

STUDIES IN THE TEACHING OF POETRY

by

Moiree Scott Compere

A THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan
State College of Agriculture and Applied Science
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P. V. Millard

THESIS ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was (1) to determine the attitudes of college freshmen toward their experiences with poetry, and (2) to evaluate the theories obtained from the concensus of agreement among them in the light of expert opinion. From the pattern of favorable-unfavorable attitudes found in the study, the author believed it possible to obtain data from which teachers, especially instructors of beginning college classes in poetry, might draw principles of teaching, and gain an insight into the lives and thinking of their students, a procedure deemed necessary in good pedagogy.

The thesis of this study is that if the general unpopularity of poetry is a fact, teachers should know the factors which cause such a situation. The seeming ubiquitous acceptance of the inevitability of poetry neglect needs to be challenged by studies which examine facts and try to determine truths. This study of attitudes is a beginning of that determination.

The subjects of the study were 2500 freshmen in the Written and Spoken English Department of Michigan State College. A Poetry Attitudes-Inventory covering four aspects of poetry experience was constructed and administered to two sample groups of these freshmen. The Inventory attempted to ascertain attitudes toward (1) general contacts with poetry such as those caused by home environment, access to books, opinions of friends, etc., (2) textual material or the poetry studied by them,

(3) techniques or teaching methods, and (4) teachers. To this method of ascertaining student opinion was added that of personal interview.

Interviews were held with members of three groups of students: (1) eighteen selected from those answering the Inventory, (2) eleven in an elective Oral Interpretation of Poetry class, and (3) nineteen in a beginning class in Oral Interpretation.

The pattern of agreement on favorable-unfavorable attitudes was compared with opinions of experts. From the data obtained, implications were induced in regard to teaching poetry on the pleasure-principle. Analysis of the data showed a very definite agreement in regard to those factors which make students like or dislike poetry, which make them want to read and study it, or abandon it forever.

There was discovered an obvious traditional pattern in materials, methods, and teachers. Texts are largely what they have always been, containing the usual classics on which teachers insist, seemingly because of values believed to be inherent in them. Adults select classics which students "ought" to know apparently without regard to their emotional maturity, interests, or ability to comprehend. Relatively little modern poetry is included in books for study although students indicate their liking for the little they know. So little poetry is taught in schools that students remember almost no poems. Students require flexibility of plan and extensive reading in poetry materials which must be made available for them in great variety and in easily accessible spots. Teachers must start where students are, accepting, if necessary, inferior

verse until students want better. For any success in teaching poetry a definite change in materials is indicated.

Data indicate that traditional methods of teaching are largely the same that they have always been. Twenty per cent of those most used were the typical ones of assignment in a prescribed text, question and answer, discussion of historical, biographical, and metrical mechanics. Of the thirty possible methods listed, twenty per cent of those most unused were the newer, more experimental ones. Other factors discovered were: Methods will depend on goals. A poor teacher can ruin any method, and a good teacher enhances any method. The oral reading method is very important. Memorization is the most hated of all techniques, and the most universal. It should either be avoided or made pleasant. Poetry cannot be learned, according to the witnesses in this study, without the proper guidance. Students claim they do not like poetry because they do not understand it, and a great majority claim that few teachers use effective methods. One fact is very evident: there must be a change in methods if students are to like poetry.

The data show that teachers largely teach as they were taught. The evidence points out that they teach poetry if they like it or have to; they frequently leave it entirely out of the curriculum. Students feel that poetry teachers must not only have the abilities and characteristics of other good teachers, but must have something over and above these. They do not care if the teacher is young or old, man or woman, if he or she is young in spirit, cooperative, interested, sympathetic, and will consult students as to what they like. A teacher must

consider student opinion, consistently allowing them to express their feelings in regard to the poetry studied. Even those who thoroughly dislike poetry, and particularly the classics, feel that educated people should know something about poetry, that if students could understand why classics are important they would be willing to try to read them, and that if pleasant methods of understanding were provided, a great many students might learn to read poetry with pleasure.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY.....	1
Purpose of Study.....	1
State and Status of Poetry Today.....	2
Evidence of Lack of Interest in Poetry.....	2
Expert Opinions on the Value of Poetry.....	6
Poetry Provides Lasting Substance.....	7
Poetry Provides Vicarious Experience.....	8
Poetry is a Prime Requisite to the Proper Function- ing of Human Society.....	10
Poetic Literature is Ideal for Imaginative Communi- cation.....	12
II. PROBLEM, SOURCES OF DATA, AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE.....	18
Statement of Problem.....	18
Method of Procedure.....	19
Kind of Investigation.....	19
Selection of Group to be Studied.....	21
Construction of Poetry Attitudes-Inventory.....	21
Administering Inventory.....	23
Personal Interviews.....	24
Parts I and II, Poetry Attitudes-Inventory.....	27a
III. DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEXTUAL MATERIAL.....	28
As Ascertained From Poetry Attitudes-Inventory.....	29
Evidence from General Questions.....	29
Evidence from Record of Poetry Listed as Remembered by Each Student.....	33

TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

CHAPTER	PAGE
As Ascertained from Personal Interviews.....	38
As Ascertained from Expert Opinion.....	46
IV. DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEACHING METHODS.....	81
As Ascertained from Poetry Attitudes-Inventory.....	82
As Ascertained from Personal Interviews.....	97
As Ascertained from Expert Opinion.....	106
V. DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEACHERS.....	127
As Ascertained from Poetry Attitudes-Inventory.....	127
As Ascertained from Personal Interviews.....	132
As Ascertained from Expert Opinions.....	140
VI. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.....	157
Implications and Conclusions.....	158
Recommendations.....	163
Suggestions for Further Study.....	167
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A -- TABULATION OF TOTAL ANSWERS TO POETRY ATTITUDES- INVENTORY.....	171
APPENDIX B -- ITEMIZED RESUME OF ANSWERS TO THE POETRY ATTI- TUDES-INVENTORY, ACCORDING TO A CATEGORICAL ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS.....	180
APPENDIX C -- PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS.....	221
APPENDIX D -- ITEMIZED TABLE OF POEMS REMEMBERED AND REACTION TO THEM.....	281
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	309

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to attempt to ascertain the attitudes of college freshmen toward poetry and determine the significance of these attitudes to the teaching of poetry at the beginning college level. All colleges and universities offer poetry courses; study of poetry is, philosophically, considered valuable. No research, however, has been done on the subject of why so few students engage in so important a study. Importance and neglect are both seemingly axiomatic.

There has been no research on the subject of why students like or dislike poetry and consequently why they study it or do not study it when there is any choice in the matter. Teachers have no factually determined data from which they can formulate principles for teaching, nor have they any factual knowledge of where their students are in their relation to poetry. Since such knowledge is the first step in good teaching of poetry, this investigation attempts to discover and analyze those factors which make poetry teaching successful or unsuccessful.

Neglect of poetry seemingly stems from lip service to its value. Actually, there is a division of belief about the importance of poetry as an asset in the life of the student and the adult which he will become. It is necessary, first, therefore, to attempt to determine the value of poetry by discussing expert opinions.

STATE AND STATUS OF POETRY TODAY

To ascertain the place which poetry deserves, two steps will be taken. First, there will be presented evidence of lack of interest in poetry and, second, there will be presented comments of experts, poets, teacher, critics, and philosophers concerning the place that poetry should have--its value for study in the world of today.

Evidence of Lack of Interest in Poetry

Evidence of lack of interest in poetry is shown in studies which have been made. These demonstrate that few people are in classes, students choose prose in preference to poetry, and they do not voluntarily choose poetry to read, as shown in the following examples.

T. W. Sussams, Principal of Folkestone Emergency Training College, England, sums up in a recent book that which seems to be the attitude of students everywhere. He says his evidence gained from the replies of five thousand school children, can be summarized as follows:¹

1. The poetry lesson, whatever its form, is relatively unpopular with older pupils.
2. Its unpopularity tends to increase with the years.
3. This tendency is most marked in the case of the intelligent pupils.
4. The reading of poetry is least disliked: the reciting of poetry increasingly disliked.
5. Girls are more interested in poetry than boys.

Sussams quotes David Jordan, an English writer, who says: "Poetry seems to enjoy little popularity except among the younger boys."² His

¹Sussams, T. W., Poetry and The Teacher, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., N. Y. and London, 1949, p. 38.

²Sussams, ibid., p. 79.

statement is supported by R. A. Pritchard, another teacher in England, who quotes replies from his students of secondary school level. They say of poetry: "I have never had any liking of poetry," "Some of the poetry is too highbrow," "Learning poetry is decidedly boring, useless and sentimental."¹

Three studies made separately by Vergara, Christmore, and MacKintosh say the same thing of American students.

Inquiry made of scores of people over a period of years confirms the fact that not many read poetry. Some occasionally read newspaper verse or selections with strong timely appeal, such as "The White Cliffs of Dover" or "The Murder of Lidice," though more listen to such selections read over the radio or on records. Librarians also attest to the small numbers who avail themselves of poetry except to satisfy requirements in literature. At one university Palgrave's Golden Treasury had not been called for in ten years; at another no books of poetry had been withdrawn for mere leisure reading in nine years.²

Christmore³ states that 73 per cent of the high school boys and girls questioned about their appreciation of poetry said they preferred prose to poetry, claiming it to be easier to understand, more exciting, and more interesting. MacKintosh says in summing up investigations from 1900-1934 that if the conclusions reached in studying the reading habits

¹Sussams, ibid., p. 79.

²Vergara, Allys Dwyer, A Critical Study of a Group of College Women's Responses to Poetry, Contributions to Education No. 923, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, N. Y., 1946, p. 2.

³Christmore, Esther Clare, Oral Versus Silent Reading for Literary Appreciation. An Experimental Study. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Master's Thesis, July, 1933, p. 24.

of children are checked it will be found the status of poetry at the present time is not high. Either poetry is not mentioned by subjects making the reports or it is given a very low ranking.¹

Writers agree with educators on this lack of interest in poetry.

Norman Corwin, famous radio writer, says of poetry:

It is the poor relative among the arts, having been sustained largely by the aesthetic charity of publishers. One of the reasons for this is that poetry has descended from its once high position as a national art - a poetry of the people - and become the almost exclusive property and interest of poets themselves.²

Herbert Read, writer and art expert from England, said in 1939 that "the art of poetry is in danger of extinction."³ Lionel Elvin, an Oxford Professor, agrees in these words:

For every ten playgoers or every hundred readers of novels there is perhaps one reader of poetry. . . . The causes for the comparative neglect of poetry among the reading public today seem too complex for an easy generalization. But what may be stated with some confidence is that the audience for poetry is much smaller than it need be.⁴

Randall Jarrel, American poet and critic asks: "Why don't people admit that anybody must know: that here and now people can't and don't read poetry, that the stupidest shepherd or potboy of any other

¹Mackintosh, Helen K. A Critical Study of Children's Choices in Poetry. Iowa University, University of Iowa Studies in Education, Iowa City, 1932. V. 7, No. 4. p. 23-24.

²Corwin, Norman, quoted in Donald Ogden Stewart's Fighting Words, N. Y. Harcourt Brace and Co. 1940. pp. 86-87.

³Read, Herbert, "Muses of the Air," Living Age, CCCLV (Jan. 1939) p. 471.

⁴Elvin, Lionel, Introduction to the Study of Literature, London, Sylvan Press, 1949, p. 15.

age liked and understood poetry better than the average college student today?"¹

Muriel Ruckeyser, noted American poet, says that poetry has no acknowledged place in American life today; the barriers set up against it are strong; it is nothing that enters our lives or that is part of the social life as it is now organized.

The resistance to poetry is an active force in American life. . . . We can see our own conflict and our own resource if we look now at this art, which has been made - of all arts, the one least acceptable. The hatred of poetry comes through as boredom, as namecalling, as the traditional attitude of the last hundred years which has chalked in the portrait of the poet as he is known in this society which Herbert Read says, "does not challenge poetry in principle - it merely treats it with ignorance, indifference and unconscious cruelty."²

Miss Ruckeyser quotes reasons for attitudes toward poetry as they have been given to her: one had no time for it, it bored another, one confesses a bad experience at school, a veteran returned to school and was compelled to recite "Bobolink, Bobolink, spink, spank, spink," a scientist cannot find a framework, it is wilfully obscure, men say it is effeminate - sexually suspect. Then Miss Ruckeyser draws a parallel between the answers and the age in which we live. She says these resistances have the quality of fear; the fear is a psychotic problem. A poem invites the reader to feel; his emotions must be used. In America, emotional feelings can be written but individuals are still afraid of

¹Jarrel, Randall, quoted by Harvey Breit, "Case for the Modern Poet," New York Times Magazine, Nov. 3, 1946, p. 60.

²Ruckeyser, Muriel, The Life of Poetry. New York, A. A. Wyn, Current Books, Inc., 1949, p. 5.

their personal expression. This author's reactions she states in this way:

In our schools, we are told that our education is pragmatic, that the body of knowledge is divided into various "subjects," that all these subjects on which we pour our youth are valuable to us in later life. We are told that our civilization depends on further and new uses for everything it has, the development and exploitation of these. We may go ahead and specialize in any of these usable fields. Except for one. There is one kind of knowledge that will be given us through school and high school which we are told is precious, it defies time, it strikes deep into memory, it must go on being taught. No matter what cities fall, what languages are misheard and "corrupted" and reborn. This is here, to be passed on. But not to be used. Among all the pragmatic training, never to come into real and active life. That is what we learn about poetry.¹

Expert Opinions on the Value of Poetry

It would seem logical to suppose, following all the foregoing discussion of the dislike of or indifference to poetry, that perhaps there is no reason to try to teach poetry. If this large a percentage of people is hostile or indifferent to poetry, it might be wise to abandon any attempt to reach them with this form of literature. Therefore, before attempting to evaluate present teaching as reflected in the attitudes of college freshmen, before trying to elucidate conclusions from these principles, it is necessary to evaluate the worth of poetry, to arrive at some factual basis for deciding whether the teaching of poetry deserves study.

Poets, teachers, literary critics, scholars, scientists, and statesmen pay tribute to the value of poetry in the life of the individual and

¹Ibid., p. 4.

the nation. They attest that (1) poetry provides lasting substance on which men may feed, that (2) it provides vicarious experience which broadens and deepens man's living, that (3) it is a prime requisite to the proper functioning of human society and especially so in a democracy, and that (4) poetic literature is ideal for imaginative communication.

Poetry Provides Lasting Substance

That poetry is a superficial thing seems to be a feeling among some; that it provides no real substance on which man can feed; that one must look beyond it to important things. But Robert P. Coffin, poet and professor, in his Substance That is Poetry takes the opposite viewpoint.

For a great many people today, knowing ones too, think of poetry as a minor thing, a marginal thing. Caviar or olives at the feast of life. Yet the truth of the matter is that poetry is now, or can be, what it was to our remote ancestors for uncounted thousands of years, before they had any books to record their elapses, their laws, or their wars in, the center, the heart, the meat, the bread of the banquet. Something essential. As essential as salt.

Of the two, the historian and poet, the poet deals in the really permanent solidities. The last will and testament of Villon lasts, whereas most of the deeds of Villon's time are dead letters now. The few ears of corn Ruth gleaned behind the reapers are safe, but the pyramids of Egypt sent to feed Rome are less than a handful of sand in today's Roman Forum. . . . For all these things have escaped out of history into literature. Only the deeds and the houses and the grain that escape the ruins of years can continue to shape men's thoughts and actions. And poetry provides an escape into real life.¹

Sir Rennell Rodd, diplomat and scholar from England, says in a lecture delivered to various American colleges, that we must never lose

¹Coffin, Robert P. Tristram. Substance That Is Poetry, N. Y. The Macmillan Company, 1942, p. 4-5.

sight of the poetry of life. In the modern world, especially in the epochs of great prosperity, inducing what is known as high standards of living, a thing which is no doubt desirable in itself, there may be a counterbalancing danger, a belief that we can dispense with poetry, a spiritual barrenness, a tendency to reduce the average of a people to a common denominator of the commonplace and, as a result, to fail to appreciate in life the things which make it worth the effort of living.¹

Robert Farren, Irish poet, raises his voice in defense of poetry saying:

Poetry is neither a sham nor a snare; it is neither a folly nor a bore. Were it any of these could its age be the same as the world's - the recorded world's, at least? How could it have elicited the ceaseless dedication of men, both those that make it and those that merely love it? Unless it were for all men a thing to test and weigh, how could it be for some a pearl beyond price - "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," a thing "more philosophic than history?"²

Poetry Provides Vicarious Experience

The second reason advanced in the defense of poetry is that it provides vicarious experience necessary for broadening and deepening man's living. James Harry Smith, teacher at Culver Military Academy Junior College, and author of The Reading of Poetry, says in that book:

In the first place, poetry, like literature in general, increases the amount of experience which we may have in a life time. Physically, we can have but one life; we can be but one person, we can be in one place at a time. Not so with the life of the

¹Rodd, Sir Rennell, "The Essence of Poetry," Dayton, Ohio, University of Dayton, 1929, p. 83.

²Farren, Robert, How To Enjoy Poetry, N. Y., Sheed and Ward, 1948, p. 3.

mind. It is of undiscovered limits. Whether one be a king or a manual laborer, he can share in the course of the evening in the feelings of the lowest or of the greatest. Nor does time matter. He can be led to dream with Ulysses three thousand years ago or be drawn into a contemplation of the future with someone living in his own time. The pleasures of the imagination are so various that here, perhaps, is reason enough for the reading of poetry. . . . Literature strengthens us and prepares us for living. One gains from it in the same manner in which he gains from experience. . . . From participation in the variety of feelings of other human beings, he comes to understand humanity as it is, as it might have been, as it ought to be.¹

Elsa Chapin and Russell Thomas, authors of a text on poetry, champion the necessity for poetry in these words:

The poet's keen and true evaluation of the facts of human life and the power of transferring his evaluation to us by means of words used at their highest potential energy is poetry. It deals with every phase of existence; nothing is too big, nothing is too low. It pierces to the heart of the matter and reveals to us its essence in words which inextricably entangle our own experiences with the poet's version and make that vision an actual reality.²

John Drinkwater, famous English poet, discusses the prevailing dullness of spirit which he says is the gravest penalty that we can pay for an over-specialized civilization. Routine and example have become blind paths for us, warping our imaginations. We cannot have absolute knowledge, he comments, but it is our experience which counts.

It is the act of experiencing that matters, that exercises our nature in the only full and significant way. . . . [We must have a wealth of passionate experience to destroy lethargy of spirit.] To shape all our daily meditation and intercourse and the fertile activity of the natural world into sharp and intimately realized

¹Smith, James Harry, The Reading of Poetry. Chicago, N. Y., Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939, p. 372.

²Chapin, Elsa and Russell Thomas, A New Approach to Poetry. Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1929, concluding paragraph.

forms in our own imaginations is the aim of every right disciplined mind. And in the accomplishment of this aim the poet is he who of all men can give surest help. . . . For contact with fine poetry is precisely contact with most vital and personal experience conveyed to us in the most persuasive medium invented by man for habitual intercourse - pregnant and living words. Pregnant and living: for here is the secret of poetry. . . . Poetry proclaims life: that is all and that is everything.¹

Poetry Is a Prime Requisite to the Proper Functioning of Human Society

There are many people who believe that poetry will contribute to the acquisition of right attitudes about good and evil, attitudes necessary in human society. They believe that a study of poetry if it is successful engenders ethical qualities in a student. This view is supported by Sussams who says:

Without preaching, without moralizing, without self-conscious rectitude the poetry lesson can make its contribution to the development of desirable character qualities in the child. Humility, gentleness, and sympathy are characteristically Christian virtues. A recognition at once of the many-sidedness of truth and the need for mental integrity is a characteristically Christian outlook. An indifference to material comforts and pleasures, a constant questioning of man-made values of force and size and power, a restatement of the importance of motives as well as of deeds, of feelings as well as of the intellect, of spontaneity and intuition as well as of the calculated judgment are characteristic elements in Christian philosophy. No one can study poetry without being compelled to ask himself searching questions. If his reading of poetry is deep the answers may not come easily, and when they come they may not be smooth comfortable answers. In early adolescence this is all to the good, for adolescence should be a time of soul searching. . . . Children who have been made aware of spiritual values through their reading of poetry as well as through more formal scripture lessons . . . will be ready to add their strength to the creation of a new interpretation of the Christian way of life, a task that must be performed by each age for itself.²

¹Drinkwater, John, "Poetry and Conduct," Prose Papers, London, Elkin Mathews, MCXVII. p. 13.

²Sussams, op. cit., p. 144-45.

John Darwin is quoted as saying that he lost the love of reading poetry through an experience in learning in his early youth. He bitterly regretted this loss and in discussing his diminishing power to read poetry and hear music, he wrote: "The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness: and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."¹

The writers of Literature in American Education express the same idea in this fashion:

The student of letters becomes aware, both with his mind and with his emotions, of the laws that govern mankind. He learns that black is not white and evil not good. . . . He knows the dead Hamlet is greater than the living Fortinbras. . . . The power of the King James Version of the Bible has been, not merely in its precepts, but in its moving quality as literature. . . . Students who have felt the antithesis of Light and Darkness in Paradise Lost, the crises of Shakespearean tragedy, or the spirit-testing decisions of Browning's men and women know the meaning of the word choice. They have had a new experience in quality.

For life has accent as well as substance. Single lines of poetry quietly working in the mind or stirring the heart like a trumpet, a great sentence unfolding itself as the perfect utterance on the matter at hand, educate men and make memorable the truths of history or social thought. . . .²

It would then seem logical to conclude that acquisition of ability to evaluate the things of the world is a necessary thing if students build a rich life for their own sakes and for the sake of a democratic government. Knowledge of poetry is education in humanity for the new

¹Darwin, quoted in Chapin and Thomas, op. cit., p. 172.

²Modern Language Association, Literature in American Education, Enoch Pratt Free Library. Baltimore, 1944, p. 16, 18.

human being as he steps forward in his time to learn both what he is and what he is to become.

H. Caruth, an editor of Poetry, writes in an issue of that magazine:

Now when death has conquered so much of the world, spreading abroad its destruction and futility, its unreason and untruth, its immorality which is the final ugliness, when so many people have been deprived by monstrous systems and sterile philosophies of the inherent privilege of aesthetic performances, now poetry is needed more than ever. Poetry is the only incorruptible antidote, one of the few unsullied arts left in the world. Poetry is the reason for all things that are true and beautiful, and the product of them - wisdom, scholarship, love, teaching, the sounds and the sights of the earth. The love of poetry is the habit and need of wise men, wherever they are, and when for some reason they are deprived of it they will be taxed in spirit and do unaccountable things. Great men will turn instinctively to the poetic labor of their time, because it is the most honorable and most useful, as it is the most difficult human action. Every spirited faculty of man is a poetic one, and in poetry is that working of the spirit which engages man and his world in an intelligible career. Only in poetry is a man knowledge to himself. The values with which poetry is concerned cannot die: they are independent of local or temporary events.¹

Poetic Literature Is Ideal for Imaginative Communication

Part of the argument of the humanists for the necessity of cultural studies is that the imagination must be developed if the individual, as an individual or as a citizen, is to take his rightful place in today's world. It is true that factual material is necessary; people must learn how to make a living; students must be trained in the use of the scientific method. However, many authorities contend that the development of the imagination is just as necessary to make a life as the development

¹Caruth, H. "Anti-Poet all Told: present state of poetry." Poetry, Chicago, August, 1949, p. 282.

of skills is to making a living. Poetry magazine carries on its mast-head a quotation attributed to Whitman saying that if we would have great poets we must have great audiences, too. It seems fairly obvious that we will never have great audiences if imaginations have been stifled in favor of the so-called "practical" pursuits. Quotations have attested to the wide belief that the poet with his compressed, concentrated, highly emotionalized, and inspirational material can make a contribution that teachers cannot let students miss. Poetry contributes to making the "dreamer" who first thought up and aimed at what science can eventually achieve.

Shakespeare described the power of the poet in these words:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

The power of poetry to perpetuate communication of values is expressed by Landor in an eight-line poem entitled:

Past Ruin'd Ilion

Past ruin'd Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises drom the shades:
Verse calls them forth; it is verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the purpled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

Again Shakespeare writes of the deathless quality of communication through the pen of the poet:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Marianne Moore, Pulitzer poetry prize winner for 1951, writes a defense of poetry in poem form. She defines poetry, meets some of the objections to it, and by a device of ingratiating herself with the reader, placates him in his dislike for poetry while she give a rebuttal of his criticisms.

POETRY

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important
beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one
discovers in
it after all, a place for the genuine.
Hands that can grasp, eyes
that can dilate, hair that can rise
if it must, these things are important not because a
high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but
because they are
useful. When they become so derivative as to become
unintelligible,
the same thing may be said for all of us, that we
do not admire what
we cannot understand: the bat
holding on upside down or in quest of something
to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless
 wolf under
 a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a
 horse that feels a flea, the base-
 ball fan, the statistician -
 nor is it valid
 to discriminate against 'business documents and

school-books'; all these phenomena are important. One
 must make a distinction
 however: when dragged into prominence by half poets,
 the result is not poetry,
 nor till the poets among us can be
 'literalists of
 the imagination' - above
 insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them,
 shall we have
 it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,
 the raw material of poetry in
 all its rawness and
 that which is on the other hand
 genuine, then you are interested in poetry.¹

Amy Lowell, the great American poet, pleads in "Poetry, Imagination
 and Education" for the cultivation of the imagination as a primary end
 in education because imagination is a primary value in life. In her
Poetry and Poets she adds:

The necessity for poetry is one of the most fundamental traits
 of the human race. But naturally we do not take that into
 account, any more than we take into account that dinner, and the
 next day again, dinner, is the condition of our remaining alive.
 Without poetry the soul and heart of a man starves and dies.
 The only difference between them is that all men know, if they
 turn their minds to it, that without food they die, and compara-
 tively few people know that without poetry they die. . . . We
 should read poetry because only in that way can we know man in all
 his moods - in the most beautiful thoughts of his heart, in the
 farthest reaches of his imagination, in the tenderness of life, in

¹Moore, Marianne, Selected Poems, N. Y., The Macmillan Co., 1935.

the nakedness and awe of his soul confronted with the terror and wonder of the Universe. Poetry and history are the textbooks to the heart of man, and poetry is at once the most intimate and the most enduring.¹

Sir Rennel Rodd says:

I would hazard the opinion that every age will have the poetry it deserves, and a survey of literature in relation to history would, I think, corroborate the justice of this view, which does not exclude a virtue and a pathos from the poetry of decadence.²

From time immemorial poetry has had an important place in literature; it has been counted as one of the necessary cultural assets of civilization. Overwhelming evidence points out that while there is lip service to the idea of poetry in America, that although teachers, poets, scholars and philosophers agree on the necessity of poetry, nothing has been accomplished to make it popular enough so that students will study it of their own free will, or adults read it as leisure reading after they leave school.

It behooves teachers to understand the slack between the ideal of worth and the reality of complete neglect. Therefore, this study makes a first step in discovering what teachers can do to make poetry enjoyable, to the end that it may assume its rightful place.³

¹Lowell, Amy, Poetry and Poets, Boston and N. Y., Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930. p. 3, 9.

²Rodd, op. cit., p. 66.

³Further important discussion of the values of poetry may be discovered in books and articles by the authors listed below. These, although not quoted here, are included in the bibliography for ready reference. See the bibliography for full listing.

1. Spencer Howard, Davis, The Status and Mission of Poetry, preface, pp. 21, 44-47.

Footnote 3 - continued

2. Wells, Henry W. Where Poetry Stands Now, pp. vii, 79-81.
3. Masfield, John, Poetry, pp. 30, 32, 37.
4. Overstreet, Harry, About Ourselves, p. 286.
5. Rittenhouse, Jessie B., "The Reading of Poetry As a National Asset," pp. 84-85.
6. Parsons, Kitty, "The Need of Poetry Today," Poet Lore, Vol. 2. p. 172.
7. Pound, Louise, "The Future of Poetry," p. 180.
8. Harris, Sydney J. "Do Schools Stifle Taste for Poetry?" in his column Strictly Personal, Chicago Daily News, Feb. 6, 1952.
9. Drinkwater, John, "Poetry and Conduct," Prose Papers, p. 13.
10. Farren, Robert, How To Enjoy Poetry, p. 3.
11. O'Donnell, Margaret J., Feet On The Ground, p. 5.
12. Spender, Stephen, "Can't We Do Without the Poets?" N. Y. Times Book Review, Sept. 2, 1951.
13. Chambers, E. K., "The Timelessness of Poetry," from A Sheaf of Studies, p. 109.
14. Housman, A. E., The Name and Nature of Poetry, p. 35.
15. Millet, Fred A., Reading Poetry, Appendix A.
16. Read, Herbert, Education Through Art, See Chapter 13, "Function of Poetry in the Schools."
17. Stauffer, Donald A. The Nature of Poetry, pp. 12-15.
18. Lewis, C. Day, Poetry for You, first chapter.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM, SOURCES OF DATA, AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Chapter I presented the background and importance of the problem. Bibliographical evidence on two aspects was reviewed: (1) indifference to and actual resistance to poetry, and (2) the necessity for the study and reading of poetry for the good of the individual and civilization.

Chapter II states the problem, gives the sources of data, and describes the method of procedure. The discussion in this chapter is organized under the following headings: I. Statement of Problem; II. Method of Procedure: (A) Kind of investigation, (B) Construction of Poetry Attitudes-Inventory, (C) Selection of group to be studied, (D) Administration of Inventory, (E) Personal interviews. Finally, copies of the two parts of the Inventory are included.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The attitudes of college freshmen toward poetry and the significance of such attitudes in relation to teaching poetry are the subject of the present study. An endeavor will be made to discover what effect the teaching of poetry has had on students; to gain as complete a picture as possible of where students are in their knowledge of poetry and their attitudes toward it; and to ascertain facts which college teachers of poetry must know if they are to teach effectively. If a favorable attitude toward poetry is desirable, as the evidence in the first chapter

points up, the teacher of poetry at the beginning college level will want a complete picture of the poetry experience of college freshmen, and the reasons for their disregard of poetry in order to devise methods which will alter unfavorable attitudes and create pleasure in learning.

Such a study will involve: I. Investigation of what students remember of their total experiences of poetry learning, their likes and dislikes in regard to poetry, the methods of teaching it, and the teachers who teach it; II. Evaluation of these discoveries in the light of documentary or bibliographical research; III. Drawing of conclusions from agreements of these sources.

Teachers should be committed to a search for appropriate educational methods of presenting poetry. This investigation is logically the first step in advancing that search. If experiences of students are annotated, their attitudes analyzed, and resulting implications made available for teachers, a step has been taken in the direction of discovering the best ways of introducing poetry so that the experience may be wholly enjoyable.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Kind of Investigation

An Attitudes-Inventory was decided upon as the only possible method of investigation because of the nature of the problem. While it is true that personal opinion surveys have weaknesses which sometimes leave them open to criticism, this particular study demanded a record of personal opinion. Even if the students cannot make strictly realistic evaluations

of their attitudes in each instance, even if their limited experience fails to illuminate every facet of the whole problem, it is necessary to know their attitudes. If a student thinks he does not like poetry because a study of it is effeminate, that fact must be known if the problem is to be understood. If an over-all trend of thinking is discovered by a general concensus that trend will be accurate. True, it is only what students remember, but education teaches that that is all they know.

To supplement the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory, personal interviews were held with three groups of students: (1) nine students who in their answer to the attitudes-inventory said they disliked poetry very much, and a matched group of nine who said they liked poetry very much; (2) an advanced class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry, and; (3) a beginning class in Oral Interpretation. The advanced class was interviewed because their presence in an elective course indicates their interest in and liking for poetry and it seemed wise to try to discover what makes them like poetry. The beginning class was chosen as being comparable for the most part to the group answering the inventory.

Since student attitudes as sole criteria are not entirely defensible, it seems worth-while to compare their beliefs and ideas with those of people experienced in the fields of poetry, teaching, and writing. Therefore, the attitudes of experts have been reviewed in relation to textual material, methods of teaching, and teachers. Both experiential and empirical studies have been included.

Selection of the Group To Be Studied

Since this study is limited to an investigation of the attitudes of college freshmen toward poetry, it was decided to use freshmen in Michigan State College as the group to be tested. Students enrolled in Written and Spoken English in the Basic College are suitable for this investigation because: (1) Written and Spoken English is required of all entering students and there is therefore the largest possible representation; (2) this course does not include any poetry and therefore a majority of students answering the questions would have only their grade and high school experience in poetry, furnishing a composite of attitudes of people who are eligible for a course in beginning college poetry; and (3) the students are not a picked nor selected group and are therefore representative of beginning college students.

Approximately 2500 students are enrolled in sections of 25-30 each. The students come from all sections of the United States. They register entirely at random in the sections; they are a representative cross-section of the ordinary high school graduate and an adequate sampling of their attitudes should reflect the attitude of the high school graduate toward the impact of poetry.

Construction of Poetry Attitudes-Inventory

Two things were done in attempting to construct an objective measuring instrument: (1) free responses in regard to attitudes toward poetry were sought from experimental groups, and (2) points to be considered were discovered by reading authorities, both experiential and empirical.

The opinions of both were combined and compiled into an inventory covering three main things: (1) textual material, (2) methods, and (3) teachers. This inventory was submitted to authorities on tests and measurements in the Board of Examiners, in Michigan State College, for approval. Following their approval, the inventory was administered to test groups.

Five sections of beginning Oral Interpretation were used as experimental groups for testing the Inventory because they most nearly corresponded to the freshmen to be finally used and because they were available. They were told that the full truth about their attitudes was desirable if the study was to be helpful to other students.

The first step in this experimental process was requesting an essay from each student in the five sections entitled "Why I Like or Dislike Poetry." They were asked to be as detailed as possible and were assured that no penalty would result from any answer. A total of 103 replies were received and these were annotated, analyzed, and arranged in groups according to categories suggested by the ideas.

In the meanwhile, a survey of literature was made and opinions annotated. A compilation of these expert's opinions was added to those gleaned from the student essays.

Opinions seemed to fall into four areas: (1) the general attitude toward poetry, (2) attitudes toward specific poems, (3) attitudes toward teaching and testing, and (4) attitudes toward teachers. Therefore, the Inventory inquired about these four phases. The wording of students was used wherever possible in constructing the questions for the inventory.

The second step in the experimental process was the administering of the Inventory to the same five sections who wrote the essays. Their help in correcting the faults of the Inventory was requested. About one-third of those participating varied from one to six or seven suggestions as to puzzling expressions, ambiguous questions, more suitable wording, etc. There was a general concensus that the Inventory was too long.

The Inventory was then re-written according to these suggestions, and in the light of all weaknesses discovered in administering it. To adjust the problem of length, the Inventory was constructed in two parts, the first to include all the questions about general attitudes and attitudes toward textual material, as well as a question about specific poems remembered and the attitude toward the poem. The second part of the Inventory included questions about attitudes toward methods and teachers.

Administration of the Inventory

The two parts of the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory¹ were given to two sample groups of freshmen enrolled in Written and Spoken English at Michigan State College. Teachers of sections chosen at random gave the tests according to directions furnished them. Sections are composed of about 25-30 people and the random choice resulted in the answering of Part I by 213 people, and Part II by 280 people. On the basis of past experimentation conducted by the Board of Examiners at Michigan State

¹Copies of the two parts of the Inventory are included at the end of this chapter.

College it was felt that a study of 200 or more cases is adequate.

Tabulations of the total answers to the Inventory are to be found in the Appendix. Appendix A is a mathematical list of question numbers with the total answers in figures. Appendix B is a detailed listing of totals according to ideas, i.e., general attitudes, attitudes toward textual material, attitudes toward methods, and attitudes towards teachers.

Personal Interviews

In addition to the attitudes-inventory method and the use of expert opinion, it was decided to complete the investigation by means of personal interviews. The people selected for these interviews were chosen by three different methods: (1) a group of nine who answered the attitudes-inventory saying they dislike poetry very much, and a matching group of nine saying they like poetry very much; (2) members of an advanced class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry; (3) members of a beginning class in Oral Interpretation.

The first eighteen were chosen from those who answered the Attitudes-Inventory because such a choice seemed a possible and expedient way of checking the accuracy of answers to the written inventory and at the same time choosing accurate samplings of people for interviews. To that end, all of the 213 papers which were answers for Part I were divided according to answers on question 12 which reads: "Which of the following best describes your attitude toward poetry?" The five possible answers are: 1. Dislike it heartily; a form of punishment. 2. Neither like it nor dislike it because of lack of good background in reading and studying

poetry. 3. Would like poetry if an easier understanding of it were made possible. 4. Like poetry generally; usually prefer simple or familiar poetry. 5. Like poetry very much; find it enjoyable, relaxing, and inspiring.

Nine students chose answer 1 - they dislike poetry very much. Twenty-one students chose answer 5 - they like poetry very much. A matched nine were chosen from the 21 by taking every other paper to the number of nine. Personal interviews were held with these eighteen.

The answers of each of the eighteen in the Attitudes-Inventory were personally checked item by item. A written profile was made giving a picture of the total reaction made up of reactions to individual items. This was done to determine whether there was concurrence in the individual and total reactions. In every one of the eighteen papers, without exception, the answers were carefully and accurately made and the only discrepancies found were small ones resulting either from opinion or from misunderstanding the question. Every paper proved to be most accurate, thereby leading to the belief that, on the whole, students answered carefully and accurately the entire inventory.

The second method of choosing people for personal interviews was that of taking all the members of a class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry. This was a class in advanced Interpretation offered by the Department of Speech, Dramatics and Radio Education. These classes are always small as are other classes in poetry if evidence is to be believed. It is an elective course and it seems logical to assume that few would take it who were not interested in poetry. It was considered wise to choose students whose obvious interest in poetry might be used

as guides for formulating principles to interest other people. Somewhere they learned to like poetry and it might be that those things which interested them in poetry could be utilized to interest other people.

The third group chosen was a beginning class in Oral Interpretation, numbering nineteen. This course is known as a "service" course, by which is meant it offers teaching in reading skills for any student who feels a need. It is not designed for speech majors but caters to students in all fields who need help in speech work. Nearly all the students are sophomores, but a few are upper classmen. Half the term is used in learning to read poetry, the other half in learning to read prose. It was judged that such a class would be a fair sampling of people who like and dislike poetry since they are not a selected nor a screened group but are simply members of one of several sections enrolled in this particular section because of their schedule needs.

Appendix C is a detailed record of all personal interviews. Further expression of totals according to the ideas of textual material, methods, and teachers are found in Chapters III, IV, and V, together with summaries of significant conclusions.

Attitudes of college freshmen toward poetry in general, poems provided for study, methods of teaching, and teachers were studied through use of a written Poetry Attitudes-Inventory, personal interviews, and bibliographical evidence. Two sample groups from 2500 Freshmen enrolled in Michigan State College were used to ascertain attitudes in written answers; eighteen of these were personally interviewed in a cross-checking of

results. Members of two classes were also personally interviewed to supplement evidence found in written answers. Totals are presented in Appendices A, B, C and D. A breakdown of totals according to the ideas listed above will be found in following chapters.

Section 1

INVENTORY OF FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE POETRY REACTIONS

This is an inventory, not an examination. There will be no grading of individual students because there is no one right and wrong answer. The purpose is to gain information on attitudes of students concerning poetry.

You are asked to cooperate in ascertaining how students truly feel about poetry. It is hoped that the study resulting from your answers will aid you and other students. Please remember that you will not be penalized in any way for any answer. However, unless you answer thoughtfully and accurately you will defeat any benefit which might be achieved.

If you will read the questions carefully and answer accurately to the fullest measure of your ability, this study can be most profitable. It is hoped as a result of your answers that there will then exist some organized knowledge as to why students like and dislike poetry eventually making possible better courses planned in the light of this new knowledge. Please answer as honestly as possible after checking your thinking thoroughly in regard to your real attitudes.

On the answer sheet indicate by blacking in one number from the numbers 1-5 as asked for in each question. Fill the space with black marking to show your answer to that particular question. Be certain to answer once for each question unless exceptions are noted. In some cases no answer may fit your feelings exactly; even so, please answer that which most nearly describes your attitude. Blank sheets are provided for your individual comments on attitudes differing from any provided here.

For example: If no answer describes your attitude, mark the one most nearly fitting your case. Then on the blank sheet mark the number of the doubtfully answered question and note your own attitude in your own words. Any other original comments will be welcomed. Use the sheets provided for these comments; do not use the inventory or answer blanks.

I. Questions 1-4 relate to your general background. Make one answer in the appropriate space.

1. Your class
1. H.S. Sr. 2. College Freshman 3. Sophomore 4. Jr. 5. Sr.
2. Your age
1. 16 2. 17 3. 18 4. 19 5. 20 or above
3. Your sex
1. Male 2. Female

4. Kind of community where you have lived most of your life

1. Farm
2. Village, 250 to 2500 population
3. Town, 2500 to 25,000 population
4. City, 25,000 to 100,000 population
5. City, over 100,000 population

II. Questions 5-20 are questions on your general likes and dislikes in reading. Select one number in each unless written exceptions call for skipping.

5. How much do you read all kinds of reading material for pastime?
(Do not include assigned school readings)

1. None
2. Little
3. Often
4. Constantly

6. What do you most like to read?

1. Fiction (novels, plays, short stories, etc.)
2. Biography, history, science, magazines such as Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, etc.
3. Poetry
4. Movie magazines, "true stories," comics, detective stories
5. Newspapers and such magazines as Reader's Digest, Ladies' Home Journal, Cosmopolitan and Sat. Eve. Post

7. What poetry materials (books, magazines, etc.) were available in your home?

1. None
2. Few
3. Many

8. Did your parents or other members of your family read poetry either to themselves or aloud to the family?

1. Never
2. Infrequently
3. Frequently

9. You read poetry: (questions 9-11)

1. Never (if you select this answer, skip questions 10 & 11)
2. Occasionally
3. Frequently

10.

1. With little or no enjoyment
2. With indifference
3. With a fair amount of enjoyment
4. With great pleasure

11.
 1. For the moral or sentiment involved
 2. For recognition of such elements as similes, metaphors, rhyme schemes, etc.
 3. To make a careful examination of the formal elements, structure, ideas and their relationship
 4. For the fun of reading poetry
 5. For the beauty of the words and the ideas they express
12. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward poetry?
 1. Dislike it heartily; a form of punishment
 2. Neither like nor dislike it because of lack of good background in reading and studying poetry
 3. Would like poetry if easier understanding of it were made possible
 4. Like poetry generally; usually prefer simple or familiar poetry
 5. Like poetry very much; find it enjoyable, relaxing, and inspiring
13. If you dislike poetry is it; (if you like poetry omit this question)
 1. Because you do not generally like to read
 2. Because you find poetry uninteresting and difficult
 3. Because you have read little or none of it
 4. Because you have never studied it in school
 5. Because your study of it in school was unpleasant
14. If you dislike poetry, which of the following most accounts for your distaste? (If you like poetry, omit this question)
 1. Comments of parents who didn't like poetry
 2. A teacher who didn't like poetry, or whose method of teaching it made it seem "silly"
 3. A feeling that most poets are "effeminate" and that studying poetry is a "sissy" occupation
 4. The kind of poetry you were given to read was uninteresting
 5. Don't really know why; you just seemed never to like it
15. What was the attitude of your friends which caused you to like or dislike poetry?
 1. Attitudes of friends did not influence me either way
 2. I began to like and understand poetry because many of my friends liked it
 3. I first got the idea that poetry was "poor stuff" and uninteresting to red-blooded people from attitudes of my friends
 4. I liked poetry as a child and would probably have gone on liking it had my friends not sneered at me
 5. I have always liked poetry and still like it so much that I cannot change regardless of the attitude of my friends

(Explanation of questions 16 & 17: It has been said that many men are inclined to dislike poetry; that most girls are inclined to like it. There is no proof of either. Questions 16 & 17 are phrased to try to get some evidence on this subject. Since men know more about men's reactions and attitudes, they should answer question 16; women, question, 17.)

16. Choose the answer which you think from experience most accurately describes why boys who dislike poetry do fail to like it. (To be answered by men only)

1. Most boys instinctively dislike poetry
2. Most boys who dislike poetry begin unfavorable attitude at an age when they get the idea that poetry is "sissy," that is, about the time they begin to want to be cowboys, policemen, mounted police, etc.
3. Most boys who dislike poetry learn to do so in school because of poor choice of material and poor teaching
4. Most boys who dislike poetry do so because they were forced to learn it and revolted against compulsion
5. Most boys who are indifferent to poetry have that attitude because of inability to understand it and would probably like it if provided means of understanding

17. Choose the answer which you think from experience most accurately describes the attitudes of girls toward poetry. (This question to be answered by girls only)

1. Most girls instinctively like poetry
2. Most girls go through a period of disliking poetry similar to the reactions of boys
3. Most girls continue their natural liking of poetry begun in their childhood because it is the general opinion of society that poetry is suitable for girls
4. Most girls who dislike poetry learn to do so because of compulsory choice of material or poor teaching
5. Most girls learn to like poetry when they understand it

18. Choose the answer which most accurately describes your experience?

1. I have always liked poetry and can remember no particular time when I began liking it
2. I have never liked poetry, have had no experience which enable me to like it, and feel that I never shall
3. I liked poetry as a young child, lost my pleasure in it, and only re-gained it after a rewarding experience in H.S.
4. I remember no reaction to poetry as a young child but good teaching caused me to learn to like it
5. I do not like or dislike poetry because I have not read or studied it much; think I would like to understand it

19. Choose the answer which most accurately describes your experience in regard to memorization of poetry.
1. My approach to poetry is negative because I was forced to memorize it and recite it in class without understanding it
 2. I like to memorize certain lines of poetry because they are easy to remember and give one something to think about when there is nothing else to do
 3. I like to memorize such selections as Laertes advice to his son because the thought will continue to live with me all my life
 4. I never like to memorize poetry for whatever reason
 5. I like to memorize the poems I enjoy
20. Which method of learning poetry do you think makes (or would make if you have had no experience) a poem most interesting to you?
1. Heard over the radio
 2. Read aloud by a good reader
 3. Read silently to yourself
 4. Read aloud to yourself
 5. Read aloud in a group called Choral Reading which is for poetry what a singing choir is for words

III. Questions 21-22 relate to your experience in studying poetry. Their purpose is to ascertain if it is easy or difficult for you to evaluate answers in this inventory because of how much or how little poetry you have studied.

21. Indicate the amount of poetry studying you have done by checking the answer closest to your experience.
1. I have studied almost no poetry and find it difficult to answer questions because of lack of experience
 2. I have never studied poetry as a special course. It was included as a very short part of English courses
 3. I have studied poetry extensively throughout my grade and high school work
 4. Study or lack of it in school has never affected my attitude toward poetry and I have learned it for myself
 5. I had two or more courses in poetry in grade or high school and gained greatly from them
22. From your experience recommend one of the following about teaching poetry
1. Poetry as such should never be taught in Jr. and Sr. High
 2. Poetry should be a definite part of all English courses and should be given approximately the same time as prose
 3. If poetry were well taught and encouraged by browsing rooms, free choice of material, phonograph records, etc. most students would learn to appreciate it and like it
 4. Study of poetry should be postponed until college when the student is more mature and therefore more ready to understand it

5. Since poetry has proved its worth through the ages as an emotional stimulant and a literary study it should be a part of the course of study in all grades from kindergarten through college

IV. Poetry Attitudes Inventory

Beginning with question 23 you are asked to show your attitude toward poetry by choosing one of the four possible answers in the following key. Be sure that you answer each question even though your attitude is not precisely described. Mark the answer nearest your attitude.

KEY: 1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

- 23. Most poetry seems like a meaningless jumble of words.
- 24. Poetry should be read primarily for its moral values.
- 25. The only thing that counts in judging poetry as good and bad is whether or not you like it.
- 26. Since poetry is not essential to earning a living, a study of it is a waste of time.
- 27. Modern poetry cannot be understood.
- 28. Poetry should express the truth of human experience.
- 29. Poetry is not interesting unless it tells a story.
- 30. That which is good taste in poetry should be decided by the literary critics.
- 31. Familiar poems are the only enjoyable ones.
- 32. Only poetry of popular taste should be written.
- 33. The form in which poetry is written makes an art form which the average person cannot hope to understand.
- 34. Classical poetry cannot serve as a guide for modern living.
- 35. Poetry has no practical or useful ideas.
- 36. Most poets write a language which only they understand.
- 37. Poetry is not the sort of reading for a red-blooded man.
- 38. More works of poetry should be easily available to increase interest and familiarity.
- 39. Poetry can be enjoyed only after making a formal analysis of it.
- 40. Classical poetry offers opportunities for pleasant experiences.
- 41. There is no use to try to read poetry in which the vocabulary is out of your reach.
- 42. Since rhythm is a basic element in all of man's life it follows that poetry could make a large contribution to mental enjoyment.
- 43. No student is in a position to challenge the worth of a poem which literary authorities have declared a classic.
- 44. The meaning of poetry should be perfectly clear on the first reading.
- 45. Most poems express nothing which could not as well be expressed in prose.
- 46. Embarrassment is the only possible reaction to poetry expressing intense emotional feeling.
- 47. Classes requiring only browsing in poetry would be more helpful than those requiring formal study.

- KEY: 1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

48. Since poetry was written to be read aloud there is no enjoyment in reading it silently.
49. Poetry written by American authors should be studied most of the time because such poetry fits the lives of the readers.
50. Poetry is important because it is an emotional stimulant.
51. Reading poetry for leisure pastime is improbable for any except highbrows.
52. Poetry is a pleasure because it broadens thinking by giving knowledge of many centuries of living.
53. Poetry is valuable to the reader because it expresses beauty in a lovely combination of words beyond the power of the reader to express for himself.
54. Poetry is enjoyable because the beauty and inspiration help counter-balance some of the drab realities of life.
55. Good oral reading of poetry by the teacher without comment, discussion, testing, and marking would increase the pleasure and value of it.
56. In times of stress with resulting political and emotional upheaval the study of poetry should be abolished in favor of engineering, science, etc.; i.e. favor the practical over the imaginative.
57. High school seniors and college freshmen would enjoy poetry more if allowed to study poetry of their own selection.
58. Discussion of kinds of rhyme and marking poetry lines off into "feet", (the number of accented and unaccented syllables) helps make the music of the poetry more evident.
59. Every college freshman should be required to study poetry.
60. Since poetry has proved its cultural worth from the beginning of recorded time, it is required of the truly educated person that he have a knowledge of poetry.
61. Present courses in poetry using texts largely made up of classical material judged by literary experts as worth studying are the ideal poetry classes.
62. Poets insist on saying things in a very round-about way, their comparisons making the meaning obscure.
63. The vivid and beautiful word pictures in poetry make the enjoyment of poetry inevitable.
64. Poetry conveys thought in subtle and figurative words but the meaning can be found if the student attacks it in the right frame of mind.
65. Great poetry is a challenge to the student.
66. Because no two people can get the same meaning or the author's exact meaning from a poem, it loses its value as truth.
67. Poetry which is lyrical is more enjoyable when read aloud.
68. Students like poetry which conveys an idea.
69. When poetry is well read it permits the reader to live a vicarious enriching experience shared with the creative mind of the author.
70. Students can enjoy Chicago if they have been there only once or not at all because Carl Sandburg crystalized its robust action in living words.

KEY: 1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

71. Sounds in poetry, like music, are pleasing to the ear and add meaning as does a crescendo of notes in a symphonic movement.
72. Poetry written in free verse form is hard to follow and therefore less enjoyable than other forms of poetry.
73. A good poem on "Spring" is better than any prose description.
74. Imagination and talent of the poet emphasize colors, sounds, smells and everything in ordinary living until all living is enlarged and more beautiful.
75. Beautiful words can give the most insignificant subject importance.
76. Too simple poetry has little appeal.
77. Poetry expresses an inner emotion, viewpoint, or mood in a creative arrangement of words which are not cold and instructional but imaginative.
78. Poetry is an individual experience and is written by an individual to the individual reader.

- IV. This is a separate part of your inventory the answers to which are to be written on this sheet and not, of course, on the regular answer blank.

The purpose of this question is to find out what poems you remember, like or dislike, and if you know the name of the authors. Please list below according to directions as many as you remember.

Title	Author (if you remember)	Like Dislike (indicate by check)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		
21.		

INVENTORY OF STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD POETRY TEACHING

This is an inventory, not an examination. There will be no grading of individual students because there is no one right and wrong answer. The purpose is to gain information on attitudes of students concerning methods of teaching poetry.

You are asked to cooperate in ascertaining how students truly feel about poetry teaching methods as they affect their knowledge and their like or dislike of poetry. It is hoped that you and other students will be helped by the resulting study. Please remember that you will not be penalized in any way for any answer. However, unless you answer thoughtfully and accurately you will defeat any benefit which might be achieved.

If you will read the questions carefully and answer accurately to the fullest measure of your ability, this study can be most profitable. It is hoped as a result of your answers that there will then exist some organized knowledge as to how methods of teaching and testing and teacher personality affect learning of poetry, eventually making possible better courses planned in the light of this new knowledge. Please answer as honestly as possible after checking your thinking thoroughly in regard to your real attitudes.

On the answer sheet indicate by blacking in one number from the numbers 1-5 as asked for in each question. Fill the space with heavy black marking to show your answer to that particular question. Be certain to answer once for each question. In some cases no answer may fit your feelings exactly; even so, please answer that one which most nearly describes your attitude. Blank sheets are provided for your individual comments on attitudes differing from any provided here.

For example: If no answer describes your attitude mark the one most nearly fitting your case. Then on the blank sheet mark the number of the doubtfully answered question and note your own attitude in your own words. Any other original comments will be welcomed. Use the sheets provided for these comments; do not use the inventory or answer blanks.

I. Questions 1-4 relate to your general background. Make one answer in the appropriate space.

1. Your class

1. H.S. Sr. 2. College Freshman 3. Sophomore 4. Jr. 5. Sr.

2. Your age

1. 16 2. 17 3. 18 4. 19 5. 20 or above

3. Your sex

1. Male 2. Female

4. Kind of community where you have lived most of your life
 1. Farm
 2. Village, 250 to 2500 population
 3. Town, 2500 to 25,000 population
 4. City, 25,000 to 100,000 population
 5. City, over 100,000 population
5. Indicate the amount of poetry studying you have done by checking the answer closest to your experience. The object of this question is to determine how easy or how difficult it is for you to answer the questions because of the experience or lack of it in observing teaching methods.
 1. I have studied almost no poetry and find it difficult to answer questions because of lack of experience
 2. I have never studied poetry as a special course; it was included as a very brief part of English courses
 3. I have studied poetry extensively throughout my grade and high school work
 4. Study or lack of it in school has never affected my attitude toward poetry and I have learned it for myself
 5. I had two or more courses in poetry in grade or high school and gained greatly from them

II. POETRY TEACHING METHODS

Below are listed a number of ways poetry has been taught. You are asked to read each statement and to select from Key A the frequency with which your poetry teachers used each one. For this you will use answer spaces 6-35 on your answer sheet. Most of the possible ways of teaching poetry are listed so there are probably many you know nothing about. Simply mark number 1, "never used it," in such a case.

After you have marked the answers according to Key A, reread the questions and answer them according to Key B which tells how the use or non-use of each method affected your liking or disliking of poetry. For this purpose use answer spaces 36-65.

Notice that on the question sheets two numbers precede each statement. Do not let these confuse you. The first number is for answer with Key A, the second with Key B. Answer according to Key A first, then start again and answer for Key B.

- KEY A:
1. Never used it
 2. Seldom used it
 3. Occasionally used it
 4. Frequently used it
 5. Used it almost exclusively

- KEY B:
1. Since I never experienced this method I have no reaction to it
 2. Feel that had this method been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking
 3. This way had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry
 4. This way contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry
 5. This way contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry

- 6-36 Formal lectures from notes on poetry previously assigned in the text from which all poetry selections were taken
- 7-37 Informal lectures without notes on previously assigned poetry from the text
- 8-38 Class discussion on previously assigned poetry directed by teacher's questions
- 9-39 Assigned poetry studied individually in the classroom with the teacher serving as consultant
- 10-40 Individual students reporting on assigned poetry to assembled class with teacher and class criticism
- 11-41 Individual student-reading of teacher-assigned material such as the life of an author or authors, the poems of a period, etc.
- 12-42 Assignment of several poems and their authors for report next day without previous help or clarification by the teacher
- 13-43 Silent reading of poems in class, questions allowed, with further assignment for discussion on the following day
- 14-44 Assignment of poems one day, these poems read aloud by students the following day, followed by discussion
- 15-45 Reading aloud by teacher, assignment for further study, and discussion and clarification on following day or days
- 16-46 Interpretive reading by teacher without comment, discussion, testing and marking
- 17-47 Interpretive reading by teacher of student-chosen poetry followed by discussion led by students

KEY A: 1. Never used it
2. Seldom used it
3. Occasionally used it
4. Frequently used it
5. Used it almost exclusively

KEY B: 1. Since I never experienced this method I have no reaction to it
2. Feel that had this method been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking
3. This way had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry
4. This way contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry
5. This way contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry

- 18-48 Compulsory memorization of poems required by teacher or by the course of study
- 19-49 Presentation of poetry by phonograph records
- 20-50 A browsing room or shelf with many available books of poetry for enjoyment of individual who is free to report on anything he likes
- 21-51 A listening room with many poetry records available for the pleasure of the individual
- 22-52 Students present interpretive readings
- 23-53 Students act out idea or plot when such is suitable
- 24-54 Poetry taught in Choral Reading group in which interpretive reading is done by the whole class
- 25-55 Individual allowed to choose his field of study in poetry making it available to the class when he feels he has something worthwhile; teacher consulted only when needed
- 26-56 Poems from the text read aloud by an untrained teacher with a poor voice
- 27-57 Recording on wire or record of poetry read by each individual student
- 28-58 Students encouraged and taught to rephrase poetry in prose form with the object of making meaning easier
- 29-59 Assignments of several pages of poetry in a text on which you reported as to why the poems included were "good poems."
- 30-60 Requirement of written impressions on previously assigned poetry together with a written study of author or authors

- KEY A: 1. Never used it
2. Seldom used it
3. Occasionally used it
4. Frequently used it
5. Used it almost exclusively

- KEY B: 1. Since I never experienced this method I have no reaction to it
2. Feel that had this method been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking
3. This way had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry
4. This way contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry
5. This way contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry

- 31-61 Poems studied with major emphasis on grammatical construction and rhyme and meter schemes (i.e. a-b, a-b, etc. and reference to iambic pentameter, spandee, etc.)
- 32-62 Poetry studied from historical viewpoint; history of poet, the poem in relation to the time it was written, compared to other poems of its time, placing it in a "period" or style of writing, poets of a nation (Eng., American, etc.)
- 33-63 Study of poems by types - ballads, odes, epics, etc.
- 34-64 Students present oral programs of poetry they have liked for assembly programs or for their classes
- 35-65 Study of poem by whole class followed by individual demonstration of understanding and appreciation such as one person memorizing the poem, another writing music for it, another illustrating it by drawings or wood carvings, etc.

III. POETRY TESTING METHODS

Questions 66-78 are statements of testing practices sometimes used in teaching poetry. You are asked to read each statement and to select from Key A the frequency with which your poetry teachers used each one. For this purpose use answer spaces 66-78 on your answer sheet.

After you have finished this first reading go back through the list of practices and select from Key B the statement which best tells how the method affected you. For this purpose use answer spaces 79-91.

Notice that on the question sheets two numbers precede each statement. Do not let these confuse you. The first number is for answer with Key A, the second with Key B. This makes two sets of answers for one set of questions.

- KEY A: 1. The usual practice
2. Sometimes used this practice
3. Never used this practice

- KEY B: 1. This practice contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry
2. This practice had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry
3. This practice contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry
4. Feel that had this practice been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking
5. Since I never experienced this practice I have no reaction to it

66-79 Final examination usually covering entire term's work

67-80 Objective tests scored by students

68-81 Essay tests scored by students

69-82 Oral quizzes

70-83 Required interviews with students

71-84 Ask students to grade themselves

72-85 Ask students to grade each other

73-86 Grades largely based on term's assigned written work

74-87 Open book examination

75-88 Oral reading of poems or group of poems with goals of clarity, meaning, enjoyment, etc.

76-89 No examinations or quizzes on the basis that poetry is means only to be enjoyed

77-90 Examination on detail of content; for instance, name of hero's horse, color of heroine's hair, material of footnotes

78-91 Examination practice chosen by students who write their own questions

IV. POETRY TEACHERS

Below are listed traits and personality characteristics as they are found in various teachers. Space is provided to answer these questions about two of your teachers. If you had only one outstanding teacher whom you remember either favorably or unfavorably answer only the first group. If you remember two teachers use both answer groups. For the first teacher use answer blanks 92-133 and 134-175; for the second teacher use answer blanks 176-217 and 218-259. Remember that this double set of answers, as in previous questions, simply means that you answer each question twice, once according to Key A, once according to Key B.

Read through the list of traits and characteristics as listed below and then mark on your answer sheet from answers 92-133 according to KEY A whether or not the teacher you are describing possessed these traits.

Next, read through the same list using KEY B and marking from answer 134-175 show how these characteristics affected your liking or disliking of poetry.

Then follow the same process for teacher two if you remember a second teacher. If you can remember more than two teachers select the two outstanding ones, either good or bad, who most affected your attitude toward poetry.

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

Key B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession or lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

FIRST TEACHER

92-134 Had a pleasant voice

93-135 Conveyed to the class meaning and feeling of poem when reading aloud

94-136 Read all poems in same manner; monotonous delivery

95-137 Dressed well; was always well groomed

96-138 Held attention of class through a sense of sharing the meaning and feeling

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

KEY B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession nor lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

- 97-139 Painted word pictures vividly
- 98-140 Refused to read poetry aloud
- 99-141 Was patient and sympathetic with student difficulties
- 100-142 Had sympathetic understanding of student interest in poetry choices
- 101-143 Could portray characters accurately
- 102-144 Exacted obedience through creation of interest
- 103-145 Facial expression was poor
- 104-146 Mannerisms detracted from presentation of material
- 105-147 Lack of confidence in ability caused close adherence to text
- 106-148 Evidence of wide knowledge of subject matter
- 107-149 Was too easy-going
- 108-150 Had a quick temper
- 109-151 Seemed indifferent to class choice of material
- 110-152 Always found fault with everyone
- 111-153 Liked only the classical poems
- 112-154 Thought poetry originated in heaven and had no relation to earthly matters
- 113-155 Lack of force of personality destroyed discipline
- 114-156 Created love of poetry through infection of own interest

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

KEY B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession nor lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

- 115-157 Never allowed students to read in class poems by authors thought to be examples of poor writing
- 116-158 Failed to understand that students are not as far advanced in ability to understand and enjoy poetry as teacher is
- 117-159 Thought students too dumb to bother with who failed to recognize and like "good" poetry
- 118-160 Had a colorful personality
- 119-161 Encouraged students to experiment and create
- 120-162 Was usually active in presenting material to class; seemed alive, moved a great deal, was animated
- 121-163 Seemed soured on the world
- 122-164 Was pretty (handsome)
- 123-165 Acted too old for young students
- 124-166 Was gushing, sentimental, and emotional
- 125-167 Treated students as if they were real people
- 126-168 Sincerely moved students to admiration
- 127-169 Had a physical disability
- 128-170 Understood poetry in its proper relationship to all school work
- 129-171 Demanded perfection of memorized performance rather than enjoyment and appreciation
- 130-172 Expected students to mimic teacher's manner of reading poems
- 131-173 Stimulated students to do further reading on their own

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

KEY B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession nor lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

132-174 Was a man

133-175 Was a woman

SECOND TEACHER

176-218 Had a pleasant voice

177-219 Conveyed to the class meaning and feeling of poem when reading aloud

178-220 Read all poems in same manner; monotonous delivery

179-221 Dressed well; was always well groomed

180-222 Held attention of class through a sense of sharing the meaning and feeling

181-223 Painted word pictures vividly

182-224 Refused to read poetry aloud

183-225 Was patient and sympathetic with student difficulties

184-226 Had sympathetic understanding of student interest in poetry choices

185-227 Could portray characters accurately

186-228 Exacted obedience through creation of interest

187-229 Facial expression was poor

188-230 Mannerisms detracted from presentation of material

189-231 Lack of confidence in ability caused close adherence to text

190-232 Evidence of wide knowledge of subject matter

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

KEY B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributes to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession nor lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

191-233 Was too easy-going

192-234 Had a quick temper

193-235 Seemed indifferent to class choice of material

194-236 Always found fault with everyone

195-237 Liked only the classical poems

196-238 Thought poetry originated in heaven and had no relation to earthly matters

197-239 Lack of force of personality destroyed discipline

198-240 Created love of poetry through infection of own interest

199-241 Never allowed students to read in class poems by authors thought to be examples of poor writing

200-242 Failed to understand that students are not as far advanced in ability to understand and enjoy poetry as teacher is

201-243 Thought students too dumb to bother with who failed to recognize and like "good" poetry

202-244 Had a colorful personality

203-245 Encouraged students to experiment and create

204-246 Was usually active in presenting material to class; seemed alive, moved a great deal, was animated

205-247 Seemed soured on the world

206-248 Was pretty (handsome)

KEY A: 1. Yes
2. No

KEY B: 1. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my dislike for poetry
2. Lack of this characteristic contributes to my dislike for poetry
3. Neither possession nor lack of this characteristic affected my liking or disliking poetry
4. Lack of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry
5. Possession of this characteristic contributed to my liking for poetry

- 207-249 Acted too old for young students
- 208-250 Was gushing, sentimental, and emotional
- 209-251 Treated students as if they were real people
- 210-252 Sincerely moved students to admiration
- 211-253 Had a physical disability
- 212-254 Understood poetry in its proper relationship to all school work
- 213-255 Demanded perfection of memorized performance rather than enjoyment and appreciation
- 214-256 Expected students to mimic teacher's manner of reading poems
- 215-257 Stimulated students to do further reading on their own
- 216-258 Was a man
- 217-259 Was a woman

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEXTUAL MATERIAL

Chapter II has stated the problem which is the investigation of the attitudes of college freshmen in relation to poetry with the goal in mind of evaluating their experiences toward better teaching. Since the dearth of concern about poetry is so evident, it is the goal of this study to ascertain the factors which prevent enjoyment of poetry and to search for factors which will aid in vitalizing the reading of poetry, judged so necessary a part of the equipment of citizens if civilization is not simply to flourish but to survive.

The method described in Chapter II includes the use of a Poetry Attitudes-Inventory answered by freshmen in Michigan State College, the use of personal interviews with three groups of students, and the use of expert opinion.

Chapter III annotates, summarizes and analyzes the data found in answers from all these sources on the subject of attitudes toward the poetry material which students found in their texts or which was given to them by their teachers, or which they studied by one means or another.

Attitudes toward textual material is discussed in the following order: (1) data from answers in the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory; (2) data from personal interviews; (3) data from expert opinion, both experiential and empirical.

DATA ON ATTITUDES TOWARD TEXTUAL MATERIAL AS ASCERTAINED FROM POETRY ATTITUDES-INVENTORY

In the Attitudes-Inventory two types of investigation were made:

(1) general questions about poems read or studied and resulting effect on likes or dislikes, and (2) listing by each student of all the poems he could remember, the author, if remembered, and his reaction.

General Reactions To Textual Material

The answers to the general questions elicited the facts that:

(1) the poetry studied was not understood and therefore caused dislike; (2) the content of a poem is an important factor in like or dislike of it; (3) the language of poetry can be a stumbling block to understanding; (4) classical material is not necessarily valuable merely because it is so judged by experts, and consistently put in text books, (5) the form of poetry is difficult for some, not difficult for others, (6) the poetic elements of rhythm, sound and imaginative construction are valuable assets, and (7) that it is important to know poetry.

Lack of Understanding Prime Cause of Dislike

The most frequently cited cause for disliking poetry is lack of understanding it. Questions 12, 14, 16 and 18 refer to this problem. Question 12, giving five choices as to degree of like or dislike, had three possible answers related to lack of understanding: (1) 52 said they neither like it nor dislike it because of poor background; (2) 49 say they would like it, they think, if easier understanding were made

possible, and (3) 81 who like poetry generally prefer only simple or familiar poetry. Only 21 of the 213 answering say they like poetry very much finding it enjoyable, relaxing, and inspiring - and, therefore, understood. Of the 213, only 21 therefore seem pleased with the choice of poetry.

In question 14, 29 said the poetry they were given to read was uninteresting and caused dislike; in question 16, 33 men answered that most boys who dislike poetry learn to do so in school because of poor choice of material and poor teaching, and 29 believe most boys who are indifferent to poetry have that attitude because of inability to understand it. In a similar question about girls, there were 16 who claimed poor material and teaching caused dislike; there were 41 who think poor understanding causes most dislike. In question 18, 77 people said they thought they would like poetry if means were provided for understanding.

Content of Poem Affects Like or Dislike

The pleasurable study of poetry may partially depend on the content of the poem: (1) 157 disagree that a poem should be read for its moral, (2) 132 favor its expression of the truths of human experience, (3) 124 want a story while 87 do not, (4) 167 think poetry should express knowledge of living through the ages, (5) 155 think poetry can transform drab living by its contents, (6) 177 want poetry with an idea. With these diverse interests, there must be a wide latitude of choice if there is a pleasurable journey into poetry material.

The Language of Poetry Makes it Difficult

The language of poetry can be the stumbling block to understanding. Vocabulary in ordinary prose reading provides difficulties and many studies have been made on words and their relative difficulty for the various grades. Poetic language provides even greater trouble with words.

In answering the Inventory, 64 claim that poetry is a meaningless jumble of words; 93 disagree that beautiful word pictures inevitably cause enjoyment of poetry; 146 think there is no use to attempt to read poetry in which the vocabulary is out of reach, and 59 insist that poets write a language which only they can understand. There are 80, as opposed to 140, who say that poets insist on saying things in a very round-about-way, their comparisons making the meaning obscure. Evidently, the textual material provided for them is one element in their dislike since the vocabulary of the poetry they have studied is beyond their abilities.

Classical Poetry Not Necessarily Valuable

Students were almost evenly divided in their opinions that classical poetry cannot serve as a guide for modern living. There was almost exactly the same proportion of disagreement on this idea stated affirmatively, "classical poetry offers opportunities for pleasant experiences." A strong majority express themselves as against the idea that present courses in poetry made up of poetry judged by literary experts as worth studying are ideal poetry classes.

Form of Poetry Difficult for Some

Two questions about form of poetry elicited the fact that a strong majority do not blame poetry form for their dislike. While 52 think it

does cause difficulty in understanding, 176 disagree. The same opinions were obtained on the statement "poetry written in free verse form is hard to follow and therefore less enjoyable than other forms of poetry. It is not poetry which is difficult, but poems.

Effect of Poetic Elements

Three statements about rhythm, sound, and imaginative construction of ideas, questions 42, 71 and 77, reveal strong agreement that these are valuable and imaginative assets.

Importance of Studying

Since mind-set or the will to learn on the part of the student is an important factor in determining difficulty and resulting pleasure or displeasure, it therefore strongly affects choice of literature. Statements from three angles tried to determine attitudes of students toward the importance of studying poetry. Statements 69, 70, 74 and 78, show that a decidedly high number of people feel that poetry is an enriching vicarious experience and that the art of the poet enhances beauty. There is less agreement on the emotional impact of poetry; they agree that the emotion of poetry causes no embarrassment, but a large number are not moved at all by reading poetry. This is probably true because of lack of identification with the living in the poem due to study of poetry beyond their comprehension and vicarious participation.

The fact that they do not read poetry vicariously also probably accounts for contradictory opinions about the worth of poetry and compulsory study. They do not agree on compulsory study and they do not

voluntarily study poetry while admitting its worth. A stronger motivation must be found than a mental acknowledgment of value.

The acknowledgment of the worth of poetry as it is different from prose is expressed in answers to 73 and 45. There is about equal division of opinion on "a good poem on 'Spring' is better than any prose description." However, a strong majority disagrees with the statement that most poems express nothing which could not as well be expressed in prose.

Results from Record of Poems and Authors Remembered

The group of 213 freshmen answering the first part of the Attitudes-Inventory was asked to list the titles of all the poems they could remember, the name of the author, if remembered, and to indicate if the poem is liked or disliked. In Appendix C will be found a complete record of the replies. There is listed (1) titles of poems according to students who remembered one poem, two poems, etc. and (2) a summary of total references to poems and authors revealing comparative representation of remembrance.

It was considered revealing, and a part of this study, to reproduce the exact titles as given and the spelling thereof. This was also done with regard to authors. While exactness as to title is not necessary, and the fact that the students were asked to list titles rather than identify lines is a weakness, still the haziness indicated in the listings shows such a complete lack of remembrance about poetry as to prove amazing ignorance.

The first significant fact is the low percentage of people remembering poems, and the small number of poems remembered by each student.

Of 213 people answering, 17 could remember one poem each, 21 could remember two poems each, 22 remember three poems each, 18 could remember four poems each, 15 remember five poems each, 12 remember six poems each, 12 remember seven poems each, and 32 could remember eight or more poems. This totals 150 people. It is presumed since the remainder of the 213 did not list any poem, that 63 could remember none at all. That this is probably true was corroborated by the personal interviews. Most of the students could remember no poem at all until by prodding and suggestion, they could possibly remember one or two, or recognize names suggested to them. Those who dislike poetry vociferously are likely to know names and authors and to hate them articulately and specifically. Others who are totally indifferent and ignore poetry could remember no details. In written statements accompanying the answers, commenting on the fact that he could not remember any poems, the student was likely to say he was indifferent. This is a most important indication since poetry is such a highly emotional form of literature. Ignoring poetry might seem more deadly than hating it.

Comments concerning poetry remembered, written in by students on the answer sheets, reveal attitudes toward poetry, explain why they list no poetry, or why they know no titles:¹

I do not remember the poems I have read. The reason for this is that I was never interested in the subject and never felt it important to me to remember them. The only author who I enjoyed in the least was Carl Sandburg, but I can't remember the names of his poems.

¹The exact form of their replies is reproduced.

I dislike most poetry because, to me, it is meaningless. The only poetry I enjoy reading is that written by Edgar Allen Poe. Poe's writings told a story and have a 'sensible' feeling to the characters involved in the poems. Usually, I think, a poem written in time of dismay or sadness can only hold meaning for the person who actually underwent the saddening experience. I'll read Poe anytime, but cannot stand whimsical poems. I don't think any of Poe's poems which I have read are whimsical.

It has been some time since I have done any real poetry reading, that the titles slip my memory. Titles are only names anyway. One can remember faces better than names and still like the person.

I haven't had the opportunity of reading poetry and so I'm not sure whether I could read very much of it or not and still like it. I don't think poetry should be left out in a high school curricula but it shouldn't be forced down the students throats with threats. Perhaps it could be presented in an interesting way, students putting different expression into the selection, etc.

I did not have poetry in my high school years so I am not capable of answering questions.

There would be no point in trying to put down my individual favorites so I have listed some of my most read authors.

(Note: it is impossible to tell if this is merely an excuse, laziness, or compensation)

I can't remember the titles exactly.

(Note: this on an entirely empty page)

There are quite a few more that Ive read and like but names I can't remember.

(Note: this went with two names which were as follows:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------|----------|
| 1. Mac Beth | Poe | Like |
| 2. The Highwayman | Longfellow | Dislike) |

Implications For This Study

1. Since 63 people presumably could remember no poem at all, and 60 more could remember only 1-3, it seems safe to say that the amount read is inadequate. Poetry is not being taught in any amounts sufficient to make any impression on the minds of most students.

2. Since such paucity of remembrance is indicated, it must be concluded that there was little worth to the student in the poetry studied

and his mind has dropped or never included poetry which meant nothing to him. This points up a need to give students, through one means or another of selection, poetry which is to them worth remembering.

3. Outside of Shakespeare, by far the largest majority of poetry remembered is that commonly studied around the seventh, eighth or ninth grade. It seems important in light of this fact to try to decide if that is the age when students best remember poetry, if it is the time when most poetry is offered to students, or if these particular poems are most consistently offered.

4. The spellings of titles and authors, the titles guessed at in relation to what they can remember of what the poem is about, the rather general distortion of titles and names of the most familiar classics offered to students, indicates a haziness of knowledge about poems consistently taught to students throughout the years. If there is such haziness about the best known poems, the fact is significant enough to warrant study with a view toward changing something. Evidently there is a great waste somewhere. It would seem that there could hardly be any profit in continuing along the same lines.

5. The list of poems remembered divides itself into two kinds of poetry: (1) classics found in the texts, and (2) sentimental poems like "Trees," "Fool's Prayer," "If," "White Cliffs," and "Flanders Fields." The few exceptions are Sandburg, Frost, Millay, E. E. Cummings, Amy Lowell, and T. S. Eliot. Even Noyes and Riley might be counted classics of their kind if inclusion in many books is the criterion. Comparative representation is shown below:

Classics		Accepted Modern Writings	
1. Longfellow	92	1. Sandburg	34
2. Poe	82	2. T. S. Eliot	6
3. Shakespeare	58	3. Frost	6
4. Coleridge	41	4. E. E. Cummings	4
5. Whittier	17	5. Millay	3
6. Chaucer	15	6. Vachel Lindsay	2
7. Tennyson	13	7. Eugene Field	3
8. Bryant	13	8. Amy Lowell	1
9. Keats	12		
10. E. B. Browning	12		
11. Milton	10		
12. Keats	8		
13. Kipling	8		
14. Gray	8		
15. Shelley	6		
16. Burns	6		
17. Homer	4		
		Popular Poetry	
		1. Trees	23
		2. Casey At the Bat	13
		3. Edward R. Sill	4
		4. In Flanders Field	4
		5. Edgar A. Guest	2

18. Marvell	3
19. R. Browning	2
20. Omar Khayyam	2
21. Beowulf	2
22. Van Dyke	2
23. Holmes	2

The same proportion of classical, sentimental and good modern authors exists in other scattered titles. It seems logical to conclude that continued study of these classical poems has weaknesses. The evidence shows that these are what students study and since they are largely indifferent or hostile to poetry, a change is indicated.

6. The small number of modern poems referred to here indicates that teaching in the grades and high school includes almost all classical poetry. Sandburg is almost the only person who might be called a modern poet who makes any appreciable impression, or has been studied enough to be remembered. If any real approach is to be made to the problem of understanding, consideration must be given to wide inclusion of poetry written about the present world where the student finds himself, and with which he is familiar to some extent. It seems obvious that the very worthy goals of presenting the living of ages to a student, of acquainting him with other worlds and other peoples, of broadening his outlook and horizons by acquaintance with literature of all times and all climes are being surely, but not slowly, defeated by not first presenting poems about the world of the student which he finds hard enough to understand without going far afield.

7. A large proportion of the selections mentioned are marked as being liked. Probably the fact that they are remembered would indicate that fact. In light of the general discoveries of attitudes toward poetry several things must be taken into consideration in an evaluation of this fact.

1. Is familiarity likely to make a favorable impression on the student as he looks back?
2. What effect on attitudes does the often repeated inclusion of these poems have? Had other and more modern poets been taught, might the comparison have made these seem disliked?
3. It is true that a majority in the Inventory stated that the familiar poem does not have the most appeal. May not that be theory in light of the facts? If they know no more poems than represented here, how do they contrast the familiar and those that might be read? If they would like a new poem, why does not that fact motivate them to reading beyond the list of the very familiar?

4. What weight does the approval and accent of the teacher, and social approval of the classics, together with accepted inclusion in texts carry when a student considers what he likes? Does he persuade himself that he likes what he has been told he ought to like, and unconsciously discard poetry for the reason that he does not like the choice made for him by society? It seems indubitable that since he has read as little as he says he has, there is little spread in choice. He accepts what seems to him the best of a bad lot and says he likes that best, but is indifferent to poetry because of the part he knows. That part leaves him cold, so he leaves poetry, as such, alone.

DATA CONCERNING ATTITUDES TOWARD TEXTUAL MATERIAL AS ASCERTAINED FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Three groups of people were interviewed personally for the purpose of ascertaining their attitudes toward poetry: eighteen people who answered the Inventory, eleven members of a class in advanced Oral Interpretation of Poetry, and nineteen members of a class in beginning Oral Interpretation. Their attitudes toward kinds and amount of poetry read are given in this chapter.

Attitudes of Eighteen People Who Answered the Inventory:

Of the eighteen, nine like poetry very much. The following is true of these nine:

1. The first student always had poetry around, parents read to her, she made her own collections, has collections now, and reads frequently.
2. The second student in early life owned many poetry books and enjoyed reading widely. Now does not own many nor have books of poetry around and so does not read much, although she likes poetry very much. She has read mostly in the classics because they are in the texts.

3. This student had little poetry at home but seemed always to like it. She had little in the grades but nothing happened to influence her negatively. One teacher in the high school surrounded her with poetry, and thus set her liking for it. She has no objection to the texts because, since she has never read much, the texts gave her wide enough choice.

4. This fourth student had many poetry sources at home but little poetry was taught either in the grades or in high school. One course highly emphasizing poetry gave him necessary acquaintance so that he continues his liking for poetry but now reads little.

5. This student likes poetry very much but still does not read much because of lack of understanding of much poetry. He has remembrance of almost no poetry study in school. One teacher who coached a play, evidently some Shakespearean performance (although he is hazy on that point), helped him. Two personal incidents motivated him to study on his own and take a survey course in college. The survey allowed him choice which was a pleasing feature to him. He chose difficult poetry because he likes challenging material on which to work. He feels he would read poetry if he had time.

6. This student reads little because he has no time. He liked the literature texts because they contained "the most famous" or best-known poems. He has no objection to the texts he studied as they gave him wide enough choice for the small amount he has read.

7. Student number seven reads little but he likes poetry. One course in high school is his only real acquaintance with poetry but great interest

was stirred up by the course, and he enjoyed reading "on his own" so much that he continued the writing of poetry which the teacher first demanded of them. When he says he likes poetry, he uses "Trees" as an example, saying it is meaningful. Then he reiterates his interest in well-known poems, but today he neither reads nor writes poetry because of lack of time.

8. Student number eight had many library resources but never liked poetry and had unfortunate school experiences. It was necessary to come to a post-graduate high school course before any teacher provided any variety of poetry and did good enough teaching so that he began to explore on his own. He does not yet like all poetry, and his reading is limited.

9. An emotional cataclysm drove this man to reading, but even with miraculous accomplishments he did not find poetry until as a senior in high school one teacher introduced him to it. His extraordinarily wide and constant reading has been on his own, stemming from the necessity to read, and motivated to poetry by the one teacher.

Attitudes of the nine people who dislike poetry:

1. This first student hates the classics which she can remember in dreary succession, read monotonously, forced on her, and meaning nothing.

Suffered over "On His Blindness." Shakespeare is not poetry; it is a story.

2. Few poetry materials were available at any time in her life. In all her study she can remember only "The Bells" and "The Raven." Even though she thoroughly dislikes all poems she has read, she feels that an educated person ought to know about poetry. It is her feeling that if students

understood why classics are considered valuable, and if they were explained to students instead of being forced on them, that learning might be both possible and pleasant.

3. This third student had few books around and nobody read to him. He never learned to read anything and doesn't read a book a year. He can remember only three poems which impressed him because they were stories. He never learned to understand any kind of poetry and dislikes the distorted rhymes and twisted lines.

4. This man never had poetry materials around, and while he had a regular English course every year and poetry was roughly one-fourth of it, he never learned to understand it or like it. His explanation is that "it has no value." He has no objection to the text saying that since all people have to learn the same thing that is as good a way as any.

5. The fifth student had no poetry in his home and reads little of anything even now. He feels that the choice of poetry he was given to read had a great deal to do with his dislike. Seemingly there was not enough poetry in grade school to remember. He had an excellent teacher in high school who had to follow a prescribed text but allowed students as much choice as possible. Still this student didn't like poetry. He can remember only Poe and Chaucer. Poe he calls "light reading" and doesn't mind too much; Chaucer was once too difficult because of the language and then when he found out the words, it was too simple a story to suit him.

6. This man never has liked poetry and thinks he never will but can't remember details as to what selections caused the dislike. All he can

remember is "The Ancient Mariner," which he dislikes probably because of length, and "The Raven" which he could not understand. He says classical poetry does not deal with his living and is therefore not valuable. The "stuff" is above the heads of students. If students were taught to realize the value of classics they might learn them whether they liked them or not.

7. This man had no material or poetry in his home, has almost no acquaintance with it at all, had such a little of it in school that he can remember no details, and his total impression is that all he had was very bad.

8. This man had no materials in his home; he can remember a few "little poems" in the grades; he thinks he had "Ancient Mariner" in the tenth grade, which is much later than other students usually study it. He did not like it for any reason. In his senior year they covered a "thick book" from which the teachers assigned endlessly. He never managed to find a single poem which he thought possible or passable.

9. This student had no poetry in his home, never read any which he liked, and can remember reading almost none. He never read as a child. He thinks of "catchy little poems" in the grades, but can remember no details. He remembers "Trees" as one of these which he possibly learned about the age of twelve. He thought "it a pretty nice poem" but it didn't interest him. He could give no definition of "interest" but kept repeating the word. He had "quite a few poems" in American Literature but they also had no interest. Despite the fact that he graduated from a Detroit high school and thus must have had some exposure to poetry, he could give

only the above as his entire reaction. He thinks there is no poem that would interest him. All he is interested in reading are sports magazines.

Implications For This Study:

1. The students who like and read poetry have usually had it around them in quantities, and have grown up with it as a matter-of-course.
2. Failing wide resources, students who like poetry have been introduced to texts containing enough variety to please them.
3. Students who become interested in poetry in high school or later, usually find some specific poem, or types of poetry, or outside motivation which moves them to liking.
4. It seems apparent that only when students have a deep emotional need they can turn to poetry, or that the small amount of poetry they do read and enjoy caters to an emotional need of some kind.
5. Poor selection of classics monotonously forced on a student is likely to make him hate poetry.
6. It seems quite evident that students who have no contact with poetry can hardly be expected to find pleasure in it. All evidence points to the fact that an almost unbelievably small amount is taught.
7. Liking for poetry can depend greatly on a sense of values.
8. Most people, even those who claim to like poetry, have no time to read it. It is evidently of little importance to their lives even if they like it.
9. Even the nine students chosen from those answering the Inventory who profess to like poetry very much, know comparatively little about it, read almost none now, and never read it habitually. Most of them base their liking for poetry on a scanty knowledge of a few poems in the usual text. If they can like poetry under such circumstances, what might be their reaction if they had been provided wide sources of poems written about their own world? It could be possible, it seems, to bring up habitual poetry readers with the right environment and encouragement.

Attitudes of Members of a Class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Of the eleven people in this elective course, nine were surrounded by poetry in their youth, their parents read to them, or sisters were

responsible. If they did not have poetry in grade school, every suitable kind was at home and they always had the kind of poetry right for their ages. They gradually progressed in their reading so that when they read classics they found them neither boring nor beyond understanding on the whole. One man got started wrong in college through inability to adjust and could not enjoy nor comprehend the poetry given him. But in the years when he dropped out of school, he evidently began to read what pleased him, chose what he liked, and made such progress that when he came back to school, he was a very fine student.

The two who had no poetry are just now learning it. One is floundering for lack of background but keeps struggling because she wants to learn. The other has found the right pace for himself just this year and is reading in great gulps to catch up with what he normally should have had through the years past.

All of them, at one age or another, have been properly introduced to poetry, have browsed at will where wide choice was possible and have not been confined to classics encased in a text. As a result they read the classics with pleasure, although, of course, they have favorites. They have always had their opinions which they freely express and are not and have not been confined to the opinions of others.

Attitudes Toward Poetry Material of Members of a Class in Interpretive Reading

(1) Had set material with no choice, studied little, even mentions Silas Marner seeming not to know the difference. (2) Had choice, teacher started with light material and led up to heavier; likes Carl Sandburg.

(3) Likes E. E. Cummings and Walt Whitman for unique style and the message but learned it for himself; can absolutely remember nothing he studied in school. (4) Knew much poetry from his home, but can remember only Macbeth from school. They were given no choice in poetry. (5) Always liked poetry because of having much in his home; grade school was bad; he detests Longfellow and Browning from school experiences. Likes Alfred Noyes. (6) Can remember no poetry until 7th or 8th grade, detests "Ancient Mariner" which is all he can remember. Never understood any poetry given to him until he got to college. (7) Had poetry in her home; liked what she had in grades because it was "animated": "Ride of Paul Revere," "If," etc. Method made all of it enjoyable. (8) Likes poetry from having it read to him constantly--Browning, Longfellow, etc. Teachers liked American Literature best in high school, so he got most of that. (9) Had poetry read to him; remembers none in grades; hated it in junior high; in high school, teacher talked about poetry rather than reading poems. (11) Had a lot and likes it, remembering "In Memoriam," "Seven Ages of Man," "All The World's A Stage," Hamlet's speech, etc. (12) Remembers poetry from her youth; liked Stevenson's "My Shadow" in grades, etc., "Evangeline" was a class project, remembers "Canterbury Tales," Browning, Poe, etc. Likes poetry. (13) Likes poetry but can remember the names of no poems. Hated memory work but has come to like poetry in college. (14) Did not like poetry in school; no choice allowed; became interested in poetry through reading it in Saturday Evening Post. (15) Owned the "Book House" and read it constantly; no poetry in grade school; liked "The Highwayman" from junior high; was allowed choice in

high school and remembers Whitman and Milton. (16) Can remember only memorization in both junior and senior high school of poems selected by teachers, put on board and memorized although words never understood.

She memorized "Prologue," "Thanatopsis," and "Ancient Mariner."

(17) Remembers little definite information; liked poetry on whole except where memory and analysis were required without understanding; could think only of T. S. Eliot as a poet; she did not understand him. (18) Remembers "Little Boy Blue" in grades. Likes Edgar A. Guest. Memorized English poetry but can remember nothing about it. (19) Remembers only one pleasant experience since she had to memorize and answer questions on all the poems in a given text. She enjoyed John Brown's Body.

Implications For This Study:

1. Students have had so little poetry that they can call Silas Marner a poem and never recognize the difference.
2. In nearly every instance, no student choice of poetry is allowed.
3. Other things being equal, the more poetry a student knows about or studies or reads, the more likely he is to like it.
4. Students like poetry that is animated, interesting, and within their range of living and understanding.
5. Teachers are likely to teach the kind of poetry which they like and so influence the student for good or bad in that direction.
6. Nearly all students were given the same classics to read and few were introduced to modern poetry.

DATA ON ATTITUDES TOWARD TEXTUAL MATERIAL AS ASCERTAINED FROM EXPERT OPINION

George R. Carlsen seems to summarize the opinions of experts in relation to choice of materials for teaching.

Our present selections probably have much to do with the fact that students leave elementary schools with a real liking for stories and poems and leave high school with a rather active dislike. If literature is going to help students gain an increased awareness of the goodness of living, it has to be selected in terms of its presentation of the experiences that young people are having.

Carlsen claims that literature teachers are responsible for maturity in use of language. A man's ability to think is tied up with his command of symbols. To help students become mature through the reading of literature of which poetry is an essential and important part, is the goal of literature teaching. All good teaching starts where a student is, but the eye must be steadily on the goal of maturity which is the real education.

We accept the fact which is obvious that we must use literature within the experiential grasp of the students in any elementary school, but we stubbornly refuse to accept it at the secondary level.¹

Louis Macneice, well-known British poet, writing in his Modern Poetry, describes his own youthful experiences in relation to material given him to study.

When I went to an English preparatory school at the age of ten [in 1917] I was given Palgrave's Golden Treasury and this was my chief reading for two years. During this period I underwent a coarsening of taste and a growing preference for what Yeats calls those "crude, violent rhythms as of a man running." Like most boys of that age I liked the flashier heroics - "The Burial of Sir John Moore," "Hohenlinden," "The Battle of Narsby," "The Execution of Montrose."

He further discusses the contents of Golden Treasury in its difference from the natural verse of nursery rhymes. While it is an excellent

¹Carlsen, George R. "Literature and Emotional Maturity," English Journal, Vol. XXXVII No. 3, March, 1949, p. 124.

collection it has too narrow a range for boys; there is too big a gap "between the formal self-conscious poems" and the rhymes of earlier years. "Blake's songs might have helped to bridge the gap, and I should also throw in a quantity of light verse and of modern folk-poetry such as the ballads of the American cow-boys." He says that the great majority of poems related events and emotions with which he had no experience. As examples he used the martial poems which were at best means of escape. He recommends The Poet's Tongue by John Garrett and W. H. Auden as containing the light verse needed, saying it has too great a proportion of this type of verse, but at least it is a more catholic conception of poetry and saves boys from "Noli Me Tangere."¹

L. A. G. Strong, English poet, teacher and writer, says of his own experiences in studying poetry:

I was forced to read Milton when I was fifteen. He bored me stiff. I was urged to persevere by some kind but foolish pedagogue. I rapidly came to hate Milton and rebelled. Some years later, when I had to read him at Oxford, I started with misgiving, and was at once swept off my feet. I read on with astonishment and delight. To have slogged on at the first attempt would have put me off for life. Great literature exists for our enjoyment, not for punishment. The man who wants to force it down unwilling throats is merely showing that he understands neither itself nor its uses.²

Arthur H. R. Fairchild who wrote a book in 1914, The Teaching of Poetry in the High School, which was referred to frequently in books read for this study, shows how teachers were even then facing the same

¹Macneice, Louis, Modern Poetry, Oxford University Press, N. Y., 1935, p. 41.

²Strong, L. A. G. Common Sense About Poetry, Knopf, N. Y., 1932, p. 130.

problems that we are today: surprise that a twelve year contact with good literature brings no abiding results, the new type of student in the crowded high school looking necessarily to a commercial and industrial existence devoid of poetic feeling, the solution of a situation where the teacher provides almost the only opportunity for development of literary taste. He says that teachers have lived through many violent discussions on progressive education, motivation, interests of students, etc.--phases of teaching born in the philosophy of John Dewey.

Such a situation is likely to reveal, sometimes with startling suddenness, the futility of much of our formal, academic teaching of literature. When the teacher at last perceives youth, dutifully but mechanically, gathering information about poets, poetic forms, and themes of poetic compositions, without once being fired with intrinsic interest in poetry itself, he loses his assurance. At the same time he is a bit uncertain whether the way out of the difficulty is to be found in the reconstruction of his own teaching practice, or in frankly admitting that some students are doomed never to care about poetic interpretation of life."¹

In further discussion of the importance of the pupil, Fairchild says a teacher must recognize that every student is the "history of his inner life up to the present moment."

Between these aims and the poetry in hand, if only the poetry has been judiciously selected, there is always some connection possible, some point of attachment discoverable, some line of approach open. It is the teacher's task to discern this point of attachment, and to affect a union, in knowledge and ideals, between the pupils and the content of the poem.² (Italics mine)

Note Fairchild's words: "if only the poetry has been judiciously selected." Then he proceeds to discuss his own selections for students.

¹Fairchild, Arthur H. R., The Teaching of Poetry in the High School, Boston and N. Y., Houghton Mifflin, 1914, p. ix.

²Ibid., p. 11.

He began a high school course with narrative poems: "The Pied Piper," "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "Herve Riel," "Incident of the French Camp." These were followed by patriotic poems: "Cavalier Tunes," "Home Thoughts from Abroad." Next they studied poems dealing with Italy: "The Italians in England." "Up at a Villa-Down in the City," "Love Among the Ruins," "De Gustibus." Personal poems included "My Star," "Summum Bonum," "Why I Am a Liberal," "The Lost Leader," "Prospice," "Epilogue to Asolando." Finally, philosophical and ethical poems included "My Last Duchess," "Childe Harold to the Dark Tower Came," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Saul," songs from "Pippa Passes."

Fairchild used "Andrea Del Sarto" as an example of a poem on which he spent much time, and for which he develops his method of teaching in full. If any of the writers on interest are correct, high school students should never be given such a poem. Fairchild advocates judicious selection and defeats his own philosophy. High school pupils have not lived long enough to grasp the emotions presented in the life story of a weakling artist who allowed an unscrupulous wife to make him an ingrate, a traitor, and a wastrel. Nor does it seem on the surface particularly good taste to introduce to students the more sordid aspects of an artist's life.

Fairchild spent the third day of study on "Andrea Del Sarto" discussing attitudes toward old age and comparing them to Browning's, and to what he had Andrea say on that subject. This seems a direct refutation of all the studies in interest which point out that young people simply are not interested in the subject of attitudes toward old age.

It is important to this study to compare what was taught in 1914, by a reputable teacher and author, with what is taught today. To that end, the investigator inquired from curricula authorities names of literature texts most used in Michigan today. Six texts, three in American literature, and three in English literature, are most commonly used. They are:

American Literature:

1. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw (Eds.) Literature and Life (American Lit.) N. Y., Scott, Foresman and Company, 1936.
2. Sharp, Tigert, Mann, Dudley, and Abney (Eds.), American Life in Literature, N. Y., Laidlaw Bros., 1938.
3. Barnes, Bessey, Gambill, Green, Haber, Knox, Seay and Shattuck (Eds.), The American Scene, N. Y., American Book Company, 1940.

English Literature:

1. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw (Eds.), Literature and Life, (English Literature), N. Y., Scott, Foresman and Co., 1935.
2. Cross, Smith, Stauffer, and Collette, (Eds.), English Writers, Boston, Ginn and Co., 1945.
3. Cross, Smith, Stauffer, and Collette, (Eds.), Writers in England, Boston, Ginn and Co., 1949.

A compilation of all titles and authors in the six texts revealed a number of vital facts. First, practically every poem taught by Mr. Fairchild in 1914 is now included in our texts. Every one of the English Literature texts included "Home Thoughts from Abroad." One included "How They Brought the Good News From Ghent to Aix," "Incident of a French Camp," "Cavalier Tunes," "Up at a Villa-Down in the City." Two included "My Star," three, "Prospice" and "My Last Duchess." "Childe Harold"

merited two and "Pippa Passes" three. "Epilogue to Asolando" was in two books.

Moreover, these same texts out-did Mr. Fairchild on the subject of old age, and added death for good measure. Beginning with the first of the listed titles can be found Byron's "Adieu! Adieu!", Sassoon's "Aftermath," Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break," "Crossing the Bar," and "Charge of the Light Brigade." These are followed by Shakespeare's "Come Away! Come Away! Death!", Sassoon's "Does It Matter?," Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and "Epitaph on Charles II." Shelley's "Dirge" also appeared. Further listings are proportionately inappropriate subject matter for high school people, and follow the typical pattern of traditional selection of material.

The American books avoid these subjects for the most part and include such modern authors as Benét, Frost, Lindsay, Sandburg, Emily Dickinson, Amy Lowell, Untermeyer and MacLeish. Except for Sandburg who is represented by several poems, these modern poets have from one to three or four poems each. Nobody more modern than these is represented at all. Not more than one-fourth of the poems could be called modern, and there is no discernible standard for selection. The traditional pattern is clear throughout.

This comparison of new texts with selections made in 1914 leads to the query, "what good are interest studies if there is no progress from 1914 to 1952 in providing literature in which students are interested? What good does it do to give lip service to the old and tried educational principle of interest motivation, and fail to give texts or other books of poetry to students based on their interests?"

Fairchild further commented that after they finished studying Andrea del Sarto students blithely undertook "Ulysses" or Shelley's "Stanzas written in Dejection Near Naples," and Milton's "Sonnet on His Blindness." If his students were blithe about these two, they refute the testimony of the freshmen at Michigan State College, and are probably the only adults today who like poetry. It is too bad that one can think of the attitude of students as being "blithe" when reading such selections and have no way to check on their later poetry reading.

Ezra Pound in his ABC of Reading says that the first decision to be made in every beginning class in poetry is the purpose of that class. Is it for criticism, history, or just pleasure? He wonders what we can expect of college freshmen in the line of critical analysis. Poems included for study in any book must be selected with the purpose in mind. When he talks of Whitman he says he is "Certainly the last author to be tried in a class room." Yet fifteen selections from Whitman were included in the three American Literature texts mentioned as being most used in Michigan high schools.¹

Carl Niemeyer, a professor, writing in College English on the subject of what to teach in beginning courses of college poetry defends and asks for the use of recent poetry. Recent poetry he defines as that of W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, Cecil Day Lewis, Archibald MacLeish, Muriel Ruckeyser, and perhaps also T. S. Eliot whom he calls their ghostly father because he believes that Eliot probably influenced all of them.

¹Pound, Ezra, The ABC Of Reading, New Directions, Norfolk, Conn., p. 192.

He says the characteristics of their verse are: a keen awareness of the contemporary scene and a consequent use of contemporary subject matter, a tone of disillusionment, and a tendency to experiment in matters of poetic technique, as shown by the use of devices like sprung rhythm and of assonance in the place of rhyme.

Urging their suitability in terminal courses in junior college, or in introductory courses in a semester's required work in poetry, Niemeyer names the two main objections to the use of modern writers and discusses why these two objections are not valid.

The two objections usually made to this kind of poetry are pedagogical and literary. Teachers say it is too difficult to teach. Mr. Niemeyer admits freely that there is modern poetry too difficult to teach to students of high school and beginning college age and cites some poems of Hart Crane as examples. Then he names Ruckeyser's "Boy With His Hair Cut Short" as a very good example for use.

As she snips, encouraging her brother to think he will soon be able to find a job, the boy from the corner of his eye looks at the "precision" of the "successful" neon sign visible through the window. No poem I can immediately recall presents so economically and so clearly a typical contemporary subject - the fumbling of man and the superiority of man's gadgets; and no class to whom I have presented the poem has failed after a careful reading to grasp the implications and the significance.¹

Niemeyer names Spender's "And I Can Never Be a Great Man," "Different Living is Not Living in Different Places," Auden's "Law Like Love," Kenneth Fearing's "X Minus X," as being good recent poetry suitable for study.

¹Niemeyer, Carl, "Recent Poetry in Terminal Courses," College English, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 3, No. 4 (January, 1942) pp. 403-4, 6.

In showing comparable difficulty between recent poetry and the classics he quotes Shakespeare's

A barren-spirited fellow: one that feeds
On abject arts, and imitations,
Which out of use and stal'd by other men,
Begins his fashion: do not talk of him
But as a property.

Of this selection Mr. Niemeyer asks:

How many minutes will it require a class to understand Antony's opinion of Lepidus and the figures in which he clothes it? Is it slovenly teaching to dismiss the passage by saying simply, "Antony does not approve of Lepidus"?

To the objection that recent poetry is not literary, this writer says:

The objectors do not so much deny the merits of the poetry I am discussing as believe that other, traditional poetry has greater merit. Once again their objection is valid in part. From the hierarchy of English poets our classics, the Miltons, the Donnes, the Wordsworths, are unshakable. The place of the moderns is unsure. Who knows what posterity will think of even Housman, or Hardy, or Yeats, all now safely dead and in the pantheon? But the question is not which poetry is greater - at best a futile question - the question is which poetry is better suited for presentation to students in freshman and sophomore courses. The appreciation of English literature is the reward of a long and exacting discipline. How many years of reading has it taken even English teachers to understand a page of Shakespeare, a poem of Andrew Marvell, or a book of Paradise Lost? That these skills are not for the terminal student in freshmen English or in a course in the introduction to poetry let us frankly confess. Rather than teach him the classics inadequately (and in freshman English we no longer even attempt to teach them), let us introduce him to poets already of his own background, with whom he may be presumed already to have some sympathy.¹

Mr. Niemeyer thinks that modern poetry needs little defense:

. . . its virtues today are what the virtues of true poetry have always been: economy, precision, imagery, and emotions.

¹Ibid., p. 405.

Is there anything freshman writing needs more than the first two; is there anything better than poetic imagery to awaken a student's perception of the relation between the world of men and thing and the world of language? And what better than poetry can give him an example of emotion which finds its powers in self-imposed discipline?¹

The Harvard Committee which wrote General Education in A Free Society says that the principle to be granted is "that nothing less than the best practicable literature is good enough for school study."²

How to judge or grade what is the best is the problem. It is a much discussed and entirely unsettled point. The Harvard Committee calls it a "vast and downtrodden topic," and lists three points in this connection:

Under-grading. With a view to "establishing the reading habit" great numbers of lower-level texts are now written in words and construction which exact no reading effort from a learner, beyond his endurance of verbal boredom, and offer him in content nothing whatever to strengthen his mental bite. Is it any wonder that he is at a loss later when he meets sentences which are trying to say something worth saying?

Sub-English. The texts in literature are written in intolerable English. Unconsciously they serve as models, and since they are such poor models, they have a bad effect.

Pre-mature formulation. They spend too much time, too soon, formulating material and summing up ideas which the student should do for himself. He could not see the trip for being buried in the guidebook.

Nor can selection of poetry be based on choice of that which is merely easy. Difficulty may be a matter of preliminary steps. The Harvard Committee says that relatively simple narrative (The Odyssey) and poetry of fairly open and uncompacted meaning will naturally come early. They go no further on suggestion of poetry, although they mention

¹Ibid., p. 406.

²Harvard Committee, General Education In A Free Society, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1946, p. 110.

sible narrative, myths, travel and adventure, as well as simple character studies in prose. These might well, then, be the subjects to be used in poetry form. The Harvard group suggests the five books of the Cambridge Readings in Literature as containing samples of great writing for provocative study from twelve years up. They suggest endless variety kept on the highest possible level.¹

The Harvard Committee also says that material and methods have been much under discussion and cast their report on the choice and ordering of text in a summary form as follows:

The limits of available time to be kept in mind. Less to be studied rather than more. Omissions to be planned, not settled by the accident of the shortage of time.

Old and new writing to be proportioned with regard to a two-way traffic between:

- (a) The new as more immediate and leading to the more remote.
- (b) The old as explaining the tradition on which more difficult modern writing depends.

The values of American and English literature and of other literature in translation to be balanced.

Texts for classroom study to be supplemented by less difficult books for outside reading. Guidance is to be provided since a chief end sought is extensive and discriminative private reading.

Proper liberty to be secured for teachers in choosing the texts they can handle best - with enough organization to prevent undesirable duplication.

Historical sequence to be followed only if illuminating to the literature read.²

¹Ibid., pp. 109, 113.

²Ibid., p. 111.

The report of the Harvard Committee decries numbers of books since the teacher might think that with so many he and the class could have a good time. It counsels looking into what "is a good time," saying while valuable class work is often, even usually, enjoyable, it does not follow that enjoyable times in class may be valuable.

As things are, however, so sad a proportion of time spent on literature is plain boredom that attachment to anything which amuses is very understandable. A safe test perhaps might be this: let the teacher ask himself, "Am I needed for this enjoyment?" If the answer is "No, they would read it as happily and as fully without me," then some other text which will not be enjoyed without the teacher's help should replace it. The choice unfortunately cannot be left to the pupil. He does not know the alternatives to be considered.¹

May Hill Arbuthnot, writing in the Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, 1949, on the subject of the teaching of poetry says:

As for the choice of poetry for different ages who shall say what is desirable? One person responds to a poem with indifference or even distaste, while to another that same poem brings a little shiver of delight that marks the impact of authentic poetry. Is it not, then, the responsibility of adults who guide the reading of children and youth to expose them to a wide variety of poetry from nonsense verse and story poems to the best of our dramatic and lyric poetry . . . ?

Young people of all ages like ballads and story poems from "The Night Before Christmas" and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" to the latest Burl Ives records. . . . Young people like the heroic too which they find in some of the ballads and Walt Whitman. . . . Somehow, Walt Whitman, with his cheerful earthiness and his concern with the individual and the cosmos, seems to prepare young readers for some of the modern poets which many oldsters are finding rather hard to take.*

¹Ibid., p. 116.

*Note difference of opinion between Arbuthnot and Pound, previously quoted, p. 53.

The personal quality of poetry young girls enjoy in the cryptic poems of Emily Dickinson and the more romantic earlier books of Edna St. Vincent Millay. On the whole, our youngsters are fairly catholic in their poetry tastes, but they seem to shy away from the continual descriptions of nature with which we used to assail them almost to the exclusion of any other type of poetry. The humorous, the dramatic, the heroic, and the personal - these remain permanent interests in any poetry which "reads aloud" well and "listens well."¹

Leland B. Jacobs, writing in the same proceedings about teaching literature comments that the early school experience of teachers of today was vastly different from that of children whom they teach.

Their school experience took them very early to what was remote, past, even adult. There was a dichotomy between their real learning out of school and their vicarious learning in school. [Modern children's books] show clearly how unrealistic the curriculum of the past was in terms of the developmental and aspiration levels of the young children who were then being "schooled."²

Jacobs contends that chance has operated largely in getting the right book to the right individual at the right time to be understood, cause a lasting impression and create delight.

The danger, then, of a tempting to generalize for whole groups of young readers on what was individually developed is quite obvious. Every individual develops within his own growth pattern and his unique cultural context. His reading must approximate his developmental level as well as his individual aspiration level. His purposes affect his reading; his backgrounds of experience affect the meanings which he can get from printed symbols. As great stories are made available for children to read, teachers and parents must be realistic about some problems of understanding that may arise.

¹Arbuthnot, May Hill, Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, University of Chicago Press, 1949, pp. 82-83.

²Jacobs, Leland B. "Great Stories and Classic Material," Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading, Supplementary Educational Monographs, University of Chicago Press, 1949, p. 85.

Since the classics, to have reached this status, have had to stand the test of time, they are already removed in various conceptual relations from today's children and youth. Modern living is, in and of itself, an intensive and extensive experience. . . . classic material, rooted as it is in the past, frequently imposes semantic obstacles that impede understanding, obscure meanings, and slow the rate of reading for pleasure and entertainment. Changes in cultural designs for living, in mores, and customs, make some of the major concepts in these stories from the past difficult to read meaningfully.¹

Changes in living bring changes in vocabulary; styles of writing have changed; stories written for adults mean the young reader must stretch up toward the intellectual concepts presented.

He must be able to reach out toward greater maturity than he actually possesses. Even if he is able to pronounce and get some meaning from most of the words, he may still be left on just the fringes of the central thought or total meaning because of the mature insight necessary to unlock the ideas as an organic whole.

A young person can read avidly and assiduously on a high level of taste, and choose almost exclusively from good books for children and youth that have been published in the past ten years. Should he periodically stop this reading that orients him to his world, past and present, and read a classic? Are any of these children's classics so priceless that every child in every community in America should, some time in their school life, read them? If so, who will constitute the board of experts for making this decision?²

Jacobs concludes that probably the best the teacher can do is to provide a lush environment of reading materials.

Luella Cole, teacher and author of numerous texts on educational subjects, states in her Psychology of Adolescence in the chapter dealing with the High School Curriculum:

¹Jacobs, Leland B. "Great Stories and Classic Material for Children And Youth," Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading. Supplementary Educational Monographs, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949, pp. 72-73.

²Ibid., p. 73, 74.

The details of curriculum development are, however, not as important as the conviction that what is taught in class really matters. The method of presentation also matters. Both method and content should be adapted to the nature of adolescent needs, adolescent abilities, and adolescent attitudes. Classwork ought to be about something that boys and girls want to hear because it is important to them, either immediately or in the future. And classes ought to be fun. When these two conditions are met, the curriculum has a chance to be a vital force in adolescent life.¹

Students and authorities agree (1) that students do not like and do not generally read poetry, and (2) that the material offered for class study follows the traditional pattern and is largely that which has been included in text books at least since 1900. Students claim that they are given material in which they are not interested and which does not fit their lives. Authorities, from the first advocacy of John Dewey, around 1900, agree that interest motivation is necessary; that poetry must be about the experiences of the student, or something comparable. Why, then, is nothing done? Can no adequate change in textual materials be made in fifty-two years?

H. Hoyt Norris, a publisher's representative, writing for the English Journal says:

Publishers, like leaders in education, have noted that there is a great discrepancy between what is recommended and what is being done in the schools. As Professor Hedrick, speaking of high-school mathematics once said, "Everybody renders lip service to the reform, but nobody does anything about it."²

¹Cole, Louella, Psychology of Adolescence, N. Y. Rinehart and Company, 1942, p. 628.

²Norris, H. Hoyt, "Textbooks and the Changing Curriculum," English Journal, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (April, 1949)

Mr. Norris, because of his occupation, is interested in changes in textbooks. He claims that teachers do not want change. In a recent convention, according to Mr. Norris, a woman teacher had made an impassioned speech on the subject of literature texts and demanded more like the one she waved aloft which proved to be one published before World War I containing all the tried and never-ending classic selections. Mr. Norris cited this woman and then referred to an article by Elizabeth Graham which said:

Every day changes come. We do not necessarily improve in changes.

So the experienced are cautious, believing caution is intelligence. We literature teachers are cautious lest in embracing the new, we lose basic values in the tried and tested content. We are cautious lest, in compromising with the pressure of time and popular appeal, we introduce trivialities and thinness; cautious lest in our experimental schools we substitute surface contacts, shortlived, for deep and abiding experiences, charged with emotional significance; cautious, lest in the adding of . . . current journalistic articles, we deprive the inexperienced unenriched boy and girl of the literature which has great knowledge of human hearts.¹

It is no wonder that Mr. Norris and the firm he represents do not want to gamble on teachers like these two. It needs repeating that interest motivation has been an established fact almost since Dewey first wrote in the early 1900s; any study of material proves the great disinterest in and dislike of the poetry students have had, and yet these two women are still clinging to the old material, while the poor tried student finds nothing true in what he reads so far as his experiences are concerned.

¹Graham, Elizabeth, "What Literature Shall We Teach Now?", English Journal, XXXIV (April, 1945), 190.

There is one statistic in education which is irrefutable and needs no further proof: these school teachers would never be picked as gamblers. With every evidence of fifty years pointing to the contrary they cling to the old.

The American Council of Education report on "What the High Schools Ought To Teach," says "Actually these recent studies (of secondary education [all of which advocated changes]) have had relatively little effect upon the schools."¹

Charlotte Peterson who analyzed the then existing studies concerning placement of literature in secondary schools, in 1931, came to substantially the same conclusions as writers of today.

The curriculum should take the best from prevailing practices, recognize the play activities of youth, retain desirable selections and eliminate the undesirable qualities in literature, and consider the reading tastes of the students. . . . The most desirable books in the opinion of both teachers and students are those which are full of action and adventure and have interesting plots and characters. The most common reason for placing a selection on the "black list" is because of over-maturity or immaturity of content.

A true picture of student's reading tastes is found in their reactions to the classics and their choices in voluntary reading. Rating of classics depend largely upon the classroom presentation of the selections. . . . The investigations of Crow and Safarjian indicate that only a small group of classics are being effective in realizing some of the general aims of literature. In addition, the classics are more adapted to the interests of girls than for boys.²

¹American Council of Education, "What the High Schools Ought to Teach," Washington, D. C., 1940, p. 6.

²Peterson, Charlotte, An Analysis of Objective Studies Relating to the Teaching of English Literature in Secondary Schools, M. A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1931, p. 176.

As early as 1922, Hubert Corvell, studied extensive reading, using only books recommended by the boys who were his students. These divided books into three types: those no boy should miss, worth-while but not of such high value, and time-killers. The investigator found that their choices were so accurate that teacher intervention would have been like "sand in a gear-box." His study indicated that full student participation in selection of literature makes a much richer experience for them.¹

In Chapter I reference was made to the Mackintosh study "A Critical Study of Children's Choices in Poetry." She surveyed the studies made from 1896-1931 and concluded that they all prove the failure of present courses of literature to provide poetry within the range of children's interests and experiences. Other conclusions reached by reason of the survey are: (1) Reasons stressed for dislike were: "too mature," "hard work," "no story," "too long," etc. Reasons for liking were: interesting action and character, adventure, humor, easy content, easy diction, portraying of supernatural, kindness, faithfulness and loyalty. (2) Material stressed and studied must deal with situations common to the age group which is doing the studying. (3) Adults select most of the poetry in texts, lists are compiled by adults, and perpetuated by adults. Studies show there are many poems, possessing literary merit and value and which are not included in adult prepared courses of study, that are more interesting to the children than the ones in the books. This conclusion

¹Corvell, Hubert V., "What Books Do Boys Recommend to Each Other?" Outlook, Vol. 131, (August 16, 1922) pp. 645-6.

was buttressed by another study which found that expert opinion differed little from inexperienced opinion and that actual experiment should determine poems for use in schools.

Macintosh concludes as a result of her own study that:

Literary merit is not necessarily an indication that a poem will be liked by children; that is, literary merit in its present accepted sense. Some objective measure should be developed for the elementary school level so that valuable new findings in the field of poetry for children will not have to be subjected to the test of time, but may at once be available for use with children.¹

EXPERIENTIAL STUDIES ON TEXTUAL MATERIAL

T. W. H. Irion writing on Comprehension Difficulties of Ninth Grade Students in the Study of Literature concluded that the literature given to high school pupils is too difficult for them. He devised and administered English tests to first year senior high school pupils and found his study emphasized the fact that appreciation cannot take place without comprehension.²

Joseph Shachtman in Elements of English Related to the Judgment Of Poetry in Grade Eleven, concluded that "as poetry is taught in the high schools today there is little guarantee that after several years of study the pupils will be able to discriminate in their choice of poetry."³

¹Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 116.

²Irion, Theophil William Henry, Comprehension Difficulties of Ninth Grade Students in the Study of Literature, N. Y. Teachers College, Columbia University, No. 189, 1925.

³Shachtman, Joseph, Elements of English Related to the Judgment Of Poetry in Grade Eleven, Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 373, Columbia University.

A study entitled Attitudes of An Age Group to Poetry, a thesis done in the University of Glasgow, investigated children's preferences for different kinds of poetry by giving them twenty-five lyrical poems divided into five groups. Differentiated according to subject matter they were (1) exciting narrative, (2) humorous, (3) description, (4) love, (5) the supernatural. Fifty children were tested by a questionnaire and a memory test of poetry previously read as to their likes and dislikes. The most important results were: (1) ninety-six per cent said they liked poetry, (2) the poems best known to these children because most read to and by them in school, were descriptive poems. A probable cause of this was divulged by an examination of school anthologies, seven of which contained an average of 63% of descriptive poems. (3) These children preferred humorous, exciting narrative, and supernatural poems almost equally but probably in that order. They had relatively little liking for descriptive poems and expressed little liking for love poems, but when taken off their guard in a memory test, they betrayed a significant interest in them. All, both boys and girls, preferred humorous; the boys liked exciting narrative most, the girls, love poems.¹

L. V. Cavins attempted to ascertain grade placement of poems by testing over 3000 children in grades 4-8 on the central thought of 66 popular poems. His conclusion was that the most used poems were taught at inappropriate age levels. If boys and girls cannot grasp the main

¹Martin, D. R. Attitudes of An Age Group to Poetry an Ed. B. thesis in Glasgow University, September, 1946.

thought of the poem, it is probable that the rest of the poem is not understood or appreciated. If the main thought is not grasped by a grade group, the poem should not be taught in that grade.¹

In an attempt to review the literature on poetry materials studied in school, Helen Welch Painter's Synthesis of Research on The Placement of Reading Material in Secondary-School Literature written in 1941 will be discussed here to find out what she discovered about the placement of selections in literature according to student's interests and comprehension. The Painter study is limited to grades 7-12 and to experiential studies written from 1895 to 1939 inclusive.

Details as they pertain to this study are as follows:

1. Necessity for scientific study of placement problems.

In the National Survey of Secondary Education a forceful statement is presented:

Obviously there is paramount need for determining through scientific investigation the relative difficulty of classics and the years in which they have their greatest appeal . . .

There is no doubt that the problem of proper selection of content in classroom reading is receiving more serious consideration by curriculum makers today than ever before.

There is imperative need for abundant materials to be read with ease and understanding.

2. Why The Need for Relative Placement of Materials?

Poems placed too early in a grade repel the pupil because of their over-maturity of sentiment and difficulty of mastery. If placed too low, there is a similar effect because it is too juvenile.

¹Cavins, L. V. Standardization of American Poetry for School Purposes, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1928.

Proper placement reduces dislike, and increases enjoyment and wider reading.

Successful teaching of reading depends much on the fitness of selections for the grades in which they are to be taught.

Fluency and a real love for reading can be developed when children have plenty to read at their own level of ability.

Poor placement results in little realization of objectives, in short-lived interest in poor taste for good literature, and ignoring of a book because of lack of experience or blocking of comprehension or because of boredom at its childishness.

There must be no inflexibility nor rigid selection. Children need extensive reading materials. In one study it was discovered that only 57 of 156 courses of study agree on any one classic to be studied by all children. "Who shall say which classic is necessary to the soul's salvation?"

Children's interest in a book gives a legitimate basis for placement. Teacher training institutions should give scientific training in children's interests and difficulties as reliable guides to standards of placement and selection.¹

3. Proportion of Modern and Classical Material in Literature.

In actual practice, most of the material studied in secondary-school literature is traditional, with the bulk of the selections written before the twentieth century (five studies). There is probably more recent material included in books of American literature than of English literature.

Modern selections are preferred by pupils (ten studies). Modern authors, themes, or settings are also preferred (three studies). In view of the statement that most of the material presented in the classroom is traditional, it would seem that the present literature curriculum is contrary to student preferences. Two procedures seem necessary. First, some consideration should be given to what children like to read, if we are to adhere to our psychological principles. This does not apply however that too much emphasis should be given over to student opinions. Extremes

¹Painter, (Mrs.) Helen Welch, Dissertation, Indiana University, June, 1941, A Synthesis on the Placement of Reading Material In Secondary-School Literature. p. 2.

along the line of letting students do what they like and read only what they like are definitely not advocated. Still they should be considered in curriculum making and revision. Flexibility of offering seems to be the solution.

If few modern selections are to be included, methods of teaching should consider children's attitudes with regard to modern and classical writing and make an even greater effort to arouse interest in things that are old. Such a procedure is necessary in view of the bulk of classical writing, some of which undeniably has quality and appeal. It would seem wise, in general, to include some modern selections in accord with pupil preferences, and at the same time to include some of the classical writings, with methods of teaching adapted to arousing children to their value and charm.¹

Mrs. Painter's thesis synthesizing studies on interest and comprehension also made the following discoveries about poetry:

There is little interest in poetry
 Interest in poetry increases with age and schooling
 Most children dislike poetry
 More girls than boys read and like poetry
 Girls like poetry
 Boys like poetry (three studies); boys dislike poetry (2 studies)
 Each sex dislikes the other's choices
 The majority of poems disliked are disliked consistently by all
 Reasons for disliking poems were dull, uninteresting, don't like any
 Memorization of poetry is most unpopular
 Children resent so-called appreciation lessons
 Children like action, plot, and humor in a poem
 Poetry which is liked has sentiment, action and romance
 Poets liked best have obvious sound effects, commonplace subject matter, and obvious humor
 The most frequently named poems are largely narrative and lyric, war-like and moral in theme, and individualistic in point of view (traditional in subject matter and type)
 Patriotic poems decrease in interest in higher grades
 Modern poetry is preferred
 Modern poems are listed as favorites
 Poems read are limited to those read in school
 Boys like poems of the sea and girls, of nature
 The only poetry read is that of Edgar A. Guest

¹Ibid., p. 75.

The poetry read is mostly that of Kiley and Field
 Factors determining reactions to poetry are sex, age, mentality,
 cultural history, and immediate environment
 In general, in Grade 7, poetry read contains satire, more
 romance and bloody encounters and fewer hero poems; in
 Grade 8, the themes are romance, tragedy and retribution;
 and in Grade 9, they are introspective - the reader seeks
 the cause of things
 A variety of interests is found in each grade in poetry
 Most pupils seem to prefer poems below their grade level
 Teachers rate poetry higher than pupils
 Poetry is interpreted with greater accuracy than the essay
 Reading comprehension differs with types. Poetry is the hardest
 Few pupils showed signs of appreciating the real value of poems
 A poem of stronger personal appeal than L'Allegro should be used
 Teaching improves appreciation of poetry

Situation in actual practice:

Most selections studied are traditional (written before the
 twentieth century)
 Textbooks in American literature contain twentieth-century
 writings in about half their content. Those in English
 Literature have less than one-sixth of their content
 devoted to present-day writing.
 Of 91 anthologies recommended by 17 courses of study published
 about 1930-34, only 10% were published after 1930, and 1922
 is an average date

Modern Selections

Modern selections are preferred by pupils
 New fiction is read in higher grades
 Modern authors, themes or settings are preferred
 Modern poetry is preferred by teachers
 Reasons for liking modern poetry are simple, familiar language,
 and interesting thought
 A course in modern literature was judged by pupils as more
 important, interesting, and enjoyable than other courses
 Books by contemporaries were in the lowest quartile of those
 read
 Recent books have no "special attraction"

Classical Selections

Many of the classics are among the popular books
 Classics are seldom read except when required
 If a book is liked, its age has no effect
 Only a few liked the classics

Not one child said he liked to read any book usually read
 in the English course
 Books most often listed as difficult were classics
 Most classics are easier for girls than for boys
 Literary classics are third choice for girls and fourth
 for boys
 In general, more girls than boys rate classics as valuable,
 especially poetry¹

Professor I. A. Richards undertook an experiment with his students at Cambridge to find out what part of the poetry they studied was understood by them, or if they understood any at all. He tested people whom he says represent "a high standard of critical discernment" but who could not make out the plain sense of poetry. Richards calls this "a most disturbing and impressive fact." He says not only could the students not interpret the symbolism of the poems but that they could not inhibit their own concepts. Instead they read into poems meanings of their own. Stock responses, mnemonic irrelevancies, their individual biases, are expressions which Professor Richards uses to describe their answers. One poem would elicit everything from praise to overwhelming condemnation. He came to the conclusion that nineteen or twenty is too early an age for students to make sympathetic contact with the subject matter of a large part of our poetry. He feels that their life experience is too limited for students to read accurately. He says that we must cease to regard a misinterpretation as a mere unlucky accident but to look for it as the normal thing, and to judge a successful interpretation as a gamble against odds.²

¹Ibid., pp. 65-66.

²Richards, I. A. Practical Criticism, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Ltd., 1929.

Sussams summarizes the findings in relation to the materials of textbooks or the poetry to be given to students to read by saying:

Reluctantly, then, on the evidence of the children themselves we are driven to the conclusion that much of what a conventionally educated schoolmaster would regard as the typical expression of English poetic genius is, for the time being, beyond the scope of his pupils.¹

He further states: (1) reactions are highly individual; attitudes are affected by age, sex, intellectual capacity, and circumstances of their environment and upbringing. (2) Sex is one of the most important and predictable factors: girls like nature lyrics and since they like poetry more than boys, texts are overloaded with nature lyrics. Boys are indifferent or hostile to such verse; they want adventure, the sea, stirring deeds, prefer dogs to cats and like jungle animals - and loathe fairy sleighbells!

Poetry that deals with experiences beyond this narrow range, or that express adult emotions, leaves the secondary modern school student bored and restless. Unfortunately for such pupils most truly great poetry falls within this category. Poets do not write for school children; they write for themselves and the like-minded. Their finest verse is born of the experiences of their manhood and womanhood; it is essentially adult. Thus with very few exceptions the flower of English poetry, the nature poetry of Wordsworth, the great odes of Keats and Shelley, the dramatic lyrics of Browning, the romances of Tennyson, and the love poetry of Swinburne, is outside the range of the secondary modern school.

¹Sussams, op. cit., p. 127.

The exceptions are all the more precious. Where a teacher finds that verse which by common consent has stood the test of time and makes an appeal to his class, that surely is the verse to be got by heart.

The adult, says Sussams, can deal with archaisms in poetry or even find it an added attraction. But the younger generation living in a world so fundamentally different from past worlds cannot possibly surmount the double hurdle of mature thought and a remote setting. He goes on to say that we cannot be tempted to swerve from this decision by the artless simplicity of the language of some lyrics, "for the simpler the language the more does it rely on its evocative power, the greater the dependence of the lyric on its reference to a basic field of human experience." He says that the familiar love lyrics can only appeal to somebody who has been in love. "Otherwise they seem commonplace and trivial, no different from the banalities of the danceband crooner. No teacher has any right to introduce such poetry to his class until he hears his pupils spontaneously singing the latest love ditty." The older girls may feel at home in such an idea but the modern school boy is embarrassed. The result is that he curses poetry because of his embarrassment.¹

Mr. Sussams advises letting the child find his own poetry, browsing in large collections so he will be spared "the sense of immodesty and humiliation that comes when people insist on talking to him about emotions the existence of which he suspects but of the nature of which he is ignorant.

¹Ibid., p. 127.

My own conviction is that a systematic study of the English heritage should be left until the middle years of adolescence. Until boys are sixteen or seventeen they have not the requisite experience of life to make contact with great poetry. . . . Boys and girls will not be fobbed off with the excuse that one day they will understand. That day, they know, will never dawn; for if poetry is branded for them as the most tedious lessons of their school days, they will escape from it forever as soon as schooldays are over. Nor does the argument that such and such a poem has been acclaimed by the greatest critics in the land carry much cogency with ordinary boys and girls. They are just not interested in our literary heritage as such; they never will be.¹

No one offers algebra to children struggling with the four rules or puts plates on map projection into a first atlas; yet something of this nature is happening in the realm of poetry.

The anthologies are veritable gallimaufries, containing anything from tongue-twisters and limericks to the songs of Shakespeare and the lyrics of Blake. . . . Offering children everything without first obtaining some indication of their preferences may upset those children who for the time being are allergic to certain kinds of poetry. The few indisputable facts that we have disclosed are that poetry has ceased to attract the average eleven-year old, that the tastes of girls and boys differ, that boys dislike poetry lessons more than girls and that fairy poems are anathema to almost all boys at the top of the junior school.²

William S. Gray says of the nature of reading materials that the content of what is read should be inherently interesting and challenging to the reader. When promoting competence in reading for specific ends, the materials should relate to purposes that appeal to pupils as significant and worth-while. The difficulty of material also merits study. He also speaks of the difference between knowing words and being able to make correct implications from ideas involved. Students can read

¹Ibid., p. 128.

²Ibid., p. 89.

ideas beyond their comprehension, but materials which they cannot at least partially experience will hardly appeal as worth-while and significant.¹

Peterson has the same viewpoint as the others quoted:

It is not enough merely to hope that the literature presented in the classroom will influence the reading habits of adult life; rather, it is necessary for the reading of the school period to make such a strong contribution to the life of the student that the habits developed will remain throughout life. [The curriculum maker] must consider the reading habits in which a high school student now engages and also the reading activities in which he is likely to practice as an adult.²

A. B. Weiser and E. J. Ashbaugh writing on the subject of what junior and senior high school students read say:

Reading should be a leisure interest for children and adults. Children's reading interests are the basis upon which adult appreciations in literature are developed. Children do read for experience; they should read for desirable experience. As they are guided to select reading materials that will give them desired and desirable experiences they will develop appreciation of life and literature. Opportunity for children to choose reading materials that they like is the starting point for adult guidance of their experiences in reading and in living through reading. One of the important guides to the selection of reading materials which will give children desirable and desired experiences at any stage of growth is found in their own interests.³

Implications For This Study:

In Chapter III are four presentations of data concerning attitudes toward poetry material provided for students to read. Viewpoints of

¹Gray, W. S. "Group versus Individual Instruction in Promoting Growth in Interpretation," Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading, Supplementary Ed. Monograph, University of Chicago, 1949, p. 26.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 14.

³Weiser, A. B. and Ashbaugh, E. J. "What Do Junior and Senior High School Pupils Read?" Educational Research Bulletin, III (1924), p. 23.

freshmen students answering the Attitudes-Inventory are summarized, attitudes of students seen in personal interview are added, and the opinions of two groups of experts, one subjectively, and the other objectively arrived at, are listed.

The following agreements are evident:

1. The material given students is largely traditional.

All four groups are agreed that the material included in texts for students is largely that which has been taught from 1900 regardless of the fact that Dewey introduced and advocated the principles of appealing to interests around that time. All writers, students, and experiential studies show that the factor of appealing to interests is very important; all the summaries show that students have not been interested in what they studied; and, yet, publishers continue to turn out textbooks with few changes because that follows most nearly the demands of teachers.

2. Classics are taught to students because they "ought" to know them, almost without regard to their ability to comprehend.

Adults have traditionally listed and included for study those so-called classics which they studied, which custom has said are important, and which "society" feels it is the duty of children to know. Such a poem, universally referred to by all groups, is Milton's "Sonnet On His Blindness" which is hopelessly beyond the experience, and therefore the interest, of nearly all young people. Not only do they hate the poem because of lack of comprehension, but Milton and all poetry eventually is included.

Too much of the poetry included, even where it attempts to cater to the interests of young people, is selected by adults without an objective study of the wishes of students. These adults select poetry about children, or with simple words, or with seeming artlessness, a great deal of which is deceptively rich in symbolism, experience, or ideas beyond the grasp of the student.

3. Relatively little modern poetry is included in books for study.

Students profess to like modern poetry; it is necessarily about a world which they understand rather than some remote world long gone by; the language and symbolism is that to which they are likely to be accustomed; archaisms and liberties taken in the name of poetic license are largely absent; the rhythm of the spoken word of today is usually found and is therefore more contributive to understanding. Still modern poetry is not provided for students to study.

Students who have read any modern poetry say they like it, but teachers say that they must become acquainted with the treasures of the past, regardless. They dwell upon the sacredness of "classics" and make little attempt to create any measuring rod or standard for good modern poetry. Teachers almost blindly accept poetry to which they are accustomed, which has been taught to them as "good," and which is found in the books. Either through lack of knowledge on their part, inaccessibility of material, curriculum requirements, or laziness they have not made access to modern poetry easy. Only a few names are known, and they stand, in the mind of the student, for only one or two poems.

It is acknowledged by all, that classics, in and of themselves, are not bad. It is not poetry but a poem which starts the student to hating it. A classic within his field of interests and experience can be a valuable study; beyond his interest and experience it is a positive menace to all his future reading habits.

4. Students require flexibility of plan and extensive reading in worlds which they themselves choose.

Even if students like Edgar A. Guest and Robert W. Service, they must not be discouraged by teachers and experts. Teachers must begin where the students are, in worlds they understand, then lead them gently and expertly to reject for themselves the less literary and the spurious. Arbitrary formulae and pronouncements of worth will never convince a student of value. He must be led to experience all poetry, however good or bad, and learn to adjudge on the basis of the experience which is real.

5. Poetry materials of every kind must be made easily available.

People who like poetry have been consistently surrounded with poetry, have grown up accepting it as part of their reading world, and usually make no great transition from another kind of literature to poetry because it has always been an accepted part of their world. The only other students who like poetry, somewhere along the way found somebody who introduced it to them in rather large quantities, led them to pursue their own interests, flicked their interests, and more or less turned them loose on their own. Prescribed reading is largely proscribed; skillful guidance is a necessity. A great majority of students feel

that it is not difficult poetry which they mind. Sufficient leads must be given them, and comprehension made possible, so that with understanding will come enjoyment.

6. For any success in teaching poetry a definite change in material is indicated.

No person, whether student or professional, presumes to say what should be included in books for study. The uppermost point agreed on is that there must be many varieties provided. Texts must not discard the values of the classics, but they cannot be taught without careful discrimination as to interests, experience, and comprehension. Some method must be agreed upon to determine the worth of modern poetry so that the best of it can be included. There must be objective studies made. These have been done for children and seemingly, of late years, resulting finds are largely included in books for children. But high school teachers stubbornly resist change. They will not admit that the same principles apply to them as to the younger children. Nothing has been done by way of change regardless of the studies already made in which all agree on the general rules for choice of poetry. Experts make known the results of research, but teachers teach the same thing they have always taught regardless of the conclusions.

7. Growth in literary appreciation and enrichment of experience through reading do not conflict with student's interests in reading.

To teach poetry to students toward the end of enjoyment does not preclude literary appreciation. But it does preclude arbitrary choice of material by the teacher, presentation of material without special

attention to method, and lack of recognition on the part of the teacher that he is facing a group of people who do not like poetry, have a mind-set against it, and do not actually know anything about it. If the teacher indulges in wishful-thinking and bases his teaching on where he thinks his students ought to be, he perpetrates and perpetuates dislike of poetry.

Chapter IV will deal with the methods of teaching poetry. There will be presented data on attitudes of the same four groups of Chapter III: (1) students answering the poetry Attitudes-Inventory, (2) students interviewed personally, (3) bibliographically expressed attitudes of experts, and (4) findings of experiential studies.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEACHING METHODS

Chapter IV deals with data on attitudes toward methods of teaching poetry. These include both recitation and testing methods.

There is presented first the attitudes of students toward poetry teaching methods as these are expressed in the poetry Attitudes-Inventory, second, attitudes of students toward poetry teaching methods as expressed in personal interviews, and, finally, attitudes of experts as these have been ascertained from both subjective and objective writing.

Method of Obtaining Information Through Attitudes-Inventory

Two hundred and eighty freshmen in Written and Spoken English in Michigan State College were used as a sample group from the 2500 enrolled freshmen. This was done by giving the Inventory to random sections of students, numbering 25-30, until that number more than represented the 200 adjudged an adequate sampling by previous tests.

Thirty methods of teaching were listed and answers requested on a double key basis. The first key was: 1. never used it, 2. seldom used it, 3. occasionally used it, 4. frequently used it, 5. used it almost conclusively. In this fashion the student indicated methods his teachers used, and the frequency of use.

Kay B was: 1. Since I have never experienced this method I have no reaction to it; 2. Feel that had this method been used it would have

helped in my understanding and liking; 3. This way had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry; 4. This way contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry; 5. This way contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry.

Attitudes Toward Teaching Methods as Expressed in the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory

Of the 30 listed ways, 265 out of 280 had never experienced "a listening room with poetry records available for the individual." The next greatest number, 248, had never experienced a method of teaching in which the study of poetry was followed by individual demonstrations of understanding and appreciation such as writing music for the poem, or illustrating it. The twenty-fifth way listed "Individual allowed to choose his field of study in poetry making it available to the class when he feels he has something worth-while; teacher consulted only when needed" had not been experienced by 232 people out of the 280. Almost that many, 230, had not experienced the method of "recording on records or wire the poetry read by each individual student." Method 34 "students present oral programs of poetry they have liked for assembly programs or for other classes" had never been experienced by 218 people. There were 204 people who said they had never experienced "formal lectures from notes on poetry previously assigned in the text from which all poetry selections were taken." "Poetry taught in Choral Reading group in which interpretive reading is done by the whole class" has never been experienced by 187, and "presentation of poetry by phonograph records" has never been experienced by 166. This constitutes approximately twenty per cent of the

thirty methods listed which shows the trend of experience in relation to methods of teaching poetry.

On the other hand, twenty per cent of the methods most experienced are as follows: 77 students indicated frequent or almost exclusive use of "class discussion on previously assigned poetry directed by teacher's questions"; 141 indicated frequent or almost exclusive use of "study of poems by types - ballads, odes, epics, etc."; 108 indicated constant use of the historical method; 113 indicated the same for "assignment of poems one day, these poems read aloud by students the following day, followed by discussion"; "individual student-reading of teacher-assigned material such as the life of the author, poems of a period, etc." and "poems studied with major emphasis on grammatical construction, rhyme scheme, etc." had 91 people indicating their frequent or almost exclusive use. Eighty-six people said that this was true of the method of compulsory memorization. Seventy-nine people said they had, frequently or almost exclusively, the method of "reading aloud by teacher, assignment for further study, and discussion and clarification on following day or days."

These two studies of least and most used methods, charts of which are shown on pages 84 and 85, are as clear an indication as it is possible to get of the sharp cleavage between the use of traditional and experimental methods. Traditional materials are almost exclusively taught in traditional fashion regardless of the results. There is scarcely any teacher who could not have phonograph records or a recording machine, or who could not equip a simple browsing room where

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS NEVER EXPERIENCING TEACHING
METHODS AS DESIGNATED BELOW

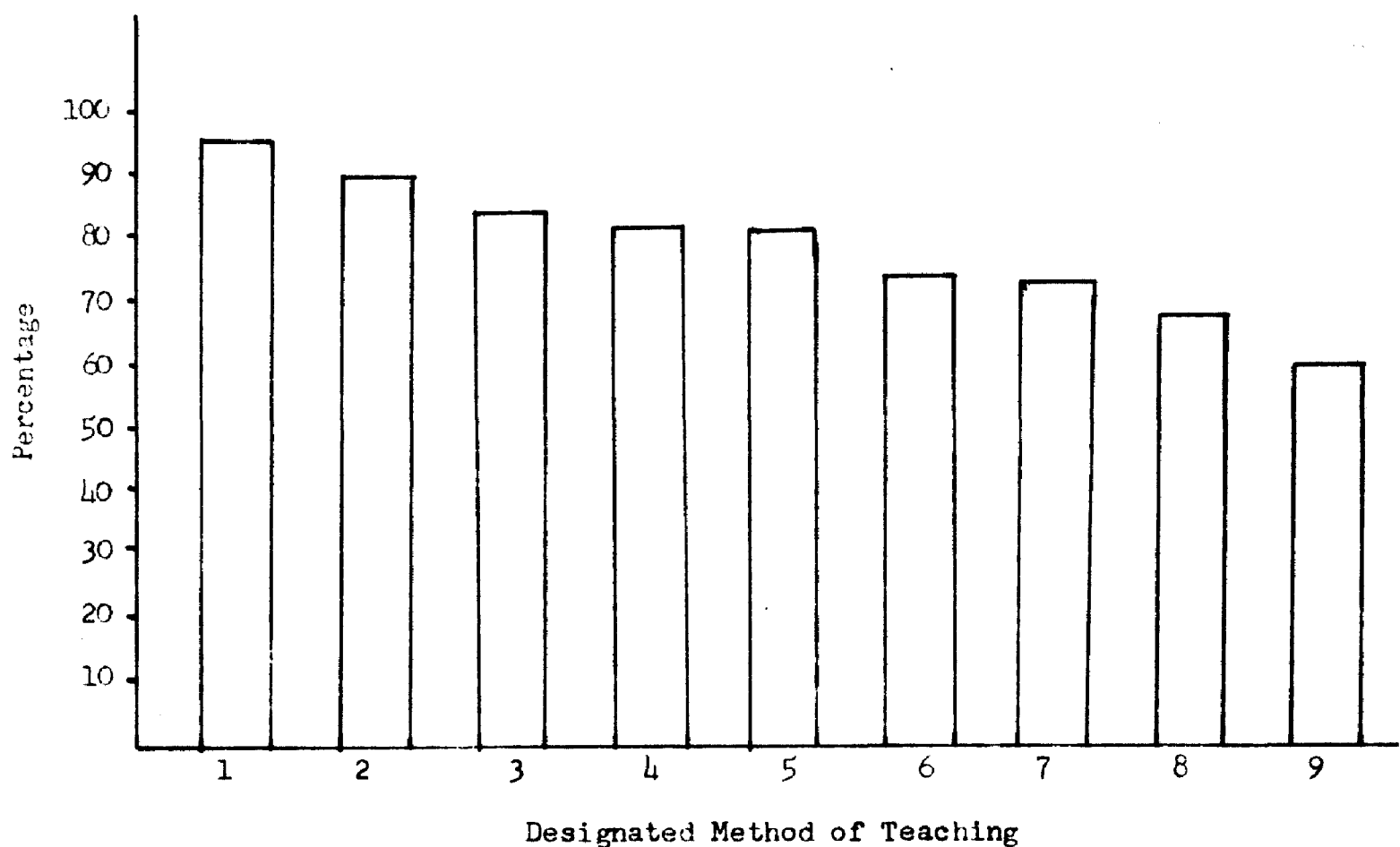


TABLE I

- Key:
1. Browsing room
 2. Creative activity
 3. Individual choice
 4. Individual reading assignments
 5. Oral presentation by students
 6. Formal lectures
 7. Poems poorly read
 8. Choral reading
 9. Phonograph records.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MOST FREQUENTLY TAUGHT BY TEACHING
METHODS DESIGNATED BELOW

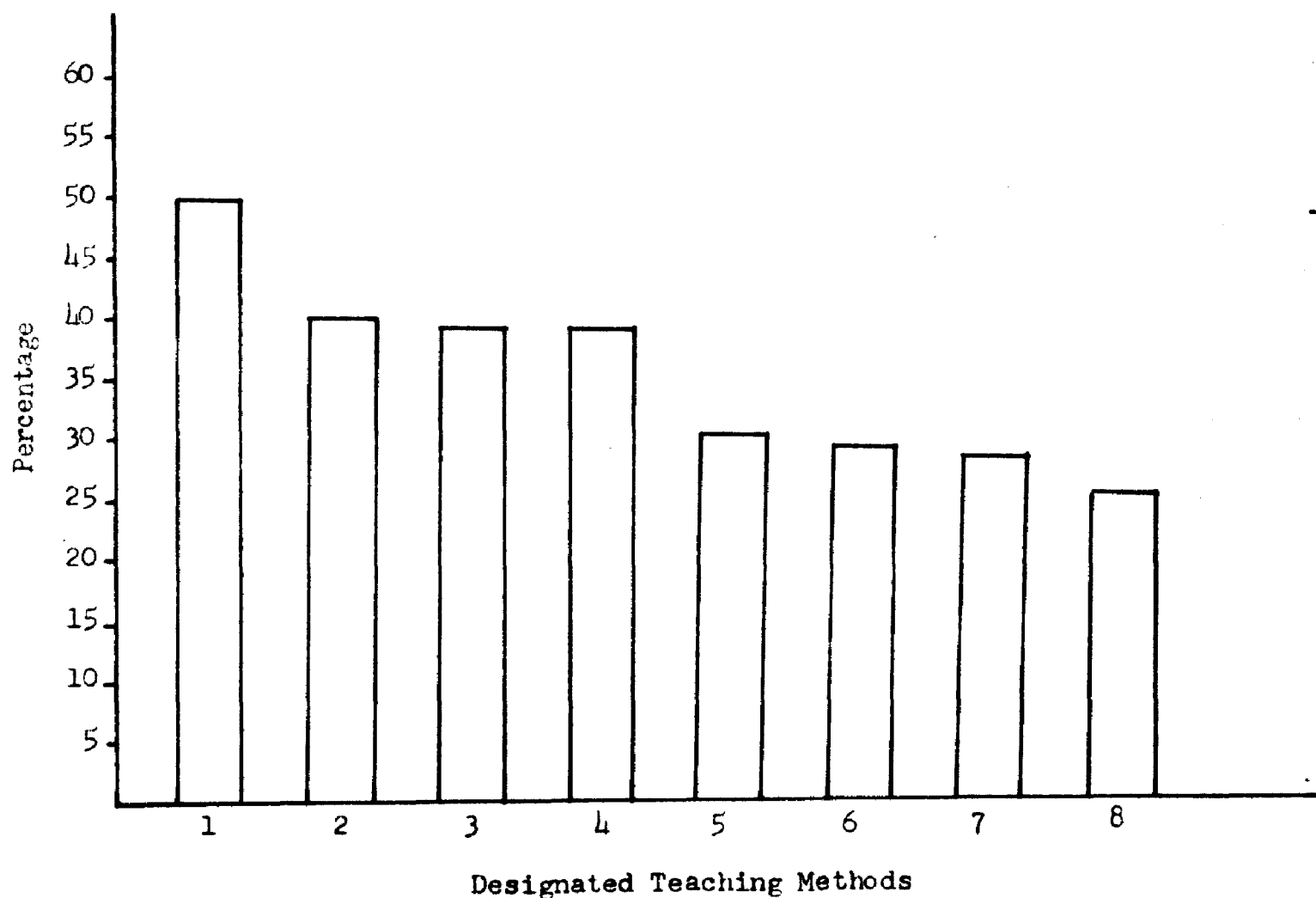


TABLE II

- Key:
1. Study of type of poem
 2. Rigid day-to-day assignments
 3. Informal lectures on text assignments
 4. Study of the history and period of the poem
 5. Rote memorization of the poem
 6. Schematic or structural study of the poem
 7. Poem read by the teacher followed by discussion
 8. Biographical study of the author.

students could easily find poetry instead of digging it out of dusty libraries, or who could not teach poetry by Choral Reading methods, instruction in which is possible at almost any good college and the popularity of which is easily provable. Certainly any teacher could motivate a class by letting it present an oral program of its favorite poetry to some group, yet this is evidently seldom done. There is a lack in the knowledge, ingenuity, or aggressiveness of the teacher which should be investigated. Lack of use of many methods points clearly to deficiencies in teacher training in colleges.

The top number of answers in relation to methods which made students like poetry are:

1. Class discussions on previously assigned poetry directed by teacher's questions - 134
2. Assignment of poems one day, these poems read aloud by students the following day, followed by discussion - 110
3. Study of poems by types - ballads, odes, epics, etc. - 109
4. Reading aloud by teacher, assignment for further study, and discussion and clarification on following day or days - 91
5. Poems studied with major emphasis on grammatical construction and rhyme and meter schemes - 82
6. Individual student-reading of teacher-assigned material such as the life of an author, poems of a period, etc. - 70
7. Presentation of poetry by phonograph records - 70

The top number of answers in relation to methods which made students dislike poetry are:

1. Compulsory memorization of poems - 125
2. Assignment of several poems and their authors for report next day without previous help or clarification by the teacher - 79
3. Poems studied with major emphasis on grammatical construction - 75
4. Interpretive reading by teacher without comment, discussion, testing and marking - 72
5. Poems from the text read aloud by an untrained teacher with a poor voice - 61

6. Recording on wire or record of poetry read by each individual student - 57

Several facts are immediately apparent here. First, since students have experienced so few methods, the choice as to like and dislike has to be made among those few. Their likes would probably be different had they experienced various methods. The authoritarian viewpoint is clearly represented. The first six choices involve specific assignments from a definite source and include teacher help and direction. Students want to be told what the poem says, how to get the meaning, and what are the specific facts which they should remember. Even the sixth method, poetry presented by phonograph records includes the idea that they will receive help in understanding what they hear.

The direct opposite is true in those methods which cause dislike. Compulsory memorization, which has a high number of votes as causing dislike and from which there is a sharp drop to the second answer, involves individual effort without aid from anybody. It clearly puts the student on his own with nobody telling him what to think or how to understand. Two, four, five and six also represent this thought. The third highest reason for dislike is the same as one reason given for liking-- poems studied with main emphasis on grammar, etc. Since personal interviews which are reported later clearly indicate that the detail of such study is highly objectionable, we have two choices of reasonings: (1) having experienced so few methods, this choice could be made by both those in whom it causes liking and those in whom it causes dislike, and (2) since there are different kinds of people, some do not mind detailed study and others do. Since so many are accustomed to study

by detail in the very small contact they have with poetry, some students accept it as part of study, others rebel.

With few exceptions, students say that poetry is difficult. Since they are little accustomed to the form in which poetry is written, their minds say it is difficult almost before starting reading. The evidence on lack of poetry readers in America shows a majority opinion to this effect concerning the poetical form of literature. Also, almost without exception, those people who like poetry because they understand it, have had good help. They have been fortunate to have teacher guides. Almost no student says he can learn it by himself. Implicit in each of these answers is the student attitude toward guidance. He must have help in poetry reading or perish as a poetry reader.

Since preliminary discussion with students, all bibliographical reading, and incidental discussion with professors, etc. point up the fact that memorization is the most hated method in teaching poetry, as is shown clearly in the answers here, a question was also included in part one. It read as follows: Choose the answer which most accurately describes your experience in regard to memorization of poetry:

1. My approach to poetry is negative because I was forced to memorize it and recite it in class without understanding it.
2. I like to memorize certain lines of poetry because they are easy to remember and give one something to think about when there is nothing else to do
3. I like to memorize such selections as Laertes advice to his son because the thought will continue to live with me all my life
4. I never like to memorize poetry for any reason
5. I like to memorize the poems I enjoy

To answer 1 there were 29 responses, 32 to answer 2, 27 to answer 3, 48 to 4, and 75 to 5.

Certain facts are implicit here: (1) Memorization in itself need not necessarily be bad. It has good points. Again, comes up the issue of the right kind of teacher help. With help in memorizing, by various methods, memorization might occur pleasantly. (2) Students forced to memorize words the meaning of which they do not understand will never like memorization, poetry, the poem being memorized, or the teacher. If the student sees a reason for memorizing, and knows what he is doing, memorization is a useful method. Otherwise, it is a sure means of making students hate poetry.

Since poetry was written to be read aloud, and because sound is so vital a part of any poem, specific questions on oral vs. silent reading were framed for answer in section 1. Question 20 of section 1 was stated: Which method of learning poetry do you think makes (or would make if you have had no experience) a poem most interesting to you? (1) Heard over the radio had 7 answers, (2) read aloud by a good reader received 139, (3) read silently to yourself, 34, (4) read aloud to yourself, 31, and (5) read aloud in a group called Choral Reading which is for poetry what a singing choir is for music, received 10 answers. Most of the students in section 2 indicated no experience with this fifth, Choral Reading, method, so it is presumed the same holds true for section 1.

Statement 55 is "Good oral reading of poetry by the teacher without comment, discussion, testing, and marking" would increase the pleasure and value of it. Agreement and disagreement are rather equally divided,

a few more being against the method. Diagnosis of the reason for the answer in light of other answers, and in light of personal interviews, discloses that those who are against this type of presentation are not against the oral reading but against that part of the statement which indicated to them that the teacher would not give them any help; they would simply listen and be called upon to be responsible for meanings or ideas which they could not get solely through hearing the poem. They never want to be responsible for meaning without leads.

Statement 67, "poetry which is lyrical is more enjoyable when read aloud" had a very large majority agreeing with the idea. Statement 71, "sounds in poetry, like music, are pleasing to the ear and add meaning as does a crescendo of notes in a symphonic movement," had an even larger number of agreements.

Evidently, students like to hear poetry well read. They do not like it monotonously read by a person with a poor voice; they do not want it read to them without further clarification; they would probably like it over the radio if it were well done but they have too little experience to know. Since only 166 of the 280 indicated no experience with listening to poetry on records, quite a large number have had some contact with that method. Those with experience are divided on the subject of the worth of this method. Since the records are not always good and because it is possible that students simply listened and received no further clarification, the prejudice against records in some cases can be easily understood. Poor reading defeats its own purpose; poor selections for reading would also be a prejudicial factor against liking to hear poetry on records.

Attitudes About Testing Methods

Thirteen methods of testing were listed and answers requested according to a double key. Key A asks about the frequency of use on this pattern: (1) the usual practice, (2) sometimes used this practice, (3) never used this practice. Key B was framed to ascertain how the use of these testing methods affected liking or disliking poetry: (1) this practice contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry, (2) this practice had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry, (3) this practice contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry, (4) feel that had this practice been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking, (5) since I never experienced this practice I have no reaction to it.

The five most frequently used methods of testing are: (1) final examination covering the term's work, answered by 195; (2) grades largely based on term's written work, answered by 83; (3) oral reading of poems or groups of poems with goals of charity, meaning, enjoyment, etc., answered by 74; (4) examination on detail of content: for instance, name of hero's horse, color of heroine's hair, material of footnotes, answered by 51; (5) oral quizzes, answered by 48. A chart giving these percentages is shown on page 92.

Charts are also given on pages 93 and 94 for the methods causing like and dislike of poetry. The largest number, 109, like oral reading of poems or group of poems with goals of clarity, meaning, enjoyment, etc. Oral quizzes were second best liked, 54 people indicating that this method caused a favorable attitude. Thirty liked the examination method

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MOST FREQUENTLY TESTED BY
THESE DESIGNATED METHODS

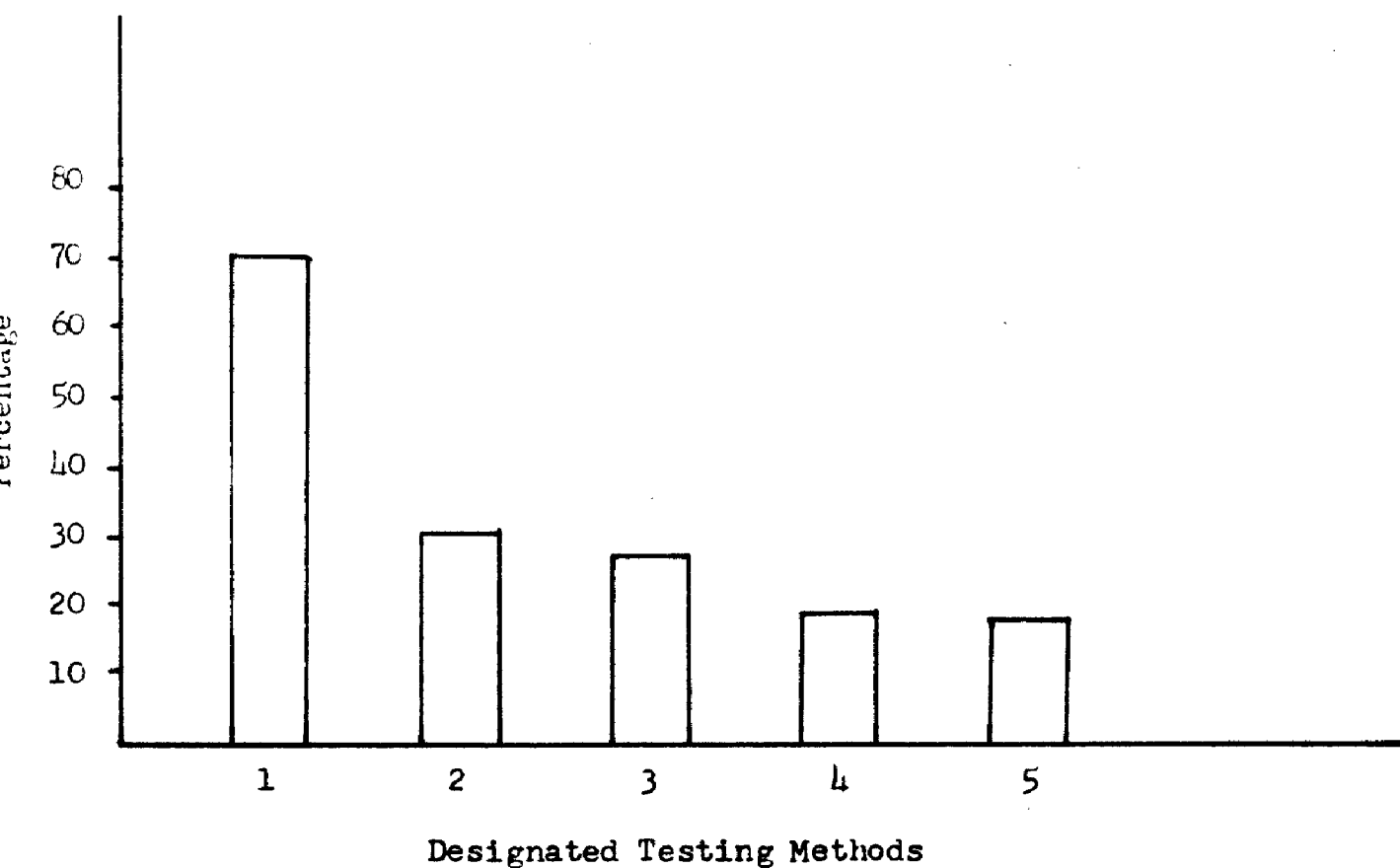


TABLE III

- Key:
1. Final test on whole term's work
 2. Grades based on assigned written work
 3. Final was oral reading
 4. Examined on detailed content of poem
 5. Grades based on oral quizzes

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE LIKING FOR POETRY WAS INCREASED
BY THE DESIGNATED TESTING METHODS

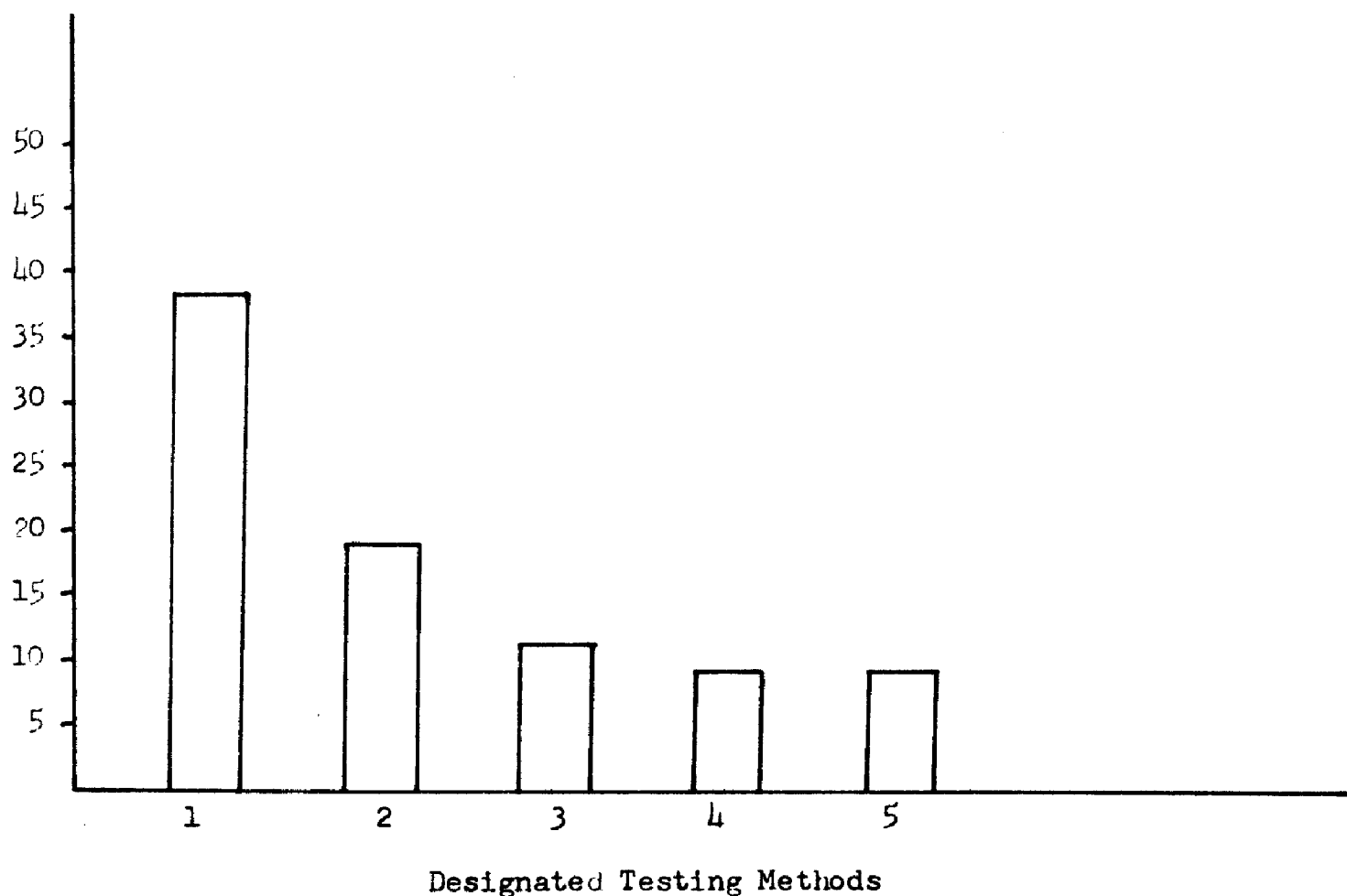


TABLE IV

- Key:
1. Grades based on oral reading final
 2. Grades based on oral quizzes
 3. Students allowed to choose own examination
 4. Examination on detailed content of poems
 5. Final examination on entire term's work

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE DISLIKE FOR POETRY WAS INCREASED
BY THE DESIGNATED METHODS OF TESTING

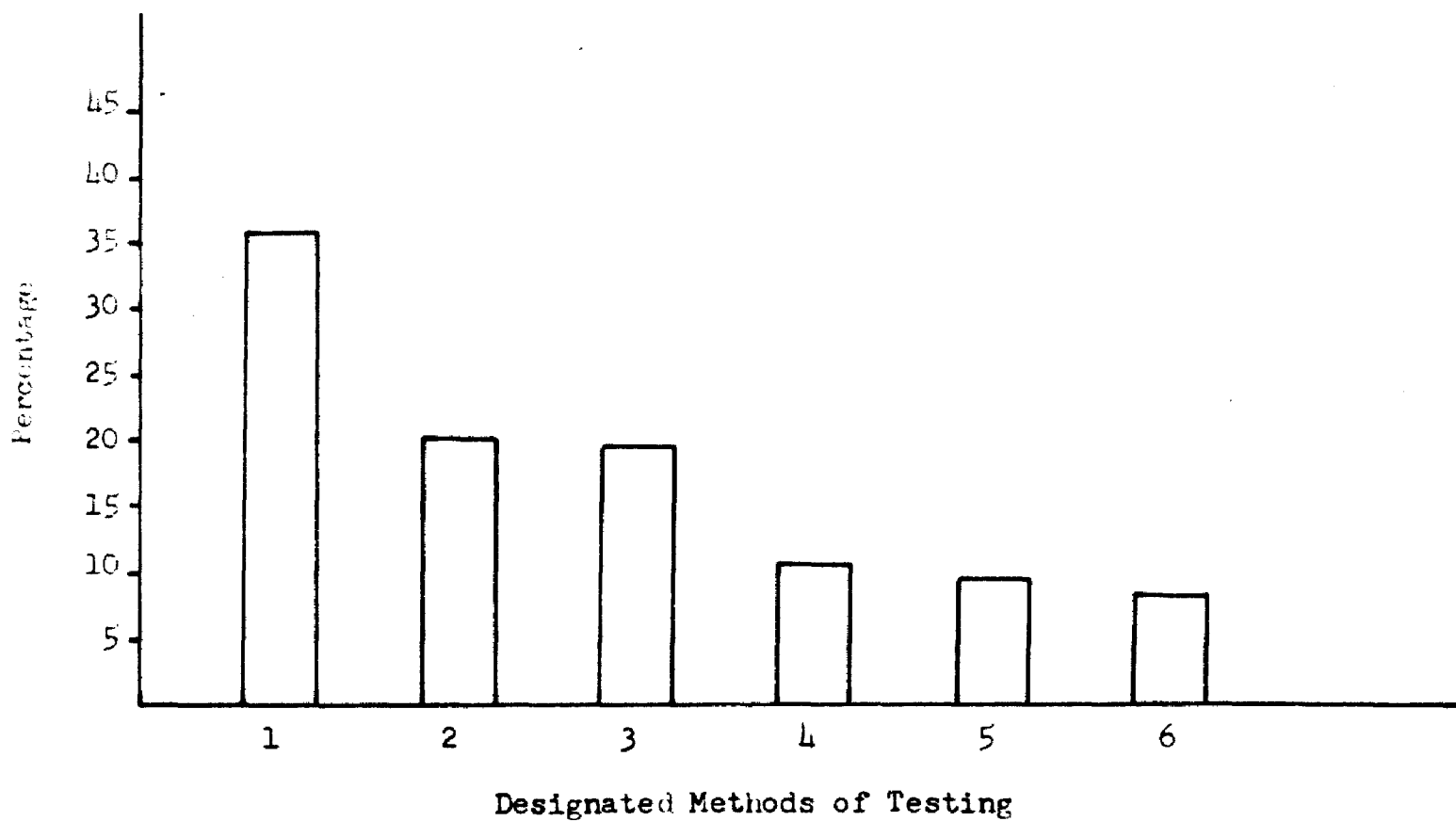


TABLE V

Key: 1. Oral reading without comment
2. Final examination on whole term's work
3. Grades given on written work
4. Oral quizzes
5. Students grade each other
6. Essay type tests scored by the students

chosen by students who write their own questions; 25 indicated liking for examination of detail, and 25 like a final examination on the term's work.

Dislike for poetry was increased for 100 by use of "no examinations or quizzes on the basis that poetry is meant only to be enjoyed; for 56 because of final examinations on term's work; for 53 because grades were largely based on term's written work; for 32 because of oral quizzes; for 24 because students graded each other; for 23 because of essay tests scored by students.

The first striking fact in this summary of answers is the evidence of very few methods of testing in use. The fifth answer, no reaction because of no experience with the method of testing, varied from 23 to 184. One hundred and eighty-four had never had a personal interview on poetry; 165 had never had a course in poetry studied only for enjoyment with no examinations; 161 had never taken an essay test scored by another student; 148 had never been allowed to choose their own kind of examination and write their own questions; 134 had never had an open book examination, and 132 had never been allowed or requested to grade themselves.

While the use of these methods listed in the questionnaire may not be important, as such, certain trends in poor teaching are very evident. This list of thirteen covers most of the possible testing methods; it includes most of the traditional as well as the experimental methods. The data shows that few teachers are using anything except traditional methods; fewer still are using even varied traditional methods.

Teachers with so little imagination and ingenuity can hardly be expected to turn out students with enough imagination to like poetry. Teachers who are bound to realize the apathy toward or dislike of poetry either find it boring or uninteresting enough to adopt a "don't-care" attitude in their teaching, or are so untrained and inexperienced themselves that they merely seize upon the method used on them, or the one most used, and let the rest go untried. On the one subject requiring the most imagination, they seem to use the least in methods.

The answers here also show that students are so well-drilled in the authoritarian method that they answer, to the number of 100, that studying poetry for enjoyment without examination, makes them dislike poetry more. On the surface it sounds impossible that such an answer could be made. In the light of personal interview comments, the answer seems to be explained by the fact that the student thinks he will have to be held responsible for the knowledge in the poetry; he will have to answer questions some way at some time; he is not willing to be held responsible unless somebody explains to him or gives him verbatim what he is supposed to think about the poem. Also, he is so accustomed to being forced to study in order to answer questions that he doubts his own ability to force himself to make any adequate preparation unless a day of reckoning is coming. Most students seem to be unable to comprehend the fact that they could get interested enough or understand poetry sufficiently to be willing to study it without coercion. It is a tragic comment that the student seems to believe that value lies only in facts to be handed back verbatim to a teacher.

Attitudes of Students Personally Interviewed
Concerning Teaching Methods

Eighteen Students Answering the Attitudes Inventory

Of the nine people who like poetry, the following was discovered in regard to their attitudes toward methods of teaching:

Student number 1 had poetry read to her constantly, first by her parents, then by two teachers whom she remembers as good readers. One teacher offended by her looks and dress but was forgiven because of her reading. This teacher's method was reading aloud followed by a discussion. This discussion should follow the reading, not ruin it by being indulged in right in the middle of the idea and the beauty. The student feels that difficulties should be cleared. Another teacher using the detailed method ruined poetry for the student by analyzing, memorization, too much discussion and too little emphasis on the beauty of the whole poem.

The second student has only one remembrance of the grades when a teacher read and acted out the poems requiring students to memorize and act the same poems for the following week. The students hated this. The high school teacher read aloud mostly, following with explanations, and since it sounded "nice when he read it" even the boys enjoyed poetry. This student also likes to hear it over the radio.

The third student remembers a pleasurable experience when she engaged in a "project" about "Snowbound" which consisted of a booklet made by herself, with history of author, pictures, drawings, etc. It was a creative activity in which the urges engendered by the poem were worthily

expended. One of the high school teachers who taught her throughout the student's entire high school life, had an unpleasant personality but because she was a good reader and followed the reading by discussion made poetry good for this student. She had little memorization and thinks this helped. Listening is difficult for her so she wants explanation added.

The next student remembers nothing in high school except memorization which he did not like. He learned almost nothing about poetry; one fine man teacher didn't like it and therefore taught none except Julius Caesar which was done for regent's examinations. A post-graduate high school course in which he had to "dig in" to get meaning challenged him. Biographies entranced him; he feels human interest studies about authors should be made. He likes to hear good oral reading and admires Charles Laughton on TV; feels that he himself would never be a good oral reader, but that method followed by discussion is best.

The next student likes poetry with vague reasons since he has had so little. But he became interested through the biography of a poet so that method evidently is good with him. The biography was written in novel form. He likes difficult poems so he has something to get his teeth into; he likes a survey of poems which gives a wide range and adequate choice. In this fashion, comparison can be made and "you learn even by the bad ones." He has no patience with metrics and close analysis saying you don't start driving the car by taking apart the carburetor. He, too, insists that students must have help in classes contending that the student cannot make a report on the analysis of a poem he has never learned to read.

The next man likes poems for the rhythm and is interested in study of that factor; he is interested in memorizing only "famous" poems; he likes the "new" in poetry he has not heard and likes for the new to be read to him although he prefers to read the familiar poetry to himself. A teacher read to him, likening poetry to music and causing students to learn enough metrics to begin writing for themselves. Thus the music of poetry got through to this student who still likes it for that.

The next student had two good teachers both of whom assigned a poem, read it orally the next day a few lines at a time, and stopped frequently to explain. Time was divided between oral reading and explanation which seems a good method to the student. Biography is important to him - he saw a picture about Joyce Kilmer and became very interested. This student likes to memorize.

The next student still likes only certain kinds of poetry - humorous and light verse. He prefers to explore on his own and thinks the best assignment is student study first, teacher discussion the next day, and personal help whenever needed. His teachers taught poetry for enjoyment which this student approves as a goal.

The final student in this group gives all credit to a teacher who was utterly feminine but firm; she gave them a wide choice for reading, never imposed her own ideas, and became so close to the students that they liked poetry partly through their complete respect for her ability. Student opinion was important to her but she required thorough work on their part.

Attitudes of Nine People who Dislike Poetry

The first student cannot understand the compressed meaning of poetry. She hates compulsory memorization; she hates the teacher who punished her by locking her in a room because she didn't get her lesson; she hates a teacher who monotonously read "Beowulf" hour after hour; she hates the teacher who made her analyze every word and comma in the poem; she didn't like it that she had to find a deep thought and wasn't given time. She likes only Macbeth and Hamlet which are "stories."

The next student remembers only "The Bells" and "The Raven" neither of which were enjoyable, and the latter understandable only in parts. She wants only poetry easy to interpret or feels that the teacher must help with the meaning. The teachers who read aloud did it in such a fashion that it sounded unreal. She found no method which was good; didn't even enjoy recordings probably because lack of facial expression, etc. took away from the interpretation.

The next man has no understanding or liking of poetry, remembering only three poems because they were stories. He feels that if the meaning were first written in prose it would be understood.

The next student remembers only one method: that of reading aloud by teacher and student-answering of printed questions at the end of each poem. He couldn't make sense of any of it and felt the teacher should have explained. He was forced to memorize that which didn't make sense to him. Poetry has no value to him.

The next student can remember only one teacher whom he admired greatly and whose method he judged to be good although he confesses it

did not work on him. The teacher read aloud, and he thought it good. He believes the student must later do some silent reading if he learns it. Memory work he disapproved of at the time but now approves. He believes written work clarifies the thinking of the student. He believes in liberal student-choice.

The next student generally does not like to read and poetry least of all. He has heard some reading aloud. The one teacher who made an impression assigned a poem one day, read it to them in class the next, "kinda went over it and asked questions." He took the memory work as just a part of an unpleasant job, to be got over with and forgot.

The next student thoroughly dislikes poetry, a lot of which is due to memorization. He said he could understand the poetry but saw no reason for being compelled to memorize it. One older woman teacher, seemingly the only one he could remember, forced both poetry and meaning on him; he was not allowed any choice.

The next young man can remember no method, either good or bad. The teachers were boring and didn't make poetry "interesting". An assignment would be made and next day the teacher would go over it in some fashion he could not remember, but no amount of study got any meaning for him.

The final young man had good teachers in a large city high school; they read parts of poems aloud, asked questions, played phonograph records, and tried all methods to no avail.

Attitudes of a Class Which Likes Poetry

The students who like poetry have, on the whole, always had poetry read to them, have had teachers who read well, and who read often. Some

of them heard phonograph records as well; all of them like biography for its human interest effect; most of them like to read aloud themselves, enjoying the fact that they read well. Courses emphasizing analysis and technicalities were boring. They especially liked the teachers who had a broad background, led them to wide exploration through guided choice, and not only permitted but encouraged student discussion and opinion. Memorizing was usually of lines chosen by the student as being valuable and enjoyable. They like help but not too great analysis nor too much tearing apart of lines so that little is left to individual imagination. Often these students make their own anthologies because certain poems are very important to them and become increasingly so as they learn to be analytically critical.

Attitudes of A Class In Interpretive Reading

These are students who, on the whole, compare to the freshmen group answering the Attitudes-Inventory. They are a little older but have had little study of poetry in college; their experience in grades and high schools is about the same.

Student 1 had no poetry until high school where phonograph records started her interest; otherwise there was a set method with assignment of textual material one day and question and answer the next. Student 2 also has no recollection of poetry until high school where the methods of a good teacher gave him permanent interest in poetry. Many methods were used including full explanation, starting with light verse and building on that enjoyment and reading aloud in an interesting and soft

voice which was appealing. The student has learned to read aloud and finds it very enjoyable.

Student 3 has learned for himself any poetry he has read. He blames on poor material and methods the fact that he can remember nothing he studied in school. Student 4 always had poetry around; the teacher used varied methods (he remembers only a high school instructor), acting out parts of the story, playing phonograph records, making full explanations. However, there was no choice of poetry which he feels is detrimental. Student 5 always had poetry and read anything he wanted to which gave him interest. A junior high school teacher dissected poetry, forgot beauty, and knew nothing about teaching. Memorization made him detest the poems so learned. Student 6 can remember only "Ancient Mariner" in all of schooling; feels no poetry is sufficiently explained; has come to like poetry since entering college because of oral reading of it. Teachers take too much for granted about understanding and interests of students.

Student 7 has pleasant memories of animated poetry read to her in grades; enactment of the story; infection of interest from the teacher. In high school she remembers wide choice; a teacher who was a good reader; methods of oral reading and Choral Reading. Student 8 remembers being read to in childhood continuously; in grade school he re-read for himself, incited to interest by vivid methods of teaching such as acting out stories. In high school, English Literature was lost because of disinterest on part of the teachers; American Literature made a unit with other things so that the living apparent in it made it enjoyable; there was infection of enjoyment from teachers. Student 9 remembers his mother reading poetry

to him; hating memorizing in grade school; disliking teacher talking "about" poetry in high school; learning to like poetry in speech class where teacher and student read orally. Student 11 memorized a great deal but does not mind this method, rather liking it when she likes the poem; likes wide selection she had in high school, remembering vividly a large number of authors and particular selections she memorized. Student 12 had parents who read to her; remembers only 6th grade when teacher read to pupils; made a "project" of "Evangeline"; used restricted text in high school but teacher read and explained well.

Student 13 had no poetry at home; in grades, student and teacher read together, with explanations; in junior high school, teacher chose poems, forced memorization, and did not explain, which was very bad to student; no poetry in high school; memorized it and hated it in college. Student 14 was surrounded by poetry at home; in grade school had memory work; junior high did not stress; in high school teacher read; became interested in poetry by reading poems in Saturday Evening Post because that is poetry he understands. Does not like to read in front of a class. Student 15 had poetry frequently read to her at home; had her own set of books; can remember little in grade school; memorized "The Highwayman" in junior high but didn't mind because it was "fun"; in high school allowed some choice and did not mind memory work because they learned what they enjoyed. Student 16 had little poetry either at home or in school until junior high school where all memorized and recited the same thing, the same way; poems copied from board and memorized without help or explanation. In high school selections were made entirely by teacher who did give help and

explanations, but analytical method left them far from any understanding and therefore bored accordingly.

Student 17 remembers little poetry until seventh grade where reading aloud with no discussion made her dislike it; stressed meter, rhyme, etc. while student missed meaning completely. In high school the approach was better because of an interested teacher who did the best he could in using a prescribed text and made explanations so that this girl found knowing a few poems helped her understand others on her own. Student 19 had a few "childish poems", liked Edgar A. Guest which he seems to have studied in a guidance class; in high school memorized assigned number of lines, given no choice, no explanation, no means of evaluating poetry; teacher read and forced her interpretation on student and then compelled memorization of a certain number of lines. Student 19 has unpleasant memories of compulsory memorization in grades; assignment of page number with no explanation; no choice. In high school they read all the poems in the book on which they were quizzed by the teacher, and her hatred grew as she was continually asked to explain poetry nobody ever helped her to understand. She had only one pleasant experience, of John Brown's Body read orally and made vivid as a story.

Implications For This Study:

1. On the whole, students have a memory unfavorable to methods they have experienced. A change seems to be necessary.

2. Students want a full explanation where needed.

3. Ubiquity of poetry materials is a large factor in the liking of poetry. Students who have grown up with poetry all around them are more likely to accept and like it.

4. Memorization by ordinary methods is the largest single factor in making students hate poetry.

5. Oral reading, when good, is the preferred method. With the oral reading the students want explanation when it is needed.

6. Students condemn set methods with prescribed material. They like variety, change, and a chance to choose their own poetry, and express their own opinion freely.

7. Teachers must not take too much for granted about the interests and knowledge of students. They must find out definitely where students are in their thinking and build on that, rather than doing wishful thinking and beginning where they think students should be.

8. Dissection is not helpful. It is boring, and death to love of poetry.

9. Poetry is properly taught by infection of interest.

Attitudes of Experts Toward Teaching Methods

Methods of teaching poetry have not changed with the times. They have changed far less than methods of teaching other subjects. Curricula and teachers perpetrate and perpetuate a way of teaching born with the education of the leisure class, the aristocrat, and those people eventually entering college and the professions. There has as yet been found no adequate system to provide for pervasive culture in mass education. Folk culture died and we have not developed a culture appropriate to urban society.

Democracy may be excellent as a system of government; but collective judgments, workable compromises, and shared responsibilities do not favour the arts. The Industrial Revolution and the rise of democracy killed the aristocratic culture of the eighteenth century, and so far our industrial democracy has failed to produce another culture with standards as high or as consistent. . . . scholastic concern does not necessarily result in effective action. There are certain tendencies inherent in a modern urban civilization which are definitely hostile to

the creation of appreciation of poetry, and the practice of the schools has sometimes been quicker to honour the poets of a past generation than to fulfill the emotional needs of the children of the present.¹

Some teachers have retained a vague sentimentality over the old ways; this sentimentality is augmented by aesthetic stirrings felt somewhere to the effect that that which has been beautiful will always be beautiful; some learned poetry in the old way, know no other, and are either unwilling or incapable of learning better ways. Factual materials they might cope with; inspirational education leaves them baffled.

There are teachers who conscientiously believe still in the intellectual discipline imposed by a detailed study of the classics. When the classics were a unique educational tool, and the method of pondering each syllable was used to gain the habit of close study, precision, clarity, and intensive knowledge, they were rightly valued. Classics still have a value today but not for the old detailed, analytical, grammatical, metrical discipline, and only when rightly chosen for the emotional needs of the child. Ratings of classics depend a great deal upon the classroom presentation. A great number of articles on experimental classroom procedures are written but if one believes the evidence of students, few of the suggested methods are ever utilized.

George S. Counts reports that, according to the methods of literature instruction in fifteen cities, the traditional analytical methods are used. This he decides upon the basis of the number of class periods

¹Sussams, op. cit., p. 14, 16.

given to one selection. His reaction is:

In their formulation of the purposes of English instruction, teachers state very explicitly that their great object is to develop in their pupils an interest in reading, but many of the methods they use are hardly calculated to achieve this end.¹

Peterson agrees with Counts. She says of methods:

The student's reactions to a selection, whether pleasant or unpleasant, depend largely upon the manner in which the selection is presented by the teacher. Appreciation comes only through a pleasurable experience and in literature this is especially true, for upon this first contact depends the future reading inclinations of the students.²

Intensive Vs. Extensive Reading

The old, analytical method of studying favored, of course, the intensive method of reading. Nearly all of the studies for twenty-five years have proved that extensive reading is as good if not better than intensive study of material in class, but all the evidence from students shows that teachers are still concentrating on intensive reading. Nancy Coryell endeavored to determine which method, extensive or intensive, was more effective for securing comprehension and appreciation. She discovered that (1) the extensive group made as high scores in comprehension of required material, (2) they were as well prepared for the State Regent's Examination, (3) scores showed equal appreciation, although the extensive reading group calls for wider appreciation in its objectives, (4) extensive group covered six times the amount of material, (5) extensive method is

¹Counts, G. S., The Senior High School Curriculum, Supplementary Educational Monograph, Chicago, University of Chicago, No. 29, 1926, p. 43.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 132.

practical for low (mentally) groups, as it allows for more individual guidance, (6) on the basis of stenographic reports, there was greater readiness in expression and more pupil activity in the extensive group, and (7) in general, it is believed that a deeper and more satisfying experience comes with the results of extensive reading.¹

Peterson says:

The movement of extensive or free reading is regarded by many educators as the solution to many problems in the teaching of literature. In the first place, extensive reading would eliminate the analytical methods which are so detrimental to literature. The emphasis would be placed on the wide and varied reading in order to provide rich experience for the students. Greater responsibility and versatility in individual guidance are demanded of a teacher under this plan, but the returns in realizing the aims of literature are worth the added effort.²

Ralph R. Williams studied two hundred ninth graders in paired sections by alternating methods with the same teacher. He tested extensive and intensive reading for (1) comprehension, (2) recall, (3) improvement of comprehension and word knowledge. He used classroom recitation, anonymous pupil comments, and reading records as evidence, findings:

(The extensive group) discovered more material to hold their interest and had a greater store of ideas, greater intensity of interest, greater freedom. . . . and the teaching was more in accord with the objectives of education. [The extensive method received more favorable comment from students than the traditional, and many students said they had developed habits of reading for pleasure.] Extensive reading methods are more effective in achieving the aims of instruction in literature than are intensive study methods.³

¹Coryell, Nancy, An Evaluation of Extensive and Intensive Teaching Literature. Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 275, Columbia University, 1927.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 132.

³Williams, Ralph R. "Extensive Reading Versus Intensive Study of Literature," School Review, Nov. 1929, p. 678.

Yet there are teachers who believe in intensive reading of literature. A recent text Reading Poetry, written by Fred B. Millett, director of The Honors College, Wesleyan University, says in the foreword:

The purpose of this book is to train young people in the intensive reading of literature. I have spent all my adult life teaching English, but only within the last decade have I come to the conclusion that we, as teachers, can help young students most by training them in the technique of close reading. Most of them will learn to read rapidly without our help, although every English course should furnish some guidance in the acquisition of this important skill. But unless we train students to read intensively, no one will, and their understanding and appreciation of literature will always be superficial. Emphasis on the intensive reading of literature may help to keep primary the most appropriate and meaningful approach to literature, the aesthetic, the study of a work of art as a work of art and not as a footnote to biography, social or literary history, philosophy or ethics.¹

Mark Van Doren, famous poet, professor and critic, teaches by the intensive method leading to what he considers the goal of literature study - critical analysis. His latest book contains ten great poems judged by his standards. Three of them were written by Homer, Dante and Chaucer who are the only ones he considers wholly beyond criticism. In this book he attempts to answer for these ten poems these questions: What is a given poem about? What happens in it? What exists in it? If too little of the world is in it, why is that? If all of the world is there, by what miracle has this been done? Is tragedy or comedy at work, and what is the difference between those two, and what the resemblance? Are the facts of life accounted for in the unique way that poetry accounts

¹Millett, Fred, Reading Poetry, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1950 p. ix.

for them, and is this poem something therefore that any man should read? Does its author know more, not less, than most men know?¹

The writer of this investigation asked three sections of an oral reading class to consult Van Doren's book for help in selecting a poem and getting meaning from it, in order to read the poem adequately to a class, transmitting meaning in as rich a fashion as possible. Not one student would admit he found any help; not one would say he liked any poem in the group. Replies of the students who made the best grades and generally comprehended meaning more readily were jotted down for future reference. One girl said the poems were not about a single thing in which she was interested; a man said the explanation made him more confused than ever; others said they could not find one interesting enough to try to read to the class. Literary criticism is evidently beyond a freshman or sophomore class, or it must begin with poems within their experience, which they are capable of enjoying. Literary merit is no guarantee that a poem will have value for a student.

Necessity For Variety of Methods

The Society for the Teachers of English in their book, Teaching Poetry, says that from the diversity of the nature of poetry springs the diversity of method necessary. In fact, they say poetry cannot be taught; the teacher can only create conditions in which a poem may have its fullest significance for the pupils reading it.

¹Saturday Review of Literature, January 4, 1947, advertisement of The Noble Voice, Mark Van Doren, N. Y., Henry Holt and Company, 1951, p. 6.

The poem is the method, and no two poems are treated alike, but there are ways of approach which have proved particularly stimulating, and which may be used again with profit. The methods of treating poetry must therefore be as infinite as poetry itself: words, feelings, images, rhythms, and associations all contribute to what is essentially a unit--a poem. It is sometimes tempting to develop a technique of approach which hardens by habit into something stereotyped and therefore dead: to study first the logical meaning or "story", then the meaning of difficult words, followed by the apt use of adjectives and figures of speech with a short talk on rhythm by way of conclusion. The danger of such a technique is that it does not begin with the poem but with itself; and it may easily become an escape from poetry rather than an approach to its fuller appreciation.¹

They recommend the method of concentration on the poem itself, usually choosing a well-known poem from an anthology and using with it others of a like theme less well-known and asking the students to study them in comparison. This same method is used by Marguerite Wilkinson who presents to students three poems on the subject of an old lady. One is good, one mediocre, and one bad poetry according to her judgment. But, by actual study of the three poems, teaching is more efficient than through judging the good poem by itself.²

James Harry Smith, author of a text, The Reading Of Poetry, modifies the comparison idea, using not several poems but several choices of expression for the images in the poem being studied. The original expression of the poet is one of three similar choices given with the idea that the student compares all three and learns to recognize the best.

¹Society for the Teachers of English, Teaching Poetry, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 2, 8.

²Wilkinson, Marguerite, New Voices, N. Y., The Macmillan Company, 1929, pp. 212-214.

Traditional methods of teaching poetry exclude student-evolved or approved methods. Experimental teaching welcomes any approach which seems to involve the student, his interests, and his living. Eunice Helkamp is of the opinion that enlisting student criticism of teaching methods and devices is always an exciting and valuable practice. In an eighth-grade English class the students were asked to give their frank evaluation of fourteen longer narrative poems. Their evaluation of various techniques, the worth of the poems, designation of methods which had fallen flat, and personal reactions were very helpful. A boy new to the school who had dreaded this poetry unit commented on the pleasure he got from it because of "the teacher's discussing the poems with me and emphasizing the interesting parts instead of giving assignments, testing me, and then just forgetting about it."¹

L. A. G. Strong asks, when a teacher is faced with a class of 40 or 50 blood-thirsty, ten-year old savages, what is the poor poetry teacher to do? These are the secrets he reveals as he found them out from his students--

1. Pick poems on subjects that will interest the pupils.
2. Stress sound and rhythms (Vachel Lindsay will help a great deal).
3. Don't be afraid of noise (let them say it with all the ferocity they can manage.)
4. Keep explanation and annotation to a minimum. (I have heard more than once a heartfelt cry, "Oh, sir, please, don't explain it.")
5. Never do violence to a child's feelings or sense of reticence.
6. Be sparing in expressing opinion.

¹Helkamp, Eunice, "In Junior and Senior High Schools," Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading, Supplementary Educational Monographs, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949, p. 222.

7. Put enjoyment first, second, third and fourth.¹

Ezra Pound says:

1. Stop analyzing the metre and get the feeling of poetry.
2. Sense its relationship to music.
3. Concentrate on imagery until it is sharp to you, as it was sharp to the Chinese ideographist who invented symbols for abstract ideas by combining the symbols for several concrete objects which illustrated the abstraction required.²

While students say they want to understand, and lack of comprehension seems to be the greatest single barrier to liking poetry, there seems to be some poetry which is liked in spite of not being understood. It is a parallel to the feeling of the student who insists he likes poetry but he doesn't know why. It is a necessary corollary to the study of anything as intangible as poetry.

Matteson says of approaches to teaching poetry that his suggestions are not original but are the result of trial and error and the expenditure of nervous energy. He has gleaned them from experience, fellow teachers and study in his efforts to make poetry meaningful. Since there must be many approaches because of many kinds of poetry, he discusses six teaching techniques. The first, "didactic", he uses when the poem contains a moral or great truth, but he warns the teacher against carrying that to an extreme. Students, he says, do not like these memorable capsules any better than they like sermons. Adults are likely to feel quite pleased when they have found a great truth and tuck it away for future

¹Strong, L. A. G. The Teaching of English in Schools, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. 1949.

²Pound, op. cit.

reference; youth will often resent it unless rightly presented and the moral of a poem is not alone sufficient reason for its teaching.

He discusses his historical approach to poetry which is, according to research, seemingly the most used. He says it sometimes helps for students to see poetry as a changing and devrloping art of any nation but that if this approach is overemphasized, poetry becomes secondary to history and students dislike poetry. One way of getting boys to see that poetry is not a weird form of activity appealing to grownups and eccentrics is to read and study some poetry "just for fun." He again warns that not all poetry can stand this method. He has found paraphrasing fairly successful in senior but not in junior high school. He warns against it as a dangerous technique saying he uses it not more than twice a year. The sociological approach to poems such as "The Man With The Hoe," "Anne Rutledge," etc. helps pupils increase their knowledge of people because they get such exact pictures. He warns again against overemphasis even though students are sometimes led to understand current life problems better. The final method is the analytical one where pupils are led to study the ideas set forth by the poets. This includes a study of rhyme, metre, imagery, etc. The aim is to let the student see how the mechanics contribute something to the total impression. However, pupils quickly tire of this method. They will accuse the teacher of tearing poetry to pieces and spoiling their pictures.

The important thing is to vary the approach. Don't try to build a house with one tool! If you expect to hold the interest of your pupils and if you hope to instill a love of poetry, you must chose your approach according to the characteristics of the poem,

your own objectives, and the knowledge and ability of the pupils in your class.¹ (*italics mine*)

Memorizing

Memorizing is easily the most unpopular and fruitless method which teachers use. It is not that it is bad in itself, nor that there cannot be good result from it. The trouble lies in the method of memorizing, and the selection of lines. Students hate rote memorizing of lines they neither like nor understand, and no possible good can result. If pleasant methods of memorizing are found, and there are several, and if students memorize what they like or what they find significant, great good may occur. But until teachers are willing to observe these two inescapable rules, they are causing students to hate poetry because of compulsory memorization.

In Teaching Poetry (published by the Society for Teachers of English) we are told that "repetition", which is the English term for memorizing, is one of the most potent causes of that dislike of poetry in school which makes so much good work by teachers of so little effect. By a quaint turn of phrase, the secondary name for this exercise is "learning by heart," often a most inaccurate description of a process by which, against their hearts' desire, pupils cram into themselves a collection of lines for no reason other than the need to reproduce them on the following day. They say that unless the student has a reason to remember the lines, they are merely one further addition to the burden of accumulated fact which robs education of its significance.

¹Matteson, R. Albert, "Poetry in Junior and Senior High Schools" Annual Proceedings, University of Chicago Press, 1949.

If memory work seems desirable the drudgery may be taken from it. The teacher can show the student how to avoid line-by-line repetition, and how to get at the whole. Part of the learning may be done in class where pupils can enjoy the chorus and the chanting.¹ (See Choral Reading)

J. F. Hosis discovered that the analytical treatment of literary selections persists to a large extent. He found in one experiment that testing and memorization of facts occupy approximately one-fourth of the time.

There seems to be a considerable discrepancy between educational theory with regard to the study and enjoyment of literature and the methods actually employed by teachers in their classrooms.²

Several writers have warned against ineffective methods of learning, particularly in memorizing.

The special importance of a learning technique is most evident when we discover how inefficient students are in learning. Practically all investigators attest to the inefficiency of student learning. Even college-trained adults are not exceptions. What may be called a case of "poor memory" may be nothing more than poor methods of study.³

Kate Gordon attests to the importance of knowing the meaning of that which is memorized:

We shall never have a complete account of memorizing so long as we leave out of our experiments the very factor, meaning, which is most effective in bringing about memorizing. We need to know more about the memorizing of particular instances of meaningful material.⁴

¹Society for Teachers of English, op. cit., p. 15.

²Hosis, J. F. Empirical Studies in School Reading, Teachers College Contribution, Vol. 114, N. Y. Columbia University, 1921, p. 55.

³Sailer, H. Carl, A Comparative Study of Various Methods of Memorizing Poetry, Ed. D. Dissertation, School of Education, N. Y. University, 1936, p. 4.

⁴Gordon, Kate, "Some Records of the Memorizing of Sonnets," Journal of Experimental Psychology, Vol. XVI, Oct., 1933, p. 10.

Gordon quotes from a study by Meumann to the effect that the increased demands of the present age require children to master a much greater body of knowledge than was deemed necessary in former generations. Meumann believes that improvements in methods of learning is one way of avoiding overburdening the pupil. If he must memorize, the instructor must be acquainted with all the known facts, foresee his students' difficulties and lessen them.¹

Sussams quotes from two of his students who replied, when they were asked to give criticism of poetry they had studied and the methods used, by saying:

1. Poetry lessons do not appeal to me, and I shudder at the thought of having to be present when a poetry lesson is to be taken. I do the latter because I think of verses and verses to be learned by heart and then recited out aloud in front of any army of critics, my classmates.

2. As regards the poetry lessons, in my opinion they are awful. I dislike especially learning poetry by heart and then saying it aloud. Even learning a poem I like bores me. I think if teachers ceased making their pupils learn poetry by heart it would become more popular among the boys. Instead I suggest that teachers should give a poetry lesson, and with the aid of books explain the poem and then answer and ask questions upon it. I am confident if this method was adopted the school poetry book would not be such an instrument of torture as it is now.²

Oral Vs. Silent Reading

Marguerite Wilkinson, a poet, expresses what seems to be the majority opinion that "all good poetry is written to be read aloud."³

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Sussams, op. cit., p. 60.

³Wilkinson, Marguerite, op. cit., p. 11.

Yvor Winters writing on "The audible reading of poetry," says:

The rhythm of the poem permeates the entire poem as pervasively as blood permeates the human body; remove it and you have a corpse. It is for this reason that the audible reading of poetry is quite as important as the philosophical understanding of poetry; without audible reading the adequate audible reading, you simply do not have poetry.¹

Stephen Vincent Benét represents modern poets in this statement:

For poetry is a rhythmic thing. In books, all writing, it consists of words printed on a page. But these words are meant to be heard with the ear as well as read by the eye. Unless you can find and listen to the rhythm of the words of a poem, you are missing half the poem.

[To learn to appreciate poetry] we must train our ear for it, as we train our ear in music to appreciate counterpart and harmony. We can do so best by remembering first of all that poetry is meant to be heard as well as read.²

Paul Farmer agrees with all the others:

Despite widespread practice to the contrary, writers on the technique of reading poetry seem to agree completely on one point; namely, poetry should be read aloud. Indeed, long before books were printed, poetry was widely enjoyed; and its composers as well as its reading performers were sure to find welcome in the palace or in the market place. People loved to hear them and eagerly learned the new songs and stories. What strong contrast exists today! Silently poring over the book, the high school or college reader of poetry is frequently found searching for figures of speech, identifying metres, or frantically memorizing the thirty or forty lines assigned for tomorrow's recitation. Reading poetry in silence is almost identical with a musical artist's appearing in concert and passing to the audience printed copies of the compositions instead of playing them. The two-fold duty of words in poetry - that is, the achievement of harmony in sense and sound, together with the numerous contrivances which the poet employs

¹Winters, Yvor, "The audible reading of poetry," Hudson Review. Quoted in Quarterly Journal of Speech, April, 1952, p. 9 (adv.)

²Benét, S. V. The Magic of Poetry and the Poet's Art. Chicago, Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, F. E. Compton & Co., 1936, p. 27.

to achieve this harmony - presupposes the reading of poetry aloud.¹

Earl Daniels says:

No one ought to think of feeding a six-months-old baby with corned beef and cabbage; no one who cares for poetry ought to confuse beginners with what are the arcana, the mysteries of the craft, proper only to one who has learned already to read, and read well. The general reader doesn't need to know the name of a single verse foot, need never scan, in the world's accepted sense, a line of verse, in order to enjoy poetry as it was meant to be enjoyed.²

Coffin agrees entirely with these views:

Poetry began and poetry existed for thousands of years before there was the written word. It was kept alive by lips - thousands of warm lips passing it on warm to later ones. It began as a public function, a public exercise of man's nobility. It was a man's voice and the passion and calm on a man's face before it was books, before it was moods and musings or intellectual gymnastics.³

Richard Church expresses it even more strongly:

It is really a most extraordinary, a most abnormal state of affairs that the matter I am discussing in this article should need to be discussed at all. To me, it is just as trite as if I were to go to a body of orchestral players to point out to them the necessity of music being performed rather than merely read from the printed score. . . . What does the poet wish for if not to make a music of consonant and vowel, a patterns of verbal shapes with length, depth and thickness. . . .⁴

Hirman Corson, the great teacher, lecturer and reader who wrote

The Voice and Spiritual Education said:

¹Farmer, Paul, "On The Reading of Poetry," English Journal, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, March, 1943, p. 149.

²Daniels, Earl, The Art of Reading Poetry, N. Y. Farrar & Rinehart, 1941, p. 31.

³Coffin, Robert P. Tristram, op. cit. p. 87.

⁴Church, Richard, "Spoken Poetry," in Speech of Our Times, Sansom, Clive, London, Hinrichsen Ed., 1948, p. 135.

A poem is not truly a poem until it is voiced by an accomplished reader who has adequately assimilated it - in whom it has to some extent been born again according to his individual spiritual constitution and experience. It must give life to the letter.¹

Helen Ogg's dissertation, A Critique of the Oral and Silent Reading of Poetic Literature sums up attitudes in this way:

. . . We believe it possible to say that for full aesthetic enjoyment and appreciation, poems should be read aloud rather than silently. Since our public schools are introducing more and more of aesthetic education to supplement the assimilation of factual material and to broaden the students general outlook on life, we believe that the oral reading of poetry should increasingly supplant, or at least supplement, the silent reading, which has of late been the main type of reading in our schools.²

Ogg further states:

If, in spite of these conclusions, the fact remains that many excellent appreciators of poetry testify to their preference for silent reading, the explanation of the fact must be looked for in their rather extraordinary powers of auditory imagery and in the accidents of education. It is believed that if the same emphasis were placed upon oral reading of poetry that is now placed upon appreciation of music thought that has been called creative listening, by far the greater number of people would prefer oral to silent reading of poetry, and poetic appreciation would be much more wide-spread than it is at present.³

Choral Reading

Choral Reading is group interpretive reading. It is for words what a singing choir is for music. This method is as old as the Greek

¹Corson, Hiram, The Voice and Spiritual Education, N. Y. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1914, p. 111.

²Ogg, Helen Loree, A Critique of The Oral and Silent Reading of Poetic Literature, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, June, 1938, p. 177.

³Ibid., p. 139.

chorus, was revived successfully in 1922 by Marjorie Gullan, in England, where there were many verse-speaking choirs, and spread rapidly in many countries.

Its use in America has been sporadic seemingly due to the fact that it is either very successful or very unsuccessful according to the skill and knowledge of the teacher using it. Teachers in the grades have used it very widely at times but lately there have been few evidences of its employment as a method of teaching.

The scarce employment of such a method is evidence of lack of ability, knowledge and skill on the part of the teacher since all articles, books, etc. written on the subject point to highly successful attainment of goals of understanding and liking poetry through use of Choral Reading or Verse-Speaking.

There are many values: (1) it is a highly democratic form of teaching since the group must necessarily work together, (2) it is an effective method of engendering appreciation since the use of many voices gives requisite variety, (3) the consultations between teacher and pupils cause more vivid comprehension of essential meaning, (4) it relieves the individual of any possible embarrassment since he is part of a group, and (5) it is a painless and efficient method of memorizing.

Sussams discusses the values of Choral Reading thus:

It is now much more common for recitation to be a creative experience for the normal child. Sunk in the anonymity of the semi-chorus or chorus he can let his feelings go, sensing the disciplined utterance of the group as a whole yet contributing his individual voice to the total orchestral effect. Further, this group recitation - so different from the mass-mouthing of verse which results in little more than an unmusical sing-song - is a powerful aid to appreciation.

A sympathetic recognition of one another's enjoyment by the individuals making up a group enhances the quality of the experience for each individual, even though no comment is offered afterwards and no request for a special effort is made before hand. Indeed the experience is probably all the more profound for being accepted without the fuss of teachery flourishes and fanfares. Song and dance are group activities; ballad poetry through its use of simple refrains recognizes the importance of identifying the tale and the teller with the group. Choral speaking performs a similar function for the young primitives of today. It is a disciplined expression of the emotions through group activity; well done it can be aesthetically as well as emotionally satisfying.¹

Mr. Matteson says choral reading is more than a technique:

I find it one of the most effective ways of making poetry live. The more senses we lend to any experience we have, the more vivid and rich it becomes. This is true with poetry. When we lend it eye, ear, and voice, we make it yield a fullness of reality that is rare and unforgettable. I have had pupils say, "It gives me a feeling of happiness inside that I have never had before." Choral speaking gives the retiring child who would never dare speak alone an opportunity for participation in a group, and it provides an opportunity for self-expression without self consciousness.²

Not all poems lend themselves to the choral reading method. It is not a solution for all teaching problems. But it is one very effective method, it can be learned by any teacher who has ability to teach poetry, and it should be employed whenever suitable. The neglect of any suitable method is a reflection on the imagination and ingenuity of the teacher.

¹Sussams, op. cit., pp. 109, 139.

²Matteson, op. cit., p. 96.

SUMMARY

There is decided agreement among all the sources quoted as to the proper methods of teaching poetry, and the methods which should be avoided if the goal of poetry appreciation is to be reached.

1. There must be a variety of methods. The teacher who does not provide variety is asking his pupils to drink from stagnant pools when they should be drinking from swiftly flowing streams.

2. Methods will depend on goals. Modern educational goals include aid for problems or interests, search for values, ways of checking comprehension, and checks for validity of conclusions. These enable students to engage in proper behavior and attitudes. If a teacher does not believe in these goals his methods are likely to reflect other goals or lack of any.

3. There must be a change in methods if students are to like poetry. Overwhelming evidence points to the fact that students generally do not like poetry; they do not like the methods used, and they associate the methods with the poetry. Since all the evidence points up the fact that we have taught poetry the same way at least since 1900, it seems axiomatic that change is desirable. Change is unavoidable unless we desire to perpetuate the present general dislike and apathy. It would seem almost impossible to make things worse; at least experiment is called for.

4. A poor teacher can ruin any method, and a good teacher can enhance any method. Methods are not important in themselves alone. The right kind of teacher personality can make almost any method enjoyable,

out such a personality must almost necessarily include imagination calling for creativity in approach to reading poetry.

5. The oral reading method is very important. The usual method includes oral reading but not always good oral reading. The teacher must be a good reader or provide examples of good reading through records, or some such fashion, if the student is ever to appreciate poetry properly. Poetry was written to be heard and will never be really liked until it is really heard.

6. Memorization should either be avoided or made pleasant. This almost universal method of teaching has probably caused more dislike of poetry than all the other methods put together. This is not true because memorization in itself is bad because it is not. It is called a bad method because students are forced to bolt great lumps of undigested mental food, regurgitate it, and have a memory of sickness forever attached to learning poetry. Learning painlessly in groups, expert help from the teacher, understanding before memorization, all are vital and necessary aids if memorization is to do anything but harm.

7. Students cannot learn poetry without guidance. Evidence points to the inevitable conclusion that poetry is difficult; that for most people it is a foreign language; that there is a mind-set against it from the beginning. Therefore, there must be better teaching of poetry than in any other subject if the teaching is to be successful. Students, almost without exception, claim that the main reason they dislike poetry is because nobody taught them how to understand it. While some poetry is enjoyed without complete understanding, most of it must appeal to the mind of the student. When it has no appeal he cannot like it.

8. The best method seems to include the following:

(1) Popular study of the author with human interest facts orienting the student to the writer.

(2) Assignment for reading one day followed by oral reading of some or all of the poem accompanied by helpful discussion. The reading must be good and the discussion cover only those points likely to be difficult. Some poems will require more discussion, some less.

(3) Students want help in getting meaning but not so much detailed help as to make the method odious and boring. Nearly all students with enough imagination to learn poetry want to be left to realize beauty and meaning for themselves.

(4) Class discussion should be a free expression of the student's mind, for good or ill.

(5) The whole thing must be kept alive and moving; static methods and not the age of the teacher is the bane of a student's life.

(6) Make memory incidental, occurring through mental compulsion or curiosity on part of the individual and of favorite lines only, or of lines completely understood before the process of memorization starts.

9. Use of traditional methods without regard to reading readiness of student is inevitably death to poetry.

10. Intensive reading of some poetry in class; extensive reading outside from many sources provided for easy access; and study of the poem itself seems to lead toward the goal of student enjoyment of poetry.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

DATA ON ATTITUDES CONCERNING TEACHERS OF POETRY

In Chapter IV attitudes on the subject of poetry teaching and testing methods were annotated and discussed with the goal in mind of arriving at principles of teaching which might be important for teachers of a beginning college class in poetry.

Chapter V deals with attitudes about teachers of poetry. It will follow the pattern of Chapters III and IV in summarizing the attitudes of students and experts as expressed in the Attitudes-Inventory, in personal interviews, and subjective and objective studies. The final step is a summary of the conclusions reached on the subject of what a poetry teacher should and should not be.

Attitudes About Poetry Teachers

From Poetry Attitudes Inventory:

Personality traits and characteristics of poetry teachers as listed by experts, expressed by students in preliminary tests, and mentioned in essays on poetry written by students, were compiled and listed in forty statements. These were designed to cover every important aspect of a teacher's personality and equipment for teaching. Students were asked in the Attitudes-Inventory to state their reactions to these forty statements by use of a double key, Key A simply indicating whether the teacher had that trait or characteristic, and Key B showing whether

possession or lack of the characteristic affected the student's like or dislike of the poetry and to what extent.

Space was allowed for answer about two teachers but so few indicated their attitudes toward a second teacher, results were used for the first teacher only.

Two sets of tables which are shown in charts on pages 129 and 130 show percentages of students affected in their like or dislike of poetry because a teacher possessed or did not possess certain personality traits or characteristics.

Those who were affected in their liking for poetry listed the following as top favorable characteristics in a teacher.

1. Conveyed to the class meaning and feeling when reading a poem aloud
2. Had a pleasant voice
3. Showed evidence of wide knowledge of the subject matter
4. Painted word pictures vividly
5. Was patient and sympathetic with student difficulties
6. Held attention of class through a sense of sharing the meaning and feeling
7. Could portray characters accurately
8. Was usually active in presenting material to class: seemed alive, moved a great deal, was animated
9. Had a colorful personality
10. Understood poetry in its proper relationship to all school work

Those who were moved to dislike for poetry by characteristics and personality traits of their teachers, indicated that the following most contributed to that feeling:

1. Demanded perfection of memorized performance rather than enjoyment and appreciation
2. Mannerisms detracted from presentation of material
3. Seemed indifferent to class choice of material
4. Read all poems in same manner: monotonous delivery
5. Expected students to mimic teacher's manner of reading poem

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE LIKING FOR POETRY WAS INCREASED
BECAUSE OF THESE TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

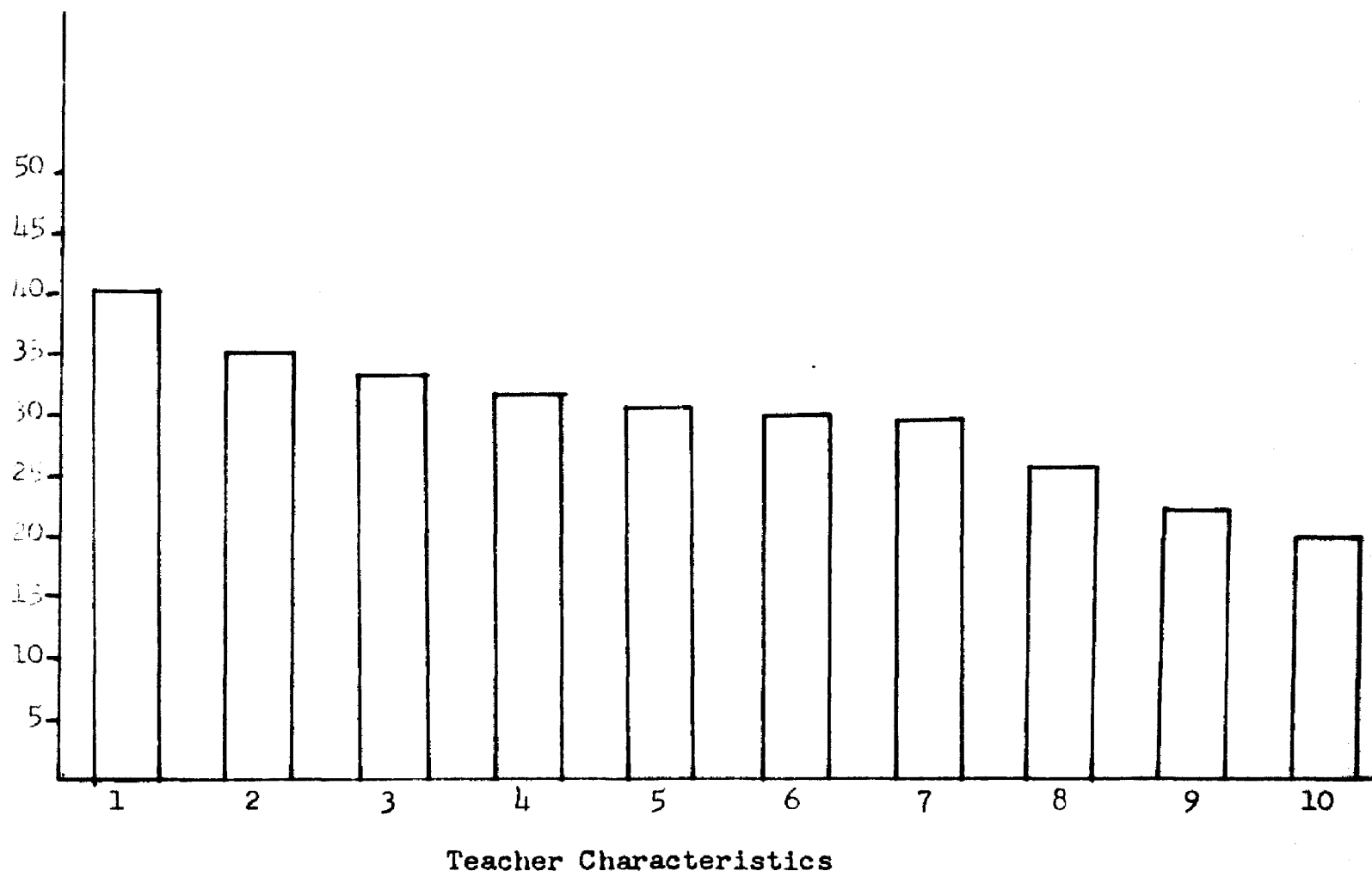


TABLE VI

- Key:
1. Good oral expression of poems and connotation
 2. Pleasant voice
 3. Knowledge of subject matter
 4. Painted vivid word pictures
 5. Patient and sympathetic
 6. Shared sense and feeling of poem with students
 7. Portrayed poems characters vividly
 8. Active and animated presentation
 9. A colorful personality
 10. Awareness of poetry's relation to other school work.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE DISLIKE FOR POETRY WAS INCREASED
BECAUSE OF THESE TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

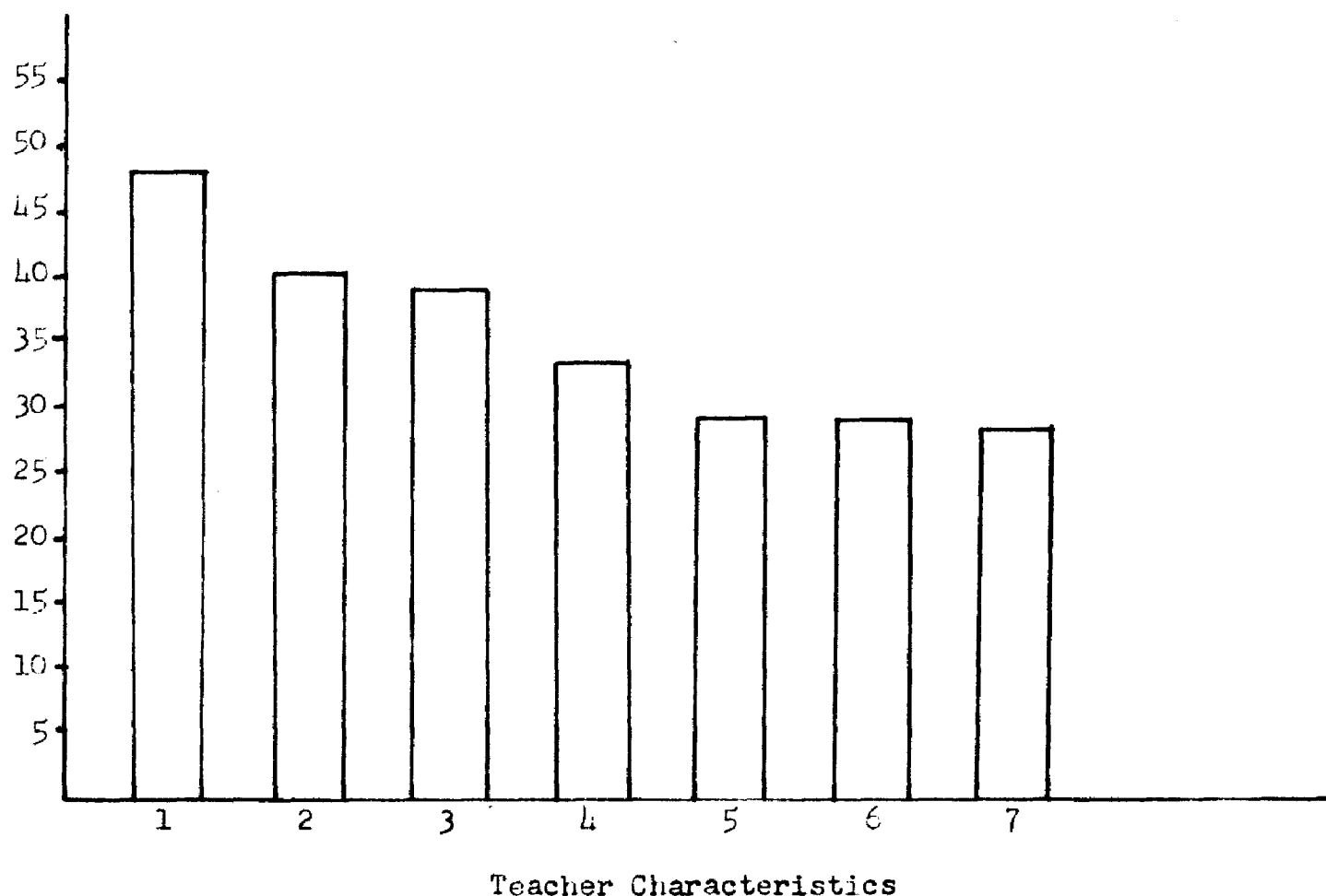


TABLE VII

- Key:
1. Read poems monotonously
 2. Demanding memorization rather than allowing enjoyment
 3. Required students copy teacher's manner
 4. Adhered to textual presentation due to lack of knowledge of subject matter.
 5. Possessed distracting mannerisms
 6. Authoritarian in selecting reading
 7. Failed to understand students' lack of knowledge.

6. Failed to understand that students are not as far advanced in ability to understand and enjoy poetry as teacher is
7. Lack of confidence caused close adherence to the text
8. Had a quick temper

Almost all teachers read aloud and most of them had pleasant voices according to the opinions of their students. Yet the fourth reason for dislike of poetry is the monotonous reading of poetry. Therefore, it can be safely said that teachers of poetry need to have training in Oral Interpretation. Facial expression seems to have been a fairly neutral factor, or it may be that students are unaccustomed to analyzing facial expression as part of meaning being projected to an audience. They objected to mannerisms which might well have arisen from nervousness or a feeling of inadequacy and could be eliminated with proper training.

Those factors which they did like, vivid word pictures, vividness of feeling and meaning, character portrayal and aliveness in presentation are all definite goals in oral interpretation and ought to be required as part of the training of all teachers of literature who will eventually find themselves teaching poetry.

There were four times as many women teachers as men. By far the greatest majority said this fact made no difference. Those factors in which the students are interested are an interesting personality, vivid and alive, a sympathetic person understanding their problems as individuals and their difficulties with the study of poetry, a person who considers their opinions and choices important, somebody who knows what he is doing and demands good work from them without being unreasonable in his demands.

The general trend in their attitudes is that, with few outstanding exceptions, they had teachers so colorless, so lacking in any particular ability and knowledge, so geared to the time-honored selections and methods, that they do not remember the teacher at all. Time after time students made the comments that they simply do not remember any teachers - it is "too long ago." One would presume that a freshman could remember one or two years ago if a teacher were worth remembering, or if he had ability to give poetry any value whatever. It seems that teachers wed to tradition and without proper evaluation of modern pedagogical methods are discarded along with the poetry which they perpetrated.

From Personal Interviews With Eighteen Students Answering Inventory:

The nine people answering question 12 of the inventory saying that they like poetry very much disclosed the following about their teachers:

The first student remembers two teachers: one too old and narrow in thought for young people and too plain of dress, but forgiven for all of it because she could read poetry well; the second "lovely," well-dressed, popular, helping with extra curricular activities, old in years but young in spirit. The second student remembers two teachers: one a younger woman who recited and acted poetry and made the students do likewise. They disliked her. The second was a man who read so well even the boys liked poetry. The next student had the same English teacher through three years of a small high school. The woman had such peculiar mannerisms, such a poor teaching personality that she alienated all the boys and was eventually asked to leave. This woman student said she did not however object to the teacher and liked to hear her read. The next

student can remember no good teacher and no interest in poetry until a post-graduate course after high school. In his sophomore year he had as teacher a "swell guy" and "a regular fellow" who didn't like poetry and therefore didn't teach it except the little they had to have for an examination. The woman who finally woke him up to poetry in this fifth year of high school was "a honey"; she "was so wrapped up in poetry herself that you couldn't keep from liking it.

The next student can remember only one teacher and that was a man who coached a play, which evidently must have been in poetry form, and was able to help the boy get at meaning. Otherwise his interest in poetry has been caused by reading a novel depicting the life of one poet, and hearing one lecture. Teachers had no influence on him. The next student can remember only one teacher, a Catholic father who read well and had the students begin writing poetry. By helping them write it, he taught the fundamentals of poetry leading to enjoyment. The next student remembers two teachers: the first, a young, friendly and sympathetic man whom students liked very much and who helped them with baseball, etc. However, he knew his poetry, required them to be on their toes in class, and if they were not, cut them down as fairly as he called signals in football games. They liked that. He liked the other teacher who was a woman but gave no details as to her personality.

The next student, a man, remembers three teachers in grade school all of whom he considered poor. Students felt that poetry was forced on them; the teachers had no feeling for it and were merely performing their teaching assignment. They "just gave a stiff assignment and didn't

bother." They were neither sympathetic nor accommodating and he feels they probably didn't understand the material themselves. In his high school work he had one teacher entirely opposite. Because of difficulty he consulted the teacher whom he came to know so well that he volunteered to check papers, etc. for the man's good will. All his high school teachers, he felt, were outstanding, teaching poetry for enjoyment, trying to interest the students and having such pleasing personalities that the students enjoyed them in class. The ninth student in this group learned nothing about poetry in school until his senior year in high school. A small, feminine woman with an iron will which rarely showed taught students by her great love of poetry. She led students through love of her to find for themselves understanding in poetry. Writing an assignment, made by this teacher, "I Am A Part of All I Have Ever Known" affected him greatly both because of his own thinking in regard to his life and because he was close enough to her that he helped grade the papers. He thus realized the confidence of students in her sympathy and understanding. He insisted that they would and did tell her anything and everything. He found that made her a "wonderful instructor."

Nine People Who Dislike Poetry

The first student claims she never had a good teacher of poetry. In the grades a terror, a "battle-axe, and a man-hater" locked her in a room one lunch hour for some infringement. She made them memorize, totally without help and understanding. This was an older woman but the student said that did not matter: "she was just a woman who had no

business in school with young children; she starts you off all wrong; she loved it, knew a lot about it, but didn't have the faintest idea how to teach young children." In high school she had a teacher whom she supposed read well but she wouldn't know, having no experience. But the teacher demanded delving deep into the thought, covering material so fast, and giving so little help that the student couldn't find out what it was all about. The instructors of the second student made the poems seem unreal to her; they seemed to read something false into the interpretation. She remembers one lecturer who visited the high school reading his own and other poems. She does not know who it was but it was her only enjoyment of poetry. Her ideal teacher, she said, could be either man or woman, young or old, but would be well dressed, very sympathetic and cooperative. Any person who "is cranky tears down what the students say, and does not pay attention to the students," is a bad teacher. She wants a teacher who teaches poetry for the enjoyment of the student.

The next student does not remember teachers at all, saying they must have been bad because he never learned to read. He does alright in college because "they threw him in to sink or swim" and he reacted to the competition and challenge of this method. The next man remembers four teachers in high school who all seemed alike to him, reading a poem and asking questions about it. Nothing they did appealed to him. The next man can remember only one poetry teacher. He liked the fact that he was a man and was "human, got along well with students, helped with extra-curricular activities, was smart, knew his material, seemed to know everything, the one man who seemed brilliant." The teacher read aloud,

allowed choice, and tried to create a mood of enjoyment but failed on this one student. Another man remembers only one poetry teacher, a woman, who read poetry aloud and he liked that because he could understand it by that method. The teacher "kinda went over it and asked questions" after she read the poem but this is all he can remember about it, except the classical "stuff" is hard to understand and he wants none of it.

The next student can remember only one teacher whom he seems to have had early in high school about whom he says "she was about sixty, and looked ancient, was very bad, and should have retired much earlier." Nobody liked her because she taught poetry that she liked and tried to make students like it because she did. The next young man remembers little of poetry until high school where "all the teachers made it boring." When unable to define what he meant when he insisted poetry teachers were not interesting, he finally said that history teachers were "more lively-like," "they taught like they enjoyed teaching it." Finally, he said of one sophomore teacher who was "a lot of fun in class," that it was not that she made the work easier but more interesting, "she didn't give a lot of tests," "she didn't force it on you," "she took into account the fact that we didn't like it and let us argue." Being able to express his true opinion seemed very important to him. The last student in this group went to a big city high school, said he had good teachers, and they taught well but it didn't help. He described a good teacher as one "who can communicate and hold attention," "he would solve our problems" (meaning that he was sympathetic, and he would help students).

Attitudes Toward Poetry Teachers As Expressed by A Class Liking Poetry

The first girl remembers two teachers unfavorably, the first requiring rote memory of Shakespeare without providing any understanding of it, the second teaching "iambic pentameter" instead of poetry. The second girl also had poor teachers, one in eighth grade requiring rote memorization, one in junior high who "had a distorted view of life and wanted her poetry hard and bitter." In high school an intelligent but unemotional woman cancelled the good of her able presentation by being "tall, bony, skinny, angular and totally unemotional." The fact that she was a widow with two small boys to support may have affected her personality. The third girl remembers a "marvelous" teacher who when she couldn't change a text, made assignments in the library. She read well and brought to them by this method any poem she felt they might not find or would be unusually interested in. She made the author interesting, let them read poems they enjoyed even if it were "Casey At The Bat," and played phonograph records. Always the students were allowed to express their opinions.

The fourth girl had a remarkable poetry world evidently. She remembers nothing definitely about the grades but had four courses in Literature in high school from the same teacher, who must have been a rare person. She was intelligent and able and led them through a great amount of material; she always made an author interesting and oriented the class in his world; she was personable and interesting; she was so sympathetic with student viewpoints that this student says all her former students always look her up when they go back home. The fifth girl also went to a large, good high school, but cannot remember any of her teachers

and learned almost no poetry. She can remember only compulsory memory work. The next student had her work in a fine private school where she had individual help from well-trained teachers. She particularly liked to talk about poems in private sessions with her instructors. The only teacher the next girl can remember taught her in junior high school. She was a gawky, unprepossessing, tall and awkward person who could not influence any one except to riot but when she started to read poetry the class never breathed. This student can remember vividly the impression, the great difference in the personality of the woman when she began to read. She made poetry a living experience for the students so that they all liked it and forgot any shortcomings she had.

A man student had little poetry until college and can remember no teachers until then. He learned oral reading of poetry from a teacher who could read well and that started his interest. The next man can remember only one teacher before college. He had as teacher when he was a sophomore a nun whom he remembers as vivacious, witty and quite young. She was "good fun"; taught the students square dancing; helped on the school paper, was most sympathetic. She was very able and her love of poetry so great that they could love poetry, too, through infection from her. In college he became even more interested through the oral reading method. The next man remembers little poetry in schools; in the grades memorization made him dislike poetry then; in the ninth grade memorizing Lady of the Lake which he still hates as a result; in the tenth grade a teacher who was better because she made poetry "fun" and let the students express their opinions. Then he got into a speech class and while he seems not to remember the teacher, that class provided the

method of enjoyment that he still has. The final student of this group had a third grade teacher who was "terrific." She read to them for half an hour every afternoon, stories or poetry or anything she thought they would like. She gave him such a wide knowledge of poetry that he has liked it since. A fifth grade teacher is the author of a famous children's story which she read to them as she was writing it. She also had a child's version of Shakespeare and would take the children to her home where they put on plays using these stories. He has no memory of poetry in high school but a minister reading poetry affected him greatly. He believed in the oral reading method because when you hear a poem well read it "gives you a sense of rightness."

Attitudes Toward Teachers As Expressed by a Class in Oral Interpretation

One man had a good teacher who gave him interest in poetry. She was from the South, had a soft, gentle voice and a manner which was conducive to learning. She read aloud well; used varying methods, started with light verse and built up their interest before attempting more difficult poetry. Another doesn't like poetry because of poor teaching methods but is not specific. Another teacher interested students with varied methods. The next student was very scornful of a teacher in junior high who had charm but no ability at teaching poetry: she picked out and assigned, she dissected it to see what made it tick, she made them memorize, and did not show a wide knowledge of poetry. Another man said his teachers were "all right" but he could never be interested until college. He says teachers take too much for granted as to the understanding,

age, and interests of students who are consequently indifferent to poetry which doesn't live for them. A girl remembers a teacher in grade school who read "vivid" poems to them; they enacted them as plays; the teacher infected the children with her love of poetry. In high school a man was a good reader and not only read to them but taught them by the Choral Reading method which made them like poetry. The next student seems to remember methods rather than the teachers who used them, liking acting of the poems in the grades, and a "unit" experience of poetry tied up with history, etc. in high school. The next student, a man, had a teacher who "caused him trouble." He disliked her. She allowed no choice; the method was memorizing. In high school the teacher talked about poetry, did not let them study poems. The next girl simply remembers a teacher who made her like poetry. Another girl remembers a teacher who read well. The next girl liked poetry in the grades because the teacher and students read it together with full explanation. Several students remember methods, not teachers; one girl said her instructor was so interested in poetry that the students became interested. The next man judged a teacher bad who forced her interpretation on the student and required memory work. The same thing is true of the last girl reporting.

Attitudes on Teachers as Expressed by Experts

Rating scales for good teachers are numerous. There have been many used for judgment of the good instructor. Usually they include the same general ideas. A rating scale for students to judge instructors used at Michigan State College for some years included fourteen points and

asked for general comments from the students. Those fourteen points are: (1) objectives clarified by instructor, (2) organization of course, (3) knowledge of subject, (4) range of interests and culture, (5) presentation of subject matter, (6) assignments, (7) ability to arouse interest, (8) ability to stimulate thinking and independent work, (9) examinations and grading, (10) willingness to help, (11) recognition of his own limitations, (12) speech and enunciation, (13) mannerisms, (14) general estimate - superior, average or poor. Another evaluation sheet stated only seven points leaving spaces for favorable and unfavorable comments. The seven are: (1) were important objectives met, (2) does instructor's presentation of subject matter enhance learning, (3) is instructor's speech effective, (4) how well does the instructor work with students, (5) does the instructor stimulate independent thinking, (6) do grading procedures give valid results, (7) how does instructor rank with others you have had?

In order to encourage good teaching, the most outstanding teacher of Michigan State College is selected each year and given not only an accolade but a money award. The school year 1951-52 was the first year for this practice. An all-college committee prepared an evaluation instrument which was given to each faculty person in the college who voted according to this evaluation for the person in his department most fitting the described characteristics. Each department presented its candidate and then an all-college group chose from these. The evaluation sheet was entitled "Characteristics of a Good Teacher" and was as follows:

I. One who has enthusiasm for his course and teaching.

- A. One who transmits his enthusiasms for his subject to his students.
 - B. One who inspires his students by his own enthusiasms for his course and for teaching to more than a superficial interest in the subject.
- II. One who has a thorough knowledge of the subject he teaches.
- A. One who is well acquainted with the literature of his field.
 - B. One whose knowledge of the subject goes far beyond the text and the course outline.
- III. One who is sensitive to the quality of student work and who maintains a high standard.
- A. One whose examinations require analytical thinking instead of pure memory and whose grades are discriminating but who is fair in both.
 - B. One who holds his own work to high standards and who stimulates students to their own highest standards.
- IV. One who has skill in applying instructional techniques.
- A. One who presents his material fluently and coherently, and is not unreasonable in his demands.
 - B. One who makes effective use of classroom time.
- V. One who stimulates his students intellectually.
- A. One who arouses the intellectual curiosity of his students.
 - B. One whose teaching opens vistas and enlarges the student's perspective.
- VI. One who demonstrates in his teaching the relationship between teaching and research.
- A. One who understands the values of research and demonstrates the relation of research to the continued progress of mankind.
 - B. One whose teaching is constantly refreshed by the flow of new ideas drawn from literature in his field.
- VII. One who is sincerely interested in his students and their problems.
- A. One who is regularly available for student conferences.
 - B. One who is interested in the intellectual achievements of his students.
- VIII. One who is mature in his personal and professional life.

- A. One who has "put away childish things."
- B. One who is respected by students and colleagues alike for maturity of judgment.

IX. One who demonstrates in his daily teaching the relationship between what he is teaching and the democratic society in which both teacher and student operate.

- A. One who is aware of the great values of personal, spiritual and intellectual liberty of a democratic society.
- B. One who strives to integrate his subject insofar as possible with the principles of a democratic way of life.

A well-known rating scale was constructed by H. H. Remmers and D. N. Elliott. It is known as the Purdue Rating Scale for Instructors and is published by Purdue University. It contains twenty-six items, ten of which refer specifically to the teacher, and the others to a list of factors which the scale says is often beyond the control of the teacher. These items are: (1) interest in subject, (2) sympathetic attitude toward students, (3) fairness in grading, (4) liberal and progressive attitude, (5) presentation of subject matter, (6) sense of proportion and humor, (7) self-reliance and confidence, (8) personal peculiarities, (9) personal appearance, (10) stimulating intellectual curiosity, (11) suitability of method or methods by which subject matter of the course is presented (recitation, lecture, laboratory, etc.), (12) suitability of the size of the class (consider the subject matter and type of class - lecture, lab., etc.), (13) the degree to which the objectives of the course were clarified and discussed, (14) the agreement between the announced objectives of the course and what was actually taught, (15) suitability of the reference materials available for the course, (16) suitability of laboratory facilities available for the course,

(17) suitability of the assigned textbook, (18) the use made of tests as aids to learning, (19) amount of freedom allowed students in the selection of the materials to be studied (considering the subject matter), (20) how the course is fulfilling your needs (consider your ultimate as well as your immediate goals), (21) range of ability in class (are there too many extremely dull or extremely bright students), (22) suitability of the amount and type of assigned outside work, (23) the weight given to tests in determining the final grade for the course, (24) coordination of the tests with the major objectives of the course, (25) frequency of tests, (26) the overall rating of the instructor.

In an attempt to determine the characteristics of an effective teacher, the reactions of 10,000 high school seniors were tabulated, with the following most often noted: Helpful with school work (1950), cheerful, good natured, sense of humor (1429), human, friendly, as one of you (1024), interested, understanding of students, (937), makes work interesting, creates desire for work (805).¹

A study of attitudes of 224 high school students elicited this list: clearness of explanation, tolerance of other's opinions, sincerity, impartiality, interest in pupils, knowledge of subject, and common sense.²

A radio program on a nation-wide basis, repeated three years in succession, (1946-48) encouraged students from grades one through twelve to write letters on "The teacher who has helped me most." Analysis of

¹Hart, F. W., Teachers and Teaching, N. Y. Macmillan and Co., 1936 p. 131.

²Englehart, Max D. and Tucker, L. R. "Traits Related to Good and Poor Teaching," School Review, January, 1936, p. 31.

more than 14,000 letters the first year, twice as many the second, and spot checking the third showed these as highly rated characteristics: (1) cooperative, democratic attitude, (2) kindness and consideration of the individual, (3) patience, (4) wide interests, (5) pleasing personal appearance and manner, (6) fairness and impartiality (7) sense of humor (8) good disposition and consistent behavior, (9) interest in pupil problems, (10) unusual proficiency in teaching a subject.¹

Since a poetry teacher will necessarily be judged by his speech characteristics, two sources are quoted on this factor. Albert B. Becker made a study of "The Speech Characteristics of Superior and Inferior High School Teachers as Revealed by Student Reaction." He found that:

A teacher who is rated high in teaching ability by students will usually be rated high in general speech proficiency, even though the teachers may have a few disturbing traits. The characteristic assets of the superior teacher will more often be found among the items of "intelligence," "language," "explanations (organization)," "Audibility," "Likeableness," and "Poise," than among the other items. The more mechanical aspects of speech (use of voice and body) seem to be less significant in the superior teacher than are the creative aspects (thought process, language and personality traits.)²

A controlled experiment at Ball State Teachers College in Indiana, on the relationship between speech proficiency and effectiveness of teaching, was made by dividing senior students, who were preparing to teach, into two groups. One group was given speech training and the other was not. Both groups were judged on effectiveness of teaching at

¹Witty, P. "Some Characteristics of Effective Teachers," Educational Administration and Supervision, Vol. 36, 1950, p. 110.

²Becker, Albert B., "The Speech Characteristics of Superior and Inferior High School Teachers as Revealed by Student Reaction," unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Northwestern University, August, 1949. p. 117.

the beginning and at the end of their practice teaching period during which the speech training was given to the one group. The study found:

All methods that were used for analysis of data indicated definite and often significant relationships between change in speech proficiency and change in student teaching competency.

There is a closer relationship between speech and student teaching proficiency than there is between student teaching and intelligence, grades in academic majors, grades in education courses, and choice of teaching materials.

There is a closer relationship between change in audible speech characteristics and change in student teaching than between change in visible speech characteristics and change in student teaching.¹

Clarence Simon in discussing "Speech Training for the English Teacher" says "literature is experience: the best experience of the past, held in a pleasing medium. This experience should be made to live for the student. Hence the student should be encouraged to use all possible sense channels in his re-experiencing of the content of literature.

Therefore, says Simon, the English teacher needs sufficient speech training to make overt the knowledge and appreciation of literature which he has as a covert possession. If the teacher has gained an understanding of literature and an appreciation of it, he must project that understanding and appreciation or fail to teach. Hence the need for speech training. He mentions the necessity for voice training as voices are

¹Huckleberry, A. W., "The Relationship between Change in Speech Proficiency and Change in Student Teaching Proficiency," Speech Monographs, November, 1950, p. 388.

naturally likely to be poor, as they become harsh with the strain and stress of teaching, and as they become didactic because of teacher habits. To have expressiveness of voice enough to read literature well there must not only be good voice quality but the teacher needs training in emotional expressiveness. College and graduate study inhibit vigorous expression of any kind; teachers tend to be over-intellectual and therefore to present literature in a dull, cold and decidedly uninteresting manner. This lack of emotional expression on the part of the teacher handicaps the student's appreciation of the true content of literature as living experience.¹

The importance of the teacher in presenting literature can hardly be over-estimated. Nearly all literature by nature of its emotional quality and vocabulary is beyond the immature student. The teacher is the channel between the living of the poem and the life of the student. Without that channel, never the twain shall meet. Preceding chapters on material and methods have shown discouraging facts. Teachers are the only people who can change the equation; the right kind of teacher is the only person to solve the problem in the schools; the personal element in presenting literature is so vital that it deserves discussion in any study of poetry.

Between the reader and the poet stands the teacher; for most people go to school, and it is there that most of them read poetry for the first time. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find many people who associate their indifference towards poetry with the dislike they felt towards the poetry

¹Simon, Clarence, "Speech Training for the English Teacher, "English Journal, Vol. XXX No. 2 Part II, Feb., 1941.

lesson at school; and although this opinion may do injustice to teachers, they cannot be freed from all responsibility, inasmuch as to them is entrusted the early introduction of poetry to the developing personality. It is easy to oversimplify the teacher's task, and to imagine that all that is needed is a happy and attractive approach to something which is essentially joyous and simple and elemental. Poetry is not simple, not even those messages which live in the imagination by virtue of their simplicity alone. It is the most highly charged form of expression of which language is capable, and one of the blessings to an age of uniformity is that it eludes definition.¹

Allan Abbott agrees with the idea of the vital importance of the teacher:

In real literature teaching, the vital thing is often not the center of the lesson but the periphery; and how far that may extend will depend on the radius of the teacher's own mind.²

Essie Chamberlain, as far back as 1921, made a study of classics to discover their popularity but found that so many factors entered into students' opinions that making conclusions was difficult. Her report showed that a classic may be liked in one room and disliked in another, showing that the teacher factor was a more vital one than the material itself.³

That teachers are often not the vital link between the poem and student that they ought to be is strongly pointed out by students and experts. R. Albert Matteson writing on "Poetry in Junior and Senior High Schools" talks about the sins that English teachers commit, sins

¹Society for Teachers of English, op. cit., p. 1.

²Abbott, Allan, "What The English Teacher Should Know," English Journal (College Edition), April 1928, p. 320.

³Chamberlain, Essie, "Literary Attitudes and Reactions of Boys and Girls," Illinois Association of Teachers of English, Bulletin 13, January 1, 1921.

that will kill pupil's love for this finest of all literature. He says the first sin is indifference. "The teacher committing this sin looks upon poetry as a medium for giving marks to his students. He gives a mark for writing a sonnet, for making a collection of favorite poems, for paraphrasing Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality,' or for a parody on Chaucer's "Prologue."¹

The second sin, says Matteson, is suspicion of emotion. Teachers stifle pupils' love for poetry because they do not let them experience deep feeling and powerful expression of it. "I sometimes wonder if it is because they (the teachers) have had to curb their own (emotions) for so many years that they believe if one of their charges has an emotion he is three-quarters of the way down the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire."

Dislike is the third sin: certain types, certain authors. "Many times a teacher dislikes an author's poems because the poet has lived an uproarious life. These little dislikes color the teaching, and pupils are quick to adopt an older person's point of view." Then there is effervescence or gushing. "The teacher goes into a sort of ecstatic trance, utters ridiculous 'oh's' and 'ah's' and exclaims, 'Isn't this a beautiful thought?' Little Johnnie sitting in the back row mumbles, 'Ain't she stupid!'" This teacher may love poetry, but she does not know how to inspire her pupils to love it. She is likely to assign poems for her pupils to memorize because she loves 'their beautiful

¹Matteson, R. Albert, op. cit. p. 94.

thoughts.' The children learn to hate poetry because they have not been led to master the thought content of the assignment."¹

L. A. G. Strong, a well-known poet and teacher in England, agrees largely with Matteson and makes a similar summary by listing six common deficiencies in poetry teachers: first, he says, the teacher dislikes poetry. He feels that a great deal of the current British hostility to poetry dates from the careers of Byron and Shelley, reinforced by that of Oscar Wilde. These connected poetry with effeminacy, goings-on, incapacity for sport. A teacher who feels this hostility may conscientiously try to hide it. He is the more dangerous in that he will enforce poetry as a discipline. Second, says Strong, there are the teachers who are embarrassed by poetry. Nothing is so contagious as embarrassment, and although the teacher may not be highly respected, the embarrassment comes to be associated, however vaguely, with the subject which gave rise to it.

The next deficiency of a poetry teacher, according to Strong, is that he is suspicious of emotions. Here again he agrees with Matteson. This seems, he says, to be a vice of women more than men. Also, some teachers are indifferent to poetry. "This teacher is every bit as dangerous, because he has nothing at all to restrain him. . . . He makes poetry yield dividends. He gives marks for it. He asks his pupils to paraphrase it. . . . Ask anyone to paraphrase a poem and you suggest that a poem is a sort of fancy dress for a statement that can be made equally well in plain prose."

¹Ibid., p. 94.

Then there is the teacher who loves poetry uncomprehendingly. "Like a man who falls in love, not with a real girl, but with his own picture of one. . . . this sort of poetry lover fastens his own emotions upon a poem and then believes that the poem has created them. . . . He misreads the poems." Finally there is the teacher who genuinely loves poetry but cannot communicate his love to others. "I am inclined," says Strong, "to believe that this is the worst of the lot. He loves poetry - obviously - but all he can do is to make it sound ridiculous. 'Listen to this, boys,' he says, 'Isn't it beautiful?' and he proceeds to quack or mouth or bleat out something which is a travesty of the beauty which had truly moved him. . . . He is addicted to giving classes poems to learn by heart. . . . I was put off Milton for years by a fool who made me learn the sonnet On His Blindness when I was eleven."¹

Henry Simon agrees with the others saying that there are many methods of teaching: some teachers have succeeded by reading the lines beautifully, some by showing the pupils how to read them, some by telling the pupils what the poetry meant to them. He says, however, that there is one common element. The teacher must know the poetry and genuinely love it. Students will be likely to accept a genuine love of poetry, not by expression of maundering sentimentalities but through the evident sincerity of the teacher's affection for poetry.²

¹Strong, L. A. G., op. cit., p. 56.

²Simon, Henry W., Poetry Appreciation, Teachers' Lesson Unity N. Y. Series, No. 4, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1931.

There stands out prominently then the problem of finding the right teachers for poetry. It appears that there has generally been a supposition that anybody could teach poetry; no aptitude tests are given to English instructors - any of them are simply turned loose on the luckless students. Such aptitude tests might well result in partially weeding out the inept. Personality tests might eliminate a few of the others who range from the over-emotional to the coldly analytical. Last, but certainly not least, tests with the goal of ascertaining the amount of knowledge of the subject, range of reading, and acquaintance with the literary field (at least in the age level where they teach) would point up the weaknesses of existing teachers, perhaps even to the point of discouraging boards and superintendents from letting just anybody teach poetry. Teachers who do not have a broad knowledge of poetry suitable to the age levels they teach, whose literary vocabulary is limited, who lack intimate acquaintance with the greatest writers of modern times, whose oral reading ability is limited so that they convey meaning poorly, will never effectively reach students where they live with the life experience of poetry.

Helene W. Hartley, on the premise that comprehension of poetry is the first essential of the reading, appreciation, or criticism of poetry, and is therefore necessary to possible teachers of it, devised tests using parts of poems which had independent meaning and which came from outside the range of reading of those who were tested.

She used the tests first on a group including English majors, non-majors, and advanced students. The non-majors had the lowest median, the majors the biggest. She next tried the test on a poetry class taught

by Dr. Allan Abbott composed of teachers, English majors, and many non-majors. Again the English majors made the highest score thus seeming to indicate that understanding of poetry can be taught, and pointing up the fact that teachers do not know all the factual material which they should know.¹

Dora V. Smith administered tests to seventy-eight junior high school teachers in a summer session of the University of Minnesota. These teachers were asked in the first test to place well-known people in literature used for junior high school people. The results caused her to reach the conclusion that teachers themselves are not familiar with the material they teach. Of twenty-one characters, Penrod was the only name known to all. The list included John Silver, Sir Launcelot, and the like. The teachers also made low scores on information about animal stories. Familiar names in stories were not known to them. When parallel tests about modern material were given, they evidenced ignorance and lack of experience in both English and American literature. They didn't even know the names of writers in the juvenile fields. Smith concluded that courses in such literature should be given to teachers in schools of Education.²

Laura Kennon found that most of the academic requirements for literature teachers required a knowledge on their part of types of literature,

¹Hartley, Helene Willey, Tests of the Interpretative Reading of Poetry for Teachers of English, Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 433, Columbia University, 1930.

²Smith, Dora V., "Extensive Reading in Junior High Schools," English Journal, June, 1930.

thus necessitating the possession of a technical vocabulary. This vocabulary she proposed to test by checking their knowledge of words drawn from famous passages, technical terms, words associated with historical periods, history, etc. She found: (1) there was little correlation between test scores and ages of teachers or degrees held; (2) there was a slight correspondence between scores and kind of position and experience, and (3) there was close correlation between general intelligence and English grades and department examinations. It seems logical that the amount of the teacher's knowledge would affect his ability to teach literature in such a way as to make it effective.¹

Peterson found that in spite of the trend toward extensive reading in junior high schools, that teachers are not familiar with the content of juvenile and adolescent literature.²

Aerol Arnold discusses methods of teaching saying that advanced students should be capable of technical analysis of high order. But, says he,

In the hands of a poor teacher who is not able to see the relationship between the ideas and emotions and the form they take there is always the possibility that technical analysis can be pretty deadly. But there is no protection against poor teachers except not to have them. Those who believe that the experience approach to literature is a "safe method" should have learned by now that in the hands of a poor teacher it descends into merely passing on emotional confusion.³

¹Kennon, Laura H. V. Tests of Literary Vocabulary for Teachers of English, Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 223, Columbia University, 1926.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 173.

³Arnold, Aerol, "Reading for What?" College English, January 1942, p. 388.

Implications for this Study:

There is definite concensus on the subject of teachers of poetry. Students and experts agree on personality and ability characteristics. The outstanding tenets in this agreement are:

1. Poetry is taught by infection, and not by rules. The teacher must have a true love of poetry and an ability to make that love apparent, right, and non-obvious. It cannot be expressed by gushing, sentimentality, or insincerity.

2. The poetry teacher must not only possess the assets of a good teacher, but must have something over and above these. He or she must have a colorful, vivid personality which sparkles and attracts. Even factual subjects need good personalities to engender interest, but an imaginative subject like poetry absolutely requires an imaginative person.

3. This personality must be warmly sympathetic and considerate at all times of student opinions and problems. One of the most strongly expressed reasons for dislike of poetry was the fact that the teacher imposed his own meaning, failing to listen to the arguments, reasons or opinions of students. Had they been able to express their sincere dislike, some explanation might have been given to take it away, or if they were made to understand that liking poetry does not mean liking every poem, the results could have been vastly different.

4. Students want to know their teachers better. This is especially true of the teacher of an emotional subject like poetry. If students read about emotions, are required to understand words expressing emotion, and to some extent must express their lives and hearts out loud for the

public to hear, they want to know that a most understanding person is listening. Over and over students used in this study expressed the fact that they liked teachers who participated in out-side activities, who allowed them to get close enough for confidences, who respected confidences, and understood problems.

5. All poetry teachers need ability in interpretive reading. Since poetry is written to be read aloud, that reading must be good if the poem is to be truly appreciated. Dull, monotonous reading is one of the great enemies of love of poetry.

6. It is not important that a teacher be a man or woman, nor that he be young. In some specific instances, students are affected by the age or sex of a teacher; on the whole, they are mostly affected by the personality of the teacher; age is a matter of spirit; ability is the keynote, not sex.

7. There are some important don'ts for teachers:

- a. Do not force teacher opinion on student.
- b. Do not stick to prescribed text and fail to allow choice of reading matter.
- c. Do not pamper students; explain, help, sympathize and understand, but require good work. They respect a teacher for it.
- d. Do not take knowledge on the part of the student for granted. Learn first, last, and all the time that the ordinary student knows nothing of poetry and begin where he is.
- e. Do not teach poetry as an assignment; do not punish by using poetry; do not penalize for not liking or not learning poetry.
- f. Do not be over-intellectual and pedantic; be properly emotional.

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The purpose of this study is to discover the attitudes of college freshmen toward poetry: the effect that the teaching of poetry has had on them, the place where they now are in their knowledge of poetry, the reasons for their neglect of poetry, and those factors which have led to pleasurable experiences with poems.

It has been stated that the discovery of these things should be of great value to the teacher of a beginning college class in poetry. Such knowledge gives him the over-all picture of his students so necessary to efficient teaching and leadership. The data discovered here, and the implications, should also be valuable to every teacher of poetry, giving grade and high school teachers a clear map of trends and some indication of directions in which to go and not to go.

The method of discovering favorable and unfavorable factors in poetry learning has been that of ascertaining from students their attitudes which are the result of experience in reading and studying poetry. These attitudes were ascertained in two ways: (1) administering a Poetry Attitudes-Inventory to two representative groups of 2500 freshmen in the Written and Spoken English Department of Michigan State College, and (2) personally interviewing three groups of students: eighteen selected as a cross-check from those answering the Inventory, eleven in

an elective class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry, nineteen in a beginning class of Oral Interpretation.

Since it was considered wise not to depend for accuracy on attitudes of students only, bibliographical evidence of the opinions of experts was reviewed and compared with the attitudes of the students. The opinions of poets, educators, philosophers, and others have been presented as parallel evidence to the data acquired from students.

Three aspects of poetry learning have been examined: (1) textual material or the poetry which the student studied or read, (2) techniques or the methods of teaching, and (3) the teachers of poetry. Data on attitudes of students toward these three aspects were annotated and analyzed in three chapters, each of which was summarized by a detailed statement of implications relevant to this investigation.

Therefore, the conclusions which follow will deal with broad aspects of the study, and will cover what might be called the philosophy underlying teaching poetry for pleasurable learning, as that philosophy seems to be suggested by the facts ascertained.

Conclusions

I. Textual Materials:

Data from both the Inventory and interviews show that a great majority of students neither like nor dislike poetry. They have such paucity of knowledge of poetry as to indicate almost no study or reading of it. Students remember little from the early grades; the largest amount from junior high; and perhaps some few poems from a literature course in high school. Shakespeare is the exception, most students remembering at least one play.

The outstanding fact apparent here is that nobody can like what they have not known; students do not so much like or dislike poetry as ignore it. They repeat again and again that poetry is simply not a part of their lives; seemingly nobody makes it so in spite of the theory that it should be. Poetry, is neither seen, heard, spoken of, read, nor written about in sufficient amounts for any appreciable number of the students to learn much about it.

Published opinions of experts reveal their feeling that poetry ought to be a possession of cultured people. It seems to be the feeling of students that they ought to know it. Answers to statements in the Inventory and personal interviews reveal a sort of wistful recognition that poetry should be a part of their cultural equipment but they cannot quite see their way clear to acquiring it without too much trouble and distaste.

Evidence points to the fact that the kind of material used in texts is largely to blame for lack of interest in poetry reading. Text books are much the same that they were thirty and forty years ago. Classics decided upon by adults as being those which children must learn are forced upon students almost regardless of results. Study of placement in the grades has changed text books for children. Little study has been done for the high school level and that which has been done is shown by data in the investigation to have been largely rejected and resisted.

Classics for use in texts must be graded to the interests and maturity of the readers. Those teachers who blindly go on teaching the

old classic selections are heavily obligated to help their students see the values they insist are there but which it is impossible for the student to recognize.

By some means, standards for judging modern poetry must be set up so that more and more poems from contemporary writers may be included in books for student reading. Students will first find value in those works of art expressing their own lives, and second discover the classics and their place in our tradition.

Few modern poets are represented in poetry texts and they are usually represented by one to three poems each. Carl Sandburg is the only modern poet remembered if evidence can be trusted. Popular, sentimental poetry is remembered by students, but not included in texts as it is judged unworthy of study. Students grow up scarcely knowing that the poetry which they like and school poetry are the same thing.

Data make one fact very evident: since the same poetry has been taught from time immemorial and since students either dislike it or ignore it, nothing is to be lost by experimental change.

II. Poetry Teaching Methods:

Scientific methods of teaching comparable to those used for other subjects have not been discovered and used. Prevailing exoteric and general "other world" approaches to reading and teaching poems have developed stultified, traditional ideas, and blocked knowledge generally. Poetry as a cultural activity, as an expression of personal and social experience, and as a creative activity has no comparable place with

other literature today. It is the stepchild, par excellence, of the whole field of literature, and Cinderella must either achieve a beautiful glass slipper that fits beyond question, or, if the pattern of the past continues, remain forever in the ashes of disdain.

It has been assumed in this study that poetry must be taught on the pleasure principle. It can logically be believed that students will read poetry for the same reason that they do everything else - because of the satisfactions or values they obtain from it. Data on teaching methods have shown that such a pleasure principle has been little used; that students find little or no value in poetry and therefore they do not read it. They have testified that teachers are not acquainted with goals based on the life interests of students; that because poetry is particularly rich in overtones and implied meanings they miss the meanings unless they get the right kind of help; that the help they need is missing, or that it is given according to a pattern of the teacher's choosing, not according to a pattern designed to give the student satisfaction.

It has been discovered in this investigation that methods are traditional, that they largely are the methods by which the teachers were taught. Too, there is very little variety even in the traditional methods. Most of the students had experienced few, if any, of the experimental methods. Even when no equipment and no extra training were required, few teachers had tried anything new.

Most of the students had experienced the method of hearing poems read by their teachers. A large majority liked this method; a few did

not. From other evidence, it was assumed that these few had heard poor reading and were therefore not favorable. A few had heard phonograph records and liked the method: the few who did not also were presumed to have heard bad recordings or poor selections. On the whole, hearing poetry well read was considered the best method.

Compulsory memorization of material beyond their comprehension was rated by students as the worst method of teaching. Memorization, in itself, is not bad; some students like to memorize favorite lines or poems they like. However, they almost universally disparage rote memory.

It was discovered that a variety of methods is needed for teaching poetry; that the teacher must use one method for one kind of poem, another method for another kind. It was also discovered that a poor teacher can ruin any method, and that a truly good teacher can succeed by almost any method.

One of the most important facts ascertained from the data was that learning poetry can be brought about only with the cooperation of the learner; that the characteristics of the learner cannot be safely forgotten. Comments showed that high school and college students are impatient of monotony; they want an ever-shifting variety and excitement; they like opportunities for mental effort (many said they liked difficult poems - found them a challenge); they like subject matter approached through emotions and imagination rather than logic; they like intriguing assignments.

III. Teachers of Poetry:

If the evidence can be believed, teachers of poetry are, on the whole, very conservative people. They tend strongly to remain static in their choice of materials, and in their use of techniques. At least part of the evidence points to the supposition that they are probably not well grounded in the material they teach, that they seem to be using the methods by which they were taught, and that they fail to be interested in experimenting with new methods.

All evidence points to the fact that they have a heartbreaking task and it might well be that judgment of them by students is harsh in light of the overwhelming odds against the successful teaching of poetry to any large numbers of people. It seems safe to say in light of present evidence that mass education and poetry scholarship will probably meet later than East and West.

Students have said that neither age nor sex have any real importance in insuring a good poetry teacher. They want a young spirit, a cooperative person, an understanding human being, a sparkling and vital personality, a well-dressed individual, and one who knows his subject and demands their best of the students. Any teacher can probably teach poetry best by infection; he must love it and impart love as well as knowledge.

Recommendations

1. The first remedy for the almost universal neglect of poetry is wide acquaintance with it. Probably even Ted Malone's selections and

Saturday Evening Post poems (and their like) should be encouraged, because if pleasure is derived from reading such verse, and people accustom themselves to associating pleasure with a rhymed form, they will begin to accept the concept "poetry" as a pleasurable one.

Popular poetry like "Casey at the Bat" and "Trees" will have to be explained away or grown away from instead of being forbidden. If a young person is thrilled or entertained by a second or tenth rate poem there is no profit in telling him he is a moron, or lacking in culture. Let him enjoy it, play with it, and hope that he moves through it by a process of growth just as he has done with his wornout clothes. When a teacher expresses horror at his choice, he will associate the teacher and all poetry in the resulting disillusion. Certainly all good teachers would like to teach good poetry, but the spark of life in love for poetry is so small that fanning it with almost any kind of poetry is better than letting it die completely.

Popularizing poetry means starting where students are. Every good teacher covets promotion of scholarship in students. However, there is no use to indulge in wishful thinking. Evidence proves that few of the best educated can get even meaning from poetry; literary criticism must be properly confined to the upper reaches of college and graduate study. But, if teachers will be content to begin where they can; if they will discard all prejudices about methods to be used, and experiment for pleasurable ones; if they will pioneer and persevere in providing wide source material so that personal choice is pleasantly possible; if they will encourage all efforts, and lead gently toward better choices, there is a definite possibility of interesting larger numbers of students.

2. To make people want to read poetry, materials for convenient reading must be everywhere. All the data points to the fact that students who like poetry usually have it in their home and read it along with everything else. Failing material in their homes, the ones who like poetry have often had a teacher who provided the poetry in some variety, and motivated them to extensive reading. Poetry is such an intensely personal literature that wide acquaintance is necessary for individual satisfaction.

Student reactions prove that all kinds of resources must be provided: browsing rooms with poetry books on every wall, poetry records to be played, material about poets placed handily instead of being buried in inaccessible stacks, record programs played not only to classes but in every place where music record programs may be heard, poetry records included for distribution in every place where records are available. All these and more must be used. Charles Laughton is pioneering in reading poetry on TV. Hearing him and encouraging other readers should be a part of the teacher's work. Poetry appreciation must be begun as music appreciation was twenty-five or more years ago. At every opportunity, poetry must be heard, must be taken for granted as good to know, must be presented by artists who make it good, and therefore enjoyable.

Little children must have records of poems suitable to them as they now have stories and music. Poetry for all ages must be handy for the people of each age; it must be well read to them by their teachers; arranged for in programs by students and experts; presented

on every possible occasion. Choices must stem from students who will either be guided through to good choices by skillful teachers, or left where they are by poor ones.

3. Whatever method of teaching is used must be cooperative and experiential. Class and instructor must work together to discover the kind of literature to be shared. Within reasonable limits, students should be allowed to plan their own courses, decide their own methods of study, look for values they consider good. Since they are at an age which wants to know "why", they should be allowed to ask questions and express themselves freely. Together the students and teacher must explore inchoate life given form and meaning by the form and music of the poem. Reading must be intensive enough in class for clear understanding; extensive enough outside of class to create a lively and persisting desire to continue to read. Those aspects of a poem which are susceptible of discussion and analysis should have proper explanation and evaluation on the basis that pleasure increases with understanding. Pleasure will also increase with the recognition of the goal of finding meaning geared to the student's interests and needs.

4. Since students like to hear poetry well read, it is necessary for the good teacher to get training in Interpretive Reading. With such training the teacher can not only read better, but can help her students to read aloud intelligently and well. The aims of interpretive reading teaching are those which develop in the learner the qualities which students say they like in a poetry teacher: vitality, good voice,

freedom of expression, freedom from mannerisms, ability to transmit emotion and meaning, clarity of understanding, and personal knowledge and appreciation.

The method of teaching poetry by teaching students to read well is recommended because it is a method calculated to help the student experience literature. It is a good method also because poetry was written to be read aloud. With such a method, there can be less attention to academic knowledge as such, less emphasis on historical backgrounds of writing, and less stress on metrics and forms. Data show these methods as among those which usually lead to dislike of poetry. Good oral reading can provide the things which students like in poetry. It gives the student a chance to demonstrate before his fellows. This is a part of the experiential learning previously discussed.

Oral reading is important because it emphasizes sound which is an integral part of the beauty of poetry. Without sound, meaning diminishes; with sound, nuances of color, flavor of words, depths of meaning are more likely to be experienced.

Suggestions For Further Study

Admittedly, attitudes in themselves are subjective. This investigation has discovered attitudes, but several important factors have contributed to making it a scientific study: (1) a consensus broad enough to prove factual indications, (2) the use of personal interviews with a sufficiently large number of people to insure accuracy of Inventory material, and (3) an almost complete agreement in the pattern

of attitudes secured from the data in the written Inventory, the personal interviews, and bibliographical evidence.

It was necessary to make such a study of attitudes as the first step in the study of poetry methods, materials, and teachers. These data must be known before other studies can profitably be made. However, this is only the basic study and many other studies must follow if there is to be a scientific body of knowledge on which to base poetry teaching.

Throughout this investigation questions have arisen over and over. Can we continue to accept the literary judgment (aesthetic criticism) of the so-called authorities - that is, the people who compile anthologies? If we accept the principle of literary criticism, do we necessarily conclude that those who set themselves up as critics are infallible in their choice of good poetry for young people to study? Is it better to make students like poetry without strict adherence to "absolute" aesthetic judgments? Since critics are not infallible, and adults do not agree, cannot we first start with student's choices? Having started with student's choices, must we submit them to literary critics for judgment?

What type of standard, what measuring instrument, must we give to students on which to base their ratings of poems? If they consistently vote high for a poem does that necessarily give "value" to the selection? Are we trying to develop powers of literary criticism in readers? If so, do we start where they are, with a goal of leading up to a higher standard, or do we start where time and/or critics have put us?

Should poems studied in school be "classics" or is there a measuring rod, a standard of values by which contemporary poetry can be judged

and utilized while it is "life" for the student? Do we have to wait until poets are dead and safely ensconced in a critics heaven of praise, or is there some way we can judge contemporary poetry as worthy of being studied by the students of the era in which it is written? Since evidence points up rather conclusively the fact that literary criticism is not possible to any great number of students before advanced study in college, what methods can be devised, what study-guides can be created to help teach recognition of the difference between good poetry and bad?

If we admit that the material in the usual texts is a poor choice, how can we determine scientifically the poetry to be put in a good text? Evidence has proved that adults largely make up present texts, and even when students are asked to choose, they choose between or among what was originally chosen by adults. What kind of study can be made to determine student choice? Who compiles the original list, and from what sources? Who is capable of determining what percentage of old and new material is suitable? If it is not to be just another choice from among previous choices, where does the investigator start? If students are allowed to pick the poems they study, will they not, in their lack of wide acquaintance with poetry, narrow the selection rather than widen it?

If we accept the principle of pleasurable learning of poetry, how far can we carry that and still make study profitable? Can study be enjoyable and still contain little or no value? Can the student get enjoyment for himself, and does he need the teacher for deeper values?

Students have shown in the data of this investigation that they like a challenging problem, that they like a teacher who really knows his material and who requires good work on the part of the student. What method or methods can embody the principles of pleasure and discipline at the same time?

Data in this investigation has shown that few teachers are prepared to do experimental teaching of poetry. They either do not or cannot use methods different to the traditional ones, and they do not even vary those much. What study-guides could be constructed to help such teachers teach experimentally? What audio-visual aids might be "packaged" for the untrained teacher with little equipment, to give him the benefit of up-to-date techniques? Would the preparation of such guides and furnishing of material make for a stereotyped method lacking in imagination, or could it somehow be adapted to the needs of the untrained teacher in a tangible, usable form, and still be flexible?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The following is a tabulation of total answers to Sections I and II of the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory. This table makes possible a quick reference to each individual question by number and is included because Appendix B does not tabulate answers in numerical order but shows answers to several questions grouped in relation to the same idea.

TABULATION OF TOTAL ANSWERS TO
POETRY ATTITUDES-INVENTORY

Question Number	Answer 1	Section I		Answer 4	Answer 5
		Answer 2	Answer 3		
1		204	6	3	
2		18	100	54	43
3	151	62			
4	18	25	59	59	65
5	1	105	96	11	
6	77	31	1	9	103
7	23	136	53		
8	100	98	17		
9	43	164	8		
10	22	32	107	18	
11	34	13	5	51	72
12	9	52	49	81	21
13	13	37	9	1	12
14	4	16	3	29	32
15	187	8	8	2	6
16	6	33	29	29	50
17	6	12	6	16	41
18	48	26	15	38	77
19	29	32	27	48	75
20	7	139	34	31	10
21	22	138	14	10	30
22	7	57	114	13	17

Continued next page

*Copies of the Inventory may be found at the end of Chapter II.

Question Number	Answer 1	Section I		Answer 4	Answer 5
		Answer 2	Answer 3		
23	8	56	131	27	
24	3	54	134	23	
25	22	63	52	41	
26	5	13	124	72	
27	2	19	113	54	
28	17	115	70	11	
29	13	74	108	16	
30	2	26	102	83	
31	11	32	144	38	
32	1	30	141	42	
33	3	49	139	17	
34	10	88	94	22	
35	2	17	134	65	
36	5	54	124	31	
37	4	22	123	68	
38	33	142	35	4	
39	10	59	119	32	
40	13	134	60	6	
41	29	117	76	7	
42	22	145	43	5	
43	4	43	113	48	
44	6	37	124	46	
45	5	50	118	42	
46	3	11	148	54	
47	14	93	94	13	
48	4	12	155	43	
49	1	52	139	24	
50	8	116	82	5	
51	3	21	132	59	
52	22	145	43	1	
53	27	142	40	4	
54	21	134	54	3	
55	36	56	94	27	
56	7	27	103	5	
57	40	115	57	4	
58	17	130	61	11	
59	6	37	108	62	
60	13	108	82	10	
61	4	38	143	26	
62	4	76	118	12	
63	17	104	87	6	
64	7	174	20	3	
65	21	135	52	5	

Continued next page

Question Number	Answer 1	Section I			Answer 5
		Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	
66	4	34	142	30	
67	15	152	44	2	
68	22	165	24	2	
69	25	144	47	5	
70	13	111	72	12	
71	22	144	43	2	
72		79	115	10	
73	8	90	105	9	
74	13	139	59	2	
75	18	155	37	2	
76	9	52	83	20	
77	21	147	42		
78	16	106	77	6	

Section II					
1		273	3	4	
2		20	179	49	32
3	163	117			
4	45	41	71	56	67
5	21	228	16	9	17
6	204	45	26	5	1
7	74	53	70	72	11
8	12	14	25	122	55
9	114	68	68	32	
10	140	72	51	17	
11	35	83	90	56	16
12	98	78	54	39	11
13	89	78	68	40	7
14	52	48	77	87	26
15	39	68	94	66	13
16	155	84	28	11	2
17	161	62	39	15	3
18	29	74	91	72	14
19	166	48	49	17	
20	158	67	37	16	2
21	265	8	4	3	
22	139	76	61	11	2
23	155	61	48	13	4
24	187	56	27	9	1
25	232	29	15	5	1
26	204	46	18	8	4
27	230	19	23	7	1

Question Number	Section II				
	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
28	88	70	80	28	10
29	102	96	52	29	1
30	83	91	58	42	5
31	50	45	93	65	16
32	26	48	98	81	27
33	26	27	86	108	33
34	218	45	12	5	1
35	248	17	13	1	1
36	187	17	38	7	
37	70	34	78	67	7
38	8	25	79	134	17
39	102	25	72	40	20
40	121	30	64	23	22
41	41	27	85	70	37
42	86	11	62	20	79
43	80	25	68	40	7
44	43	28	56	110	21
45	45	35	66	91	20
46	133	10	52	23	62
47	117	52	88	52	6
48	30	4	61	40	123
49	109	58	18	70	5
50	121	60	51	21	2
51	161	85	8	8	2
52	98	43	58	39	9
53	112	36	50	50	13
54	148	21	41	25	13
55	153	56	19	21	7
56	171	7	22	12	61
57	145	62	22	44	2
58	69	51	44	56	25
59	92	19	81	43	29
60	70	16	78	46	57
61	35	17	77	82	75
62	20	20	71	109	31
63	22	12	92	64	19
64	197	43	15	23	1
65	167	45	17	13	17
66	195	60	26		
67	28	121	131		
68	26	52	202		
69	48	161	71		
70	14	40	226		

Continued next page

Question Number	Section II				
	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
71	12	114	154		
72	7	124	135		
73	83	136	61		
74	9	104	167		
75	74	125	77		
76	25	27	217		
77	51	145	84		
78	10	68	193		
79	25	154	56	1	23
80	20	113	19	12	102
81	22	46	23	9	161
82	54	93	32	19	62
83	13	27	11	25	184
84	20	62	14	11	132
85	17	92	24	9	124
86	21	122	53	10	52
87	42	61	7	27	134
88	109	43	14	59	49
89	18	33	14	59	165
90	25	57	100	4	72
91	30	44	12	22	148
92	208	51			
93	215	50			
94	44	216			
95	209	53			
96	162	96			
97	174	85			
98	14	240			
99	172	88			
100	168	88			
101	194	64			
102	147	104			
103	66	197			
104	75	182			
105	44	212			
106	207	46			
107	50	207			
108	87	166			
109	65	189			
110	27	225			
111	33	220			
112	13	239			
113	51	201			

Continued next page

Section II					
Question Number	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
114	126	126			
115	57	191			
116	65	183			
117	32	205			
118	158	88			
119	138	106			
120	161	87			
121	42	206			
122	68	80			
123	37	209			
124	48	200			
125	192	50			
126	137	116			
127	32	211			
128	174	68			
129	69	172			
130	49	191			
131	140	102			
132	53	188			
133	185	50			
134	24	19	67	7	101
135	13	25	45	7	122
136	23	16	66	79	11
137	6	6	132	6	42
138	8	38	47	8	96
139	10	30	51	5	102
140	7	13	85	64	23
141	10	22	57	15	98
142	11	26	66	4	83
143	7	25	59	7	91
144	11	24	86	15	57
145	15	20	85	55	16
146	22	15	82	57	10
147	16	11	78	63	15
148	8	3	58	16	101
149	11	13	107	37	11
150	16	10	94	55	6
151	24	14	73	53	10
152	16	6	76	65	6
153	10	6	85	62	8
154	9	9	82	50	8
155	14	10	83	38	15
156	14	21	33	9	66

Continued next page

Question Number	Section II				
	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
157	7	14	75	53	13
158	16	14	57	63	12
159	14	16	55	69	12
160	7	16	55	4	81
161	5	17	73	2	64
162	3	19	46	8	85
163	13	10	69	61	4
164	8	8	123	8	10
165	12	8	78	54	5
166	10	9	79	50	9
167	4	15	38	57	91
168	6	17	65	5	62
169	4	8	122	11	7
170	15	10	58	5	64
171	27	13	36	48	10
172	20	6	59	61	6
173	6	17	67	8	54
174	5	10	125	4	6
175	7	7	117	4	5
176	30	16			
177		16			
178	13	30			
179	29	16			
180	20	24			
181	26	18			
182	3	40			
183	22	22			
184	24	19			
185	25	18			
186	21	21			
187	14	28			
188	11	34			
189	12	33			
190	29	14			
191	12	35			
192	19	25			
193	17	26			
194	10	33			
195	6	36			
196	5	36			
197	10	31			
198	17	24			
199	6	35			

Continued next page

Question Number	Section II				
	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
200	12	30			
201	12	18			
202	24	19			
203	20	22			
204	27	15			
205	13	33			
206	13	30			
207	9	34			
208	9	34			
209	26	17			
210	20	21			
211	6	37			
212	29	14			
213	15	27			
214	12	31			
215	18	24			
216	13	28			
217	26	13			
218	2	4	21		13
219	3	3	12	3	17
220	4	1	17	13	3
221		5	1	21	10
222		7	10	1	12
223	5	2	15	4	12
224	2	2	14	15	5
225	4	6	14	1	13
226		7	17	1	13
227	3	7	12	1	15
228	3	5	20	2	8
229	3	3	24	7	1
230	3	4	18	10	3
231	2	4	18	11	3
232	3	2	12	3	18
233	4	4	21	6	4
234	6	5	20	5	2
235	4	7	18	9	1
236	2	5	18	11	2
237	2	2	23	8	4
238	2	5	17	9	3
239	5	3	20	5	3
240	2	6	21		7
241	5	3	19	8	2

Continued next page

Question Number	Section II				
	Answer 1	Answer 2	Answer 3	Answer 4	Answer 5
242	6	6	10	12	1
243	2	5	17	11	1
244	4	4	17	2	10
245	2	4	18		12
246	5	2	12	2	15
247	1	3	18	11	3
248		3	26	4	3
249	4	4	14	16	1
250	1	5	15	10	4
251	4	3	11	3	16
252	3	4	19	3	6
253	2	3	26	3	2
254	2	3	16	4	11
255	7	3	12	10	4
256	6	2	13	11	4
257	2	5	20	1	9
258		5	30	1	
259	4	2	23	1	2

APPENDIX B

ITEMIZED RESUMÉ OF ANSWERS TO THE POETRY ATTITUDES-INVENTORY,
ACCORDING TO A CATEGORICAL ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS

The following is a tabulation of all the answers given in Parts I and II of the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory copies of which may be found at the end of Chapter II. It is a written summary analyzing total reactions and is organized according to the ideas which they answer, as follows:

Part I

General information--age, class, etc.; questions 1-5
 General likes and dislikes in all reading: questions 5-23.
 Specific problems in likes and dislikes of poetry: questions
 23-78

Part II

General information--age, class, etc.: questions 1-5
 Specific problems on likes and dislikes of poetry
 caused by poetry teaching methods: questions 6-65
 Specific problems on likes and dislikes of poetry
 caused by teachers: questions 134-259.

Inventory of Student Attitudes Toward Poetry

Two hundred and four college freshmen, six sophomores, and three juniors answered the first section of the Inventory of Favorable and Unfavorable Poetry Reactions. This total of two hundred and thirteen students, studying in the Department of Written and Spoken English, was made up of one hundred and forty-eight men and sixty-four women, eighteen of whom were 17 years old, one hundred were eighteen years old, fifty-two nineteen years old, and forty three twenty years or older. Eighteen

had lived on farms most of their lives, twenty-five in villages of 250 to 2500 population, fifty-nine in towns of 2500 to 25,000 population, fifty seven in cities of 25,000 to 100,000 population, and sixty-five in cities over 100,000 population.

Questions 5-20 were on general likes and dislikes in reading. Not all students answered each question because the men only answered one question pertaining to their opinion as to why boys dislike poetry if they do, and the women answered the same question about girls and women. Also, if their answer in question 9 indicated that they never read poetry they skipped the next three questions pertaining to enjoyment or lack of enjoyment in reading poetry. This accounts for the fact that there are not the full number of answers to these questions. The totals also show that in spite of the fact that directions were clear, some boys answered the question about girls, and some of the girls answered the question about boys.

One person said he reads none (of any kind of reading) for pastime, one hundred and five indicate little pastime reading, ninety-six read often, and eleven read constantly.

Of those who read for pastime, seventy-seven prefer fiction (novels, plays, short stories, etc.); thirty-one read biography, history science, magazines such as Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, etc.; one person reads poetry for pastime; nine read movie magazines, "true stories," comics, detective stories, and one hundred and three prefer newspapers and such magazines as Reader's Digest, Ladies' Home Journal, Cosmopolitan and Saturday Evening Post.

Twenty-three students said that no poetry materials (books, magazines, etc.) were available in their homes; one hundred and thirty-six said a few such sources were available, while fifty-three said many such materials were available in their homes. One hundred said their parents never read poetry either to themselves or aloud to the family. Ninety-eight said this happened infrequently, and seventeen answered frequently.

Forty-three said that they never read poetry; one hundred and sixty-four read it infrequently, and eight read it frequently. Of those who read poetry, twenty-two read it with little or no enjoyment, thirty-two with indifference, one hundred and seven with a fair amount of enjoyment, and eighteen with great pleasure.

Thirty-four read poetry for the moral or sentiment involved; thirteen for recognition of such elements as similes, metaphors, rhyme schemes, etc.; five read it for the purpose of making a careful examination of the formal elements, structure, ideas and their relationship; fifty-one read it for the fun of reading poetry and seventy-two for the beauty of the words and the ideas they express.

In question twelve, nine said they dislike poetry heartily finding it a form of punishment. Fifty-two neither like it nor dislike it because of lack of good background in reading and studying poetry; forty-nine felt they would like poetry if easier understanding were made possible; eighty-one like poetry generally but prefer usually the simple or familiar poetry. Twenty-one said they like poetry very much finding it enjoyable, relaxing, and inspiring.

In question thirteen there was an attempt to find out why those who dislike poetry do so. Students were instructed to omit answering this question if they like poetry. Of those who dislike poetry, thirteen dislike it because of their general dislike of all reading; thirty-seven because they find poetry uninteresting and difficult; nine because they have read little or none of it; one because he never studied it in school, and twelve because their study of it in school was unpleasant.

Question fourteen was also for those who dislike poetry and asked which of five elements best accounted for the dislike. Four found comments of parents discouraging; sixteen had teachers who didn't like poetry or whose method of teaching it made it seem "silly"; three had a feeling poetry is effeminate and that studying it is a "sissy" occupation; twenty-nine said that the kind of poetry given them was uninteresting to read, and thirty-two said they do not know why they do not like it--just never seemed to.

In question fifteen the attitude of like or dislike was approached from the standpoint of attitudes of friends. One hundred and eighty-seven felt that the attitude of friends influenced them neither way; eight felt that they began to like and understand poetry because many of their friends liked it; eight first got the idea that poetry was "poor stuff" and uninteresting to red-blooded people from attitudes of friends; two liked poetry as children and feel they would probably have gone on liking it if their friends had not sneered at them for the liking, and six have always liked poetry and still like it so much they would not change regardless of the attitude of their friends.

Question sixteen was the one to be answered by men only on the subject of why they thought boys who do dislike poetry feel this dislike. Six feel that most boys instinctively dislike poetry; thirty-three believe that most boys who dislike poetry begin unfavorable attitudes at an age when they get the idea that poetry is "sissy," that is, about the time they begin to want to be cowboys, policemen, mounted police, etc.; twenty-nine answered that most boys who dislike poetry learn to do so in school because of poor choice of material and poor teaching, while another twenty-nine believe most boys who dislike poetry do so because they were forced to learn it and revolted against compulsion. Fifty men believe that most boys who are indifferent to poetry have that attitude because of inability to understand it and would probably like it if provided means of understanding.

Women were to answer question seventeen about girls. Six feel that most girls instinctively like poetry; twelve believe that most girls go through a period of disliking poetry similar to the reaction of boys; six say that most girls continue their natural liking of poetry begun in their childhood because it is the general opinion of society that poetry is suitable for girls; seventeen think that most girls who dislike poetry learn to do so because of compulsory choice of material or poor teaching, and forty-one believe that most girls learn to like poetry when they understand it. Since this number totals more than the number of women answering the inventory, it is evident that some of the men answered it, contrary to the directions.

When asked to choose the answer in question eighteen which most accurately described their experience with poetry, forty-eight people said they had always liked poetry and could not remember any particular time when they began liking it; twenty-six had never liked poetry, had had no experience with it which enabled them to like it, and felt they never would; fifteen liked poetry as young children, lost their pleasure in it, and only re-gained it after a rewarding experience in high school; thirty-eight remember no reaction to poetry as young children but good teaching caused them to learn to like it, and seventy-seven say they do not like or dislike poetry because they have not read or studied it much but think they would like it if they understood it.

Question nineteen attempted to ascertain attitudes toward memorization of poetry and its effect on like and dislike. One hundred and sixty-six people said their approach to poetry is negative because they were forced to memorize it and recite it in class without understanding it. Forty-eight say they like to memorize certain lines of poetry because the lines are easy to remember and give one something to think about when there is nothing else to do. Forty-nine like to memorize such selections as Laertes advice to his son because they believe such a thought will live with them all their lives. Nineteen never like to memorize poetry and no reason is sufficient to make them like to memorize. No answer was given to the fifth choice "I like to memorize the poems I enjoy."

Question twenty dealt with the method of learning poetry. It asked what makes (or would make if the student had the experience) a poem most

interesting to him. Seven feel that hearing it over the radio would be best, one hundred and thirty-nine prefer hearing it read aloud by a good reader, thirty-four prefer to read silently to themselves, thirty-one like to read aloud to themselves, and ten like reading aloud in a Choral Reading group which is for poetry what a singing choir is for music.

Question twenty-one points up the lack of poetry study in schools or elsewhere. Twenty-two had studied almost no poetry and said they find it difficult to answer questions because of lack of experience; one hundred and thirty-eight or almost three-fourths the total number had never studied poetry as a special course but their experience of it was in English classes where poetry was a very short part of the work; fourteen had studied poetry extensively through grades and high school; ten felt that study or lack of it had never affected their attitude toward poetry as they had learned it for themselves, while thirty said they had had two or more courses in poetry in grade or high school and gained greatly from these.

When asked, on a basis of personal experience, to recommend one of five things in relation to teaching poetry, seven feel that poetry as such should never be taught in junior and senior high school; fifty-seven feel that poetry should be a definite part of all English courses and should be given approximately the same time as prose; one hundred and fourteen feel that if poetry were well taught and encouraged by browsing rooms, free choice of material, phonograph records, etc. students would learn to appreciate it and like it; thirteen feel that the

study of poetry should be postponed until college when the student is more mature and therefore more ready to understand it, and seventeen believe that since poetry has proved its worth through the ages as an emotional stimulant and a literary study it should be a part of the course of study in all grades from kindergarten through college.

Questions 23-78 inclusive are in the form of statements to which response was requested according to a key: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, (4) strongly disagree. For purposes of deducing principles from the answers given in the inventory, statements have been grouped in categories. More than one question was usually asked on the same idea so that a cross-checking might be a double surety of accuracy, or that there might be profitable comparison when answers did not exactly jibe. The questions fall into the following categories:

I. Content of the poem

Questions 24-28-29-52-54-66-68

II. Critical judgment of poetry

Questions 25-30-43

III. Language of Poetry

Questions 23-27-36-41-53-62-63-75

IV. Kinds of poems

Questions 23-27-32-34-40-44-49-61-64-65-76

V. Forms of poetry (effect of)

Questions 33-72

VI. Practical vs. the imaginative

Questions 33-72

VII. Effect of poetic elements

Questions 42-71-77

VIII. Importance of studying

1. Enlarges living

Questions 69-70-74-78

2. Emotional impact

Questions 46-50

3. Value to students

Questions 59-60

IX. Poetry vs. prose

Questions 45-73

X. Methods

1. Formal vs. informal study

Questions 38-39-47-57-58

2. Oral Reading

Questions 46-55-67

I. Contents of the poem

On the statement (24) that "Poetry should be read primarily for its moral values," three strongly agree, fifty-four agree, one hundred and thirty-four disagree and twenty-three strong disagree. Question 28 stated that poetry should express the truths of human experience with which seventeen strongly agree; one hundred and fifteen agree; seventy disagree, and eleven strongly disagree. Questions 29 stated that poetry is not interesting unless it tells a story. Thirteen strongly agree; seventy-four agree; one hundred and eight disagree while sixteen strongly

disagree. When questioned about the statement, number 52, that "poetry is a pleasure because it broadens thinking by giving knowledge of many centuries of living," twenty-two strongly agree; one hundred and forty-five agree; forty-three disagree, and one strongly disagree. Statement 54 that "poetry is enjoyable because the beauty and inspiration help counterbalance some of the drab realities of life" had twenty one reactions of strong agreement, one hundred and thirty-four agreement, fifty-four disagreements, and three strong disagreements. On question 66, "students like poetry which conveys an idea": twenty-two agree strongly, one hundred and sixty-five agree, twenty-four disagree and two disagree strongly. Finally, on the idea content (66), the statement that "because no two people can get the same meaning or the author's exact meaning from a poem, it loses its value as truth" received these reactions: four strongly agree, thirty-eight agree, one hundred and forty-two disagree and twenty strongly disagree.

II. Critical Judgment of Poetry

Since a great many teachers feel that one of the objects of studying poetry is to develop critical ability in judgment of it, three questions were asked in relation to evaluation. Statement 25 was "the only thing that counts in judging poetry as good and bad is whether or not you like it." With this twenty-two strongly agree, sixty-three agree, fifty-two disagree, and forty-one strongly disagree so there seems to be highly divided opinion on the subject. Statement 30 was to the effect that "that which is good taste in poetry should be decided upon by literary critics." With this two strongly agree, twenty-six agree, one

hundred and two disagree, and eighty-three strongly disagree so they evidently are not in favor of leaving judgment to experts. A similar statement with a slightly different approach was made in number 43 which stated: "no student is in a position to challenge the worth of a poem which literary authorities have declared a classic." Four strongly agree, forty-three agree, one hundred and thirteen disagree, and forty-eight strongly disagree. Students evidently believe that their own likes and dislikes, as well as the opinion of critics, have something to do with the evaluation of poetry.

III. Language of Poetry

The following statements all relate to the ability of the student to understand the language of poetry:

No. 23: Most poetry seems like a meaningless jumble of words.

No. 27: Modern poetry cannot be understood.

No. 36: Most poets write a language which only they can understand.

No. 41: There is no use to try to read poetry in which the vocabulary is out of your reach.

No. 62: Poets insist on saying things in a very round-about-way, their comparisons making the meaning obscure.

Eight strongly agree with number 23; fifty-six agree; one hundred and thirty-one disagree; twenty-seven strongly disagree. On number 27, two strongly agree, nine agree; one hundred and thirteen disagree; fifty-four strongly disagree. With number 36 five strongly agree, fifty-four agree, one hundred and twenty-four disagree, and thirty-one strongly disagree. On number 41, twenty-nine strongly agree, one hundred and

seventeen agree, seventy-six disagree, and seven strongly disagree.

Therefore, a large majority think poetry is not a meaningless jumble but if seventy-nine do so believe, the picture seems rather dark. Finally, on number 62, four strongly agree, seventy-six disagree, one hundred and eighteen agree, and twelve strongly agree.

Only twenty-one feel that modern poetry is not understandable, while the great majority feel that it can be understood. Practically the same number feel that poets do write a language which others can understand. A strong majority of those answering agree that there is no use to try to read poetry in which the vocabulary is out of your reach, but the great majority also said that poets make things obscure.

Fifty-three, sixty-three and seventy-five approach the problem of understanding work in poetry from an opposite viewpoint; No. 53: Poetry is valuable to the reader because it expresses beauty in a lovely combination of words beyond the power of the reader to express for himself. No. 63: The vivid and beautiful word pictures in poetry make the enjoyment of poetry inevitable. No. 75: Beautiful words can give the most insignificant subject importance.

With 53, twenty-seven strongly agree, one hundred and forty-two agree, forty disagree, and four disagree strongly, on the importance of beautiful words in poetry. With 63, seventeen strongly agree, one hundred and four agree, eighty-seven disagree, and six strongly disagree. While a majority agree, there is a very large number who do not believe in the inevitability of enjoyment of poetry because of beautiful word pictures. With number 75, eighteen strongly agree, one hundred and fifty-five agree,

thirty-seven disagree, and two strongly disagree, so they evidently believe in the power of beautiful words. Eighteen agree and 155 strongly agree on the power of beautiful words to give significance. Only 39 of the total number disagree. Lack of understanding of beautiful words seems to be the explanation.

IV. Kinds of poems

This section deals with kinds of poems and includes statements 31-32-34-40-44-49-61-64-65-66-76.

Opinions on familiar or popular poetry are found in thirty-one and thirty-two:

No. 31: Familiar poems are the only enjoyable ones.

No. 32: Only poetry of popular taste should be written.

For 31, eleven strongly agree, thirty-two agree, one hundred and forty-four disagree, and thirty-eight strongly disagree. For 32, one strongly agrees, thirty agree, one hundred and forty-one disagree, and forty-two strongly disagree. Therefore, a strong majority agree that familiar and popular poetry is not the only kind to study.

Thirty-four, forty and sixty-one show attitudes toward classical poetry:

No. 34: Classical poetry cannot serve as a guide for modern living.

No. 40: Classical poetry offers opportunities for pleasant experiences.

No. 61: Present courses in poetry using texts largely made up of classical material judged by literary experts as worth studying are the ideal poetry classes.

With 34, ten strongly agree, eighty eight agree, ninety four disagree, and twenty-two strongly disagree. With 40, thirteen strongly agree, one hundred and thirty-four agree, sixty agree, thirty-eight strongly agree, one hundred and forty-three disagree, and twenty-six strongly disagree. There is only a slight majority who believe that classical poetry can serve as a guide for modern living; a strong majority believes that it offers opportunities for pleasant experiences; and a quite strong majority are against the kinds of classes studying material judged by experts as being classical and worthy of study.

The difficult or easy meaning of poetry was studied from the standpoint of four statements as follows:

No. 44: The meaning of poetry should be perfectly clear on the first reading.

No. 49: Poetry written by American authors should be studied most of the time because such poetry better fits the lives of the readers.

No. 61: Poetry conveys thought in subtle and figurative words but the meaning can be found if the student attacks it in the right frame of mind.

With 44, six strongly agree, thirty-seven agree, one hundred and twenty-four disagree, and forty-six strongly disagree. With 49, one strongly disagrees, fifty-two agree, one hundred and thirty-nine disagree, and twenty-four strongly disagree. With 61, seven strongly agree, one hundred and seventy-four agree, twenty disagree, and three strongly disagree. Therefore a strong majority do not expect understanding on the

first reading; they believe that authors besides American authors should be studied; and they strongly believe that the student can get the meaning if he attacks it in the right frame of mind.

Statements 65 and 76 deal with the question of difficulty versus simplicity.

No. 65: Great poetry is a challenge to the student.

No. 76: Too simple poetry has little appeal.

With 65 twenty-one strongly agree, one hundred and thirty-five agree, fifty-two disagree, and five strongly disagree, showing that a large majority agree with the worth of the study of great poetry. With 76, twenty-five strongly agree, twenty-seven agree, and 217 disagree. This directly contradicts 65 if the students properly understood the statement. In personal interviews with the students who answered the inventory and in whose answers to these two questions a contradiction was found, it was discovered that "too simple" meant nothing to them. When it was explained what was meant, they said they had not understood this term. This is probably true of a great majority of the students.

V. Forms of Poetry (effects of)

These questions deal with the effect of forms of poetry on learning.

No. 33: The form in which the poem is written makes an art form which the average person cannot hope to understand.

No. 72: Poetry written in free verse form is hard to follow and therefore less enjoyable than other forms of poetry.

Of 33, three students say they strongly agreed, forty-nine agreed, one hundred and thirty-nine disagreed, and seventeen strongly disagree. While fifty-two evidently find difficulty with the form of poetry, a majority feel that it can be understood in spite of its form. A large majority disagree that the form of free verse adds to the difficulty of reading.

VI. Practical vs. the Imaginative

No. 26: Since poetry is not essential to earning a living, a study of it is a waste of time.

No. 35: Poetry has no practical or useful ideas.

No. 37: Poetry is no sort of reading for a red-blooded man.

No. 51: Reading poetry for leisure pastime is improbable for any but high brows.

No. 56: In times of stress with resulting political and emotional upheaval the study of poetry should be abolished in favor of engineering, science, etc., that is, favor the practical over the imaginative.

With 26, five strongly agree, thirteen agree, one hundred and twenty-four disagree, and seventy-two disagree strongly so a strong majority believes poetry reading is not a waste of time. With 35 two strongly agree, seventeen agree, one hundred and thirty-four disagree, and sixty-five disagree strongly, so again a strong majority believes poetry can be practical and useful. With 37, four and twenty-two are in agreement, one hundred and twenty-three and sixty-eight in disagreement so they

strongly oppose the idea that poetry reading is not for red-blooded men. With 51, there are three and twenty-one in agreement, and one hundred and thirty-two and fifty-nine in disagreement so again they believe that leisure reading of poetry is not wasteful. Number 56 with which seven strongly agree, twenty-seven agree, one hundred and three disagree, and five strongly disagree again shows that a decided number favors the study of the imaginative.

VII. Effect of Poetic Elements.

No. 42: Since rhythm is a basic element in all of man's life it follows that poetry could make a large contribution to mental enjoyment.

No. 71: Sound in poetry, like music, is pleasing to the ear and adds meaning as does a crescendo of notes in a symphonic movement.

No. 77: Poetry expresses an inner emotion, viewpoint, or mood in a creative arrangement of words which are not cold and instructional but imaginative.

With 42, two strongly agree, one hundred and forty-five agree, forty-three disagree, and five strongly disagree. A majority clearly appreciate the value of rhythm. With 71, twenty-two strongly agree, one hundred and forty-four agree, forty-three disagree, and two strongly disagree. With 77, twenty-one strongly agree, one hundred and forty-seven agree, forty-two disagree. There is, then, strong agreement that the elements of rhythm, sound, and mood are valuable and imaginative assets.

VIII. Importance of Studying

This division deals with the importance of studying poetry and approaches it from three angles: (1) enlargement of living, (2) emotional impact, and (3) value to the students.

(1) includes the following statements:

No. 69: When poetry is well read it permits the reader to live a vicarious enriching experience shared with the creative mind of the author.

No. 70: Students can enjoy Chicago if they have been there only once or not at all because Carl Sandburg crystallized its robust action in living words.

No. 74: Imagination and talent of the poet emphasize colors, sounds, smells and everything in ordinary living until all living is enlarged and made more beautiful.

No. 78: Poetry is an individual experience and is written by an individual to the individual reader.

With 69 twenty-five strongly agree, one hundred and forty-four agree, forty-seven disagree, and five strongly disagree. With 70, thirteen strongly agree, one hundred and eleven agree, seventy-two disagree, and twelve strongly disagree. With 74, thirteen strongly agree, one hundred and thirty-nine agree, fifty-nine disagree, and two strongly disagree. With 78, sixteen strongly agree, one hundred and six agree, seventy-seven disagree, and six strongly disagree.

A decidedly high number therefore feel that poetry is an enriching vicarious experience and that the art of the poet enhances living and

increases beauty. A majority feel that poetry is an individual experience but a large number disagree with this viewpoint. In personal interviews it was discovered that this question was rather subtle for understanding, too involved in individual versus universal for the student to grasp the implications. Therefore, it is likely there is not enough significance in the answer to 70 to make it a worthy guide.

(2) includes the following statements in relation to emotional impact:

No. 40: Embarrassment is the only possible reaction to poetry expressing intense emotional feeling.

No. 50: Poetry is important because it is an emotional stimulant.

With statement 40 three students say they strongly agree, eleven agree, one hundred and forty-eight disagree, and fifty-four disagree strongly. With statement 50, eight students say they agree strongly, one hundred and sixteen agree, eighty-two disagree, and five disagree strongly. A large majority therefore disagree with the idea that the emotion of poetry is embarrassing but there is also a large number who do not find it an emotional stimulant.

(3) deals with the value of poetry to students and includes statements 59 and 60.

No. 59: Every college freshman should be required to study poetry.

No. 60: Since poetry has proved its cultural worth from the beginning of recorded time, it is required of the truly educated person that he have a knowledge of poetry.

With 59, six strongly agree, thirty-seven agree, one hundred and eight disagree, and sixty-two strongly disagree so that there is an overwhelming majority against compulsory study. With 60, thirteen strongly

agree, one hundred and eight agree, eighty-two disagree, and ten strongly disagree. Thus there is a fairly close vote on the subject of the truly educated person who must have a knowledge of poetry. Over half agree that there is need of poetry in the life of an educated person but a great majority are against requiring its study. They give honor to the idea but are cold to the implementing of it.

IX. Poetry Vs. Prose

IX is made up of two statements about the difference between prose and poetry.

No. 73: A good poem on "Spring" is better than any prose description.

No. 45: Most poems express nothing which could not as well be expressed in prose.

With 73, eight are in strong agreement, ninety agree, one hundred and five disagree, and nine strongly disagree so there is fairly even division of opinion. With 45, five strongly agree, fifty agree, one hundred and eighteen disagree, and forty-two strongly disagree, so a clear majority is against the fact that prose expresses everything as well as poetry.

X. Methods

Section X deals with methods (1) being on the subject of formal vs. informal study of poetry and (2) dealing with the method of oral reading.

No. 36: More works of poetry should be easily available to increase interest and familiarity.

- No. 47: Classes requiring only browsing in poetry would be more helpful than those requiring formal study.
- No. 57: High school seniors and college freshmen would enjoy poetry more if allowed to study poetry of their own selection.
- No. 39: Poetry can be enjoyed only after making a formal analysis of it.
- No. 58: Discussion of kinds of rhyme and marking poetry lines off into "feet," (the number of accented and unaccented syllables) helps make the music of the poetry more evident.

With statement 38 thirty-three strongly agree, one hundred and forty-two agree, thirty-five disagree, and four strongly disagree; therefore they strongly believe that works of poetry should be more readily available. With statement 47, fourteen say they strongly agree, ninety-three agree, ninety-four disagree and thirteen strongly disagree so there is an evenly divided opinion. The reply would seem to indicate that browsing would help but that some aids in the way of teaching and explanation might implement self-direction. With statement 57 forty strongly agree, one hundred and fifteen agree, fifty-seven disagree and four strongly disagree. Here a large majority clearly agrees that students would enjoy poetry more if allowed to do their own choosing. It seem permissible to deduce from these expressions that students would like better a greater leeway in the choice of poetry which could be implemented greatly by adequate browsing rooms. Their own choices could then be brought to class for the aid of the teacher who could increase the understanding of

the student who would then browse further because of more mature knowledge and interest.

Statements 39 and 58 deal with a formal study of poetry. With 39 ten strongly agree, fifty-nine agree, one hundred and nineteen disagree and thirty-two strongly disagree. With 58 seventeen strongly agree, one hundred and thirty agree, sixty-one disagree, and eleven strongly disagree. Thus, strangely, a large majority vote for the formal study of "feet" in poetry but in 39 they say strongly that poetry does not need a formal analysis for enjoyment, but needs informal study instead. Since in later personal interviews, almost without exception, students spoke of hating "iambic pentameter" and their lack of comprehension of what it was all about, it seems likely that they are advocating here some means to augment understanding, and lack an exact knowledge of what the question indicates. Most students said they cannot learn it without help and perhaps this is, in their minds, one way of getting help.

Oral reading as a method of learning poetry is discussed in statements 48, 55, and 67.

No. 48: Since poetry was written to be read aloud there is no enjoyment in reading it silently.

No. 55: Good oral reading of poetry by the teacher without comment, discussion, testing, and marking would increase the pleasure and value of it.

No. 67: Poetry which is lyrical is more enjoyable when read aloud.

With 48, four strongly agree, twelve agree, one hundred and fifty-five disagree, and forty-three strongly disagree. With 55, thirty-six

strongly agree, fifty-six agree, ninety-four disagree, and twenty-seven strongly disagree. This means that there is a majority who would like the oral reading method but a sizeable number would not like this method. With 47, fifteen strongly agree, one hundred and fifty-two agree, forty-four disagree, and two strongly disagree. Therefore a large majority prefer lyrical poetry read aloud. At the same time the high disagreement with statement 48 shows that students also like to read poetry silently, or at least since they have probably done mostly silent reading they are in the habit of so reading it.

Inventory of Student Attitudes Toward Poetry Teaching

Two hundred and eighty students enrolled in the Written and Spoken English course of Michigan State College answered Section 2 of the Inventory of Student Attitudes Toward Poetry Teaching. Of these, two hundred and seventy-three are freshmen, three are sophomores and four are juniors. One hundred and sixty-three are males and one hundred and seventeen are females. Twenty are 17 years old, one hundred and seventy-nine are 18 years old, forty-nine are 19 years old, and thirty-two are 20 years or older. Forty-five have lived on farms most of their lives, forty-one in villages from 250 to 2,500 population; seventy-one in towns from 2500 to 25,000 population; fifty-six in cities from 25,000 to 100,000 population; and, sixty-seven in cities over 100,000 population.

As with those students who answered Section 1 of the Inventory, these were asked their experience in studying poetry so that a check could be made of their ability to answer questions. Twenty-one had studied

almost no poetry and found it difficult to answer questions because of lack of experience. Two hundred and twenty-eight have never studied poetry in a special course but only as a very brief part of English courses. Sixteen had studied poetry extensively throughout grade and high school work. Nine felt that study or lack of it in school had never affected their attitude toward poetry as they learned it for themselves. Finally, seventeen had two or more courses in grade or high school and gained greatly from them. This indicates that the overwhelming majority of students have had comparatively little teaching about poetry.

Poetry Teaching Methods

Questions 6-65 inclusive are on poetry teaching methods which were answered on a double key. The first was in regard to the use of the method designated and the second was in regard to the student's opinion of the method. Key A is: 1. Never used it, (2) Seldom used it, (3) Occasionally used it, (4) Frequently used it, (5) Used it exclusively. Key B is: 1. Since I have never experienced this method I have no reaction to it; 2. Feel that had this method been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking; 3. This way had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry; 4. This way contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry; 5. This way contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry.

For statements 6-36 "formal lectures from notes on poetry previously assigned in the text from which all poetry selections were taken" two hundred and four said teachers never used it, forty-five answered seldom, twenty-six answered occasionally, five frequently, and one exclusively.

Only 248 answered according to Key B. Of these, one hundred and eighty seven indicated no reaction since they had no experience, seventeen felt that the method, if used, would have helped understanding and liking, thirty-eight indicated no influence, and seven said it contributed to a favorable attitude.

On questions 7-37, seventy-four had not experienced "informal lectures without notes on previously assigned poetry from the text," fifty three seldom, seventy occasionally, seventy-two frequently, and eleven exclusively. Only two hundred and fifty-six students answered 37 about which seventy have too little experience for reaction, thirty-four would have liked to try the method, seventy-eight say the method had no influence, sixty seven feel it contributed to their liking, and seven feel it contributed to their dislike.

"Class discussion on previously assigned poetry" is statement 8-38. Of 228 answering statement 8, twelve never experienced it, fourteen seldom, twenty-five occasionally, one hundred and twenty-two frequently, and fifty-five exclusively. Eight students had no reaction; twenty-five would have liked it; seventy felt it had no influence; one hundred and thirty-four felt it added to liking; and, seventeen felt it added to dislike.

"Assigned poetry studied individually in the classroom with the teacher serving as consultant" (9-39) elicited 114 never, 68 seldom, 60 occasionally, and 32 frequently. Of 259 answers to Key B, 102 had no reaction, 25 would have liked it, 72 felt it had no influence, 40 indicated it added to their liking, and twenty said it added to their dislike.

"Individual students reporting on assigned poetry to assembled class with teacher and class criticism" is the statement of 10-40. One hundred and forty never used it; seventy-two seldom; fifty-one occasionally, and seventeen report frequent use. Nobody had known it to be used exclusively. One hundred and twenty-one had no reaction because of no experience, thirty feel it would have helped, sixty-four feel it makes no difference, twenty-three that it added to their favorable attitude, and twenty-two to their unfavorable attitude.

"Individual student-reading of teacher-assigned material such as the life of an author or authors, the poems of a period, etc." is number 11-41. It was given thirty-five never, eighty-three seldom, ninety occasionally, fifty-six frequently and sixteen exclusively. Of these forty-one had no reaction, twenty-seven would have liked it, eighty-five felt it had no influence, seventy said it added to their liking and thirty-seven said it their dislike. This totals only 260 answers out of the 280.

"Assignment of several poems and their authors for report next day without previous help or clarification by the teacher" was 12-42. Ninety-eight never, seventy-eight seldom, fifty-four occasionally, thirty-nine frequently, and eleven exclusively were the answers. Of 258 answers to Key B there were eighty-six with no reaction, eleven would have liked it, sixty-two indicated no influence, twenty felt it added to liking, and seventy indicated it added to their dislike.

Questions 13-43 dealt with "silent reading of poems in class, questions allowed, with further assignment for discussion on the following day." This elicited eighty nine never, seventy-eight seldom, sixty-eight

occasionally, forty frequently, and seven exclusively. Of two hundred and forty-nine answers, eighty indicated no reaction, twenty-five would have liked it, sixty eight indicated no influence, fifty-six felt it added to liking, while twenty felt it added to dislike.

"Assignment of poems one day, these poems read aloud by students the following day, followed by discussion" was the method of 14-44 eliciting fifty-two never, forty-eight seldom, seventy-seven occasionally, eighty-seven frequently, and twenty-six exclusively. For 44, forty-three indicated no reaction, twenty-eight felt it would have helped, fifty-six feel no influence either way, one hundred and ten say it added to their liking, and twenty-one say to their disliking.

Questions 15-45, "Read aloud by the teacher, assignment for further study, and discussion and clarification on following day or days" drew thirty-nine never, sixty-eight seldom, ninety-four occasionally, sixty-six frequently, and thirteen exclusively. For answer to Key B there are forty-five never, thirty-five seldom, sixty-six occasionally, ninety-one frequently, and twenty exclusively.

"Interpretive reading by teacher without comment, discussion, testing and marking was statement 16-46. Students answered one hundred and fifty-five never, eighty four seldom, twenty-eight occasionally, eleven frequently, and two exclusively. For reaction one hundred and thirty-three indicated none, ten thought they would have liked it, fifty-two feel it has no influence, twenty-three feel it added to their liking, and sixty-two to their disliking.

"Interpretive reading by teacher of student-chosen poetry followed by discussion led by students" are questions 17-47. These elicited one hundred and sixty-one never, sixty-two seldom, thirty occasionally, fifteen frequently, and three exclusively. Students to the number of one hundred and seventeen indicated no reaction, fifty-two might have liked it, eighty-eight felt it had no influence, fifty-two feel it added to their liking, and eight to their dislike.

Statements 18-48 are: "Compulsory memorization of poems required by teacher or by the course of study." Twenty-nine students never memorized, seventy-four seldom, ninety-one occasionally, seventy-two frequently, and fourteen exclusively. Thirty have no reaction to memorization because of lack of experience, four think it might have helped, sixty-one felt it had no influence either way, forty feel it added to their liking, and one hundred and twenty-three feel it added to their dislike.

"Presentation of poetry by phonograph records," statements 18-49, elicited one hundred and sixty-six never, forty-eight seldom, forty-nine occasionally, seventeen frequently. Of these one hundred and nine had no reaction, 58 think it might have added to liking, eighteen feel it is of no influence either way, seventy indicate it added to their liking, and five to their dislike.

"A browsing room or shelf with many available books of poetry for enjoyment of individual who is free to report on anything he likes," statements 20-50, was answered never by one hundred and fifty-eight, seldom by sixty-seven, occasionally by thirty-seven, frequently by sixteen, and exclusively by two. No reaction was the answer of one hundred and

twenty-one, thought it might have helped 60, feel no influence either way 51, added to liking 21, and detracted from 2.

"A listening room with many poetry records available for the pleasure of the individual" was the statement of questions 21-51 which received as answers an overwhelming majority of two hundred and sixty-five never, eight seldom, four occasionally, and three frequently. Incomplete answers to statement 51 show one hundred and sixty-one had no reaction because of lack of experience, eighty-five think it would contribute, eight feel it does not affect liking either way, eight feel it added to their liking, and two that it took away.

Statement 22-52 was answered: "Students present interpretive readings," elicited lack of reaction on the part of one hundred and thirty-nine; seventy-six think it would have helped, sixty-one feel it had no influence, eleven think it might have been good, and two feel it contributed to their dislike.

To statement 23-53, "Students act out idea or plot when such is suitable," there were one hundred and twelve with lack of experience enough to have no reaction, thirty-six who think it might have added, fifty who feel it would not influence either way, fifty who feel it added to their liking, and thirteen that it took away.

"Poetry taught in Choral Reading group in which interpretive reading is done by the whole class," statement 24-54, gained one hundred and eighty-seven never, fifty-six seldom, twenty-seven occasionally, nine frequently, and one exclusively. No reaction was indicated by one hundred and forty-eight, twenty-one think it might have helped, forty-one feel it had no

influence, twenty-five that it added to liking, and thirteen that it added to dislike.

"Individual allowed to choose his field of study in poetry making it available to the class when he feels he has something worth-while; teacher consulted only when needed," statement 25-55, was never experienced by two hundred and thirty-two, seldom experienced by twenty-nine, occasionally by fifteen, frequently by five, and exclusively by one. To this method one hundred and fifty-three had no reaction, fifty-six think it might have helped, nineteen feel that it had no influence, twenty-one like poetry more because of it, and seven dislike it more.

Statement 26-56 was "Poems from the text read aloud by an untrained teacher with a poor voice," This received answers of two hundred and four with no experience of this method, forty-six who seldom experienced it, eighteen who occasionally experienced it, eight who frequently experienced it and four who experienced it exclusively. Reactions to this method were: one hundred and seventy-one with no reaction, seven who feel it might have helped understanding and liking (showing an evident lack of thought on the answer), twenty-two who felt it affected them in neither liking nor disliking, and twelve who felt it made them like poetry better. The answers to such a statement indicating that it did not affect liking, or might have made poetry more attractive show up part of the weakness of trying to get opinion of students. That many, at least, were not using their brains and were obviously putting down answers at random. However, it does not affect the total pattern of the answers.

"Recording on wire or record of poetry read by each individual student," statement 27-57, received the answers: never used it, two hundred and thirty; seldom, nineteen; occasionally, twenty-three; frequently, seven; and, exclusively, one. Since they lacked experience with the method one hundred and forty-six expressed no reaction, sixty-two think the use of it might make poetry more likeable, twenty-two feel it would not affect the liking or disliking, forty-four believe it made poetry better for them, and two said it affected them adversely.

"Students encouraged and taught to rephrase poetry in prose form with the object of making meaning easier," was the method questioned in 28-58, eliciting eighty-eight never, seventy seldom, eighty occasionally, twenty-eight frequently, and ten exclusively. Of these, sixty-nine had no reaction because of lack of experience, fifty-one think it might have made them like poetry more, forty-four feel it would not influence either way, fifty-six that it increased their liking for poetry, and twenty-five that it decreased their liking.

"Assignments of several pages of poetry in a text on which you reported as to why the poems included were 'good poems,'" was the phrasing of statement 29-59. Never received one hundred and two answers, seldom ninety-eight, occasionally fifty-two, frequently twenty-nine, and exclusively one. To this method ninety-two had no reaction, nineteen feel it might have helped them like poetry, eighty-one feel it would not matter either way, forty-three feel it helped them like poetry, and twenty-nine that it helped them dislike it.

Statement 30-60 was worded: "Requirement of written impressions on previously assigned poetry together with a written study of author or authors." To question thirty-eighty-three answered never, ninety-one seldom, fifty-eight occasionally, forty-two frequently, and five exclusively. To this method seventy had no reaction, sixteen feel that it might have been helpful, seventy-eight that it would not influence either liking or **disliking**, forty-six that it helped them like poetry, and fifty-seven that it added to their dislike.

"Poems studied with major emphasis on grammatical construction and rhyme and meter schemes (i.e. a-b-,a-b, etc. and reference to iambic pentameter, spondee, etc.) statement 31-61, elicited fifty never, forty-five seldom, ninety-three occasionally, sixty-five frequently, sixteen exclusively. To this thirty-eight had no reaction, seventeen think it might have added to their liking had it been used, seventy-seven feel it had no effect either way, eighty-two feel it added to their liking, and seventy-five that it added to their dislike.

"Poetry studied from historical viewpoint: history of poet, the poem in relation to the time it was written, compared to other poems of its time, placing it in a 'period' or style of writing, poets of a nation (English, American, etc.), statement 32-62, was answered never by twenty-six, seldom by forty-eight, occasionally by ninety-eight, frequently by eighty one, and exclusively by twenty-seven. Twenty answered that because of lack of experience they had no reaction, twenty feel it might have added if used, seventy-one feel that it makes no difference either way, one hundred and nine said that it added to their liking for poetry, and thirty that it added to their dislike.

Statement 33-63 was "Study of poems by types--ballads, odes, epics, etc." elicited never from twenty-six, seldom from twenty-seven, occasionally from eighty-six, frequently from one hundred and eight, and exclusively from thirty-three. Use of this method affected twenty-two not at all because of no experience, twelve think it might have been good, ninety-two that it made no difference, sixty-four that it added to their liking, and nineteen that it added to their dislike.

"Students present oral programs of poetry they have liked for assembly programs or for their classes," statement 34-64, was answered by two hundred and eighteen that they never used it, forty-five seldom, twelve occasionally, five frequently, and one exclusively. One hundred and ninety-seven expressed no reaction because of no experience; forty-three think they might have liked it; fifteen feel it would neither add nor detract; twenty-three that it added to their liking, and one that it caused more dislike.

The final method, statement 35-65, "Study of poem by whole class followed by individual demonstration of understanding and appreciation such as one person memorizing the poem, another writing music for it, another illustrating it by drawings or wood carvings, etc." received two hundred and forty-eight never answers, seventeen seldom answers, thirteen occasional answers, one frequent, and one exclusive. One hundred and sixty-seven had no experience and resulting reaction, forty-five feel that it would have helped, seventeen feel it would make no difference, thirteen that it added to their liking, and seventeen that it added to their dislike. Evidently an overwhelming majority of this group never

were taught so that any creative work resulted as a product of the learning of poetry.

Inventory of Student Attitudes Toward Testing Methods

Numbers 66-78 are statements of testing practices sometimes used in teaching poetry. The student was asked to comment on the statement, or answer the question, by marking according to Key A: 1. The usual practice; 2. Sometimes used this practice; 3. Never used this practice.

Statements 79-91 were these same statements to be answered according to Key B: 1. This practice contributed to my favorable attitude toward poetry; 2. This practice had no influence on my liking or disliking poetry; 3. This practice contributed to my unfavorable attitude toward poetry; 4. Feel that had this practice been used it would have helped in my understanding and liking; 5. Since I never experienced this practice I have no reaction to it. These double answer statements are discussed in the following pages.

The first testing practice was expressed: "Final examination usually covering entire term's work." This was the statement of questions 66-79, the first of which elicited one hundred and ninety-five answers that this method was the usual practice, sixty that it was sometimes used, and twenty-six that it was never used. The attitudes toward it were thus expressed: twenty-five that the practice contributed to favorable attitude, one hundred and fifty-four that it had no influence, fifty-six that it contributed to unfavorable attitude, one person felt that he would have liked poetry more if this practice had existed in his study

(which leads to suspicion of his carelessness), and twenty-three had no reaction because of no experience with the method.

Of the students answering the 67-80 statement "Objective tests scored by students," twenty-eight said it was the usual practice, one hundred and twenty-one that the method was sometimes used, and one hundred and thirty-one that it was never used. Evidently few high schools use objective tests in their poetry teaching. Twenty said such a practice made a favorable attitude; one hundred and thirteen claimed no influence; nineteen say it made an unfavorable attitude; 12 feel they might have liked it; one hundred and two have no experience.

Statement 68-81, "Essay tests scored by students," received twenty-six replies that it was the usual practice, fifty-two that it was sometimes used, two hundred and two that it was never used. Of these, twenty-two feel it contributed, forty-six that it had no influence, twenty-three that it made an unfavorable attitude, nine feel that it might have helped, and one hundred and sixty-one have no reaction.

"Oral quizzes" was the method of 69-82 to which expression of attitudes was requested. It received forty-eight answers of usual practice, one hundred and sixty-one of sometimes, seventy-one never. Of these fifty-four think it contributed to their favorable attitude, ninety-three that it had no influence, thirty-two that it contributed unfavorably, nineteen feel they would have liked this practice, and sixty-two that they have no reaction.

Statement 70-83 was "Required interviews with students" eliciting fourteen answers that it was the usual practice, forty that it was

sometimes used, and two hundred and twenty-six that it was never used. There seems little doubt that this method is unpopular with teachers. For the answer of 83, thirteen said that this method contributed to their favorable attitude, twenty-seven that it had no influence, eleven that it contributed to an unfavorable attitude, twenty-five that it might have helped, and one hundred and eighty four had no reaction because of no experience.

To statement 71-84, "Ask students to grade themselves," twelve answers were received that it was the usual, one hundred and fourteen that it was sometimes used, and one hundred and fifty-four that it was never used. Twenty felt this practice added to their favorable attitude, eighty-two that it had no influence either way, fourteen that it added to an unfavorable attitude, eleven that it could have been helpful, and one hundred and thirty-two have no experience.

"Ask students to grade each other" is the practice in 72-85 to which two hundred and sixty-six people replied, seven saying it was the usual practice, one hundred and twenty-four sometimes used, and one hundred and thirty-five never used. Seventeen feel this practice contributed, ninety-two feel it had no influence, twenty-four that it contributed to an unfavorable attitude, nine that it might have helped, and one hundred and twenty-four that they had no experience.

"Grades largely based on term's assigned written work," statement 73-86, received eighty-three replies of usual practice, one hundred and thirty-six sometimes used, and sixty-one never used. Of these, twenty-one feel it contributed to their liking, one hundred and twenty-two

that it had no influence, fifty-three that it contributed to dislike, ten that it might have helped, and fifty-two had no reaction.

"Open book examination," the practice mentioned in statement 74-87 received nine answers that it was the usual practice, one hundred and four sometimes used, and one hundred and sixty-seven never used. The reactions were: forty-two that it contributed, sixty-one that it had no influence, seven that it added to unfavorable attitude, twenty-seven that such a practice might have helped, and one hundred and thirty-four had no experience.

"Examination on detail of content: for instance, name of hero's horse, color of heroine's hair, material of footnotes," statement 77-90, received fifty-one answers that it was the usual practice, one hundred and forty-five sometimes, eighty four never. Of these, twenty-five felt it contributed, fifty-seven that it had no influence, one hundred that it contributed to unfavorable attitudes, four that it might have helped, and seventy-two had no reactions because of no experience.

The final testing practice, "Examination practice chosen by students who write their own questions," 78-91, received ten answers that it was usually used, sixty-eight sometimes, and one hundred and ninety-three never. Their attitudes to this were: thirty think it contributed, forty-four that it had no influence, twelve that it contributed to unfavorable attitude, and twenty-two that it might have helped, and one hundred and forty-eight had no experience, therefore no reaction.

Inventory of Student Attitudes Toward Teachers

Traits and personality characteristics of teachers as well as their knowledge of the subject and their ability to present that knowledge is conceded by the experts to be an important factor in whether or not students like poetry. A list of these traits and abilities was made and the students were asked, first, if the teacher possessed them, and then how the possession or lack of the characteristic or ability affected the student's liking of poetry. In the experimental inventory, space was allowed for answers about only one teacher, the students being asked to evaluate the teacher most remembered for good or ill. But students said it was confusing, that some could remember two and to talk of only one was not likely to be accurate under such circumstances.

Therefore, in the final inventory space was provided for the student to tell about two teachers with the direction that if he could remember well only one to omit the second. That accounts in part for the reduced number of answers after question 175. Another factor which affected the number of answers here was that of time. In spite of the fact that all the questions were double and need be read only once, although answered twice, comparatively few finished the entire section 2 of the inventory. Its length proved to be a weakness. Because the student had to answer first "yes" if the characteristic as stated was a possession of the teacher and then say how it affected him, or to say "no" if that were the right answer, and then say how that affected him, it proved confusing. It was necessary to check each individual answer. Totals proved nothing.

They were given in the previous table but, as such, could not be interpreted. Therefore, each question which was answered "yes" was counted separately from the same question which was answered "no." The following table clears up the difficulty. It also shows how many people quit because of lack of time and on which question.

In the individual check-up four or five people were found to be consistently confused in their answers. However, their valueless answers did not affect the total picture. Neither did the percentage of opinion about the second teacher deviate in any great way from opinion about the first although there were fewer answers.

	YES					NO					Number Stopping on Question
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
134	5	2	46	3	97	13	11	14		1	
135	3	8	26	3	113	8	11	14	1	3	
136	12	4	11	4		11	10	54	73	9	
137	5	2	99	6	40	2	2	33			
138	1	4	26	4	83	6	31	17	4	12	
139	6	2	26	5	90	4	27	25	1	6	
140	2	4	21	19	5	6	9	69	45	9	1
141	1	3	33	5	88	8	18	22	4	9	2
142	6	5	22	3	36	4	21	33	1	44	
143	3	5	30	6	82	4	20	17	1	9	2
144	6	5	49	4	44	5	17	37	3	13	3
145	9	9	20	2		6	9	62	52	13	
146	16	4	28	7	1	6	9	55	47	8	1
147	10	3	10	6	2	5	7	67	54	13	2
148	5	2	42	10	92	3	1	15	3	8	2
149	4	3	25	1	5	6	10	82	38	5	
150	10	5	37	3	2	5	5	55	51	4	7
151	14	6	22	6	1	10	8	48	46	8	1
152	8	2	11			8	4	64	61	8	1
153	4	3	13	2		6	3	69	59	5	2
154	2	2	3	2		6	6	77	60	7	1
155	7	4	14	4	1	6	4	68	43	16	

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	YES					NO					Number Stopping on Question
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
156		4	22	7	53	4	18	50	18	8	4
157	4	6	12	8	2	3	7	59	44	12	
158	11	10	9	4	3	4	6	38	47	10	
159	5	5	7	3		7	11	48	63	10	1
160	5	1	16	1	62	2	14	37	3	16	2
161	3	6	28	1	54	2	13	44	1	8	1
162	3		22	7	72	2	15	25		5	1
163	8	3	15	1	2	4	7	53	58	2	1
164	1	2	30		9	6	6	85	6		
165	7	3	8	3		4	6	69	49	5	1
166	6	3	12	1	2	3	7	58	47	5	1
167	3	3	26	3	83	1	12	11	2	4	1
168	1	4	24	2	53	5	11	37	3	8	
169	2	2	7		3	1	6	112	9	4	
170	7	2	45	4	56	9	9	15	3	5	1
171	17	8	14		4	8	5	43	41	7	
172	12		10	1	2	8	5	48	56	4	
173	3	3	35	2	46	3	11	34	6	6	7
174	2	1	20		5	2	11	95	6	1	5
175	7	3	102	2	5		9	14	1	1	103
218		2	11		13	2	1	7			
219	1	1	5	1	15	2	7	1	1	2	
220	2	1	6	1	1	1		10	13	1	
221		2	15		7		2	7	1	2	
222	2	1	5		9	2	6	6	1	4	
223	3	1	7	1	10	2	1	8	1	2	
224				1	1	2	2	11	14	5	
225	1	2	8		9	2	4	6	1	3	
226		3	9	1	9		4	8		2	
227	1		9		12	2	6	3	1	2	
228	2	1	6		8	1	4	13			
229	2	2	3	3		1		20	4	1	
230	2	2	3	2		1	1	14	8	3	
231	1		5	1		2	3	15	7	2	
232	2		7	1	15	1	2	4	1	3	1
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235	3	3	6	2		1	2	11	7		
236	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	13	9	1	
237		2	2		1	1		20	8	1	1
238		3	2	1		2	1	13	8	3	
239	2	1	3		2	2	2	16	5	1	

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	YES					NO					Number Stopping on Question
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
240		2	7		5	2	3	13		2	
241	2	1	1	1		2	2	17	6	2	
242	5	4		1		1	1	11	10	1	
243	2	3	3				1	16	9		
244	2	1	9		8	1	3	7	2	1	
245	2	1	8		7		3	10		3	
246	3	2	5	1	11	1		7	1	3	
247	1	2	2	3	1		1	15	8	1	
248		1	6	1	1		2	17	2	2	
249		1	3	1		1	2	11	12	1	
250		2	5	1	1	1	3	9	3	4	
251	2	1	8		10	2	2	2	2	4	
252	2		8	2	5	1	3	11	1	1	
253	1		2	2		1	3	22	1	2	
254	1	1	11	1	10	1	2	5	1	1	
255	3	1	4	2	1	4	2	8	7	2	
256	5	2	2	1				11	10	3	
257	1		7		5	1	5	12		3	
258		1	10				3	18	1		3
259	2	1	15		2	2	1	7			30

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

Interviews With Eighteen People Who Answered the Attitudes-Inventory

Nine People Who Like Poetry Very Much

These nine were chosen by taking every other answer sheet of the twenty-one who said in the Inventory that they like poetry very much. There were three women and six men.

First Woman

This student is twenty, a sophomore, and lives in a town in the 2500 to 25,000 population group. She likes to read and often reads poetry as a pastime. She has always had around her collections of poetry and keeps them with her in college because of her fondness for poetry, believing that if more poetry were easily available, more people would at least try to read it.

At least part of this springs from the fact that her parents read to her continuously until she learned to read although she says they were too busy to read poetry for themselves. This habit of hearing poetry makes her like to hear poetry read aloud. This liking was augmented by a teacher in high school who was a very good reader. She did not like the teacher whom she considered too old in ways and too narrow in thought for young people. She did not like the teacher's plainness in looks, but since she read poetry well nothing else mattered.

Another teacher in the eighth or ninth grade was a "lovely" person who dressed well, was popular with the students who enjoyed her classes.

This teacher was active in extra-curricular activities with the young people who did not mind that she was old in years because she was young in spirit. Her method of teaching was to read to students. The student can remember "Snowbound," "Ancient Mariner," "Vision of Sir Launfal." Among some modern poetry she remembers "Chicago." The teacher would lead a discussion with the students thus clearing up any difficulties. This student says this is the method she would recommend today for all study. Students cannot adequately learn entirely by themselves so they need help; they do not want detailed and boring discussion. This discussion should not be in the middle of the reading and thus interfere with the loveliness and the mood, but should follow as students ask for it or as the teacher feels certain difficulties should be cleared.

She has had one class in poetry in college and did not like it at all. They had a prescribed textbook but she liked that and considers the teaching at fault. Detailed analyzing, memorization or rhythmical methods, prevalence of discussion rather than reading the material took away all the pleasure. This student feels that class work ought to give a picture of the whole poem with leads from the teacher as to the meaning, details of which should be secured through private reading. She feels that the music of poetry can easily be apparent without analysis.

The student believes that poetry reading is more difficult than prose but that the results are worth it. One discrepancy in her answers was that she agreed with the statement that poets write a language only they understand. When asked how she understood this statement, she explained that she thought it referred to the fact that no two people

can get the same meaning, or that no one can get the exact meaning of a poet.

She remembers studying poetry only around 7th, 8th, or 9th grade, and the one other high school teacher. That plus the one college course is all she has learned in school. She feels that all people should study poetry but resents compulsion; says that she has no electives left and therefore cannot take another course.

Second woman

This student is a freshman, 18, who lives in a city of over 100,000 population. She reads often for pastime but not poetry because it is not easily available. The early habit of owning books of poetry has evidently been broken because she has only one personal copy which she bought as a gift for a room-mate and kept when she became interested in reading it. She feels that more people would read poetry if books were available and handy. As early as five years of age parents and friends gave her books of poetry with pictures she remembers vividly. Many Christmas gifts were of this variety. That fact, coupled with her father's reciting to her many favorite bits of poetry, started her liking for poetry.

She remembers little teaching in the grades. In the sixth grade of a parochial school a woman came in and recited poetry using gestures and acting it out. She required the students to know the poem the following week and also to act it out. This left an unfavorable impression.

In high school, teachers mostly read poetry aloud from books. A tenth grade English instructor "loved" poetry and read it aloud

frequently, following the reading by explanation. He explained the difficult words not demanding that students look them up. He did not do any detailed explanation of "feet" and rhythm in poetry saying that would come later. There was a small amount of memorization which this student enjoyed, remembering "Little Boy Blue" vividly. That poem was in the text. She says all the boys liked the teacher and enjoyed poetry although they would not admit it. The teacher liked it so much and read it so well that they said "it sounds nice when he reads it." The student has heard poetry on the radio and likes that method of listening also.

Much of the poetry read and studied was by American poets; some by English poets which she likes also. She feels nationality makes little difference. She likes Emily Dickinson whose poetry she calls "light" poetry and thinks it quite simple.

She says she has read little modern poetry, however, but is familiar mostly with classics because they were in the books used as texts. She thinks simpler books would be better as a beginning text. She remembers Longfellow and Poe because they were included often in the literature texts; she also knows Tennyson, Browning and Whitman on whom she once wrote a paper. She believes that at least one compulsory course would be advisable because most students are too busy to have time to read poetry and without the required course they will never get acquainted with poetry to know if they like it or dislike it. When re-questioned about her own lack of reading poetry in spite of her love of poetry she reiterated that lack of time and books prevented her reading.

Third Woman

This student, a freshman eighteen years old, living in a village in the 250 to 2500 population group, reads little for pastime, and likes fiction when she does read. There were few poetry materials available in her home and her parents read it infrequently. She has always read it, occasionally, with great pleasure. She thinks that girls go through a period of disliking poetry as boys seem to do. She has always liked poetry and can remember no influence which seemed to cause this liking.

She seems to remember none in the grades but had quite a lot of poetry in the very small high school which she attended. Somewhere along the way she studied "Snowbound" about which she made a book containing pictures, the life of the author, character sketches, etc. She still owns this book which she did as a project.

The English teacher was very fond of poetry and consequently gave at least half of the English course to studying it. The teacher was a good reader and followed her oral reading to the class by discussion. Unfortunately, the teacher's personality was much less pleasing than her oral reading ability. The boys in the class had a negative attitude because of her although this girl said she didn't mind. Since in her small high school they had the same teacher all the time, this student studied with her three years, and results were not good.

Outside the class, the student says, the teacher seemed to be all-right. In the class she became another person giving special attention to the boys but doing it in such a "silly" way that it was most

objectionable. Her "very poor teaching personality" was marked by severe mannerisms such as sitting on the desk and crossing her legs conspicuously, snapping her girdle, and like manifestations. The student did not know her previous teaching experience nor her personal background but there were rumors and she was eventually asked to leave. The boys were in a continual state of disturbance, scorn, and resentment.

Very little memorization was required, and this student feels she would not like that method of studying poetry. She emphasized the need for understanding which she felt was achieved by this teacher's method of first reading aloud and then discussing difficulties. She feels that listening pleasure probably would be augmented after studying the poem for understanding. Listening is fairly difficult for her although there was one radio program entitled "And The Night Shall Be Filled With Music" which she enjoyed.

However, although saying she enjoys reading poetry, and feels that facilities for browsing would greatly aid enjoyment, she reads little and does not make opportunities for herself. She had no objection to the choice of poetry in her literature book saying that since it was a big book there was a great deal of choice, and that students choose what they understand. A wider choice in a browsing room would be good, but even her satisfaction with what she knows has not driven her to further reading.

First man

This freshman student, nineteen, went to school in a small rural grade school where he had the same teacher from grade 1-4, and another

teacher from grades 5-8. There was little time for poetry here. However he had many poetry reading sources in his home and his parents read poetry frequently. He learned to read a great deal for pastime and, while he enjoys fiction most, is now a reader of poetry which gives him great pleasure.

This was not always so as he feels he went through the stage which boys often do of feeling that liking poetry was "sissy." This was augmented by the fact that there were seven girls to one boy in his school and because they liked poetry he associated their liking with a girl's weakness. So it was not for him.

Too, the impact of going from the small grade school to a large high school with a graduating class of one hundred and forty-three made so abrupt a change that he was not ready for the great difference. He says he didn't study too much because he didn't know how. When studying poetry in his freshman year he didn't pay much attention to it. He had to memorize it and didn't like that. The final examination was memorization of twelve lines from "The Ancient Mariner." He learned it for the moment and "that was that." Probably, he says, he didn't mind the memorization but resented being forced to learn it.

In his sophomore year the teacher was a "swell guy" and "a regular fellow" who didn't like poetry and therefore didn't teach any but concentrated on novels and prose of other kinds. In the junior year they concentrated on Julius Caesar because the regent's examination was coming and they had to pass it, so crammed for the necessary knowledge. In the senior year they had two or three week's study of Hamlet.

Also, in the senior year he took a speech course studying public speaking, learning to recite "My Last Duchess" and participating in some radio plays. This gave him enough courage to stand on his feet and talk. However, poetry still was unpopular with him.

For some reason he had to go to high school for a fifth year. He leisurely perused an English course where he learned to like poetry. Someway, he scarcely knows how, he found there was worth in poetry. He began "to dig in" and when he got it, he liked it. Shakespeare and Wordsworth had great value. "There is so much more in poetry than the average person realizes," he says. He likes to read "Paradise Lost" because the idea was "terrific." He doesn't pretend to know what it means in places but likes it anyway. Most of the things that a person reads, he says, are obvious. Poets "beat around the bush and hide meaning" and he finds it worth-while to look behind it and know what they mean. He likes to study an author and his history, finding the personal element interesting and an aid to understanding. The fact that Shelley had tuberculosis ("a pretty rough life") made him more appealing to study; Wordsworth "changed his style between 1802 and 1805" and it was good to know why. Biographies, he feels, should be included in texts for ready reference.

He has heard little poetry on records or radio but thinks he would like it. He saw Charles Laughton on television for about two hours and was immensely impressed saying "I never heard poetry recited like that." He says this would increase liking because people could then go back over what had been read and study it for increased meaning. For himself, he

is afraid he would never be able to read aloud. His teachers read it orally and then gave help on difficult points which were discussed with the students in class. He thinks this a good method as he "probably wouldn't have done an assignment" in the days before he became interested.

The woman who taught him poetry in an English course "was a honey."; she "was so wrapped up in poetry herself that you couldn't help from liking it." She didn't give tests and that helped. But he feels the ordinary student would have to be forced to study the text by some means or method as he would not voluntarily study.

Second man

This sophomore, nineteen, lives in Battle Creek. He has learned to enjoy reading "quite a bit," and often reads for pastime, reading poetry occasionally with great pleasure. He likes biography, science, history, etc. He says the reason he does not read poetry more often although he likes it is because he cannot understand a great deal of it. He compared it to his not grasping modern art. He says the time element is the biggest thing; he has no time to take classes; and when he has an hour, no poetry seems to be around to read. He feels that if there were a browsing room in the library, recorded poetry available, etc. that he would use the spare hour in reading or listening.

There were no poetry materials in his home; his parents never read; friends probably influenced him; he believes that boys do not like poetry because they do not understand it; but, that teaching and experiences of late years have caused him to like it.

He can remember little poetry study in grade school. He had to memorize "Night Before Christmas" which caused an unpleasant reaction. In ninth grade he also memorized and feels that this method does not help appreciation. He never had a poetry course, as such, and can remember only Hamlet which he studied "a little." He remembers his teacher, a Mr. Smith, whom he credits for his liking of poetry. This teacher coached a play in which he took part. This helped by showing him how to get meaning.

Two events seem to have influenced him more than any other. He read the novel written about the life of Walt Whitman which started him studying that poet. He likes difficult things and feels obvious meanings have no appeal so he continues to read poetry which demands thinking and studying saying he looks up the words if there are not too many, and delves deeply. He has greatest respect for the writer who creates in such a fashion as to cause interest at first reading and thought about the poem in later contemplation.

The other incident which impressed him most was a visit to a poetry class at Harvard the professor of which must have been very good as the student can detail all the class procedures. The instructor read well and showed the difference between the rhythm the author used and the way some people read it. He handled the situation humorously. He showed how, when it was read like prose, it fell flat. He discussed metre, the history of the author, and such things but made them vital so that they motivated.

The student has since taken a course at Michigan State College in Literature and Fine Arts and finds it the best thing he ever took. The

method was a survey one, a comparison of many things. Many poems were read and the student felt that hearing many gives a great appreciation of a few. "You learn even by the bad ones." He has no patience with intricate study of metre, division, analogies, etc. Says that is not teaching poetry but is starting backward. He says that "when you are learning to drive and enjoying it you do not worry about the carburetor." Technical knowledge will not bring the music of the poetry; it is already there and enjoyment comes first. Later technical knowledge may be of value.

He insists that students must have help in classes. "How can you take apart a poem you never read before, for which you have had no explanation and know no explanation? You, at that rate, will never have an explanation."

Third Man

This freshman, over twenty, lives in Lansing and reads the little he reads for pastime in biography, history, etc. He had no poetry at home, his parents never read, and now he occasionally reads it with great pleasure for the beauty of the words and the ideas they express. He says it is a matter of time.

He has seemed to like poetry since he could read it for himself. Rhyme has always attracted him. "Sing-song" fascinated him as a child; it compared in his mind to music and he found it most enjoyable. He found himself growing to like more complicated rhythm to match a more complicated life. He says he likes "Trees" because it brings out the meaning and when you look at a tree you remember the words and see in a real way what the tree is like. When reminded of the question "too

simple poetry has little appeal" with which he disagreed, he said he didn't understand "too simple" and in addition "Trees" to him is not too simple. It means something! He likes "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" because that "tells a story, tells about life."

The first he can remember about poetry in school is a teacher reading aloud to the class. He liked it; it was "something new." He likes better reading to himself but if a new poem is presented he likes it read to him, then he reads it to himself for study. He feels it is not necessary to memorize although he has no particular reaction against it. He likes to memorize if it is a "famous" poem or one "well-known" like Gray's "Elegy."

He concentrated on the poems in the literature book because they were most often heard about; the few "famous" ones not in the book he found elsewhere. He never studied Shakespeare very much; he liked the story of it; liked the slow music of it which he said was "thoughtful."

A Catholic father in a parochial high school who liked poetry very much and knew the subject well read a few poems to the class. He thus stirred up interest. The student said when he got students interested, he assigned other poems to read on their own. The teacher emphasized scanning; brought out the form of the poem and compared it to music; then he had them begin writing poetry of their own. At first it seemed to the student insuperably difficult but when he got the hang of it, he loved it. He was grateful for the training in metrics and technique. He wrote quite a lot in high school, one of his poems being the one read on graduation day. He remembers his laborious start on four lines with

an a b a brhyme scheme which he thought very difficult. Eventually he liked the whole process and feels that teachers do not matter so far as liking poetry is concerned. You get an impression when you are young; a teacher stirs it up, and you really learn to like it when you start writing it. He does not often write now but when he starts, spends hours on a single poem.

He has no objection to the classics having read them almost exclusively and finding in a large book or books enough choice. He says if students pick their own in a wide choice of classics, enjoying them is a natural thing.

Fourth Man

This freshman who is nineteen years old lives on a farm. He reads little for pastime and when he reads prefers newspapers, and such magazines as Reader's Digest, Ladies' Home Journal, etc. He had few books of poetry in his home and his parents read infrequently while he, himself, reads occasionally with the greatest of pleasure. He remembers no influence in his liking for poetry and his first real remembrance of any poetry is from the eight or ninth grade when he studied Lady of the Lake. He liked both the instructor and the method.

The male instructor was young, played baseball, was friendly and sympathetic and understood personal problems. However, students seemed most to admire him for his philosophy of life which showed plainest in school when it came time to work. He required work, was not lenient, and did not excuse laziness. Although usually a good student, this student fooled around one time and did not study. The teacher promptly

marked him down from an "A" to a "C" and gained the student's admiration by so doing. He also remembers another instructor who was a woman and he liked her very much. He had both in the eighth and ninth grades which was his "main time for poetry."

Both teachers used the method of assigning the poem ahead of the class discussion. Then they read orally a few lines at a time stopping to explain in detail wherever needed. They related historical stories of Loch Lomond; they provided pictures to make places vivid. Each student had to write a brief narrative summary of each Canto. The man teacher also read "The Pit and The Pendulum" to which he gave a dramatic value. He divided his time between oral reading and explaining previous assignments where they had been difficult.

This student actually likes to memorize. The philosophy in a poem when it suited him made it fun to remember. He also particularly likes "Trees." He saw the "Fighting 69th" a movie on the life of Joyce Kilmer and this made the author and his poems live always in the mind of the student. The poems stand out because he heard them read orally. He likes the 23rd Psalm very much also and says that the same quality of beautiful words in prose are attractive to him.

This student feels that nearly all the reasons stated in the inventory as to why boys dislike poetry are partially true. But he thinks three reasons are strongest: (1) the idea that it is "sissy", (2) poor choice of material and poor teaching, and (3) their inability to understand it which likely stems from poor teaching. He says they are no more likely to revolt against compulsion in learning than girls, and that

memory work will not make them hate poetry. They have to memorize Gettysburg Address also and they do not hate it.

Fifth Man

This freshman, nineteen years old, lives in a town in the 2500 to 25,000 population group. He had a complete library of poetry at home and his sisters liked to read, but his parents never did. He started out with indifference and has only unpleasant memories of grade school where he remembers three teachers who all seemed bad to him. Students felt poetry was forced on them; teachers had no feeling for it; they were merely doing their duty teaching it. They "just gave a stiff assignment and didn't bother." They were not accommodating and would not help students. This man is not sure they really understood the difficult parts themselves.

The student still is indifferent to some kinds of poetry; he prefers "humorous," "easy to read," that from which you "can get a clear understanding," and avoids "some that is fairly dry." He likes Shakespeare, "The Raven," and "Trees." He started liking poetry in late grade school and in high school where he studied it in English courses.

The school year in English classes was divided between a study of grammar and fine arts; two weeks of grammar and then two weeks of literature. He liked this because it provided good variety. He learned to read on his own and still likes this exploration. He thinks the best method is an assignment one day so the student studies for himself; then the next day in class the teacher asks questions and if there are places not mastered, gives help. The teacher augments this by personal

interviews if there is need. This the student particularly liked. In the first term the student was not doing too well; he had a personal interview and through knowledge of the teacher learned to like him; he eventually came to the place where he volunteered to check papers, etc. to create good will.

The student feels appreciation of poetry largely stemmed from teachers. All his high school teachers were particularly outstanding: tried to please the students; presented material as a thing to be enjoyed; if poetry was difficult were always ready to help on every point; had such pleasing personalities that students liked being in their classes.

Sixth Man

This man, a freshman, 19, living in a city in the 25,000 to 100,000 population group, came from a family where he says the cultural background was only fair and that neither his mother nor father could have made much contribution to his knowledge of poetry. His parents would be described as having a negative influence. The only thing he can remember in relation to poetry in connection with his mother is that in her grade school work she memorized "Charge of The Light Brigade" and still recited it at intervals. For many years he associated memorization with poetry, thinking the two were synonymous.

He can remember that in grade school there was poetry but he had no interest in it. He feels that there is actually an age when boys dislike poetry, not instinctively, but because of the cultural atmosphere. He had a poor introduction to poetry at that time because of the poor choice of material provided; he says that teachers and texts provided poor poetry.

He was not a very responsible student when in the grades; his parents allowed him almost complete freedom of which he took advantage to the extent of running away from home many times, hitchhiking once to New York, and many similar things. At fourteen he got into such serious trouble that the juvenile authorities gave him into the custody of his father who was responsible to the law for him. He was confined to his home, being required to be in at ten every night.

After two months and in complete desperation he turned to reading. Rather blindly he went to the bookcase and picked out Tolstoy's War and Peace which he doggedly read for two months and one hundred pages without the slightest understanding. Finally, he conquered that book and now says that the first book he ever read was War and Peace. He learned in the same way to read poetry to which he turned for what he says was absolutely necessary emotional release and escape. There was no religious belief in his home and in his struggle he turned to poetry for a philosophy of life. About 16 or 17 he began to think what a wonderful thing it would be if we "could see music like a picture" and then gradually poetry came to mean to him the picture of music.

As a senior in high school he had a teacher to whom he gives credit for most of his added interest and his knowledge of poetry. This teacher was a small, frail, very feminine type of woman who had never married because she had a mother to support and because as the student says "she fell in love with Byron." She was a smart and able woman, head of the English Department, and he admired the steel control under the very feminine exterior.

Her method was to give them wide choice; she listed a series of things and they chose from the series. She never tried to impose on them her likes and dislikes; the student thinks they would have had a mind set against such a choice just because the teacher insisted. She had them write a theme which he still remembers vividly, "I Am A Part of All I Have Ever Known." He came to know her so well he helped read and grade these papers and found the revelations in them amazing. He commented that the students would tell her anything, and did tell her everything about themselves, in these papers, because they trusted her. He found that admirable in a "wonderful instructor."

He studied "Paradise Lost" with her and came to appreciate the expression of her opinion on it. She allowed student opinion and its expression. He was rather shocked, since he thought he knew her so well, and she had allowed such a wide latitude of choice, to have her give a very complete and "stiff" examination.

Of her he said, "Until I studied with her I had no attitude toward poetry. I can't remember what I felt like before because I had never related poetry to school; school poetry and the poetry I knew were two different things."

This man likes poetry because it is a mature expression of his living. He knows what it means because he has lived, however disastrously, and perhaps largely because of disaster, and he recognizes the wisdom of a master mind writing from insight and inspiration. His vocabulary and method of expression are immeasurably beyond the others interviewed; his knowledge makes theirs seem puerile; he does not merely quote long

passages of poetry because he has memorized them but because they have thrust themselves upon him through necessity. His knowledge and love of poetry are not results of surface-imposed cursory covering of material, but engendered by emotion desperately searching for an outlet and a discipline. Perhaps the greatest tenet to be learned from his experience is that poetry to be effective must be about the experience of the person reading it; that it must touch upon the emotional problems of the reader with force; that if he realizes that it meets his needs he will be motivated so that no compulsion is necessary. Since most students fortunately lack this violent experience, good teaching will show them how they gain experience through reading, and gain maturity to weather future experience.

Interviews With Nine Students Who Dislike Poetry

In this group there were two women and seven men.

First Woman

This woman is a freshman, eighteen years old, who lives in a city of over 100,000 population. She reads often for pastime and prefers fiction. She says she can easily understand many or nearly all types of prose but never could understand poetry, cannot understand it today, and can see no reason for trying to read it. The novelist has more room to put down things; more space to include complete ideas is possible; the compressed form of poetry leaves no chance for meaning; the inverted word order makes it hard to understand and takes any possible sense away from it. She says it is impossible for her to understand how anybody

can find what a poet is thinking in eight to fourteen lines.

She remembers vividly Milton's "Sonnet On His Blindness" and the innumerable nights she spent trying to figure some sense out of it. She doesn't classify Macbeth as poetry. When asked if there was any modern poetry at all that she liked she said she could understand Carl Sandburg. "His poetry is most like prose"; "It is about things that I myself know"; "I have been to Chicago and can see what he says."

She claims that she never had a good teacher of literature and poetry. In the grades she had a woman teacher who was the terror of the school. "She was a battle-axe, a man-hater, and thought of nobody but herself." She made them memorize and recite all the poetry with the result that the student "didn't care a hang about it, didn't understand it and was self-conscious." When asked about the age of the woman she replied that she was an older woman but they would not have minded that. She concluded maybe it was because the teacher was a woman "who had no business in school with young children." She "starts you off all wrong; she loved it and was crazy about it, knew a lot about it, but didn't have the faintest idea how to give it to young children. I remember the actual occasion when she locked me in a room one time without lunch. I held it against her as much as if she purposefully persecuted me."

A teacher in high school spoke in a monotone. She read "Beowulf" to them for an entire hour time after time in a complete monotone. The student didn't understand it and the teacher did nothing to help her understand. Beowulf was followed by Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Shakespeare, Chaucer and Milton. She hated them all. She says she

enjoyed Macbeth because it had a plot, a story, actors. The poetry didn't get in her way. She also enjoyed Hamlet which she saw on the screen. She remembers nothing of what she learned; she worked for a mark, and that was all.

In Modern Literature it was the same thing, according to her version. This teacher could read fairly well, she supposed, but since she never heard poetry well read she was no judge and does not now know if she would like that method. She made the students explore deeply into the main thought. Since they covered a lot of ground the amount of time allotted to getting the thought was not enough and students remained permanently lost.

This girl does not want any critic telling her what to read nor what she likes. "If you like it, you like it no matter what some man says unless you are a wishy-washy person." "People look for some worth leading to a final goal. Poetry does not lead to anything. It must have something to do with my living now, and I never find any which does."

Second Woman

This freshman, eighteen years old, lives in a city over 100,000 population, constantly reads for pastime such materials as novels, plays, short stories, etc. Few poetry materials were available in her home, her parents never read poetry and she never reads poetry. She dislikes it heartily and finds in it a form of punishment. She has found some which she likes but not often. She said she could not remember names because she had not studied for so long a time. In high school she had a few poems the only one of which she can remember is "The Bells" which

she did not like, and she only remembers not enjoying all the others also.

She remembers "The Raven", parts of which she liked and parts she did not like. She disliked what she called the "sinister" parts which others enjoyed because of the dramatic quality.

She thinks that poetry must be easy to interpret or that there must be someone to read it aloud who knows how to interpret. "If a student is reading for enjoyment and can't interpret, the enjoyment is gone and dislike occurs." The instructors she can remember reading aloud made the poem seem unreal to her; they seemed to get something false into the interpretation. "Poetry is something someone has seen or read or felt and must be read like that." She can remember no method that was good. She heard a few recordings but didn't enjoy them "maybe because facial and bodily activity helps the interpretation and meaning was thus lost." She can remember a lecturer at high school who read his own poems and others. He talked about them in such a way as to make everybody appreciate the poems more. She cannot remember who the man was. It is her only pleasant memory of oral reading and she thus prefers to read by herself, if ever!

She described her ideal teacher. It made no difference if man or woman, or if young or old. Nice dress is one of the best influences but personality makes a great difference. Any person who "is cranky, tears down what the students say, and does not pay attention to the students," would be a bad teacher. Any teacher who fails to realize that the student is not as far advanced as the teacher is and who demands

perfection of memorized performance more than enjoyment is a total loss, according to this student.

She believes that an educated person should know something about poetry and therefore students will probably have to be compelled to study it. She says you cannot shock them into learning classics by force but if the material is well presented, if sufficient explanation is made to aid understanding, and if the students know why it is good for them to learn it, they will likely learn.

First Man

This freshman, aged 18, is the son of a teacher in Lansing who has an M. A. from Columbia University and writes poetry. They had few books on poetry in their home and the parents never read poetry to him. He never liked it; could never seem to get started at understanding it. He reads little for pastime and likes only newspapers and such magazines as Reader's Digest, etc. He hasn't read a book in a year which was not assigned; probably never read ten books in his life; his pastime is movies. He had recently seen Quo Vadis which he considered "wonderful."

He thinks a large part of his trouble stems from the fact that he never really learned to read. He probably had a poor teacher at the beginning; he could call words but could not read. In grade school, two or three people could read well and they would set examples for the rest. Since he could not do as well he was discouraged; he felt the unspoken criticism and would not compete.

He says he is competitive only "in important things." He is interested in making a living; in engineering and learning to build. He can

see beauty in concrete things but can't see it in words. This competitive feeling has caused him to learn to read much better in college. Here he "was thrown in to sink or swim," he had to learn. He "wanted to succeed and didn't want to get ditched." Therefore his reading has improved greatly and he is doing well in his field.

The way poetry was written caused part of the difficulty. He didn't like it because of "distorted rhymes, twisted lines for poetic license." Also, he said he didn't like it because he could not understand it. The only three poems he can remember were in story form so they left an impression. The others did not. He feels that if the meaning were first written in prose, the poetry writing would become clearer.

He feels that students probably ought to be compelled to study poetry since it really is a part of education. But for himself there is nothing that could motivate him now to study poetry which he considers a waste of time.

Second Man

This freshman, aged 18, lives in a city over 100,000 population. He often reads newspapers, magazines such as Reader's Digest, etc. He reads poetry none and does not like it at all. There were no books and poetry materials in his home and his parents never read it.

He answered the inventory saying there was value in poetry in the moral, for story telling, in truths of living; in the interview he reiterated his belief in a reason for studying poetry but didn't want any for himself. He does not want a critic to tell him what is good; "the worth of the poem is what the student thinks." However he would not

disagree with the present kind of texts containing classics saying that it is possibly a good way "because probably other people like those poems and that is the way everybody studies the same."

He used a regular text in school which was equally divided among Biography, poetry, short stories and novel selections. He cannot remember any of them. Nor can he remember studying any poetry in Junior High school. He liked short stories "probably because they were short," "came to the point quicker."

He had four different high school teachers who all seemed to him to teach the same way. Somebody read the poem and at the end students had to answer "them" questions printed at the bottom of the poem. "I couldn't answer them questions but had to make a stab. Had to keep reading them over and over to try to make sense. It is better for the teacher to make explanations."

He was forced to memorize a lot which probably had something to do with his dislike. "It didn't make sense." "I couldn't figure out what they intended to drive at."

In his first three years of high school he had a "C" average which was raised to a "B" in his senior year because he liked his subjects better and had a better choice. He said he chose bookkeeping, economics, and typing but English was required. The first three subjects had value to him but poetry has no value. It does not help make a living and he is interested in learning to make a living.

Third Man

The freshman, a young man of eighteen lives in a city in the

25,000 to 250,000 population group. He reads little for pastime and that from newspapers, magazines such as Reader's Digest, Ladies' Home Journal, Cosmopolitan and Saturday Evening Post. There were few books and magazines of poetry in his home, his parents never read poetry and he never reads poetry now.

He feels that the choice of poetry he was given to read had a great deal to do with his dislike. He also remembers several teachers, one of which seemed to be outstanding. He knows that he had a little poetry with his language or English courses in grade school but can remember nothing about them. In fact, he says that his memory of poetry in high school is dim "because that was two years ago."

The one teacher most vividly remembered is a man and he believes he liked the fact that he was a man. He had a good personality which the student described as "human, got along well with students, helped with extra-curricular activities." He was also described as "smart, knew his material, seemed to know everything, the one man who seemed brilliant."

The boy says the teacher tried to teach the students to like poetry, feeling that was the best method but he didn't succeed in this case although the student believes it is not the fault of the teacher. There was a course of study which had to be followed but he allowed student choice as much as he could. Of all the poems studied the student can remember only one and that indefinitely. He likes Edgar Allen Poe because he calls it "light reading" and doesn't look upon it as poetry. Consequently, all the reading in poetry he has done, unless required, is Poe.

The teacher read aloud and was judged by the student to have read well. He thinks oral reading is very helpful. Later, he believes the student should read the poem silently for himself unless it is a poem like "The Raven" which was meant for reading aloud. There was no listening to recordings or radio and he knows only the reading of the teacher.

He was required to do some memory work which he disliked at the time, but later approved of, thinking it had value for the reader.

He approves of written reports by the students believing that clarifies their thinking. A group of high school students asked his help, after he graduated, on writing a report. He thinks their professed inability to understand was caused by mere laziness as he is able to understand poetry if he tries. He never particularly objected to the written report method simply considering it one of the necessary evils of study and something which had to be done, so he did it.

In discussing why he does not like poetry he says he finds it hard to think why he doesn't. It is not a lack of understanding because he can understand it if he tries, and, also, he enjoys a poem which demands something of him. He likes poems with a philosophy or story. He says of Chaucer's "Prologue" that at first he didn't understand it but he "loved to spout it," and he still does. He just likes the sound of the original but now that he has translated the original into meaning it is "too simple" for him. He does not like that kind of story telling.

His trouble, according to him, is not that he doesn't know how to read. He claims that he does know how. He also says he has a limited vocabulary but looking up new words is a sort of challenge. He feels

different from other people about that and likes to accomplish a difficult job. The main trouble is time. There simply is no time to do all this.

He has the idea that people who know poetry are above the level of other people and are smarter; that probably students should be forced to know something about poetry because of need; that wider acquaintance might help, with choice largely left to the student, although probably the student has need of certain poems which should be required. But he says that if choice were left to him he would choose a historical novel and no poetry. When he answered the attitude inventory concerning the poems he can remember, he did not list even one poem and said in the interview with prodding that Poe and Chaucer were all he could remember from any source.

Fourth Man

This freshman is eighteen, lives in a village of from 250 to 2500 population, and recently came from a Southern environment which shows definitely in his speech and his attitudes. He was brought up in a religious atmosphere and when he approves of poetry at all, which is most infrequently, he thinks it ought to have a good moral, an uplifting philosophy, or be the kind that helps one "do some good to others."

On the whole poetry to him is "stuff." He does not like "real long" poems like "The Ancient Mariner" which didn't make sense to him. It told a story but he couldn't follow it. He likes a moral more than a story. He didn't like "The Raven"; he could understand it but it didn't concern anything he cared about.

He cannot remember any poems which he does like. On being prodded he said he has read poems about basketball which were good but he couldn't

remember anything about them although he thought one was named "The Champion." He likes sports and plays baseball. He says "if the poem is about things you are interested in or really tells something" he likes them. He is not against poetry as such but just against some poems.

He studied mostly classical material in school although he cannot remember details, simply repeating that he is sure most students do not like long poems like "The Ancient Mariner." He does not feel that classical poetry deals with his experiences and is therefore not valuable. He feels he had too much poetry but that might have been just because he disliked it so much. "The classical stuff" was too much above the heads of the students.

He does not believe that poetry should be required in college, as students by that time are mature enough to make choices. If they need to study poetry, it should be in high school, and if the claims of poetry as a necessity for cultural background were rightly presented, the students would probably try harder and like it more.

He generally does not like to read and when he does read is interested only in sports magazines. He thinks lack of training in reading is largely responsible for that attitude. He didn't have enough training in reading in either the grades or high school, remembering no special help in reading, and after the fourth grade just didn't bother to read. He was required to read books for book reports and managed on those allright because a choice allowed him to pick stories about baseball or other sports. He reiterated many times the narrow limit of his interests.

If the method included letting him choose what he liked it was a good method and he inevitably chose one thing--something about sports.

He heard some reading aloud; some reading he had to do himself which made him react resignedly saying that he didn't mind it, it was just something he had to do and the fact that he didn't enjoy it was just part of the struggle. The only teacher he seems to remember was a woman who read aloud which he liked. She assigned the poem, read it to them in class, "kinda went over it and asked questions." While he complained that "classical poems are tough to understand" the method of reading aloud and helping the student to understand was good, although he thinks other students would just as soon learn it for themselves. He had quite a bit of memory work but said he didn't mind too much-- "It was just a part of the job."

He stutters rather noticeably and while it seems not to bother him now, that probably enters into his problem since he says he stuttered very badly as a young boy. He had a private teacher to help him and from his accounts has made a remarkable improvement. He himself stated that he felt his poor reading was partially caused by stuttering but he wasn't seriously bothered by it.

The student likes music and thinks he would listen to poetry if there were records around handy. But he prefers song to poetry if given a choice of listening.

Fifth Man

This freshman man, eighteen years old, lives in a town in the 250 to 2500 population group, and often reads for pastime such things as

newspapers and popular magazines. Few materials for poetry reading were in his home and his parents never read poetry. He never reads poetry except under compulsion and is rather vociferous in his consistent disapproval of all poetry about which he can say nothing good. When checked on a seeming inconsistency in an answer in the inventory, he having said that familiar poems are not the only interesting ones, it was found that he meant that familiar or not familiar, no poems are interesting.

He agrees that boys dislike poetry and is not sure that it is a certain age or because of psychological attitude. He feels mostly that it is because they have been forced to learn and resent the compulsion.

This was particularly true about memorization. He was forced to memorize it not because he liked it but because the teacher thought it was good for him. He could understand it, he said, but couldn't see why he should have to memorize it. He cannot now remember the names of the poems he had to memorize but he says he memorized "about half of Macbeth" and accompanies this statement with a great groan.

None of his early experiences seems to be too specific in his mind except one instructor whom he claims was a woman "about sixty who looked just ancient, was very bad, and should have retired much earlier." "No one liked her" but it was because of the way she taught. "she tried to make us like the poetry she liked instead of trying to find out what we liked."

He seems to have had her as teacher in early high school. That added to an absolute dislike which he had had from the beginning, so he could not and now cannot find any good in poetry. He says there are no

interesting poems, no red-blooded man has any reason for reading them, they are not practical, and have no worth. They do not affect him emotionally, and the form is difficult so that understanding is too hard to come by with no commensurate results worth the effort.

Sixth Man

This freshman, a young man of eighteen, lives in a city of over 100,000 population. He was one of two who broke engagement after engagement and literally had to be hunted up during summer school to get an interview. When found, he proved to be a most engaging and courteous person, very personable, very nice, but limited in his interests so that he was unwilling to put much effort into anything not in the scope of those interests. When explanation was made as to why his response was valuable he proved to be very cooperative on the basis that he was needed.

He was entirely vague about his poetry experiences; so totally uninterested in the subject that no experience seemed to have struck him enough to remember, his vocabulary was enough limited that he could find no words to describe his reactions. He is neither a dull nor "dumb" person and makes a 2.1 all-college average but both his experience and interests are limited enough that when he searches for words to describe interest or lack of it he gets stuck. He neither hates nor dislikes poetry--he is so entirely indifferent that his ignoring of poetry is colossal. Poetry just doesn't exist in his world. It isn't important enough to dislike.

There were no books in his home; his parents didn't read. He himself reads little for pastime and that mostly movie magazines, etc. He is an addict of the twenty-five cent book. Of the serious pocket books he likes only biographies. Movies are his mental pursuits; sports, especially swimming, his pastime.

He can remember nothing about poetry in the grades but has a dim recollection of "little poems." In high school a little poetry was part of the English course but he can remember almost none. He finally remembered "Ancient Mariner" which he says he studied in the tenth grade and can remember nothing about it except certain lines. He could not understand it; "just read it over and over" and got it over with as part of a job. The teacher would make an assignment and then go over it in class but still it didn't help.

In his senior year they "covered a thick book." The teachers were boring in every year "and didn't make it interesting." The whole subject of literature was boring and he doesn't think anything would have helped. He first said they never studied any works of Shakespeare but only the poet himself but finally remembered Macbeth which "wasn't too bad," "was a pretty good story."

When he kept insisting that all his teachers were boring he was asked if he had any good teachers outside of literature and he finally got around to saying the history teachers "were more lively-like," taught "like they enjoyed teaching it," but that was as far as his description could go. Eventually he thought of one sophomore teacher who was "a lot of fun in class." She didn't make the work easier but made it interesting.

However, he found it impossible to say what was interesting. Other teachers gave a lot of tests but this one didn't, "she didn't force it on you," "she was pretty broadminded about it," (presumably meaning that she let them have ideas and opinions), "she took into account that we didn't like it and let us say why and argue." This last seemed to be the strongest thing in his mind relative to good methods of teaching.

This student has made no choice of field of study as yet, but thinks he will major in police administration.

Seventh Man

This man, a freshman, over twenty, lives in a city of over 100,000 population. He reads little for pastime and prefers fiction, reading no poetry at all. There were no poetry material available in his home, his parents never read and he has never read poetry. He finds poetry uninteresting and difficult. He does not really know why he doesn't like it--he just doesn't, and keeps repeating "it is not interesting." Friends did not influence him and he feels boys instinctively dislike poetry. He has studied as little poetry as possible, and read none not required, so he can answer few details.

He said in an answer on his questionnaire that he thought free choice, browsing rooms, phonograph records, etc. would help make students like it but in the interview he seemed to feel nothing would.

In the grade school he had "a few catchy, little poems." "Trees" is remembered half favorably as a "nice, little poem" but it had no interest for him. He had the regulation number of literature courses in a high school in Detroit but can remember absolutely nothing except Macbeth which

he claims they must have studied for half a semester and still he hadn't the vaguest idea what it was all about. Teachers read parts of it aloud, asked questions, played it on phonograph records, and generally tried all the methods to involve his interest to no avail.

He says he had all good teachers but that nothing they could have done would have helped. When asked to describe a good teacher, his reply was "one who could communicate and hold attention"; he "would solve our problems" by which he meant that the teacher was close enough to and sympathetic enough with the student that he would help on personal problems. The poetry teachers were as good as any other teachers but to no avail in his case.

All that he wants to read are sports and adventure stories.

Interviews With A Class In Oral Interpretation of Poetry

The members of a small class in Oral Interpretation of Poetry in the Department of Speech, Dramatics and Radio art were interviewed personally as to their experiences in reading and studying poetry and their resulting attitudes. There were seven women and four men who were chosen on the basis that their enrollment and interest in such a class showed their interest in poetry; that if they were interested, those things which caused their interest might be listed, studied and analyzed as to possible future utilization for other students. It seemed logical that factors which created interest for them might also create interest for others.

Each student was asked to talk freely on any aspect of the question which occurred to him. No specific or directed questions were asked.

Casual comments along the three lines of the attitudes-inventory about material, techniques and teachers were made in case they hesitated. Each person was urged to speak in unrestrained fashion on any aspect, favorable or unfavorable. Some even came back after the interview to add to facts already revealed because starting their thinking on the subject had later caused them to remember aspects not thought of during the interview.

Student one, a girl, 22, a junior, says she has always liked poetry. She can remember definitely at seven years of age discovering some volumes of Kipling in her home. These started her love of poetry. She can particularly remember "Gunga Din" which fascinated her. Her father read it to her and she thought his reading admirable. She learned from him how to read poetry aloud. So great was her love for poetry that she used it in games. From the time she was nine until around fourteen years of age she played with three other girls constantly. Their favorite game was called "villain" which consisted each day of a different imaginary excursion to a place where some supposed villain existed. There were many such plots as the one of three young sisters forced to go to a lonely house where some Blue Beard or other monster lived. This student made up the plots which usually consisted of poetry which she read aloud to her playmates, or sometimes tried to write. She says friends did not influence her like or dislike of poetry, but that she is sure she thrust poetry upon her friends.

She can remember no poetry studied in the grades and not too much in high school. There were just ordinary literary courses in which poetry evidently made no impression on her. The only thing she can remember is

a study of Shakespeare in which the teacher would force students to memorize selected parts which they repeated parrot-fashion without understanding. All the other students hated Shakespeare and the teacher, but this student says she was accustomed to reading aloud and did it rather well, according to adults around her, so that she feels she enjoyed the whole thing because she had a chance to "show off." However, she knows little of Shakespeare now and enjoys it probably least of all poetry.

An early college course almost made her hate poetry because of time spent on technical details. They had weeks of studying "iambic pentameter," etc. before they got to poetry. She says she still doesn't understand all the scanning and likes her poetry better without bothering with it. It is her opinion that freshmen should never be given such teaching, and, also, that most of the poetry given to them is too serious and deep for their comprehension, and entirely beyond their understanding.

To her, the greatest joy of poetry is that it crystallizes and condenses ideas which she wants to say and cannot, and when she finds such ideas in the lovely words of poetry they are beyond music or any other form of art beauty.

This girl has made a high scholastic record, proving her ability both as an actress and a reader. She is judged by all her teachers as being an outstanding person.

Student 2, a girl, 21, a junior, was born in the upper part of Michigan in an isolated spot. All her brothers and sisters were much older so that she had no playmates and lived in her own imaginative world. She was largely influenced by her mother and her grandmother, the latter of whom

was the first white child born in that part of the state. When she was not much more than two her mother trained her to speak a poem at a Sunday School meeting because the mother disliked heartily the usual way children recited. Having had some speech training, she started in to teach her daughter to read well. The student liked it then and has continued to like speech, and is now a speech major with a good record.

This student did not like fairy stories so that her grandmother told her stories of early settler life and of the Indians. When she was five her grandmother read her the story of "Hiawatha" which became her favorite and inseparable companion. She wanted nothing except Hiawatha which seemed to her to be "so meaningful and vivid." In retrospect, it seems to her that the analogy between life as she lived it and "Hiawatha" was completely satisfactory. From then on she wanted all her reading to be poetry. She was given a set of Robert Louis Stevenson and literally wore out A Child's Garden of Verse which had to be replaced.

She can remember only nursery rhymes in the grades, or other simple poetry which she already knew. She was not impressed. In eighth grade the teacher forced them to scan poetry which made them usually hate the poem they scanned. However, she liked "Evangeline" regardless of the fact that she could not understand it. In her junior year at high school she had a teacher who "had a distorted view of life and wanted her poetry hard and bitter." That evidently did not please the students. In an English Literature class in which she studied as a senior the teacher was intelligent in her presentation of poetry but unemotional. She was a widow with two small boys and just her looks took away from the poetry.

She was "tall, bony, skinny, angular and totally unemotional." Her good, logical explanation seems to have been lost in the dismay caused by her personality.

This student says she is much moved by poetry and therefore cannot like it indiscriminately. She likes that which deeply moves her. Friends did not influence her either way, but her mother definitely taught her to love poetry.

Student three is a girl of twenty, a junior, who learned to like poetry from reading it in numerous volumes in her parent's library and from having her mother read to her from the time that she was very little. She remembers nursery rhymes, particularly remembering Longfellow whom she likes very much, and can remember a book of early American poets which had something to do with history. She also read Greek legends, the Iliad and the Odyssey, as she grew older.

Grade school was much what she had at home and because she was familiar with the poetry she enjoyed showing off her superior knowledge before other children. She mentioned "The House on the Hill" by Robinson as having been learned in the eighth grade along with "Chicago" and "The Ancient Mariner." This last selection she felt the students read before they understood it. Personally, she liked it without understanding it.

When she was in the eleventh grade she had a "marvelous teacher." The teacher did not like the prescribed text and since she could not get it changed, evidently made an effort to bring poetry from other sources to their attention. This was done by library assignments on which there was discussion in class to check if they had read and understood. She

herself read well and would bring to them selections which she felt they would especially enjoy, or material which she felt they might not find for themselves. She read aloud the parts that she thought would be most interesting to them.

Before studying an author she would take probably a whole period to talk about the author, getting at the human interest angles which this student judges to have been very interesting and valuable. She liked to hear that they were drunkards or that the woman poet smoked cigars, etc. She still feels that to know the human part of a writer is valuable. She also feels that to have the teacher read such popular poems as "Casey at The Bat" is a good motivation to the liking of poetry. This teacher also played phonograph records about every two weeks. She would first play them and then the students were allowed to discuss them in any fashion they chose. This student said that in those days she liked every poem she heard; today she would be more critical.

Her introductory course in college was given by an instructor who is considered to be very good. He won the first faculty award for merit although he is a negro and has been in M. S. C. only three years. This student considers him an excellent poetry teacher. He dwelt heavily on "structure" and literary criticism saying that they were now far enough advanced to know such things. He emphasized the necessity for "tearing a poem apart" which many people criticize, saying that it is necessary to take it to pieces to find out how the whole is constructed. Poems were assigned for library study and were discussed freely in class. He read aloud only passages which they found difficult, using this method to buttress his explanations of the passage.

This student likes all poetry but does not know why. She just likes it. She gives the credit for her liking to her mother and the eleventh grade teacher.

Student four is a girl, 22, a senior who seems to have had an extraordinary high school background as well as family life. She says that poetry has always been a part of her life.

Her family liked poetry and had a huge library. There was a varied collection of poetry among the books so that when she browsed, looking for something to read as pastime, she often read poetry. Her parents bought books of children's poetry and she cannot remember if she had any study in grade school or not. Probably there was definite study beginning around the fifth or sixth grade, and definitely study in junior high school. She remembers Elizabeth Barret Browning, Matthew Arnold (Dover Beach is a favorite), Evangeline (which she hated), and such poems.

In high school there were five courses offered in literature of which she took four. These were full semester courses in American Literature, English Literature, World Literature, and Poetry. She did not take the fifth course, Modern Literature. All of these courses stressed poetry heavily, the English Literature course consisting mostly of poetry. She said that in each course they had a comprehensive, many-paged text which they rather thoroughly covered and on which they took a thorough examination. She gave as an example of the comprehensiveness of the course in American literature a scope of writing which went from earliest American through Dorothy Parker and Gertrude Stein.

She gives credit to the teacher whom she felt was almost entirely responsible for the great popularity of the courses. The students universally thought her a remarkable woman and she is personally popular to the extent that when they re-visit their high school or go back to the home town, they look her up.

One of the methods thought best was a very full discussion of the author by the teacher before a study of the poem. This oriented them to the poetry to follow and they were led to explore through curiosity and interest. The teacher included human interest stories and made the author a real person. The students were required to memorize a certain number of lines per week but these lines were chosen by the students as favorites. The student says she cannot remember any of them now but feels that such memory work had a definite advantage.

One of the often-used methods of testing was the oral reading of passages by the teacher who then asked them to identify each. The student stressed the fact that the teacher did not pick difficult or obscure passages but those that had proved lovely and enjoyable. In that fashion they learned to identify things which they would want to remember and she now enjoys being able to tell where passages come from when she hears them quoted.

She likes poetry so much that she has been making a private collection. She likes any kind of poetry and finds it hard to choose, so far as liking is concerned, between the Aenid, Sappho, dramatic poetry, modern poetry--just any kind.

Student five, 21, a junior, had no special poetry background. There was never any in her home and what she read and liked seemed accidentally found. She just read it and liked it; often didn't know what it meant. "You feel as if you want to like it; you ought to want to explore but feel silly when people say what do you want to read that silly stuff for?" She says she has an intense desire just to own volumes of poetry.

Although she went to Morgan Park High School in Chicago she can remember no special poetry work; just a little which was part of a literature course. No stress whatever was placed on poetry. She can remember no poetry at all in the grades. She didn't like any of her literature teachers but can't remember much. She memorized a little. She is now a speech correction major and has almost no electives and no time for any extras. Said she had a yearning to take at least this one course in poetry but her trouble is that she simply hasn't had enough study of poetry to be very intelligent about any of it. She just likes it and wants to read it.

The sixth student, a girl, twenty and a junior, did all her school work at Cranbrook from the kindergarten through high school so had a particular kind of preparation. She remembers a lot of poetry in kindergarten but has no other definite recollection until the seventh grade where she had a teacher she didn't like. She is sure the teacher was a "marvelous woman and a good teacher but she made students get every bit of meaning in the poem." This student resented such a method, feeling that just to read it for sound and the first meaning which comes to her

is much preferable. The too great emphasis on detailed meaning took away beauty for her.

Her mother had studied speech and wrote plays and poetry. She taught her daughter to read aloud and also read to her. The mother kept her own private collection of poetry which the daughter likes to browse through and read.

In high school they had individual attention on their work so she could talk about any and all poems to her teacher in private session; or she could get any sort of help which she wanted to have. Therefore, her reading seems to have grown as a private kind of thing leaving her with decided opinions as to what she likes rather than as to what is generally read and with an individual approach to learning poetry.

She likes reading it over to herself, then reading it out loud, and she likes to talk about it with some one but she badly resents having it torn apart. She says she is particular in her likes and dislikes and feels that liking poetry is like people--you get the first impression and like or don't like them forever according to that initial time. Liking depends on mood. A friend, once gave her a book of Massfield and he has always been her favorite since. She likes descriptive poetry especially. She would not read poetry as a pastime but often she is in "the mood" for poetry and reads it while in the mood.

The seventh woman student is a second generation American in a Greek family in which the father has been blind for many years and the mother has had to take the lead not only in family life but in the restaurant which they run. There has been constant emotional conflict

both because of learning to live in a new world, and the affliction of the father who, although he does a very good job in adjustment to living, still creates a problem.

The mother appears to have done a good job, as the girl is much above average in personality, mature thinking, and ability. She is a senior, graduating in voice, and has done exceptionally well. She is a highly emotional person and finds in poetry outlet for her emotions. While her mother, from description, sounds like an able and fine person she had neither the background nor the time to read poetry or make a cultural background for her children. So this student remembers little of poetry in her early life.

The first thing she remembers happened during her junior high school years and it made an indelible impression on her. A new English Literature teacher came to the school and this student was in her class. She was an extremely tall woman "approximately six feet tall and what you would term 'skinny'." Her appearance was lanky, awkward, self-conscious. At the beginning of the hour the class noted how ill at ease she was, and immediately broke forth into a free-for-all. Miss M- stood weakly before the class. Then she reached quickly for her book and began to read poetry.

"I have never seen the like of it. None of us ever saw Miss M- the same teacher in class as she was before and after. During her readings she was completely altered. She had complete control of the class. Her love and work with poetry must have been very great. The interest created in that hour was unbelievable. To me this is proof that poetry

isn't merely words but human emotions that can be reached and re-experienced (as Miss M - did) with beauty that is rare and sought."

She remembers no outstanding teacher in high school nor any particular method used. She did some memorizing which she did not like. But the interest created by this one incident held and she now reads poetry often and studies it as much as possible in college.

Student number eight, a man of twenty-three, came from a home of extreme poverty. His father and mother had separated under even more than adverse conditions for children in a home. His mother had been brought up in such poverty that she was put out to do housework at an early age. She must have had a moral fibre and integrity that could rise above seemingly impossible conditions because she brought up three children by the first husband and now has a young child by the second whom she has endowed with a thirst for school until all of them in some fashion have managed high school. One daughter had two years of college, and this son is a junior in college although he spent three years in Japan in the army and started at a later age than the usual boy. The mother can do nothing tangible by way of encouraging her children to read poetry but she has their undying loyalty and her encouragement makes them want to achieve cultural backgrounds by whatever effort necessary. This man is highly emotional as a result of continuous turmoil in his life and finds release in poetry. He says this is almost entirely a recent development in his college life resulting from interest created in a class.

He can remember no specific facts about poetry in the grades, and since he finished up part of his high school credits in extension courses

for soldiers in Japan he had no contact with it there. He formed a close Friendship with a man about his age who is a speech major. A spirit of competition was added to a desire to do something about acting and he began studying speech. He heard poetry read orally, he himself began to read it aloud, he became good enough to win a competitive reading event, and now he is trying to let the emotion come through him by writing poetry.

He says not all poetry appeals to him; he claims that he has fought against social and religious prejudice which he ran into in the army and that he did not know poetry also fought against it in the poems of many writers. Having discovered that some writers do write on that subject, he has a new interest. He is at the age when morbid poems appeal to him, and beautiful words are a strong part of the appeal of poetry.

Student number nine, a man, 24, and a junior says that his life was surrounded by poetry. His family did not have a big library but had numbers of books of poetry. He received books very often as gifts and these were frequently poetry. Most of the pictures on the wall were framed poetry quotations.

In the grades he did not like poetry. He had to memorize too much so that it destroyed his pleasure. He says that even when he chose the poetry he did not like memorizing.

In his freshman year he can remember only "Ancient Mariner" which he regards with indifference. He went to a small Catholic school and had nuns for teachers. He remembers especially one he had when he was a sophomore who was very vivacious, witty, and quite young. She was

"good fun." She taught the students square dancing, counselled on their school paper, and would do anything to help. She seemed quiet and reserved and was very "literature conscious." She so impressed the students with her love of poetry that their liking for her carried over into her love--poetry. In his junior year he remembers some Shakespeare but nothing specific about it. He remembers that they had quite a bit of American Literature but can't remember anything about poetry. He also remembers nothing in his senior year. He thinks probably boys that age feel they shouldn't enjoy poetry because of social pressure; because it "isn't done too much." He also thinks that they do not have much time due to the press of so many other things.

His freshman year in college was rather bad because the abrupt change from a small school where he was personal friends with all the teachers to a huge institution like Michigan State left him too bewildered to study or know what he wanted. He made such bad grades that he was asked to drop out of school which he did for a year and a half. He browsed in poetry during that time and became poetry conscious. He began to read it because it was a thing to be desired in itself. For instance, he says, he picked a poem from Coronet magazine in 1950 and because he wanted to keep that, he started a private collection and now has many poems in a personal anthology.

When he came back to college he began to study poetry in speech classes and both likes to hear it well read and likes to try to read it himself. He is now an exceptional student and makes a high average in all his classes.

Student number ten, a man, 23, says that he has had poetry all his life. His mother read to him and he enjoyed it greatly. He says that "you can enjoy anything if it is read to you." The mother and father read from a fairly good sized library in the home. Nothing was ever forced on him; it was just around if he wanted it.

He can remember no poetry in the grades. Junior high school included an English class of which poetry was a small part but he didn't care for any of it. "It was mostly lesson, and we had to memorize this and that. I forgot them right away and disliked poetry then."

In the ninth grade English class he was forced to read Lady of The Lake. He hated it then, and hates it now. He could not understand it. He says of meaning that he likes to read poetry from what he calls the aesthetic point of view--it has a beauty, an appeal, a worth even if it doesn't have complete meaning; he likes it just for what it means to him. He was very much against the fact that he had to accept the teacher's opinion of meaning; that he was never allowed to express his own; that he was forced to look up so many words in Lady of The Lake that the whole thing was very boring.

In the tenth grade literature course he had a teacher who was better. Poe was her favorite and he particularly remembers "Bells, Bells, Bells." She, too, had her own interpretation but "made it fun." She also asked the students what it meant to them.

He then began to study poetry in a speech course which he thought was fun. He was divided between a love for speech and mathematics the

latter of which he considered work but still liked. It was a "serious" subject; speech gives you a "freer outlook on life."

Methods, he says, are not as important as the person who uses them. He had to recite in some classes but since he is an extrovert that did not bother him; the introverts and shy people hated it. He personally prefers the oral reading method although he says he gets more out of it still when others read to him as he is not yet too capable of getting meaning for himself. He expressed himself as particularly liking to hear a class like the one occurring on the day of the interview when each student in turn read a poem aloud and, in that case, did a rather good job. He can learn better if he reads to himself when the meaning is left up to him. He can learn best from others when they read to him. Listening to records seems a good method to him.

He says that free choice for students is far preferable; that avoiding too strict rules and criticisms is a good idea; and that skillful guidance to new material with pertinent and interesting facts about the author is the ideal method.

The eleventh student, a man, is twenty-two years old. His parents were not interested in poetry but a sister two years older always liked it and he became interested through her interest and through her books which she left around so that he always had them for reading and reference.

His first remembrance of school poetry is that read to class by a third grade teacher who was "terrific." She read to them from a half hour to an hour every afternoon at the close of the school day using

stories, poetry, and any material which she thought would interest them. She gave him such a wide acquaintance with poetry that he liked just anything which was called poetry.

A fourth grade experience is not remembered but in the fifth grade he had a most unusual experience. One of his teachers was a writer who very soon after that published what he says is quite a well-known book entitled Funny Dogs of Humorous People. The teacher's name is May Trevellyn Smith and she now teaches at a college in Illinois. She was writing this book for children their age and she read it to them to try it out on them. She also had a child's story of Shakespeare entitled "Beautiful Stories From Shakespeare" by E. Nesbitt. She seems to have taken any number of children to her home (he cannot remember why nor exactly whom) but he knows it was a private class of some kind, and the children would act plays from these Shakespearean stories. He calls it "tremendous fun."

However through 6th, 7th, and 8th grade he was rather indifferent to poetry which he explains by saying there was not time; there was too much else to enjoy, particularly sports.

In high school he studied little poetry still not having time which was spent in men's choir, opera, and chorus. He can dimly remember Julius Caesar and Macbeth. What he does remember about poetry, and that vividly, is the minister who was an older man. Being an acolyte he had to remain for services and enjoyed the fact that the man read poetry frequently and well. He always read "Crossing The Bar" at every funeral and did it most effectively, in the opinion of the student. He heard

the poem "High Flight" from him the first time and has been constantly moved by it since.

A poem is "a lot more enjoyable if somebody else reads it, if they read it right. If you like it when you hear it read, you can even memorize easier." His present interest in poetry stems from study in an oral interpretation class because he says that when you hear a poem well read you have the secret of liking; that it "gives you a sense of rightness."

Interviews With Class in Beginning Interpretive Reading

1. A girl, 20, never had any poetry at home or in grade school. Her father forbade her ever studying poetry because it was impractical and useless. In high school no choice of material was allowed and there was a set pattern of teaching, mostly the assignment and question and answer kind. However, phonograph records were used which began, for her, initial liking for poetry, and now she likes it because it is an emotional outlet. She is one student, of many, who mentioned Silas Marner as poetry studied.

2. This man, 23, had no poetry at home; father and mother were apathetic about it; he can remember no poetry until high school. In high school a very good teacher gave him interest in poetry; she used varied methods, giving full explanations; started with light verse and gradually built up to heavier poetry. The teacher was from the South and had a soft voice and gentle manner which was conducive to learning; read aloud well, and student learned to like to read out loud for himself. He says it is the actor in him coming out. He, therefore,

prefers dramatic poetry, and particularly likes Carl Sandburg.

3. A man, sophomore, 20, has absolutely no remembrance of anything concerning poetry study right up until the present time. Any literature courses he had were so dull and uninteresting that they left no impression. He blames it on poor teaching methods and material. There was no poetry in his home, his parents were not interested, and any interest he has acquired is due only to his own reading. He likes E. E. Cummings and Walt Whitman, and says he likes poetry for unique style and the message. These two authors would confirm these reasons.

4. This man, 20, had much poetry in his home; there were many books around, and he liked the rhythm and story part of poetry. He loves poetry now because it is (1) a beautiful way of telling a story, (2) it paints a picture, and (3) it is very colorful. In high school he remembers Macbeth which he liked very much as he has always liked story forms. The teacher used varied methods, acting out parts of the story, playing phonograph records, giving full explanations. However, they were given no choice of poetry.

5. A man, 21, always had poetry at home, and read what he wanted. For this reason he has always been interested in finding out more about poetry. He did not like poetry in grammar school. In junior high he had a teacher with one very dull method of teaching poetry she picked out and assigned; she dissected it to see what made it tick--and it didn't for the students! Beauty was not considered. The teacher had charm but knew nothing about poetry and didn't know what to do in teaching. This student detests Longfellow and Browning which he had to memorize, and

condemns such a method of teaching. He now likes a particular kind of poetry such as that written by Alfred Noyes. He likes action and historical poems.

6. A man, 23, senior, had no poetry at home. He can remember no poetry until 7th and 8th grades; didn't understand what he read and heard then; teachers were all right but he was interested only in sports; remembers "Ancient Mariner." He could not understand it, and did not like it. Feels that students cannot learn what has not been properly explained to them. Only understanding of poetry has come in college when poetry has been read to him, and he has begun to learn to read it. "How can you learn poetry when you knew nothing about what you were supposed to read, knew nothing of the author or what influenced him to write poems? Teachers take too much for granted as to the understanding, age, and interests of students who are indifferent because of it."

7. This girl, 19, a sophomore, had poetry in her home where it was often read to her. She remembers grade school pleasantly because an animated type of poetry was used. It was read aloud to the students; they enacted it in the form of plays; the teacher infected them with her enjoyment of poetry. She remembers vividly "The Ride of Paul Revere" and can yet enjoy the vivid picture it made for her. In high school she studied all types of poetry. Enjoyed "If" most of all. The teacher she most remembers was a man who was a good reader, consistently read to them interpretively well, and taught them the Choral Reading method. She learned how a poem ought to be read and enjoys reading poetry interpretively to others.

8. This older man, a senior, 30, enjoys poetry very much. He remembers a constant association with poetry in his childhood; his grandfather read from many volumes--Browning, Longfellow, etc. During depression years, his parents read nearly every evening. It seems to have been something to do and a release of emotions. In grade school he began reading for himself, re-reading volumes he had heard earlier; enjoyed the teaching of poetry, deciding what the author had to say. In class the children acted out parts of the poems. In high school English Literature seems to have been speeded up and lost consequently. The teachers enjoyed American Literature more and therefore taught it better. They made a unit of poetry, tying it up with history, political events, etc. In this way he came to see a value of poetry which he particularly enjoys. He therefore likes realistic poetry showing social changes, bringing together in its philosophy a whole pattern of living. It is also a manner of relaxation for him. He now enjoys re-reading the authors he read before, and also finding new ones.

9. This man, a sophomore, 20, had a mother who read poetry to him; remembers none in grade school; no choice in junior high school, and the method was memorizing. He disliked the teacher and "she caused him trouble." In high school, the literature courses did not cover much poetry. When they studied it, the method was talking about poetry by the teacher. He enrolled in a speech class and learned to read poetry there. He enjoyed what he learned through the oral reading method. He remembers Shakespeare and Poe.

10. This girl, a junior, 20, has a speech minor. Her mother read to her; she can remember none in grades; in junior high they had to memorize one poem a year. In a literature course they had to memorize a hundred lines. All the studying was done from a text. However, the teacher she remembers liked poetry and was able to make her like it in spite of other things. She most likes humorous poetry. Any poetry study in college has been in speech classes. She therefore likes the oral reading method.

11. This girl, 21, a junior, has parents who like poetry but never read it to her. In grade school she liked memorizing poems but felt that from 7th to 10th grades memory work was too time consuming. Yet she does not mind memorizing. In high school, in a literature course, the students made a selection of poetry for themselves and "put out" a book of poetry including their selections. She had much poetry study in both English and American Literature and likes the classics, remembering "In Memoriam", others of Tennyson, Scott, Poe, and Shakespeare. She evidently memorized "Seven Ages of Man," "All The World's A Stage," and Hamlet's speech, all of which she likes.

12. This girl, a sophomore, 20, had poetry at home, with parents reading it to her. She remembers nursery rhymes and poems like Stevenson's "My Shadow." In grade school she remembers little poetry, that mostly in the 6th grade where they had mostly nature poems which the teacher read while they listened. In junior high "Evangeline" was a class project. They did not memorize. She had poetry in junior and senior year of high school remembering Macbeth (from which she memorized 12 lines),

"Canterbury Tales," Browning, and Poe. She can remember only Carl Sandburg in modern poets. They studied from the text but also read outside, emphasizing content always. The teacher read well and explained it well. She now reads poetry "off and on."

13. This older girl, 26, had no poetry at home, can remember only a Valentine poem in kindergarten, disliked it in junior high school because of memorization and because the teacher chose the poems which they were forced to learn. The teacher did not explain the poems. She can remember liking poetry in the grades because teacher and students read it together, with full teacher explanation. She had no poetry in high school; memorized and therefore hated it in college. She likes poetry, she says, but could not remember the names of any poems.

14. This man, a senior, 23, had many books of poetry at home. His mother recited poetry to him, and read a lot. He disliked poetry in grade school because they had to memorize. Not allowed own choice in junior high, and poetry was not stressed. In high school the teacher read the poetry. This man does not like reading in front of a class, and does not like poetry he does not understand. He became interested in poetry by reading poems in Saturday Evening Post; went out recently and bought a pocket edition of poetry and enjoys reading it because he is "on his own."

15. This girl, a sophomore, 19, had a father and mother who read frequently to her. They owned the "Book House", a set of six, from which they all read constantly and the student remembers these vividly; had one favorite poem. She had little poetry in grade school; in junior high

she remembers "The Highwayman"; memorized a great deal and did not mind-- liked the poem so much it was fun. In high school students were allowed to choose for themselves and evidently had some memory work there but feels if the poem is understood that memory work is not too difficult. She remembers Whitman and Milton.

16. This girl, a junior, 20, had no poetry in the home except nursery rhymes in books given to her. She remembers no poetry in grade school; "probably the teacher read to them" but it evidently made no impression. In junior high English class, they had to memorize verses from the Bible and other poetry which the teacher selected. These they recited in class; everybody had to do the same thing. Poems were written on the board; students copied and memorized and recited without any explanation or help from teacher. They never understood any of them "well enough to go ahead and do something on their own." In high school selections were entirely by teacher. There was discussion and other help in class. The student memorized Chaucer's "prologue," and remembers "Ancient Mariner" and "Thanatopsis." The teacher used the analysis method and scanning, which the student has never understood to this day, and is therefore correspondingly bored with poetry.

17. This girl, 19, a junior, had little poetry at home since her parents had little time for it. She remembers her first poetry in grade school and liked it in general; had poetry in seventh grade but did not like it. They read it aloud in class but had no discussion. They were not required to memorize. The teacher stressed meter, etc. and the students missed the meaning completely. In high school the approach was

better because they were helped in appreciation. One instructor was very interested and was able to kindle interest in this student in spite of the fact that no selection by students was allowed; all poetry was from a text. She had some T. S. Eliot whom she did not understand; but liking and understanding some poetry made the rest of it better.

18. An older man, 38, a junior had very little poetry at home as his parents were not educated. In grade school he had "childlike recitations," and he mentioned remembering "Little Boy Blue." In junior and senior high he studied poetry in a guidance class. He likes Edgar A. Guest. In English class he was compelled to learn a stipulated number of lines of English poetry, was given no choice, no basis of evaluation of poetry. He felt the poetry was presented in a dull and monotonous manner. The teacher read, gave her interpretation which the student must accept, and then students were required to memorize a certain number of lines. They always disliked what they had to memorize.

19. This girl, 20, is a senior. At home she learned nursery rhymes which she recited to all visitors. She has unpleasant memories of grade school where she had to memorize and recite to the teacher poems which she never understood. The teacher simply told them the page number on which the poem was found, they memorized and recited until the teacher was satisfied with the perfection of the performance. There was no choice for the student. In high school poetry was taught predominantly in the sophomore year; they had to read all the poems in the book and the teacher gave quizzes on what the poems meant; there was no memorization, not much oral reading, and no choice of material. Her hatred for

poetry grew as she was continuously asked to explain poems the meaning of which she had no way to obtain. She can remember only one pleasant experience in high school; they read John Brown's Body which she enjoyed because it was a story and was done in oral recitation. As a result of aversion to poetry caused in high school, she has only recently begun reading it.

APPENDIX D

ITEMIZED TABLE OF POEMS REMEMBERED AND REACTION TO THEM

Part I of the Poetry Attitudes-Inventory requested the 213 freshmen answering the questionnaire to list all the poems they could remember, authors if remembered, and their reaction of like or dislike. There are two listings given: (1) according to each person's record of remembrance, and (2) according to author and number of persons remembering poems of the author. The spelling of the students is reproduced as it is, in itself, considered revelatory.

I. POEMS REMEMBERED BY INDIVIDUALS

1. One poem remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
1. Little Boy Blue		x	
2. Merchant of Venice		x	
3. Canterbury Tales	Chacuer*		x
4. Snowbound		x	
5. Mac Beth	Shakespere		x
6. Raven	Poe		
7. Trees		x	
8. Raven	Poe		x
9. Mary Had A Little Lamb		x	
10. Trees		x	
11. My life is like a summer rose		x	
12. The Raven		x	
13. If		x	
14. Sat. Eve. Post Poems			
15. When the Frost is on the Pumkin		x	
16. Poems buy Ed. Guest		x	
17. Ancient Mariner			

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

2. Two poems remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
1. Hiawatha	Wadsworth Longfellow	x	
Bells, Bells, Bells		x	
2. Paradise Lost		x	
Shakespeare's Sonnets		x	
3. Helen		x	
Bells			
4. Paradise Lose*	Milton		couldn't
On His Blindness	Milton	x	understand
5. Snowbound			
Spring			
6. Harp Weaver		x	
Chicago		x	
7. Ancient Mariner		x	
Midnight Ride of Paul Revere		x	
8. Fool's Prayer		x!	
Village Blacksmith			
9. The Ancient Mariner		x	
The Chambered Natilus*		x	
10. Chicago	Sandburg	x	
Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
11. Manhattan		x	
Chicago		x	
12. Rhyme of Ancient Mariner		x	
Snow Bound		x	
13. The Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
Trees			x
(Mentions he like Edgar A. Guest)			
14. Chicago	Sandburg	x	
America For Me	"(attributed to)	x	
15. Ancient Mariner		x	
The Golfer	Edgar Guest	x	
16. Hiawatha	Longfellow	x	
When the Frost is On the Pumkin*			
17. Hiawatha		x	
Spring		x	
18.	Omar Kyham*		
	Ogdan Nash*		
19. Chicago	Sandburg	x	
	Scott's poetry	x	
20. Canterbury Tales	Chaucer	x	
The Raven			
21. Chicago	Sandburg	x	
Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner	Collrich*	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced

3. Three poems remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
1. Trees			x
Lady of Lake			x
Sohrab and Rustum			x
2. Fog	Sandburg	x	
Man With the Hoe		x	
Raven	Poe	x	
3. Mac Beth*	Poe	x	
Highwayman	Longfellow		x
Claims knows more but cannot remember titles			
4.	Sandburg	x	
	Tenison*	x	
	Shakespear	x	
5. The Raven	Poe	x	
Annabelle	Poe	x	
	(likes other by Poe)		
	Carl Sandburg	x	
6. Raven	Poe	x	
Hamlet	Shakespeare	x	
Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
7. Flanders Field		x	
Casey at The Bat		x	
French Stenographer		x	
8. Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
Raven	Poe	x	
Chigo*	Sandburg	x	
9. Trees	Joyce Kilmer	x	
Elegy	Gray	x	
The Cremation of Dan McGrew	Anon.	x	
10. Chicago	Carl Sandburg		
Old Ironsides			
The Blacksmith	Longfellow		
11. Flanders Field		x	
Little Boy Blue	Eugene Feild*	x	
Paul Revere's Ride			x
12. Evangeline		x	
Ride of Paul Revere		x	
The Highwayman		x	
13. Hamlet	Shakespear	x	
Crossing The Bar	Tennisson*	x	
Paul Revere		x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

3. Three poems remembered: cont.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
14. Thenatopsas		x	
The Windy City	Carl Sandburg	x	
Ancient Mariner		x	
15. Ancient Mariner*		x	
Casy at the Bat	Ogden Nash	x	
16. The Mariner		x	
The Raven			
Floyd Irison			
17. Cawterbury*	Chaucer	x	
The Raven		x	
The Village Blacksmith		x	
18. The Raven	Poe	x	
Sail On		x	
Casey at The Bat		x	
19. The Raven	Poe	x	
Evangeline	Longfellow?		
The Pit and the Pendulum	Poe	x	
20. Lady of the Lake		x	
Barbara Allen		x	
(Tales of Paul Bunyan)**			
21. Snowbound	Whittier	x	
Thanatopsis		x	
Chicago	Sandburg	x	
22. Paradise Lost	Milton	x	
Rhyme of Ancient Mariner	Coleridge		
To Lucasta on going to war	Taylor***		

4. Four poems remembered:

1. Casey at Bat	x	
Silas Marner****	x	
Lady of the Lake		x
Night Before Christmas	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

** Included to show lack of concept of poetry.

*** Author included as given by student.

**** Silas Marner frequently mentioned in personal interviews.

4. Four poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
2. Raven	Poe	x	
Vision of Sir Launfal		x	
Chicago	Sandbrug*	x	
Lament	E. St. Vincent Millay	x	
3. The Birches	Robert Frost	x	
Little Boy Blue			
A Day	Emily Dickinson	x	
The Railway Train			
4. To a Skylark		x	
On a Grecian Ode		x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
To A Daisy		x	
5. Elegy in a Country Churchyard	Gray	x	
How Do I Love Thee?	E. B. Browning	x	
Tintern Abbey	Wordsworth		x
Trees	Kilmer	x	
6. The Highwayman			
The Frog	Emily Dikerson*		
Song of the Open Road			
Adam in the Garden)from Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman		
7. Ancient Mariner	Coleridge	x	
Thanatopsis		x	
Captain, My Captain		x	
Leaves of Grass			
8. Macbeth	Shakespear	x	
Ancient Mariner		x	
Snow Bound	Whittier	x	
Hamlet	Shakespear	x	
9. McBeth*			x
Silas Mariner*		x	
Evangeline			x
Midnight Ride of Paul Revere			
10. Birches	Frost	x	
Any poems by	Nash	x	
Rime of Ancient Mariner		x	
Lays of Ancient Rome		x	
11. Thanatopsis	Thoreau	x	
The Stone			x
Bells			x
To a Waterfall	Longfellow		x

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

4. Four poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
12. Evangeline			
The Village Blacksmith			
Canterbury Tales			
The Raven			
13. Raven	Longfellow	x	
Everything	Melville !!!!!!!!!	x	
	Keats	x	
	Browning	x	
14. Daffodils		x	
The Blacksmith		x	
The Crane		x	
Sorab & Roustum*	Robinson	x	
15. Macbeth		x	
Springtime			
Tam O Shanter			
All of	Burn's works		
16.	Poe	x	
	James R. Lowell	x	
	Longfellow	x	
	R. Browning	x	
17. Raven	Poe	x	
Flanders Fields		x	
The Mill			x
McBeth (Prose?)*		x	
18. Julius Ceaser	Shakespere	x	
Ancient Mariner		x	
Macbeth	Shakespere	x	
Purple Cow		x	
*This is as many as I can remember. The last time I study poetry was in H. S. and that was ten years ago." ¹			

5. Five poems remembered:

1. Trees	x	
Waterfowl	x	
Skyscrapers	x	
Macbeth	x	
Caesar	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

¹ Note from student included with this list.

5. Five poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
2. Paul Revere's Ride	H. W. Longfellow	x	
Courtship of Miles Standish	H. W. Longfellow	x	
Evangeline	H. W. Longfellow		x
The Lady of The Lake	Sir W. Scott	x	
The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*		x	
3. Anna Bell Lee*	Poe	x	
Raven	Poe	x	
Guinga Din*	Poe	x	
Village Blacksmith		x	
Evangeline		x	
4. Macbeth	Shakespere	x	
To Lucasta on Going to War		x	
The Highwayman	Longfellow	fair	
The Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
The Raven	Longfellow	x	
5. Trees	Kilmer	x	
Silas Marner	Shakespeare****	x	
Merchant of Venice	Shakespeare	x	
The Night Has a Thousand Eyes		x	
Lady of the Lake		x	
6. Invictus		x	
West Wind		x	
Ancient Mariner		x	
Spring		x	
Canterbury Tales		x	
7. Casey at Bat	Service	x	
To a Skylark		x	
Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner		x	
The Explorer		x	
Trees		x	
8. The Bells		x	
Fog	Carl Sanburg*	x	
Chicago	Carl Sanburg*	x	
Prisoner of Chalise*		x	
Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
9. The Vision of Sir Launfal		x	
Snowbound		x	
Trees		x	
The Sandpiper		x	
I Shot The Bird With the Albatross		x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

**** Silas Marner frequently mentioned in personal interviews.

5. Five poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
10. Trees		x	
The Raven		x	
Village Blacksmith		x	
The Sandman		x	
Canterbury Tales		x	
11. The Villiage Blacksmith*	Longfellow	x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
Autumn		x	
Fall		x	
The Coin			x
12. The Congo		x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
	Ogden Nash	x	
(Old English Poems			
Macbeth	Shakespear	x	
13. Great Snowfall	C. G. Whitier*	x	
Children's Hour	Longfellow	x	
Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
Opportunity	Sill	x	
I Never Saw A Moor	Amy Lowell?	x	
14. Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
Chicago	Sandburg	x	
Alogy in a Village Graveyard*		x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
Paridise Lost*	Milton	x	(but hard to understand)
15. Ancient Mariner		x	
Raven	Poe	x	
Villiage Blacksmith*	Poe	x	
Paul Revere		x	
Casey at the Bat		x	

6. Six poems remembered:

1. Trees	Scott	x	
The Raven		x	
Hiawatha		x	
The Lady in the Meadow	Richards	x	
The Spring	Cummins	x	
The Autumn Woods	Grant	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

6. Six poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
2. The Raven	Poe	x	
The Deerslayer		x	
Ryme of Ancient Mariner*			x
	Longfellow	x	
Snowbound		x	
Caterbury Tales*			x
3. About a Locomotive	Berton Braley	x	
A Boy's Prayer	Unknown	x	
Thanitopsis*	Bryant		x
Wreck of the Hesperus			x
The Sandpiper		x	
Trees	Kilmer	x	
4. The Raven	Poe	x	
This Is My Beloved		x	
Rubyat of Omar Kayam*		x	
Gungha Din			x
Cremation of Sam McGee		x	
Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner		x	
5. Much of	Shakespear		
Much of	Sandburg		
Verses	Dorothy Parker		
Book of poems	Poe		
Works	Milton		
Works	Eugene Field		
6. Evangeline	Longfellow		x
MacBeth	Shakespear		x
Lady of the Lake	Sir Walter Scott	x	
The Raven	Edgar Allen Poe		x
The Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
Paul Revere's Ride		x	
7. To His Coy Mistress	A. Marvel	x	
Dover Beach	Marvel	x	
Tintern Abbey	Wordsworth	x	
Night	Shelley	x	
Wonder Evening	T. S. Eliot	x	
Preludes	T. S. Eliot	x	
8. Man With the Hoe			
Thanitopsis*			
The Old Violin			
In Flanders Field			
There is no Death			
The Wild Flower			

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

6. Six poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
9. Ancient Mariner			x
Casey at the Bat		x	
Trees	Longfellow	x	
Old Iron Sides		x	
Hiawatha		x	
Concord Hymn*		x	
10. Ancient Mariner		x	
Trees		x	
Casey at the Bat		x	
Old Iron Sides		x	
Hiawathia*		x	
Concord Hymn		x	
11. Ancient Mariner			x
Casey at the Bat		x	
The Return of Case		x	
Hiawatha		x	
Trees		x	
Concord Hymn*		x	
12. Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
Ave Maria		x	
Sonnet on Marriage		x	
To a Daffodil		x	
How Do I Love Thee	Barret	x	
Twelfth Night	Shakespeare	x	

7. Seven poems remembered:

1. The Barefoot Boy		x	
Village Blacksmith		x	
The Hanging of Danny Deever		x	
Lucy Gray		x	
Rode the Five Hundred		x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
I must go down to the sea again		x	
2. Ellegy Written in a Country Churchyard*			
Fences	Thomas Gray	x	
Taming of the Shrew	Carl Sandburg	indifferent	
Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
	Shakespeare	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

7. Seven poems remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
Hamlet	Shakespeare		x
Merchant of Venice	Shakespeare	x	
Julius Caesar	Shakespeare	x	
(Says he has read Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Burns and a few others and liked them generally)			
3. Trees	Kilmer	x	
Chicago	Sandburg	x	
Fog	Sandburg	x	
Earth's Last Picture		x	
The Raven		x	
West-Ward-Ho*		x	
Annabelle Lee		x	
4. Man With The Hoe	E. Markham	x	
Charge of the Light Brigade		x	
Hiawatha	Longfellow		x
Evangeline			x
When the Frost Is On the Pumpkin	Frost	x	
Highwayman		x	
Casey at The Bat		x	
5. The Falls of Loddore*			
The Tiger	Frost	x	
Ode To A Grecian Urn			
The Nightingale			
The Raven	Poe	x	
The Flight			
Macbeth	Shakespere*	x	
6. Thanatopsis			x
L'Envoi		x	
Kentucky Belle		x	
Collections	Sandburg	x	
Collections	Edna St. Vincent Millay	x	
The Last Dutchess			x
Sonnets	Elizabeth Browning	x	
7. How Do I Love Thee	E. Browning	x	
Illegero*	Milton		x
Macibeth*	Shakespeare	x	
The Highwayman		x	
The Prisoner of Chelate*		x	
Chicago	Sandberg*	x	
Fog	Sandberg*	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

7. Seven poems remembered: cont.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
8. The Raven	Poe	x	
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner	Coleridge	xxxxx	x
Bells	Poe		
To Helen	Poe	x	
Fog	Sandburg	x	
Daffodils	Wordsworth	x	
On Blindness	Keats	x	
9. Raven	Poe	x	
Highwayman	Noyes	x	
McBeth*	Shakespeare		x
Hiawatha	Longfellow		
Ulalume	Poe	x	
The Albatross		x	
To Helen	Poe	x	
10. Snowbound	Whittier	x	
MacBeth	Shakespeare	x	
Caesar	Shakespeare	x	
Ulalume	Poe	x	
Evangeline	Longfellow	x	
Hiawatha	Longfellow	x	
Highwayman	Noyes	x	
11. Julius Caesar	Shakespeare	x	
Merchant of Venus*	Shakespeare	x	
Hamlet*	Shakespeare	x	
MacBeth*	Shakespeare	x	
The Riveter		x	
The Highwayman		x	
Chicago		x	
12. The Deserted Village	Goldsmith	x	
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard	Gray	x	
Sonnets to the Portugese	Eliz. Barret Browning	x	
Eve of St. Agnes	Keats	indifferent	
Lady of the Lake	Scott	x	
Vespers	A. A. Milne	x	

8. Eight or more poems remembered:

1. Ancient Mariner

Sandberg*

x
x

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
Blacksmith Black Raven	Whitman Longfellow	x x	
	Emerson Thoreau Hawthorne		x x x
2. Abeau Ben Adam* Tam O'Shanter Gerontion Ode To A Nightingale Ozymandias "Oh to be in England" Batter my heart The Ancient Mariner		x x x x x x x x	
3. Gravyard* Julius Caesar King Lear Romeo and Juliet The Villige Black Smith* Hiawatha The Raven The Highwayman	Gray Shakespeare* Sheakespeare* Sheakespeare* Goldsmith Longfellow Poe Alfred Noyes	x x x x x	x x
4. Vision of Sir Launfall* Skeleton in Armour (likes all of Longfellow)	Lowell Longfellow	x x	
All of The Raven (likes all of Poe)	Edgar A. Guest Poe	x x	
One Horse Shay Barefoot Boy Village Blacksmith Rubaiyat of Omar?	Riley Fitzgerald	x x x x	
5. Thanatopsis The last Leaf O, Captain, My Captain Anabelle Lee The Raven Hiawatha Evangeline Snowbound The Rainy Day	Bryant Whitman Poe Poe Longfellow	x x x x x x x x x	
6. Buffalo Bills defunct* The West Wind Ode to a Grecian Urn	T. S. Eliot Shelly Keats	x x x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced

8. Eight or more poems remembered:

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
Idylls of the King		x	
Poems, sonnets and dramas	Shakespeare	x	
Cyrano de Bergerac		x	
(Others too numerous to mention - all of which were well liked)			
7. Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree			
Little Flower in a crained wall*			
Hiawatha			
The Childrens hr*			
elpenseroso*	Milton (likes all of Milton)		
	Dante		
	Burns		
	Shakespere		
8. Thanatopsis	Bryant	x	
To a Mountain Daisy	Burns	x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
War	Sandburg	x	
Chicago	Sandburg		x
	Frost	x	
Crossing the Bar			
Evangeline	Longfellow	x	
Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
9. The Village Blacksmith	H. W. Longfellow	x	
The Raven	E. A. Poe	x	
Thanatopsis	W. C. Bryant	x.	
The Coin	S. Teasdale	x	
The Highwayman	A. Noyes	x	
Trees	J. Kilmer	x	
Hiawatha	H. W. Longfellow	x	
I Never Saw a Moore*	E. Dickenson	x	
Snow Bound	J. G. Whittier	x	
10. The Hired Man	Rob ert Frost	x	
Boots		x	
Rhyme of Ancient Mariner	Coleridge	x	
Raven	Poe	x	
Annabelle Lee	Poe	x	
Ode a Cassandre	Ronsard		
Miniver Cheevey		x	
Chicago	Sanburg	x	
Ballade des Pendus	Villon	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
11. The Vision of Sir Launfal		x	
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner		x	
Building of the Ship	Longfellow	x	
Maud Muller		x	
Wreck of the Hesperus		x	
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard	Gray		
Sunrising	Donne		
A courtin'	Holmes		
146th Sonnet	Shakespear		
12. Charge of the Light Brigade		x	
The Raven		x	
Bar the Door		x	
Spring		x	
Rymen of the Ancient Mariner*		x	
To the Dead		x	
Fate		x	
Trees		x	
Concord Hymn		x	
Taps		x	
13. Trees		x	
Snowbound		x	
Sonnetts*	Browning	x	
Chicago	Sandburg	x	
Raven			x
Ode to a Grecian Urn			x
Canterbury Tales		x	
Concord Hymn		x	
Annabelle Lee		x	
The Lament		x	
14. Barrel Organ	Noyes	x	
23 Psalm		x	
Ancient Mariner	Same?	x	
Anabel Lee	Poe	x	
Raven	Poe		x
Highway Man			x
Hiawatha	Longfellow		x
Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
Paul Revere's Ride		x	
Casey at the Bat		x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
15. The Oddessy*			Alright
Daffodils	Wadsworth		Good
Westminster Bridge	Tennyson (I think)		Fair
Prisoner of Chillon	Bryon		Excellent
O Capt. My Capt.	Whitman		Excellent
Charge of Light Brigade			Excellent
Bells	Poe		Excellent
America for Me	Van Dyke		Good
Gunga Din	Kipling		Excellent
Danny Dever	Kipling		Excellent
Mandalay	Kipling		Excellent
16. Little Orphan Annie		x	
Village Blacksmith	Stevenson	x	
Casey at the Bat		x	
Ode to a Nightingale	Shelly	x	
Elegy in a Country Churchyard		x	
Saturday Night	Burns	x	
Macbeth, etc.	Shakespeare	x	
Canterbury Tales	Chaucer	x	
Why (or How) Do I Love Thee	Browning	x	
Old Ironsides	Holmes	x	
(Best of all! she likes)	Burns	x	
17. Ode to A Grecian Urn			x
The Light		x	
Canterbury Tales		x	
Rhyme to An Ancient Mariner		x	
To A Rose		x	
L'Allegro			x
Trees			
Bar the Door			
The Raven			
Concord Hill			
Charge of the Light Brigade			
Annabel Lee			
18. Grass	Carl Sandburg	x	
Sonnets to Portugese	E. B. Browning	x	
The Raven	E. A. Poe		Indiff.
Rime of Ancient Mariner	E. A. Poe	x	
My Luv's Like a Red Red Rose	R. Burns	x	
Evangeline	Poe	x	
To a Waterfowl	Thoreau	x	
Thanatopsis	Thoreau		indiff.

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

	Title	Author	Like	Dislike
	Across the Sands of Dee		x	
	Canterbury Tales	Chaucer	x	
	The Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
	Elegy in Country Churchyard	T. Gray		x
19.	My Shadow	Stephens	x	
	Ryme of the Ancient Meriner*	Tennyson	x	
	When the Frost Is on the Pumkin	J. W. Riley	x	
	Works	Paul Lawrence Dunbar	x	
	Snowbound	Whittier		x
	Bells	E. A. Poe	x	
	Anabelle Lee	E. A. Poe	x	
	The Raven	E. A. Poe	x especially	
20.	Rime of Ancient Mariner	Coleridge	x	
	Snow Bound	Whittier		x
	Canterbury Tales	Chaucer	x	
	Chicago	Sandburg	x	
	How Do I Love Thee	E. Browning	x	
	Evangeline	Longfellow	x	
	Hiawatha	Longfellow	x	
	Break, Break, Break	Tennyson		x
	The Raven	Poe	x	
	Idylls of the King	Tennyson	x	
	John Brown's Body	Benet	x	
	Elegy in Country Churchyard	Gray		x
21.	Chicago	Sandburg	x	
	Ancient Mariner		x	
	Homers Odyssey*		x	
	Raven	Poe	x	
	Old Ironsides		x	
	O Captan My Captan*		x	
	Village Blacksmith	Longfellow	x	
	Little Orphan Annie		x	
	The Purple Cow	Gilbert	x	
	Paul Revers Ride*	Longfellow	x	
	A Farmer in the fields	Whittier	x	
	Trees	Kilmer	x	
22.	When Lilacs Last In The Dooryard Bloomed		x	
	Stopping by Woods on a Snow Evening	Frost	x	
	Cradle of the Deep		x	
	Wm. Booth Enters into Heaven		x	
	Sylvia			x

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

	Title	Author	Like	Dislike
	When We Too Parted		x	
	They Tray*			x
	My Heart Leaps Up		x	
	The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner		x	
	Cassie at the Bat*		x	
	The Battle of the Keys		x	
	Captain, My Captain		x	
23.	Seven Ages	Shakespeare		
	White Cliffs of Dover	Alice Duer Miller		
	Snowbound	Whittier		
	Evangeline	Longfellow		
	Hiawatha	Longfellow		
	Crossing the Bar	Tennyson		
	Break, Break, Break	Tennyson		
	The Raven	Poe		
	The Bells	Poe		
	The Canterbury Tales	Chaucer		
	Annabell-Lee*			
	Captain My Captain			
	Elegy in A Country Church Yard	Gray		
24.	The Devine Comedy*	Dante	x	
	Faust	Geothe	x	
	To his coy mistress	Melvell	x	
	Sunrise	Melvell	x	
Ode	to a Nightingale	Keats	x	
	Odyssy*	Homer	x	
	Sonnets	Petrarch	x	
	Song of the Bell	Schiller	x	
	Sonnets	Shakespeare	x	
	Gerontion	T. S. Elliot	x	
	Cesar & Cleopatra*	B. Shaw	x	
	Ballade des Pendus*	F. Villon	x	
	Wilhelm Tell	Schiller	x	
25.	The Raven	Edgar Allen Poe	x	
	To his Coy Mystres*	Shakesphere		x
	Ode to Grecian Urn			x
	Sonnets 18-23	Browning	x	
	Trees		x	
	Sunrise			x
	To the Virgine*			x
	Spring		x	
	Annabelle Lee	Poe	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

	Title	Author	Like	Dislike
	The Frost is on the Pumpkin		x	
	Village Blacksmith		x	
	Midnite Ride of Paul Revere		x	
	Elegy	Gray	x	
	Gerontion		x	
26.	Chicago	Sandberg*	x	
	Buttons	Sandberg	x	
	White Curtains	Sandberg	x	
	Patterns	Amy Lowell		
	Vision of Sir Launfal		x	
	How Do I Love Thee?	Eliz. B. Browning	x	
	Beowolf			x
	Canterbury Tales	Chaucer	x	
	Elegy in A Country Churchyard	Gray	x	
27.	The Fool's Prayer	Sill	x (favorite)	
	Opportunity			x
	I Hear America Singing	Whitman	x	
	Iliad and Odyssey	Homer	x	
	Mending Wall		x	
	How did you Die?		x	
	O Captain, My Captain		x	
	The Daffodils		x	
	The Bells	Poe		x
	The Raven	Poe	x	
	Trees	Kilmer		x
	When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed	Whitman		x
	If		x	
28.	Highwayman	Alfred J. Noyes	x	
	Listening	Alfred J. Noyes	x	
	Paul Revere's Ride	Holmes	x	
	Captain, My Captain	Whitman	x	
	Evangeline	Holmes	x	
	Courage	Johnson	x	
	Fog	Sandburg	x	
	Camel		x	
	Pig		x	
	Panther		x	
	Merchant of Venice	Shakespeare	x	
	Julius Caesar	Shakespeare	x	
	Macbeth	Shakespeare	x	
	Midsummer Night's Dream	Shakespeare	x	
	Sonnet XIV 'Marriage of True Minds'	Shakespeare	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
29. Rape of the Lock		x	
Mac Beth*	William Shakespear	x	
Hamlet	William Shakespear	x	
Julius Caesar	William Shakespear	x	
To A Skylark	Wordsworth	x	
To My Beloved Wm. Shakespear	Ben Johnson*	x	
Mid summer Nighs Dream*		x	
as you like it		x	
Pardise Lost	John Milton		x
Rhym of the Ancient Mariner*	Coloridge*	x	
Cantabury Tales*	Chaucher*	x	
Prologue to Canterbury Tales		x	
Beowulf		x	
Plowman's Charm		x	
30. Sonnets from Portugues*	Browning		
Love	Unknown		
Crossing the Bar	Tennyson		
Ode to Grecian Urn			
My Last Duchess	Ferra		
Arab's farewell to his Horse			
Thanatophis*			
Break, Break, Break			
Fog	Sanderburg*		
Leaves of Grass	Whitman		
The Raven			
Annabelle Lee			
Cremation of Sam Mcgee*			
Dover Beach			
"and many others"			
31. This student wrote: "There would be no point in trying to put down my individual favorites so I have listed some of my most read authors."			
They are:	E. E. Cummings	x	
	Walt Whitman	x	
	Keats	x	
	Byron	x	
	Shelley	x	
	Shakespear	x	
	Browning	x	
	Modern poetry	x	
	Milton (occasionally)	x	

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

8. Eight or more poems remembered: contd.

Title	Author	Like	Dislike
32. McBeath*	Shakespeare	x	
Ceasar*	Shakespeare	x	
The Raven	Poe	x	
Hiawatha	Emerson	x	
Rime of Ancient Mariner	Coolridge*	x	
Annabelle Lee			
Lesbia	Saphio*	x	
Illiad	Homer	x	
Oddessay*	Homer	x	
"I liked some of Browning's poems, but I can't recall any of the names."			

* Original spelling of student reproduced.

II. SUMMARY OF POEMS REMEMBERED AND THEIR AUTHORS

1. Coleridge	
Rime of the Ancient Mariner	41
The Albatross	1
"I Shot The Bird with the Albatross"	1
(Both of these presumed to belong here; no author given)	
2. Poe	
Raven	49
Annabelle Lee	13
Bells	14
Helen	3
Pit and Pendulum	1
Falls of Lodore	1
Ulalume	1
3. Shakespeare	
Macbeth	28
Julius Caesar	8
Hamlet	7
Sonnets	4
Merchant of Venice	5

3. Shakespeare (Continued)	
Midsummer Night's Dream	2
Taming of Shrew	1
Seven Ages	1
Lear	1
As You Like It	1
Romeo and Juliet	1
Twelfth Night	1
146th Sonnet	1
4. Longfellow	
Hiawatha	18
Evangeline	15
Paul Revere	11
Village Blacksmith	25
Courtship	1
Skeleton in Armor	1
Building Ship	1
Children's Hour	2
The Rainy Day	1
To A Waterfall (attributed to Longfellow)	1
Concord Hymn (once called Concord Hill, spelled variously in others)	4
Wreck of Hesperus (no author)	1
5. Sandburg	
Chicago	22
Fog	7
War	1
Grass	1
Fences	1
Buttons	1
White Curtains	1
) Attributed to Sandburg	
) (Do not know to what they refer)	
6. Kilmer	
Trees	23
7. Whittier	
Snowbound (1 title - The Great Snowfall)	15
A Farmer in the Fields (attributed to)	1
Barefoot Boy	1
8. Chaucer	
Canterbury Tales	15
9. No author given - 1 attributed to Service	
Casey at the Bat	13

10. Alfred Noyes	
Highwayman	13
Listening (credited with)	1
Barrel Organ (no author mentioned)	1
11. Holmes	
A Courtin'	1
One Horse Shay (no author mentioned)	1
12. William Cullen Bryant	
Thanatopsis (Author seldom given, spelling varied and marvelous)	13
13. Tennyson	
Charge of Light Brigade	
(Various titles: Rode the Five Hundred, etc.)	5
Crossing the Bar	4
Break, Break, Break	3
Idylls of the King	2
14. Gray	
Elegy in a Country Churchyard	13
(Various titles, including Gravyard)	
15. Keats	
Ode To A Grecian Urn	7
Eve of St. Agnes	1
16. Elizabeth Barrett Browning	
How Do I Love Thee	6
Sonnets	6
17. Robert Browning	
My Last Duchess	2
(One attributed poem to Ferra)	
18. T. W. Eliot	
Gerontion	3
Preludes	1
Wonder Evening	1
"Buffalo Bills defunct"	1
(Exact title and spelling of students)	
19. Whitman	
Oh, Captain, My Captain	9
Leaves of Grass	3
When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed	2
"Adam in the Garden" (attributed to)	
Song of Open Road	1
I Hear America Sing	1

20. Wordsworth	
Daffodils	5
Tintern Abbey	2
Westminster Bridge (attributed to "Tennyson, I think")	1
Lucy Gray (no author given)	1
To A Skylark (credited to him)	1
21. Rubyat of Omar Kayam	1
Rubaiyat of Omar ? by Fitzgerald	1
22. Beowulf	2
23. Marvell	
To His Coy Mistress	2
(Once attributed to Melville)	
(Once "To His Coy Mystres - Shakespeare)	
Sunrise (attributed)	1
24. Markham	
Man with the Hoe	4
25. Dante	
the devine comedy (exact spelling)	1
26. Lowell	
Vision of Sir Launfal	5
27. Milton	
L'Allegro (once spelled "Illeggero")	2
ilpenseroso (exact spelling)	1
On His Blindness (once attributed to Keats)	2
Paradise Lost	5
28. Sill	
Fool's Prayer	2
Opportunity (author not mentioned)	2
29. Edna St. Vincent Millay	
Harp Weaver	1
Lament	2
30. Van Dyke (author not mentioned)	
America For Me	2
31. Homer	
Odyssey (once spelled Oddesy)	3
Iliad	1

32. Riley (given name not mentioned)	
When the Frost Is on the Pumkin	5
(once attributed to Frost)	
Little Orphan Annie	1
33. Kipling	
If	2
Gunga Din	3
L'Envoi (once listed by first line)	2
Boots	1
Hanging Dany Deeever	3
34. Field	
Little Boy Blue	3
35. No author mentioned	
Sohut & Rustum	2
36. No author mentioned	
In Flanders Fields	4
37. E. E. Cummings	
Spring	1
Others mentioned a poem entitled "Spring" but no author)	3
38. Amy Lowell	
Patterns	
39. No author	
Prisoner of Chillon (spelled numerous ways)	3
40. No author	
Cremation of Dan McGrew (exact wording)	1
Cremation of Sam Mcgee	1
41. Alice Duer Miller	
White Cliffs	1
42. Stephens	
My Shadow	1
43. Gilbert	
The Purple Cow	
44. Robert Burns	
My Luv Is Like a Red, Red Rose	2
(once simply called "My Love")	
Sat. Night (abbreviation student's)	1
To A Mountain Daisy	3
(once called "To A Daisy")	
Tam O'Shanter	1

45. No author	
Dover Beach (once credited to Marvel)	2
46. Frost	
Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening	1
Mending Wall	1
Hired Man	1
Birches	3
47. Shelley	
The West Wind	2
Night (credited to him)	1
Ode to a Nightingale	2
The Nightingale	1
48. Sara Teasdale	
The Coin (author mentioned once)	2
49. Villon	
Ballade des Pendus	2
50. Edgar A. Guest	
The Golfer	2

Miscellaneous mention of one person each

51. Barbara Allen	
52. Sail on!	
53. Lays of Ancient Rome	
54. The Old Violin	
55. The Congo	
56. General William Booth Enters Heaven	
57. Night Before Christmas	
58. Night Has A Thousand Eyes	
59. Invictus	
60. I must go down to the seas again	
61. A Boy's Prayer - Unknown	
62. This is My Beloved	
63. There Is No Death	
64. The Wild Flower	
65. The Flight	
66. Kentucky Belle	
67. The Riveter	
68. Ozymandias	
69. Oh, to be in England	
70. Batter My Heart - Shakespeare	
71. The Light	
72. The Return of Case	

73. To a Rose
74. Faust - Goethe
75. To a Waterfowl - Thoreau
76. Mary Had a Little Lamb
77. St. Eve Post Poems
78. My Life Is Like A Summer Rose
79. Manhattan
80. French Stenographer
81. Floyd Irion
82. The Stone
83. The Crane
84. Springtime
85. The Mill
86. Skyscraper
87. The Explorer
88. The Sandpiper
89. The Sandman
90. Autumn
91. Autumn Woods - Grant
92. Fall
93. The Tiger - Frost (attributed to)
94. Plowman's Charm
95. The Lady in the Meadow - Richards
96. About a Locomotive - Berton Braley
97. Lesbia - Saphio
98. Cradle of the Deep
99. Sylvia
100. When We Too Parted (exact spelling)
101. Abeau Ben Adam (exact spelling)
102. Sunrising - Donne
103. To The Dead
104. Fate
105. 23 Psalm
106. The Battle of the Keys
107. To the Virgine (exact spelling)
108. Barefoot Boy - Riley
109. The Last Leaf
110. Cyrano de Bergerac
111. "Little Flower in a Crained Wall" (exact spelling)
112. Ode a Cassandre - Ronsard
113. Miniver Cheevey
114. Maud Muller - Wordsworth?
115. Bar the Door
116. Taps
117. John Brown's Body - Benét
118. Sonnets - Petrarch (exact spelling)
119. Song of the Bell - Schiller
120. To My Beloved Wm. Shakespeare - Ben Johnson

121. Wilhelm Tell - Schiller
122. Ave Maria
123. How Did you Die?
124. Courage - Johnson
125. Camel
126. Pig
127. Panther
- (these three given by one person with no identification)
128. Love - unknown
129. Goldsmith's Deserted Village
130. West-Ward-Ho
131. To Lucasta on Going to War

The following authors had honorable mention as being favorites:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Omar Kyam (exact spelling) | 2 |
| 2. Ogden Nash | 4 |
| 3. Scott | 1 |
| 4. Keats | 2 |
| 5. Browning | 2 |
| 6. Wordsworth | 1 |
| 7. Edgar A. Guest | 1 |
| 8. Burns | 4 |
| 9. Frost | 1 |
| 10. Poe | 3 |
| 11. Longfellow | 3 |
| 12. R. Browning | 2 |
| 13. Dante | 1 |
| 14. Sandburg | 3 |
| 15. Paul Lawrence Dunbar | 1 |
| 16. Dorothy Parker | 1 |
| 17. Eugene Field | 1 |
| 18. Shakespeare | 3 |
| 19. Edna St. Vincent Millay | 1 |

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