changed in my classroom was not so much the materials for reading, listening, viewing, or discussion, but the way in which I perceived their use by the students. I had given

the "whys" for teaching what I had taught in the last six years an intense and painful examination. This resulted in the change of the focus of English 12.

After five days of agonizing soul searching, my group at the Inservice Training Program had come to two major conclusions:

1. The fundamental concern of English is the study of the process of linguistic communication. This is the most significant aspect of the human's total education, for his economic, educational, social, cultural, and esthetic survival depends upon his communication skill. Therefore, upon the study of linguistic communication depends the survival of man himself. Concepts about the process of communication, then, should be the nucleus of the English program.

2. Because the responsibility for deciding the role and focus of English education now rested with us, the classroom teachers, rather than being prescribed, the concepts about communication were more meaningful to the group members, and each member was able to work out implementation of the concepts for the classroom with relative ease. Ironically, while searching for the major concerns of English, which most of us had interpreted as a search for appropriate subject matter, we realized that more important was the searching process itself. The appropriate subject matter for the English classroom seemed to be the study of the process of search. We experienced a growing awareness that discovering both how to formulate questions and how man uses language in problem solving is of importance. These kinds of discoveries also gave the members of the group insights as to how individuals truly internalize concepts by working them out inductively. The rapid flow of suggestions concerning how to set up situations to stimulate these same kinds of discoveries about the thinking process and the part language plays in it offered vivid proof of the creative powers generated by such situations. If we could generate the same kind of creativity among the teachers in the Inservice Seminars and also in our high school students, the attitude of many toward "English" and English education might be altered.

Sustained by what was happening in my classroom as a result of my experience at the planning session, I planned to set up the format of the Inservice Program following the pattern of my procedure in the classroom. The following description of this classroom procedure will provide illustrations of the methods I think to be most effective and the concepts I feel are important to the students. These kinds of attitudes I hoped would be developed at the Inservice Program by the teachers themselves.

Believing that the study of the process of communication could best be undertaken by having students inductively examine a linguistic act, I assigned at the beginning of the year contemporary short stories that were loosely grouped under thematic topics that vitally concerned my students. After they had read the selections, I surprised my students by announcing I would not ask any discussion questions, since I believed that once I had initiated a question I had already done the most difficult part of evaluating, namely deciding the focus or basis. The only directions given were that the students were to work in groups of five or less and make lists of questions or observations about a story such as "The Enemy," by Pearl Buck. As I circulated from group to group in my non-college bound section, I found that every group was first considering why the American trained Japanese doctor, who finds a wounded American sailor near his home during World War II, helps the sailor escape. In former years I would have posed the question myself to start a general discussion about reasons for the doctor's action. All the suggestions for his action contained in the story, such as his former contact with Americans and his training as a doctor, were being brought out in the small groups by more students because more of them were being forced to actively confront the story. The groups became very frustrated as it became clear to them that all the possible motives suggested by the story were valid and that no certain combination was indicated. All members of the groups also reported that they were aware of most of the motives for the doctor's decision before the discussion began. I then asked the students why they were starting with this question if they were all aware of the answer, and whether they were willing to drop the question as unimportant. They weren't willing to drop the question because something about the doctor's decision not to kill his avowed enemy still bothered them. The students now saw that the plot-character type question was not their major concern. What they were more concerned about was the sentence with which Buck closed the story: "Strange, he thought, I wonder why I did not kill him." The students finally managed to articulate the questions that did concern them: Why does the reader see the forces which work upon the doctor when the doctor does not? Why did the writer choose to end the narrative in such a manner? With the formulation of these questions, the students were able to discuss by themselves the theme of the work, which was an interpretation in fiction of the working of a semantic principle. The doctor reacts differently from the other Japanese in the story because of his actual contact with Americans, even though he was not always fairly treated by them, and because of his devotion to medicine before his devotion to his country. Because he was conditioned to respond to the word "American" as if it meant "white and repulsive," the term he continually uses, he is, unlike the reader, incapable of seeing the reasons for his overt behavior.

The process that the students were using--to start with the

obvious, the concrete, examine it, then move to a more basic question until a question was so formulated that the way of finding the answer was pointed out--is the very heart of the English curriculum. This particular selection demonstrated for the students the power of connotative language and why it is essential for the human to know how it works upon him and when it is being used. Also, their own difficulties demonstrated the work needed to formulate a clear and precise question that asked what they wanted it to.

At the opening session in the end of September at the Inservice Center in Waseca, I tried to make it clear that I was not there to hand out prescribed answers to problems of curriculum development and methodology but merely to assist the members of the class in a search for the answers to these problems. It was my role to define the task--to decide from the viewpoint of the classroom teacher what the role of English education was in the total scope of the student's education; to provide some materials to stimulate creative thinking about the task; and to remind the teachers that they must know why they were making the decisions they would make.

An analysis of data provided on a personal information sheet filled out by the participants at the first meeting revealed a wide range in experience and education. Some young teachers had seven or fewer years of experience and little post-graduate work, a number of people had ten to twenty years experience and about thirty hours work beyond a B.A., and a few people had Master's degrees. Schools of various sizes were represented, but teachers from various small school systems predominated. The information sheets revealed one common factor: there was little communication between school systems on matters of curriculum and little departmental communication. Ironically, this was illustrated in the composition of my class. Two of the largest school systems that had been invited to send participants to the seminar sent no one, presumably because they were occupied with curriculum revision of their own. This isolationist attitude, it seems to me, may hinder meaningful curriculum work all through the state, as it inhibits rather than encourages the interchange of ideas.

I also presented an attitude test, developed by one of the participants at the planning institute, to the members of my class which they took anonymously at the first meeting. The only items that all were in agreement on out of twenty were:

1. The basis for the English curriculum should be the study of communication.
2. Learning how to learn is more important than learning facts.
3. Integrated units dealing with the traditional aspects of English such as writing and literature were superior to separate units.
4. The English curriculum is in need of major changes.

5. Choices in English usage are large in number and rarely subject to arbitrary rules.

There was a wide division of opinions on such items as:

1. A year's curriculum should be centered around a good literature anthology.
2. "Correct" writing is essential to communicating thought in prose.
3. One of literature's primary purposes is to develop in the student an awareness of social problems.
4. Literature should be taught "for its own sake."

Some of the responses seemed to contradict each other, and I think the respondents sensed not only the contradictions apparent in their test answers, but also the disparity between the theory to which they subscribed and what they practiced in the classroom. This awareness of existing contradictions accounted for the fact that the class all agreed on the need for change in the English curriculum. If they had all agreed that the center for the English curriculum was the study of the processes of linguistic communication, why then did many feel the literature anthology should be a focal point? Were they defining communication as the written word? Did they really know what they meant when they agreed that linguistic communications should be the basis for an English curriculum? I felt it was my task to simply provide an opportunity for discussion and self-analysis through which the participants could discover why they accepted contradictory statements.

Subsequently I asked four groups of five individuals to complete a list of "things" they would retain in their teaching if a dictum had been issued decreeing that these five "things" would comprise their curriculum. I was trying to use the same kind of inductive process that I had used with my students in helping them to discover the theme of "The Enemy." The two Junior High and two Senior High groups within the specified time limit compiled two kinds of lists. One was a list of actual materials and the other was a list of concepts to be taught. The two questions I had asked them to consider in constructing lists were: What will this thing enable the student to do or understand? Why is it important for the student to be able to do or understand this? Following is a few examples of concepts that the teachers agreed should be taught:

1. Ability to communicate (speak, listen, write, read, see) to meet the needs of life, both aesthetic and practical.
2. Ability to appreciate, tolerate, and respect another's point of view.
3. Logical thinking.
4. Profitable use of leisure time through creative participation.
5. Knowledge and appreciation of our cultural heritage.

After they arrived at the list of concepts they deemed essential, I asked them to arrange the concepts on a priority scale of importance, using the same criteria as before, and then to form a generalization about the role of English education in the total education of the student. Because all the groups were in fairly close agreement about what the most important concepts were, they decided easily that English education enabled the student to survive in every aspect of his life because it dealt with the student's understanding and use of communication. This was the concept to which each group had given first priority. That was followed then with the conclusion that the study of processes of linguistic communication was the major concern of English, and all the other concepts to be taught were merely a part of communication.

At this point in the seminar, what to me was an astonishing thing occurred. As I moved from group to group, the participants were sitting puzzled and silent, a radical change from the arguing and discussing that had accompanied construction of the list of essential concepts to base a curriculum on. Most had little idea of what the study of communication involved, and though they realized that the traditional division of English into speech, literature, and composition concentrated on the unique demands of each as an individual form of communication, they didn't seem to know what principles were common to all forms. Fortunately, before the next meeting an excellent pamphlet on semantics, "What Everyone Should Know About Semantics," had reached almost every school. This panphlet led some to readings in Hayakawa, Johnson, and Fries, which helped establish that understanding of semantics which is essential to solving problems of communication. As soon as the background in theory had been established during the several meetings that followed, each of the groups compiled a list of concepts every student should understand about communication. By the time these lists had been compiled, about one-half of our sessions, most of which were in small groups, were over.

At this point, in the interests of time, I took it upon myself to compose a summary of the lists. This was not difficult as the concepts compiled by each group were similar. Following is that final list of concepts about communication which I believe to be a reasonably accurate composite of the work of all the groups in the Waseca program. For a statement of the conclusions the groups reached about the role of English education in the total education of the student see the list on page 13. Many of these mirror statements made both by Dr. Kincaid and the directors at the planning session.

1. Communication is a two-way process dependent on the interpretation of a system of symbols about which there must be some agreement between sender and receiver.

2. The symbols are determined arbitrarily.

3. The unique symbol systems which English education examines are the written, the oral, and various visual-audial combinations made possible by modern technology.

4. As distances and differences between sender and receiver increase, chances for misinterpretation increase.

5. The more abstract the referent of the symbol, the greater the chances for misinterpretation.

6. The dialect of the symbol system used depends on the nature of the audience.

7. Creativity is exhibited by discerning consumption as well as production of communicative symbols.

Below are several suggestions for implementing one or more of these concepts about communication:

1. Have one student talk to another student in the school voicing complaint about something in the school. Record this conversation on a tape recorder. Have the same student write a letter to an actual friend in another school voicing the same complaint; lift the part of the letter that contains the complaint and mimeograph it. Have the same student write a letter on the same subject to the high school principal. Have the same student prepare an oral presentation of the same complaint to the school superintendent. Use these four forms of the complaint to have the students inductively discover (working in groups of five) concepts 4, 5, and 6.

2. Distribute copies of "Mr. Tambourine Man" or "Master of War." Have small discussion groups try to determine the meaning of the lyrics. Perhaps through doing this they will discover the relationship between the writer, audience, and choice of language. Obtain four different recordings of these songs, play them, and let the class decide which recording best fulfills the purpose of the selection. The students will probably inductively discover that interpretations will be dependent on the meaning assigned to the words by the various receivers. They will also probably see certain individual attributes possessed by the written and spoken symbol systems even though the "same words" are used. This exercise helps them to grasp aspects of concepts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

I believe the suggested activities illustrate the wealth of material from which an English teacher can draw after he sees the focus of English as a study of communication rather than as the study of a literature anthology or the presentation of oral reports.

The final assignment directed each class member to sketch out a lesson plan for one class period with the objective to help the students discover some aspect of one of the concepts. After each member of the group had presented his plan to the group, the most meaningful ones were chosen to be presented to the whole class at the closing meeting.

After this description of the workings of the Inservice program at Waseca, I feel I now can make some general observations and interpretations. The anonymous answers on the evaluation sheets supplied by Dr. Kincaid and filled out by the members at the final session, supported my impressions of the favorable reactions of the members of the class to the format and material developed. In this last analysis, the three most important concepts the teachers felt they had developed were that the major concern of English was the study of the processes of communication; that a curriculum which helped the student to use communication more effectively should be based on an understanding of those basic principles about communication itself; and that the student should arrive at the principles inductively.

The objections of the minority seemed to center around the format of the class, which the majority found stimulating because of the opportunity for the interchange and development of ideas. I suspect the minority who were unhappy with the format had come to class hoping to find answers provided by an authority. I also observed that this minority was so unfamiliar with semantics that they found it a little frightening, because if they granted the worth of the knowledge of semantics it would have meant a major teaching shift to them. A reverence for the philosophical content of literature made it very difficult for some to see other responsibilities to students than the transmission of "the beautiful and the profane." Even some of the people who eventually became the most creative in class struggled with this until they realized English defined as a study of the process of communication doesn't preclude appreciation of philosophical statement but embraces this and much more. Because of the Senior High teachers' traditional involvement with masterpieces of literature, I found in the beginning sessions that the Junior High people were more creative and searching because they had few sacred cows to defend.

At this writing I do not know how much effect the Inservice program has had on this year's classroom teaching of the members in the program. I do not know if they have had the restraint it takes to stop asking the questions that define the answers for which students either dutifully or resentfully look, or if the teachers have had the courage it takes to turn the questioning process over to the students, helping them only to formulate meaninful questions to which they can discover the answers themselves. I do not know if the teachers have had the patience to wait while students groped to formulate questions and find conclusions without the teacher providing them with the question or telling them the answers so more "material" might be covered

during the year. I do not know if the teachers have been given or have taken the time to look at all they would teach and examine it to see if it is relevant to the student's understanding and effective use of communication.

I do suspect, when most of the schools attending did not even have a written philosophy of English education for their department, if departments existed at all, that very few of the teachers had adequate reinforcement to sustain them through the period of uncertainty that accompanies the throwing of responsibility for learning back on the students while the teacher functions chiefly to motivate and define a broad task. I do not know whether enough support had been offered in the short time of the Inservice program to sustain teachers through the agony of re-examining materials and methods in view of what they had defined as meaningful to the student.

I also wonder if the administration in the various schools has been sympathetic to the requests of these English teachers for released time to meet with their own colleagues and in a similar kind of format as we had to examine the subject matter and methodology being used in terms of its relevance to the students. I wonder how many of the teachers who were not touched by this program would be sympathetic to such a plan. I hope when I meet my group again at a voluntary meeting this Spring that I can hear reports of the same kind of creative work by students in their classrooms as I see in mine this year.

REPORT FOUR

By MRS. MARLYS C. MACHACEK
English teacher at Faribault High School
and participant at Waseca

At some time or other, I suspect that every Senior High School English teacher develops serious doubts about the value of the material he is teaching his students. This questioning began for me at the beginning of my first teaching assignment. Because of deep personal interest as well as special academic preparation, I had decided to begin my English 11 classes with a unit on frontier literature. In addition, such a unit had been written into the State Curriculum Guide; the several textbooks at my disposal contained a reassuring amount of "grist"; our school library was well equipped with fiction dealing with life on the various frontiers. Finally, I felt that such a unit would contain a built-in motivation because the students already possessed a background of TV and movie lore about the Western frontier.

Student interest appeared high as my classes read many accounts

of early American life, and began such exercises as contrasting the realistic Indians of Parkman's Oregon Trail with the "noble Savage" of James Fenimore Cooper. My first misgivings about what I had taught came when a reporter for the school paper approached me for an interview about the new course I was offering on the Wild West!

I proceeded to my next unit, "The Struggle for Freedom." Again, everything pointed to the validity of such a unit being taught--anthology content, State Guide, plentiful library materials. At the close of this unit, a student informed me: "You know, I learned more history in English, than I did in history."

By now I had an uneasy feeling that I had infringed upon another department's curriculum, and it was with relief that I began a new unit on major American writers. Here, certainly, I would be within the confines of content which was exclusively "English," and with the study of the American Romantics, the realists, and the naturalistic writers, I felt reasonably successful, and my doubts vanished.

However, during the summer I continued to wonder at what appeared to be an overlapping of material between what I had covered and what was taught in American history. I realized that it was not the material which was being duplicated, but that in my approach to literature dealing with America's past, I had overstressed those facts and attitudes which are properly the subject matter of social studies. Although I was unwilling to give up my units, I was uncertain as to what different approach to take, and when I discovered that an Inservice training program for English teachers was to be offered the coming Fall, I determined to attend, hoping for some clarification about units to be taught as well as methods for teaching them.

At our first Inservice meeting in Waseca, I quickly learned that there would be no easy answers forthcoming in the form of authoritarian lectures. Our instructor, Mrs. Ruth Lysne, informed the class that we would be expected to examine the English curriculum of the various schools represented, and to arrive at our own recommendations about any changes. In groups of five we set about compiling lists of the five "things" that we would insist upon retaining in the English curriculum at our particular grade level, if all other "things" had to be eliminated. We were also to evaluate these five "things" in light of what they would enable the student to do or understand and why we thought it important that the student do or understand them. Finally, from these five "things" we were to determine the major concern(s) of English in its role in the total education process.

This didn't sound too difficult and our group confidently began its list: the novel; the short story; composition; the drama; poetry.

The following remarks represent a random sampling of the groups'

discussions:

There. That's five general "things" that we would insist upon. . .What about biography and the essay?. . . We re-examined our list. We couldn't very well eliminate any of the five, but certainly biography should be included. . . Perhaps we could broaden our terms: prose (fiction and non-fiction); poetry; composition; drama.

But that's only four. We're supposed to have five. . . We could add history of the language. . .Not in grade 11, we can't. . .We forgot speaking activities. . .Can't we assume that speech is an integral part of any English curriculum?. . .No. Speech constitutes a separate "thing" . . .Oh, well. Let's evaluate what we have. . .

Now, how vital is it for the low ability student to study poetry? Wouldn't he be better off if his understanding of correct usage were reinforced?. . .But I teach only college bound seniors. They already know correct usage. . .Well, many of my students should be taught how to write a simple business letter, rather than Chaucer. . .But can't a selection be taught for its own sake? Isn't that justification enough?. . .

After an hour of trying to defend the inclusion of some pet unit or activity in our list, we were forced to the uncomfortable conclusion that nothing which we had discussed was absolutely vital to all students. The only "thing" really necessary to the survival of the student was learning to speak the English language, and he had learned to do this long before he ever reached the Senior High School. Was high school English, then, a "frill" course? Was the teaching of English at the secondary level unnecessary? If so, we were all out of a job. But we knew that English had a valid place in education. Why then couldn't we define its role in a clear statement: This is how English differs from other courses, and this is what it should teach. Obviously, we would be unable to do this and still talk in terms of the "short story" and "letter writing." We had to begin again, seeking broader concepts upon which to base an English curriculum.

The answer, evident as it is now, did not come easily. By the end of the three hour period, our list had been revised to read:

Concepts which we will not give up

1. Teaching logical thinking
2. Teaching communication
3. Teaching profitable use of leisure time
4. Teaching the knowledge and appreciation of our cultural heritage
5. Teaching skills to meet the needs of life

At our next meeting, as we attempted to restate our five

"things" in order of priority, we discovered that one item was totally different from and basic to the other four. Unless this item were pre-supposed, the other four concepts were not only meaningless, but impossible. Recognizing this, we were then able to articulate the concept that the one vital concern of English the one area with which English should be primarily involved, was communication. In fact, so satisfied were we with this re-emphasis, that during the remaining weeks, we used the terms "English" and "communication" synonomously.

Now began the search for the principles about communication of which our students should be aware. With varying degrees of progress, we examined and re-examined all the facets of communication we could think of--oral, written, audio-visual, even kinesics and proxemics--until we finally reached a consensus about what our students should know in order to communicate more effectively.

The Student should know:

1. That he communicates through symbols, of which words are the most common.
2. That symbols are arbitrary.
3. That some general agreement as to the meaning of symbols must occur between the sender and receiver before communication can take place.
4. That symbols exist in systems that give them meaning.
5. That the symbol systems that are the major concern of English are spoken, written, and audio-visual.
6. That the meaning of spoken word symbols is dependent upon voice inflections, juncture, kinesics, and proxemics.
7. That the meaning of the spoken symbols, is dependent upon word order, context, and frame of reference.
8. That the meaning of the written word symbols is dependent upon spelling, punctuation, and style.
9. That the meaning of audio-visual symbols systems is dependent upon previous experience and associations, and that they differ from the written and spoken systems in immediacy and magnitude.
10. That all patterns of symbols can be organized into sequences and may be interrelated.

Here, then, we believed was the heart of an English curriculum--the point of departure for the examination and/or creation of any written, spoken, or audio-visual content. At last we felt confident about what the focus of English should be.

There remained the task of implementing these concepts about communication and one approach was clearly indicated. As our group had inductively reached agreement about the major concern of English, and further agreed when we established our priorities that we did not consider the transmission of knowledge to be as important for the student as the process of independent learning

we felt that we should explore applying a similar method of arriving at conclusions about language and literature in our own classrooms. We were convinced from the experience at Waseca that the main advantage of such an approach would be an increased sense of involvement on the part of the student with his work, because he would be discussing only questions which arose within the group.

This technique, we felt, used judiciously by a teacher in situations requiring the application of previously acquired knowledge to a particular assignment, or in some cases to discover new knowledge, would enable the student to act as a creative and productive learner, rather than as one who simply consumes the results of the instructor's labor and dutifully regurgitates it at exam time. (By "judicious" I do not mean to imply that we regarded inductive teaching generally as a method to be used and then stored away until it was again needed. Actually, most of the teachers present practiced this method constantly, to a greater or lesser degree. "Judicious" simply refers to the decision of a teacher as to whether to inductively elicit answers from the class as a whole, or to allow the small group to elicit its own conclusions, using both deductive and inductive methods of reasoning.)

At the conclusion of the training course, I decided to try the group induction method with a college-bound section in the study of the novel, Huck Finn. Last year, when I taught the same novel, I had relied solely upon the lecture-question-answer method. Now I decided to see how well my students could apply the knowledge gained in a previous unit on satire to Twain's novel. I provided no study guides to chapters 17 and 18 (which deal with Huck's visit to the Grangerfords, and in which Twain satirizes certain customs and values of Southern "aristocracy" during the 1840's . . .). Instead, the students were told to discuss the two chapters within their small groups and at the end of the period present to the class any question to which they did not know the answer, or to offer any conclusive statements they wished to make about the material studied. Although one group, after working an entire hour, offered the somewhat facetious question, "Of what significance are these two chapters?" the other groups quickly got down to specific questions. Because I had a definite idea of the conclusions that I expected the groups to arrive at, I reinforced those "what" questions dealing with social and cultural criticism that I hoped would lead to "how" questions about ways in which Twain employs satire.

One group felt that Buck Grangerford acted somewhat hardhearted when he replied in answer to Huck's question about the number of deaths claimed by the feud that year, "Yes, we got one and they got one," much as if he were discussing the results of a hunting trip. This "what" question led to the recognition that Twain was employing the device of satire in which a character is made to seem coldly objective about a situation which calls for a deeper feeling.

Another "what" question--Why do the Grangerfords have all that junk on their mantlepiece and why does Huck think it's beautiful?--led to a consideration of Huck's qualifications to judge beauty. The students concluded that Huck was admiring something unworthy because he doesn't know any better and this led to the discovery that Twain, through the device of a naive observer, is offering a criticism of the poor taste in the decor of Southern aristocracy.

An understanding that Twain is criticizing some other cultural values of Southern aristocracy through the parody arose from the question, "Why does Emmaline always write poetry about death?" Although the students had studied parody earlier, and had in some cases written parodies, they were reluctant to openly criticize anything having to do with death, until I read to them without comment Ben Franklin's "Receipt For Making a New England Funeral Elegy." They were then able to see that Emmaline's "tributes" contained many of the ingredients inveighed against by Franklin, and that Emmaline's ode was actually a parody of such sentimental tributes to the dead, common in those days.

Because the class was familiar with the concept of sentimentality I encouraged the groups to explore it further. This led to a critical appraisal of Emmaline's drawings, in light of what they knew about sentimentality, and after discussing the morbid themes and preoccupation with death which characterized the drawings, they finally focused upon the drawing which showed a distraught, weeping young girl holding a dead bird (feet up) in her hand. They then realized that the grief expressed by the girl was out of all proportion to the situation, since the other drawings showed the same girl reacting in the same way to the death of her lover. They were able to conclude from this that Twain's attitude toward sentimentality in art was critical because in describing the drawings and Huck's reactions to them, he is employing irony.

Situation irony became increasingly easy for the students to detect, and when they considered the church scene, very little discussion was necessary for them to arrive at the conclusion that Twain was criticizing hypocrisy through the irony of the Grangerfords' saying one thing (admiring and discussing the sermon on brotherly love) and doing another (continuing the fued).

Altogether, we spent about five class periods in both small group and general discussion of the material, and at the end of that time the students were able to arrive at some conclusions about the chapters, the essence of which may be summed up in the following statement:

> Through the study of Twain's use of satire (irony and parody), Twain's critical attitude toward sentimentality in literature and art, the custom of feuding, cultural values of the 19th century

Southern aristocracy, and the hypocrisy of organized religion is revealed.

I discovered in applying the group induction method that the role of the teacher as a guide and resource person is a difficult one to maintain. The temptation to direct and give answers is overwhelming while watching the groups flounder helplessly, toying with a valid thought, only to discard it for a spurious one. And I discovered that this temptation to step in and take complete charge increases when the teacher has very definite ideas (as I had) about the conclusions he wishes the students to reach.

But because the basic questions which led to the formulation of the above statement arose within the groups, I am hopeful that the learning experience of applying previously acquired knowledge to a new situation will have more relevance for the students and will be more lasting than if I had simply pointed out directly that Twain in these chapters was making certain social criticism by means of satire.

Another particularly versatile way to implement the concepts about communication is the student-created collage. Although previously used by one of the teachers at the seminar to teach symbolism per se, it actually illustrates most of the concepts about communication which we believed should be taught. Applicable to any content, it was used in this particular case with Hemingway's short story, "The Old Man at the Bridge." The teacher had asked the students to create from any materials they found at home a collage which would represent through symbols the characters of the story--human and animal. One student presented a gray metal plate upon which he had fixed a bent bolt, a straight nail, two small tin cans, and some other freely arranged bits of metal. In recognizing the bent bolt as the old man, the straight nail as the soldier, the salvaged tins as the sacrificial goats, and the floating pieces of metal as the cat and the doves, students may be taught more than the concept of symbolism in literature. They can be brought to see that these particular symbols had meaning for them only because they shared a special background--that of having read the story. When I used this technique to point up this concept, I brought in another student who had not read the story and asked her what the symbol which the class recognized as the old man stood for. She was able to answer only that it was what it looked to be--a nail with some gear arrangement on top of it.

Through comparison of the various collages which my six discussion groups presented, the class also realized that however a particular group chose to represent the old man constituted a completely arbitrary decision upon the part of the group, and further, that all symbols were by nature arbitrary.

The relative ease with which the class agreed that a particular symbol represented the old man, compared with the varying interpretations of those symbols meant to stand for the doves (which because of their abstract connotations of freedom and flight made them more difficult to express symbolically than concrete connotations such as "old" and "worn out" which suggested the old man) demonstrated effectively that as meaning moves from the concrete to the abstract, the communicative process becomes more difficult and subject to misinterpretation.

The inter-relation of the symbol systems is also evident in this project. The visual communication from the creator of the collage to the class is in this case completely dependent upon the written communication between Hemingway and the readers of the story. The spoken interpretations of the collages are in turn dependent upon both the visual communication system and the written.

Finally, the student-made collage is illustrative of not only productive creativity, but of consumptive as well, in that those students who were able to interpret the collages successfully were those who had read the story creatively. Thus the necessity for becoming a creative reader is emphasized, becuase if the student cannot perceive the relationship between a bent bolt or a withered prune and the old man, he is no better off than the student who had never read the story.

Neither a gimmick nor busy work, this method successfully incorporates nearly all of the concepts about communication which we believed the student should understand.

An illustration of another concept which our Inservice group agreed that students should know (that meaning in written communication is dependent upon word order) was taken from a recent television program, The Strange Case of the English Language, in which commentator, Harry Reasoner, demonstrated how the position of a single word can affect sentence meaning. By inserting the word "only" into five different positions in a basic sentence such as, "I hit William in the nose," it is possible to give the sentence five distinct meanings.

Only I hit William in the nose.
I only hit William in the nose.
I hit only William in the nose.
I hit William only in the nose.
I hit William in the nose only.

Such exercises make it readily apparent to the student that meaning here depends entirely upon the position of the word "only."

Nowhere is the need for student understanding that interpretation of symbols is dependent upon some agreement between the

sender and the receiver more evident than in composition work. We agreed at the seminar that a most frequent flaw in student composition, the failure to adequately develop general statements, is due to the student's assumption that he is writing only for the teacher. Since the teacher, through some kind of clairvoyance already knows what the student means, the student sees it as unnecessary to provide frames of reference.

One teacher suggested a means to demonstrate to the student the need for an awareness of his audience and his responsibility to that audience. She informed her classes that not only would she read their papers, but that they were to be placed in the school library along with other reference materials, and consequently the themes would have to be clear to any other student at any other time--not just to her.

Another more immediate way of emphasizing the importance of awareness of audience is to select two themes from each set, have them reproduced, and distribute them to the class for comment. The students are quick to point out vagueness, and their demand to know "Whaddyuh mean by that," is far more effective in getting the writer to understand the need for providing the necessary background and support for his statements, than is a comment written by the teacher indicating a need for "antecedent" or "support."

An awareness of the concepts about communication outlined here have provided me with a guideline in determining which aspects of any given content are to be emphasized, and have enabled me to show that unless we understand how something is being said, we cannot understand fully what is being said. I realize now what had been "wrong" about my units on Frontier literature and the Struggle for Freedom. In emphasizing what the selection said, I had largely ignored how it was being said. It is not surprising that I had drifted into teaching approaches which emphasized life adjustment rather than communication.

This is not to say that I know now exactly what method is to be employed to point up which concept. Due to inadequate time, I do not believe that the groups at Waseca had opportunity to fully appraise most of the ideas about implementation which were presented. Certainly there was no time to put them into actual practice. Were the teachers involved to reassemble now, after a period of six months, for an interchange of thoughts, we would be able to evaluate our suggestions on implementation in light of experience.

This need for an exchange of ideas and reinforcement is acute. That I was able to make some attempt at altering the focus of English in my classes is largely due to the accessibility of our instructor, Mrs. Lysne, with whom I share office space at Faribault Senior High School. Because of constant communication between us, I was encouraged to explore a variety of procedures and was able

to obtain immediate evaluation as to their effectiveness. Knowing the advantages of this instant feedback, I am concerned for those teachers present who were the sole representative of their particular school system. I wonder how many of them, upon returning to their classrooms, were able to put into effect the concepts which we developed, lacking as they did any kind of external reinforcement. I would hope that this could be achieved by some schedule of released time, whereby the schools would allow the participating teachers to reconvene at intervals for the sole purpose of discussing their successes and failures with one another. It is clear to me that the long range success and effectiveness of such an Inservice Training Program must be dependent upon just such subsequent, frequent reinforcement.

DEVELOPING ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

By JAMES ELSENPETER
De La Salle High School, Minneapolis

There is a direct relationship, I believe, between the strength of any particular English department in a secondary school and the excellence of that department's program. Anyone who is interested in organizing a strong English department should keep three principles in mind. First, as much authority and responsibility as possible for all that a department does should be put into the hands of the members of that department. Second, the duty of the chairman should be to assist or serve the teachers, to coordinate their work, to encourage them, and to give them worthwhile suggestions as to how they might accomplish their work. Third, the teachers themselves have two basic obligations; the first is to teach excellent courses and the second, and equally important, is to do the work necessary for their department to be a strong department which offers an excellent program. If these three principles are followed, then responsibility for the success or failure of the program of any particular English department is placed directly upon the shoulders of the teachers themselves.

There are several areas in which work is, I feel, fundamental to the success of any particular English department, and I wish to show how we worked in these areas in our English department at De La Salle High School in Minneapolis. I must point out here that our school is quite autonomous; it has a great deal of freedom in deciding upon its own operation. Also, our school is on flexible or modular scheduling which simplifies for us progress in these areas. Finally, our administrators are convinced that their obligation is not to impose duties upon the teachers but

rather to assist the teachers in accomplishing what the teachers themselves have decided are their duties. However, I am convinced that any English department, no matter whether it is in a school which is completely independent or in a school which is a member of a very large district, no matter whether it is in a school which is on flexible scheduling or in a school which is on the most rigid of block schedules, and no matter whether it is in a school with a most enlightened administration or in a school with a most authoritative administration, can make progress in these areas if the teachers take it upon themselves to see that progress is made.

I. Curriculum

If a department is to be strong, I believe that the first thing it must do is get a complete, organized curriculum which is thoroughly written out so that courses in the department can be coordinated and constantly revised. However, it is of the utmost importance that the faculty members themselves create the curriculum, write it, implement it, and revise it. It should not be imposed upon the department by some higher authority; it should come from the teachers themselves. This means that English curricula will differ from school to school on paper as well as in practice, and I believe that this is as it should be.

In creating their own program the English teachers at De La Salle first decided to offer ten one-semester courses: Speech, required; American Literature, required; Composition, required; English Literature, required; Linguistics, required; Great Literature of the Western World and the Twentieth Century Novel, one or the other required; Creative Writing, elective; Drama and Oral Interpretation, elective; and Debate, elective; and five two-semester courses: Freshman Language Arts, required; and Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Developmental English, required of students with basic reading, writing, and speaking problems. After the department had decided upon the basic plan, the chairman asked each teacher to give his first and second teaching choices. For example, an individual teacher might have chosen American Literature first and Composition second, and, of course, the teachers chose to teach their academic specialties and interests. The chairman then appointed teachers to committees; the teacher who chose American Literature and Composition, for example, was put on American Literature and Composition committees. The chairman then directed each committee to write a course description for its course. Each committee had complete freedom in deciding the content of the course, what materials and texts the students would use, and what teaching methods or procedures would be followed. The course descriptions contain performance criteria or objectives, lists of materials the students need, methods of instruction or procedure, and suggestions for formulating specific syllabi. The descriptions were completed during the academic year before the program went into effect. After the chairman had found out what teachers were and were not returning

the next year, he was given the authority by the administration to interview prospective teachers. Since the chairman knew that he had to find someone to replace the person who had helped write, for example, the American Literature description or the English Literature description, he looked for people who had specialized in those areas. The chairman then worked with the administration on the scheduling and saw to it that teachers were scheduled to teach the courses which were their academic specialties and which they had helped to write. The following year when the program went into effect, the teachers on each committee wrote a syllabus for the committee's course. Copies of the course descriptions and syllabi were given to all of the English teachers, to the administration, and to the students. What the department ended up with was a curriculum thoroughly described on paper, and because it is on paper, one that is constantly being revised; teachers working in their academic specialties and interest; and teachers committed on paper to their colleagues, to their superiors, and to their students.

II. English Center

In order for an English department to operate effectively as a unit, there must be free and continual communication among the teachers in that department. One of the best ways to facilitate this communication is to have some central location which is the hub of all the activity of the department. Not only is it important to have an English center, but it is just as important that each English teacher has a hand in planning the center or he will be dissatisfied with it.

At De La Salle the administration gave the English department permission to remodel two classrooms and a corridor outside the rooms into an English resource center. The teachers themselves planned the rooms and did much of the work with the help of students, remodeling, that is painting, fixing, cleaning, and arranging them. Because the teachers and students did the work, they feel that the rooms are theirs and they are proud of them. The center contains a desk and file cabinets for each teacher; an English resource library, the books in which are chosen by the teachers and used by the teachers and students; storage space for audio-visual materials, chosen by the teachers and used by both teachers and students; storage space for sets of paperbacks, chosen by the teachers and used by the students in various courses; bulletin boards; and study tables and carrels for about seventy-five students. What the department has ended up with is a place where each teacher has his own little kingdom where he has at his fingertips the materials necessary for his efffective teaching, where he can work by himself or with his students, and where he can communicate freely every day with his colleagues. And equally important, each student has a place where he can get the materials and the consultation he needs for his effective pursuit of the study of English.

III. Faculty Meetings

Frequent faculty meetings are necessary for the proper functioning of any department. Although every English teacher has had unpleasant experiences with dreary, purposeless, disorganized meetings, if meetings are planned and if they take place in a place and at a time convenient for the teachers, they will not be dull. First, if a department has an English center, it automatically has a place convenient for meetings. Second, members of a department must work with their administrators to see to it that there is time allotted in the schedule during the school day for faculty meetings. Finally, in order for faculty meetings to have purpose, tasks within a department must be carefully defined.

At De La Salle because we are on flexible scheduling, teachers themselves are free to schedule a good deal of their own time. The department, therefore, finds it very easy to schedule a meeting of the entire English faculty on any given school day. Various committees within the department are free to schedule meetings if and when they think they are necessary. Because the department is divided into committees with definite goals and obligations, the meetings always have purpose. Besides the various committees responsible for the various courses, which must meet regularly in order to develop, coordinate, and revise the courses, the department also has, for example, a committee which is working out a pilot unit in linguistics to be introduced into the Freshman Language Arts course, a committee developing an advanced placement program in English to go into effect next year, and a committee working out a schedule for the administration of a reading test to the entire student body.

IV. Departmental Budget

The budget of an English department should be in the hands of the English teachers, for they know best what is needed for the effective teaching of English. Also, if the teachers are allotted money and told to use it as they see fit, because the responsibility is put upon them, they are inclined to scrutinize carefully the materials they wish to buy and the prices of those materials. In other words, not only do they know best what they need, but they are inclined to shop. Secondly, they are inclined to be protective of what they have had a hand in buying and, therefore, take excellent care of the materials.

At De La Salle in the spring the chairman asks the teachers to submit to him lists of materials which they feel the department needs, their cost, and the places where they can be purchased. The chairman comiles the lists, adds up the total and submits the budget to the administration. The administration approves the total or asks that it be cut. If a cut is necessary, the English teachers work together to revise the budget and the chairman resubmits it to the administration. This process goes on until

agreement is reached. The department does all of its own ordering, receives and processes the materials, sores them, and inventories them.

V. Professional Organizations

In order for members of an English department to be truly professional and to keep up with what is going on in the profession, they must not only belong to but also be active in and read the literature of the professional organizations. They must be given the time and the money to attend professional meetings, workshops, and institutes, and professional materials must be made available to them.

At De La Salle the department keeps a rack of professional literature in the English center and includes in the budget an ample amount of money with which to send teachers to professional meetings. Teachers are almost always allowed to attend meetings of their choice during the school day if necessary. The other teachers automatically pinch hit for the absent teacher. When a teacher requests to be absent from school in order to attend a professional meeting, the chairman gets permission from the administration, which is usually automatic, and then asks that the teacher make arrangements with his colleagues to take care of his obligations for the day. The department finds that because it is easy for teachers to get away from school for professional meetings, they are very willing to attend meetings on weekends and holidays. Finally, because the teachers are encouraged to read professional materials and because those materials are available in the English center, the teachers are very aware of what meetings are where and when, of what is going on in the profession.

VI. Supervision of English Teachers

Most English teachers feel that teacher supervision is necessary, especially supervision of new teachers or teachers new to a particular school. If English teachers are to be guided, it is only reasonable that they be supervised by teachers of English. Therefore, each English department should be wholly responsible for the supervision of its own members. It seems to be practical for the chairman to take on the task for he then gets a picture not only of how the individual teachers operate, but also a picture of the day to day operation of the department. The chairman and teachers should work out a system of supervision satisfactory to all of them, and in most cases the chairman should see that the program is carried out. However, if the chairman or anyone else in the department is going to supervise, he must have the time to do it for it is a most time consuming job.

At De La Salle the program of supervision is extensive but somewhat informal. The chairman does the supervising and has

adequate time in which to do it. Some of the teachers have expressed a desire to know when they will be visited, but most of them have told the chairman to feel free to walk in whenever he has time. He concentrates on new teachers, teachers new to the school, and teachers who have asked for his help. He usually follows a visit with an informal conference with the teacher involved. If the administration asks the chairman to report on the work of any individual teacher, the chairman informs the teacher of the request and of what he intends to tell the administration. If something comes up in his conference with the administration which he had not discussed with the teacher, he also informs the teacher of the matter after the conference. If the chairman puts anything in writing which will go into the teacher's file, he gives the teacher a copy before he files the written report. The chairman finds that the teachers do not feel threatened by this rather informal but straightforward procedure and that, in fact, they look forward to his visits and his comments.

In summary then, any English department interested in improving and strengthening itself must consider how it might develop its curriculum, develop an English center, improve faculty meetings, institute a departmental budget, promote activity in professional organizations, and supervise its teachers. However, before any department will progress in any of these areas, each member of the department must first work and plan in such a way as to show his superiors that his department should have and can handle the authority and responsibility for seeing to its own operation, and, secondly, each member of the department must then work and plan in order to see to it that his department does, in fact, use that authority and responsibility and, therefore, does operate successfully. The burden finally falls upon each teacher and indeed the burden is heavy. He can no longer consider his only job to be the teaching of excellent and successful classes. He must realize that he has another responsibility just as important and that is to see that the entire operation of his department is excellent and successful. In many cases each teacher's burden will be almost doubled, but the extra work leads to a total program which can give each teacher tremendous satisfaction.

James Elsenpeter is chairman of the English Department at De La Salle High School.

newsletter

The following items have been included in the JOURNAL in lieu of an edition of the NEWSLETTER. An issue of the NEWSLETTER will come out later in the year. Please continue to send news items to Gene Fox, NEWSLETTER editor, Northfield Senior High, Northfield, Minn.

MCTE PRESIDENCY CHANGE

Brother H. Raphael, former president and ex-officio member of the Council's Executive Board, has agreed to fill the unexpired term of office for President Rodger Kemp. Mr. Kemp submitted his resignation, citing personal reasons. Anyone finding it necessary to consult the president of MCTE should do so by contacting Brother Raphael at St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota.

MINNESOTA READING ASSOCIATION

The Minnesota Reading Association will host its annual Spring meeting on Saturday, April 19th, 1969, at the Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Dr. William Sheldon, of Syracuse University, will be the keynote speaker. The theme of the meeting will involve specific teaching techniques and instructional technology.

MCTE SPRING CONVENTION

Miss Edna Downing, Sanford Junior High, Minneapolis, is in charge of plans for the Minnesota Council spring convention. Vice-President Downing indicates that the program is nearly complete for the annual convention which will be hosted by Moorhead State College, Moorhead, Minnesota, April 25 - 26. Make plans to attend now.

forum

LITERATURE, FRESHMAN, AND MORALITY

By CHARLES R. MOYER
Hamline University, St. Paul

I

The controversy that my title is meant to point toward is, I am quick to admit, often boring and fruitless. I trust that there is no need to describe it at length. Someone has asked the students to read a book that offends someone else's sense of sexual decency. Someone has assigned some such novel as Last Exit to Brooklyn or Our Lady of the Flowers -- some novel replete with all those virile Anglo-Saxon monosyllables and sometimes with painstakingly detailed explorations of such taboo practices as masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, and so on. And someone -- usually some parent, alumnus, trustee, or "friend of the college"-- is incensed. The Dean begins to get the irate telephone calls, and we hear the innuendoes about night-life in the dormitories, the arguments ad hominen, and the tired cliches about Socrates being made to drink hemlock. It tends to be a relentlessly repetitious controversy, but it does often involve important assumptions, and it may be that if these could be brought to the surface and discussed, the controversy might be carried on with a degree of cogency that it too often lacks.

My own experience in these matters is limited, and there may be better reasons for assigning or refusing to assign some supposedly licentious book than I have heard. But the ones I have heard are these. Those who condemn the book say either that it may corrupt the young or that it may tarnish the image of the college in its surrounding community. Those who defend the book sometimes say that the college ought to teach it because it will have a liberating effect on the students: it will "shake them up" and help to emancipate them from their provincialism and middle class values. Or, if this argument is not thought to be effective, those who defend the book may do so on the grounds of its relevance to the contemporary world: Deer Park, they say, will give the students a valuable insight into the manners and mores of our society, will show them what our society is really like.

One of these assertions lies slightly to one side of the issues that I hope to discuss, and I would like to get it out of the way in a preliminary and perhaps abrupt fashion. Those who condemn the book say that it may tarnish the image of the college. Parents may withdraw students, alumni may withdraw support, and contributors may withhold funds. The problem here concerns the degree of loyalty and responsibility that a college owes to its surrounding community. While a college does have such a responsibility, its

first responsibility must always be to the intellectual life and the heritage of thought and culture which it represents and transmits. If a book has an important place in that heritage, then the college should see to it that the book is represented on its campus whatever the expectations of the community might be. But the college does, of course, have a responsibility to this community. I should say that it is just what Socrates identified as the responsibility of the rational man: to be able to give coherent reasons why he believes what he believes and does what he does. The college need not truckle to the community, but it must be able to reply to it with cogent and rational grounds for the manner in which it conducts its affairs.

If we can set aside this "public relations" argument, we are left with three assertions. I will, in lawyer-like fashion, list the assumptions and then go on to deny them.

1. Literary choices are to be made in moral terms and on moral grounds.

2. A college should seek to impart moral or spiritual enlightenment to its students.

3. The justification of college study lies in its relevance to the contemporary world.

II

Both sides to the controversy, whatever their differences, seem to agree that choices among works of imaginative literature ought to be made in terms of morality, and they even imply that the purpose of literature is a moral one. Although their ideas of morality may differ, they are both judging on moral grounds: one side is condemning the book because it sets at naught some value they cherish -- chastity or conventional standards of decent discourse, perhaps; while the other side is praising the book because it has a moral or spiritual effect which they cherish -- emancipation or liberation or something on that order.

The precise relations between morality and literature are a vexed and vexing matter. Here there is neither the space nor the necessity to develop them completely. It is obvious that literature presents us with characters making moral decisions and with authors recommending moral values, and a host of examples make it clear that as moralists we may use literature in a variety of significant ways. It has even been said that every serious author has some scheme of values or view of life which he wishes to persuade his readers of, and while we may wish to deny the "every," it is obviously true of many or even most authors. (It is especially true of authors since the Romantic Era.) And since a person's ability to grasp this scheme of values is one of the most convenient tests of his ability as a reader, it is to be expected that a good deal of attention will be focused upon it in the

classroom.

Considerations such as these make it easy and natural for us to go on to say, as was traditionally said, that the purpose of literature is a moral one: literature exists to delight and instruct. It may be easy and natural to say this, but it is also false. The word "instruction," it is true, may be so manipulated that one may say that literature "instructs," but this turns out to be a sense of the word quite removed from the sense it bears in normal discourse, and these days it is better to be blunt about the matter. The purpose of literature is not moral or spiritual "uplift" or enlightenment, and Philip Rahv was quite accurate when he recently observed that "the relation between literature and truth or moral insight is sometimes very erratic, if not altogether deceptive."[1]

There are, of course, more famous names that might be invoked here -- one thinks of Coleridge's insistence that the purpose of a poem is pleasure and not truth -- but these appeals to authority hardly seem necessary. It should be obvious at this late date that those who define literature in moral terms are letting themselves in for some unpleasant consequences. The very first critic to judge literature in terms of its moral value was Plato, and the result of that decision is known to all of us. The poets were thrown out of the just republic because they are not trustworthy as sources of moral insight. And if Plato's premises are granted, we must admit that he was quite right. It may even be that Leo Tolstoy, given his premise that the purpose of literature is moral improvement, was correct in saying that Uncle Tom's Cabin is superior to Shakespeare's plays.

Such aberrations may tempt us to deny that morality has any relevance whatever to literature, but this is, of course, quite as extravagant as it is to define literature in moral terms. How do we react to the moral principles and decisions that we find in literary works? If we are good readers, we play a game of "let's pretend." We accept the author's premises hypothetically and for the time being, and then we see what he makes of them. We grant that ghosts may exist, that statues may come to life, that prophecies always come true, that Nature never did betray the heart that loved her. For the test of a work of art is not its "truth to life" but its internal coherence and consistency. If this coherence is maintained, we do not scribble "How true" or "What nonsense" in the margins (as we might in the margins of this essay). There are, for example, works of the imagination which ask us to accept the premise that the act of murder is not very important and can be quite comical. Anyone who might be "corrupted" by such a work would not be in need of moral enlightenment; he would be in need of instruction about the nature of literature and the manner in which it is to be received.

Admittedly, there are occasions on which this game of "let's

pretend" breaks down. On the one hand, we may come across statements, creeds, or allegiances which we believe to be profoundly true, and we may remove these from the novel or poem and make them our own in our own daily life. (As Yeats' lines "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are filled with a passionate intensity" are for many people today not dramatic utterances in a poem but a truth whose authority is beyond question.) On the other hand, we may find the author's outlook to be so pernicious -- as in Ezra Pound's poems recommending anti-Semitism -- that we are unable to assume it even hypothetically. We must simply close the book. Such an example might suggest that there is some consensus gentium of humane or "universal" values which an author must not violate if he is to win our acceptance. While the great majority of authors do in fact write within the limits of some such consensus, still this is a rather misleading and perhaps ultimately false doctrine. As is certainly suggested by Homer's calm acceptance of murderous brutality or the grim pleasure with which Dante places his contemporaries in the burning pits of Hell.

Literature does not and cannot tell us what powers, if any, govern our world, nor what forms of conduct are pleasing to them. And if we make such enlightenment the aim of our reading, we will stultify and even destroy our interest in literature. Our list of acceptable authors will be reduced to those who are in possession of the "truth"; we shall say that these authors have written "great" literature while all the others have written "mere" literature, and it is all too possible that we shall end by continually gazing at ourselves in the mirror that we have defined as "great" literature.

Of course, the act of reading imaginative literature does have important ethical and moral significance. By submitting ourselves to the moral outlook of a wide variety of authors we become aware of moral possibilities of which we previously knew nothing, we may develop some sense for the complexities of ethical decisions, and we may even develop a sort of ethical tolerance and balance. But this reading does not and cannot of itself give us moral wisdom, and it cannot even insure our commitment to moral concerns. After all, our acquaintance with the literary world need be very slight to show us that those who have read a good deal of imaginative literature are not morally superior to those who have not done so. Tolstoy's many diatribes concerning the moral superiority of simple, unlettered folk to the literati of his time are gross exaggerations; it is also exaggerated to simply reverse his position and speak as though literature does in fact confer such a superiority.

III

We have now arrived at our second assumption -- that a college has a duty to impart moral or spiritual enlightenment to its students. In the controversy that we are discussing this assumption appears when those who defend the allegedly salacious novel do so

on the grounds that it will have a certain moral effect: it will be emancipating or liberating and will lift the student above the narrow provinciality of his middle class values, presumably into some sort of higher wisdom.

There are several things that might be said here. One might deny that we in fact have the close and copious knowledge of our students' values which would be necessary if we were to know just what we are to liberate them from. (Are we to unhesitatingly accept the students' rather faltering attempts to articulate their attitudes, when we know how difficult we ourselves find it to say anything meaningful about our own values?) Or one might remark that there is never a reasonable approach to precision in the use of the term "middle class" -- at least not in this context. What is the middle class, and how do we know what its values are? This "middle class" is, indeed, on its way to becoming a rather ludicrous anachronism, for the allegations that one hears about it today are almost precisely the same as those that may be inferred from the early works of Joyce, Mann, or Gide, works which appeared nearly half a century ago. It is difficult to believe that this "middle class" is some timeless Platonic essence which hovers serenely above the normal processes of historical change. It is considerations of this sort which sometimes lead to the suspicion that "middle class values" have become a perhaps convenient but rather frayed rhetorical fiction.

But even if this is wrong and there are such things as middle class values, then it seems plain that this belief in the power of education to grant moral redemption and damnation must be one of them. There is certainly a good deal of evidence to suggest that it is one of the more pervasive faiths of the American people. In our zeal to liberate people from middle class values, perhaps we teachers have incorrectly identified those who are in need of this deliverance.

Just as we were touching upon a complicated matter when we were brought up against the relation between literature and morality, so the relation between education and morality cannot be described by over-simplified disjunctions or identifications. No one denies that the collegiate experience may have -- indeed one hopes it will have -- an ethical impact upon the students, but just as it is not true that the purpose of literature is to be morally uplifting, so it is not true that the purpose of a liberal education is to give the students moral and spiritual well-being.

Perhaps the point would be more easily granted if Cardinal Newman's Idea of a University were read as often as it is cited. The book is frequently referred to as one of the great landmarks in the theory of liberal education, but it is not easy to see that it has much influence upon educational matters today. Newman placed an extraordinarily high value upon the fruits of a liberal education, and he has given them what is perhaps their most famous

definition. A liberal education, he tells us, is meant to impart

> that true enlargement of the mind which is the power of viewing many things at once, as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence.[2]

This is the "health of the intellect" which it is the goal of liberal education to give its students. It is a great good and greatly to be prized. However, as Newman is at pains to point out, it is not a moral or spiritual virtue. There are many virtuous people who do not have it, and some of those who do have it are -- well, not notorious for their virtue.

A student's intellectual development does presuppose certain moral virtues -- honesty and integrity, for example. But there are crucial moral virtues -- humility and commitment to the common good (and perhaps even chastity) which cannot be made the aim of a liberal education. As Newman said, there is nothing in the structure of a liberal education which can prevent its students from becoming "victims of an intense self-contemplation." This self-absorption -- pride, as it used to be called -- can corrupt every moral virtue, and one may legitimately wonder whether or not a liberal education does not tend to promote this failing just about as often as it militates against it. As Newman recalled, "Basil and Julian were fellow-students at the schools of Athens; and one became the Saint and Doctor of the Church; the other her scoffing and relentless foe."[3] We may substitute whatever moral or religious or humanitarian ideal we like for Newman's Church; his point will remain untouched.

Of course, a college has a moral responsibility. Moral issues are matters of concern to the students, and the college should help the students to apprehend and discuss these concerns intelligently. But there should be no pretence about this. It will not assure, and perhaps not even noticeably further, any degree of moral commitment on anyone's part. It is simply another way in which to encourage that "health of the intellect" which this very controversy shows to be so necessary.

IV

We now come to our third and last assumption, the assumption that appears when those who defend the supposedly scandalous book do so on the grounds that it will give the student important insights into contemporary society. Lionel Trilling has already stated this assumption better than I can:

> The unargued assumption of most curriculums is that the real subject of all study is the modern world; that the

> justification of all study is its immediate and presumably practical relevance to modernity; that the true purpose of all study is to lead the person to be at home in, and in control of, the modern world.[4]

Mr. Trilling goes on to say that he knows of no way of quarreling with this assumption, but it seems to me that we need only to state the assumption in order to see its insufficiency. Surely all of us have shared Mr. Trilling's desire to occasionally find that quiet place where the student can simply know something: "in what year the Parthenon was begun, the order of battle at Trafalgar, how Linear B was deciphered"; almost anything at all which does not ring the changes on all the accepted ideas about Angst and anxiety and alienation.

The contemporary world and comtemporary culture are legitimate, important, and necessary objects of study. Our own time is quite properly of greater interest to us than another time. But while our culture looks quite disapprovingly upon provincialism in space, provincialism in time is becoming more widespread every day. All of us are learning every day to pronounce the names of exotic spots on the globe which yesterday we didn't even know existed. But that common grasp of the past which was once the shared possession of all educated men and women is every day becoming more rare.

Furthermore, we are discussing the general education of young people during their first years in college, and we must ask how we may most effectively help them toward Newman's "health of the intellect." Do we most effectively do this when we lead them into all the strident urgencies of contemporary culture? It seems possible that the breadth and balance of vision which Newman spoke of might be more easily acquired in a less over-heated arena. If we wish to liberate our freshmen from moral provinciality, perhaps we will not advance very far toward this goal by asking them to read novels which are flamboyant attacks on what are assumed to be conventional standards. Perhaps when we do this, we are still within the areas of concern defined by conventional morality and our "liberation" is a rather truncated affair.

My ignorance of educational psychology is by now quite manifest, but I fear it is necessary to make the exposure even more complete. One sometimes meets with the belief that a student must have acquired a certain amount of sophistication and training before he can take an interest in the past. I do not know how to question this belief except by appealing to my own experience, but I at least have not found it to be true. On the contrary, the relatively unsophisticated students -- the freshmen and sophmores -- have, in my experience, often been readier than their upperclass colleagues to take a lively interest in past eras. The imaginative flexibility and readiness that is required in good reading is closely allied to the imaginative and intellectual flexibility

that is required in the study of the past, and just as the unsophisticated may be better and more willing readers than their elders, so they are often more willing to put aside present concerns for a moment and take an interest in the cultures of the past. Or so I have found.

I trust that the bearings of these uncertain remarks is apparent. What is important about this controversy is not the issue itself, but the fact that all of the participants to it have attributed to literature and literary education purposes which they cannot possibly sustain. It is hardly surprising these days to hear someone saying that because of the decline of traditional religion, American "education has become a kind of secular religion, and teachers a sort of lay clergy, equipping the young with whatever theology, morality, and spirituality they have."[5] Although it is not surprising, it is nonetheless disturbing. If such observations are correct, if either literature or education is becoming the religion of the future, then religion, education, and literature are in for some serious disappointments. For if, as I believe, one does a grave disservice to literature and to morality by identifying them or defining one in terms of the other, so one does a grave -- and indeed a more important -- disservice to education and morality if one slips into a similar confusion when thinking about their purposes. The chief burden of this essay, in fact, is a protest against the exaggerated moral and spiritual authority that in our time is so commonly attributed to literature and education.

Because the issues of today are in fact extreme in their intensity and because traditional religion has in fact lost so much of its authority, it is understandable that the college may be tempted to guide its students through these issues and to assume the mantle once worn by religion and the church. But to adopt these assumptions with all their spurious consequences is to take up illusory hopes and impossible expectations. Most importantly, in trying to do what we cannot do, we may easily desert the one task that we may hope to perform -- the encouragement and development of that "health of the intellect" which alone can permit our students to work creatively within our culture rather than passively accepting whatever assumptions and presuppositions it may entail. Of course, the last, vain hope is that a more modest attitude on our part might lead to a college catalogue which is something other than a work of fiction. But what's a Heaven for?

FOOTNOTES

1. "An Open Secret," New York Review of Books, June 1, 1967, p. 20.

2. The Idea of a University, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (New York, 1960), p. 103.

3. Ibid., p. 161.

4. Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning (New York, 1965), p.4.

5. Christopher Jencks, "The Future of American Education," The Radical Papers, ed. Irving Howe (New York, 1966), p. 274.

Professor Moyer is an associate professor of English at Hamline University.

active file

Kept by MRS. LUCILLE DUGGAN

When I hear someone say, "I haven't missed a single day of school in years," I marvel, for I am apparently beset by ills he either doesn't know anything about or rises above. I am sometimes contagious; I have even been needed. I expect these states, like death and taxes, will continue to arise and, again like death and taxes, they will probably not be convenient. My daily lesson plans (and let's discuss lesson plans some day) will not often give a substitute much help. Moreover, there are times when I don't want to hand over the work I am doing to anyone else. This means I have to have another plan ready for a substitute and it must be something that is worth doing.

Because my classes are subject to other emergencies, there are days when I need alternate plans for myself. I do not hesitate to abandon a lost cause if my best-laid preparations fall flat. Sometimes I simply don't want to teach what is on the agenda. At such times I draw upon a slim emergency file which "I would. . .were fatter."

Whether or not you have need of such a supply of alternatives, I hope you will contribute some of your ideas to those of us who do. For a start, here briefly sketched, are a few of mine:

Hand the students dittoed sheets upon which are short lists of suggested statements--topics for talks. I like funny or surprising ones. Allow one or two minutes to structure ideas before asking for less-than-a-minute talks.

Read some limericks. Complete some. Write some.

If you can flood the room with reading material, let students browse, choose, and read.

Let students write something that is fun, but which is directed in a particular way. Retelling a well-known fable or fairy tale for a carefully depicted audience has lots of possibilities.

Use a word-sleuth assignment with dictionaries for searching out interesting word histories, and shifts in meaning. Nothing dull allowed.

Since MCTE members teach on different grade levels and in differing situations, suggestions pertinent to any of these will be welcome. Mail your ideas to this column. If no response is forthcoming, I shall assume that no one but me ever comes a cropper or needs to resort to an emergency file.

Mrs. Duggan teaches English at Richfield High School, and supervises student teachers.

"SHELL STATION NEAR DETROIT SUMMER"

By WILLIAM D. ELLIOTT
Bemidji State College

The attendant is relieved at the burning out
Of my sudden questions.
No - regretfully, only the car's tank, not the can.
But on this Promethian night
The very sky seems scalded
And must not be denied.
In Ypsilanti, they tell me,
A riot could go quickly; the vague rain
Will do nothing. When the night goes
It will probably freeze and snow
And on the Expressway, Edsels running
Like giant mechanical ghosts
Will cut down Mormons.
The white merchants on 12th Street, true Christians,
Will make presents of their counters;
Their brothers, the Black Snipers,
Will yawn like old darkies
And dream themselves away. If ever
Thoreau would move away from Walden
He would destroy the town with bullets
While down in the white suburbs, my home,
The dull monotony of Johnny Carson
Is dull monotony.

TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA: CHAPTERS IN A CONTINUING HISTORY

Chapter II. REPORT FROM THE CAMP COURAGE CONFERENCE IN MARCH, 1968

By SISTER MARY ALICE MUELLERLEILE, College of St. Catherine

On March 17, 1968, I joined a group of teachers from the five-state region of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, who left their students and their books for the wilds of Camp Courage in Annandale, Minnesota. Representatives of various subject matter areas involved in college and secondary education, we had come to this particular camp at the joint invitation of the Upper Midwest Regional Laboratory and the five-state Association of Student Teaching organizations in order to discuss criteria for guiding teacher preparation. The four days of discussion carried on in this rural and rustic setting demanded psychological as well as physical courage from us participants. Most of us were not prepared for bunk beds or for camp cooking, but, true to our profession, we adjusted easily once we discovered that the workshop would satisfy our occupational interest in ideas.

To be honest, however, I must confess that the first two days of the workshop had us wondering whether or not there would be such intellectual satisfaction. The workshop opened on Sunday night with a presentation of the Stanford University Performance Curriculum for Teacher Education by Dr. James Cooper, a leader in the development of the Stanford program. As Dr. Cooper masterfully described the Stanford program, most of us grew more and more aware of our own uneasiness. The basic premise underlying the Stanford approach to teacher preparation is the belief "that much of teaching consists of acts or behaviors." (See the unpublished article by James M. Cooper, "A Performance Curriculum for Teacher Education, " p. 3.) The program which developed from this belief attempts to train young men and women for the classroom first by identifying certain teacher behaviors which have proven successful in the classroom and then by helping prospective teachers shape their own teaching activities so that they reflect these successful skills. Years in the classroom--both as teachers and students--had taught most of us that a variety of teachers with a variety of teaching styles could be effective. How then could we accept Dr. Cooper and the program he was trying to sell?

As we broke into small groups that evening, those of us in the English group openly analyzed our hesitancy to accept the Stanford program. That session and the one which followed on Monday found us airing our difficulties: "Did we think we could describe what an English teacher needs in regard to the technical skills of teaching?" And if we could, "Would the Stanford list

of such skills include all those needed for the teaching of English?" The hours of discussion spent trying to answer these and similar kinds of questions offered no answers or solutions. In spite of the fact that the discussions did not resolve our dilemma, however, they were probably the most important sessions of the workshop for our particular group. By uniting us at the very beginning against what appeared to be a common enemy, they kept our group from splitting into the conventional divisions of college and secondary. We did not have time to tell the college methods' teacher or the secondary cooperating teacher where he or she had failed. We were too busy trying to discover where Stanford had failed.

On Monday afternoon, we finally gave up our struggles with Stanford theory. By that time we had learned so much from listening to one another that we were willing to let even Stanford have its say. We conceded to Dr. Cooper's request that we take one of the activities described in the Stanford material--the activity of introducing a unit--and that we analyze the criteria listed for this activity against our own experience in the English classroom. The Stanford criteria described the following procedures as appropriate to this activity:

The teacher:

1. Recognizes the importance of the introduction and organizes and times the lesson so other activities do not detract.
2. Arouses student interest in the unit by relating it to other experiences, showing personal enthusiasm, and providing potentially interesting student activities.
3. Ascertains that purposes of the unit are clear to the student.
4. Explains or develops with students their roles in the unit and their responsibilities to the material.
5. Relates the unit to previous units and overall goals for the year.
6. Utilizes instructional materials which enhance introduction activities.
7. Discusses the ways and means for evaluating the unit.

(See the unpublished "Stanford University Performance Criteria in Teaching," p. 5.)

After three or four hours of discussion, we decided to revise the Stanford criteria to the following list:

The teacher:

1. Chooses the best time to introduce the unit.
2. Presents an overview of content.
3. Develops with the students the purposes and goals of the unit and the means of attaining them.
4. Explains unfamiliar terms and new concepts.

5. Demonstrates procedures.
6. Introduces and uses relevant instructional and resource material.
7. Relates unit to students' experiences.
8. Tests students' capabilities and responsiveness.
9. Develops students' roles and responsibilities within the unit.
10. Sets up pertinent schedules and routines.
11. Determines the ways and means for evaluating the unit.
12. Determines the ways and means for evaluating the effectiveness of the lesson.

The results of this exercise were not terribly exciting. By adding five procedures to the Stanford list, we may have provided a more comprehensive and precise description of one teaching activity, but the activity itself did not catch our interest or imagination. Perhaps we reacted this way because we knew that units of work had been and would continue to be, more or less effectively, introduced by English teachers, whereas other activities which rightfully belonged in the English classroom might continue to be more or less ignored.

Our earlier discussion of the Stanford material had led most of us to believe that Stanford itself was guilty of ignoring activities essential to the teaching of English. We had feared, for example, that no provision was made in the Stanford program for the teaching of written composition. With such thoughts in our heads, we could hardly be satisfied with limiting ourselves to an analysis of the criteria worked out by Stanford. So as soon as we had completed the assigned task, we moved away from the Stanford program into an area which had more meaning and relevance for us English teachers--the area of written composition.

As we discussed what had worked and what had failed in our own teaching of composition, we began to draw up some guidelines to help the student teacher. The process could have been painful, but, by this time, we respected and trusted one another to such a degree that encouragement rather than pain was the end result. We vied with one another to present our ideas to the scrutiny of the group even though this scrutiny frequently exposed our weaknesses. Such exposure no longer hurt; we had forgotten ourselves in our concern for the prospective English teacher. The college English teacher, who is usually defensive about her lack of secondary teaching experience, was continually turning to the secondary teacher and asking, "Will this work with a class of your students?" The secondary teacher, on the other hand, who is usually sensitive about her lack of academic work, was asking the college teacher to explain such recent developments as the rhetorical method of teaching composition.

Interaction of this kind helped us formulate a set of guide-

lines which we felt would foster better training of English teachers in the area of written composition. (These guidelines were published in the following article: Lucille Duggan and Sister St. Alfred, "Guidelines for Student Teaching: An Adaptation of the Stanford University Performance Criteria in Teaching to an Activity in Language Arts," Minnesota English Journal, IV, April, 1968, 63-69.) Although we realized that these guidelines were neither the first nor the last word on the topic, we knew that they expressed a consensus of experienced high school and college teachers and, for this reason, they could be helpful for student teachers. In spite of our attempt to appraise our work realistically, however, we were somewhat smug in viewing our guidelines as more practical and, therefore, more important than the criteria described in the Stanford program. Fortunately for us, we were not allowed to leave the conference with this illusion. Towards the end of the last session on Wednesday, a member of our group accidentally discovered that some of the procedures we had so painstakingly worked out for our guidelines were listed in the Stanford material. Procedures we had recommended for the student teacher's use during the composing stage of teaching composition, for example, were listed among the Stanford criteria for monitoring in-class assignments. Such a discovery had brought us full circle. The very foe who had forced us to unite in the beginning of the conference was disclosed as a member of our ranks.

Richer for this discovery, we left the wilds of Camp Courage with a new kind of hope. Not only had we overcome the difficulty of approaching the problem of teacher preparation from our individual and, therefore limited, perspectives, but we had also created a kind of harmonious union which encouraged and respected the unavoidable variety of these perspectives.

Chapter III. REPORT FROM THE ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION CONFERENCE AT THE COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE IN OCTOBER, 1968

By MRS. LUCILLE DUGGAN, Richfield High School

Participants in the MCTE-affiliated Teacher Training Conference met in October, 1968, to consider ways in which all those concerned with the training of English teachers can work together to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Among the forty-three registrants were representatives from the State Department of Education, the University of Minnesota, eight Minnesota colleges, and twenty-six public schools. It was the hope of the planners that discussion in small, cross-level groups could promote understanding of one another's situation, give perspective to the problems of teacher training, and indicate ways in which this group of interested persons could contribute to the solutions of these problems.

Sister Mary Alice Muellerleile of St. Catherine's, president

of the planning group for the conference, welcomed conference members and told how this group had been organized at the 1968 Spring Conference of the MCTE in response to needs expressed in two preceding conferences (the UMREL-sponsored Minnesota Colleges Conferences on English Teacher Preparation held in Minneapolis during the Spring of 1967, and the UMREL-AST-sponsored conference on the Stanford University Performance Criteria held at Camp Courage in March, 1968). She also reported some suggestions made earlier by the participants for discussion during the October conference, and explained that group assignments had been made to include representatives from several areas of teacher training. A leader and a recorder were chosen by each group.

Note: In this report the term supervising teacher will be used to refer to the college instructor who supervises student teacher assignments. The elementary or secondary school teacher who works with the student teacher in his classroom will be designated as the cooperating teacher. The confusion which exists in current usage about the terms supervising, supervisory, cooperating, and critic teacher should not be tolerated.

What follows is a list of Problems proposed for consideration in the various groups, each of which is followed by some suggested means of coping with the problem:

I. Need for agreement about what the field of English is
Suggested solutions: Eliminate separate discipline emphases; help student teachers to see the basic unity of English; subject matter teachers should be "critic" teachers as well as educational methods teachers.

II. New developments within the discipline which are not being coped with by those who prepare English teachers
Student teacher must be aware of his obligation to keep up with new deveopments in his field throughout his teaching career, and his training should reflect this awareness on the part of his teacher.

III. Relating student teacher training to new ideas in education (for example, current curriculum design)
Student teachers should know about different kinds of teaching designs and have some preparation for teaching within them; they should visit elementary or secondary classrooms early in their training so that their methods classes can be of more value to them; place methods courses earlier in students' course work; sophomore and juniors might serve as teachers' aides; there should be seminars after student teaching to compare experiences in teaching in different fields and in different kinds of teaching situations.

IV. Orienting cooperating teachers to new designs

Secondary English teachers should exchange classes not only within their own schools but between schools -- if the exchange is made between schools, the visiting teacher should meet with the English faculty of the school he visits; arrange special training for cooperating teachers; establish qualifications for cooperating teachers (ideally, cooperating teachers should be screened by experienced methods teachers before students are assigned); have the cooperating teacher connected to the teacher-training institution; get the methods teacher back into the high school for a semester's assignment.

V. The inability of student teachers to be flexible in their approaches and realistic about the job of teaching
Video tapes should be made of experienced teachers teaching and of student teachers teaching, and made available to methods classes and to workshops on English teacher preparation; student teachers should have participated in small-group interaction and in the preparation for small-group learning experiences; use the Stanford University Performance Criteria to develop competence in a range of teaching skills which allows the student teacher to be more versatile in approach and more responsive to the needs of his students.

VI. The need for student teachers to learn the value of inductive teaching before they teach
Provide opportunities for practice with discovery methods of teaching (since many teachers react negatively to the term inductive teaching, methods teachers and student teachers should expect some discouraging responses from cooperating teachers; it was also suggested that a student who does not reach the specific objective anticipated has not failed if he has become involved).

VII. The need for more individualized teaching experiences for the student teacher
The Carnegie Student Teaching Program used by the University of Minnesota was discussed in several groups; see also XI.

VIII. The need for in-service training for teachers
In-service training can be used to influence teacher behavior; types of in-service training now being used successfully in Minnesota are: a) one-day-a-week sessions for teachers to work together within a department, with substitutes hired to cover classes; b) in-service classes once a week for six or eight weeks.

IX. The relationship to be fostered between student teacher and cooperating teacher
The cooperating teacher and the student teacher should work together as a team during the initial stages of the student's

experience 1) to maintain the level of teaching that has been established, 2) to provide an effective learning experience for the student teacher, and 3) to encourage him to stand on his own feet while the cooperating teacher is present so that he will be better able to do so when he is alone; both cooperating teacher and student teacher should keep a daily journal of the student teacher's experience in the classroom; both cooperating teacher and student teacher should work together in preparing students to evaluate the student teacher's work; cooperating teachers should take the time with student teachers to give them the best possible advice, which means being involved with what these teachers are doing (note: the personal, social, and cultural life of the student teacher will be a determining factor in his success as a teacher if he realizes that these experiences can and must form a part of his day-to-day teaching); in order to be a more valuable resource person to a student teacher, the cooperating teacher should make every effort to observe the teachers within his own school to discover a variety of successful teaching techniques.

X. The need to establish better relationships between high school and college teachers

There should be meetings of the supervising teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher to discuss common problems; involve methods instructors in actual teaching situations in the secondary schools periodically so that they can be more effective in teaching methods courses and can communicate better with secondary school teachers; methods instructors might make an effort to meet with all the cooperating teachers in a given school in order to clarify points of mutual concern; get the successful classroom teacher into the methods classroom as a resource person.

XI. The need for a professional program of teacher training by extension of existing programs or by a new program

Revise present program by means of seminars (financed by federal funds?) for college and cooperating teachers to determine what English is and how it can be taught--classroom experience of student teacher could then implement his learnings from methods courses; create a new program of teacher training in which lower level composition, communication, and literature courses are handled in part by student teachers under supervision of master teachers in the college as an addition and partial replacement of present methods courses; replace two probationary years in secondary schools by an in-service training program in which a master teacher supervises, assists, and teaches beside inexperienced teachers; teach English courses for prospective teachers in a way which helps students see how

they might teach what they are learning; create dialogue between administrators, college methods people, and classroom teachers to educate all to responsibilities in training teachers; establish pilot programs to evaluate success of programs.

XII. Cultural differences between teacher and students which affect mutual understanding

Cultural differences should be emphasized in English academic courses, English methods courses, and in regular education courses.

While surprising unanimity existed about the nature of the problems and about ways to approach their solutions, obviously not everyone at the conference agreed with every statement reported above. The groups were searching for answers, not setting down rules.

Perfect accord, however, obtained in another matter. Members of the conference were most appreciative of the hospitality of the College of St. Catherine and especially appreciative of the careful arrangements which Sister Mary Alice Muellerleile had made for them.

Finally, the following recommendations emerged from the conference:

1) That the English Teacher Preparation Conference group be organized into a permanent organization which will work to improve English teacher preparation.

2) That this organization become an affiliate of CEE.

3) That the Spring convention of the MCTE plan sessions at which elementary and secondary teachers who will work with student teachers can discuss mutual problems and exchange ideas, and to which student teachers will be invited.

4) That this organization provide structure for dialogue between teacher education programs of colleges and cooperating teachers of public schools.

5) That this organization encourage intra-institutional dialogue between concerned departments such as English, English education, and education departments.

6) That this organization involve itself with in-service training programs such as those sponsored by Dr. Kincaid's office, and provide publicity on in-service programs.

7) That this organization relate itself to other kinds of in-service programs (e.g. curriculum studies, inter-class visitation, four-day week, modular scheduling).

Participants at Minnesota Teacher Preparation Conference, October, 1968, at the College of St. Catherine:

Mrs. Ione L. Allen, Milaca; Carlton Anderson, Park Rapids High School; Laurie Arter, Northfield High School; Walter P. Ayotte, St. Mary's College, Winona; Naomi C. Chase, University of Minn-

esota, Minneapolis; Edna C. Downing, Sanford Junior High School, Minneapolis; Mrs. June Doerr, Hutchinson High School; Lucille Duggan, Richfield High School; Gloria Erwin, Stillwater Senior High School; Harold J. Fitterer, Mankato State College; Lillian B. Ford, Richfield High School; Gene Fox, Northfield High School; George Gillespie, Cloquet High School; Mrs. Victor Gislason, College of St. Teresa, Winona; Len Golden, Duluth Central High School; James Haugen, Ely High School; Jerry Healy, Bethel College, St. Paul; Sister Brigid Heffernan, SSND, St. Agnes High School, St. Paul; James Hogan, Ely High School; Ruth S. Johansen, Tyler High School; Gerald Kincaid, State Department of Education; William J. Krump, Morris High School; Josephine Liebhaber, Wells; Dorothy E. Lorenz, Redwood Falls High School; Ruth Lysne, Faribault High School; Alice Mitchell, Chatfield High School; Sister Mary Alice Muellerleile, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul; Richard Nicolai, Austin High School; James O'Neil, St. Mary's College, Winona; Anna Pederson, Augsberg College, Minneapolis; Mrs. R. L. Ramsell, Cambridge Senior High School; Gene Robinson, Red Wing High School; John Rylander, St. Cloud State College; Ted Stellton, West High School, Minneapolis; R. C. Streater, Forest Lake High School; Wallace Stubeda, Litchfield High School; Myron R. Swanson, Bemidji State College; Mary M. Tell, Fergus Falls High School; Eve Webster, Northfield High School; Sandra Wolff, Virginia Junior High School; Robert Wright, Mankato State College; Marvin H. Zastrow, Little Falls High School; Anna Lee Stensland, University of Minnesota, Duluth.