

SECONDARY ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS LICENSURE

TASK FORCE: AN UPDATE

by Mark Youngstrom

The purpose of this article is to bring people up to date on the work of the Secondary English/Language Arts Licensure Task Force. This Task Force was charged by the State Board of Teaching with the responsibility of recommending new licensure guidelines for the teaching of secondary English/language arts in Minnesota.

Some History:

In the fall of 1977, John Alexander, then President of MCTE, appointed a task force to explore the necessity of redrafting licensure guidelines for English/language arts. The need to examine licensure requirements arose from a sense among various MCTE members that the current rule was not addressing many priority topics. In particular, there was a concern that writing was not being addressed in the way it should be.

Under the direction of Tom Bacig, University of Minnesota, Duluth, the MCTE Task Force spent three years assembling a report and in the Spring of 1980 the report was submitted to the MCTE Executive Board at the annual business meeting in Duluth. Included in the report were the results of a survey of Minnesota secondary English/language arts teachers which had been conducted by Tom Bacig and Richard Beach, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. The survey, which asked teachers to rate the importance of 35 different components of language arts instruction, clearly indicated a desire for change in the way English teachers are prepared. Also included in the report were the task force's recommended guidelines for English/language arts licensure.

Following one of the more animated debates in MCTE annals, the task force report was received by the

MCTE Executive Board and sent on to the State Board of Teaching along with a separate set of recommendations from the college and university English Department Chairs. It should be added that other comments and recommendations were also submitted to the Board of Teaching by such groups as the Speech Association of Minnesota and the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

In the Fall of 1980, the need for an English/Language Arts Licensure Task Force was acknowledged by the State Board of Teaching. Qualified people were asked to apply for membership on the task force and in November, 1980, the following people were appointed: Joseph Adams, teacher, Park High School, Cottage Grove; Carlton Anderson, teacher, Park Rapids High School; Eddice Barber, Professor of English, Mankato State University; Constance Chivers, teacher, Benjamin Mays School, St. Paul; Richard Dillman, Assistant Professor of Education, College of St. Catherine; Milo Gaul, Principal of Kellogg High School in Roseville; Jan Liepold Goodell, teacher, Central Junior High in Columbia Heights; Carol Hartman, teacher, Red Lake High School; Carlene McDowell, teacher, Burnsville High School; James Nelson, Reading Director, Princeton Public Schools; Addie Perl, public member from Deephaven; Kathryn Rayburn, teacher, Rochester Mayo High School.

Appointed in ex officio capacities were Karsten Braaten, Board of Teaching liaison and Mark Youngstrom, Department of Education liaison. The composition of the Task Force followed established Board of Teaching guidelines.

Task Force Progress To Date:

The task force began to meet in February, 1981 and plans to complete its work this fall (1982). It's job, as previously described, was to establish a set of recommendations which would be presented to

the Board of Teaching*.

The task force started by internally brainstorming a list of essentials for secondary English/language arts education. After the list had been compiled and after sufficient time had been provided for task force members to become familiar with one another's views, the task force began to work through the various proposals in front of it--sorting, categorizing, critiquing, clarifying, adding and subtracting. Out of those discussions, certain concerns emerged:

1. The new rule must attempt to anticipate the needs of secondary students in the late 80s and 90s.
2. The rule should combine an appropriate blend of theory and practice--in other words, reflecting what research says ought to be happening without being too idealistic.
3. The rule should be specific enough to be enforced but general enough to allow some flexibility for colleges and universities.
4. The program should be able to be completed in four years.
5. The rule should be written in clear English.

The first draft to emerge was dated August 27, 1981. It was shared, on a limited basis, with interested outside groups. In December, 1981, a second draft, altered to reflect some of the criticisms directed at the first draft, was circulated widely throughout the state. A substantial amount of feedback was received. This feedback resulted in a third draft (dated April, 1982) which was shared at a general session at the NCTE/MCTE Spring Convention in Minneapolis. At the time of this writing

*It is important to understand that the official role of the task force is to recommend. As will be pointed out, changes in the recommendations may occur after the Task Force has completed its work.

(summer, 1982), a fourth (dated May, 1982) and, probably, final draft is being circulated to teachers and administrators at the secondary and college levels. Responses to this final draft will be incorporated into the recommendations which go to the Board of Teaching. At the conclusion of this article is a copy of the May, 1982 draft. In all likelihood the final task force recommendations will closely resemble this draft.

A word about the May, 1982 draft. You will notice that it is divided into three major sections: knowledge and skills applicable to meeting the major responsibility of teachers of English/language arts; knowledge and skills applicable to meeting additional responsibilities of teachers of English/language arts; skills applicable to teaching all components of English/language arts. This organizational plan was devised so as to maintain a traditional and achievable focus while at the same time bringing in components which have become and are becoming (at least in part) the domain of English/language arts. You will also notice that the draft is written in terms of "outcomes" rather than courses. This is done in order to provide greater specificity and greater flexibility. The flexibility comes from the fact that multiple outcomes can be taught in a single class and a single outcome, for example, might be satisfied in a literature class as well as a composition class. Finally, you will notice near the top of the draft that the task force has in mind entry level preparation. It feels that beginning teachers need, at the least, an introduction to these outcomes while at the same time recognizing that anything approaching total competence requires a great deal more work beyond the baccalaureate level.

A position paper, which provides detailed rationale for the recommendations of the task force,

has been written by a subcommittee of the task force and is available from Mark Youngstrom, 653 Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Final Steps in the Process:

After the English/Language Arts Task Force presents its recommendation to the Board of Teaching, its mission is completed. The Board of Teaching then reviews the recommendation and makes any adjustments it feels necessary (typically these adjustments, and any to follow, involve minor language items). Following Board approval, the proposed rule change goes to public hearing where a hearing examiner receives spoken and written testimony. The hearing process lasts six months and at the conclusion of those six months the examiner renders a decision. The rule then goes to the Attorney General's office where its legality is evaluated. Following the Attorney General's review and assuming there are no problems along the way, the rule is then published in the Public Register. From the time the new rule enters the books, teacher preparation institutions have five years to prepare a program which conforms to the rule.

DRAFT

May, 1982

Requirements for Licensure of Teachers of English/
Language Arts in Secondary Schools in Minnesota.

We recommend that to be eligible for licensure in English/Language Arts education a candidate shall have entry level preparation in the following knowledge and skills.

I. Knowledge and skills applicable to meeting the major responsibilities of teachers of English/
Language Arts

A. To teach language and writing

Knowledge

1. Theories of language development

from early childhood onward with emphasis on the adolescent and of the effects of social, cultural, and economic environment on the acquisition and use of language

2. The phonological, grammatical, and semantic functioning of language, the uses of language, and the process of development and change in language--particularly as applied to the English language
3. The various descriptions--traditional and modern--of the grammatical structure of the English language
4. The elements of the writing process, the uses of writing, and research in written composition
5. The methodologies for teaching writing and the importance of logic and reasoning to both the writing process and the written product
6. A variety of strategies for efficient yet effective evaluation of student writing

Skills

1. To write effectively as a model for students
2. To provide instruction and activities that will enable students to write grammatically and to adapt strategies and forms of writing to various contexts, audiences, and purposes
3. To respond specifically, constructively, and efficiently to students' writing for the purpose of revising and improving the writing
 - a. To respond to considerations of audience, purpose, and context
 - b. To diagnose problems in reasoning,

form, structure, usage, and style as well as in syntax, diction, spelling, punctuation, and legibility

B. To teach literature

Knowledge

1. A representative body of American and British literature, past and present, written for adults and for adolescents by majority and minority male and female authors, and some of the major works - in translation, if necessary - of Continental and non-Western authors
2. The value of literature as an art as well as (a) the enjoyment derived from a variety of experiences and viewpoints encountered in literature; (b) the appreciation of the force and beauty of language; (c) vicarious experience; (d) an appreciation of the commonalities and the diversities among peoples; (e) the interpretation of human motivations; and (f) the correlation between reading good literature and writing well
3. The various methods of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literature
4. The characteristics of various literary forms: poetry, drama, novel, short story, and essay; the kinds of literary devices; and such elements of literature as plot, theme, character, and style
5. An in-depth study of the works of at least one major author

Skills

1. To be a skilled reader and an in-

formed interpreter of literature

2. To encourage students to respond to literature in a variety of ways: personal response and application to their own lives and experiences, teacher-directed response based on acknowledged critical theories, and response through writing and other art forms
3. To stimulate the sharing of the enjoyment of literature
4. To motivate students to read literature throughout their lives
5. To help students understand the cultural and historical context of literary works

II. Knowledge and skills applicable to meeting additional responsibilities of teachers of English/
Language Arts

A. To teach reading and study skills

Knowledge

1. A variety of philosophies and strategies for teaching reading at the various levels of interpretation and understanding
2. Sources of materials for use in teaching developmental reading and study skills
3. The elements of the process of developing reading skills: comprehension, phonics, vocabulary, scope and sequence, and criterion-referenced testing

Skills

1. To assess the range of interests and abilities of students in reading and to select materials and plan

instruction to meet their varying needs, including the ability to analyze the readability of instructional materials

2. To teach students to comprehend both the stated and implied meanings of language and to identify, analyze, and use facts, implications, inferences, and judgments expressed through different modes of communication
3. To teach students to locate resources for learning available through libraries, archives, interviews, and mass media and to use appropriate techniques for gathering, organizing, and assimilating information from such sources

B. To implement speaking and listening techniques in the classroom

Knowledge

1. Techniques or oral interpretation of literature and of small group and public speech communication
2. The elements of the speaking and listening processes and the relationship between the two activities

Skills

1. To use appropriate communication skills
2. To instill habits of speaking and listening which show respect for each person's dignity while leading students to understand that Standard American English is the widely accepted dialect of business, government, and education

2. To show students how to make discretionary use of print and non-print mass media

III. Skills applicable to teaching all components of English/Language Arts

- A. To assess the ability of students in writing, speaking, and listening and to select materials and plan instruction to meet their varying needs
- B. To evaluate student's progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- C. To integrate the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing so that they are mutually reinforcing
- D. To evaluate and use learning aids such as textbooks, computers, standardized and non-standardized tests, projectors, and tape recorders

We further recommend that each institution engaged in preparation of teachers establish the following requirements:

- I. Prior to each audit by the Board of Teaching of the English/Language Arts education program, an informal review and critique of the program shall be made by classroom teachers of English/Language Arts and by administrators from the geographical area in which the institution is located.
- II. Prior to student teaching, students shall be required to complete satisfactorily at least two planned, supervised, and evaluated individual experiences, one

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