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ABSTRACT

THE RESPONSE TO LITERATURE: A NEW CURRICULUM

By

Ronald A. Santora

The teaching of literature in the public schools, as well as the teaching of English in general, has changed considerably in the past fifteen years. The more notable influences on English pedagogy include the demise of progressive education, the academic curricular reform movement of the 1960's, and the humanistic free-school "revolution" of the last several years. This study traces the changes in and the development of literature curriculum and theories about teaching literature from the Basic Issues Conference of 1958 to the present day and concentrates specifically on the Response to Literature theory which emerged from the joint Anglo-American Seminar on the teaching and learning of English held at Dartmouth College in 1966.

Instead of concentrating on set book lists, the study of genre, literary form and structure, or constructing curriculums about universal literary themes, topics and motifs, the Response to Literature theory posits that the most central aspect of the study of literature (k - 12) is the direct relationship which exists between the portrayal of human experience in fiction and poetry and the personal real-life experiences of each individual student--the "That's Me!" response to stories. The Dartmouth Conference proposed, therefore, that instead of attempting to teach for specific concepts, themes or ideas, students be given the opportunity to become personally involved with literature on an experiential and creative basis, responding to the emotional and intellectual facets of fiction and poetry in authentic, activity-centered ways: through dramatic improvisation, oral discourse, non-verbal improvisation, art work, film, collage, etc. This aspect of the literature curriculum is developed and explored in this study under the rubric, the productive mode of teaching literature, and focuses on the process of literary response rather than on the products of literary analysis. But insofar as each teacher of English has the obligation to introduce stories and poems into the classroom, a literature curriculum must

at the same time be receptively-oriented. Thus the new Response to Literature curriculum to emerge from this study suggests that a literature curriculum within the English classroom be centered on doing literature, productively, so that these activities will generate the need within students to want to read more literature (the receptive mode) which, when responded to actively and experientially, creates once again a productive level of operation with its attendant desire to explore more fiction receptively, and so forth.

Finally, a Response to Literature curriculum does not abrogate its responsibility to teach form. But this too is seen as a personally engaging, activity-centered process. Throughout, a Response to Literature curriculum encourages the writing of literature--"storying"--as well as the reading of literature. Simply, storying means that students be given the opportunity to create fictions from the very stuff of their own lives and experiences. Since language is inevitably about itself, in the process of creating stories themselves, students will gradually come to an understanding of the structure of literature in the very complex and intimate ways that professional authors themselves do.

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By

Ronald A. Santora

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Language is learned in operation,
not by dummy runs.

John Dixon
Growth Through English

Men make some things to serve a purpose,
other things simply to please themselves.
Literature is a construct of the latter
kind.

James Britton
The Response to Literature

CHAPTER I

THE ACADEMIC REFORM MOVEMENT, STRUCTURE-CENTEREDNESS AND THE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

. . . coming partly through the Symbolist
aesthetic . . . the poem became a set of
relations within itself, a fascinating
clockworks that told no time.

Benjamin DeMott
The Response to Literature

In an article written for the NASSP Bulletin in 1967 James E. Miller, Jr. identified three major stages in the development of the English curriculum over the past one hundred years: the authoritarian, the progressive, and the academic.¹ Miller characterized the first of these stages by "the arid classicism and rote learning of the Nineteenth Century"; the second with the Progressive Movement of the 1920's and 1930's, indiscriminate permissiveness and social adjustment; and the third influence on the curriculum amounted to what Miller referred to as "a revolution in our

schools" and dates "for convenience sake" from Russia's launching of Sputnik in October, 1957. Miller aptly labeled this stage "the academic" and saw it characterized by a distinct emphasis on teaching valid subject matter and curriculum reform:

In this stage we have seen the introduction of the new math, the new physics, and the new English in our schools, together with emphasis on intellectual grouping or tracking to identify and challenge the intellectually gifted--all rather much under the supervision of the academic rather than the education establishment, and all somewhat a reaction to the academically thin curricula of the schools awash in back eddies of extremist progressivism.²

It was this academic stage that gave rise to the great curriculum reform movement which produced The New English. From 1958 to 1968 a series of federally supported Curriculum Development Centers were established at major universities across the United States. These Centers created new theories and methodologies for the teaching of English and provided the schools with a multiplicity of rich curricular materials. Because this academic stage influenced English teaching to a significant extent in the last decade and will, quite clearly, continue to influence the English curriculum throughout the 1970's, much of this chapter will be devoted to a descriptive analysis of this

reform movement.

Why Reform English?

Even before Sputnik I had focused the attention of the nation on the need for excellence in education in a modern society, the English Teaching Profession had for quite some time felt the need to liberate itself from the "back eddies of extremist progressivism," for after World War II the English curriculum had quite clearly dissipated to a point where it had neither proper direction nor valid substance.³

The literature component of the English curriculum during the 1950's was perhaps the most unwieldy and unmanageable. There were two prevailing philosophies about how literature should function in the schools. In one respect, literature was frequently taught as a means to "social adjustment." Teachers attempted to focus squarely on the individual interests of their students. Through literature and books, students were to find meaning in terms of their own lives and gain valuable insights into the nature of their own personalities and the nature of the society in which they lived. As a result almost any book could be included in the curriculum, at any point, and

defended on an individual basis. Consequently reading-interest-book-lists became popular and "reading ladders" were created to move students a step at a time through ever more rewarding experiences.⁴ But these were loosely arranged and provided no real direction for teaching because there was no coherent theoretical basis underlying these reading-interest guides. At the same time, literature was intended to "broaden one's horizons" and "expand perceptions" about other subjects. Under this notion, literature was frequently taught as a tool for gaining insight into some other academic area such as social justice, race relations, or democracy.⁵ Thus, any humane or liberating subject in history or the social sciences could be included in the literature curriculum. In addition English classes were still expected to teach reading, writing, and speaking, and these activities, because of the general "life-adjustment" philosophy, were often intermixed with many practical interest matters like "bread and butter" letter writing, telephoning etiquette, study habits, and job interviewing.

In order to strengthen the English curriculum in individual schools and provide a sense of direction within the classroom, many school systems began to rely heavily on

the English textbook and workbook. But these provided little more than busy-work activities. The workbooks contained numerous drills and exercises in grammar and usage and the textbooks in literature contained anthologized snippets of poetry and prose from the masters of American and British Literature. No matter what his ability or background, the average student at the time could only find these texts burdensome and boring.⁶ Michael Shugrue, a scholar and teacher who has been intimately connected with the changes in the teaching of English for many years comments on the textbook problem of the 1950's from his excellent volume, English in a Decade of Change:

If textbooks in English had been outstanding, the plight of the English classroom would have been less precarious. Well-intentioned authors, however, had ignored the linguistic and critical discoveries of the scholarly community, scrupulously avoided the dangers of controversy and censorship, and produced instead, textbooks for the school which were outmoded, timid, and intellectually unsatisfactory.⁷

To further complicate the matter, there was also at the time an alarming shortage of qualified English teachers, and as more and more students entered and stayed in school after World War II, many administrators and principals, whether they knew better or not, began to rely on the

concept that "anybody can teach English." Consequently, gym teachers, history teachers and guidance counselors found themselves instructing English classes. The result was catastrophic, for these individuals were even less knowledgeable than the regular teachers about what the English curriculum did and did not contain, and to make matters worse, these people had little, if any, expertise in the special pedagogical skills necessary to teach English effectively. Bewildered and confused, these substitutes relied very heavily on the textbooks and reading ladders to provide their students with both "content" and "direction."⁸

Finally in 1963 the textbook problem peaked. In that year James J. Lynch and Bertrand Evans published their influential and devastating study: High School English Textbooks: A Critical Examination. This volume presented detailed evidence that English textbooks and literature anthologies were seriously inadequate. Lynch and Evans spoke for many in the profession whose objections to the "textbook syndrome" had been increasing since the late 1950's. They noted that the most popular texts gave a topic "essentially the same treatment in any volume of any particular series that is given in the other volumes of

that series"; and they further charged that Progressive Education had introduced polite speech, social behavior, and motivational behavior into so many English textbooks and classrooms, it was readily apparent that "the subject of English had lost its way in a wilderness of things, has become intolerably amorphous, unteachable, and undeserving of anyone's respect as a legitimate and discrete school subject."⁹

The frustration at the time was perhaps no better expressed than by J. N. Hook when he said in 1962 that in the English teaching profession:

. . . a sequentially planned curriculum is the only way out of the present disorder, the mess, the chaos, . . . in some schools essentially the same instruction in grammar is repeated every year from grade six or seven through twelve; that other schools present grammar piecemeal and incoherently; and that some schools teach principles . . . in grade seven and others never . . . a few schools have a planned sequence for improving student's writing, but that most assign them theme topics at random. And . . . in literature The Rime of the Ancient Mariner may be found anywhere from grade seven to grade twelve, (and that) literature before grade seven is likely to be a hodge podge of barely related snippets.¹⁰

It was obvious that the philosophies, textbooks and reading designs of the late 1950's and early 1960's were totally unsatisfactory as curriculum guides, and that neither

English teachers themselves nor the NCTE could put together a satisfactory curriculum for English. Solid direction was needed in the profession and the logical place to look for such help would be to the universities and the research centers; and although throughout the 1950's college professors of English had managed to maintain their aloofness from the schools, it was very apparent at the time that the profession's national leaders in universities throughout the country could no longer ignore the pleas of the public schools for reform of the English Curriculum.¹¹

The Basic Issues Conference

Throughout 1958--less than a year after Sputnik--a group of twenty-eight national leaders in the teaching of English, representing such organizations as The American Studies Association, The College English Association, The Modern Language Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English, held a series of four meetings in New York City supported by the Ford Foundation in order to re-examine the whole problem of teaching English from the elementary grades through graduate school.¹² The participants attempted to come to a clear formulation of the "basic issues" confronting the profession by raising such

questions as what the subject matter of English might be, how it could be articulated, and how the profession should go about teaching it. In the course of four conferences, the participants agreed upon thirty-five basic issues facing English teachers which centered about the problems of teacher preparation, the role of English in American society, the need for financial support for basic research, and curriculum reform. While few if any solutions to these problems resulted from the meetings, the overall drift of the discussions and the issues themselves seemed to point in one basic direction: look to the structure of English itself for answers.^{13*}

The problem of "what to do about the curriculum" particularly shared this attitude. The participants agreed that whatever the final shape of the English curriculum it should be (1) centered about the tripod of language,

*The notion that English itself--language and literature--should serve as the core of instruction became firmly established over the next several years. The 1965 Freedom and Discipline Report in English of the Commission on English concluded that "language, primarily the English language, constitutes the core of the subject" and that "the study and use of the English language is the proper content of the English Curriculum."¹⁴ See discussion of the Oregon Literature Curriculum in a subsequent section of this chapter.

literature, and composition, (2) "beefed up" and content-structure-oriented, and (3) both sequential and cumulative in design. The second of the Thirty-Five Basic Issues read:

Can basic programs in English be devised that are sequential and cumulative from kindergarten through the graduate school? Can agreement be reached upon a body of knowledge and set of skills as standard at certain points in the curriculum, making due allowance for flexibility of planning, individual differences, and patterns of growth?¹⁵

The conference, therefore, firmly believed that a sequential and cumulative curriculum for English was an absolute necessity, and that such a curriculum could not be formulated unless there existed wide agreement on a body of knowledge and a set of skills which would be standard and fixed at certain points in the sequence. In short, the profession sought a solid pedagogical basis about which to structure its content: language, literature, and composition. While the problem was ultimately to prove vastly more complicated than anyone realized at the time, the Basic Issues Conference had succeeded in paving the way for the development of a curriculum with clearer goals and fewer of the peripheral activities that had cluttered the curriculums of the 1950's.¹⁶

The New Science and the New English

As the spirit for reform of the English curriculum gained momentum and attracted widespread support throughout the profession, Jerome Bruner, an eminent psychologist and educator, published a small volume in 1960 entitled The Process of Education. Bruner's book created a tremendous stir in the ranks of those directly involved with the curriculum reform movement. Bruner's thesis was simple. Every subject, he asserted, has its own unique structure, and the easiest and most effective way to learn a subject was to grasp its structure by coming to understand the basic, underlying and fundamental principles and concepts of a particular discipline; intuiting, that is, the "relationships" that exist between concepts, facts and ideas--between the parts of a subject and its conceptual entirety.¹⁷ Learning the structure of a subject, Bruner maintained, would then allow other things to be related to it meaningfully, in organized, intellectually powerful schemas. Thus, teaching structure would in fact promote the transfer of learning--or what Bruner termed "the ability to learn how to learn"; for once an abstract principle was understood, then other like problems could be solved, on a more complex basis, using the very same

principles and strategies:

The teaching and learning of structure, rather than simply the mastery of facts and techniques, is at the center of the classic problem of transfer. . . . If earlier learning is to render later learning easier, it must do so by providing a general picture in terms of which the relations between things encountered earlier and later are made as clear as possible. . . . (and) the basic ideas that lie at the heart of all science and mathematics and the basic themes that give form to life and literature are as simple as they are powerful. To be in command of these basic ideas, to use them effectively, requires a continual deepening of one's understanding of them that comes from learning to use them in progressively more complex forms. . . . A curriculum as it develops (therefore) should revisit these basic ideas repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them.¹⁸

Rather than insisting, therefore, on the mastery of facts and techniques as the best way to make the materials students are exposed to count in their thinking, Bruner, instead, advocated what was at the time a new and challenging teaching method: inductive-discovery learning. Drawing on the research of Piaget and others, Bruner maintained that the mastery of a subject's structure involved not only a knowledge of fundamental principles, but also the natural cultivation of an attitude toward learning and inquiry, toward guessing and hunches, toward the possibility of solving problems and discovering knowledge on one's own:

Just as a physicist has certain attitudes about the ultimate orderliness of nature and a conviction that order can be discovered, so a young physics student needs some working version of these attitudes if he is to organize his learning in such a way as to make what he learns usable and meaningful in his thinking. To instill such attitudes by teaching requires something more than the mere presentation of fundamental ideas. . . . but it would seem that an important ingredient is a sense of excitement about discovery--discovery of regularities about previously unrecognized relations and similarities between ideas, with a resulting sense of self-confidence in one's abilities. Various people who have worked on curricula in science and mathematics have urged that it is possible to present the fundamental structure of a discipline in such a way as to preserve some of the exciting sequences that lead a student to discover for himself.¹⁹

Bruner, therefore, called for the best minds in every discipline to be put to work to design a curriculum in which the method of discovery of general principles would lead to progressively more difficult problems, in which what is learned in the early grades has relevance for later learning, and in which students become more actively alert to how things affect or are connected with each other.²⁰ Bruner defended teaching the student "initially not a skill but a general idea" which could then be used as a basis for recognizing "subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered."²¹

The Process of Education was so immensely popular primarily because it tersely articulated for the entire

academic community ideas and beliefs that had been slowly developing for some time. Simply, Bruner confirmed what everyone wanted to hear. He suggested that education be scientifically based: to impart to young people "a sense of the substance and method of science"; that it be content-centered: the goal of education is "to present subject matter effectively--that is with due regard not only for coverage but also for structure"; and finally that it cultivate "intellectual excellence." While Bruner realized, of course, that good teaching and proper education must speak for the less able student as well as for the more gifted one: "if all students are helped to the full utilization of their intellectual powers, we will have a better chance of surviving as a democracy in an age of enormous technological and social complexity";²² it is clear nonetheless that The Process of Education considered the naturally bright student academia's most valued possession: "The top quarter of public school students, from which we must draw intellectual leadership in the next generation, is perhaps the group most neglected by our schools in the recent past."²³ It was quite obvious to most educators at the time, therefore, that schools were to provide challenging, problem-solving opportunities for the

better than average student to forge ahead in his own intellectual development.

These concepts of "basic structure" and "transfer" and "discovery" seemed to speak directly to the questions about the shape of the English curriculum raised at the Basic Issues Conference. Besides being intellectually exciting and academically solid, Bruner's endorsement of the inductive "spiral" curriculum--for which his book is best known--offered a positive framework for the kind of direction and sequence the English teaching profession had been seeking.²⁴ In English in a Decade of Change, Michael Shugrue assesses the impact the Brunerian hypothesis had on the English curriculum reform movement:

Bruner touched upon matters which no one designing an English curriculum can afford to ignore. Of obvious importance are Bruner's convictions that what is taught be worth teaching, that repetition and the accumulation of facts do not constitute a satisfactory curriculum in any subject, that the discovery method . . . must be fostered in the classroom, that the child's intuitive powers must be developed in his school experiences, and that media and technological advances must be used appropriately in the classroom to allow the teacher to accomplish more effectively his task as communicator, model, and identification figure through the use of a wide variety of devices.
 . . .²⁵

Using Bruner's thesis, it seemed obvious, then, that English

teachers ought first to agree upon what constituted the structure of English and then develop a sequentially spiral curriculum based on that structure. In short, by adhering to the structural tripod advanced at the Basic Issues Conference, it was believed that students ought to be taught in a coherent manner the basic structure of the English language (the various grammars), the basic structure of literature (genre, form and technique), and the basic structure of composition (the various rhetorics). As students mastered these structure, they would then be in a position to transfer this conceptual knowledge progressively to other similar but more complex "contents." By studying the form of a particular short story in grade six, for example, students ought then to be able to apply this knowledge of structure to a more complex story in grade seven, and so on from grade level to grade level and from literary experience to literary experience. And in fact, Bruner himself emphatically asserted that literature as well as the sciences and social sciences could be taught with an emphasis upon the intuitive grasp of ideas and upon the use of basic ideas because "intellectual activity anywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of knowledge or in a third grade classroom":

If it is granted, for example, that it is desirable to give children an awareness of the meaning of human tragedy and a sense of compassion for it, is it not possible at the earliest appropriate age to teach the literature of tragedy in a manner that illuminates but does not threaten? There are many possible ways to begin: through a retelling of the great myths, through the use of children's classics, through presentation of and commentary on selected films that have proved themselves. Precisely what kinds of materials should be used at what age with what effect is a subject for research--research of several kinds.²⁶

The English teaching profession was indeed quick to endorse the Brunerian hypothesis. Two years after the publication of The Process of Education (in 1962) J. N. Hook, then Executive Secretary of the NCTE, published an article in the English Journal entitled, "If a Curriculum is to be Sequential" in which he affirmed that Bruner had at last freed the English curriculum from its past history of lock-step repetition and confusion. The new English curriculum, Hook said, ought to pursue not a "brick by brick" or "step by step" paradigm, but rather ought to be in the shape of a "spiral cone" to allow for sequential structuring and to provide, at the same time, for the varying rates at which different children develop:

The analogy of a spiral cone may be more helpful to curriculum makers than the more frequent analogy of an assembly line or that of piling block upon block. A spiral covers the same ground repetitively but on

successively higher levels. A spiral in the shape of a cone, with the point at the bottom, likewise covers much of the same ground, again at steadily higher levels, but it also broadens as it ascends. The image is a good one to remember, for it helps us to recall three things: (a) As I have said, much repetition or review is necessary, but preferably not in the same words, in the same contexts, or by means of the same devices. (b) The work of each year should be on a higher level than that of the preceding year. (c) The coverage should broaden each year--should include materials and skills and concepts not previously taught.

If curriculum makers accept the spiral cone analogy, they will select for each ring of the spiral those skills, concepts, and materials that experience has shown can be mastered and put to use by children of average ability at each level. They will provide each year for reiterative but varied practice of basic skills. The slower pupils will be thought of as moving upward along the inner part, the smaller diameter, of the ring, and the abler ones as moving upward along the outer edge, the perhaps much larger diameter.²⁷

In the following year (1963) James Squire, Hook's successor to the Executive Secretaryship of the NCTE, committed the entire profession to the establishment of a sequential curriculum for English based on Bruner's thesis. In an address to the annual meeting of the MLA in New York City that year, Squire pronounced:

I accept Jerome Bruner's assumption that he who knows a subject most deeply knows best the great and simple structuring ideas around which a curriculum may be organized. I believe that basic insights into the nature of language, literature, and composition must emerge from the study of informed scholars. And I rejoice in the possibility that the new interest of

college English departments in the teaching of English may lead to revolutionary changes in the educational enterprise as predicted by Mr. Bruner.²⁸

But research was already underway. The English profession had finally succeeded in persuading the United States Congress to fund the research and development of a new curriculum for English.

Project English

Early in 1961 the NCTE published The National Interest and the Teaching of English. This document, a direct outgrowth of the Basic Issues Conference, made a forceful argument for the importance of English in the schools, supported the tripod of language, literature and composition, and strongly urged the government to support basic research in English.²⁹ Simultaneous with the publication of this report J. N. Hook publicly exhorted Congress to supply funds for improvement in the instruction of English just as Congress had provided funds for the study of science, math and foreign languages in 1958 under the National Defense Education Act.³⁰ Towards the end of the year Sterling McMurrin, then head of the Office of Education in the Kennedy Administration, gave into these demands and threw his support behind both the NCTE and the MLA in their

request for federal support: in November Congress gave English the money to finance fourteen Curriculum Study Centers. This appropriation was called Project English and six Curriculum Centers were funded by April, 1962:

Carnegie-Mellon University, Northwestern University, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Oregon.³¹ In 1963 additional Curriculum Study Centers were established at Florida State University, the University of Georgia, the Teacher's College of Columbia University, and the University of Wisconsin; and a year later with the addition of Indiana University and the University of Illinois the number of Study Centers funded had risen to twelve.³² In general, work at these Centers was conducted by people from English, Speech, and Linguistics rather than from Education departments; and the basic research problem was to develop an intellectually respectable content and sequence for teaching English.³³ Thus, there was much reason for jubilation in the profession in the early 1960's. The Federal Government had finally recognized its obligation to the Humanities and had, with significant amounts of money, begun a program to improve English teaching through basic research.³⁴

The Nebraska "Cone" Curriculum

Nebraska was unquestionably the most ambitious of the Project Centers. Under the direction of Paul A. Olsen and Frank M. Rice, Nebraska sought to develop and test out in the public schools throughout the state a sequential spiral curriculum in English from kindergarten through the first year of college. The researchers at Nebraska clearly intended to imitate as perfectly as possible the Brunerian model. The preface to the curriculum for grades 1 to 6 clearly established the goals and the rationale for the entire project:

One who plans an elementary curriculum must first identify the basic generalizations of the discipline; second, represent these generalizations so that they can be taught to children; and third, build a spiral curriculum which covers those basic concepts in ever greater depth, thus developing a progressively more sophisticated understanding of them. Once introduced in a relatively simple fashion, a concept will be treated somewhat more intensively each time it appears. All in all, the units of the curriculum intend to expose the student repeatedly to facts and ideas that he may use in order to proceed inductively to general conclusions about the conventions of good literature.³⁵

In its completed form the Nebraska elementary curriculum was divided into seventy specific "units" for the various grade levels, plus two packets of ancillary materials: Poetry for the Elementary Grades and Language Explorations for the

Elementary Grades. All the units suggested for the elementary level attempted to arrange literary pieces in a spiral sequence to develop concepts that would be re-introduced into the curriculum at later stages on more complex levels. The units were divided into nine groups or pseudo-genres:

folk tales	fable
fanciful stories	other lands and people
animal stories	historical fiction
adventure stories	biography
myth	

The curriculum designers made it clear that the various stories and poems selected for each particular classification were not chosen because they fit into one of the nine categories; but rather, the selection committees primarily sought works of "substantial literary merit," and then created categories from a consideration of the unique qualities of each separate poem and story.³⁶ Each unit in the elementary curriculum also presented variations of what the designers considered to be the four basic structural motifs or plot patterns of children's literature: (1) a small person's journey from home to isolation away from home; (2) a small person's or a hero's journey from home to a confrontation with a monster; (3) a helpless figure's rescue from a harsh home and the miraculous creation of a

secure home; and (4) a conflict between a wise beast and a foolish beast.³⁷ In theory the Nebraska researchers felt that repeated exposure to various forms of these four basic plot patterns would provide children with an intuitive understanding of "form consciousness"--that is, pupils would come to recognize various genre distinctions, plot similarities and differences, as well as basic underlying themes and motifs.

In order to provide a more complete picture of the structure of the Nebraska elementary literature curriculum, the following pages provide an outline of all the units to be studied at each grade level under the various genre classifications:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNITS

	FOLK	FANCIFUL	ANIMAL	ADVENTURE
Grade	Little Red Hen Three Billy Goats Gruff The Ginger- bread Boy	Little Black Sambo Peter Rabbit Where the Wild Things Are	Millions of Cats The Elephant's Child How the Rhino- ceros Got His Skin Ferdinand	Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain The Little Island
1				
	Little Red Rid- ing Hood Story of the Three Pigs Story of the Three Bears	And to Think That I Saw It On Mul- burry Street	Blaze and the Forest Fire How Whale Got His Throat The Beginning of the Arma- dillos The Cat That Walked by Himself	The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins The Bears on Hemlock Mountain
2				
	Sleeping Beauty Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper	The Five Chinese Brothers Madeline	The Blind Colt How the Camel Got His Hump How the Leopard Got His Spots	Winnie-the-Pooh Mr. Popper's Penguins
3				

Mother Holle	Madeline's Rescue	The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo
4	Febold Feboldson	Charlotte's Web
	Brighty of the Grand Canyon	Homer Price
	Tall Tale America Rapunzel The Woodcutter's Child The Three Languages	King of the Wind The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood Island of the Blue Dolphins
6	The Seven Voyages of Sinbad	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
	Alice in Won- derland and Through the Looking Glass A Wrinkle in Time	Big Red

MYTH	FABLE	OTHER LANDS AND PEOPLE	HISTORICAL FICTION	BIOGRAPHY
Grade	The Story of the First Butterflies	The Dog and the Shadow The Town	A Pair of Red Clogs	They Were Strong and Good George Washington
1	The Story of the First Woodpecker	Mouse and The Country Mouse		
2	The Golden Touch	The Hare and the Tortoise The Ant and the Grass- hopper	Caroline and Her Kettle Named Maud	Ride on the Wind
3	Daedalus and Icarus Clytie Nar- cissus	Chanticleer and the Fox The Musicians of Bremen	The Red Balloon The Courage of Sarah Noble	Christopher Columbus and His Brothers
4	Hiawatha's Fasting Theseus and the Minotaur Arachne Phaeton and the Chariot of The Sun	Jacobs: The Fables of Aesop	A Brother for the Orphelines Little House on the Prairie The Matchlock Gun	Willa Leif the Lucky

5	Ceres and Prosperine Atalanta's Race Jason The Labours of Hercules	Bidpai Fables Jataka Tales	The Door in the Wall	Children of the Covered Wagon This Dear-Bought Land	Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist
6	The Children of Odin The Hobbit	The Wind in the Willows	Hans Brinker Secret of the Andes	The Book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights	Cartier Sails the St. Lawrence

CORRELATIVE UNITS: "You Come Too" -- Poetry of Robert Frost--Grade 6; Poetry for the Elementary Grades; Language Explorations for Elementary Grades.³⁸

From the first grade through the sixth, each vertical series of units attempted to provide a definite progression in the complexity of concepts presented. For instance, the Fable units in the first two grades supposedly introduced the child to the common devices and structural patterns of the simplest fables. Then later in the fourth and fifth grades, the Fable units on ancient India were intended to offer a "more intensive, more analytical study of the classical fable form." And finally, the series culminated in the sixth grade with a study of Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows, characterized by the curriculum staff as "the epic fable in a humorous, satiric, allegorical representation."³⁹ Similarly, as the chart indicates, the sequence of units on the Folk tale, beginning with the first grade, presented familiar Folk tales "all sharing characteristics stemming from their common origin in the body of oral folk traditions":

The first grade unit concentrates on the oral and repetitive features of the folk tale; the second grade unit exhibits common plot patterns in a series of stories; and the third grade unit introduces the student to the magical world of fairy-land and reviews the common structural motifs of folk literature; the fourth grade unit and one fifth grade unit examine the tall tale, the most typical form of American folk literature.⁴⁰

Then in the succeeding grades these folk units attempted to build upon the knowledge accumulated in all the preceding lessons. The fifth and sixth grades, therefore, begin with an investigation of the symbolic and allegorical meanings "that the devices common to all folk literature tend to express."⁴¹

Not only was the Nebraska curriculum designed to fuse together internally from grades one to six, but it was also intended to connect viably with the junior and senior high school programs as well:

As the study of form which characteristically uses the oblique perspective of satire, symbolism, and allegory, the series on the fable points to many other units concerned with other levels of meaning and with simple symbolism (for example, the grade 5 unit, The Door in the Wall). Besides coordinating with other elementary units in an informal investigation of literary forms, expressions, and meanings, this fourth grade "fable" unit helps to form an important foundation for more analytical secondary units: units which take up the satiric use of the fable (ninth and twelfth grade units on satire); units which take up more sophisticated Greek literature (seventh grade unit on the classical myth, ninth grade unit on the epic, and tenth grade unit on tragedy); and units which take up techniques for attacking secondary levels of meaning (Grade 7 units, The Making of Stories and The Meaning of Stories).⁴²

Structurally then, the Nebraska elementary literature units attempted to move the student from the world of children's

stories in two basic directions in the upper grades: first, in the direction of heroic and mythic literature, and second, in the direction of realistic literature and the novel. The curriculum saw the less fully developed characters of children's literature as slowly being replaced by the subtle and carefully analyzed characters of realistic fiction: the fairy tale which ends "and so they lived happily ever after" as developing into mature comedy; the adventure story replaced by the epic; and the simple fable by such satiric fables as Animal Farm and Gulliver's Travels. In like order, Huckleberry Finn followed Tom Sawyer, The Tale of Two Cities followed Children of the Covered Wagon, and The Biography of Samuel Johnson followed Willa.⁴³

Quite obviously, then, "transfer of learning" was a basic underlying principle of the Nebraska curriculum and the program for the elementary grades, at least in theory, did not attempt to place excessively heavy demands on the overt analytical abilities of children. Though the early stories were indeed intended to exemplify important principles of literary form, the program co-ordinators insisted that teachers were to instruct by suggestion only, by allowing the student to gradually intuit for himself basic

concepts and structures:

Intellectualizing which is prematurely forced upon students may degenerate into mere manipulation of jargon⁴⁴ . . . children are never (to be) asked to interpret a story directly; they are certainly not invited to become symbol mongers. The interpretation which they do, they do by picturing stages in the action of a story and dramatizing it.⁴⁵

Simply, "exposure to" and "exploration of" excellent children's literature was intended to produce a sufficient intuitive understanding of basic underlying concepts: the elements of myth, fable, folk tales, romance and adventure stories, as well as the basic patterns of poetry--rhyme, meter, metaphor, etc. But the actual lesson plans developed by the Nebraska staff for the elementary grades tended to belie these intentions. Frequently the basic "question-discussion" format was clearly "leading," and in many instances "form consciousness" was not only encouraged, but specifically required, if not in the literature lessons themselves, then in the compositional activities which followed each literature unit in sequence.*

*Here is a typical Nebraska elementary lesson plan for the 5th grade dealing with the mythic story of Baucis and Philemon:

The Objectives of this unit are (1) further to enrich the children's background in mythology; (2) to help

The curriculum in the junior and senior high years, on the other hand, abandoned any pretense about the dangers of attempting abstract reasoning too early. The Nebraska

children understand that our culture is a result of the merging of the influences of a number of civilizations that have preceeded ours; (3) to investigate more attempts of ancient men to explain their environment through the creation of myths and legends; and (4) to increase the children's understanding and appreciation of good literature.⁴⁶

I. "Baucis and Philemon"

A. As preparation for the stories, explain briefly that this unit will deal with stories about Greek gods similar to those that the children have heard before concerning the Greek gods and goddesses. If the children indicate any recollection of previous Greek myths, they may wish to recall together some of the things they already know about ancient Greece and Greek mythology. Their discussion might touch on such subjects as:

1. Early Greece (locate on a map) was composed of many parts--mainland and islands--and this explains why there were so many kings and queens in the stories.
2. The Greeks were a very religious and civilized people. They built temples to worship their gods and goddesses. Some of these buildings are still in evidence. Good pictures of Greek architecture may be shown and compared with buildings which the children have seen.
3. In addition to the gods, there were those who had one human and one divine parent. These were demi-gods.
4. When the Romans conquered the Greeks they adopted much of the Greek culture. This

literature program explicitly stated that in grades 7 - 12 literature study "must be developed in special directions, if the child is to attain anything more than mere literacy."

explains why, in some myths, the same gods may have different names--one is Greek and the other Roman.

B. Read or tell the story to the class, checking the proper pronunciation of names in a good dictionary.

C. Discussion

1. What two natural phenomena does this myth explain? (a lake and an odd formation of two trees beside a temple)
2. The contrast between the treatment the gods received from most of the villagers and that which they received from Baucis and Philemon may remind some students of the story of Lot and the angels in Genesis 19. The teacher might read this story to the class and then ask what qualities typical of Greek myth appear in "Baucis and Philemon" that do not appear in the story of Lot.
3. What is the first hint that the visitors are gods? (the magical replenishing of food, etc.)
4. Discuss the reasons for having poor people be hospitable in the myth. (the greater value of generosity when there is little to spare, the effect of transforming a cottage into a temple, the Greek distrust of pride expressed through admirable characters who are "humble" in a very concrete sense, etc.)
5. Why were Baucis and Philemon turned into trees instead of into animals or some other thing?
6. In this story, the gods are very generous in repaying the hospitality of Baucis and

In other words, the lesson units in the junior and senior high school levels specifically required students to read fairly difficult works of literature, to infer from their readings and from the unit "discussions" basic themes and motifs, and to generalize about the basic concepts underlying our Western tradition and literary heritage.⁴⁸ In short, the major purpose of the Nebraska literature curriculum in the upper grades was to consciously engender formulation and "form consciousness":

The junior high student continues the study of poetry but studies more serious poems, and he begins the study of drama, particularly of the great comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare. He should, at this level, read for a "deeper understanding" of the meaning of the literature he encounters, and he should be asked to formulate what he finds in the works he reads in paragraphs and essays of his own.⁴⁹

While the elementary curriculum at least posited the

Philemon, but how does their reward before they die show that Zeus and Hermes have the trait that made Venus transform Atalanta and Hippomenes? Are Zeus and Hermes unfair to the other villagers?

7. Discuss the transformation of the humble home into a temple. Children will probably make the inference on their own that "home" is a happy place when all share willingly. This is not to moralize, but rather to recognize that harmony and sharing in the home is an ancient tradition.⁴⁷

enjoyment of literature as one of its chief objectives, academic demands in the upper grades of the Nebraska curriculum clearly pre-empted reading for sheer pleasure:

. . . junior (and senior) high school students should be learning to read beyond the "surface" and the plot; they should be reading for more than just entertainment though the delight that goes with great literature should never be denied them.⁵⁰

As in the elementary curriculum, the junior high program at Nebraska was divided into "units" and the literature selections for grades 7 - 10 included:

- Grade 7: Greco-Roman myths and related poems
Hebrew narratives and related western poetry
Iroquois, Cherokee, Tachi myths
Schaeffer, Shane
- Grade 8: Crane, The Red Badge of Courage
Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea
Lazarillo de Tormes
Cervantes, Don Quixote
White, The Once and Future King
Forbes, Johnny Tremain
Tolstoy, War and Peace
Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities
The Song of Roland
- Grade 9: Orwell, Animal Farm
Wibberly, The Mouse That Roared
Aristophanes, Frogs
Beaumont and Fletcher, The Knight of the Burning Pestle
Shakespeare, Twelfth Night
Shaw, Arms and the Man
Homer, The Odyssey

Grade 10: Crane, "The Open Boat"
 Steinbeck, The Pearl
 Hardy, Return of the Native
 Shakespeare, Julius Caesar
 Kennedy, Profiles in Courage
 Marlowe, Dr. Faustus
 Synge, Riders to the Sea⁵¹

In the 11th and 12th grades, however, the unit method of sequencing was abandoned to a degree in favor of a more intensive study of the great classical works of American and English literature. Instead of attempting to unite several longer works around a controlling theme, teachers here were expected to teach the longer work "for its own sake and for its form and idea."⁵² The Nebraska curriculum for grades 11 and 12, therefore, was structured about developing the following concepts:

1. To recognize and to discriminate among the characteristics of the various genres of literature: comedy, tragedy, satire, etc.
2. To gain an appreciation of tone, of mood, of different periods, and of different people.
3. To capture the unique characteristics of a given author, such as Shakespeare, Swift, Samuel Butler.
4. It should generally teach students to read closely and analytically for the full implications of the work they read.⁵³

and included among its many literature selections:

- Grade 11: Thoreau, Walden
 Whitman, Leaves of Grass
 Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter
 Melville, Billy Budd
 Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
 Faulkner, The Unvanquished
 Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby
- Grade 12: Shakespeare, Hamlet
 Milton, Paradise Lost
 Spenser, The Faerie Queene
 The poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats,
 Shelley, and Blake.⁵⁴

Theoretically then, the literature curriculum developed at the University of Nebraska under Project English attempted to structure itself solidly in Brunerian terms. In its rationale for what it taught and how the program explicitly stated that it was not concerned with imparting information and knowledge per se, but rather that it was most concerned with developing cumulatively and transferring sequentially general abstract concepts about genre, form, technique and style which, when intuited in the early grades, could then be related to and connected with the structure and form of longer, more complex literary works in the upper levels. It considered teachers, therefore, to be guide-figures rather than lecturers or instructors:

The teacher should know all that she can about the meaning and literary method of the work so that, whenever and wherever she can, she may bring to the students

those insights that she has and, more importantly, so that she can encourage her students when they show evidence of gaining insights themselves. But the teacher should not deliver lectures and ready-made literary analyses. . . . She should not deliver the background material in the units to students but lead them when and as they can to perceive what a work is about.⁵⁵

But while the Nebraska curriculum rightfully protests the lecture method to teach "content," the program is nonetheless as clearly and as overwhelmingly devoted to content as any college lecture course. It adheres to Bruner's description of the "act of learning" with a vengeance. As described in The Process of Education, the act of learning involved three simultaneous processes: first, the acquisition of new information (often information that runs counter to or is a replacement for what the person has previously known implicitly or explicitly); then the transformation of that information--the process of manipulating new knowledge to make it fit new tasks and to "go beyond it"; and lastly, the evaluation process--checking whether the way we have manipulated information is adequate to the task.⁵⁶ While the "discussion" lesson plans developed at Nebraska attempted to account for both abstract transformation and evaluation, it is in the acquisition of knowledge that the curriculum is primarily interested. To begin with, the

Nebraska coordinators felt that literature and knowledge about literature needed no justification for inclusion in the curriculum. It was, as Bruner intimated, worthy of study in and for itself, just as science was:

That so many young people are generally ignorant of the great figures and the great stories of classical and biblical literature has been deplored widely by the whole educated community in recent years. When a student who has been graduated from high school looks blank at the mention of the names, fails to grasp the significance of the stories, of Odysseus, Apollo, Athene, Achilles, and Jason or Job . . . he is suffering from acute cultural anemia, if nothing worse. . . . Students need only to be introduced to the great stories of our civilization to find them interesting and exciting . . . That student who approaches high school and college study with a background of such reading has placed himself in a distinctly superior position. . . . The student who is not going on to college needs ever more to know such works; for this may be his only chance to become familiar with pieces of writing which have been of enormous influence on the development of his own civilization and so on his own life. . . . Certain things are worth every man's attention.⁵⁷

In addition to enormous amounts of reading at all levels, also worthy of every pupil's attention were enormous amounts of information about literary analysis, criticism and history. Some lesson units at the junior and senior high levels sequenced information about literary genre, technique and style as necessary prerequisites for the exploration of a work's meaning, and other lesson plans

called for the close literary analysis of the classics (Milton, Wordsworth, etc.) according to the various critical theories in vogue in the early 1960's.

When finally viewed in its entirety, the Nebraska literature curriculum is an enormous accomplishment. It reflected both the zeal and the optimism with which the English teaching profession threw itself into Project English. But in terms of the "simple structuring ideas of a subject," this eagerness on the part of the curriculum planners resulted in course descriptions that would simply stagger the average student. Most of the Nebraska curriculum attempted to cover far too much material and seriously neglected to account for student attitude and response. Some of its high school units would be very difficult even for bright college students. Shugrue comments:

Nebraska's spiral leads students from fables and myths into satire through units prepared for grades three, six, nine, and twelve. In a formal unit on satire for grade nine, the student is introduced to such works as George Orwell's Animal Farm and Leonard Wibberley's The Mouse That Roared; less realistically, he is asked to study Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, condescendingly called "On Lousy Writers." In its plan for the twelfth grade, which introduces formal satiric devices, Menippean satire, and the mock epic through Swift's Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift and Gulliver's Travels, Alexander Pope's Rape of the Lock, and excerpts from John Dryden's Essay on Satire, the Nebraska center requires too much of both the student and of the

average English teacher. The preparation necessary for the teacher and the impossibility of an adolescent's having the necessary grasp of the political, social, cultural, and literary backgrounds of the Augustan period suggest that a content-centered curriculum can become quite unrealistic. Even the "Teacher's Packet" prepared by Nebraska, with its wealth of secondary material, long lists of suggested readings, and definitions of the technical terms of satire, argues for a simplification of this unit.⁵⁸

It is obvious that only the most gifted and devoted youngster could master the material in some of these units in the course of a year long literature sequence. In the revision of its original curriculum, therefore, the Nebraska center staff, aware of the difficulty of some portions of its program, advised teachers to eliminate some of the more difficult literature and select from the remaining units available those most appropriate for a given group of students. But even so, Shugrue's criticism is still more than applicable, for while most structure-centered curriculums were very demanding intellectually, none could match Nebraska for sheer academic enormity.

The Carnegie-Mellon Literature Curriculum

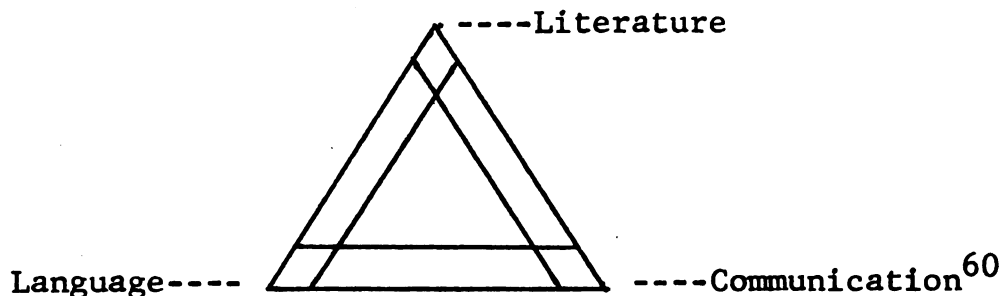
Unlike Nebraska, the Curriculum Development Center at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh chose to design a more modest sequential and cumulative program in English:

it focused its attention on able college-bound students in the senior high school, grades 10 - 12. The Study Center staff completed the revision of its curriculum in the summer of 1965 and its program stated seven major objectives:

1. To develop a curriculum in literature for grades 10 - 12 which will teach the student to read with understanding and sensitivity, and thus provide him with a skill essential to excellent work in college.
2. To develop a composition program for grades 10 - 12 which, in ordered sequential steps, will lead to a growing mastery of writing skills.
3. To develop a sequential language program, consonant with contemporary studies in linguistics, which will increase the student's understanding of the structure, history, and power of the English language.
4. To develop syllabi and other teaching materials which will interrelate the programs in literature, composition, and language into a cumulative three year sequence.
5. To test the effectiveness of the cumulative sequence by introducing it experimentally into seven high schools of diverse types and sizes in the Greater Pittsburgh area.
6. To evaluate formally the total program by means of tests given to students in the cooperating schools.
7. To contribute toward defining a standard for high school English which colleges may consider in designing their freshman courses so that learning may continue to be sequential and cumulative.⁵⁹

The research staff at Carnegie-Mellon, therefore,

had also adopted the tripartite theory of structure which divided the content of English into three basic areas of study: language, literature, and composition. And they saw the interrelation of these areas as fittingly represented by three inter-locking triangles:



As the diagram indicates, the Carnegie staff saw only a small part of each of these studies as unrelated to the others: the larger portion of each, in fact, over-laps significantly with one or both of the others. In the tenth grade course, for example, the time allotted for each of the three areas was apportioned as follows: 56% for instruction in literature; 26% for instruction in composition; and 18% for instruction in language. And the percentages for grades 11 and 12 were approximately the same.⁶¹ Thus it was early agreed by the Carnegie staff that the core of their program should be literature and that the way to develop a curriculum for each grade level

was to build the literary core first and then organize the study of composition and language around that literary core. It was also further agreed that the focus of the literary core ought to be structured in terms of the "universal human concerns and themes" portrayed through literature in every age and every culture, for "while the writer of literature deals with universal concerns, he is necessarily affected by the particular time in which he lives and by the particular culture of which he is a member."⁶² Consequently, in the 10th grade program, for example, the examination of literature concentrated upon the universal concerns of man, the 11th grade upon the modification of those universal concerns by particular culture patterns, and the 12th grade upon literary art forms, genres, and techniques. Although one of these emphases figured more importantly than the other two in a particular year, all three formed part of each year's program:

10th Grade World Literature	Universal concerns of man		M....	L....
11th Grade American Literature	U....	Modification by Culture pattern		L....
12th Grade English Literature	U....	M....	Literary art forms, genres, techniques ⁶³	

The 10th Grade Literature sequence, primarily emphasizing the universal concerns of man, dealt with domestic literature as well as world literature (in translation) and focused on the following themes: social concerns, love, reality and illusion, heroism, human weakness, and the search for wisdom. The selections under Unit I, Social Concerns, included:

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities
 Ivan Turgenev, "Birjuk"
 R. Akutagawa, "Rashomon"
 Lin Yutang, "Chastity"
 Po Chu-i, "Golden Bells"
 R. Tagore, "My Lord, The Baby"
 A. Nicol, "Return: Two Poems"
 Peter Abrahams, "Tell Freedom"
 H. Ibsen, An Enemy of the People
 Po Chu-i, "The Prisoner"
 S. Motokiyo, "The Dwarf Trees"
 E. M. Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front
 Dylan Thomas, A Child's Christmas in Wales⁶⁴

From a detailed exploration and examination of each of these stories students in the 10th Grade were intended to intuit and discover for themselves abstract, fundamental conceptualizations about the meaning and significance of basic, human social and political problems as they have plagued mankind throughout history, so that in the 11th and 12th grades these universal formulations might be applied (modified) to particular works of literature dealing with

social values, customs, and problems in both British and American literature. How this process was to occur specifically can be demonstrated by examining an 11th Grade modification sequence.

The 11th Grade American literature program attempted to demonstrate how universal literary themes--in this instance, social problems--are modified by American cultural patterns: Puritanism, the American desire to get ahead and win material success, American optimism, American Pessimism, The Quest for Identity, and the American Social Conscience. Unit II--the desire to get ahead and achieve material success--included the following literary works:

B. Franklin, The Autobiography
 W. D. Howells, Silas Lapham
The Parables of Jesus
 Leo Tolstoy, "What Men Live By"
 Plato, The Apology of Socrates
 Plato, The Death of Socrates (from Phaedo)
 Arthur Miller, All My Sons
 F. S. Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby⁶⁵

Each of these works was intended to establish a uniquely American focus for the general theme of Universal Social Problems. One 11th Grade unit, for example, centered about Benjamin Franklin's influence on the American desire for success as illustrated in his Autobiography. Controlled

"question-discussion" lessons attempted to lead the student through an exploration of Franklin's notions concerning self-control through reason, careful industry, and a well-ordered check on self-indulgence: "Students are suddenly aware, in a significant way, of why 'early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.'"66

The next several lessons, then, attempted to modify this theme even further by dealing with W. D. Howells' Silas Lapham, a man described by the curriculum designers as one who in a sense has lived according to some of Franklin's precepts:

Silas works hard; he has honestly but diligently become rich; he is the self-made man. It is only when Silas attempts to imitate the artificialities of society--when he tries to make too much money or build an ostentatious house--that he is criticized. The implications of Howells' favorable comment on the rise to wealth and his unfavorable comment on the snobbishly-contrived rise in society increase student awareness of the complexities of the theme. They understand why Howells makes certain that Bartley Hubbard's condescending attitude toward Silas in the initial interview is not shared by the reader.

Lapham typifies the self-made American--a tradition with roots in the Puritan attitude but with a more specific impetus for strength coming from Franklin.⁶⁷

An analysis of The Great Gatsby and All My Sons completed this particular modification sequence:

Gatsby's dream, in which "the blocks of the sidewalks really form a ladder" to material success, symbolized by Daisy, is a false dream. He shows Daisy his many shirts, his house, and his car; students see the emptiness, not in the intensity of his vision, but in the falseness of his values. How pathetic are the words of his father, "I came across the book by accident," when he shows Carraway Gatsby's "schedule of activities" chart, a version of Franklin's! How tragic that, although Gatsby achieves what he thinks is success, no one, except his father and Carraway, attends his funeral.

And in All My Sons, Joe Keller, like Carraway (since Gatsby never consciously recognizes his false sense of values) does see that he has been wrong; he commits suicide, perhaps as an escape, but also as an act of atonement. . . . Students see his gradual awakening from this devotion to personal material-success. His final awareness is of universal significance; "They are all my sons." The idea of American materialism, then, is the organizing principle of the unit, but specific universal concerns and the literary art forms are also involved in class discussions.⁶⁸

According to the Carnegie staff students would come to apprehend these themes and understand all of the inter-connecting motifs, on the various levels of abstraction, through carefully constructed, inductively patterned discussion lessons "with questions ordered so that the discussion, like the literature, [would] achieve a meaningful climax."⁶⁹ The Carnegie staff sincerely believed that such a structured and sequenced curriculum could supply students with the basic abstract tools and knowledges they would need in order to understand any piece of fiction or poetry

in either American, British, or World Literature: "Leaving the child to discover is not nearly so good as providing him with a guided sequence to maximize the possibility of early discovery."⁷⁰

Following this general pattern Carnegie's 12th Grade literature program attempted to deal primarily with British literature and to give its major attention to the structuring principles of genre and aesthetic form. Units at this level centered about the Tale, Tragedy, Epic, Satire, Lyric poetry, the Novel, and the Drama of social dissent. Selections under Unit IV (the Novel), for example, included:

Charles Dickens, Great Expectations
 Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd
 Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth
 Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter⁷¹

In each of the three years, students were asked not only to look at different bodies of literature, but to examine literary works from different points of view. Each year was clearly intended to build on what went before, and the various thematic approaches to literature theoretically demanded ever more perceptive responses at each succeeding grade level. Moreover, the Carnegie-Mellon staff considered its overall approach to be basically textual rather than

historical and to be vastly different from traditional survey courses:

We strive for depth rather than breadth. Although we try to give our students a sense of the historical flow of the literature they study in the 11th and 12th grades, our primary concern is to get them to grapple closely with certain major works of literature. Thus our teachers do no lecturing. The approach to each work is inductive. We deal, furthermore, with whole works, or major sections of works, not with snippets.⁷²

In comparison to the Nebraska curriculum, certainly, the Carnegie-Mellon staff is to be commended for carefully choosing literary works at each grade level and for keeping its reading lists reasonably short, though many of its selections here--as in the Nebraska curriculum--are far too difficult and too "pretentious" even for the college bound.

Finally, the actual inductive method of instruction developed at Carnegie differed in no real way from the methodologies of the Nebraska curriculum. Its lesson plans were almost exclusively question-discussion oriented. In the 11th Grade Unit on American Pessimism, for example, after having read Faulkner's short story "Wash," the curriculum outlined class procedure as follows:

1. Class discussion
2. Points of major re-emphasis
3. Assignment

Class discussion:

1. Why does the first scene of "Wash" have such a great impact on the reader?
2. What specific incidents provoke Wash's changing attitude toward Stupen?
3. In what way is Wash a sympathetic character?
4. Discuss the direction of the narrative in "Wash."
5. What is the final impact of the story? Why is it so horrible? Is it logical in terms of the character of Wash? Why?

Points of major re-emphasis:

1. Wash as a sympathetic character and as a victim of society.
2. Reality in the development of character.
3. The final impact of horror.

Assignment: "Flight" by John Steinbeck.⁷³

Similarly, the lesson plan for an analysis of Julius Caesar, the 10th Grade Unit on Heroism, called for a discussion to center about the following questions:

1. a. Does Cassius have any faults? In spite of these, what heroic qualities does he possess?
- b. Why do most readers of this play like Brutus so much? In spite of his appeal, does he have faults? What are they?
- c. How does the sin of pride operate in Caesar's character and in Antony's character? Do they have any other weaknesses? What admirable qualities do they have?
2. Who in your opinion is the real hero of the play? Why do you choose him above the other three?
3. Is Brutus fit for what he does in Julius Caesar? Does he make the wrong decisions? Why? Is Brutus too honest? Is he always honest?
4. What political problems is Shakespeare criticizing?

- Do these same problems exist today? What does Shakespeare say about mob psychology?
5. What is evident about Roman culture and about Elizabethan culture? . . .
 6. Why is Julius Caesar a tragedy?^{74*}

Thus, while the outline of the entire workings of the Carnegie-Mellon literature curriculum just reviewed seems to allow a great deal of room for the exploration of various types of literature and for the free substitution of different texts (which the planners themselves suggest, when appropriate), and while the staff describes its methodology as clearly inviting students "to make discoveries and in so doing create a learning situation,"⁷⁵ these question-discussion lesson plans, nonetheless, like those developed at Nebraska, must be seen as severely restricting and limiting, and as we shall see in Chapter II, a major point of contention among the critics of structure-centered "discovery" learning.

The Oregon "Pretzel" Curriculum

The Study Center at the University of Oregon under the direction of Albert Kitzhaber developed an English

*Additional lesson plans for both the Carnegie-Mellon and Nebraska curriculums are provided in Chapter II.

curriculum for grades 7 - 12 which its designers believed could be adaptable for approximately the upper 85% of a typical student body. In an attempt to rid itself completely of any "progressive" trappings, the Oregon staff specifically rejected structural schemes based on historical chronology or various theme topics such as "Our Democratic Heritage" or "Understanding One's Neighbor" because it felt that structures of this sort were neither sufficiently "well formulated and organized" nor animated by purely literary considerations. Similarly, the staff also rejected plans founded primarily on "someone else's" notion of a scale of increasing difficulty in the literature being studied, "though obviously the question of difficulty must be kept in mind in organizing such a curriculum."⁷⁶ The Oregon staff clearly wanted to keep the focus of its literature curriculum on "literature as works of art, to be not only enjoyed but understood," and its approach was predicated on the axiom that the study of literature was truly a discipline and that as such had its own unique structure and vocabulary (critical terminology.)⁷⁷ The Oregon curriculum, therefore, represented as fully as the programs developed at Nebraska and Carnegie-Mellon Professor Miller's "academic" stage in educational reform:

its staff adopted as a working principle Robert Heilman's thesis that "the idea that knowledge follows interest is a scandalous half-truth" and that "it is a better than half-truth that interest follows knowledge";^{78*} and subscribed fully to the statement of the Commission on English in The Freedom and Discipline of English (College Entrance Examination Board, 1965) that:

Knowledge of the formal elements of a literary work is presumably a large part of every English teacher's experience, and it is a knowledge that he alone can transmit to students. Those elements do not constitute the whole of literature, but they are what distinguish it from other writing, and they must be taught if literature is to be seriously taught at all.⁷⁹

Thus the Oregon curriculum attempted very explicitly to be both content-centered and very academic, adopting what might best be described as a critical "formalist" approach, relying in its lesson plans on the careful critical analyses of different kinds of literature appropriate at the various grade levels.

Predictably then, the Oregon staff viewed the "simple structuring ideas" of literature to be basic,

*Robert Heilman, "Literature and Growing Up," English Journal, 45 (1956), pp. 303-13.

fundamental principles of literary analysis and structured its sequential curriculum around three formal conceptualizations of literary technique: Subject, Form, and Point-of-view: a construct that the designers felt was simple enough to be grasped by young readers and yet broad enough to embrace many of the complex aspects and relations that exist in mature works of literature for more sophisticated readers.⁸⁰ The notion of Subject was meant to suggest that every piece of literature is "about something" (perhaps on several levels at once) and that consideration of subject matter would naturally invite generalization from the reader and help make him realize that literature "means as well as tells."⁸¹ In considering subject, Oregon trained teachers were intended to lead students to perceptions involving meaning, not only on the surface of a piece, but in terms of the basic themes and ideas dramatized about human experience as well.⁸² The Oregon curriculum referred to Form "as the verbal and artistic structuring of ideas . . . as the thought in a sonnet must somehow be packed into fourteen lines of iambic pentameter":⁸³ in other words, the various genres and sub-genres of literature as well as basic elements of structure--setting, dialogue, metaphor, symbol, etc., devices common to more than one genre alone. And

finally, Point-of-view, although traditionally taken to mean the angle of vision of the narrator only, was expanded in the Oregon program to include the various attitudes toward the subject of a work: that of the author, the characters, the reader, and the culture from which the literary work derived.⁸⁴ In developing this aspect of their curriculum the Oregon staff drew heavily on the critical work of Northrup Frye (and the New Criticism in general) who identified in all Western literature four major modes or Points-of-view: the Romantic, the Comic, the Tragic, and the Ironic.

The 7th Grade Program, then, introduced the basic principles of Subject, Form and Point-of-view primarily through a consideration of the narrative form: the ballad, the myth, the short story, and the fable, though some lyric poetry was read as well. In the 8th Grade, Oregon introduced--through Subject, Form and Point-of-view--the Drama, the Novel, the Essay, the Autobiography, as well as continuing with the forms introduced the previous year. The Oregon's co-ordinators saw the 9th and 10th Grades as being "transitional" years wherein the three basic principles might be studied more intensely in and for themselves so as to provide students with as much preparation and as wide a

reading background as possible for the more mature works of grades 11 and 12. Thus Huckleberry Finn in the 10th Grade was studied both as a narrative form with its own individual structure and organization and as a representative of the journey motif used as a vehicle for irony and social and moral criticism. Similarly, the Odyssey, in the 11th Grade, introduced the concept of epic form, while at the same time treating on a more sophisticated level the mythical and legendary material studied earlier in myths (grade 7) and Arthurian legends (grade 9).⁸⁵ Finally, the Oregon curriculum for grade 11 dealt with a basic generic approach intended to cut across an essentially thematically organized sequence introduced in the 12th Grade. One Oregon staff member wrote: "The one approach (generic) provides the x-axis of which the other (thematic) is the y-axis."⁸⁶

The Oregon staff realized, of course, that their basic structural premises were somewhat vague and ambiguous, but they deliberately chose to keep them so in order that in the 7th and 8th grades students might ferret out for themselves a basic abstract conceptualization of the meaning of the terms as well as their usefulness, and then in the upper grades, begin to refine the basic concepts of Subject, Form, and Point-of-view through a more concentrated

analysis of more sophisticated literary material. Moreover, the Oregon staff felt that their curriculum's three structural principles were essentially integrated concepts in that a discussion of any one would naturally have to involve consideration of the other two as well:

One cannot talk of the subject of a work without considering the control of the subject imposed by form. Similarly, the point-of-view can be seen as the function of both form and subject. A reciprocal relation exists between all three terms, but at the same time each can be held up for particular inspection. As long as we are talking of cones and spirals, we might consider the Oregon curriculum as a pretzel with its three parts, separate but interrelated, forming the whole.⁸⁷

In theory, these basic concepts were to be introduced separately in grades 7 and 8 and without an excessive demand for critical formulation: the Oregon designers tried to follow Margaret Early's suggestion that literary appreciation in the elementary and junior high schools ought to involve an "unconscious" (basically intuitive) understanding of both meaning and form.* Then, in the upper grades, students were expected to gradually "see" (become conscious of) the inter-relationships among the

*Margaret Early, "The Growth of Literary Appreciation," English Journal, 49 (1960), pp. 161-67.

three aspects for themselves:

The Oregon curriculum begins in grade 7 with a transition from phase one to phase two--from unconscious enjoyment to self-conscious appreciation, and ends in grade 12 with the transition from phase two to phase three: self-conscious appreciation to conscious delight. Or . . . we try to move the student from the age of romance through the age of precision into the age of generalization.⁸⁸

A good picture of how the Oregon literature curriculum was supposed to function, integratively, on all levels, is provided by Stoddard Malarkay, Professor of English at the University of Oregon and member of the Curriculum Development staff. In an article appearing in the 1967 volume of the English Journal, Professor Malarkay explained that Subject, Form and Point-of-view were capable of an infinite number of refinements and extensions:

In the 7th grade under subject, the students learn that there is more to a work of literature than its narrative line (and) that any work deals with the abstract as well as the concrete. . . . This idea receives further refinement in later years, until the student is dealing with the thematic aspect of literary study. Through a simple beginning with Subject in grade 7, we can end in grade 12 with a unit which treats the theme of the conflict of conscience and law as it appears from Antogone to Darkness at Noon.⁸⁹

Similar conceptual spiralling was likewise intended for both Form and Point-of-view:

Similarly, the idea of Form is refined and extended. The 7th grader will explore on the most elementary level the obvious rhythmical and rhyming distinctions between prose and verse. . . . Later refinements introduce the idea of basic patterns of literary expression--such distinctions as that between "storied" and "non-storied" forms, or those forms whose primary organizational pattern is a narrative line. . . . The spiral continues until the student is dealing with such concepts as the tragic form of the comic form. In the eleventh grade he is introduced to formal genre study, where he explores the variety and range possible within each type at the same time as he becomes increasingly aware of the inescapable limitations that each form imposes upon the writer . . . the study of form, then, can lead from the simplest beginnings to the most abstract considerations.

In the same way . . . Point-of-view is expanded and refined. The elements of the technical meaning of the term are easy to grasp: the first or third person narrative voice. In the spiral, this meaning of the term is elaborated and other meanings brought in. The student is led to see that literature deals with the point-of-view of the author towards his material, of the response to that material that the author solicits from the reader, and of the methods he uses to elicit that response. In later years consideration of the persona of the speaking voice lead naturally to examination of the oblique modes such as satire and irony.⁹⁰

Ultimately, of course, the three basic aspects of structure were intended to fuse and coalesce as students began to perceive through analysis and conscious formulation that, in essence, the three concepts are but facets or relations of the same basic subject-matter, Literature:

In Huckleberry Finn, for instance, the form of the novel--the journey-- . . . provides the narrative frame

as well as the symbolic pattern which governs our understanding of the subject. This subject is clearly more than just the first person narrative of a trip, but the first person point of view, considered as Mark Twain's deliberate adoption of a particular persona, is one of the things that governs our perception of the subject and one of the things that determines the form. When the student arrives at this level of insight, he has arrived at or beyond the threshold of the age of generalization. . . . He has learned how to read, and specialized studies of History, or culture, or various critical approaches, will be far more meaningful.⁹¹

The Oregon literature curriculum, therefore, was designed to provide students with the critical and analytical skills necessary to understand any other work of literature encountered in either college courses or recreational readings: "The test of success for the curriculum would be the student's ability to apply the tools of understanding to a work outside the curriculum."⁹² Moreover, while the Oregon staff developed a full set of lesson plans built around a complete list of literary selections with fairly extensive coverage, their emphasis on theoretical and analytical knowledge allowed for a wide substitution of many different titles; and although the Oregon curriculum was academically quite demanding, at no point did its materials present students with units as far beyond their capabilities as did the Nebraska curriculum's junior and senior high sequences.

The literature curriculums developed at the Universities of Nebraska, Oregon, and Carnegie-Mellon under Project English, then, accomplished exactly what they were supposed to: each provided the profession with well-ordered, tightly structured programs that were clearly content-centered with respect to both coverage of literary works and knowledge about literature; each was thoroughly academic, sequential and cumulative in design; and each developed similar instructional methodologies--the question-discussion unit.* Apparently each Study Center took to heart Bruner's comment that inductive-discovery curriculums in all fields might best be created by expert teachers who had learned the art of knowing how to ask exactly the right kinds of questions to promote efficient understanding of basic principles:

Given particular subject matter or a particular concept, it is easy to ask trivial questions or to lead the child to ask trivial questions. It is also easy to ask impossibly difficult questions. The trick is to find the medium questions that can be answered and that can take you somewhere. This is the big job of teachers and of textbooks. One leads the child by

*An exception was the Hunter College Gateway Project which will be reviewed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

well-wrought medium questions to move more rapidly through the stages of intellectual development. . . .⁹³

But, as we have seen, the academic literature curriculums in English, at any rate, managed, more often than not, to ask trivial questions rather than difficult or medium ones. And though the Nebraska curriculum, in some of its elementary units, did allow for creative activities (drawing, music, etc.), it was obvious that given the program's basic academic purpose, these expressive lesson suggestions were clearly "concessions" to the child's world and by grade 5 they were completely abandoned.

And yet, even though the basic approach and philosophy in each of these structure-centered curriculums was similar, each did manage, nonetheless, to create curricular designs for literature that were quite different from one another in certain respects. Each operated under different ideas as to what constituted basic structure and what concepts ought to be transferred from grade level to grade level.

The Nebraska curriculum, of course, left no stone unturned. It tried to structure and sequence every conceivable aspect of literature (coverage, genre, theme, critical theory, technique, etc.) and it attempted to

transfer basic understandings of all these knowledges from year to year. But perhaps its main intent as a curriculum in English was coverage. It tried to include in its curriculum as many different literary works of substantial merit as possible, and although never stated explicitly, the apex of its curricular design, in all likelihood, was the B. A. in English: a college graduate knowledgeable about all phases of literature, widely read, and hopefully pursuing intensive scholarly research in literary criticism at a respectable graduate school.

The Carnegie-Mellon curriculum, on the other hand, though not so concerned with coverage per se, was nonetheless very much involved with structuring "content" of a different sort. It sought to make its students knowledgeable about the universal motifs and ideas common to all stories and poems, and its interpretation of the fundamental structure of literature centered about basic thematic relationships. The Carnegie-Mellon curriculum, therefore, intended to prepare its students as fully as possible for the academic rigors of college by supplying them with a well rounded background, not only in literature, but in the Arts intimately connected with literature as well: particularly, history, social studies, and aesthetics.

And finally, the Oregon curriculum, as we have seen, was primarily concerned with transferring from year to year a basic understanding of the main principles of literary analysis and criticism. And while its college bound students might not have been as well rounded, academically, as graduates of Nebraska and Carnegie, the Oregon staff nonetheless believed that its students--armed with a basic knowledge of the structure of literature--would be able to "catch up" quickly in the other fields of learning and in time surpass the less disciplined individual.

The Gateway English Program at Hunter College

While structured-centered Brunerianism was the dominant trend in curriculum reform under Project English, other ideas and approaches were experimented with, and not all the new programs developed through educational research in English in the 1960's were exclusively content-centered or structure-centered, though academic concerns were no doubt present in most curriculum projects to one degree or another. Project English, in fact, when viewed in its entirety, actually created a wide variety of many different kinds of programs developed under a number of different theories and ideas. The Universities of Georgia and

Northwestern, for example, developed some very fine curricular material in writing based on child development studies and the processes of experiencing and composing; the University of Illinois concentrated not on developing a curriculum for pupils, but on a teacher-training curriculum in English for both in-service teachers and prospective teachers, a project which combined the educational resources of twenty different colleges and universities throughout the state, each different institution developing and evaluating programs to deal with some of the vexing problems in teacher preparation; the University of Minnesota designed curricular "Resource Packets" for linguistic and semantic studies in grades 7 - 12; and the Teacher's College at Columbia University created materials in TESOL aimed for the first three years of elementary school.⁹⁴ The only literature curriculum developed under Project English that departed to a large extent from the thoroughly academic and structured approaches typical of the programs at Nebraska, etc. was the Gateway English program created at the Hunter College Curriculum Development Center in New York City under the direction of Marjorie B. Smiley.*

*Only one other Curriculum Development Center in English devoted its chief emphasis to the literature

The Hunter Project was unique primarily because of the nature of the student it was intended to serve. Deeply committed to the early Civil Rights Movement of the last decade, the Hunter Project was solidly urban centered and its materials were clearly intended to appeal to economically disadvantaged youngsters in the inner city from many different cultural backgrounds; and its co-ordinators, therefore, were primarily concerned with producing a curriculum to meet the practical needs of their students, rather than the more abstract needs of a subject-matter and were much less concerned than were the other projects with producing scholarly, knowledgeable students.⁹⁵ Rather than attempting to devise an abstract, conceptual formulation about which to structure the study of literature, the Gateway program instead sought to address itself directly to the values, experiences, and codes of behavior typical of adolescence and to involve young people in pleasurable reading experiences that typified those values for them in creative, realistic ways. Consequently, its literature selections were "chosen because students have

curriculum--Florida State University. This center's program will be reviewed in Chapter V in connection with a discussion of junior high school literature programs.

found them interesting and especially relevant to the problems they themselves have to face."⁹⁶ The Gateway program saw the adolescent moving into a wider world than he has ever known before as he entered his teens and becoming less emotionally dependent on his family, while seeking deeper friendship among his peers. And at the same time it was recognized that the junior high student begins to think seriously about his own identity and personality and to think about life goals and how he might attain them.⁹⁷ And it was these experiences especially that the Gateway program sought to tap through the study of personally meaningful literature:

People have always found through literature greater understanding of themselves and others. For the thirteen or fourteen year old, such understanding is basic to achieving increased emotional independence and maturity. People have always found literature to be helpful in formulating personal codes and values which are satisfying to themselves and to society. Young adolescents particularly need such help in formulating their individual codes and values. . . . Gateway English has paid particular attention to these adolescents and their needs in its selection of materials, of concepts and skills to be acquired, and of methods of learning. . . . All youngsters, whether reading on grade level or one or two years below it, will respond to good literature which expresses problems and ideas of relevance to them, as well as to truths (whether set in a realistic framework or in myth and legend) which they recognize as valid.⁹⁸

A Family is a Way of Feeling, Stories in Song and Verse, Who Am I? and Coping formed a year long program for an estimated reading level of fifth through seventh grades, and the programs for grades eight and nine also sought to motivate the student to learn and to convince him that school was about real things of real value to him. These volumes contained stories that junior high youngsters could easily identify with and yet while the selections were in no way academically pretentious, neither were they condescending or intellectually and emotionally immature.

The overall direction and general movement of the Gateway literature program began with an emphasis on family experiences: feeling that as students moved toward increasing independence they would be able to observe and relate to members of their family more objectively and thereby recognize their human frailties as well as their strengths both as individuals and as part of the family group. From experiences centered about the family, the Gateway materials then attempted to move the student, experientially, further outward from the self toward relations with other individuals and to "coping" with problems in the world outside one's own immediate surroundings. Because of its interest in student experience and

attitude, Gateway English was a great deal less content-centered than most other curriculum projects at the time; instead of content and knowledge about literature, the Gateway program explicitly attempted to nurture personal involvement in reading, response, and self-expression:

In order for students to achieve facility in thinking and talking, the teacher must be patient, accepting the students' answers, realizing that the students' self-expression may be as important as the correctness of their answers. The teacher must not allow the pressure of time to force him to cut off a student's attempt at formulating an opinion, or his neighbor's attempt at a response.⁹⁹

The Hunter Project, therefore, was one of the first English programs to suggest that literature and language instruction center about students' strengths, abilities and experiences, and the program as a whole placed just as much importance on the feelings, opinions, and ideas that students bring to school with them as it did on what the school itself could provide:

The guidelines discussed above may be summarized in the following list of Do's and Don't's for the teacher of Gateway English:

Don't tell the students anything that they can discover for themselves. Do let them find out for themselves and tell you and the class what they think and know. Don't talk when you can listen. Do give students plenty of time to bring out what they have to say

Don't assume that children who are inarticulate or underachieving are not able to think in mature ways about things that concern them. Do understand that outside of school they have been solving problems and communicating with their fellows. Do make them feel that what is taken up in school is worth thinking and talking about.

Do become a partner in the production of Gateway English . . . by modifying lesson plans according to the needs of your students, and by adding new and contemporary materials as you discover them.

Do enjoy the children, the materials, and their interaction under your guidance.¹⁰⁰

But perhaps most significant of all, the Gateway program directly attempted to introduce into the English classroom creative language and literature activities. To aid involvement and motivation and to change attitudes about English and success in school for its students, the Hunter College program made extensive use of the media in the classroom co-extensive with language and literature instruction. To enrich the learning experience, its lesson plans often included recordings, transparencies, films, slides, and pictures, in addition to extensive group work, pantomime, dramatic activity, art work, committee reports, writing dialogues, and cartoon making.

And yet the program as a whole was still very much committed to the Brunerian thesis. Its materials were centered about "the unit"; its lesson plans frequently

employed inductive-discussion questions; it attempted to foster conceptual development; it frequently taught for specific concepts and attempted in its overall design to be both inductive and sequential:

The lesson plans are constructed whenever possible according to an inductive method. Materials are presented in a manner that will enable students to draw their own conclusions and to arrive at generalizations by themselves. Students are encouraged to think problems through and to become aware of the methods they have used in solving them. Discovery thus takes the place of memorization and simple recall.¹⁰¹

Though always clearly stated as a secondary and long-term objective, it is not rare to find in the Gateway Teacher's Manual directions about what teachers ought to look for, specifically, and what particular concepts they ought to especially encourage. From the preface to Stories in Song and Verse:

In the course of the unit, and as a secondary aim, students should develop some understanding and enjoyment of a number of poetic devices: rhyme, rhythm, refrain, stanza. They will also be introduced to other literary terms: theme, lament, narrator. In every instance, however, it is important that students develop the meanings of these terms gradually, as they listen to, read and discuss these Stories in Song and Verse. . . . Particularly in the case of underachieving students, the intellectual skills of observing, applying, comparing, classifying and generalizing need to be strengthened. . . .¹⁰²

There was, therefore, in the Gateway program an overall conflicting sense of direction and basic purpose between experimental approaches based on student experience, activity and response on the one hand, and structure-centered inductive Brunerianism on the other; and this confusion is perhaps no better illustrated than in the actual lesson plans developed by the Hunter project staff. Unit 23, for example, in the Teacher's Manual for the volume Who Am I? presented a three part semi-activity centered lesson based on the short play, The Trouble With Johnny. In addition to poster displays and creative writing assignments the unit also required students to actually dramatize the action of the play in the classroom using tables and chairs for props. However, similar to the other academic curriculums reviewed thus far, this particular unit also included standard, inductive question-answer schemes--specifically requiring, therefore, that students understand the meaning of the play in the play's own terms, instead of allowing for the interpretation of meaning and characterization to evolve freely from both creative and personal improvisation and involvement.*

*See Teacher's Manual to Gateway English (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), pp. 173-76.

When viewed in its entirety, finally, it is almost as if the Gateway English program has been arrested in mid-agony. It was undeniably tied to the academic reform movement, to inductive teaching and concept development, and yet at the same time, it desperately wished to take off in new directions: toward activity-directed lessons (rather than discussion-directed lessons), student-centeredness, and a more total commitment to response.

1967 marked the end of the initial phase of support for basic research on the English curriculum. In that year fourteen of the Study Centers completed their work and submitted final reports to the U. S., Office of Education. Although after 1967 the Office of Education encouraged institutions to continue to submit proposals for further investigations, the Office no longer appeared to be deeply committed to further research in the Humanities.¹⁰³ At the same time the War in Vietnam was rapidly expanding and governmental energies and monies were being diverted to support military and defense buildups; and anti-war protests on the campuses from 1966 to 1970 further swayed the government to withdraw its support for educational research not directly connected with the national security. This trend has continued from 1967 to the present time and

prospects appear dim for government financed research in English at least for the immediate future. Neither the academic establishment nor the federal government has yet recovered from the political and social scars of the anti-war years. For all intents and purposes, by 1968 Project English had run its course.

Although most of the curriculums and materials produced through Project English have in the last several years been severely criticized, the entire curriculum reform effort did manage to draw the English profession together and it facilitated "dialogue" within the professional English teaching community: teachers, administrators and scholars, at all levels, for the first time in many years communicated with one another about goals, approaches and methods. Linguists, journalists, professional writers, educators and psychologists all joined together to talk about a common subject and establish a common set of attitudes. As a result, the English profession as a whole will be soundly committed to curricular reform, change, innovation and dialogue for many years to come. The Curriculum Development Centers had uniquely demonstrated that educational reform could be attained with effort, determination and adequate funding. And although the money for

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research is no longer available, the desire to create new materials and establish new programs has not yet abated.

In a speech to the annual meeting of the MLA in 1968, James Squire summarized Project English's unique contribution to the profession:

If then we stand again at a crossroads, what should be the profession's response? We might begin by reminding ourselves of what we have already accomplished, for retaining achievements of recent years is dependent upon clearly identifying them. Some are unmistakable: a clearer perception of subject content in the schools; vastly strengthened curricular guides for teachers; more textually-centered programs in literature; the beginnings of genuine programs in literature at the elementary level; understanding that study of the English language involves something more than hap-hazard exercises in usage and parsing; solid new programs for preservice and continuing education; awakening awareness that the elementary teacher, above all, is a teacher of English; changes in college English and college education programs; the emergence of college departments to a national voice through the new ADE association; above all, the shift in the attitude of the public and profession toward developments in English today.¹⁰⁴

The "crossroads" of Squire's speech undeniably referred to the Dartmouth Seminar which met at Hanover, New Hampshire in the late summer of 1966, and which, on the one hand, served to underscore the basic philosophies of structure-centeredness (and Project English to the extent that it was discipline-centered), but which at the same time has

further inspired the profession to continue to improve English teaching through innovation and basic research. In any event, the Dartmouth Conference has influenced the theory and practice of English teaching in the last decade to a greater extent than any other single factor, including Project English. But the revolutionary new ideas and theories to emerge from Dartmouth did not just simply appear. The Project English experience involved hundreds of talented professionals in a co-operative and creative academic endeavor, and any such intellectual involvement--especially one of such massive proportions as the entire curriculum reform movement--will automatically produce many new and different ideas not initially planned for. Since these new ideas--many of which were highly critical of structure-centeredness in curricular reform--helped shape the direction and the scope of the Dartmouth Seminar, it will be necessary to examine them in some detail, therefore, before the Response to Literature may be formally discussed in Chapter III.

CHAPTER II

STUDENT-CENTEREDNESS AND THE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

It is not subject-matter that makes some learning more valuable than others, but the spirit in which the work is done.

John Holt
How Children Fail

From the very start we were too busy being intellectuals.

James Herndon
The Way It Spoze To Be

From 1965 through 1968 many of the English Curriculum Development Centers were engaged in the process of evaluating their work and preparing their curriculums for national distribution; sometimes the members of a research staff would appraise their own materials, while at other centers outside evaluators were employed. The over-all reaction of both the public and the profession during these years--across a wide spectrum at all educational levels--was

generally favorable, if not positively enthusiastic. It was felt that solid curriculums for English had finally been developed and that English had at last been given both a content and a structure, as well as sequence and direction: the average English teacher could feel both proud and confident about the "academic status" of his/her unique discipline. There was now something definite to teach and teachers would know both how and when to teach it. All that was needed, it was felt, was widespread adoption and implementation by school districts all across America. Shugrue reports that by 1968 the Nebraska materials had been adopted throughout the state of Nebraska itself, in school systems in a great many other states, and in many countries overseas as well. In Columbus, Nebraska, for example, a community of only 12,500 citizens some fifty miles from the university, the senior high school, junior high, and seven elementary schools had begun teaching the entire Nebraska Curriculum as early as the fall of 1967.¹ The Paul Roberts English Series published in 1966--a sequential and inductive, content-centered, skills-oriented curriculum for teaching all aspects of the English tripod*--became instantly popular

*This series, however, was not the product of a Curriculum Development Center.

because of its thoroughly structured and sequential approach both to the "content" of English (language and literature) and the skills of English (reading, writing and speaking). In addition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston purchased the Oregon curriculum, Barnes and Noble began to publish the Carnegie materials in 1968, and the Silver Burdett Publishing Co. sought the various Florida State curriculums. In short, publishing houses across the country were very ready to "cash in on" the sequential curriculum craze and print texts for each year and/or grade level corresponding to one newly developed curriculum or another. And so, in one respect, the newly-devised structure-centered curriculums in English and Literature were a huge success in the mid 1960's--and that was the way everything was supposed to be.

Yet, on an entirely different front, agreement, unanimity and approval in large measure was not forthcoming. There were serious critics both within and without the English teaching profession who challenged the educational value and relevance of both the final results of individual project center curriculums as well as the entire Brunerian theory of content-structure-centeredness on which most of the new English curriculums were based. This criticism of

discipline and structure in education, with respect to English and Literature, operated on two levels: (1) those within the profession itself at the university level who formally helped evaluate the new curriculums and whose objections to them were based both on some new and different conceptions about the nature and content of English as well as on Bruner's scientific theory of teaching and learning when specifically applied to English-as-a-school-subject; and (2) at the same time there were a group of individuals, mostly full-time teachers in both public and private schools at all levels (some English teachers, others not), who became involved in the education of their students in a very sensitive and humane way. These teachers, who had to work daily with both the new and old curriculums, began early to be suspicious of the entire academic, content, discipline-centered philosophies of education very popular in the early 1960's. These critics of the educational establishment were part, in retrospect, of a wholly different and separate trend of educational theory and practice: rebelling against disciplined and sequential education, they created during the last decade, side by side with the academic reform movement, a philosophy of education that has since come to be known as the Student-centered or Humanistic

approach to teaching and learning. The ideas of these individuals were both intellectually exciting and "radical" enough to have become very quickly popular in an age recently labelled "America's greening."* The humanistic philosophies of men such as John Holt, James Herndon and Herbert Kohl in the mid '60's instantly attracted many ardent supporters and the Student-centered movement in education that these men helped initiate has continued to the present day. In recent years, humanistic education has given rise to the "free-school" movement that has blossomed in the United States of late in small towns and large cities alike.

This chapter will examine, then, both these reactions to the academic reform movement of the last decade in an attempt to provide a framework for a formal discussion of both the Dartmouth Conference and The Response to Literature.

Criticism of the New Literature Curriculums in English

During the spring and summer of 1966, Robert Shafer, then member of the English Department at Arizona State University in Tempe, evaluated the Carnegie-Mellon

*See Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America (New York: Bantam Books, 1971).

Curriculum designed for grades ten through twelve. His review was published in the January issue of the 1967 volume of the English Journal. Shafer's overall tone in the article was cautious, yet penetrating. The thrust of his criticism was not aimed directly at the newly-developed curricular materials themselves nor at Bruner's thesis (the New Math and the New Science were flourishing in schools across the country), but rather at Bruner's applicability to "English." While Shafer commended the Carnegie planners for successfully and imaginatively presenting a model curriculum which could effectively serve to test the assumption that English is in fact a cumulative and sequential subject, he seriously questioned whether Bruner's inductive-discovery teaching theory as implemented by many of the centers was in fact "real discovery" when applied to a structured-sequence for literature, and whether or not there might not be other aspects of English (besides language, literature and composition) and other methods of instruction (besides inductive learning) which the new content-oriented curriculums, like Carnegie-Mellon, had totally neglected to consider.² Shafer reported that the Carnegie-Mellon program had defined teaching as an attempt to create situations where structures can be discovered and where good pedagogy "must

involve presenting the child with situations in which he himself experiments . . . in the broadest sense of the term . . . trying things out to see what happens, manipulating things, manipulating symbols, posing questions and seeking his own answers, reconciling what he finds one time with what he finds on another, and comparing his findings with those of other children."³ It is clear that Shafer has examined the new curriculum in depth and in light of the tightly structured program developed by the Carnegie-Mellon staff, Shafer in this report was highly suspicious of the real effectiveness of many of its lesson units. Specifically, Shafer wondered to what extent the lesson-units of the Carnegie-Mellon program actually involved students in "guided sequences which maximized the possibility of early discovery" and to what extent "massive transfer of learning" really occurred.

Shafer provided an example of a typical unit lesson in literature from the Carnegie-Mellon curriculum designed specifically for "discovery"--a unit intended to maximize brain power and to induce, in Brunerian terms, the creation of new ideas and relationships:

In the literature lesson, the teacher is given the following questions to guide the "guided sequence"

in four poems, "Out Upon It" by Suckling, "Let Me Not To The Marriage of True Minds Admit Impediments" by Shakespeare, "Gather Ye Rosebuds" by Herrick, and "On His Blindness" by Milton:

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. To whom is he speaking?
3. What is the incident being discussed by the speaker?
4. Why is this a poem of dramatic incident?
5. What similarities and techniques do you recognize between this poem and drama?
6. Who are the characters and what is the dramatic situation in "Out Upon It"?
7. Who is the speaker and what is he discovering in the poem "On His Blindness"?
8. In the three poems considered today, what is the relationship of the speaker to the poet? (Note to the teacher: Place a line on the board to represent a continuum, placing the word "character" at one end and "poet" at the other. Have the students view the speakers of each of the three poems in this way and place the poems on the continuum. It will probably look like this:

The Poet Himself

"Out Upon It!" An Imagined

"On His Blindness"

"Edward"

Character

The point to make here is that the dramatic situation can make a certain impact regardless of whether the poet himself is the "speaker" of the poem.)

9. What is the tone of "Edward"?

The writers stay true to their conception of the appropriate role of the teacher, "In such a lesson, obviously, the teacher is neither preacher nor lecturer, but guide, discussion leader, and perhaps, occasionally, resource person." They also propose the list of questions as a model for a guided sequence, "It (the sequence of eight questions) offers a series of questions designed to help the students analyze the poem

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in an orderly way: starting with the concept, relating earlier learning to the current lesson, and suggesting points of major emphasis. The students are required to summarize the day's lesson in a paragraph of 150 words. The effect of this activity is to "require them to rethink the day's discussion, and to discover, once again, what he and the class had learned about the poems and about the particular aspect of poetry discussed that day."⁴

In this lesson unit there were clearly definite answers to all the specific questions being asked, and all that was required of the students--in terms of being given the opportunity to do some real "thinking"--was to "discover," "guess," or "produce" the kind of answers that such a lesson plan called for. And to Shafer at least it was clear that this provided for no real discovery, no real learning experience. Lessons such as this one did not in actuality present students with genuine problem solving situations: encounters in class, that is, in which students could make decisions and come to conclusions by intuiting structures and relations and inventing new ideas through their own creative efforts. Instead, the entire Carnegie curriculum, Shafer intimated, while certainly sequential and cumulative, was basically contrived, inauthentic and non-Brunerian in that it apparently hindered real thought instead of provoking it. It was neither truly

inductive nor honest:

The basic question remains: "Do these curriculum materials really present the learner with 'situations where structures can be discovered,' or 'situations in which he himself experiments,' or 'the exercise of problem solving and the effort of discovery'?" In this reviewer's judgment, they do not. Indeed, they are probably as carefully designed examples as we have available of guided sequences projecting a proposal of the cumulative transfer of increasingly complex understandings in language, literature, and composition. Evidence is not yet available as to the extent such transfers may have taken place. But these learning sequences are not, in and of themselves, situations which present problems to the learner which he necessarily sees as worthy of engaging his time and energy in finding a solution. They do not seem to provide what Piaget calls for in his quest for a situation which "provokes" or what Charles Pierce once described as the "persistent irritation of doubt."⁵

In other words, although it was clearly not the intent of the newly created discipline-centered curriculum to "run students through their paces," Shafer's evaluation strongly suggested that such was precisely what the Carnegie-Mellon curriculum in particular--and the other structure-centered-inductive curriculums in general--were doing. (Shafer's criticism could be applied with equal validity to the curriculums developed at Oregon, Nebraska, Florida State, Indiana, etc.)* And when one looks objectively at the

*Here is a unit-lesson from the Nebraska Literature curriculum (6th grade) dealing with the poetry of Robert

structure-centered literature curriculums of Project English, it is indeed difficult to find in them opportunities for real intellectual exploration. In short, Shafer

Frost.⁶ The objectives of the unit are (1) to impart to children some of the simpler tools for the reading and understanding of poetry and (2) to help prepare for the treatment of poetry at the junior and senior high school levels. The lesson plan makes it clear that in this unit time will be spent in reading for depth of meaning and that, therefore, a few of the poems will be read and studied intensively: "It is hoped that in this way the students will discover some of the riches beneath the surface of good poetry":

Group I

Most of Frost's poems are presented within a rural context. This rural world provides the point of view from which things, events, and people are seen.

For this first group the teacher may select any of the less complex poems, since they will be explored only on the literal level. Let the students enjoy and appreciate some of the excellent descriptive passages. It would be well for the teacher to read the poem over a second time to the students before asking questions. In discussing imagery or rhyme scheme it is well to move by small units, a short passage, or a stanza at a time. The following are a few poems suggested for the first group and some discussion questions for each:

"The Pasture"

What does the story tell?
 Who is telling the story?
 Who is invited to come along?
 What farm animal is mentioned? What is said about it?
 How long does the speaker expect to be gone?
 What is the rhyme scheme?
 What line is rich in alliteration?

believed (1) that the new literature curriculums in English had managed not to sequence real discovery activities but rather to sequence "content" and "knowledge" so that through

"Departmental"

Do you think the poet has enjoyed watching ants?
 Is this poem completely serious or do you think the poet is trying to be humorous? Is the poem humorous from the beginning or does it become so later?
 Are there any times in the poem when the author tells you that ants mind their own business?
 In the last two lines is the author saying that in one way he admires the ants but in another way he doesn't?
 Give the meaning of the following words: sepal, ichor, nettle.

Group II

As has been stated previously, Frost's poems have a superficial simplicity. Because Frost works from a simple rural incident to philosophical wisdom, most of his poems are not as simple as they appear. While Frost's early poems show a harmonious relationship between man and nature, his more complex poems present a conflict between the two. Since these poems have greater depth, they should be studied with greater care. Suggested teaching procedures for several of these poems may prove helpful.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (p. 24)

What does the title tell us about the time of day?
 about the weather?
 Is the man riding or driving the horse? How do you know?
 Does the man know who owns the woods? Where does the owner live?
 Does the horse show any impatience? How?
 What decision does the man have to make? What does he decide?

carefully contrived discussions and exercises students would be led to eventually "uncover" in a story or poem, for example, aspects of theme and technique that the curriculum planners themselves had already deemed as significant, important, and worthy of study; and (2) that the new curriculums had concentrated too strongly on academic content and the accumulation of facts and theories to the exclusion

The above questions are about the surface meaning of the poem. Do you think Frost may have had deeper meanings in mind when he wrote the poem?

Explain the idea of a symbol. Signs are often symbols (traffic signs, the flag, a cross, an eagle, etc.).

The first symbol in the poem is the owner. What is the "something else" that he may stand for? (Frost could have used the owner to symbolize village life where people are together while the poet is alone in the woods; or on an even broader scale, he could represent civilization or society in general.)

The second symbol in the poem is the horse. Remember that he is impatient. What do you think he could symbolize? (He could represent the animal world that does not understand man's desire to meditate; or he could represent an obstacle to the man's doing what he would like to do.)

Are there other symbols in the poem, other things that could stand for something else? (The woods: beauty or enchantment. Sleep: rest or death. Promises: obligations or responsibilities.) Students may think of others, but it is sufficient if they can be led to discover some of the main ones.

Why do you think Frost repeats the last line?

The teacher must decide whether or not the class' ability and previous experience is such that a discussion of rhyme scheme, form, etc. of the poem will be profitable and hold the interest of the class. The greater the understanding of the techniques employed by the poet, the greater will be the appreciation of his poem.

of what he felt to be the essence of education in general: providing for the personalized involvement in learning and developing the "processes of thought" and the "growth into knowledge." Shafer concluded his evaluation with the query:

. . . Why subscribe to inductive teaching and learning as a basic rationale without an attempt to develop and test literary, linguistic and composing models, which will lead students to inquiry and ultimately to growth in the processes of thought?⁷

But perhaps it was the criticism of James Moffett, then of Harvard University (and later to become one of the most influential participants at the Dartmouth Conference), that penetrated to the very heart of the matter and really exposed the inherent conceptual flaws in the structure-centered, inductive curriculum craze that dominated English teaching reform in the 1960's. Like Shafer, himself at the time, Moffett was involved with evaluating the new curriculum for English. In a January, 1966, Harvard Educational Review article entitled "A Structural Curriculum in English," Moffett not only accused the new curriculums for their implicit inauthenticity and misapplication of Bruner's thesis with respect to English, but he also asserted that most of the researchers engaged in creating new curriculums--

structuring new academic "contents" and teaching methods for English--had failed entirely to grasp the nature of what English-as-a-school subject is all about.*

In "A Structural Curriculum for English," Moffett pointed out that English is indeed untidy and amorphous and therefore a very unattractive candidate for a structural curriculum "which no doubt is a main reason for its being the caboose on the train of educational renovation."⁸ What accounts for the difficulty, according to Moffett, is that English can be conceived of in two basic ways: it can sometimes be defined as all "content"--language, literature and composition--and at other times as a series of "arts" or "skills"--reading, writing, listening, speaking.⁹ Moffett claimed that in the profession's absolute zeal to get hold of a definite academic content for English, the new structure-centered curriculum planners (for the most part) had mapped out the content aspect of English with such a vengeance so as to exclude almost entirely the skills or activity component of English. Now Moffett did not mean to

*Other early criticism of the new curriculums in English included an article by G. Robert Carlsen and James Crow: "Project English Curriculum Centers," English Journal, 56 (1967), pp. 986-993.

imply that the new curriculums did not include the teaching of writing, rhetoric, oral discourse, etc., but simply to assert that the new curriculums did not treat these aspects of the subject "English" as activities--mental and linguistic operations closely related to the processes of thinking itself. Instead, Moffett claimed that most of the new structure-centered curriculums had merely remade these skills into contents, transformed, that is, a process into a thing, since a "content" for English was what everyone wanted.* Thus most of the structure-centered curriculums presumed that one must learn certain "contents" before one could become involved in the act of writing or before one could respond to and understand literature:

. . . That is--to write one must know, as information, certain linguistic codifications and facts of composition; to read literature, one must be told about prosody and "form." But learning "form" this way is really learning content, and the result is quite different than if the student practices form or feels it

*A notable exception to this trend was the composition curriculum designed at the Northwestern Curriculum Development Center. From the very beginning the Northwestern researchers considered writing as an activity--as a process first--and the materials produced by the Center encouraged students to experiment with language instead of studying rhetoric and grammar either as contents or as necessary preludes to the act of writing itself.

invisibly magnetize the whole curriculum. Learning and learning how to result in very different kinds of knowledge. Compare the psychiatrist's telling the patient, "You have an Oedipus complex," with the deep liberating reorganization that takes place gradually through the transference process.¹⁰

According to Moffett, however, English is done a great dis-service when it is cast almost exclusively in the form of contents, when teachers and curriculum planners try to make it into a subject like history, geography, or physics. For English, Moffett contended, is not properly about itself; it is not a subject with a definite content which everyone must learn (uncover), but instead it is a content-maker. To reiterate in Moffett's own terminology: there are some things (subjects) that are symbolizers and other things that are symbolized. Subjects like chemistry and psychology and history have definite contents for they contain specific empirical facts and phenomena and people use other subjects like language and math to talk about--or symbolize--these contents. Simply, English is primarily a subject that symbolizes; it is operational and activity-oriented and people use it to structure other contents. Therefore, Moffett asserted, English in and of itself ought not to be thought of primarily as a subject which either directly imparts knowledge to students or helps them discover

some particular kind of knowledge on their own:

At the risk of disparaging what a lot of English teachers, including myself, have relied on as curriculum guides, I have emphasized the ways we have unnecessarily deformed our subject to make it into a content like other subjects. But English, mathematics, and foreign languages are not about anything in the same sense that history, biology, physics, and other primarily empirical subjects are about something. English, French, and mathematics are symbol systems, into which the phenomenal data of empirical subjects are cast and by means of which we think about them. Symbol systems are not primarily about themselves; they are about other subjects. When a student "learns" one of these systems, he learns how to operate it. The main point is to think and talk about other things by means of this system.

In insisting on a major division between symbol systems and what is symbolized in the systems, I am attempting to break up the bland surface of our traditional curriculum, whereby the Carthaginian Wars, the theorems of Euclid, irregular German verbs, the behavior of amoebas, and the subordination of clauses all come dead-level across the board as if they were the same kind of knowledge. The failure to distinguish kinds and orders of knowledge amounts to a crippling epistemological error built into the very heart of the overall curriculum. The classification by "subject matters" into English, history, math, science, French, etc., implies that they are all merely contents that differ only in what they are about. The hidden assumptions of this classification have taught students to be naive about both symbols and the nature of information; even very bright students are apt to leave high school not understanding the difference between empirical truth and logical validity. Furthermore, we have fooled ourselves.^{11*}

*There is one aspect of "content" here which must be mentioned because it will become integral to a discussion of the Response to Literature in Chapters III and IV. Although

Moffett pointedly asked the question, then, "How much is teaching English a matter of covering content and how much a matter of developing skills which are independent of

Moffett avered that English did not properly have a special content all to itself, the problem is more complex. In fact, when talking about a "content" for English, a central and important paradox is involved. Because Moffett is so eloquently terse in "A Structural Curriculum for English" I will quote him directly and extensively on this point:

. . . in trying to separate symbol from symbolized, one discovers their inseparability. Ultimately, we cannot free data from the symbols into which they have been abstracted, the message from the code. All knowledge is some codification by man of his phenomenal world. This is precisely what many incoming college freshmen and even graduate students have never learned. The fact is that languages are about themselves, in a greater measure than we usually suspect; but this is a wholly different matter from the English teacher's fear that if he does not keep English self-contained it will slip through his fingers and become as big as all outdoors. The ambiguity I am after is that while we speak in English about non-English things, we are using invisible syntactic relations as well as words like "although" and "because" that are not about the phenomenal world--at least not the external one. Every code or language says something about itself while delivering its message. "Codification is the substitution of one set of events which we substitute for outer phenomena when we talk about them is an inner set of neutral events--activities we learn when we learn the language and about which we are normally unaware. The purpose, I take it, of teaching linguistics and semantics is to make the student aware of how much people's words are about people and words and how much they truly recapitulate outer phenomena. But this is best done by letting students try to symbolize raw phenomena of all kinds at all levels of abstraction, and then by discussing these efforts under the guidance of a teacher who is

any particular content?"¹³ It was clear to Moffett, at least, that the new content-structured curriculums had concentrated much too heavily on the substantive components of

linguistically and semantically sophisticated. I think it will be found that what we might tell the student or have him read about concerning the reflexiveness of language will be much better learned through his own writing and discussion. By this method, teachers may more readily learn what kind of understanding of language the student can take at different ages and in what form they can take it.

Yes, language is about itself, but, in accordance with something like Russell's theory of types, higher abstractions, never about themselves. That is, some English words refer to the outer world, other words (like relative pronouns) refer to these first words, and all syntax is about tacit rules for putting together the concrete words. Some notion of a hierarchy of abstraction, defined as greater and greater processing of phenomena by the human mind, is indispensable. Thus, the more abstract language is, the more meta-language, culminating in mathematics as the ultimate language about language. So we imagine a symbolic hierarchy going from the codification of our world that most nearly reflects the structure of that world to codification that more and more resembles the structure of the mind. Basically this is what abstraction is all about. To enable the student to learn about this process, we must first separate in the curriculum, and hence in the student's mind, symbolic systems from empirical subjects, and then help him discover both the dependence and independence of one and the other.¹²

In other words, while realizing on the one hand that English properly has no content, when we use language to symbolize "other contents," the nature of the communicative medium turns in upon itself and we intuitively learn something about the structure of language anyway (whether we realize it or not or whether we want to or not). As we talk we

English. As a result, students would learn all about literary technique, rhetoric, linguistics and literary criticism, but would they be able to read and to write well--to appreciate literature and to express a universe of knowledge through language? For Moffett, real "discovery"--the opportunity to think and to use one's intelligence most fruitfully--lay not in learning facts about English, but rather in learning how to use language, how to accrue excellence in thought through self-expression, through discourse. By concentrating on English as pure substance, and by trying to induce students to understand this substance, the new curriculum had ended up merely sequencing or "juggling about" various kinds of information, instead of teaching students, as Shafer noted also, how to learn and explore through language and literature and how to nurture "growth in the processes of thought."

Moffett suggested, therefore, in "A Structural Curriculum for English"* that new curriculums for English

gradually become aware of the nature of discourse and as we shall see in Chapter III, when we become involved in responding to literature operationally, in authentic activities, we automatically learn about the structure of literature at the same time.

*See also: James Moffett, "I, You, It," College Composition and Communication, XVI (1965), pp. 243-48.

should concentrate not on sequencing contents, but rather on attempting to articulate the operational possibilities of language (discourse): giving students the freedom and opportunity to use language, experiment with it and manipulate it in as many different ways as possible and on whatever "contents" and in whatever discourse situations seem appropriate at the various grade levels commensurate with the intellectual abilities of individual students. According to Moffett, the nature of English is to know how to and a curriculum for English ought to revolve around "someone-talking-to-somebody-else-about-something."¹⁴ In short, to promote the kind of intellectual excellence everyone wanted for English, Moffett suggested a functional, rather than a substantive approach to curricular design by re-establishing English around a continuum of authentic discourse*:

I have suggested structuring the English curriculum according to the relations of speaker-listener-subject as the ultimate context within which all our other

*It is obviously beyond the scope of this study to explicate in full Moffett's thesis here. In addition to "A Structural Curriculum in English" and "I, You, It," the reader is also referred to: James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968), and James Moffett, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, K-13 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968).

concerns may be handled functionally and holistically, moving the student in his writing and reading from one kind of actual discourse to the next in a sequence which permits him to learn style, logic, semantics, rhetoric, and literary form continuously through practice as first or second person. Ideally this sequence would correspond both to his own intellectual and emotional growth and to some significant progression in "symbolic transformation," as Suzanne Langer has called the human processing of the world. The structure of the subject must be meshed with the structure of the student. A major failure of education has been to consider the logic of the one almost to the exclusion of the psychologic of the other. Atomizing a subject into analytical categories, inherent only in the subject, necessarily slights the internal processes of the student or language-user, who in any given instance of an authentic discourse is employing all the sub-structures, working in all the categories, at once. We must re-conceive the subject in such a way that we can talk simultaneously about both the operations of the field and the operations of the learner. . . .

The connection between structure and skills is that (1) both are independent of particular matter, and (2) skills keep structure in action, invisible, so that it does not become mere data. Thus I associate a structural curriculum with a functional approach.¹⁵

Finally, Moffett attacked the actual "content" of the new Literature Curriculums simply in their own terms. He questioned both the educational validity and the practical relevancy of the information the new programs were attempting to teach through discovery. If the new curriculums were attempting to get students to discover and analyze literary themes, critical theories, stylistic techniques and genre distinctions, is this knowledge, Moffett asked, worth

knowing to begin with? What is its importance, relevancy, and for how long will such information remain true? Is it real knowledge or mere opinion? And why is it so necessary for students to learn about what others have thought and said about literature and literary analysis:

. . . Any English teacher could drum up a grandiose thesis (such as, "Great literature reflects man's tragic conflict with himself"), illustrate it with selections from literature, and say that he had created a structural curriculum. I have four objections to this: it is old hat; it encourages a pre-digested, moralizing approach; it reveals more the structure of psychology and sociology than of literature; and even the structure of literature is not the structure of English. . . .

To the extent the English teacher has an obligation to familiarize the student with what has been written in the past, he rightly has a problem of content-coverage. But any approach that entailed plenty of reading could accomplish this. We no longer agree very much on what every gentleman ought to have read, and the survey of literature seems to have placed us more in the role of historian than we thought appropriate. Virtually any curriculum could sample the range of literature. Genre divisions satisfy a passion for taxonomy. Though perhaps the best classification of literature so far, genres are too cavalierly equated with form and structure. Actually, the structure of a novel or play is at least as much unique to itself as it is shared by other novels and plays. And some stories are poems, some poems stories, some plays essays, and some essays are stories or poems. Perhaps more than anything else, genres are marketing directives. As such, they provide convenient rhetorical bins. Pedagogically, they constitute a hazard by making both teachers and students feel that they have to "define" what a short story or a poem is, i.e., find something similar in all the examples. Even if this were not futile, one would be left with only a definition,

another substantive reduction that does not help one to read or write, or even appreciate. Since a definition would have to be of the form, not content, the very difficulty of definition suggests that we exaggerate greatly the formal similarities among members of the same genre.¹⁶

Moffett contended that the curriculum planners had simply and arbitrarily assumed that certain information was necessary for all students to know. But how does one establish priorities about what knowledge is necessary and useful? Moffett asked, "Why should physics be an elective and literary history required? Why offer linguistics in high school rather than psychology or anthropology, which might be deemed equally 'basic'?"¹⁷ Recall for a moment the lesson unit described by Shafer or refer back to the descriptions of the Nebraska and Oregon curriculums in Chapter I. In terms of educating for the future and in terms of developing the real thought processes necessary to enable students to learn on their own and inquire on their own, is it necessary to know, for example, who the speaker is in Milton's poem "On His Blindness"; and is it necessary in the long run (even for college bound high school students) to know the literary techniques and forms of the Tragedy, the Epic, the Lyric, and the Novel, or to be able to relate a piece of American fiction to one of the great American literary

themes: Puritanism, American Optimism and Romance, the New Eden, the West, etc.?

Both the analyses of Moffett and Shafer, in retrospect, can be seen as pleas for student-centeredness in education. What contents are to be taken up in school and what information is to be acquired ought to be determined, Moffett and Shafer implied, by the students themselves, by their own unique interests, concerns and natural curiosities. If curriculums are primarily concerned with sequencing information and knowledge only, then everything ought truly to be considered an elective, if educators intend to pay more than mere lip service to the doctrine "freedom to explore." This, of course, is not to deny that "content" and "knowledge" have no validity in and of themselves. But to state the problem that way, Moffett and Shafer would insist, would be to skirt the issue. Both believed that what is really important for true learning and productive intellectual growth was not content, but thought processes and language processes: student-centered, activity-directed, question-oriented learning experiences: somebody-talking-to-somebody-else-about-something.

The Student-centered Movement

The specific criticism levelled against the new content-structured curriculums in English were, in actuality, part of a much larger, more comprehensive educational movement that gradually emerged in the last decade in opposition to academic reform. In the early 1960's, as this report has indicated, the emphasis in education was clearly on intellectual excellence. Schools were being criticized for being too permissive, and to protect the "national security" public education in America tightened its standards across the board in an attempt to provide academic superiority and intellectual leadership. Administrators and teachers alike tried to re-make schools into high-powered scholastically-oriented institutions where students worked diligently all the time on their studies learning those things that were necessary to protect the future of America. In discussing the exploration of scientific subjects in The Process of Education, for example, Bruner believed that both the direction and motivation for learning would be supplied by the natural lure and curiosity that each different and unique discipline in and of itself provided. Finding out about things, discovering microscopic life for instance, or intuiting the basic

premises of plane geometry--these intellectual tasks, Bruner felt, would supply their own intrinsic rewards:

There is, to begin with, the question of the balance between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic ones. There has been much written on the role of reward and punishment in learning, but very little indeed on the role of interest and curiosity and the lure of discovery. If it is our intention as teachers to inure the child to longer and longer episodes of learning, it may well be that intrinsic rewards in the form of quickened awareness and understanding will have to be emphasized far more in the detailed design of curricula. One of the least discussed ways of carrying a student through a hard unit of material is to challenge him with a chance to exercise his full powers, so that he may discover the pleasure of full and effective functioning. Good teachers know the power of this lure. Students should know what it feels like to be completely absorbed in a problem. They seldom experience this feeling in school. Given enough absorption in class, some students may be able to carry over the feeling to work done on their own.¹⁸

Experts in all fields would map out what was to be learned and in what order, and every year; with research progressing and with more and more knowledge becoming available about each subject and how it might be structured, the future of American education was approached with both optimism and assurance: students would, no doubt, become brighter and brighter (when so challenged), learn more and learn faster, and spiral up through the curriculum to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, educators--the future

leaders of America. At the time it was earnestly believed that student-interest, subject-interest and teacher-interest were all fundamentally unified "if teaching is done well and (if) what we teach is worth teaching." Performance in science and math were especially emphasized, and Project English, as we have seen, was created to provide the same kind of excellence and the same kind of discipline for the study of English.

But there were a number of individuals actually teaching in the public schools at the time--a small coterie in the mid '60's, voices crying in the wilderness mostly--who gradually began to sense the potentially destructive directions inherent in education for "academic" ends rather than for "humane" ends. To these individuals the new discipline in education, far from producing instant success, had instead produced instant failure.

There was James Herndon who taught, as he put it, in a 97½% black junior high school on Chicago's South Side from 1959 to 1960; and there was Jonathan Kozol who substitute taught in a de facto segregated elementary classroom in the Boston Public School system during the academic year 1964-1965. The careers of both these teachers were noticeably short for each was summarily fired after one year's employ

for not adhering to curricular guidelines, for introducing "outside" literature into their classes, for not providing enough direct instruction and for not maintaining enough discipline and order. And finally there was Herbert Kohl who taught a sixth grade class of Harlem boys and girls in 1962 and 1963, and who showed what kinds of real learning could be accomplished by having the courage and the humanity to allow freedom, spontaneity and curiosity to blossom within his classroom.* Each of these gentlemen in his own unique way described an educational system at work vastly different from the success story everyone had anticipated--the public and the professional community alike.

Kozol recorded his experiences in a volume entitled Death at an Early Age. What is most noticeably absent from Kozol's account are discussions of education, learning

*See also:

Nat Hentoff, Our Children Are Dying (1966)

David Holbrook, English for the Rejected (1964)

After the Dartmouth Conference--1967--the list of student-centered publications on education becomes very long indeed. Four of the most influential and pertinent are:

George Dennison, The Lives of the Children (1969)

Herbert Kohl, The Open Classroom (1969)

N. Postman and C. Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity (1969)

John Holt, How Children Learn (1967)

theory and teaching practices, the reason being simply that real education was the least important concern of the particular school in which he taught. According to Kozol, the main purpose of his school was to keep order, keep silence, and keep the school system segregated. He charged that the Boston Public School System not only failed its students intellectually, but through racism and psychological brutalization, had also slowly and individually succeeded in destroying each of its children personally and emotionally as well. All day long, Kozol relates, his students learned rules and regulations and clung to the curriculum to a point where whatever was original and creative in them, whatever might have been theirs by virtue of fantasy or imagination became steadily discouraged and denied. No real learning was possible, no real education permitted. Kozol's book flatly condemned the whole Boston School System for both spiritual and psychological murder.

Several years after his experiences at George Washington Junior High School, James Herndon published The Way It Spozed to Be, and the way it was "spozed" to be wasn't the way it actually was at all. There was supposed to be order, discipline, and content-to-be-covered-in-sequence; and if these principles were followed, then advancement,

learning, and better test scores were supposed to result. But that isn't what Herndon's book described at all. In fact, Herndon, like Kozol, showed that exactly the opposite happened from what was "spoed" to happen. Instead of real learning and growth taking place, both discipline and a clearly defined syllabus retarded and subverted both teaching and learning. Chaos threatened on all sides, every day, from the frustration, tedium and pentup psychological emotion of each individual student in each of Herndon's six junior high classes, ranked by I.Q. scores, from A to H. No one advanced, no one got better scores, no one learned what he was supposed to. In an age intent on creating academic excellence, Herndon was teaching in a school where most of his students had not even learned to read! With the curriculum set, and with order and silence the great watchwords, Herndon relates that the only real choices, the only real freedoms the curriculum afforded his students was either to-do or not-to-do the assigned work:

Teachers are always willing to give advice to new (or old) teachers, and I talked to them all during those first six or seven weeks. . . . This advice was a conglomeration of dodges, tricks, gimmicks to get the kids to do what they were spoed to do, that is, whatever the teacher had in mind for them to do. It really involved a kind of gerry-mandering of the group--promises, favors, warnings, threats, letting you pass

out or not pass out paper, sit in a certain place or not, A's, plusses, stars, and also various methods for getting the class working before they knew it. The purpose of all these methods was to get and keep an aspect of order, which was reasonable enough, I suppose. But the purpose of this order was supposed to be so that "learning could take place." So everyone said--not wanting to be guilty of the authoritarian predilection for order for its own sake--while at the same time admitting that most of the kids weren't learning anything this way. . . . The material which was so important, which had to be "covered," was supposed to lead toward understanding, broader knowledge, scientific method, good citizenship or, more specifically, toward better writing, speech, figuring, grammar, geography, whatever it was. But actually what was happening was that they were presenting the students, every day, with something for them either to do or not-do, while keeping them through order from any other alternative. If a kid couldn't or wouldn't do his assignment, he had only the choice of not-doing it, of doing nothing. Almost every teacher admitted that this last was the choice of half the class on any given day.

The kids who chose to do the assignment seemed rarely to benefit from it; even if they did the speller conscientiously, their written work remained badly spelled. The A's promised as prize for hard work didn't materialize. . . . 7H raised hell with me about the second- and third-grade spellers. They needed seventh-grade spellers. They'd already had them second- and third-grade spellers for a number of years, they pointed out with some justification; they'd already not-done them a few times.¹⁹

Nor were these condemnations confined solely to poor ghetto schools. The experiences John Holt described in his 1964 publication How Children Fail took place in white, private schools with high standards and good reputations. His students, with very few exceptions, were well above

average in intelligence, "successful," and on their way to "good" secondary schools and colleges.

How Children Fail was perhaps the most disturbing of all to the academic community at the time, because, for the most part, Holt focused strictly on solid educational matters. And his main thesis was downright apocalyptic: under the pressure for high grades, knowledge-acquisition and "success" at all costs, and with the emphasis on testing and evaluation to clearly distinguish the more gifted student from the less, most children in school become too tense and too strung-out to either think intelligently or use their native capacities to their best advantage. The sort of constant academic pressure fostered within the classroom, Holt maintained, made most children in school scared and fearful and as a result many failed to develop more than a tiny part of their tremendous capacity for learning, understanding and creating with which they were born and of which they make full use during the first two or three years of their lives.²⁰ The fear of failing and of displeasing the many anxious adults around them, "whose limitless hopes and expectations for them hang over their heads like a cloud,"²¹ Holt asserted, fostered non-learning to a far greater extent than real learning:

Most children in school fail. . . .

They fail because they are afraid, bored, and confused.

They are afraid, above all else, of failing, of disappointing or displeasing. . . .

They are bored because the things they are given and told to do in school are so trivial, so dull, and make such limited and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capabilities, and talents.

They are confused because most of the torrent of words that pours over them in school makes little or no sense. It often flatly contradicts other things they have been told, and hardly ever has any relation to what they really know--to the rough model of reality that they carry around in their minds . . . schools foster bad strategies, raise children's fears, produce learning which is usually fragmentary, distorted, and short-lived, and generally fail to meet the real needs of children.²²

Holt noticed that under the necessity to succeed in school, most children become "producer" thinkers and "answer-grabbers" rather than real learners. With content clearly defined and with the pressure steadily on, it becomes vitally important for students to learn to produce the right answer, rather than to learn how to concentrate on meaning, relevance, or connectedness:

. . . most children in school are answer-centered. . . . They see a problem as a kind of announcement that, far off in some mysterious Answerland, there is an answer, which they are supposed to go out and find. Some children begin right away to try to pry this answer out of the mind of the teacher. Little children are good at this. They know, especially if they are cute-looking, that if they look baffled or frightened enough, teacher will usually tell them what they need to know. This is called "helping them." Bolder children are

ready to sally forth into Answerland in a kind of treasure hunt for the answer. For them, the problem is an answer-getting recipe, a set of hints or clues telling them what to do, like instructions for finding buried pirate treasure--go to the big oak, walk a hundred paces in line with the top of the church steeple, etc. These producers think, "Let's see, what did I do last time I had a problem like this?" If they remember their recipes, and don't mix them up, they may be good at the answer-hunting game, and the answers they bring home may often be right ones.²³

Good learners, however, Holt maintained, are problem-centered and inquiry-oriented rather than answer centered:

The problem-centered person sees a problem as a statement about a situation, from which something has been left out. In other words, there is in this situation a relationship or consequence that has not been stated and that must be found. He attacks the problem by thinking about the situation, by trying to create it whole in his mind. When he sees it whole, he knows which part has been left out, and the answer comes almost by itself. The answer to any problem, school problem, is in the problem, only momentarily hidden from view. Finding it is like finding a missing piece in a jigsaw puzzle. If you look at the empty space in the puzzle, you know the shape of the piece that must fill it.²⁴

Furthermore, the answer-centered individual, Holt asserted, made more or less uncritical use of rules and formulae to get his answer, for he would work under great strain and a basic lack of self-confidence induced by a curriculum that appeared both insurmountable and of questionable relevance to his own particular life-style and

interests. As a result, the average school child would quickly jump at a possible right answer, instead of trying to think, analyze, intuit and infer--intellectual abilities, Holt avered, all normal children possess and use before they come to school.*

But perhaps what made the situation even more distressing, Holt noted, was that when answer-centered children failed to produce the correct response--the one the curriculum demanded, the one the teacher sought--they inevitably fell back into defeatism and self-despair because they simply didn't know what else to do and had no where else to turn.²⁶ The school structure--as perceived by Holt, Hern-
don, Kohl, etc.--in most instances simply would not allow children the freedom and opportunity to develop really

*Holt himself presents an interesting side-point on this whole notion of natural aptitude and failure. In the world beyond the school, he asserted, in the real world, children fail all the time. Most of the explorations of children, in their efforts to predict and control their environment, don't work. But this sort of failure doesn't hinder further learning simply because there are no penalties attached, except nature's own. In fact, failure is a necessary condition to assure that further learning will occur. In other words, Holt was convinced it was the schools themselves that taught that failure was shameful. In all natural learning, the child is not concerned with protecting himself against everything that is easy and familiar, but instead reaches out to experience and to embrace life. In the real world children live "beyond praise or blame."²⁵

productive and worthwhile learning strategies. In short, Holt asserted, that most children in school are not very good at all at playing the answer-content game, and so instead of becoming good learners, they become frustrated and unhappy individuals who develop defensive and evasive growth strategies and who dissipate their intellectual energies on routine tasks and limiting curricular objectives. Under such circumstances, children, of necessity, learn to devise elaborate psychological strategies aimed solely at avoiding embarrassment, punishment, disapproval, loss of status, and above all else the enigma of stupidity. Holt lists many of these defensive strategies in How Children Fail:²⁷

- 1) First of all, there are the wild-stabbers-and-don't-look-backers. These children will produce, through fear, any answer in an attempt to get a right one, right away.
- 2) Secondly, there are the pretend-you-really-know-the-answer-so-you-won't-get-called-on type.
- 3) Then there are the mumblers: these children will purposely attempt to mumble and disguise their answer, hoping that the teacher--who is anxiously waiting to hear the "right" answer (as proof that everything is happening the way it is supposed to)--will presume the muffled response to be correct.
- 4) Other children slavishly attempt to imitate and answer the way the smart kids do. This is one of the "better" defensive strategies.

- 5) Then of course, Holt related, there are always the bet-hedgers and the fence-straddlers.
- 6) And the wait-and-it-outers. These children, Holt maintained, learn quickly that teachers can't stand not getting the right answer almost as much as they can't. So they simply wait until the teacher succumbs to the pressure and supplies the answer.
- 7) And finally, for the most desperate, there is only silence--no response. These children, usually among the poorest learners and the least confident, simply withdraw from the game completely in an attempt to salvage for themselves at least a measure of self respect and dignity.

All of these strategies, Holt maintained, may be classified under what game theorists call "minimax"--the object of which is to maximize your chances of winning and minimize your losses if you should lose:

Schools and teachers seem generally to be as blind to children's strategies as I was. Otherwise, they would teach their courses and assign their tasks so that students who really thought about the meaning of the subject would have the best chance of succeeding, while those who tried to do the tasks by illegitimate means, without thinking or understanding, would be foiled. But the reverse seems to be the case. Schools give every encouragement to producers, the kids whose idea is to get "right answers" by any and all means. In a system that runs on "right answers," they can hardly help it. And these schools are often very discouraging places for thinkers.²⁸

Holt concluded that most children consciously adopt the learning strategies of failure, for when pupils fail,

he asserted, they are no longer under tension, no longer in pain and can't be expected to perform: "children to whom making mistakes is acutely painful are, therefore, under great tension when doing something correctly . . . only someone freed from worrying about success and failure is ready to use his brains:"²⁹

. . . I can read their thoughts on their faces, I can almost hear them, "Am I going to get this right? Probably not; what'll happen to me when I get it wrong? Will the teacher get mad? Will the other kids laugh at me? Will my mother and father hear about it? Will they keep me back this year? Why am I so dumb?" And so on. . . .

These self-limiting and self-defeating strategies are dictated, above all else, by fear. For many years I have been asking myself why intelligent children act unintelligently at school. The simple answer is, "Because they're scared." I used to suspect that children's defeatism had something to do with their bad work in school, but I thought I could clear it away with hearty cries of "Onward! You can do it!" What I now see for the first time is the mechanism by which fear destroys intelligence, the way it affects a child's whole way of looking at, thinking about, and dealing with life. So we have two problems, not one: to stop children from being afraid, and then to break them of the bad thinking habits into which their fears have driven them. . . .³⁰

And at times, Holt was so perceptively accurate about the way it is, we can do nothing but shudder:

. . . most children in school are scared most of the time, many of them very scared. Like good soldiers, they control their fears, live with them, and adjust

themselves to them. But the trouble is, and here is a vital difference between school and war, that the adjustments children make to their fears are almost wholly bad, destructive of their intelligence and capacity. The scared fighter may be the best fighter, but the scared learner is always a poor learner. . . . Maybe I thought the students were in my class because they were eager to learn what I was trying to teach, but they knew better. They were in school because they had to be, or because otherwise they would have had to be in another class, which might be even worse. . . .

So the valiant and resolute band of travelers I thought I was leading toward a much-hoped-for destination turned out instead to be more like convicts in a chain gang, forced under threat of punishment to move along a rough path leading nobody knew where and down which they could see hardly more than a few steps ahead. School feels like this to children: it is a place where they make you go and where they tell you to do things and where they try to make your life unpleasant if you don't do them or don't do them right.³¹

It is painfully obvious to note at this point that the descriptions provided by Holt and Herndon, etc. of the schools-in-operation in the 1960's aligns almost point for point with both Moffett's and Shafer's criticisms of the new content-structured curriculums in Literature being developed at the time under Project English. Real learning, "growth into thought," Shafer intimated, most likely required not pre-formulation, but rather positive, authentic choice and the freedom to explore. And Moffett, it will be recalled, advocated that what an English Curriculum ought to provide is not an arbitrary sum of contents and knowledges,

but rather "a rich set of options."

Holt, too, was aware of the "new" teaching methods--induction and discovery--and he criticized them for precisely the same reasons that Moffett and Shafer did: they failed to provide for authentic learning experiences:

. . . We must not fool ourselves, as for years I fooled myself, into thinking that guiding children to answers by carefully chosen leading questions is in any important respect different from just telling them the answers in the first place. Children who have been led up to answers by teachers' questions are later helpless unless they can remember the questions, or ask themselves similar questions, and this is exactly what they cannot do. The only answer that really sticks in a child's mind is the answer to a question that he asked or might ask of himself.³²

But perhaps one of the remarks of Holt's students provides the most insight into the basic inadequacies of the "new" curriculums and the "new" teaching methods. After a game of Twenty Questions (Holt frequently played this game with his pupils to study firsthand their learning strategies) Holt recorded in How Children Fail that the more sophisticated players--those few who had learned to ask good questions--tried in vain to tell their answer-grabbing classmates that "it is silly to ask a question when you already know the answer."³³

Real Learning

Real learning and real growth--Holt, Herndon, Kohl, Kozol, etc. protested--are not and can never be fully conceived of in terms of subject-matters, contents, curriculums or information. Instead, each of these individuals considered the students themselves to be the single most important school input. True learning--learning that is permanent and useful, that leads to intelligent action and further learning--can arise, each came to believe in his own way, only out of the experiences, interests, cultures, strengths, and opinions of the learners themselves and means providing students with both the freedom and the opportunities to use their minds in potentially good ways, rather than unproductive and limiting ways.

Academic reform had assumed that education ought to primarily concern itself with intellectual pursuits, that it was through the discovery of subject-matter that good learners were produced and that, therefore, schools ought to attempt to plan out, structure and sequence content in the most logical and rational ways possible commensurate with both the nature of the material on the one hand and the cognitive growth patterns of children on the other. It was earnestly believed that an intense involvement with the

structure of knowledge itself would be sufficient to enlarge and expand a child's mind.

But student-centered education poses that this is not how children come to learn at all. Children do not see contents, or sequences, or structural relationships in the ways that adults do, and they do not necessarily see the universe of knowledge as being either rational or logical. At any moment, a child is attempting to make sense of the world in his own terms. Structuring contents and formulating elaborate curriculums are adult passions and adult biases which hinder growth, because student-centeredness sees true learning as proceeding from how the student, not the teacher, perceives the world about him:

Children cannot learn much from cookbooks, even the best cookbooks. A child learns, at any moment, not by using the procedure that seems best to us, but the one that seems best to him; by fitting into his structure of ideas and relationships, his mental model of reality, not the piece we think comes next, but the one he thinks comes next. This is hard for teachers to learn, and hardest of all for the skillful and articulate, the kind often called "gifted." The more aware we are of the structural nature of our own ideas, the more we are tempted to try to transplant this structure whole into the minds of children. But it cannot be done. They must do this structuring and building for themselves.

. . . ³⁴

Knowledge, learning, understanding, are not linear. They are not little bits of facts lined up in rows or piled up one on top of another. A field of knowledge, whether it be math, English, history, science, music,

or whatever, is a territory, and knowing it is not just a matter of knowing all the items in the territory, but of knowing how they relate to, compare with, and fit in with each other. It is the difference between being able to say a room in your house has so many tables, so many chairs, so many lamps, and being able to close your eyes and see that this chair goes here and that table there. It is the difference between knowing the names of all the streets in a city and being able to get from any place, by any desired route, to any other place.³⁵

Simply, student-centeredness views every individual as already being a well-functioning, very capable learning model before he enters school and sees every person as possessing an innate and unquenchable drive to understand the world in which he lives and to gain freedom and competence in dealing with that world:

Almost every child, on the first day he sets foot in a school building, is smarter, more curious, less afraid of what he doesn't know, better at finding and figuring things out, more confident, resourceful, persistent and independent than he will ever again be in his schooling, or, unless he is very unusual and lucky, for the rest of his life.³⁶

The normal individual gets satiated and bored with experiences and delights that he has savored sufficiently and eagerly goes on to higher more complex intellectual delights as they become available to him without danger or threat. Student-centeredness sees growth and learning as naturally

pleasurable, rewarding, and exciting experiences that exist with or without school, with or without curriculums, and only if frustration, failure, disapproval, and ridicule await at the next step do people then fixate and regress. In the first six years of life, all children already possess and have used to great advantage what Postman and Wein-gartner in Teaching as a Subversive Activity list as the qualities of good learners:³⁷

- 1) Good learners have confidence in their ability to learn
- 2) They have a profound faith in their problem-solving ability
- 3) They enjoy solving problems
- 4) They seem to know what is relevant to their survival and what is not
- 5) They prefer to rely on their own judgment
- 6) They are not afraid to take chances and be wrong and to learn from their mistakes
- 7) They are capable of changing their minds
- 8) They are not apt to give quick answers
- 9) They are capable of shifting perspectives, and try to see problems from the point of view of others.
- 10) They realize that answers are relative
- 11) They know how to ask good questions and they know how to question their own assumptions

- 12) And finally, they do not need to have an absolute answer to every problem

But as Holt, Herndon, Kohl, Moffett, etc. demonstrated, school curriculums, with their emphasis on performance, content-acquisition and discipline, slowly and steadily tend to erode the natural learning capabilities of children and turn these good strategies into defensive ones. In other words, student-centeredness sees no need to challenge children to learn by presenting them with fully-articulated curriculums, for children are already challenged intellectually, every day, in their encounters with the real world, with real experiences and explorations. In fact, student-centeredness sees the whole sequential content curriculum craze as encompassing a grand irony: the new academic curriculums were intended to open up vast areas of learning for both students and teachers alike, but instead, by failing to rely on the natural learning abilities of pupils pursuing their own intellectual ends in their own ways, the new curriculums (even those as enormous as Nebraska's) in actuality were offering an education that was both limited and stultifying; by forcing children to concentrate on specific "contents" and "particular" books, instead of greatly developing the powers of thought, the

new curriculums had managed to seriously constrict what children are really capable of learning under their own inclinations and left to their own designs.

This later point was dramatically illustrated by James Herndon in The Way It Spozed to Be. Herndon related that most of his seventh graders couldn't read very well, some not at all. But one of the "alleged" better readers in the class, a black girl named Alexandra, alone faced the reading issue with both defiance and aplomb, instead of simple defeat like most of Herndon's students: "She read like hell. Whatever was given to her, she just read right along, stumbling occasionally, but always recovering and getting everything right."³⁸ Then Herndon discovered what was actually happening. Alexandra was listening to Judy (the only "real" reader in the class) who was sitting right behind her whispering the words for Alexandra to repeat aloud. Herndon, therefore, moved the two girls apart to see what would happen. And then the real shock came. Alexandra remained non-plussed; she merely paused every so often to look over at Judy--in order to read her lips! In short, while George Washington Junior High had failed to teach many of its students to read, this one student of Herndon's had learned, on her own, necessitated by the

instincts of survival and fear, to read lips, an abstract, intellectual task at least equally complex as learning to read itself. Imagine what this girl could have accomplished, Herndon related, "if she'd have spent one tenth of the time learning to read that she'd spent avoiding it . . . the other non-readers, or almost non-readers, applied similar tactics, to the effect that it was more honorable to appear bad than stupid."³⁹ In terms of what individual students might come to know, given the opportunity, the sequential curriculums of the 1960's, in retrospect, can be seen to actually make very few demands on the wide spectrum of students' intellectual capabilities and talents and to fail ultimately in teaching what children so desperately need to learn: abstraction, self-confidence, inquiry, appreciation, the ability to think.⁴⁰ The new curriculums, unwittingly, had sacrificed a large measure of real learning potential for a small increase in the amount of information gained.

While educational theory, in general, in America has traditionally emphasized the Cognitive, rather than the Affective aspects of learning, and prized reason and intelligence more highly than personal values, imagination and creativity (even during the height of the progressive movement), Student-centeredness in education, as initiated by

Holt, Kohl, Kozol, etc. and since followed by many more, in education as well as psychology and sociology, sees itself as departing radically from the cognitive tradition. For basically, student-centeredness considers what an individual learns to be of less importance for intelligent growth than how that individual feels about what he learns, since it is believed that how children feel in school (how the classroom is meeting their wishes, fantasies and inner desires) and, even more importantly, how children feel about themselves, will determine, for the most part, both the amount of motivation and confidence that individual students will bring to intellectual problems. Simply, a student is more likely to learn and exceed expectations when he feels good about what he learns; when he experiences a sense of "inner joy" from knowing he is making positive choices about what and how he should learn; and when he feels he is determining his own existence and fulfilling his own unique sense of freedom and individuality. By the same token if a pupil has no personal stake or involvement in the learning process, then he must be motivated to learn by a way other than his own inner curiosity. And when schools are forced to motivate extrinsically--through grades, discipline, rigid curriculums and/

or inauthentic "discovery" methods*--then, as we have seen, inefficient, non-productive learning results. Student-centeredness sees education as something a person gets for himself and not as something someone else gives or does to him; and it sees knowledge, not as something to be imparted to students, but instead as something "drawn out" of individuals by enhancing those qualities in method and attitude which are most conducive to how each particular student grows and learns in terms of his own unique and subjective experiences. While content-learning must center itself about subject-matters that a student must acquire, like adding coins to one's pocket, real growth and real change, in student-centered-humanistic terms, becomes much less an acquisition of habits or a discovery of associations one by one, and much more a total change of the total person--"a new person rather than the same person with some concepts added like new external possessions."⁴¹

While most of the educational community in the 1960's was attempting to structure knowledge and manipulate children, Kozol, Kohl, Moffett, Holt, etc. were desperately

*I would also list here the current, somewhat popular, performance contracting.

trying to understand them. They realized early that children were not just minds eating through contents, but whole human beings, all aspects of which are, at any moment, totally involved in every learning encounter: "Children live all of a piece. Their bodies, their muscles, their voices and brains are all hooked together; turn off a part of them and you turn them off altogether."⁴² In these terms, then, a real learning experience is self-justifying: that is, the experience validates itself in and for itself, rather than by becoming justified by some outside criterion. A real learning experience is not defensive and does not operate from threat and fear; but is rather growth-oriented, and fully embraces both intellectual independence and freedom of thought and action. Real learning impels the individual toward wholeness of self, toward full functioning of one's capacities, toward spontaneity, delight, creativity, and confidence in the fact of the external world:

We don't [learn] . . . because it is good for us, or because . . . [people] approve, or because somebody told us to, or because it will make us live longer . . . or because it will bring external rewards, or because it is logical. We do it for the same reason that we choose one dessert over another . . . or for choosing one friend over another. . . .

In this way we learn what we are good at, what we really like or dislike, what our tastes, and judgments, and capacities are. In a word, this is the way we

discover the Self and answer the ultimate questions:
Who am I? What am I?

The steps and the choices are taken out of pure spontaneity, from within outward. The healthy infant or child, just Being, as part of his Being, is randomly and spontaneously curious, exploratory, wondering, interested . . . he tends to try out his powers, to reach out, to be absorbed, fascinated . . . to play, to wonder, to manipulate the world. Exploring, manipulating, experiencing . . . can all be seen as attributes of pure Being, and yet lead to Becoming (change, growth), though in a serendipitous way, unplanned and unanticipated.⁴³

In the final analysis, then, Student-centeredness sees the ultimate goal of education, not as knowledge, but as self-knowledge. Personal, healthy growth and self-discovery become crucial concepts and student-centered-humanistic education sees itself as providing the opportunity for (A) Inner Growth--the discovery of what kind of a person one is and what talents and strengths one possesses, and beyond this to an experiencing of a self-identity that is positive, worthy and valuable solely in its own terms, and (B) Outer Growth--coming to know the world outside through a personal understanding of one's inner self, each individual learning what he perceives to be most self-enriching for him, and where school comes to be a place, a resource almost, where the world and the world's knowledge is approached from the inside out. What students need more than knowledge is

attention, freedom and understanding; and student-centeredness sees the primary responsibility of the school as providing each of its charges with the opportunity to go about learning in his own unique ways, using the good strategies he already possesses, discovering those matters he wants to explore at any particular moment, at his own pace, and in accord with his own abilities and natural inclinations.

Student-centered education emphatically posits, therefore, that for efficient learning--and for the attainment of all those highly prized intellectual ends--there can be no real distinction between the cognitive and affective aspects of the learning process. In fact, Humanist Education would insist that the cognitive can be approached only through the affective: that one's emotional experiences, vital personal concerns, unique perceptions, and particular learning strengths and abilities are the crucial variables that determine what a person comes to know and how well equipped one is to meet and solve problems in the future. Abraham Maslow, whose Third Force Psychology has provided the student-centered movement with a strong psychological basis, sums up this particular notion quite well in an article entitled, "Self-Actualization and Beyond:"

If I love Beethoven and I hear something in a Quartet that you don't, how do I teach you to hear it? The noises are there obviously, but I hear something very, very beautiful, and you look blank. You hear the sounds, how do I get you to hear the beauty? This is more our problem in teaching than making you learn the ABC's or demonstrating arithmetic on the board or pointing to a dissection of a frog. These kinds of things are external, and this kind of teaching is easy. The other kind is much harder. . . .⁴⁴

Maslow is of course suggesting that cognitively-oriented teaching which rests purely on analysis, logical implementation, and dissection is inadequate and insufficient. Direct instruction is easy because it is external and non-personal, and represents only one man's way of conceiving a subject and putting structure to a content. The new way of educating is more difficult. It means letting students become personally involved in the material, generating their own meanings and structures; it means communicating with students on a personal level; it means letting an individual's natural curiosity and motivation stir him and build his confidence; and finally, humanistic teaching tries to let people respond to the beauty first--a beauty of their own devising and creating, a beauty that is part of each student's personal identity and experience. Simply the most effective learning results when one's affective needs and cognitive needs are being satisfied at the same time,

and the chances for learning to occur will be maximized if the learner's feelings and concerns are recognized, validated, and made to direct the cognition that logically should follow.⁴⁵

Education for self-knowledge, then, implies that schools must strive to promote an atmosphere which is basically non-threatening, self-accepting, and non-competitive. Carl Rogers, along with Maslow, also feels that there are three basic essentials for student-centered education: (1) psychological safety: creativity and learning spring from people slowly coming to realize that they can be what they want, learn what they want, and express what they want, without sham or facade; (2) the absence of external evaluation: grades are always a threat and always create a need for defensiveness. (But perhaps even more importantly, "evaluation means that some portion of experience must be denied to awareness."); and (3) empathetic understanding: teachers and students must establish trusting relationships, for, to facilitate the learning of others, all involved must be prepared to learn and grow themselves.⁴⁶

In addition, here are a number of classroom attitudes endorsed by student-centered philosophies of education--

attitudes intended to encourage self-growth and promote real learning:

- 1) Relying minimally on pat answers and solutions in learning experiences.
- 2) Accepting unconditionally each student's language and experience.
- 3) Removing the threat of grades as a mark of failure, as punishment, or as norms of minimum achievement.
- 4) Allowing free self-expression.
- 5) Encouraging students to bring their actual life circumstances to bear upon the problems at hand in the classroom.
- 6) Providing students with democratic power to help draft school policy and school curriculums.
- 7) Providing freedom of self-determination. Students must feel that their presence in school is influencing their self-chosen life-style in a positive way.
- 8) Making student concerns just as important as subject-matter.
- 9) Letting students know that their opinions and ideas really count for something.
- 10) Opening classrooms to innovation and experimentation.
- 11) Providing opportunities for real, meaningful choice.
- 12) Encouraging inter-action and communication that is genuine and not a bidding for the teacher's approval.
- 13) Realizing that more learning and growth can occur through co-operation and interaction rather than through competition.⁴⁷

- 14) Being willing to learn from what one's students offer.
- 15) Playing a lot.
- 16) Subordinating teaching to learning.⁴⁸
- 17) Realizing that students know intuitively that inner meaning is more important than outside authority.⁴⁹

But while teachers must offer their students respect for what they choose to learn, they should at the same time let their pupils know that there is genuine help and guidance available for when they fail, or attempt something beyond their capabilities. Teachers ought to have confidence in the power of their students to succeed and ought to encourage freedom of choice, inquiry, curiosity, and the willingness to guess and to predict theories and solutions to problems. But while freedom and choice are emphasized here, student-centered philosophies of education in general make it quite clear that there is a grave distinction between purposeless chaos and creative disorder,⁵⁰ between simply offering one choices and offering choiceful, guided possibilities that all tend toward real learning in various ways, wherein one can be a daring learner and at the same time maintain his need for safety, integrity, and self-respect. Successful teaching lies in the kinds of

experiences offered to students and the attitudes underlying them. Student-centeredness sees the relationship between the intellect and the affect as indestructibly symbiotic, and instead of denying the situation, it attempts to use the integration to the best advantage, since student-centeredness sees this as the way people actually do learn: and there is no reason to suppose that what and how a learner feels cannot be integrated with what schools believe one should know.⁵¹ Humanistic education sees many children in school today who do not seem to learn as well as they might because they simply are not clear about who they are, what their lives are for, or what is worth learning and striving for.⁵² Perhaps Carl Rogers provides the best insight into the basic inadequacy of structure-centered, academic philosophies of education. In Freedom to Learn he tersely states:

Education implies a trust in the human organism and in its potentialities. If I distrust the human being then I must cram him full of information of my own choosing, lest he go on in his mistaken ways. But if I trust the capacity of the human individual for developing his own potentialities, then I can provide him with many opportunities and permit him to choose his own way, his own direction, and move to self-discipline in his own way.⁵³

The Hooked on Books Program

While the Brunerian, academic philosophies of education represented the dominant trend in English curriculum reform during the 1960's, there was one English program which attempted to integrate student-centeredness with new curricular designs. The unique and different approach to teaching English and Literature developed at the University of Michigan under the direction of Daniel Fader represented the first (pre-Dartmouth) practical attempt to implement the new student-centered theories of education within a non-structured conceptualization of curricular design. And in the end, Fader proved that the new idealisms of student-centered teaching could work given the opportunity and the effort necessary for success in any such endeavor.

In the summer of 1964 Daniel Fader accepted the challenge to construct an English and reading program for the "dropouts" at the W. J. Maxey Boys' Training School in Whitmore Lake, Michigan. As far as Fader and his colleagues could ascertain no one had ever previously attempted to devise a workable curriculum specially designed for the general student; or more specifically, for the inner city disenchanting individual: the Dropout, the Unteachable and

the Unreachable. And the task was even more difficult than at first anticipated for the students at Maxey were even less capable than the average "lower-tracked" student. Fader reported that individual literacy quotients at Maxey ranged from barely marginal to nonexistent.⁵⁴

At first, Fader and his associates from the departments of Education and Psychology at the Ann Arbor campus did not know where to begin. They began traditionally, investigating materials, exploring current teaching practices and interviewing teachers. The project's original assumption was that language training was a matter of discovering techniques and developing materials to effect lasting changes in performance.⁵⁵ In other words, the Michigan Project was originally locked into the Brunerian content/method bifurcation. After a succession of failures, however, Fader and his colleagues scrapped the materials/method philosophy and began to get personally involved with the students they were attempting to teach. Gradually the root of the problem--and possible solutions--emerged. It was not materials or methods or sequencing or "transfer" or "drill" or "exposure" that could reach the students at Maxey, but rather attitude and motivation. The boys at Maxey perceived themselves as social failures and the public

schools, with their emphases on scholastic attainment, success, and with the tracking system, had helped to reinforce that attitude. Education was to provide the means for a better life, but to the students at Maxey, school (and especially English and Literature) had become a totally irrelevant social institution when compared to the hopelessness and brutality of their lives. In Hooked on Books, the popular paperback detailing Maxey's innovative program for teaching English, Daniel Fader explained the concept of teaching for attitude in this manner: Fader became convinced that general-tracked students are not themselves entirely responsible for their failure. Performance-oriented middle-class students--for whom all of the other Project English curriculums were intended--could reasonably cope with a system unconcerned about attitude and feeling toward learning; that is, such students could run through the irrelevancies of content curriculums because a better life (college and/or a job) waited at the end of the game. But for society's failures an attitude of self-worth and a sense of accomplishment had to be developed first. The students at Maxey would learn only if what they did in school related directly to the personal concerns and/or pleasures of their individual lives. Since Fader's

program was aimed at changing student attitude toward reading, writing, and literature, his curriculum was based on two very new and different concepts of teaching English effectively--Diffusion and Saturation.

Fader explained that Diffusion refers to what good English teachers have done or tried to do or wanted to do in schools and classrooms everywhere: convince their colleagues in all subjects that English must be taught by each teacher in every classroom, and provide materials for teaching literacy which invite the general student to learn. "English in Every Classroom" helps change attitude, Fader believed, because each teacher in the school becomes in effect an intermediary between the student and functional literacy, so that from one end of the school day to the other the student must come to view reading and writing as a necessary means to all ends.⁵⁶

Saturation, however, was the real key concept to Fader's reading and literature program. Simply put, saturation considers the influence of the child's total school environment, and the attitude of the students to learn to read, and more importantly, to learn to enjoy reading. It proposes radically that curriculums do away with texts and lists of sequentially arranged literature selections and

units designed about the concepts of teaching the approaches to literature through structures and instead surround the student in school with newspapers, magazines and paperbound books that invite people to read for pleasure first. With the Maxey student it was Fader's belief that what literature programs ought to stress is not what students ought to read and ought to know about, but rather what students will read. Fader explained that publishers, editors and writers know that commercial survival depends upon producing words and sentences that people will read. Financial disaster is the reward for creating paragraphs that people should read:

Whereas saturation refers to the materials used in every classroom to induce the child to enter the doorway of literacy, diffusion refers to the responsibility of every teacher in every classroom to make the house of literacy attractive.⁵⁷

In addition, saturation attempts to relate what the student reads to the world outside the school building. Fader felt it absolutely necessary, therefore, to import materials from that world for the teaching of the literacy that the world required. Fader believed that English teachers had for too long ignored such materials as unworthy of the better world schools and curriculums have traditionally been dedicated to creating. But Fader's program in

fact yielded to none in its desire to make a better world, and to do so he believed that curriculums must attempt to educate students to deal with the world as it is, and no literature he felt better represented that world than the various periodicals and newspapers abounding in the streets and neighborhoods just outside the classroom doors.

The Hooked on Books program differed from the curriculums of the other project centers in several significant ways:

- 1) Fader's program advanced the radical proposition that "students are not scholars or machines but people and should be treated accordingly when being induced to learn."⁵⁸
- 2) For effective learning to result, curriculums must first be concerned with the attitudes and emotions of the learner.
- 3) "Hooked on Books" proposed a radically different concept of "materials."
- 4) Fader's program was totally non-Brunerian; instead it was student-centered and pleasure oriented.
- 5) The program saw learning and growth as organic processes.
- 6) It focused on the quantity and not necessarily on the quality of what was read.*

*It is interesting to note here that Kohl, Kozol and Herndon all begin to experience "success" in their classes when they decided to scrap the school curriculum, begin to

In addition, the Hooked on Books approach shared the attitudes on the nature of English-as-a-school-subject advanced by James Moffett in "A Structural Curriculum for English." Fader maintained that individuals learn to read and write and to appreciate literature not by analyzing structures or transferring concepts from one content to another, but instead by actually doing language: in short, one learns to read by reading and to write by writing. Language, Fader asserted, cannot be taught in isolation, in the abstractions of textbooks and learning units. To promote literacy, the Whitmore Lake program firmly rooted language in the real concerns and experiences of actual people who communicate daily in a verbally-oriented society. Fader's program suggested that the language contexts of the real world become in effect the curriculum of the English classroom, where reading and writing "become as natural as

teach in open-ended student-centered ways, and establish a real dialogue with their pupils in honest, respectful relationships. Who can forget the real learning just beginning to take place in Herndon's class when several of his students respond, in a script and pantomime of their own composing, to the fairy tale "Cinderella"; and it is completely impossible to dismiss the accomplishments of H. Kohl's 36 children, especially Maurice's "Autobiography" and Robert Jackson's novel, Journey Through Space and Time.

eating, talking, and sleeping."⁵⁹

But while the Hooked on Books approach was highly successful with respect to showing the importance of student attitude and self-concept in the learning process in what was essentially a student-centered approach to English, Fader's program failed to provide a coherent philosophy for the teaching of English or Literature. Fader demonstrated that the motivation for real learning and the acquisition of literacy and beyond could result from a method attempting to deal with people in human, rather than academic terms. But when it came to actually working with literature (any literature--the literature of the street as well as stories and poems of higher quality) within an authentic classroom situation outside the Maxey school, Fader's program fell back on lesson plans and structures that almost completely negated the humane philosophies of education upon which his entire approach to learning was founded. His lesson units and class objectives for both West Side Story and Ann Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (in the Hooked on Books paperback) are as detailed, structured, inauthentic, content-oriented and limiting as any of the lesson units developed at the more traditional project centers: Nebraska, Carnegie-Mellon, etc.

While firmly believing in student-centeredness, and while demonstrating its effectiveness for English teaching, what the Hooked on Books approach lacked, essentially, was the coherence and "creativity" that the theory "The Response to Literature" was to provide several years later at the Dartmouth Conference.

CHAPTER III

THE DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE

AND

THE RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

Affective responses come from people who are not necessarily organized and complete, and literary response, at school and college, is often crazily expected to come off in the same way in different people responding to literature from widely different periods and cultures. Response is a word that reminds the teacher that the experience of art is a thing of our making, an activity in which we are our own interpretative artist. The dryness of schematic analysis of imagery, symbols, myth, structural relations, et al. should be avoided passionately at school and often at college. It is literature, not literary criticism, which is the subject. It is vividly plain that it is much easier to teach literary criticism than to teach literature, just as it is easier to teach children to write according to abstract models of correctness than to use their own voices.

Wallace Douglas
Barbara Hardy
"The Dartmouth Conference"

Our New work is growing up--mere instruction will not suffice.

Marshall McLuhan
The Medium is the Message

The Dartmouth Conference

The Anglo-American Conference on the teaching and learning of English met at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in the late summer of 1966. For a period of four weeks there were joined together forty-eight scholars and specialists in teaching English in the public schools and colleges: twenty-seven from the United States, twenty from the United Kingdom, and one from Canada. Since this was the first large-scale international conference on the teaching of English, the participants were carefully selected to assure diversity of experience, interest, and point of view. Some were teachers in primary and secondary schools, others teachers in schools of education, and still others university professors concerned about what had been going on in public education. They included specialists in the various disciplines of English--literature, linguistics, creative writing, rhetoric, composition and communication skills--and a dozen or so other specialists, including psychologists, psycholinguists, and sociologists who visited the Seminar from time to time as consultants.¹

The participants at Dartmouth were concerned about precisely the same issues as the Curriculum Project Centers: attempting to define English and thus establish a coherent

methodology for teaching it effectively. Only four years earlier many in the profession had thought that the problem would be solved by now for Project English would soon be completing its work based on the theories and principles of the New Math and the New Science. But as the preceding chapter served to illustrate a great deal of change and a great many new ideas had emerged in the few short years since the structure-centered Nebraska Project had been funded early in 1962, and upon re-examination many both within and without the profession had found the entire academic-Brunerian formulation unsuitable as a curricular guide for English. Despite the fact that the Project Centers were completing their Curriculums and preparing them for national distribution, a sense of dissatisfaction and a new skepticism had slowly surfaced among the more prominent in the profession: the criticisms of Holt, Herndon, Fader, Shafer, Kozol and Moffett could not be ignored. When Dartmouth formally convened, therefore, even those participants who had been directly involved with the structure-centered programs of Project English could be listed among the doubters: Paul A. Olson of Nebraska, W. W. Douglas of Northwestern, and Albert Kitzhaber and Wayne O'Neill of Oregon; all had themselves begun a painful re-evaluation

process and their misgivings were publicly voiced at the Conference. Albert Kitzhaber, in an opening address to the participants, remarked of the academic-oriented curriculums for English:

I would like to be able to tell you that they have all been carefully planned, and that each has been assigned to work on a predetermined segment or aspect of the curriculum to insure uniform coverage of the whole. I would like to assure you that the work of all two dozen is being carefully coordinated, and that all are producing uniformly excellent results. None of these is true. We are all muddling along, working hard but often rather aimlessly, sometimes producing new and exciting materials, sometimes just warming up the old and serving them under a new name. . . .²

So although there were some very excellent materials being produced by the Study Centers, Kitzhaber in this very speech, nonetheless, pinpointed for both delegations the familiar root problem:

We have no generally accepted philosophy of our subject to build upon, one that defines and orders it, one that has been scrutinized by the best minds that can be brought to bear upon it and has their endorsement. Many of the most important questions have not been answered; some may not even have been asked. So we are back where we started: "What is English?"³

And so, at the beginning, after much debate and after various "position papers" were passed back and forth numerous times for additional comment and response, many

were inclined to agree with Kitzhaber: when one attempted to define the nature of English, even after the prodigious efforts and accomplishments of Carnegie-Mellon, Florida State, Oregon, etc., the whole thing once again seemed to slip through everyone's fingers like so much water. While structure, sequence, and discipline had created the New Science, the participants at Dartmouth for the most part agreed that it simply did not provide the means for effectively teaching students to read, write, talk, listen or enjoy reading literature.⁴ Somehow, as the publications of Holt, Kohl and Fader illustrated, most English curriculums had neglected to address themselves to the personal and humane qualities that each individual student is capable of bringing to the study of language and literature. In its quest for excellence, scholarship, and respectability the structure-centered reform movement of the early 1960's had lost sight of its original purpose and become trapped by its own intellectual energies. Defining English, establishing a curriculum for literature, and learning to teach both effectively were found to be tasks far more difficult than many had originally thought. To discern literature's "great and simple structuring ideas," as Albert Marckwardt was said to have remarked, "we must look for continuity on

more than just a few levels of abstraction."⁵

English -- "It is what we have chosen to ignore."

Although neither an articulate definition of English nor a detailed curriculum ultimately emerged from Dartmouth, the Conference as a whole managed superbly to construct a whole new and vibrantly-alive philosophy for the teaching of English and Literature based both on the student-centered, humanistic education movement occurring in America in the 1960's and on some fascinating and different ideas about the nature of language and literary response presented at the Seminar by the British delegation.*

After examining at great length the kinds of instruction traditionally offered and the curriculums for schools both in America and England, Dartmouth saw its pedagogical task as supplying to the study of English a theoretical basis on which to plan instruction and develop curriculums that had been almost totally neglected by the English teaching professions both in the United Kingdom and the United

*These theories will be taken up in detail later in this chapter.

States. Dixon explains in *Growth Through English** that among the models or images of English widely accepted in schools on both sides of the Atlantic, all were composed of or centered about two basic concepts: the development of skills and the transmission of a cultural and intellectual heritage via the classics of literature. English instruction had concentrated heavily on both these components over the last several decades, with the result being on the one hand that almost universal literacy had been brought to both countries, and on the other, that this literacy had been "dissipated, for the most part, on the impoverished literature of the popular press, which grew in answer to it."⁶ In fact almost everyone at the Conference was willing to admit that structure-centeredness had brought the concentration of the teaching of skills, concepts, and literary heritages to their ultimate achievement in many of the Project English Curriculums: no grander or more elaborate a construction or method of operation could ever have been achieved for the careful articulation, delineation, and

*John Dixon and Herbert Muller provide excellent accounts of the entire Conference proceedings in *Growth Through English* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) and *The Uses of English* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), respectively.

transmission of knowledge about literature and language than the programs developed at Nebraska, Carnegie-Mellon, Oregon, etc. And in this respect, participants on both sides noted that after years of drill and exercise, there was little to show for the effort: the concentration on knowledge seemed not to have significantly improved either the communicative abilities of students or their appreciation of literature. Dartmouth was to propose, therefore, that the major limitations of these curricular formulations lie not in the area of English they choose to sketch (concepts, information, frames of reference), but rather "in the vast terrain they choose to ignore."⁷

And what were those areas that traditional, structure-centered, skills-oriented curriculums had neglected to consider? Simply the actual human experiences and the activities of every day life: the talking and the thinking things over, the gossip and the reading, the diary, the newspaper and the conversation it evokes, the TV programs and an evening at the movies, the stories (oral and written) which compel retelling and passing along, the reflections on past experiences and the memories that usher monologue and dialogue, and the writing about those vivid happenings, and always the readings and the "stories" we

create through language which help us more fully to understand our world and our experiences and which give us pleasure, constantly. In short, the participants at Dartmouth felt that English instruction in the past had for too long concentrated on the thing itself (set lists of books, grammar, usage exercises, themes, genre studies, critical theories, etc.) and had failed to bring into the classroom the basis from which all the various language activities derive--involvement in activity and engagement with life experiences themselves: that broad range of linguistic discovery (which prompts the use of language in the first place) and those very human and personal areas of existence which "join a man's language to his experiences" and draw him naturally into reading and writing:⁸

There is, then, a central paradox about language. It belongs to the public world, and an English classroom is a place where pupils meet to share experience of some importance, to talk about people and situations in the world as they know it, gathering experience into new wholes and enjoying the satisfaction and power that this gives. But in so doing each individual takes what he can from the shared store of experience and builds it into a world of his own.⁹

And in ignoring "culture" as the student knows it, schools had not helped promote a craving for the pleasures of literature, for a student's own personal heritage and

background is:

. . . a network of attitudes to experience and personal evaluations that he develops in a living response to his family and neighbourhood. . . . And this personal culture is what he brings to literature; in the light of it he reads the linguistic symbols (giving his own precious lifeblood!). What is vital is the interplay between his personal world and the world of the writer: the teacher of English must acknowledge both sides of the experience, and know both of them intimately if he is to help bring the two into a fruitful relationship.¹⁰

Thus, by emphasizing texts and concepts and tradition, the average teacher was secure in presenting to students already formulated literature and fictions, the written word, the school's strength, instead of attempting to draw on student experience of reality and self: "their strength, their fictions."¹¹ Dartmouth suggested, therefore, that only when we openly encourage students to bring into the classroom their experiences and their concerns about themselves and their lives do we produce the need to communicate and the motivation to learn and expand both language and imaginative potential: to talk, to write, to read, and to create something of beauty through self-expression, through a thought, a feeling, a remembrance, a story:

What the child has learned already he has learned under the pressure of the necessities and pleasures of daily

living. If school is to continue the process already started, it must stir the same kind of pressure and kindle the same excitements.¹²

A good way to explore the theoretical basis of what Dartmouth meant by English relating a man's language to his experiences would be to examine the British pedagogical contributions to the Seminar, for, as the Americans quickly discovered, educational reform was not exclusively a Yankee phenomenon in the 1950's and '60's. During the same period of time, the British English Teaching Profession initiated a curriculum reform movement of its own which in many respects was both similar and different from the American experience.

While English teachers in America had been studying the cognitive psychologies of Jerome Bruner and the behavioral psychologies of B. F. Skinner, the British had for some time been strongly influenced by the developmental-growth-oriented psychologies of Suzanne Langer, Jean Piaget, and L. S. Vygotsky. These psychologies attempt to develop a whole new theory of communication based not on cognitive structuring or concept building, but rather on the personal, imaginative and experiential growth and development of the individual student. Thus instead of trying to increase

language proficiency and literary awareness on a cognitive and skills-oriented model (as many Project English programs attempted), the British were more concerned educationally with the development of personal sensitivity to experience and the gradual evolution and expansion of linguistic ability and literary awareness.¹³

Perhaps the best way to explore these new creative theories presented by the British contingent at Dartmouth would be to examine some of the popular English-education publications in Britain in the early 1960's. In 1965, just one year prior to the Seminar, J. W. Patrick Creber, then teacher and lecturer at Churchfields School, West Bromwich, published Sense and Sensitivity on the philosophy and practice of English teaching; and early in 1966, Frank Whitehead, then honorary chairman of the National Association of Teachers of English and one of the most influential participants at Dartmouth, published a volume entitled, The Disappearing Dias.^{*} Both Whitehead and Creber contended, in

^{*}Other important British publications at the time on the English teaching reform movement include:

David Holbrook, English For Maturity (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1961).

general, that traditional British methods of instruction in both language and literature had been misdirected in England (as in America) by an overly-academic emphasis on drill, grade-level attainment, and an examination system that had managed to considerably erode the humane and imaginative aspects of English teaching. And the root of the problem, according to Whitehead, seemed to be that many teachers had simply failed to take into account some very fundamental notions about both language growth and basic learning theory. In the opening chapter of The Disappearing Dias, for example, Whitehead reports that what is most significant, most fundamental to language development, is not its forms, structures, or its grammar, but the simple fact that language acquisition and growth is an on-going psychological, social, and linguistic process which begins at birth and continues throughout one's life. The average child,

David Holbrook, English For The Rejected (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1964).

Sybil Marshall, An Experiment in Education (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1963).

A. B. Clegg, The Excitement of Writing (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962).

D. Thompson and B. Jackson, English in Education (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964).

Whitehead asserts, enters school with a rich and varied oral language background and by age five has mastered the basic structures of English:

This is undeniably true of the spoken language, for the normal five year old comes to school already able to understand and employ almost all the common structures of his native language, together with a considerable vocabulary.¹⁴

What's more, Whitehead notes, most of us do the greatest part of our language learning outside school, in the give and take of everyday affairs, in the everyday need to communicate to others and to express our own thoughts and feelings:

It is proper to stress that the child's mother-tongue is, in fact, acquired rather than deliberately learned. It is "picked up," for the most part unconsciously, by an intuitive process of assimilation, imitation, and adaptation; and it is also "picked up" for the most part outside school. . . . And even during his school years, the lessons concerned directly with his reading, writing and speaking form only a tiny fraction of his total experience of the language, for this continues to expand and develop at many other times--during other kinds of lessons, in the playground, in the street, in the home. The English child, in fact, acquires far the greater part of his mastery of the English language outside English lessons.¹⁵

Whitehead posits, therefore, that English instruction has been misdirected by believing its lessons, exercises and assignments were developing in children "hitherto non-

existent skills." But in fact, just the contrary is true, for school age children have accomplished much of the work towards literacy themselves. In a second of talking, for example, the child obeys five or six highly complex linguistic rules and makes on the average only about one mistake every ten seconds. In The Disappearing Dias Whitehead implies that the trouble inevitably begins when the child enters school, for there a teacher may seize on a small and infrequent mistake in either speaking or writing and shatter a pupil's confidence about himself and his communicative ability without recognizing the enormity of all the oral language strengths children bring with them to school.¹⁶

Creber also believed that the main thrust of British education had been misguided. And the tragedy of the situation, as he notes in Sense and Sensibility, is at the same time its greatest irony: discipline and drill were intended to produce literacy and inculcate a literary heritage as efficiently as possible, but had instead more clearly succeeded in "educating" too many individuals "stultified and cramped" in self-expression and incapable of responding to the human experiences of literature in a "fresh and personal way."¹⁷ Creber writes that the whole approach to English teaching in Britain has encouraged

pupils to disenfranchise their concerns, personalities, and experiences from the study of English. When this occurs, he explains, linguistic expansion tends to "go bad," for language becomes isolated and fragmented and individual words tend to be considered without reference to either an actual experience or a relevant context:

Unfortunately, from the 11+ examination onwards there is a marked tendency to give up teaching in favor of such practice: there are far too many pre-examination English courses that concentrate attention exclusively on the "word" and neglect the experience of which it is an expression. This leads in turn to the abstracting of language from its proper (i.e. natural) functions, and also to the canvassing of obscurely alien or excessively mature literature, in the misguided belief that its perusal is good for the pupils vocabulary.¹⁸

As a result of many years of teaching English, Creber had become convinced (as had Fader, Holt, Kozol, etc. in America at about the same time) that students become very much involved in the imaginative processes of language learning when words and sentences are used in context and related to actual personal experiences and immediate relevant interests. Instead of completely relying on drills and concept attainment, Creber would urge teachers to encourage pupils to explore reality both in and outside the classroom and then to share these experiences with other pupils both orally

and in writing. In this way, real dialogue could be established and students could respond to one another with an experience and a context of their own.¹⁹

It was this point in particular--the relation of language to relevant context and personal experience--that seemed to emerge as the dominant theme of The Disappearing Dias as well. Children come to school, Whitehead affirmed, not only with the ability to talk, but also with many things that they want to talk about; in other words, language and literature exist for children as they do for adults: intimately connected and inter-twined with each individual's own personal background and specific personal ideas and experiences about which one wants to communicate:

Nearer to the heart of the matter is George Sampson's observation that English "includes and transcends all subjects" since it is "for English people the whole means of expression the attainment of which makes them articulate human beings, able to inherit the past, to possess the present and to confront the future." . . . Certainly, I believe, we shall never reach a full understanding of what English teaching can and should be until we have grasped the peculiarly intimate relationship which exists between the individual human being and his mother-tongue; more particularly we need to have brought to clear focus in our minds the way in which a child's acquisition of his native language is inseparably intertwined with his developing consciousness of the world in which he is growing up, with his control of his inner phantasies and feelings they give rise to, and with his possession of the values by which he will live his life in the civilization

he forms a part of . . . our language is a means of illuminating and exploring experience, of giving shape to an institution which can crystallize only as the words grow together to define its inherent structure . . . for each of us (and especially for the child on his journey toward maturity) the old truths have to be rediscovered afresh if they are to be fully valid.²⁰

For Whitehead, then, the way we respond to the spoken and written word bears a direct relation to the uniqueness of the actual experiences we have undergone, the kind of a person we are, and the nature of the culture from which we come. Furthermore, growth in language is seen as a continuously developing and expanding process (and a highly complex one), at no time complete, always in the process of transformation, and always needing to investigate and explore new experience. Simply, language helps us to know and to know how to express.

As for the teaching of literature, James Britton, in this very same vein, delivered a position paper at Dartmouth entitled "The Response to Literature"²¹ which was so favorably received by the participants in general that the study group on the teaching of literature, chaired by D. W. Harding, accepted the document as the framework for the group's final report. Following the thinking of Whitehead and Creber, and the psychologies of Piaget and Langer in

particular, Britton noted that as with language growth, literary involvement and enjoyment does not begin with formal classroom instruction either: young children, Britton avered, come to school already having been engaged, often intensely, in rich literary experiences, spontaneously responding to and delighting in oral stories, rhymes, folk songs, fairy tales, fantasies and myths, as well as imaginative TV programs and movies. In short, teachers ought not to deal with literary awareness and response as though they were starting from scratch. Moreover, knowledge of human experience, feeling, and motivation, is also developed for the most part, like all language processes, outside school, in confrontations at home and with friends, in personal triumphs as well as in personal reprisals. Loneliness, anticipation, the celebration of life, and the knowledge of evil--none of these experiences can be approached directly and taught as "themes" or "unit-lessons" in class; with these matters, Britton's essay suggests, one can only encourage his students to bring their inchoate personal emotions with them to class for exploration, discourse, discovery, and enlargement. All of one's natural delights and responses, as well as all of one's ideas, subjective opinions and background experiences, will determine how one will

react to the literature introduced into the classroom, and the growth of literary appreciation and awareness, Britton maintained, ought to be viewed as a gradually developing process of imaginative response and creative expressiveness.* The participants agreed with Britton. Teachers of

*Although Dartmouth's zeal for child-centered, experience-centered programs may seem like a passionate attempt to revive the values and practices of the outmoded American "progressive" pedagogy, such a conclusion would be unwarranted. Beyond a genuine concern in English classes for the development and "education" of each individual student, one finds little of the concern with the processes of thinking characteristic of John Dewey and his followers. James Squire recently commented on this point: "Despite the superficial similarities with Progressivism as it developed in America, the teaching in British schools is almost entirely oriented to the classroom situation and to the imaginative and linguistic development of each child. Intellectual growth per se is almost entirely neglected, as is any long term perspective on the results of instruction. The best preparation for tomorrow may well be the richest participation in today, but the present emphasis (in Britain) is directed toward neither the transformation of society nor the life-adjustment of the individual, concepts close to the core of American Progressivism."²² In fact, after reviewing both Dartmouth's official publications and its position papers, it would be difficult to construe the teaching practices advocated at the Seminar as being concerned with "cultural-intellectual" processes. Much of the fervor at Dartmouth, in reality, derived from the profession's desire simply to improve the literacy of English-speaking youth. As one participant remarked about the creative teaching methods discussed, "It is strictly English--the fundamentals of reading, writing, talking, and listening, learning to use language better. It pays sufficient respect to subject-matter as well as to the growing child."²³

literature ought not to treat stories and poems as "works of art" or be overly-concerned with content, interpretation, criticism, or technique; rather, it was agreed that literature ought to exist within the classroom as a presentational and dramatic enactment of human experience which, when treated as such, demands affective as well as intellectual and creative responses. Thus instruction in literature ought to begin with the naive responses to the "fictions" and "stories" students bring with them to school. Britton confirmed that what pupils will offer are gut reactions, or perhaps a remembrance, a "that's me" identification, or maybe just a personal fragment. But it is these fragments which must be accepted and explored, not rejected, and above all, Britton warned, our pedantry as teachers of literature and defenders of the culture must not be allowed to stand in the way of the imaginative growth of our students:

Clearly a naive writer and a naive reader may share a satisfaction in circumstances which would only infuriate or at least disappoint a more sophisticated reader. Is this naive response different in kind from that we desire for literature, or merely different in intensity of feeling or complexity or comprehensiveness or verisimilitude? In other words, are such responses (and children must make many of them) the bad currency we seek to drive out, or are they the tender shoots that must be fostered if there is to be a flower at all? . . . Again, at quite a different level, teachers using the "practical criticism" method sometimes introduced

passages of literature paired with sentimental or otherwise second-rate writing, inviting comment leading to a verdict. Is not this an attempt to drive out bad currency? If, as I believe, satisfaction with the second-rate differs in degree but not in kind from the higher satisfaction, teachers should surely be concerned to open doors; as the pupils advance, other doors will close behind them with no need for the teacher to intervene.

Our aim, then, should be to refine and develop responses the children are already making--to fairy stories, folk songs, pop songs, television serials, their own game-rhymes, and so on.²⁴

The implications for teaching methodology and curricular design from the preceding theoretical discussion are obvious: for the language processes of growth into literacy and growth into literary appreciation, what the student brings to school with him in terms of oral language ability, literary responses, and experiential background ought to be considered at least as important as anything the classroom can directly provide in terms of instructional opportunity. Moreover, what teachers actually do in the classroom--the activities they devise and the opportunities they provide--should not serve as an all too apparent halt to the natural language-growth-response-process, but rather should strive to enhance and expand the way children have developed and used language and literature all their lives and to extend into the classroom the experiences, fears, joys, triumphs,

and failures, etc. that children have talked about and wondered about since birth. In fact, in The Disappearing Dias, Whitehead flatly rejects the notion that English can be taught "directly": that is, as a completely structured model to be handed over to students for imitation, "discovery," or emulation. The true task of English instruction, he affirms, is:

. . . to help children to refine, polish, raise to a higher level of sensitivity, effectiveness and precision a language which they already possess in a highly developed form. . . . The main business of the English teacher is not instruction in any direct sense, nor even teaching in the sense which may be applicable in some other subjects. It is the provision of abundant opportunity for the child to use English under the conditions which will most conduce to improvement; opportunity, that is, to use his mother-tongue in each of its four modes (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and for all the varied purposes (practical, social, imaginative, creative) which make up its totality; opportunity moreover to use it under expert guidance and in situations which will develop ultimately his power to be self-critical about his own efforts.²⁵

Thinking of English or Literature, therefore, in terms of skills to be mastered, contents to be sequenced, and structures and approaches "to be transferred" (as had the academic curriculums), maneuvers us into thinking of language and literature as somehow external to the human being who uses it--a technique which can be mastered by

intellectual effort, or a set of responses which can be learned by processes of conditioning:

Surely (such ideas) completely fail to match the extraordinary delicacy, complexity and manysidedness of the processes that go on inside us when we acquire our native language. The fact is that our mother-tongue is something that is built into us at a very deep level of the whole personality. It is the medium in which we have evolved our most deeply-ingrained modes of interpreting the universe in which we live; and our capacity for human relationships, our ways of perceiving, understanding and mastering the phenomena of our everyday existence are shaped and colored by it in countless ways of which we are seldom consciously aware. The work of certain Russian psychologists, notably Vygotsky and Luria, provides interesting indirect confirmation of the way in which the child's perception of reality takes its structure and patterning from language, as his acquisition of this enables him to sort out his impressions into generalized categories incorporating the accumulated experience of past generations. For a child, it is claimed, the word not only indicates a corresponding object in the external world, but also abstracts and isolates its essential features, thus bringing it into relation with a systematization of experience which involves a reorganization of the child's whole mental activity.²⁶

Dartmouth was convinced, therefore, that curriculums which attempt to emulate several definite cognitive and/or logical orientations will always remain inadequate, for to be effective such constructions would have to be as complex as the workings of the mind itself, and flexible enough to adjust to the different experiences and uses of language of each student. Simply, the deep structure of language--where

meaning resides and from where literary response emanates-- is highly individualistic and at the present time it is impossible to mesh (and would probably be inadvisable anyway) what we know of the structure of the English language, the nature of the imagination, or the "why" of literary response, with the structure of each individual mind without seriously damaging the humane and affective aspects of English. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) the acquisition of language and the growth and development of the imagination in human beings more naturally follows a psychological-experiential-creative sequence which is, to a great extent, idiosyncratic for each person. What one selects from his experiences to explore through language and what kinds of experiences, language situations and "fictions" one happens to be part of by accident of birth or otherwise simply cannot be predicted. And although this is not to deny that cognitive patterns do not exist in language development, Dartmouth recognized--far in advance of most others in the profession--that for too long the teaching of English has considered the logic and rhetoric of its subject-matter almost to the exclusion of the psycho-logic of individual language users and story-responders. Dixon reports:

To the external observer, then, the attempt to derive a rational sequence for the teaching of English from the internal structure of the subject as studied at its highest level seems open to three major objections. In the first place, there is no body of agreement as to the nature of this structure, nor does any such agreement seem attainable; it is not even clear whether it should be looked for within the discipline of literary criticism or that of linguistics. Secondly, the search for this kind of "structure" as a guiding principle leads to a retrogressive emphasis on "knowledge" (knowledge about the language, or about literature) as opposed to "ability to use." And, thirdly, the desire for a step by step articulation leads (as is made explicit in Hook, 1962) to a demand that the English teacher's field of activity be restricted to that which can be made incremental.²⁷

Thus, with respect to literature, it is not that Dartmouth assumed a necessarily anti-literary, uncritical stance, and one totally insensitive to the ideas contained in literary selections, but rather, following the new "transactional" psychologies, the writings and the creative work of men such as David Holbrook and J. W. P. Creber, and the student-centered philosophies of Holt, Herndon, Kozol, and Fader, the Seminar felt acutely that courses of study in literature designed to teach a set number of selections, uncover major themes, demonstrate literary techniques, or generally teach for concepts and information about literature and literary periods, simply violated the true significance of literature and interfered with the pleasures

good writing can afford when approached correctly: as part of a transactional process that contributes to the imaginative development of individual human beings.

The Problem of Formulation

From the theoretical positions being discussed here, it may appear that the Dartmouth Conference was adamantly opposed to the more formal concerns of literary instruction: the problem of artistic formulation and the importance of literary criticism and interpretive analysis--in short, knowledge about technique, style, form, and genre. Let it be clearly asserted that Dartmouth considered all of these "contents" to be valid classroom concerns. In fact, it was Benjamin DeMott, who from his caustic article, "Reading, Writing, Reality, and Unreality," can clearly be identified as no defender of the rank and file, was said to have remarked at one of the Seminar's committee meetings that under any circumstances it should never be considered a sin "to talk about what literature is about."²⁸ Actually, the validity of such knowledge was not precisely the issue at Dartmouth, but rather, the Conference was more concerned with putting this kind of content in its "proper perspective"; that is, how should such knowledge be approached, how

much is necessary, and how much importance should it be accorded? It is clear from Britton's paper in general that if a sophisticated literary response--a verbalized formulation of a work's artistic qualities--is the ultimate goal of instruction (a goal in fact that Britton himself and some others at the Conference were not quite willing to accept), then such "form consciousness" must also be considered a developmental process and appropriate "artistic" responses can only emerge, slowly, from unsophisticated and naive reactions. The Conference was inclined to believe that knowledge of structure, form, technique, and genre will develop automatically if children are allowed to respond to literature freely and creatively and if they continuously receive satisfaction from their reading experiences:

"An increasing sense of form" must be taken to mean an extension of responses to include these forms, or perhaps an integration of earlier responses to some of them into a total and inclusive response.

Our sense of literary form increases as we find satisfaction in a greater range and diversity of works, and particularly as we find satisfaction in works which, by their complexity or the subtlety of their distinctions, their scope or their unexpectedness, make greater and greater demands upon us. Our sense of form increases as our frame of reference of reality grows with experience, primary and secondary, of the world we live in. A sense of literary form must grow thus, from within; it is the legacy of past satisfactions. . . . Progress lies in perceiving gradually more complex patterns of events, in picking up clues more widely separated and

more diverse in character, and in finding satisfaction in patterns of events less directly related to their expectations and, more particularly, their desires; at the same time, it lies in also perceiving the form of the varying relationships between elements in the story and reality, as increasingly they come to know that commodity.²⁹

In other words, Dartmouth believed that formal meanings and perceptions about structure are not necessarily apprehended through analysis (as the structure-centered curriculums believed), but rather, formal understanding and articulation are most effectively fostered by providing first for a personally meaningful encounter with literature, and then interpretation and structural designs can be intuited from these total experiences.* Thus, although all "formal"

*It was James Moffett who attempted to provide the Seminar with more than just a "sense of faith" about the ability of children to become aware of structure and formulation through authentic language-response engagements. In a 1968 publication entitled Teaching the Universe of Discourse (this publication was a direct outgrowth of both the Dartmouth Seminar and Moffett's earlier 1965 "I, You, It" article), Moffett talks at length about the cognitive ability to abstract information from experience and codify this information into operational mental systems like language. One consequence of intellectual maturation, Moffett explains, is that, with growth, one's powers of symbolization become increasingly more abstract, i.e. removed from direct experience:

In common and technical parlance, the words "abstraction" and "to abstract" seem to refer to both the abstracting and the abstracted and, as the following

considerations of stories and poems do relate to the literature curriculum, and are important, it was generally agreed at Dartmouth that in the final analysis none of these

sentences illustrate, to apply in what appear to be very different domains. "The individual abstracts objects from his environment" (perception). "This student has chosen to write on a more abstract subject than that student" (size of referent). "The concept of bartering is easier than the concept of international trade because the latter is more abstract" (concept formation). "Proposition two about proposition one is of a higher order of abstraction than proposition one" (logic). This diversity of usage might indicate that abstraction is an overly loose and unworkable concept, but I prefer to believe that it indicates a similarity of process underlying all stages of information-processing, from sensori-motor and perceptual to affective and intellectual. At each stage, abstraction means something a little different but it still retains stable meaning through all stages--which is an excellent reason for our using "abstraction" to cover so many different phenomena. . . . Not only do we grow slowly through the whole abstractive range during our period of maturation, but at any time of life we are constantly processing new experience up through the cycle of sensations, memories, generalizations, and theories.³⁰

This process of abstraction, this ability to categorize, relate and structure information into meaningful wholes, operates throughout one's life--like breathing, it goes on all the time--"for the chief purpose of ensuring that we will survive and prevail."³¹ Not only this, but Moffett makes it clear that as one develops intellectually he also gradually becomes aware of the process of abstraction; that is, individuals slowly become conscious of their own thinking processes:

A child is not an empty vessel when he enters school; he comes replete with a set of abstractions about the world and himself, some of which he may have acquired

matters ought to become the central concerns of any literature program; the demand for interpretation and criticism should arise from response itself.

ready-made from others but some of which he generated himself from his own experience. It is these latter that are troublesome to others, obscure to himself, and not very amenable to influence and possible correction. They are unconscious, private, and essentially non-verbal (they sound verbal only because we have to denote them with language). Yet they determine a lot of his behavior. And control of behavior becomes possible only as awareness of these abstractions arises. In short, increased consciousness of abstracting has as much to do with developmental growth as has progression up the abstraction ladder. I believe that growth along one dimension fosters growth along the other. This would square with Piaget's insistence on decreasing egocentrism as a dimension of growth. That is, certain cognitive processes which we associate with higher abstraction may become possible only as the child becomes aware that he is abstracting. Because higher abstracting is so much about lower abstractions, it may be impossible to make inferences of a certain generality and complexity without becoming aware of prior stages. Or the effort to make such inferences may of itself induce this awareness. Also, words seem necessary to higher abstraction and this necessitates greater consciousness.³²

Thus, given the opportunity to produce language over a wide range of different discourse situations and to experience literature both receptively (inward responses) and productively (create one's own fictions), Moffett's thesis is that the human mind necessarily becomes aware of structure, forms, categories, and concepts, first within the sphere of one's own thinking patterns and fictions (how one has codified and arranged experience for oneself), and then (actually this is a simultaneous process) about the structures of thought and the fictions of others:

This position was idealistic and naturally the practical question arose, "What if 'form consciousness'--the desire to know about literature, its techniques, its genres

Ideally, a student would spend his time in a language course of study abstracting a large amount of raw material into categories of experience and then into propositions which finally he would combine so as to arrive at new propositions not evident at any of the lower stages. By discussing his productions in a workshop class, he could profit from other points of view, discover what part of his abstracting is peculiar to him and what he shares with a public, and see how the worth of his higher abstractions is determined by the worth of his lower ones. Generally, a student should learn to play freely the whole symbolic scale, and to know where he is on it at a given moment. Most of our faulty thinking, and consequently a lot of our ineffective behavior, come from confusing abstraction levels and assigning to a high-order inference the same truth value we assign to a lower-order "factual" abstraction about which public agreement would be high. The key is the consciousness of abstracting--as general semanticists have insisted for years. This consciousness is worth more than all the courses in logic because it is something any logician, amateur or professional, stands no chance without. It grows slowly over the years, but different conditions can retard or advance it.

Although Moffett can offer no direct proof for his contentions in The Universe of Discourse, his essays imply rather strongly that when children do fiction on an operational level (respond to and create stories in the ways suggested at Dartmouth), then they gradually and naturally become aware not only of the "forms" and "structures" and "techniques" of their own fictions (experiences), but also about the structures and forms of those professional stories and poems introduced into the classroom for them to respond to:

and modes--what if these curiosities and satisfactions do not naturally develop?" It was Britton who spoke to this question most eloquently. Simply, he was willing to admit that in many instances "form consciousness" may not develop. Students are not literary critics, he admonished, and what they bring to a text may ostensibly lead far away from the text: "(Response) may become articulate, finding expression in comment and criticism, but equally it may not; and this, as pedants, we find very difficult to admit."³⁵ Britton was aware that his stance did not please everyone at the Conference, but he did feel that his remarks presented a "realistic" perspective on the problem of teaching about literature in the English curriculum. Very few people will grow up to be critics or teachers, and for most--growing up to assume responsibilities in widely disparate occupations--their sense of what their own life is about will naturally occupy the forefront of their minds, and so they will derive from literature the pleasures and the illuminations

Again, the awesome ability of small children to create novel sentences modelled on a paradigm they are unconscious of demonstrates a very powerful operating generalization which they have somehow "inferred" from instances of others' sentences and which they practice in their vocal behavior. Why would they not bring this faculty to bear on the other data of their experience?³⁴

(and the formulations) that seem most meaningful to their wants and needs. And it was to these goals, the Conference felt, that a literature program ought to be directed.

Two problems about formulation remain: (1) when should teachers introduce these matters, and (2) how much information about literature is necessary. In regard to the first question, Dixon reports that this problem might best be solved by individual teachers operating within specific classroom situations:

When we teachers tell ourselves (in syllabuses and curricular guides) that pupils should be familiar with this or that literature, should have a working knowledge of this or that rhetorical form, should be aware of varieties of English, differences in standard, etc.--in all these cases we are in effect giving ourselves a reminder of what to be looking for in pupils' discoveries. These are the things the teacher is bearing in mind, waiting for the pupils to reach towards, looking for an opportunity to develop. So there are two levels: at the first, the structure the teacher bears in mind; at the other, his observation of the individual's development and his sense that at some point in that development, this is the appropriate moment--to judge by the pupil's signals--for the creation of a particular frame of reference to be meaningful. Thus, a discussion of the attitudes, feelings and ideas implied by a word, according to its context, may arise in reading a poem aloud, or in looking at an advertisement, or when a class that has just been reading, say, Hemingway suddenly turns to Dylan Thomas; indeed there are so many occasions for awareness of this kind to come to the surface through a hesitation, a question, or an argument, that it seems quite unnecessary for teachers suddenly to impose a set course on elementary semantics.³⁶

In other words, knowledge about literature is appropriate when it would serve to further extend and deepen initial response. But this solution was found to be inadequate by some; and with respect to the second question, Whitehead remarked that there was even more "muddled thinking." This quote from James Squire's Response to Literature is perhaps the most informative piece of evidence available from the Dartmouth papers. But it is clear the participants had no solution to this complex problem either:

On the other hand, to understand a literary work and to approach the experience that it offers, a student may very often need extrinsic information about, for example, the historical or cultural setting in which a work was written, or about the life, the thought, the sensibility of its author. The teacher should be able to judge how much such information is necessary in any given case, considering the particular needs of the students confronting him. It follows, therefore, that his education should train him to make such judgments and equip him with the information to frame and support his teaching.³⁷

The Problem of Continuity and Sequence

Although Dartmouth firmly rejected the notion of fixed, sequential curriculums for literature (or any other aspect of English for that matter), the Conference as a whole cannot be accused of disregarding entirely the problem of continuity and sequence. In fact, the question of

attempting to establish possible "directions" for the study of literature was one of the most intensely contested issues at the Seminar. But the kinds of sequencing Dartmouth considered were vastly different from traditional curricula and syllabi, precisely because the Seminar was aware that a curriculum for English and/or Literature must deal with many different levels of growth and patterns of development simultaneously.

To begin with, Dartmouth recognized that the various aspects of English-as-a-school-subject (reading, writing, listening, discourse, literature) cannot be fragmented, separated from one another, and taught in isolated sequences. As we have seen, the Seminar tended to view English as decidedly wholistic and humanistic, consisting of an integrated body of attitudes, ideas, facts and conclusions that are all intrinsically interrelated and bound together by a knowledge of the intimate relation that exists between a man's language and his experiences; simply, language activity resists fragmentation because it is essentially imaginative--"story-creating"--and is part of the very fabric of individual human beings who are free to develop and transform themselves by conscious choice.³⁸ Thus, if we seek continuity, Dartmouth suggested, our curriculums cannot attempt

to disunify and teach as separate skills and subject-matters, language processes that are already inexorably integrated; to do so would be to seriously misrepresent how language actually functions within the human community: as a meaningful construct of whole human beings who bring all of their past experiences and present intellectual knowledges to bear on each creative and communicative response. This recognition of the "wholeness" of English was, in fact, one of the major accomplishments of the Seminar and the participants were convinced that much of the failure of teaching English well resulted from language arts programs that treated the various aspects of English as separate sequences. Even though integration was always planned for, it was painfully obvious that cohesiveness rarely eventuated.* So in the first instance, a curriculum for literature would have to account for the fact that all language activities are interrelated. Thus the teaching of literature would have to take its place within (not alongside) all the other language involvements of the English classroom, and literature ought not to be considered the hub of

*See Shafer's criticism of the Carnegie-Mellon Curriculum in Chapter II.

study from which the other language arts would emanate; instead, creative, integrated language activity was seen as frequently including literary experiences and vice-versa.

Dartmouth also looked at developing a sense of continuity and direction for literary response within the individual classroom. But growth here was viewed as an open-involvement-student-centered learning experience, proceeding "organically" according to the directions and the concerns of individual students or individual groups of students. Thus, in a year's work for example, instead of structuring lessons about the analytical demands of an abstractly defined "content" or "work to be covered," Dartmouth suggested that the introduction of literature into the classroom center about the intellectual and imaginative exploratory curiosities of individual students responding creatively to any number of diverse stories, poems and dramas appropriate for a particular grade level. Activities and discussions were conceived of as necessarily being free-form, rather than proceeding through a tightly-knit and well organized sequence of unit lessons. But this was not in any sense to reject pre-planning. In fact, Dartmouth was well aware that structuring language activities for openness, freedom and growth possibilities was a far

more difficult task than teaching according to a syllabus:

If in the course of reading some poems with a class, the teacher sees possibilities for acting, or if in the accompanying talk pupils are so seized with the topic that they want to write, then a unitary approach permits the flow from a prepared activity to one relatively unforeseen. Lessons become less preformulated. This is not to reject pre-planning and system: on the contrary, a teacher who is planning flexibly needs to consider beforehand many possible avenues that his pupils may discover in the course of a lesson, so that whichever catches their enthusiasm he is aware of its possibilities. The more active the part pupils are given, the more difficult to predict all that they will find and uncover: thus the need for a flexible teaching strategy rather than rigid lesson plans, and for teachers confidently able to move with a class for instance from reading My Childhood to discussing old people they know or to acting encounters of youth and age. . . . What unifies such varied classroom activities is the theme or aspect of human experience on which work centers.³⁹

Furthermore, it was pretty well agreed that in all instances and at all levels teachers ought to very carefully attempt to move as often as possible from simple responses to ever more creative and complex ones, all the while being very mindful of the psychological and emotional complexities involved in developing and refining literary responses.

In addition, sequencing and continuity were discussed on more global terms as well. The direction of these talks is perhaps best exemplified by referring once again to the work of Professor Creber. In Sense and Sensibility, for

example, Creber strongly urged the adoption of a whole new approach to the English curriculum for both primary and secondary schools, based on imaginative explorations with language, and sequenced according to the characteristic interests and enthusiasms of children at succeeding stages of his/her development. Creber proposed that English teachers begin in the elementary grades with the child's world of experience, and experience of the world, and initiate creative activities centered on sensation, observation and perceptual awareness. English classes, Creber posited, should initially offer the child the opportunity to give order and form--through language--"to his developing sense of realness:"⁴⁰

The basis of the argument should now be clear. The child, by keeping his eyes "greatly open," extends and improves his knowledge of the world and, furthermore, the attainment of this deeper and wider imaginative insight is in itself an enjoyable process for him.⁴¹

As maturation proceeds, according to Creber, English instruction ought to attempt to broaden out and involve other kinds of consciousness: notably social and emotional awareness:

Without abandoning the discipline of perception and observation one should introduce the human element more and more into the content of the work. Just as the children have become progressively more articulate about sensory experience, so, one hopes, they will grow to an articulateness in matters of emotional and social experience.⁴²

To facilitate this widening sense of consciousness, Creber proposed that enormous amounts of literature be used in the classroom--literature that directly related to the experiences and concerns of each student's developing sense of awareness about himself and his world.

As the child moves into his teens a perceptible change of interest takes place so that, if the experience of writing and reading is to continue to answer his needs, there must be a corresponding re-orientation, a change of emphasis, in the syllabus.

The generalized evidence of such work as Dr. Wall's The Adolescent Child, the specific testimony of such novels as Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Lawrence's Sons and Lovers and of such autobiographical documents as Richard Wright's Black Boy and A Young Girl's Diary--all such writings confirm one's own memory and one's observations: for the adolescent, life takes on a new intensity, and this intensity is to be found both in terms of an increase in introspection, on the one hand, and an often obsessive concern with social relationships on the other. . . . The demands of English should change likewise. . . . My first concern, however, is not with articulation but rather with imagination, so that reading is as important a means of fostering the imagination as writing. At this stage, we move on to a new definition of imagination. . . . When we are dealing with boys and girls in the third and fourth years . . . we need to extend our definition of the imagination in order to compass aspects of experience which are at once more subtle and

complex than sense impressions by themselves. The work is now seen as having a moral aim, for it is here that one seeks to encourage that involvement in the life of others, generally by means of literature. . . . Not only this, but the imagination has an important part to play in enabling the less intelligent children to grasp truths which, if expressed abstractly, would baffle them.⁴³

Dartmouth was keenly aware of the fact, then, that what needs to move sequentially is imaginative growth, sensitivity and responsiveness, all within a humane framework of breadth, balance and flexibility. But with regard to such long-range formulations as Creber suggested, there was once again much uncertainty mixed with the Seminar's optimism. Muller reports:

No one tried to define the "natural" sequence of English studies from the beginning of school to the end because there is no such thing. We can make out roughly stages in the child's development, because of which we can all agree that he should begin with nursery rhymes and fairy tales before Hamlet, but there is no way of deciding just when it is best for him to read Hamlet or how much he should be expected to know and say about it. Similarly we know that he needs to enlarge his vocabulary and will do so haphazardly and unconsciously by himself, but no teacher who wants to help him systematically can know just what words he needs to know next. Having dwelt on a number of troublesome questions, I should finally say simply that there is not only no possibility but no need of positive, conclusive answers. For informed teachers experience can be a sufficient guide. The seminar contributed chiefly by sharpening awareness of the problems, making clearer the need of tact and flexibility,

and agreeing upon the aim of providing more diverse and abundant opportunity for development through the uses of language.^{44*}

In addition, the participants were well aware that literary response is both a receptive (inward, moral, private) aspect of language growth and development, as well as a productive one; that is, reading can easily lead to writing activities, to discourse, to drama, as well as result from them. And Harding added that the Response to Literature also included not only immediate response, but later effects, and that overt response (verbal, etc.) may indicate very little of one's inner response.⁴⁵ Dartmouth suggested, therefore, that teachers and planners must be aware of these kinds of continuities also. At times, teachers ought perhaps to help connect response, and at other times leave responses unresolved in the expectation that a greater

*In retrospect, the Dartmouth Conference as a whole ought not to be viewed as a total rejection of the structure-centered curriculum projects of the USOE. Such a conclusion would be unwarranted, for Dartmouth was just as concerned with sequencing and continuity as were the most ardent reformers of the early academic educational reform movement. But while everyone at Dartmouth agreed on the need for more continuity, it was also agreed that the profession as yet did not know just how to plan for it successfully, considering all the "variables" an English curriculum must deal with.

degree of imaginative growth may result from this avoidance of closure.

Similarly, the Seminar pointed out that sequencing would have to be acutely aware of experiential growth patterns as well. What kinds of experiences, for example, can be considered typical of the elementary school child? the adolescent? the urban youth? As John Dixon remarked, if we are to construct a curriculum closely related to student experiences, "to promote growth, (then) experience must come in some sort of order."⁴⁶ Dixon makes it abundantly clear that students do not merely want teachers to entertain, they want them to teach; pupils need to feel they are going somewhere and they need to experience both accomplishment and success: "Improvisation can thrive only within a framework that expresses, more or less articulately, an underlying pattern of development."⁴⁷ And yet, imaginative growth patterns are often individual and complex to understand. Why one type of literature is passionately devoured by a certain youth at a certain time in his life is a difficult, if not impossible, question to answer. And finally, there are linguistic growth patterns to consider, for the verbalization of literary responses and the increasing desire for "formulation" and "conceptualization" are no

doubt closely connected with the student's growing language abilities and his slowly emerging sense of awareness and control over his linguistic powers.

Because the problem of establishing continuity and sequence, then, was seen as both vitally important and complex in the extreme, Dartmouth managed to twist about the questions, What is English? and How should we provide continuity? from the lofty theoretical plane established at the Basic Issues Conference into a new and vital plane of practicality. Dartmouth was not interested in establishing a master plan--the ultimate curriculum for literature, for English was seen as simply not lending itself to such massive all-encompassing constructs. Dartmouth was, therefore, more concerned with the problem, "What do we do in Monday's English class?" The Conference wanted to get down to specifics and it wanted to talk about actual response-provoking activities within the classroom. This particular and unique focus for the Seminar was aptly described by Albert Marckwardt when he commented that the concept of discipline at Dartmouth was "operational rather than tentative; almost immediately upon the opening of the Conference the familiar question, 'What is English?' was turned into, 'What does the English teacher do?' which in effect

was asking what the pupil or student might best be doing" to develop his sensitivities to literature and his adroitness in the use of language.⁴⁸ And in this regard Dartmouth has provided the profession with a good idea of what an English class ought to look like and what both students and teachers ought to be doing: using language, doing together, creating, talking, dramatizing, miming, scripting, working in groups, painting, improvising, sharing experiences, telling stories, and both acting on literature and reading it. Involvement, Activity, Engagement, Drama--these were the over-riding themes of the Seminar.

As for literature particularly, Dartmouth suggested that the curriculum cannot teach literature directly by concentrating exclusively on what it is, but rather the English classroom ought to instead create viable, meaningful, personally relevant "contexts" within which literary experiences--the need and the desire to experience fictions and to create them--might naturally and organically be inter-mixed with authentic, operational language activities. This essential notion of the English classroom as providing a "context," a "place," wherein literature and human experience might find root, expand, and grow is eloquently expressed by Benjamin DeMott in the article, "Reading,

Writing, Reality, and Unreality:"

The substance of English is dramatic and presentational, a fullness, an embodiment, a wholeness not an isolate or a swiftly nameable concentrate: not energy, not heat. But as already indicated . . . it is the place--there is no other in most schools--the place wherein the chief matters of concern are particulars of humanness--individual human feeling, human response, and human time, as these can be known through the written expression (at many literary levels) of men living and dead, and as they can be discovered by student writers seeking through words to name and compose and grasp their own experience. English in sum is about my distinctness and the distinctness of other human beings. Its function, like that of some books called great, is to provide an arena in which the separate man, the single ego, can strive at once to know the world through art, to know what if anything he uniquely is, and what some brothers uniquely are. The instruments employed are the imagination, the intellect, and texts or events that rouse the former to life. And, to repeat, the goal is not to know dates and authors and how to spell recommend; it is to expand the areas of the human world--areas that would not exist but for art--with which individual man can feel solidarity and coextensiveness.⁴⁹

"Solidarity" and "Co-extensiveness:" with literature, students ought to spend their time in class engaged in the active and creative exploration of human experience--responding to literature--where the "stuff to be conceived" is the raw stuff of human interaction and not concepts or literary matters themselves:

The principal aim is to build on the method of language learning by which he has already accomplished

so much. The classroom is a place for taking on new roles, facing new situations--coming to terms in different ways with new elements of oneself and new levels of human experience. In the course of doing so, with the teacher's encouragement and guidance, language is incidentally adapted to the new role, especially when the teacher can avoid serious discontinuity. Thus the movements from spoken to written, from dialect to standard, from kinds of dialogue to kinds of monologue, are all potentially points of rupture--of breakdown in confidence, in acceptance of school, and at worst in the sense of one's own identity. Each movement is therefore a source of failure--or strength.

Fortunately, and partly because English is so rooted in experience outside school, the resources for new strength are latent in all children and young people. We note particularly a resource that becomes our major concern, in the high school and beyond: the power through language to take on the role of spectator and thus to enter into and share in the work of the mature artist and thinker.⁵⁰

Thus what emerges from Dartmouth--from all its official publications and its 1000 plus pages of "seminar papers"--is not a curriculum for teaching English or Literature, but rather a set of values, a stance, a "clearing of the air." Dartmouth deflated several theories and endorsed several others; it frankly admitted the errors of the past, but provided a positive sense of encouragement for the future; it re-asserted the importance of the humane and affective aspects of English and positively identified those areas where research is most vitally needed: the nature of oral language discourse, the nature of response,

psycholinguistic patterns of development, and all those areas where child development intersects with the use of language.

And so, although Dartmouth raised many more questions about the teaching of English than it answered, the Seminar as a whole managed to stir something very deep within the profession, and even though six years have passed, its true effects on the schools and the curriculum are yet to be seen. It would not, however, be an exaggeration to say that the Seminar in general will influence the teaching of English and Literature more profoundly in the next decade than any single event of the past fifteen years. Simply, what has stirred the heart of the profession so profoundly and altered so radically individual perceptions about the nature of English was the Seminar's sense of "bravado." Dartmouth's recommendations about the teaching and learning of language and literature are not merely recommendations, but manifestos. The term "The Response to Literature" has come to stand for, not a curriculum, not even a plan of action, but rather a philosophy of education, and in a very real sense, a call to arms as well.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW CURRICULUM:

LITERATURE PRODUCED AND RECEIVED

. . . in the act of talking about structure we reify it into substance. The form of one man's short story is the content of another man's critical essay.

James Moffett

Teaching the Universe of Discourse

A central aim in the teaching of English is for the teacher to help young people become the best storytellers they can be, both by providing situations in which students can discover the stories they have to tell and by creating opportunities for students to share the fictions (and lives) they have made.

John Rouse

Gull Lake, Michigan

May, 1972

While it is obvious that a detailed, fully articulated and workable curriculum for literature is neither possible--nor desirable--to construct, it is possible,

nonetheless, from the theoretical discussions presented thus far in this study, to make the following statements about what a literature curriculum in English ought to be primarily concerned with in this post-Dartmouth age,* if the teaching of literature is to be an educationally productive learning experience for all the hundreds of thousands of students currently enrolled in English classes in schools across America. A Curriculum for Literature ought to be:

1. both Productive-centered and Receptive-centered
2. Experience-oriented
3. Response and Feedback-centered
4. Pleasure-oriented
5. Student-centered

The Productive-Receptive Complex

This study clearly suggests that a literature curriculum based on the "Response to Literature" as established at the Dartmouth Conference ought to revolve about two closely related (in fact reciprocal) notions about how

*Professor Miller recently commented that the educational community has already entered a fourth major stage of development: the "Humanistic," and he calls for, not a new curriculum, but a new "anti-curriculum." See: English Journal, 61 (1972), pp. 740-42.

literature ought to exist within an English classroom. On the one hand, the teaching of literature ought to be viewed as a functional, operational and productive language activity; that is to say, the classroom ought to provide the student with many diverse and creative possibilities for creating "fictions"--forging tales, stories and poems from the experiences of one's own life and imagination. These activities would comprise the "skills" aspect of the curriculum: the development and expansion of coming to know how to through doing, and as such, this aspect of the literary involvement in the English classroom, like the nature of the English curriculum in general, would tend to be content-less.* In this productive regard, then, the literature created by the students themselves would not be about something already symbolized (like a novel or a poem), but rather literature would exist as a creative-making process and curricular growth would be concerned with the act of symbolizing upon whatever experience (past or present) the classroom dialogue might happen to evoke for a particular student or group of students. These experiences would be

*See the discussion of Moffett's article, "A Structural Curriculum in English," in Chapter II.

operated upon, abstracted about, reflected upon, codified-- in short, made into narrative, communicated to others in the class, and thereby further extended, explored, and responded to. With literature as a symbolizing activity, then, there can be no necessary content for a curriculum, for one's "stories" can be about anything, and therefore, in this role, the teacher cannot plan to teach anything in particular; there are few explicit concepts, experiences, ideas, facts or theories that are necessary to know about in order to produce literature. The teacher's concern here would be to guide, to help, to foster growth--to implement learning how to expand and develop what students already possess: language, experience, and the ability to tell stories. As Moffett reminds us, a story, poem, or play can be anything, can have any kind of content, and portray, examine and explore any kind of human experience or subject-matter.*

*Actually there is a "content" in this mode, but it is incidentally acquired through response. In the productive dimension of a Response to Literature curriculum, when students are given the opportunity to tell their own fictions in as many different ways as possible, they learn at the same time about the nature and structure of fiction itself, for as Moffett suggests, when we use language operationally, it turns in upon itself and we gradually become aware of the structure of our own discourse. In this

At the same time, the literature curriculum does have a content, for it does deal with professional literature--with stories and poems (already articulated and patterned experiences) that other people have written for the world at large to read and enjoy. This is the literature curriculum's receptive mode: satisfying the human need to explore and respond to good tales, to delight in the aesthetic pleasures of myth and romance, to respond to the human experiences of others, to have our own experiences enlarged and commented upon, and to provide our encounters with life with a significance that might otherwise escape

case, by creating narratives and sharing them students would gradually learn incidentally about the nature, modes, and structures of fiction: one's abilities to be both aware of and to use such subtleties as plot construction, point-of-view, metaphor, suspense, irony, etc. ought slowly to evolve for every individual's self-created fiction says something implicitly about the nature of fiction itself. "A student writing or speaking (creating fictions) in all the same forms as the authors he reads can know literature from the inside in a way that few students ever do today."¹ Every response (verbal or otherwise) in the productive dimension entails some form of "organization," and these are the structures teachers ought to concentrate most on developing. "Form consciousness" is most easily nurtured when the form is of the student's own creating. "The structure of a work for us is the structure of our experience while reading."² It is the teacher's responsibility to create the best possible story-telling situations. Naturally, there ought to be a sense of progression and continuity to this productive aspect of the literature curriculum, and this problem will be examined in Chapter V.

us. It is the teacher's responsibility to introduce appropriate literature into the classroom at the appropriate time (commensurate with the imaginative and experiential capacities of one's students), realizing all the while that there are no specific works of literature which must be covered and that at all levels there is no single book and no one author that all students must read.

Thus, a curriculum for literature involves "content" on two dimensions which co-exist and function simultaneously: (1) on an operational and productive level, within the dialogue and activity of the classroom (and this includes narrative-making), particular stories, novels, poems, and plays find their way into the classroom, earn their right to exist, to be read and responded to, because "language in operation" means involving students in such an immediate and experiential way that the creativeness, activity and excitement of the class itself generates the need for the further "perspective" on experience that only the "added voice" of literature itself can provide. In instances such as these, a specific content, a story for example, is seen as complementing an activity, as being incidentally adapted to the on-going explorations of the classroom. (2) Or, with equal validity, the class may

begin, receptively, with the exploration of a specific story or poem, and when students respond to literature in this way (teacher-initiated, so to speak), the class is once again involved in the productive dimension of the literature curriculum. Thus, by beginning with literature instead of with an activity, new realms of engagement may be created and new possibilities appear for individuals and/or groups of students to move to other activities and readings.

Both the productive and receptive aspects of the literature curriculum are so inter-twined and inter-related that in many instances it will be difficult to separate the two.* And in fact, if one's classes are running smoothly, it ought to be difficult to perceive where one dimension ends and the other begins. Telling stories and learning

*And on another level of operation, as we have seen, the literary concerns of an English curriculum cannot be separated from all the other language processes: writing, talking, listening, drama, etc.--all of these productive language activities may be productive "responses" to literature as well. In addition, though it is difficult to separate the two modes, on certain levels, one or the other aspect may tend to dominate. In the early elementary grades, for example, children possess a voracious appetite to hear stories and tales, though their ability to create fictions based on their personal experiences in most instances lags far behind their receptive thirst. But this of course is not to imply that the productive mode ought to be neglected in the early grades.

how to tell stories leads to wanting to hear them and/or simply wanting to hear them leads to telling them. The productive and receptive aspects of a Response to Literature Curriculum are like two sides of the same coin, and the curriculum as a whole ought to attempt to integrate the world of personal experience (learning how to tell stories) with the world of literature--fictions that have already been created but await exploration. Finally, neither aspect ought to be considered more important than the other and neither a necessarily more valid starting point for literary exploration on any level. The receptive-productive-literary-response complex is, ideally, truly reciprocal in nature.

A Literature Curriculum Ought to be Experience-Oriented

Although as this study has shown, any curriculum for literature must recognize that there are many levels of growth and development to consider simultaneously, certain priorities can be established with respect to the specific concerns of specific classes. A writing class teacher, for example, though involved in all aspects of English, ought no doubt to be more acutely attuned to the productive-linguistic patterns of growth developing individually

within his class; he ought primarily to be concerned with how his students are progressing in terms of their powers to express and their awareness of their powers to express. However, in a literature class (or when an English class is dealing with literature) a teacher ought to shift gears somewhat (all of these strands are tightly inter-related) and concentrate more specifically on the imaginative and experiential patterns of growth involved in student response. In any event, a literature teacher ought to be very aware of the nature, value, significance and use of experience that pupils are capable of at various levels in their development. In short, one must know the extent of a pupil's ability to intellectualize upon experience at a certain age. What do children do with the raw data of perception and experience at age ten for example? What forms are their narratives likely to take? What kinds of experiences will their stories comprise, and what experiences is a child of a certain age most likely to respond to?

A Literature Curriculum Ought to be Response-and-Feedback-Centered

A Response to Literature Curriculum recognizes the importance of feedback. A student does not necessarily need

to know whether his response was "right" or "wrong" according to some abstractly defined norm of evaluation; instead, what he needs to perceive is how both he and others responded. He needs the opportunity of being flooded by many, many responses and to talk about his own response so that he may gradually discover for himself his own rules of discrimination and consider how he might have responded under different conditions or with a different piece of literature. Just as with talk, after a reading experience, there is always that positive need to want to respond, communicate, share. A main purpose for reading literature in the first place is merely to provoke thought, to get one's mind and imagination working. And in this regard, it is perhaps the attitude of the teacher which is most crucial towards encouraging response. Does this classroom militate against self-expressiveness? Is creativity urged? Do students feel safe that their responses and opinions will be accepted and not rejected? Does the teacher care about the experiences of his students? Do students feel that they can turn to their teacher for help? enlargement? response? direction?

It seems obvious that it is vitally important for a literature curriculum to begin to define its goals and

objective at the various grade levels in terms of a body of questions: What activities will help introduce these stories? How can I encourage my students to relate to the experiences of this poem. What should we do with this group of stories? Where might this story lead? To what other knowledges and/or experiences? Or conversely, what experiences and knowledges will lead to this story?

A Literature Curriculum Ought to be Pleasure-Oriented

A Response to Literature Curriculum sees as the ultimate goal of any literature program that students continue to read, enjoy, and respond to literature with ever-increasing satisfaction and with a deepening sense of awareness long after they have left school. Growth, development and awareness never cease, and as we have seen, English is an "outside school" subject much more than an inside the classroom one. As far as possible, literature programs ought not to give students any "hang-ups" about what is "good" literature and what is "bad," for nothing so stifles response than to be told that this particular story is "good" literature. Rather, the curriculum at all levels should strive to give students good experiences with whatever literature pupils seek to devour at any particular

time, allowing, that with the opportunity for growth and the encouragement for advancement maximized, students will of themselves, as Britton says, ". . . open doors . . . (and as they) advance, other doors will close behind them, with no need for the teacher to intervene . . . reading without satisfaction is like the desperate attempts we make to keep a car going when it has run out of petrol."³

A Literature Curriculum Ought to be Student-Centered

There is no need to belabor this point. A curriculum for any aspect of English must be student-centered in that it accepts unequivocally each individual for what he is as a person and welcomes into the classroom both his language and experiences. Simply, any curriculum must recognize that students are capable human beings (already well-functioning learners) given both the freedom and direction necessary for intellectual and emotional growth to occur. Students are capable of bringing a great deal to literature and thereby capable of learning a great deal as well. Student-centeredness means that classrooms ought to offer people a rich set of options and allow students to share in the responsibility for choosing both what they wish to explore and learn in school and how. A Response to

Literature curriculum places its faith in the natural desire of people to learn and it relies to a great extent on intrinsic motivation: "It is only through wide involvement with experience and activity that will solve the problem of motivation."⁴ What literature a curriculum teaches ought to depend more upon what one can learn about his students than upon what literature one feels his students ought to learn about; and a curriculum should attempt to seek out responses just as often as it attempts to pre-suppose them:

In English . . . even more than in any other subject, it is a sine qua non for the teacher that he should understand his pupils in depth, sympathize with their needs and aspirations, and be perceptively aware of their individual rhythms of growth and development.⁵

How then do we create a curriculum based on these perspectives? It is obvious that these five principles can operate most effectively if schools are first willing to reorganize themselves in the following ways:

- 1) be willing to do away with textbooks, and instead purchase every year a new supply of paperback books and magazines; perhaps the school library could be made into a discount bookstore.
- 2) be willing to make a sizeable investment in media equipment, particularly one closed-circuit TV set-up, if possible.

- 3) be willing to allow education to become student-centered, rather than authority-centered; trusting students, that is, to be responsible for their own learning without direct teacher supervision (on occasion), thus freeing teachers frequently to teach independently either on an individual basis or with small groups of students.
- 4) allowing students and teachers to go outside the school frequently, if such experiences best serve the interests of true education and real learning.
- 5) opening the community to the school and vice-versa.
- 6) making class scheduling flexible, so that students will have some portion of the day to do what they want or to attend any other class or activity they wish.
- 7) allowing parents as well as many other members of the community to come to the school frequently (lawyers, carpenters, community leaders, etc.) to share their experiences and knowledges with the students; making the school, therefore, into more of a "resource workshop" rather than a hallowed place of learning.
- 8) be willing to do away with tracking and grades so that students will feel free to learn, grow, and explore in their own ways without fear or threat.

At the same time, research is desperately needed to find out more about the nature of the process of literary response and the nature of story-ing. Specifically:

- 1) what kinds of stories are children most likely to write at the various grade levels.
- 2) what kinds of responses are children most likely to create.

- 3) what archetypal-experiential patterns are most likely to influence story-making and story-telling.
- 4) what stories are children most likely to respond to and why.
- 5) what are the oral intricacies of response.
- 6) and how might oral language be best adapted to classroom situations to help evoke response.

But these administrative changes are unlikely in the near future for most public schools, and even with research underway, it is one thing to believe in a student-centered response to literature curriculum, and quite another to implement it effectively. Clearly, something workable, flexible, and practical is necessary right now to effectively guide the average teacher of English in the public schools. The final chapter of this study, therefore, will describe activities and sequences within a possible literature curriculum based on the above premises which might be implemented (not constructed) in one form or another and to one degree or another in schools as they presently function.

It is hoped that such a description might, at the very least, provide teachers with confidence, direction and some practical advice in helping them teach creatively a flexible curriculum for literature based on student-centeredness, humanistic philosophies of education, and on

what the profession as a whole has learned about the teaching of language and literature from the Dartmouth Conference.

"What we need is something less specific than a curriculum and more ordered than chaos."⁶

CHAPTER V

A POSSIBLE STUDENT-CENTERED RESPONSE TO LITERATURE CURRICULUM

It seems prudent at this point to list, as concisely as possible, the overall objectives of a student-centered response to literature curriculum in English--goals valid for all levels: elementary, junior and senior high school. Since such a curriculum is by its very nature an open-ended and continuously growing and changing process, within these broad goals and objectives (and the general activities and sequences to be outlined in this chapter), it will be necessary for teachers and students alike to actually formulate the curriculum for themselves on a daily, weekly and monthly basis: that is, plan, devise and implement creative literary response activities and establish consensual short-term goals and projects, as well as methods of self-evaluation. What a response to literature curriculum actually becomes, then, can only be seen through hindsight, after the school year has ended, for it may come to involve

"anything" (depending upon the individual students in a particular class in a particular year), consider any number of ideas, imaginings, concepts and activities, and include any number of different stories, poems, novels or plays. These long range objectives, therefore, are probably best viewed as attitudes--values that teachers ought to teach for and attempt to develop in their students, for only with positive, pleasure-oriented attitudes toward literature will students feel free to use their own capabilities and creative talents to come to know literature widely, to learn to love it, and to understand it in all its mature satisfactions and enlargements.

A Response to Literature curriculum in English, therefore, ought to attempt:

1. to have each student come to realize for himself that the natural delight to be found in telling about one's own experiences and fictionalizing about them is the reason why literature has come to exist in the first place

2. to help each student gain confidence in himself by having the classroom both welcome and validate his experiences, perceptions, opinions, beliefs and ideas through as diverse and as varied as possible an immersion in literature, both productively and receptively

3. to produce good learners able to approach professional literature (including the classics) with independence of thought and self-assurance

4. to help each student use literature as a means of self-exploration and self-enlargement

5. to integrate the exploration of literature as fully as possible with all other language activities

6. to promote saturation ("fictions" everywhere): opportunity for each student to read as widely as possible and to tell as many stories as he is capable of

7. to help each student realize that literary communication is only one form of communication among many: oral discourse, television, painting, drama, collage, photography, cinema, music, sculpture, etc.

8. and finally to have each student come to realize for himself that reading and enjoying literature and coming to understand it are life-long processes, and that one's most rewarding and satisfying aesthetic literary experiences are most likely to occur long after the last day of high school.

The Elementary Grades: 1-6

For the sky, blue. But the six-year-
 old searching his crayon box, finds
 no blue to match that sky
 framed by the window--a see-through
 shine
 over tree-tops, house-tops. The wax colors
 hold only dead light, not this water-
 flash
 thinning to silver
 at morning's far edge.
 Gray won't do, either:
 gray is for rain that you make with
 dark slanting lines down paper
 Try Orange!

---Draw a large corner circle for sun.
 egg-yolk solid,
 with yellow strokes, leaping outward
 like fire bloom--a brightness shouting
 flower-shape wind-shape joy-shape!

The boy sighs, with leg-twisting bliss
 creating . . .

It is done. The stubby crayons
 (all ten of them) are stuffed back
 bumpily into their box.

"Drawing by Ronnie C., Grade One"

Ruth Lechlitrer

The first years of school provide abundant opportunity for both productive and receptive literature activities and responses. On the one hand, young children come to school with an insatiable thirst for the unconscious delight to be found in poems, rhymes, romances, fairy tales

and stories of adventure and daring of all kinds. Numerous receptive literary opportunities, therefore, need no motivation whatsoever at this level: teachers may simply tell stories to young children, orally, to the class as a whole; or read to a group perhaps, while other groups of students partake in other activities; or students can read stories to one another as part of either a reading lesson or a literature lesson. And of course there ought to be ample opportunity for pupils to read stories on their own in private, though in the earliest years children usually prefer communal story telling listening situations. Only gradually does the desire to read and enjoy for oneself develop. At the same time, literature at this level may also be approached very easily from the productive mode. Children at this age are eager to engage in activities, games, diversions and play of all sorts. Indeed, young children make no distinction between learning and playing. Furthermore, productive literature activities in the primary grades can provide even more opportunity for teachers to introduce stories and poems into the elementary curriculum. But most importantly at this level, productive activities can provide children with both the opportunity and motivation to weave their own stories from the fabric

of their personal experiences. Since the receptive mode can take care of itself more or less in the early grades, the activity or operational aspect of the curriculum--learning how to fiction--ought to be given perhaps more of an emphasis in the primary grades. This first section, therefore, will sketch three of the most basic language activities for the elementary school that teachers ought especially to stress in order to promote growth in literary response: oral language activity, direct experiential explorations, and dramatic improvisations.

A) Oral Language Activity: Talk, as we have seen, is the most naturally authentic of the uses of language and it is the most powerful and familiar learning tool that youngsters bring to school with them. Children of all ages want to talk all the time because language is helping them discover the fascinating world around them and they want to share their new perceptions and ideas with others and ask innumerable questions about their private little realities in order to determine for themselves if what they perceive and experience is similar to or different from what and how others perceive and experience. Talk of all sorts, therefore, ought to be actively encouraged in the early primary

grades, from gossiping and questioning, to word games, oral compositions and oral narratives. For what is particularly significant for a literature curriculum at this level is that talk helps to get one's imagination going. Through oral discourse we start to remember experience, and simple conversation encourages the recollection of both the remote and recent past. In short, talk is the very beginning of the story-making process. By encouraging a youngster to tell about his breakfast, for example, he may begin, after a start, to talk about his Uncle Henry who always had fine, brown horses to care for right after breakfast every morning on the farm he and auntie owned in . . . when . . . etc. Gradually other children may join in the conversation with their own stories and experiences. Or one could ask a group of children to tell about the best (or worst) time they ever had at the ballpark, the movies, the playground, and in keeping with the reciprocal nature of a response to literature curriculum, talk could also be initiated by simply telling a group of children a good story and letting them respond orally. Nor need the process of storying always spring from a verbal stimulus. Children can be drawn into conversation through the use of photographs, drawings, films, and unusual objects or toys which either the teacher

or the students themselves bring to school for sharing, examining and exploring. (Model cars and planes work just fine here, as do erector sets and dolls for both boys and girls.) What is important, simply, is that children be given the opportunity to tell about themselves. And while the teacher need not oversee all the dialogues and all the fictionings, he ought to encourage the process of rendering experience into story form as often as possible and in as many different ways as possible.*

And finally, no matter what the nature of the oral language activity in the elementary classroom, in nurturing story-making and literary response among small children, the tape recorder must be seen as the primary school's most valuable classroom asset. For the stories that children tell can be easily recorded and stored on tape and listened to again and again, or perhaps re-told because the teller wants to add something or change his tale around a little: like all good story-tellers, children learn quickly, by being involved in the process of making fictions on an

*James Moffett's publication, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, K-13 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968) contains many valuable suggestions for initiating all different kinds of oral and written narrative sequences.

intuitive basis, that one cannot separate "the tale from the telling . . . the dancer from the dance."^{1*} In addition, the stories and poems that children tape orally may be transcribed onto paper and published for the whole class to read, enjoy, and respond to in other productive activities. And there is no reason why these stories might not be collected and edited (preferably by the children themselves) over a number of years and made into a continuously self-updating "text" for future classes to enjoy, add to and/or delete from.**

Thus the child's first introduction to literature

*Besides taping their own stories, children should read and record real stories as well--like a fairy tale. Frequently the real story will become intermixed with their own experiences and fantasies and all sorts of creative possibilities may then emerge.

**Of importance here is attitude. Elementary teachers ought to expect and teach for the very best from their young pupils, for it would be very damaging to presume that the stories that children will produce in these early grades are most likely to be flat, episodic, unrevealing and just plain "not very good." For the most part, young children are very capable of creating fine stories and poems as Kenneth Koch's new book, Wishes, Lies and Dreams (New York: Chelsea House, 1970) convincingly demonstrates. And even the youngest children can be encouraged to experiment with discourse and style in order to make their story "as good as possible."

ought to be oral, both productively and receptively. Their stories can be tape recorded, and as writing ability develops, children ought to be encouraged to write down their experiences. In these ways, of course, the elementary literature program blends easily, as it should, with all the other aspects of an English curriculum: writing, reading, speaking, and here especially, talk is the unifying medium through which all the other language activities can flow.² It is vitally important in the elementary grades to keep the class dialogue going all the time and to be prepared at all times for both productive and receptive possibilities to emerge.

B) Direct Experiential Explorations: When considering productive possibilities for a Response to Literature curriculum for the primary grades, it is necessary to keep in mind that the young child's intellect is not yet fully developed. In his explorations into the world in quest of knowledge (the organization of reality) the young child's native learning strategies are still very much tied to concrete situations, to the immediately present. The second, third and fourth grader is interested primarily in occupying his mind with here and now situational activities

in an attempt, intellectually, to advance, through the use of language primarily, his "symbolic" and "imaginative" capacity to deal with reality, to order it, structure it, explore it, and create new ideas and relationships for himself through it. But although the child of school age is a competent language user, one must realize that often his concepts are only pre-concepts: that is, they are sometimes too general and sometimes too specific, and a great deal of actual experiencing is still very necessary to facilitate both language growth and learning in general:

Mental growth, too, consists of two simultaneous progressions--toward differentiation and toward integration. We build our knowledge structures upward and downward at the same time. A child frequently over-abstracts as well as under-abstracts: he cuts his world into a few simple categories that cover too much and discriminate too little, and that display no subordinate or super-ordinate relations among themselves. Or he makes a generalization that is too broad for the meager experience it is based on. He fails to qualify and quantify his statements. Judging only by the surface generality of his words and sentences, one would conclude that he was thinking at a high level of abstraction. But he may be understanding "international trade" as "barter," not as the complex of activities adults understand by the word. That is, he may use early many concepts that only later will take on the meaning adults give to them. And his concepts are all ranged in his mind on the same plane, awaiting the time when he will rank them hierarchically as super- and sub-classes of each other or laterally as coordinate classes. His generalizations will begin, however, to collide and conjoin, qualifying each other or building syllogistically on each other. This increasing interrelationship corresponds to the

organism's continual reintegration of differentiated functions. So, as regards individual concepts and statements, growth is toward internal complexity and external relationship. In the sense that abstraction means hierarchical integration, the child does climb the ladder as he matures, but this integration necessarily depends on a downward thrust into details, discriminations, and subclasses. He is on a two-way street: sometimes he needs to trace over his generalizations down to their inadequate sources, and sometimes he needs to build new ones from the ground up.³

Thus in the early grades, in addition to fostering talk of all kinds, teachers ought to provide activities that allow children to directly interact with and act upon the world about them: to encourage, that is, the kind of looking and exploration and observation of experience that takes advantage of the way young children naturally learn best. Whole classes or groups of children, therefore, ought to frequently go outside the school building and into the community to experience many things firsthand: taking a trip to the park or playground and encouraging the youngsters to feel and smell the bark of trees, to collect different grasses and leaves, to play in the sand, to collect rocks and stones and to examine them, and to go to stores and gas stations and factories and talk to policemen, workmen and shopkeepers. Moreover, children especially seek to perceive through all of their senses, and this is

precisely what these excursions invite. Many teachers unknowingly limit the possibilities for perceiving and experiencing by allowing only two sense organs to be used. The eyes and the ears are overworked, as the other senses are neglected. But outside classroom walls, the child is frequently seen fondling a new object, licking it, smelling it, and banging it against other objects. Childhood is the great period of synaesthesia, and all such doings ought to be encouraged.^{4*}

Direct experiential activity not only encourages further talk, but also allows students to bring back to the classroom fresh experiences and perceptions which may then be further explored and enlarged either through talk or through some other creative activity (paint, clay, dance, writing, etc.). In addition, numerous other "imaginings" have most likely been aroused so that stories and poems can now be created, or built up so to speak, from the details of the outing itself. Back in class, in small groups perhaps, the children will be eager to share their new observations with their classmates, and hopefully, to

*I note here particularly Herbert Kohl's remark in 36 Children that the most significant learning experiences for his sixth grades occurred "between classes."

fictionalize about them as well. Such excursions, operationally, provide pupils with opportunities for both "symbolic and imaginative representations of experience to emerge, if they will."

And receptively, of course, direct, whole experiencings provide as well numerous opportunities for stories and tales to be introduced into the dialogue of the classroom. After examining with care some of the old houses and trees in the neighborhood of the school, for example, the fairy tale, Old Mr. Vinegar,^{*} would be a most appropriate and enjoyable story to listen and respond to. In direct experiential activities, the curriculum ought to attempt to promote growth in the direction of "imagining about" things and the states of things, and to emphasize the child's world of experience as well as his experience of the world.

C) Dramatic Activities: Finally, in the elementary classroom, dramatic activities can be initiated either as a result of reading or listening to an actual fairy tale, story or poem, or to a story created by an individual

^{*}See Time For Old Magic, an anthology of children's literature edited by May Hill Arbuthnot and Mark Taylor (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1970), pp. 15-17.

student or group of students. Children can be easily introduced to dramatic activity through simple body games or through the street games that students themselves play and enjoy. Games like potsie, hide and seek, and Simple Simon Says all entail a great deal of physical motion and improvisation. Gradually, mime can come to form a portion of the day's activity, as well as simple dancing or moving to music symbolically. Then simple improvisations and role-playing situations can be developed, with words ad libbed for the most part at this level. Children will usually need little persuasion to act out their own fictions and stories with their friends, each taking a different role and with the author playing both himself and others. In this instance, each child can perceive how he and others react to certain common experiences and each is provided with instantaneous feedback, on an intuitive level, as to the quality, effectiveness, successes and inadequacies of each other's fictionalized experiences. Puppets work especially well in dramatic activities at the primary level, and children enjoy both making their own puppets and creating roles and stories for them at the same time.

Literature read receptively is also readily adaptable for dramatic activity. Children's stories and poems

are filled with one dimensional, stereotypic characters whose actions and motives are thoroughly predictable and easily mimicked. Simple ordinary folk tales and fables contain hundreds of talking beasts, magicians, fairy god-mothers, giants, witches and goblins, as well as enchanted men and maidens--and so there is tremendous potential here for children to role-play their own versions of these familiar figures. Moreover, plots in these tales are episodic for the most part with the action revolving about three wishes or three trials in a repetitional cadence until the spiraling action ends abruptly or runs backwards to its beginning.⁵ Since children's stories, then, give only the bare bones of a plot, there is a great deal of room to flesh out the sketch with more action and many different kinds of sub-plots. From simple folk tales of home and hearth, for example, children can play at being mother and father, rejected and/or homeless child, friend to a lost dog, or supernatural son or daughter. The simple English folk tale, The Travels of a Fox, is perfect for such dramatic improvisation; everyone will want to take turns jumping out

of the Fox's big brown sack.*

Sequencing

Sequencing is less a problem in the elementary grades than in either the junior or senior high school. The order of activities at this level can afford to be constructed somewhat loosely simply because the direction of the class--its context and its sense of continuity--will be provided to a large extent by each child himself. Simply, it is assumed that each individual student, given the freedom and opportunity to explore, play, create and respond, will learn to rely in the classroom on the gradual expansion and development of his own representational and experiential world to the same extent that he has successfully relied on these learning strategies outside the classroom. In short, the classroom, by validating each child's own personal experiences and by making children feel comfortable and at home in school, will naturally generate its own activities and its own sense of continuity both individually and communally. Nonetheless, it is the teacher's primary responsibility at

*See Time For Old Magic, an anthology of children's literature edited by May Hill Arbuthnot and Mark Taylor (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1970), pp. 12-14.

this level to constantly seek to encourage, enlarge and to deepen, to nudge pupils in the direction of further imaginative growth and awareness and to address the intellectual and emotional needs that young pupils themselves will obscurely indicate. Perhaps David Holbrook sums up the situation best of all:

A teacher of English, one could well say, spends his time in his better hours discovering through his pupils. This is not hyperbole. It follows inevitably if we accept personal experience as the vital core of English work. Then good creative work can only be spontaneous, and the teacher works best when he works with opportunities as they arise. Why children decide to take hate one week and flowers the next as themes is unpredictable, but it is necessary to important dynamics of their exploration of life to do so; and the creative teacher must follow, enlarge, and deepen.⁶

The child who feels secure in his own experiences is better able to perceive the pattern of his own growth and development, first intuitively, and then gradually with more and more awareness. In this way children learn to learn on their own and learn as well to be independent in school--invaluable assets for student-centered education in the upper grades.

The Junior High Grades: 7-10

Although the Response to Literature recognizes that greater maturity and sophistication of response is an ultimate goal of reading, no pupil should ever be pushed to the point of conceptualization until he is so steeped in the level of operation that he pushes himself to that level.

John Dixon
Growth Through English

A Junior High Literature Curriculum Receptively and Individually Perceived

If the outline of a Response to Literature curriculum on the elementary level seemed overly optimistic a portrait, the junior high years will provide a need to remember the enthusiasm and the successes of the "good old days," for here in these middle grades, a Response to Literature curriculum will meet its sternest test. Traditionally, the junior years have been the most difficult for teachers and curriculum designers alike, for early adolescence is undoubtedly the least understood of all the artificially partitioned stages in human growth and development invented by social scientists.⁷ The age period 11-15 has been categorized under various labels--pre-adolescence, the time of puberty, the latency period, and "myths" have sprung up around this group of individuals to which one frequently

hears the phrase (a sure sign of adult chauvanism), "they will grow out of it:" It, in this case, referring to the emotional, physical, and psychological imbalances society gratuitously ascribes to "going through a phase."⁸ The junior high student is seen simultaneously as both wanting to become an adult all too rapidly and yet clinging to childhood and immaturity; as anxious to discover who he is and yet fearful of the knowledge of self; as compliant and eager to learn on the one hand and yet rebellious and unteachable on the other; as seeking independence and freedom, but desirous also of security and peer group conformity; as overly self-conscious and introverted and yet extroverted and out-going; idealistic and cynical: the list is endless, but in essence it is partly, if not totally, a fabrication. For while there is no denying the pre-adolescence is a time of confused and unpredictable growth, the conflicts and psychic contradictions attributed to adolescents alone are in fact common to all of us. Every normal person's life is a time of confused and unpredictable growth--a period of transition. I personally possess all of the above psychological conflicts in one form or another and in varying combinations. What makes the situation so disturbing to the adult world, however, is not necessarily the

nature of the emotional conflicts, but rather the speed with which they occur. Psychological growth at this time is not different in nature from psychological, human growth at any other time--the discovery of self, after all, is a life-long process. It is simply that for what seems a very short period of time all the developmental processes, at once, are temporarily accelerated by virtue of their being linked simultaneously with phenomenal physiological and biological growth and maturation. As a result of misconception, myth, and simple fear of young people, adults, in desperate attempts to guide (or control) adolescent behavior--to find the underlying key principle, that is, about which to model a curriculum--have been too content to label, categorize and work from abstract arbitrary premises about what the adolescent world, intellectually and experientially, might possibly be about. Consequently, literature programs for this age group in the last several decades, on a receptive level (introducing literature into the junior high classroom), have been constructed about many different theories, philosophies, and approaches.

The Curriculum Development Center at Florida State University illustrates this confusion dramatically. Aware of the difficulties of dealing with the "transitional"

junior years, the Florida State staff, under the direction of Dwight L. Burton, developed and tested several different curriculums in literature for grades 7 to 9. One of the curriculums was a structure-content-centered approach that differed in no really significant way from the "academic" curriculums developed at other project centers: Nebraska, Oregon, Carnegie-Mellon, etc. Lesson units and literary selections in this curriculum were structured according to genre, style, technique, and theme, and presented at each grade level sequentially and inductively. Seventh grade lessons, for example, were concerned primarily with mythical tales, legends, folklore, and traditional stories of adventure and romance; the eighth grade introduced the more modern forms of literature: the novel--"symbolism in fiction," the short story--"plot development," narrative poetry, and one act plays; and the ninth grade was concerned with investigating the principles of satire, classical tragedy (Sophocles, etc.) and comedy (Aristophanes, etc.), and lyric poetry.⁹

A second Florida State Curriculum* attempted to

*The third and final Florida State curriculum for the junior high school was structured not on literary content directly, but rather on inductive-cognitive processes. This curriculum saw the junior high school as the age when students traditionally begin to master the complexities of

Brunerize a literature program for the junior high schools that has been immensely popular in American schools since the progressive movement of the 1930's: the experiential-adolescent-interest centered curriculum. Since adolescence is "supposed to be" the age of self-discovery--the time when

adult thought--begin, that is, to employ hypothetical reasoning ("formal thought" in Piaget's terminology), inferring general truths both inductively and deductively. "The junior high school is the logical chronological point, in terms of cognitive development, to begin the all important transition from the child's world of subjective immediacy to the more adult world of inference."¹⁰ One of the direct results of the beginnings of formal reasoning, the curriculum notes, is that during the ages of 12-14 students begin for the first time to ask questions about the "meaning," "significance" and "structure" of literary works.¹¹ The pivotal concern of this curriculum, then, was an attempt to take advantage of all of these intellectual forces at once. Through a concentration on logical and cognitive processes (recognition of form, perception of meaning, relation of universals and particulars, generalization and analogization) this program introduced literature, in sequence, into the classroom and its lesson plans were intended to provide students with the opportunity for developing their powers of thought in problem-solving, literary analysis activities. Students were expected to extract information from literary works about character, plot, technique, style, etc. and then use this information to infer meaning--to "discover" the various themes and universal human concerns to be found in different literary selections as well as to intuit the connections and relations to be found in genre, style and technique in similar kinds of literature.¹² In its final form, this curriculum was perhaps even more inauthentic and dishonest in its methodology than either the Carnegie-Mellon or the Nebraska programs. See the Moffett-Shafer Discussion in Chapter II.

each young individual becomes aware of himself as a distinct and unique personality--it has been believed for many years that a good literature curriculum for the junior high school ought to concern itself with typical adolescent experiences and introduce into the curriculum literature which deals primarily with adolescent interests and concerns and which presents both characters and themes in stories and poems that young readers can easily identify with and recognize for themselves as important and personally relevant. In fact, this adolescent-interest-centered program is still the most popular curriculum used in American junior high schools. Simple classification of selections under a topic supposedly of interest to the young adolescent has been common in textbook anthologies and story collections for the junior high for many years. In addition to grouping selections by genre (short story, poetry, biography, etc.) and/or structure (plot, character, theme, etc.) some of the more common typical classifications include:

I) Animal Stories:

Lassie Come Home, Eric Knight
The Yearling, Marjorie K. Rawlings
Old Yeller, Fred Gipson
National Velvet, Enid Bagnold
Big Red, Jim Kjelgaard

II) Sports Stories:

Rebound, Curtis Bishop
The Big Inning, Robert Bowen
Go, Team, Go, John Tunis
Breakaway Back, Nelson A. Hutto

III) Physical Adventure and Ordeal

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Scott O'Dell
Full Fathom Five, Lew Dietz
Burma Rifles, Frank Bonham
Shipwreck, Howard Pease

IV) Stories of Earlier Times

Johnny Tremain, Esther Forbes
The Innocent Wayfaring, Marchette Chute
Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter

V) Science Fiction

VI) The Adolescent Novel--stories with adolescent heroes and heroines and with themes that explore and examine experiences and conflicts of particular significance and importance to young people: loyalty and friendship, young love, racial hate, gang society, sex, loneliness, self-worth, etc. Some of these novels are first rate.

A Girl Like Me, Jeanette Eyerly
Two and the Town, Henry Felsen
Dark Adventure, Howard Pease
The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank
Death Be Not Proud, John Gunter
Durango Street, Frank Bonham
The Outsiders, S. E. Hinton

The Florida State staff merely "beefed up" and tightened this curriculum, gave it a definite structure and sequence and made it more academic. In this Florida State

curriculum, the "subject-matter" of literature was made into generalizations about human experience, felt to be common to adolescent growth and development, to which literary selections relate. Six separate units on "thematic categories" were presented in each grade in the following sequence:

Seventh Grade

The Unknown	Qualities of Folk Heroes
Frontiers and Horizons	Far Away Places
Decisions	Courage
Teamwork	Team Leaders
Man in Action	Man and Nature
Relationships	Adolescents We Learn About

Eighth Grade

The Unknown	Deeds and Qualities of Men and Myth
Frontiers and Horizons	The Village
Decisions	Responsibility
Teamwork	The Family
Man in Action	Man Among Enemies
Relationships	Close Adolescent Relationships

Ninth Grade

The Unknown	Concern for the Unexplained
Frontiers and Horizons	Frontiers in Space
Decisions	Justice
Teamwork	The Team and the Individual
Man in Action	Man Alone
Relationships	Mirrors (relations with self) ¹³

Under these various categories there were such titles as:

7th Grade - Courage:

Call It Courage, Sperry Armstrong: a south sea island boy proves his courage in a lonely ordeal.

Third Man on the Mountain, James R. Ullman: a boy conquers a great mountain on which his father met death.

- Far Away Places:

The Big Wave, Pearl S. Buck: a typhoon destroys a Japanese Village.

8th Grade - Man Among Enemies:

Call of the Wild, Jack London

- The Family:

Shadow of a Bull, Maia Wojciechowska: the son of a great Spanish bullfighter feels impelled to follow in his father's footsteps, but does not really want to be a bullfighter.

The Ark, Margot Benary Isbert: A German family just after the Second World War finally finds a new home in an abandoned street car.

9th Grade - Mirrors (relations with self):

Swiftwater, Paul Annixter: A Maine woods boy, his ambitions, his family, and the girl in his life.

- Justice:

Face of a Hero, Pierre Boulle: an ironic story of a prosecuting attorney who sends an innocent man to his death.

The Ox-Bow Incident, W. Van Tilberg Clark: psychological story of the lynching of innocent men in early Nevada.¹⁴

This kind of curriculum for the junior high school has been so durable and persisted for so long in schools in one form or another simply because its basic premises are essentially valid: the books and stories it contains deal with experiences that adolescents are concerned about, and many young readers have read these stories with pleasure and enthusiasm for many years. In fact, a main purpose of this entire study has been to show that a literature curriculum at all levels ought to be both student-centered and experience-centered. But this experience-interest curriculum for the junior high schools, whether a product of progressivism or academic reform, has never really functioned properly

for two reasons: on the one hand, most junior high school curriculums pay merely lip-service to the doctrine of allowing students to do their own "free" reading based on their interests, experiences and natural desires; and secondly, although the typical junior high school curriculum attempts to be experience-centered, it has never really allowed for the growth of individual, creative response to develop across a broad spectrum of activities in relation to the human experiences vicariously perceived in adolescent literature.

In the first instance, it has been the lament of junior high teachers for decades that no matter what the shape, content, or direction of the junior high curriculum at about age eleven or twelve reading interest appreciably declines. But this is in reality another "myth" about teenagers. In most instances it is the curriculum itself which un-motivates students to read (even about experiences which do interest them) by structuring their reading experiences in terms of a syllabus and by forcing students, overtly or covertly, to put away what they are reading for their own personal enjoyment and move on to literature of

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higher quality.* Noticeably at this age (9-13)--and this is not a myth as any news-stand keeper will testify--a passion for pulp literature emerges, the next highest step up from the elementary school child's voracious receptive capacity for fairy tales and romances. The sixth, seventh and eighth grader seeks out on his own: comics, gory magazines, horror tales, teen romances, auto magazines, mystery stories, tales of the supernatural, war comics, and slapstick humor and satire--such as commonly found in Mad magazine. Now while most interest centered curriculums for the junior high school supposedly respect the student's "right to read," most schools do not in actuality make pulp literature widely available in the classroom. Interest centered literature curriculums for the junior years traditionally seek to move on to more "substantial" literary

*Adolescents are "supposed to be" interested in adventure stories in the eighth grade and in all the other kinds of stories that an experience-interest curriculum provides--and they are, to an extent. But let us not forget that fear, adventure, loneliness, sex, peer pressure, self-identity, justice, athletic competition, racial hate, etc. are as much a part of the adult world as the adolescent (these experiences are part of all literature and appeal to people of all ages), and any adult would rightfully be put off by having to read about "justice" next week when perhaps he would rather read a spy thriller, or by being asked to put down his newspaper and pick up Time magazine instead.

experiences; after all, these years are "transitional" years. (This of course was particularly true throughout the 1960's with the emphasis on academic and scholastic achievement). But these more substantial literary experiences can only be grown into while students are at the same time allowed to glut their passion on the kinds of comics, magazines, and pulp literature that they wish to read and respond to. Simply, one need not exist to the exclusion or detriment of the other. Both in fact can exist simultaneously within the junior high classroom and one's aim should be to allow students themselves to move imperceptibly in their own personal reading from the comic book to the more mature pleasures to be found in a good short story or an adolescent novel. But just as a junior high curriculum must not be timid about allowing pulp literature into the classroom, in addition to all the fine titles traditionally included in junior high literature programs, there is no reason to suppose that young adolescents cannot, like adults, respond in their own ways to literature like:

An American Tragedy, T. Drieser (selections)
The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X
The Cross and the Switchblade, Wilkerson
The Cool World, Warren Miller
Last Summer, R. Hunter

The Summer of '42, H. Raucher
Nigger, Dick Gregory
The Contender, R. Lipsyte
Down These Mean Streets, Piri Thomas
I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down, Nat
 Hentoff
In Cold Blood, Truman Capote
Manchild in the Promised Land, C. Brown
The Collector, John Fowles
The Snow Goose, Paul Gallico
The Caine Mutiny, Herman Wouk

and to stories like:

"The Fastest Runner on 51st Street" - James Farrell
 "Don't You Wish You Were Dead" - L. Woiwode
 "The Wishing Well" - Phillip Bonosky
 "A Good Long Sidewalk" - W. M. Kelley
 "Phone Call" - Burton Roueche
 "Sonny's Blues" - James Baldwin
 "A & P" - John Updike
 "Snowfall in Childhood" - Ben Hecht
 "Skeleton" - Ray Bradbury*

In short, we need not worry about reading interest on a receptive level in the junior high school if we disavow elitism and allow students to determine what is "good" literature for them and what is "bad," and most important of all, what they enjoy reading. Daniel Fader and Herbert Kohl, particularly, have demonstrated that saturation and

*It is not suggested that these novels and stories be taught necessarily, but only that literature of this sort (along with pulp literature) be made available.

diffusion do work if honestly implemented.

But even more significantly, the typical interest-centered curriculum for the junior high school has never really allowed for personal, creative response activities. The teaching method most commonly used to implement an interest-centered curriculum is discussion. This is true of almost all the Project English literature curriculums, including Florida State. But while it is true that formulation (the desire to know and to verbalize to oneself and for oneself what literature is about--what stories "mean") first begins in the junior high years, reliance on discussion activity exclusively has done more to hinder response at this age than nourish it. Verbal communicative ability about "meaning," "significance" and "personal relevance" works to the advantage of the curriculum in junior high at the expense of the student. Adolescents, like adults, often become reticent about certain areas of experience (these of course will differ from individual to individual) and discussion activities will only serve to "turn off" young readers. It may take a youngster a year, for example, to articulate for himself a sense of loneliness that has been bothering him for some time. Consequently, non-verbal response activities (paint, film, clay, etc.) in the junior

high are more likely to help articulation and formulation at this level than a hundred class discussions.* When a student projects his response into some creative, concrete, meaningful and pleasurable activity--a productive involvement engaging one's whole personality--he is more likely afterwards to be able to talk about both his response and its relation to the literature from which the response evolved. Moreover, since creative activities are real, whole involvements, each separate response allows a student to bring more to each successive reading encounter in terms of actual human experience accumulated and reflected upon.**

*As usual, these personal individual responses ought also to include a great deal of personal, creative story making, both verbally and non-verbally, or perhaps a combination of several communicative modes at once. This aspect of a Response to Literature curriculum for the junior high, as well as response provoking discussion activities, will be taken up later on in this chapter.

**In this regard also, re-reading the same selection and re-responding can help enormously in terms of building self-confidence and providing students with visible proofs of achievement and accomplishment. Simply, through activity and response, through interaction with others and with stories, we have more actual experience working for us on each new story we read. When people re-read a novel, or see a play over again, and say that they understood more the second time, it is simply that on the re-run they have brought more to the encounter from within themselves. Moreover, it is interesting to note in this regard that because the "academic" curriculums were so concerned with covering content, they totally neglect to perceive that re-reading can provide a valuable learning experience.

Literature is an experience-interest curriculum on a receptive level, then, ought to allow adolescents to respond to literature, emotionally and intellectually, in productive activity-oriented ways rather than discussion-oriented ways--ought to become, that is, truly student-centered and response-centered.

By allowing for response to become a productive creation, one becomes involved inextricably in the receptive-productive complex. And besides helping formulation and articulation, this interchange has an important additional advantage as well: by observing how a student responds productively (verbally, non-verbally or both) a teacher is more likely to know what kind of literature will appeal to the same student receptively. In other words, the Response to Literature affords the teacher the opportunity to really get to know each of his students on a personal, affective-first basis; to discard stereotypes and misconceptions about adolescents, and to begin to really teach and to promote real learning on an individual basis. This presumes, of course, that teachers be both prepared and willing to re-respond to individual student responses, be willing to help a pupil explore his own response, relate responses, suggest other possible responses, really listen to student

verbalizations, and most of all, be willing to learn from the response itself. This naturally is most difficult, and it is here that a Response to Literature curriculum is most likely to break down from time to time. This new kind of teaching, as Maslow suggested, is very difficult indeed. And Elton McNeil, the psychologist who helped Daniel Fader create the Hooked on Books reading program, recently remarked, "There is no handy well-indexed cookbook containing sure-fire recipes for dealing with pre-adolescents. Teachers must learn to cook intuitively and with artistry if they are to present a palatable education to young persons in their classrooms."¹⁵ But assuming that no student-centered teaching can ever hope to be perfectly executed, at some point this student-teacher-response interchange can shift back to the receptive mode: the teacher, using his increased sense of awareness and knowledge about a particular student, can now direct this pupil to some other story or poem. In this way, then, an interest-centered curriculum (now become an activity based Response to Literature curriculum) need rely less on having to guess about what kind of literature might interest a particular group of students; by permitting the junior high literature curriculum to become student-centered and response-centered, teachers

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will have a more solid basis for knowing what literature to introduce to what students at what time. On an individual, receptive level, then, a junior high literature curriculum ought to help each student expand his imaginative awareness and come to know many different kinds of literature in many different ways.

A Junior High Literature Curriculum Productively and Collectively Perceived

But how can one teach and respond on an individual basis with forty students in each class and six classes a day. Now that, of course, is an excellent question. In addition to an individualized and personalized level of instruction, therefore, a junior high literature curriculum ought to function at the same time on a collective group activity level as well. Within the multifarious activities of an English class in general, students ought to be working simultaneously in groups (in addition to reading and responding on an individual basis) on productive literary response projects, and the junior high teacher ought to attempt in various ways to split his time between helping the various groups and working with individual students. This next section, therefore, will discuss four very broad creative-response group activities within which individual teachers

and students alike may devise an infinite number of variations. In addition, each of these response categories, hopefully, will open up numerous possibilities for formal, professional literature to be introduced into the classroom.

A) Media Involvement: Ideally, an English classroom at all levels--but especially in grades 7 through 10--ought to have available as many different kinds of media machines as possible: record players, records, tape recorders, still and motion picture cameras, a projector, radios, lots of building materials (wood, paper, paint, crayons, tape, glue, string, etc.), different kinds of lighting fixtures, and if possible, a closed circuit TV available somewhere in the school building for students to create, perform and tape their own TV shows: Playhouse 90 and Queen for a Day at a junior high school. Using these materials and mixing them for a variety of communicative purposes, student media projects may take a number of forms:

- 1) A productive media project may be a completely original creation; that is, a group of students may simply become involved with certain materials and through the talk that this sort of activity naturally generates create a media display or project to which, then, another group, or

an individual perhaps, may wish to respond.

2) A media project may be a response to a completely original fiction: a group of students may attempt a response to a story or poem written entirely from the collective experiences of the students involved in the project, or the group may respond to a fiction written by one member of the group alone who wishes to share his story with the others and exchange responses.

3) A media project may be a collective response to a professional story or poem read receptively by the group, or read by one member of the group and suggested to the others.

4) Options (1), (2) and (3) above all contain many receptive possibilities, for in the course of creating a media project, and responding in various ways, ideas, questions, connections and other creative possibilities will arise and naturally lead to the consideration of other stories and poems--just as hearing stories leads to wanting to tell them, responding to stories leads to wanting to read them. And here perhaps is where the teacher can be most helpful. In working with a group on a project, he can suggest other literature that will help to increase and further extend the imaginative satisfaction of the group experience.

In this regard, then, the media might on occasion be used solely to help implement the receptive aspect of the curriculum. A group of students, for example, might wish to put together a media display for the entire class in order to introduce their classmates to a particular piece of literature. Naturally, if the presentation is enjoyable enough, many students will want to read the story as a result of the group project. This can be an extremely rewarding experience. In a ninth grade class I once taught a group of students created a 10 minute media extravaganza in preparation for Ray Bradbury's "The Skeleton." After the presentation, we were all so scared, that no one that afternoon dared read the story. Instead we spent the rest of the hour responding to the project as a whole. Several days later, however, another group asked if they could challenge the first group's presentation, and within a week almost everyone in the class had read the story; one poor reader even asked to have it told to him. Naturally, on a number of other occasions, other projects in this particular class did not fare quite as well.

There is one final important point to mention here. Under no circumstances ought the media activities in the classroom appear to the students as subtle "con-jobs" to

get the class interested in literature. Using music, for example, as an introduction to a poetry unit or devising a project in order to recreate a passage from a story or illustrate the "meaning" of a poem are activities as inauthentic and dishonest as the inductive-discovery teaching methods of the content-centered curriculums of Project English. And today's student will immediately see through this sort of facade anyway. Simply, media activity must be undertaken in and for itself, and not for any ulterior academic purpose. This means doing (not doing in order to . . .) and responding in authentic, creative ways. Only true involvements are capable of turning back in upon themselves; and only from a completely honest engagement can students learn about what fictions mean (their own as well as others) and how good ones are put together for others to enjoy.

B) Creative Writing: This productive activity in the junior high school literature program ought to be seen as a further extension of the creative oral language "story-ing" of the elementary school, and, in fact, oral language activities themselves ought to continue unabated throughout junior high school. But as writing ability improves, sixth

and seventh and eighth grade pupils ought to be gradually encouraged to write about their experiences in personal essays or simple narratives and to slowly begin to write actual short stories and poems, all the while (with conscious ability expanding now at this level) learning how to experiment with and manipulate style, form, time scheme, diction, metaphor, etc. for particular narrative purposes. Articulated personal experiences at the junior high level ought to be viewed as touchstones for entirely fictional narrations. As with elementary school children, junior high students will naturally bring many story possibilities to class with them, and the involvement in the media and in other productive activities will no doubt help to create many more "story-ing" possibilities as well.

There are, unfortunately, few guidelines to follow here. In the elementary grades, personal narratives are most likely to be third person and episodic; then gradually in the junior years stories will probably tend to become more personal (and more first-person) as students try to project into their stories their own newly-discovered personal qualities and to act out through their stories their own personal fantasies, wishes, dreams and desires. He or she will want to become, in one way or another, hero

or heroine. But there is simply no way to tell; this is one of those areas, particularly, where research is sorely needed. Two things are certain, however, at this level, with respect to helping each student learn how to create the best stories he is capable of: (1) what is more important than direct instruction in creative writing in the junior high is simply that children be given as many opportunities as possible to write in many different ways; and (2) creative writing ventures must also involve group responses and reactions. A student will want to know if his story is "good" or not, how well written it is, and how it might be improved. Consequently, students ought frequently to gather in small groups and, in workshop fashion, help each other improve his/her story or poem. Moreover, teaching each other to write in this way also helps each student reflect upon and articulate for himself--for the benefit of another--what he has gradually been learning in his own way about the nature of story-telling and story-making.*

*At the same time, of course, all the non-verbal response projects, individually or collectively created, have also been supplying instantaneous feedback to each student: when a group of students see how each of them responded creatively to a story or poem, it becomes immediately apparent that there are many different ways of perceiving and interpreting the same human experience. Thus, while on the

And finally, writing stories, of course, can never really be separated from reading them. Thus, here too, a teacher might suggest some professional story or poem to a student which might relate either to the particular experience the student is struggling to convey or to the manner and form under which the student is trying to shape and direct his own fiction.

C) Dramatic Activity: As with oral and written language activities, dramatic involvements in the junior high ought to evolve directly from the dramatic experiences and activities of the elementary school. In addition to continuing to act out and improvise upon their own stories, and professional tales as well, junior high students are capable of creating a role-playing situation totally from scratch:

one hand, creative response is intended to help substantiate and validate each student's experiential-world view, it can also demonstrate to each pupil that others may not necessarily share his perceptions, opinions and/or beliefs. Different responses will naturally provoke discussion and as each student's views are questioned, each must defend his own ideas and, in a sense, justify his response. In doing so, of course, one may be forced to either clarify his own opinion or broaden his perspective so as to incorporate the perceptiveness of another. The Response to Literature, therefore, helps promote intellectual growth by allowing students to discriminate and re-organize perception and idea through authentic, response-feedback interactions.

that is, to begin an improvisation, junior high pupils need not be confined to relying on either the simple plot lines or the stereotyped, ready-made character figures from fairy tales, romances, and adventure stories. On their own, these pupils will gradually begin to create for themselves more "real-life" characterizations, all the while trying out different roles and personalities--fictional and dramatic versions of themselves. Starting together as a group, seventh and eighth graders, then, ought to be encouraged to merely imagine possible dramatic scenes or episodes and then further formulate and articulate these situations by acting them out spontaneously. For example, a simple street scene could be imagined, with students playing themselves and ad libbing, a policeman or two perhaps, a candy store proprietor and his wife, some children playing noisily, and an action like robbery or a domestic squabble; or perhaps a science fiction episode with students plotting the destruction of a neighboring galaxy; or role-playing about the day school disappeared. Furthermore, involvement with media projects at the same time will be an invaluable aid here in helping to costume, create make-shift sets, and provide music, lighting and sound effects.

Spontaneous drama of this sort in the junior high school immediately creates for the class many possible further activities, both productively and receptively. On the one hand, using their own improvisations for a start, students can be encouraged to write their own plays; and secondly, acting or role-playing of any kind naturally leads to wanting to read and produce real, professional plays. The inexpensive paperback anthology Fifteen American One Act Plays, edited by Paul Kozelka, is excellent for these purposes. And there is no reason why short stories and parts of novels and even poems might not also be converted by the students themselves into small dramatic projects. The short story Phone Call* by Berton Rouche is very adaptable for junior high dramatic presentation as is Browning's My Last Duchess for perhaps a ninth or tenth grade class. Bear in mind also that all of these operational activities are turning back upon themselves. By writing plays, producing plays, and converting stories and poems into plays, students, by story-ing (doing) on an intuitive-response basis, are learning how to cope with character, motivation, metaphor,

*See Point of Departure, nineteen stories of youth discovery, edited by Herbert Gold (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 88-93.

time sequence, theatricality, human conflict and experience, etc. in all the very same ways that authors themselves do. But the object here is not to ultimately produce fine, professional drama, but merely to afford students the opportunity to become involved in creating, responding and interpreting in ways that are meaningful and pleasurable for them. It is their interpretation which is important, and not fidelity to a text.

D) Discussion Activities: Finally, when all of these productive activities result in students reading literature for themselves receptively, there is no need to totally disregard formal discussion. Class momentum is bound to dissolve from time to time, especially when everyone's projects are going badly. When a class is centered on student activity for the most part, even the most energetic teenagers will welcome a respite. On these occasions, time for free reading and participatory discussion activities--to explore literary response verbally--might fit into the curriculum quite well.

These discussions might take a number of different formats:

- 1) Teacher-Directed: Since during junior high

school the desire to "formulate" will first appear in one form or another, discussion can help students verbalize how they feel about a particular story and what possible significance such a story might have for their own lives. A good way to nurture formulation at this age (and to respect naive responses at the same time) is to have students respond to the different characters in a story on an affective basis through personal identification by asking questions such as, "How do you think so and so felt in this story when his father died?"; or "Why do you think Joe became angry at Bob?"; or "Why did Harold feel lonely at the circus?" etc. After the students have explored the feelings, experiences and motivations of the characters in a piece of fiction in this way, the discussion might then move to an exploration of how each student would personally feel and react if he were involved in a situation or conflict similar to the one portrayed in the story. Then perhaps the students could examine the sources of those feelings within themselves, culminating ultimately in a consideration of their own personal belief system, principles and ethical values. In other words, public, verbal response and formulation is probably best approached at this level through discussion activities which are affectively-oriented (i.e. how would

you feel in this situation) rather than cognitively-oriented (i.e. what does this story mean?).

2) Student-Run: On their own, students might decide what particular aspects of a story they might like to explore in an open-ended, but somewhat formal discussion. Panels could be set up for students to question and/or debate other students on how they responded to various aspects of a story. Courtroom games work great here, with different students taking turns playing prosecuting and defending attorney, judge, interested spectators, various witnesses, etc. Naturally mystery stories are perfect here, but many different kinds of stories can be converted into "who-don-its" or "why" stories.

3) Group-Oriented: Finally, the class might be broken down into various groups, with each group discussing a different aspect (response) of a particular story. If the elementary years have been successful in providing each student with confidence in his oral language ability and if students are used to oral language activities from the lower grades, there should be little difficulty initiating oral-response-discussion activities in grades 7-10 to stories read in common:

The comprehension of a piece of literature will always stand in some ratio to what an individual has done, heard, seen and felt in his personal life.¹⁶

Thus a response to literature curriculum in the junior high school ought to operate on two levels simultaneously: (1) a private, personal-response receptive level where teachers must be prepared to teach individually; (2) and a group activity, productive level which may at times tend to incorporate the private responses and individual readings of some pupils on a personal level. Sequencing here will be most difficult. Obviously on level one there can be no pre-planned course of action. Teachers, therefore, ought to attempt to plan their classes around different activities on level two: improvisation for three days, media projects for a week, a movie response next Thursday, then, perhaps, some group discussion, etc. Books should be flowing in and out of children's hands constantly and teachers will have to organize class time so everyone's projects can be seen and responded to. But most important of all, students at this level ought to be gaining confidence daily in their ability to initiate their own activities and direct their own learning.

The Senior High Grades: 11-12

We can no longer cut the roots of experience which alone can sustain the growth we look for. It is not only that the classroom must more and more merge into the world outside it, but that the processes of school learning must merge into the processes of learning that began at birth and are life-long.

James Britton
Language and Learning

A senior level response to literature curriculum sees the last two years of high school as centering about a series of many different student-centered courses, worked into the over-all school curriculum by means of a loosely-constructed modular scheduling system. These literature courses would operate in two basic ways: a receptive content-centered approach and a productive context-centered approach.

A) Content-Centering:

1) Teacher-developed: English teachers in these final two years of high school could schedule at the start of each semester a whole series of literature related problems which they would like to teach based on their competencies, interests and/or natural desires to want to learn (along with their students) more about a particular

aspect of literature, period of literature, or particular author. Instruction here could be either standard fare:

the short story
 American romanticism
 contemporary American poetry
 the fiction of Hemingway and Salinger
 modern drama

or experimental, depending upon the creativeness of individual teachers:

the poetry of rock
 the Victorian novel and sexism
 Shakespeare and the cinema
 the politics of contemporary Black Literature

These courses could run for any length of time--from an intense three to four week involvement, to a two month long encounter, to a whole semester--and students would be free to enroll in as many of these courses as they wish during a term. Similarly, the selection of courses offered could be up-dated and revised at any point during a semester. It is hoped that at this point student-interest, subject-interest, and teacher-interest would intersect fully. If the curriculum has been working up to this time, teachers ought to be responding both to the developing interests of their students as well as to literature itself under a wholly new and creative perspective. In other words, a Response to

Literature curriculum ought to make real learners out of teachers also. In any event, teachers ought not to use this opportunity merely to teach content in new ways, but for the old reasons. Nothing could be more inimical to a Response to Literature curriculum. Instead, teachers should attempt to legitimately satisfy the demands of their students to know more about literature and to fulfill their own curiosities and creative needs as well. And although this may appear to be a throwback to content-centeredness and structure-centeredness, it is presumed (1) that this curriculum, up to this point, has succeeded in creating students who are good learners: people who have learned how to learn and who can now generally be considered responsible for supplying both the direction and the motivation for their own learning; (2) that students who have had the opportunity to respond to literature and to create with it will already by this time have read widely and will know what they like in literature and what they would like to know more about; (3) that, therefore, students will be enrolled in these content courses because they want to be enrolled in them; and (4) finally that the literary explorations within these classes will adhere to the ideas and theories of a Response to Literature curriculum, in general,

and make use of any of the creative methods for teaching already described in this chapter.*

2) Student-developed: Within all these teacher-developed content-oriented courses, groups of students themselves ought to be allowed to suggest their own content-courses: decide together what ideas they would like to explore, books they would like to read, goals they would like to achieve, and activities and projects they would like to engage in. Given the nature of the school system for which this curriculum is designed, it should not be much of a problem, then, to find a teacher willing to help direct student-developed courses and learn along with the students at the same time.

B) Context-centering: These courses ought to attempt to examine in depth some aspect of American society through a number of different activities, discussions and experiences

*But even with such content-centering, some teachers, students, administrators and concerned parents might yet feel that a curriculum of this sort has so far failed to teach those "areas of knowledge" which must be covered for success in all lower division college literature courses. One of these content classes, therefore, might be scheduled each spring designed specifically to cover pre-planned subject-matter and teach literary criticism, technique, and analysis. Such a class might be entitled, "Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About Literature, But Have Been Afraid to Ask."

in order to establish within the classroom a socially relevant context within which literature may then be introduced and examined. It is hoped that through intense involvements, both inside and outside the school building, a body of knowledge, opinionation and different sets of beliefs and values will gradually be drawn into the classroom and that these forces will create a frame of reference within which--through literary response--solutions to these social problems might be probed. Because it will probably take some time to establish a number of different contexts within the class, to explore a problem from a number of different aspects, and for everyone to get to know and trust everyone else, these context-centered courses are probably best scheduled for an entire semester or half-semester (two months).^{*} Each of these context-centered courses ought to rely on extensive out of class and community field experiences, and each will no doubt include a great many non-imaginative readings in sociology, history, politics, psychology, etc. Consequently, these classes might best be set up in conjunction with the other "arts" departments within the high school. For in the final analysis, after

^{*}Students should feel free to create these courses as well.

all, all "subjects" become integrated anyway. Here are some possible context-centered courses for grades 11-12:

A) "An Examination of Educational Theory and Practice in the United States"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Students might interview teachers and administrators about educational problems both within their own high school and at other schools within the city or in neighboring cities.
- b) Students might canvass the neighborhood to find out how different parent groups within the city feel about public education.
- c) Students might examine areas of disagreement between the local police and various student organizations.
- d) Students might decide to set up a "model" classroom, and then attempt to put their theory into practice in another course the following semester.
- e) Students might examine the role of athletics in public education; the role of the school counselor; administrative bureaucracy, etc.

2) Possible Literature:

Up the Down Staircase, Bel Kaufman
The Way of All Flesh, S. Butler
Gulliver's Travels, J. Swift
The Way It Spoze to Be, J. Herndon
The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,
 A. Sillitoe
How to Survive in Your Native Land, James Herndon
Inherit the Wind, J. Laurence
To Sir, With Love, E. R. Braithwaite
Good Times/Bad Times, James Kirkwood
Great Expectations, C. Dickens
The Child Buyer, J. Hersey
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, H. Greene

B) "An Examination of Violence in America"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) The class might examine some of the more popular violent movies and then discuss how they reacted to the violence in these pictures on a personal, introspective basis.
- b) Some students might interview members of the local police force and perhaps even become involved in local community-police programs; or better yet, manage to talk to some of the inmates at the local jail.
- c) Students might ask their parents how they feel about violence; or question fathers who have fought in World War II and older brothers who have fought in Vietnam.
- d) Role-playing situations might be set-up within the class in order to allow everyone to experience how he responds and reacts to different violent confrontations.
- e) Students might probe the causes of violence within themselves and society, and examine at the same time different kinds of violence: psychological, physical, political, etc.

2) Possible Literature:

In Cold Blood, T. Capote
The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X
A Clockwork Orange, A. Burgess
Macbeth, Shakespeare
The Butterfly Revolution, W. Butler
The Godfather, Mario Puzo
Deliverance, James Dickey
The Last of the Mohicans, J. F. Cooper
Lord of the Flies, W. Golding
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,
 A. Solshenitsyn
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, K. Kesey

C) "An Examination of Political Power: The Individual vs the System"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) This kind of context course is great for an election year. For part of the term, students could become involved in someone's campaign effort (locally or nationally), and then bring these experiences back to class for examination and exploration.
- b) Politicians, judges and lawyers could be invited to the classroom for a panel discussion.
- c) Students could interview the local radical political groups.
- d) Some students might wish to publish a political newspaper for distribution both within the school and the community.
- e) Or some students might wish to volunteer to work for local political organizations: the city or county branch of the Democratic or Republican Party, the Model Cities program, CORE, OEO programs, etc.

2) Possible Literature:

All the King's Men, R. P. Warren
 A Novel by Ayn Rand
The Armies of the Night, N. Mailer
The Naked and the Dead, N. Mailer
Brave New World, A. Huxley
The Crucible, A. Miller
Fail-Safe, E. Burdick
For Whom the Bell Tolls, E. Hemingway
Looking Backward, E. Bellemey
Lost Horizon, J. Hilton
The Outsider, R. Wright
Seven Days in May, F. Knebel and C. W. Bailey
Prison Journal of a Priest Revolutionary,
 D. Berrigan
Animal Farm, George Orwell

D) "Is Religion Alive or Dead in America?"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Groups of students might wish to explore through personal writing or through the media their own religious heritage and values.
- b) Students might wish to select several religious conflicts from stories, novels and/or poems and then re-create these episodes in role-playing situations to see how they might react in moments of "conscience-crisis."
- c) Students might explore the relationships between religious ritual and secular ritual.
- d) Students might wish to make a film based on religious allegory and symbolism.
- e) And, of course, the local religious organizations might be canvassed.

2) Possible Literature:

The Power and the Glory, G. Greene
Rabbitt, Run, John Updike
Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett
Siddartha, H. Hesse
The Old Man and the Sea, E. Hemingway
On the Road, J. Kerouac
The Lord of the Flies, W. Golding
Measure for Measure, Shakespeare
King Lear, Shakespeare
Babbitt, S. Lewis
Elmer Gantry, S. Lewis
The Assistant, B. Malamud
Another Country, J. Baldwin
The Nun's Story, K. Hulme
The Devil's Advocate, M. L. West
The Prophet, K. Gibran
Song of Myself, W. Whitman
The Exorcist, W. P. Blatty

E) "War"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Students might interview veterans as well as the local anti-war groups.

- b) Students might try and see as many American war movies as possible (local late shows program old war flicks at least once a week), and then examine both the values in those movies and their personal reactions to those values.
- c) Students might create war games for themselves based on Monopoly, Black and White, The Education Game, etc.
- d) Students might examine local industries, colleges, business organizations, and farm bureaus to see if the "military-industrial" complex is fact or myth.
- e) Students might make both a literature and musical anthology of popular war songs and ballads.

2) Possible Literature:

Johnny Got His Gun, D. Trumbo
A Farewell to Arms, E. Hemingway
All Quiet on the Western Front, E. M. Remarque
The Bridges at Toko-ri, J. A. Michener
The Naked and the Dead, N. Mailer
Catch-22, J. Heller
Slaughterhouse Five, K. Vonnegut
Why We are in Vietnam, N. Mailer
Little Big Man, T. Berger
The Caine Mutiny, H. Wouk
Mila 18, Leon Uris
The Bridge on the River Kwai, P. Boulle
The Guns of Navarone, A. MacLean

F) "Injustice in America"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Students could interview local residents with political and/or economic gripes: factory workers, school teachers, farmers, struggling businessmen, etc.
- b) Students could role-play typical situations involving a sense of injustice: Black-White confrontations, school grading policies, the

- draft, the arrest procedure, etc.
- c) Through small encounter-group situations, students might reveal to one another their own experiences with injustice and hypocrisy.
- d) Local leaders of minority organizations might be invited to the class to discuss the political and economic difficulties facing the various ethnic groups in a particular community.

2) Possible Literature:

The Godfather, M. Puzo
The Confessions of Nat Turner, W. Styron
In Dubious Battle, J. Steinbeck
The Book of Job
The Jungle, Upton Sinclair
The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare
Native Son, R. Wright
Black Like Me, J. Griffin
The Trial, F. Kafka
The Fixer, B. Malamud
King Lear, Shakespeare
The Grapes of Wrath, J. Steinbeck

G) "Women's Liberation"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Each student in the class might like to keep a journal recording all the occasions on which he or she felt forced into a particular role based on sex. Periodically, these journals might be passed around the room and discussed.
- b) The local NOW group might be interviewed.
- c) Students might examine the ways in which their own high school is sexist in its practices, overtly or covertly. The results could be published in a report made available throughout the school.
- d) Female students and school athletics.
- e) Female students and school academics.

- f) Role-playing situations might be explored in which sex roles become reversed: the males in the class assume female roles and vice-versa.

2) Possible Literature:

Madame Bouvary, G. Flaubert
Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen, Alix K. Shulman
The Poetry of Nikki Giovanni
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, E. Albee
Wuthering Heights, E. Bronte
Women in Love, D. H. Laurence
Prisoner of Sex, N. Mailer
What I'm Going to Do, I Think, L. Woiwode
A Doll's House, H. Ibsen
Ariel, Sylvia Plath
Main Street, S. Lewis
The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
Jane Eyre, C. Bronte

H) "The Occult"

1) Possible Activities:

- a) Read everything you can about witches, devils, ghosts, and spells. Collect everything you can about witchery and bring it to class.
- b) Media projects are obviously well suited; making a film, of course, would be best of all.
- c) Maybe some in the class could find out if there are any covens in the area.
- d) Students might want to try and write their own occult stories.
- e) In various role-playing-media experiences students could explore their own reactions to the occult.

2) Possible Literature:

The Exorcist, W. P. Blatty
Rosemary's Baby, Ira Levin

Macbeth, Shakespeare
The Turn of the Screw, H. James
To the Lighthouse, V. Woolf
The Picture of Dorian Grey, O. Wilde
Rebecca, D. DuMaurier
The Birds, D. DuMaurier
The Narrative of Arthur G. Pym, E. A. Poe
The Poetry of William Blake
The Search for Bridey Murphy, Morey Bernstein

I) Finally, every high school ought to have a real, live theatre operating throughout the school year as a regular credit-earning, academic course. Students could enroll in this theatre class on a continuous basis or for one semester only. Such a theatre could perform whatever plays it wanted, with different students being responsible for the various aspects of production: acting, directing, costuming, set design, finances, etc. Plays could be either professional or student experimentations, and periodically different classes (or the entire school, assembly fashion) might take the morning or afternoon off and see a play in the auditorium. And perhaps a similar on-going class could be established for the cinema as well.

It is realized, of course, that all of these context-centered courses are purely arbitrary and artificial intellectual constructions. Any one of the titles above could be logically placed under any one of the course descriptions. But to put the emphasis on the particular focus or supposed

content of these courses is to totally misconstrue their purpose. Simply, these classes ought not to emphasize the examination of these ideas in literature; rather, each of the courses should seek to involve its students in activities, projects and engagements that the students themselves see as educationally relevant and worthy of both their time and effort.

CONCLUDING NOTE

This study has argued against many current teaching practices, and against, for the most part, the organization of school systems and curricula as they now exist. But the plain truth of the matter is: in the future, curriculums for English (and for most other subjects as well) will have to become both student-centered and activity-response-centered. But these arguments have been intended, from the beginning, to be positive. Thus, while the English teaching profession can no longer attempt to improve instruction through upgrading content or redesigning curricula, there are means available for institutional change to occur. Inevitably, the burden for this new kind of teaching and for the creation of a new kind of school--as indicated by this study--will fall on the English teachers themselves. And herein lies the profession's best hope for the future. If English teaching is to fulfill the promise and hopeful expectations set forth at the Basic Issues Conference many years ago, the profession in the next decade must concentrate on educating excellent teachers as strongly and as devotedly as it has in the past concentrated on producing new materials and designing new courses of instruction.

While the English teaching profession in the 1970's will still be in need of financial support to further basic research (particularly in linguistics, psycholinguistics, reading instruction, literary response, and composition), it must at the same time seek to establish teacher-education workshops in university and community college English departments across the country at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Specifically, future teachers of English must:

1. be as thoroughly knowledgeable as possible about the nature of language itself--its acquisition, development, growth, and all its communicative and discourse possibilities;
2. be well schooled in both learning theory and the psychology of child development;
3. learn how to communicate interpersonally, and how to get to know and to trust children; and
4. future teachers of English must not only know literature, but they must respond to it themselves, creatively and often.

But most important of all, the English teaching profession must educate its future teachers to be free and creative individuals--free, that is, to know how to create new and different methodologies on their own and how to teach in the ways indicated by this study, revising and implementing what happens in the classroom each year in the

light of previous successes and failures.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹James E. Miller, Jr., "Literature in the Revitalized Curriculum," NASSP Bulletin, 51 (1967), p. 25.

²Ibid., pp. 25-26.

³Michael F. Shugrue, English in a Decade of Change (New York: Western Publishing Co., 1968), p. 22.

⁴William H. Evans and Jerry L. Walker, New Trends in the Teaching of English in the Secondary Schools (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1966), p. 21.

⁵Ibid., p. 22.

⁶Shugrue, p. 23.

⁷Shugrue, p. 23.

⁸Shugrue, p. 22.

⁹James J. Lynch and Bertrand Evans, High School English Textbooks: A Critical Examination (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963), pp. 1-16 + 242.

¹⁰J. N. Hook, "If a Curriculum is to be Sequential," English Journal, 51 (1962), p. 79.

¹¹Shugrue, p. 23.

¹²Evans and Walker, p. 32.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Freedom and Discipline in English: Report of the Commission on English (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1965), p. 2.

¹⁵"The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English," in PMLA, 74, September Supplement (1959), p. 4.

¹⁶Shugrue, p. 27.

¹⁷Evans and Walker, p. 32.

¹⁸Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 12-13.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 20.

²⁰Shugrue, p. 29.

²¹Bruner, p. 17.

²²Bruner, p. 10.

²³Bruner, p. 10.

²⁴Shugrue, p. 29.

²⁵Shugrue, p. 30.

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