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A brief survey of recent objectives in the teaching of English expression in the junior high school

Rosalie Richardson
Indiana State University

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A BRIEF SURVEY OF RECENT OBJECTIVES IN THE TEACHING
OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION IN THE
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

Rosalie Richardson

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Rosalie Richardson

I. INTRODUCTION

A. General Statement

1. The Junior High School - A New Creed in Secondary Education. John Dewey¹ defines education as "life, not preparation for life." His thesis is that the function of the school is to foster the growth of the child along the line of its interests rather than impart subjects that may be of interest to him in later life. The aim of education is social; accordingly the curriculum must include subjects that have immediate value commensurate with the time devoted to them.

This creed is not a new principle in education.² Only as a new unit in the secondary school has it created a new name for itself, the junior high school. The six-six plan of education has existed in the great public schools of England since ancient times, and in Boston, in the Boys' Latin School for over two hundred years. The eight-four plan neglected the adolescent age. Recognizing this gap between elementary and secondary school, educators established the linking unit, the junior high school.

¹ Philip W. L. Cox, The Junior High School and Its Curriculum (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1931), p. 4.

² Charles Swain Thomas, The Teaching of English in the Secondary Schools (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1927), p. 70.

2. Objectives of the Junior High School. In order to administer to the adolescent needs, the junior high school must function in the following ways:³

- a. It must continue and master the tools left unfinished in the elementary school.
- b. It must afford common information for democratic living.
- c. It must provide prevocational training for those who must leave school.
- d. It must give opportunity for self-discovery.

These needs can be administered only through the medium of instruction, the English language.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to determine, through a brief survey, the major objectives in the teaching of English expression. Before any survey can be made, it is necessary to know the limits of the field to be surveyed. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the exact definition of the term, "English", as a subject matter in the curriculum.

Recent tendencies in the teaching of the subjects related to the study of expression have, through economic pressure, made toward the composite known as "English", presenting reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and composition under this one head. How far this trend has gone, and what objectives are to be achieved in each specific subject related to the

³Charles Clinton Peters, Foundations of Educational Psychology. Revised (New York: MacMillan and Company), p. 170.

composite English, together with their modes of achievement, is the attempt of the survey.

C. Sources of Data

There are two brief sources of data in this thesis: the text of the authority in the teaching of English expression, and the periodical with its digests and suggestions for motivation. Such authors as Charles Swain Thomas in "The Teaching of English in the Secondary School, Thomas C. Blaisdell in "Ways to Teach English," and Virginia E. Craig in "The Teaching of High School English," have mapped out the main highways in search for objectives and their emphasis in the particular phase of expression.

The best periodical in the field is The English Journal. It has furnished many suggestions for motivating the pupil for the particular objective to be achieved.

D. Method of Procedure

The survey was made over the two fields of English expression, the oral and the written. In each field, the objective as stated by the authority, and emphasized by the majority, was sought out. Where possible, the project or procedure for motivation that achieved the objective was given after the discussion of the objective.

Much emphasis has been given to the project for motivation. The child loves to do things, and if he feels that what he is doing is worth while, he will throw his whole soul into it. The influence a dictionary, made by the pupil, will nail

dictionary habit, better than all the discussion and drills can give. Both his intellect and emotion are wrapped up in this project.

E. Limitations.

Lack of time in giving the outline as approved by the author's committee, its fullest consideration has caused a loss of interesting and helpful content. The field for survey is rich in helpful material, such as class-room motivations, but time would not permit their fullest discussions and presentation.

II. PRESENTATION OF SURVEY

A. General Statement

As a medium of expression of the American people, English has received great importance and value in the curriculum of its public schools. "It is the one subject that has stood firm while the current of popular opinion has swept away other traditional subjects from the course of study of the public schools."

B. English Defined According to Methods of Approach

1. Synthetic Method. "Its two main divisions, composition and literature provide what every child needs, whether the child is to be a laborer in the mines, a clerk at the desk, a housewife in the kitchen, or a preacher in the pulpit."⁴

Ten years ago Searson asked teachers of English to state the most important modification needed to improve English instruction. Out of 8,799 votes, 7,359 listed specific plans for the co-operation of teaching of English in all departments of the course of study.

Rollo Lyman,⁵ sponsoring this plea, would dispense with the composition work, and devote this time to supervision of oral and written expression.

As a unit in itself, literature would be taught not

⁴ W. S. Barnes, The New Democracy in the Teaching of English (Chicago: Rank, McNalley and Company, 1923), p. 3.

⁵ Rollo L. Lyman, "Normalizing English Instruction," English Journal, Volume XXI, February 1932, No. 2, p. 94.

earlier than the eleventh year, and then as a world literature by types which grew out of the expression of the individual heart and mind of a gifted human being. Below the eleventh grade it should be taught with a socializing view.

Popular opinion, through economic stress, has voiced the synthetic process. Language Arts⁷ are replacing separate subjects, such as spelling, grammar, and reading, under one unit, English.

English opportunity teacher,⁸ class guidance programs, interdepartmental co-operation for good English, the listing of poetry and fiction with reading in the social sciences, are all evidences of the synthetic trend.

The excellence of this method⁹ is shown in the modern junior high school curriculum where several subjects afford more opportunity for developing skill in reading than in the traditional restricted course.

2. The Two Unit Method.¹⁰ Though educators voiced economy and utility in the educational system, yet caution in over-democratizing has been observed.

"Life¹¹ is more than meat, and body, than raiment, whether one be a ditch digger or a Chautauqua lecturer. Democracy

⁷ Philip W. L. Cox, op. cit., p. 117.

⁸ W. Wilbur Hatfield, (Editor), "Changing Objectives in the Teaching of English," English Journal, Volume XXI, May 1931, No. 5, p. 403.

⁹ Philip W. L. Cox, op. cit., p. 120.

¹⁰ W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 6

¹¹ Ibid.

does not imply making everything useful; leisure, taste, culture, and the pursuit of happiness are as vital to the laborer in the field as to the judge upon the bench. Literature arouses healthy and wholesome emotions, and develops and guides them."

The National Council Committee¹² recommends a clear-cut separation of the practical and appreciation phase, the two-unit method. Composition is the unit of expression, and literature that of appreciation.

C. Composition Defined

1. General Statement. The traditional literary composition¹³ as a subject matter in itself is gone. Composition in the public schools today includes reading, spelling, grammar, oral and written expression.

The first aim¹⁴ of the English course of this country, as set forth by the Office of Education at Washington, "is to enable boys and girls to speak and write correctly and effectively in the normal social and business contacts." There are two types of procedure in this goal, the study of oral and written expression.

¹² Philip W. L. Cox, op. cit., p. 117.

Dora V. Smith, "Highways Versus Detours in the Teaching of English," English Journal, Volume XXXIII, February, 1934, No. 2, p. 109.

Virginia E. Craig, The Teaching of English in the High School (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1903), p. 5.

C. H. Ward, What is English? (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1932), p.

¹³ Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁴ W. S. Barnes, op. cit., pp. 43-52.

D. Oral Expression

1. What is Oral Expression? The term oral speech was formerly interpreted as the formal study of elocution. Today it has come to include conversation,¹⁵ explanation, discussion, speech-making, story-telling or any form with oral purpose.

"All are tools necessary in a democratic society."¹⁶

2. Value and Emphasis. "Oral¹⁷ speech is the form that every one uses. It is therefore more important that the student acquire ability to talk well. To express thought clearly and convincingly through voice is of immediate value. Tones move, persuade, and inspire when printed words fail." Reasons for its emphasis are:

- a. Children with much oral training write noticeably better written composition.¹⁸
- b. This rising generation is becoming almost inarticulate;¹⁹ too much grammar exercises and lack of speech opportunity.²⁰
- c. Oral expression has become an end in itself.²¹

¹⁵W. S. Barnes, op. cit., pp. 43-52.

¹⁶Bulletin-Course of Study in English for Junior and Senior High Schools, Salt Lake City Public School, September 1929, Introduction, p. 7.

¹⁷Thomas C. Blaisdell, Ways to Teach English (New York: Doubleday Doran and Company, Inc., 1930), p. 139.

¹⁸Stella S. Center, "Responsibility of the Teacher in English," English Journal, Volume XXII, February 1933, No. 2, p. 108.

¹⁹Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 109.

²⁰Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 145.

²¹Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 189.

The emphasis in English instruction for the junior high school has shifted from written expression to that of oral. Progressive teachers²² are demanding it.

3. Objectives in Oral Speech. The junior high school furnishes the common elements²³ which constitute a democracy. It is absolutely essential that they be able to communicate correctly and effectively. It is also not enough to have something to say, but to say it in a pleasing voice.

4. Achievement of Objectives through Mechanics of Speech and its Practice. The study of oral speech should be approached along two lines of procedure,²⁴ the mechanics of speech and the practice of it.

Mechanics of speech include poise through posture, clear enunciation, correct pronunciation and management of voice.

Poise may be secured through posture. When the child enters school, he is perfectly at ease among his fellows, but by the time he reaches the adolescent age of the junior high school, he has become sensitive to criticism, and fears his fellows in open discussion.

A ninth grade oral composition class,²⁵ in getting ready for the unpleasant ordeal of making an oral speech, gave two

²² Charles Clinton Peters, op. cit., p. 170.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sarah E. Simons, English Problems in the Solving, (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1920), p. 71.

²⁵ Mary D. Bedford, "Laying Plans for Oral Composition in the Junior High School," English Journal, Volume XXI, September 1932, No. 7, p. 555.

reasons for being ill at ease when speaking--fear and lack of preparation.

The following fears were listed:

- a. Meeting gaze of whole group.
- b. Not being heard.
- c. Making a mistake.
- d. Being laughed at.

The student should know what correct posture is and the reasons for it. These facts will banish fear, and be a step in preparation. The points in correct posture are:²⁶

- a. Head: erect.
- b. Chest: properly expanded.
- c. Feet: at restful angle.
- d. Eyes: directed squarely into those of the audience.

Clear enunciation is necessary to carry the message over.

Silent attention on the part of the audience is not enough. The adolescent voice, too often, lacks depth and carrying power. The audience has been silent and polite, but not getting returns, it becomes restless and irritable. This again reacts as despair on the part of the pupil speaker. He shouts to be heard, and strains his voice.

²⁶ Charles Swain Thomas, op. cit., p. 149.

Mary D. Bedford, op. cit., p. 555.

Sarah E. Simons, op. cit., p. 71.

Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 130.

Helpful suggestions²⁷ for practice in enunciating are:

- a. Breathe deeply and fully.
- b. Open the mouth wide enough to allow free passage of tone.
- c. Accentuate lip movements, cut tones sharply at beginning and close of words to prevent their running together.
- d. Practice drill exercises for proper utterance of vowels and consonants.
- e. Guard against affectation through over-emphasis in uttering letters and syllables.

Special emphasis is now being placed on correcting speech defects in both gifted and normal pupils. The best schools are deeply concerned in best types of oral examination.²⁸

Special drills²⁹ for overcoming poor enunciation may be made in the form of reading poems or paragraphs which require attention to enunciation.

Dramatics are also valuable in developing clear enunciation.

A resource for help in remedying speech defects is the bulletin, entitled "Foreign Accent," published by the Board

²⁷ Charles Swain Thomas, op. cit., p. 153.

Edward H. Webster and Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 229.

Sarah E. Simons, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁸ Charles Swain Thomas, "The Examination in English," English Journal, Volume XX, June 1932, No. 6, p. 491.

Philip W. L. Cox., op. cit., p. 256.

²⁹ C. H. Ward, op. cit., p.

Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

of Education of New York City.

Pronunciation is a sequence to clear enunciation. Without proper lip function, vowel or consonant cannot be made. This is often the fault in the foreign idiom, e.g., "wen" for "when." Some foreigners, because that particular sound "wh" has not been in their enunciation English habit,³⁰ can not produce the "wh" sound. Beginning "wh" with "pw" will by persistent effort overcome this fault.

Pronunciation, like enunciation, becomes an individual problem.

Inherited mispronunciation³¹ must not, however, be allowed to become an excuse in the junior high school. The dictionary must be a constant habit for correct utterance of vowel and consonant, and accent of syllable.

The pupil should further understand that usage accepted by the group determines the preferable pronunciation, e.g., the dictionary accents the word "combat" on the first syllable, but educated people say, "combat" with accent on the second syllable.

Voice management does not necessarily imply voice training. One may have a pleasing voice, yet not a trained voice. The voice may be so controlled through careful following of a few

³⁰ Charles Swain Thomas, op. cit., p. 153.

Edward H. Webster and Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 229.

Sarah E. Simons, op. cit., p. 71.

³¹ C. H. Ward, op. cit., p.

suggestions, carried out by the pupil's practice in school, that a pleasing voice will be the result.

Charles Swain Thomas gives³² these suggestions to the student for obtaining a pleasing voice:

- a. Breathe from the diaphragm and place the voice back in the mouth.
- b. Open the throat for a big vibrating area and speak the full tone deeply.
- c. Create flexibility of vocal cords by changing the ranges of tone: high, middle, and low.
- d. Cultivate musical quality by using just as much breath as needed.

5. Practice of Oral Speech. The second approach to good oral expression is the application of the mechanics in the oral speech. The only opportunity for oral expression which the child of the public school in the past had, was the formal question and answer; a longer speech was for the special day program. This was usually an essay to be read, or an oration to be delivered from memory. To know how to carry on a conversation at a class party, or to conduct a class meeting according to parliamentary procedure, was not felt to be within the province of the school of the past.

The goal for English in our present public schools, as set by the National Council of Education at Washington, is correct and effective oral and written expression in the daily

³²W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 4.

social and business contacts, with emphasis on the oral expression.³³ Such practices as conversation, discussion, explanation, informal argument, story-telling, and speech-making are replacing the formal types of narration, description, exposition and argumentation.³⁴

a. Conversation. "The greatest innovation into the thus far traditional English, is the making of conversation an art with a teaching technique that gives it justification for being in the high school curriculum.³⁵ The chief instrument of social adjustment and integration is the language of the group used acceptably."

Conversation leads the list of activities for specific training in oral expression for the ninth grade³⁶ of the Indiana public schools.

Projects for informal conversation are:

- (I). Class party.
- (II). Imitation Tea.
- (III). Home room. Discussion of "courtesy."

Civic projects are:

- (I). Class meeting.
- (II). The assembly.
- (III). Office introduction
- (IV). Moot court.

³³ Sarah E. Simons, "Problems of Expression, Hints at Solving," English Journal, Volume XXXIII, Feb., 1934.

³⁴ W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 44-52.

³⁵ Ethel E. Holmes, "Conversation in School," English Journal, Volume XVIII, November 1924, No. 11, p. 712.

³⁶ Bulletin No. 110A. "Tentative Course of Study in English for Secondary Schools of Indiana," 1928, p. 44.

Class Party.³⁷ As a tactful motivation for courtesy in conduct and speech, the class party lies nearest the child's interests. Formal discussions or lectures on speech and behavior fail to motivate, but the actual contact with his associates in a leisure mood corrects many a social fault.

The class may be prepared for the party by a previous day discussion of hospitality, and separate practices of it, to bring out the following essentials for a successful party:

- (I) Issue invitations courteously.
- (II) Receive guests graciously.
- (III) Converse on topics of interest to all.
- (IV) Pay special attention to guests who are backward.
- (V) Change topic to new interests.
- (VI) Take courteous leave.

As a device to locate faults in conduct and speech a committee of class members, one to observe courtesy to teacher, a second, courtesy to guests, and a third, courtesy to classmates may be appointed.

Imitation Tea.³⁸ A class in current events revealed the most communicative pupils. These were separated from the regular class, and arranged for an informal tea. They were directed to discuss as if they were thrown together by chance. The teacher and the remainder of the class remained in the background for observation and criticism.

Home Room Program.³⁹ Topic, "Courtesy." The teaching of

³⁷ Bulletin No. 100 A., op. cit., p. 44.

³⁸ Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 214.

³⁹ M. C. Channing Wagner, The Assembly Program, (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1930), pp. 118-119.

courtesy is a difficult task, for it is an attempt to change the habits which have become entrenched in the student. Projects to reach out into the life of the student are too many for time allotted their practice in the school room. Some points of courtesy must be brought out through Home Room discussion. Topics for discussion of courtesy are:

- (I) In the assembly.
- (II) At the game.
- (III) In the lunch room.
- (IV) At the table.
- (V) In street car or while traveling.
- (VI) In correspondence.
- (VII) At the theatre.
- (VIII) At the party.
- (IX) In dress and personal appearance.

The Class Meeting⁴⁰ The class meeting according to parliamentary procedure becomes a civic situation. Its methods of procedure are those of the civic world. A ninth grade class drew up its own simple code from "Paul's Parliamentary Procedure" and Robert's Rules of Order." The large assembly room gave experiences in clear enunciation and correct pronunciation in the effort to be heard and understood in every corner of the room. To get the interest of the listener and persuade him was another real live effort. Students learned how to address the chairman, give appropriate time for discussion from the

⁴⁰ Edward H. Webster and Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 239.

floor, and rules governing the making and passing of motions.

Moot Court.⁴¹ A real civic contact is motivated in the "Moot Court." The class is organized for a mock trial for such criminal offenses as language errors, school-rule violations and discourtesy. Official parts--judges, lawyers, plaintiffs, defendants, and jury were assigned to the different members of the class. A court scene is always a good motivation for student response.

The Technique of an Office Introduction.⁴² The typewriter is not the only means of motivation for technique in the business world; an apparently insignificant episode as an office introduction expanded its failures into a series of four lessons on technique with the final summary:

- (I) Greet the stranger courteously.
- (II) Give your name, get his.
- (III) Make visit pleasant but talk "sale."
- (IV) Cover the disappointing "out" with the diplomatic "will be in in a minute."
- (V) Secretary shoulder blame for negligences of the caller.

The Interview.⁴³ To take the ability to interview out of the narrow confines of "word of mouth inquiry, reply to

⁴¹ Bulletin No. 100A, op. cit., p. 44.

⁴² Elizabeth W. Baker, "The Technique of Office Introduction," English Journal (col. ed.), Volume XIX, April 1930, No. 4, pp. 281-286.

⁴³ Mary F. Grossman, "The Interview as Composition Material," English Journal, Volume XX, November 1931, No. 11, p. 51.

instructions, and conference, and link it with the practice that develops power to analyze personality, cultivate a balanced sense of humour, and ability to get information through proper and tactful questioning, and also to get material for character descriptions and lively dialogue, is this six weeks project, by Mary Grossman. The sixth lesson was a real life experience, each child to his characteristics, the most academic interviewed the principal, the daintiest, to meet some one of movie ability.

Other parties interviewed were the janitor, garbage collector, a grocer, a fighting magistrate.

The eagerness with which each child pooled his experiences, proved the worth of the project for giving ability in narrating experiences more than the ability to interview.

The little fellow who interviewed the fiery magistrate, through embarrassment, forgot his questions, and had to fumble for his paper. The magistrate reached for the paper, and, after joshing the lad good-naturedly, gave him a first-rate opinion of current city politics. To the class, the magistrate was a good example of character type.

b. The Oral Theme⁴⁴ The second phase in the practice of oral speech, co-ordinate with the practice in mechanics, is the oral theme. It links up with every conceivable subject, and every conceivable form that lies within the student's interest and ability.

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W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 16.

The oral theme must develop the following abilities:⁴⁵

- (I) To choose something appropriate.
- (II) To organize quickly the material at hand according to essentials and non-essentials into a convincing paragraph.
- (III) To express himself in correct and clear sentences.
- (IV) To use graphic words to picture the idea in his thoughts.
- (V) To deliver his speech effectively by observing the mechanics of speech.
- (VI) To listen accurately.
- (VII) To suggest helpfully.

Suggested Projects in the Oral Theme.

- (I) The Oral Book Report - Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 224.
- (II) Current Events. Ibid.
- (III) Biography. Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 209.
- (IV) Description. Ibid., pp. 53, 209.
- (V) The Auditorium, C. H. Ward, op. cit., pp. 149-153.
- (VI) Linking up With Social Sciences. Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 20. Sarah E. Simons, "Problems of Expression," op. cit., p. 157; W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 15.

6. Story-telling.⁴⁶ Now that the literary narrative is out of the province of the junior high school, and the oral

⁴⁵ Charles Swain Thomas, op. cit., p. 132.

⁴⁶ W. S. Barnes, op. cit., pp. 16, 51.

story has taken the reserved seat, the question arises, "What kind of stories?" W. S. Barnes answers the question thus:

"The three kinds we all have to tell are:

(I) Anecdotes; humorous, striking, apt.

(II) Personal experiences:

Stories of what we have seen, heard, and done.

(III) Children's stories:

Centuries old classics of the nursery."

Very few people can tell a story well. It is through practice of telling stories that the art develops itself.

The Anecdote.⁴⁷ Most children fail in the attempt to tell an anecdote well, by giving the point at issue too soon.

A well-told anecdote observes the following procedure:

(I) Statement of the situation.

(II) Working for suspense.

(III) Spring the surprise at the end.

The Autobiography.⁴⁸ Experiences are interesting if they are pooled honestly. The junior high school student, sensitive and ashamed of his own experiences, attempts to describe those he has not. He fails because he tells what he has not experienced.

As a motivation for this particular type of story-telling, the title may be given as an autobiography in which the student tells how he felt on the first day of school, or about the first quarrel with a friend.

⁴⁷ Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴⁸ Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 135.

The Oral Myth.⁴⁹ Here is another neglected story. It is a perfect story in itself. Students dislike classic literature because they do not know the myths upon which it is based.

Much practice in telling these stories should be given. Virginia E. Craig lists one hundred oral myths for study in the high school. The student should have the oral myth in his list of stories.

6. Summary of the Oral Objective. The chief objective in expression in the junior high school is oral. The two major objectives of oral expression are conversation and oral theme. The pupil shall have mastered these two by the time he leaves the ninth year.

The art of conversation demands of the pupil:

- a. Good sentences, correct as to form and meaning, correct in mechanics, and graphic in vocabulary.
- b. A pleasing voice with clear enunciation and pronunciation.
- c. Courteous conduct and speech in social and business contacts.

A good oral theme demands the ability:

- a. To explain clearly and connectedly any subject of interest to pupil and others in any form in accordance with his ability.
- b. To pool his experiences or those of others honestly and vividly.

⁴⁹

Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 135.

- c. To tell a story interestingly.
- d. To conduct a class meeting according to parliamentary procedure.

E. Written Expression

1. General Statement. The traditional course was chiefly concerned with the exhibit of thought through written composition. With the shift of emphasis upon the oral phase in the junior high school, what is left for written expression? The need of the written phase is still great. As previously stated, most of the world's work is done through the written sentence. The sentence must be accurate. Most of the results in accuracy are, therefore, secured through the written sentence. The junior high school, therefore, has become the nailing department for accuracy with emphasis on the oral phase as an aid to that of the written.

2. The Specific Objective. This, through the medium of oral and written expression, may be stated as: "A clear and precise medium of expression with some regard to the decencies and traditions of the language."⁵⁰

The English language is the medium of expression. To achieve a clear, precise expression, we have need of:

- a. Sentence Sense
- b. Paragraph Sense
- c. Theme Sense

⁵⁰"The Teaching of English in England," Report, Departmental Committee of the Board of Education of England (1921),

In oral expression there are just three concerns: syntax, pronunciation, and diction. In written composition there are four concerns: writing, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.⁵¹

The Sentence Sense.⁵² To have a sentence sense the student must know the sentence as to the following:

- a. Form.
- b. Meaning.
- c. Parts of: subject, predicate, modifiers.
- d. Principles governing the function of parts.
- e. Structure.
- f. Vocabulary: graphic, clear.

The achievement of the above sentence sense must come through much drill. Habits must be established not merely through mechanical repetition of the same facts, but must be broadened into larger skills through creativeness.⁵³ This should require serious effort on the part of the student. He must bend to the difficult and unpleasant task just the same as adults have to do.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵² C. H. Ward, op. cit., pp. 303, 159.

⁵³ Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., pp. 532-534.

Charles Swain Thomas, "The Examination," op. cit., p. 491.

C. H. Ward, op. cit., pp. 120, 131.

Edward H. Webster and Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 208.

⁵⁴ Eleanor Corneia, "Motivation," The High School Teacher, Vol. VIII, March 1932, No. 3, p. 109.

Not mechanical repetition in the use of a thousand time habit-forming exercise, but the making of original sentences⁵⁵ by the pupil in the practice of the exercise should be emphasized⁵⁶ in achieving the sentence sense. Not the terminology, as "complex or compound, but the more imaginative term of balanced scales for members of complex and compound sentences should be used if necessary.

Begin with the complex sentence to avoid the "and uh" habit. Have pupils place comma before "for", "as", "since", meaning "because" and make two complete statements.

Begin sentence with "as" and a comma, and add two complete sentences. Create sense for capital at beginning of sentence by emphasis of capitalization of first word and not because of subject.

Show emphasis through introducing sentence with "as" or "since."

Teach the four sentences as to use--statement, command, question and exclamation point with their respective marks--period, question mark, and exclamation mark.

Teach the predicate as a helper to the copulative verb and meaning the same thing as the subject. Require many original sentences.

Teach the transitive verb, active voice, as having as a helper a noun that receives the action described by the verb, and performed by the subject.

⁵⁵ Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 237.

⁵⁶ Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., pp. 532-534.

Require many, many original sentences.

Teach adjective by adding it to a noun, and an adverb to a verb. Require many sentences with use of adjective and adverb.

Teach passive voice through interchange with active. Again, many sentences showing skill in interchange should be required.

Place preposition before adjective with noun and teach phrase. Once more require many sentences showing the use of phrase.

Change adjective and adverb phrases into complete sentences and teach their use as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in the sentence. Construct many sentences like these.

Teach⁵⁷ that the dangling participle breaks the unity of the sentence.

Teach⁵⁸ vocabulary along with verbs, adjectives, and adverbs by selecting the most graphic word to picture the idea, e.g., the verb "goes" should picture the action as hobbled, shuffled or ambled, or the specific manner of.

Require pupils to keep note-book for new word pictures. As a further mastery in habits and skills, Thomas C. Blaisdell insists that every one of the thirty-seven rules listed on page 536 of "Ways to Teach English" be mastered before the pupil leaves the eighth grade.

Virginia E. Craig in "The Teaching of English in the High School," p. 251, lists one hundred errors under nineteen

⁵⁷ Virginia E. Craig, op. cit., p. 240.

⁵⁸ Edward H. Webster and Dora V. Smith, op. cit., p. 208.

different groups. Her defense against psychological error is that the junior high school student has left the imitative stage.

Spelling. Most high schools have in the past made spelling an incidental and individual problem along with the written composition, but the present day tendency is to give it separate attention apart from the written composition.

There are three reasons for poor spelling, listed as follows:

- a. Visual confusion,⁵⁹ due to a sluggish mentality that can not adjust the eye quickly.
- b. Poor spelling books which failed to provide important words.
- c. Lack of co-operation of other departments in their written work.⁶⁰

Spelling books are beginning to improve their word lists through careful investigations showing:

- a. Most commonly misspelled words in school.
- b. Most commonly needed words in writing outside of school.
- c. Words of average spelling difficulty.

As a check upon the pupil's ability to spell, regardless of method, the "500 Spelling Demons" should be mastered.

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C. H. Ward, op. cit., p. 47.

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Ernest Horn, "Spelling in Junior High School," Class Room Teacher, Vol. X, pp. 454-455.

An excellent device in motivating good spelling is the "Allen Spelling Plan." This lists two columns; the words to be spelled in column one, labeled "Attempts," the second, "Misspelled," and the last four pages of the student booklet penalizes the misspelled as "Inexcusables" which must be studied until mastered. If the pupil fails in excusables, he is sent to the Hospital Class.⁶¹ After a few weeks, the new words are given.

The Dictionary.⁶² Another help in forming the correct spelling habit is the dictionary habit.

A revelation made by the Cross English Test, revealed the following interesting information about pupil's knowledge of the dictionary:

- a. Many pupils owned no dictionaries.
- b. Some showed pride in the dime store variety.
- c. The term "unabridged" was a new one.

A school which was four blocks from the nearest library, and which, also, had only three copies of "Winstons", for class room reference, overcame this situation by making its own dictionary.

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Philip W. L. Cox, op. cit., p. 131.

62

Helen I. Davis, "Study in Dictionary by Making One," English Journal, Vol. XX, June 1931, No. 6, p. 503.

Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

Carl F. Movious, "Dictionary Daily Dozens," English Journal, Vol. XXI, January 1932, No. 2, p. 51.

When the project was complete, brilliantly and artistically covered books were given titles like "Pet's Handy Dictionary."

The preface contained:

- a. Key to pronunciation.
- b. Key to abbreviation.
- c. Brief history of the English language.
- d. Plates brilliant with drawings of birds, animals, and butterflies.

Paragraph Sense. Through the oral theme, the pupil has developed a sense for the structure of the sentence and a single paragraph.

His new experience⁶³ is the linking by means of the topic sentence, the paragraph with other paragraphs that progress continuously to make a complete whole. A correct topic sense must be established. Pupil must be able to construct his sentences continuously until a new phase of the theme appears, and a new block of writing made by indentation of paragraphs. This is the paragraph sense.

Theme Sense.⁶⁴ All the experiences that developed the paragraph sense are added to by the desire for correct form and organization.

The following items⁶⁵ are suggested in study of the form of the theme:

- a. Paper: Uniformity by direction of teacher.

⁶³ C. H. Ward, op. cit., pp. 47, 404.

⁶⁴ Charles Swain Thomas, The Teaching of English in Secondary Schools, op. cit., p. 409.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

- b. Title: Place on first line. Capitalize all important words. Underline each word. Distance from first line of them--at least a space of a line between.
 - c. Indentation of paragraph: One inch from left hand margin.
 - d. Use of hyphen: Correct division of words at end of line. Do not divide syllables.
 - e. Endorsement of Theme: Per direction of the teacher.
3. Major Written Types of Composition.⁶⁶

- a. Narration.
- b. Exposition.
- c. Description..
- d. Argumentation.

The traditional theme, like all other traditional subjects, has been relegated to the past. Education is no longer an ideal of culture, but a practice of living. There are but few very talented story-tellers; the majority are of average ability. The interests of the majority are the common, everyday happenings. The mode of their expression is commonplace.

The formal literary story has yielded to the telling of jokes, anecdotes and current news. The explanation, or (informal exposition) as, "How to Make Griddle Cakes", or "How to Clean a Gun", are of equal importance with "The Structure of the Drama."⁶⁷

Debating Societies are rare. But "Boy Scout" and "Girl

⁶⁶W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 43.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 43.

Reserve" organizations provide opportunities for informal discussion.

Informal Written Types of Story-Telling.

- a. Anecdote with dialogue.
- b. School Fun.
- c. Autobiography.
- d. News Story.
- e. Feature Story.
- f. Editorial.

The Anecdote.⁶⁸ The written anecdote has more than the narrative interest. The use of dialogue makes it an excellent character portrayal, and the development of skill in indentation of paragraph and the use of the quotation marks as well as other marks of punctuation.

As a preparation for the mechanics of dialogue, teacher dictate, "The Prodigy." The character it portrays is the mother too ardent for her son, the prodigy. Students can find many such situations like "The Prodigy" in their own environment. They should be trained to be on the alert to find ridiculous character types with their "breezy dialogues", and weave them into an anecdote.

School Fun.⁶⁹ Almost every junior high school has some form of school paper wherein the pupils find an outlet for their interests from the academic curriculum. Telling of jokes, preferably the joke which is on the side of the one who tells it, should be encouraged. Pooling of experiences, as honest confessions, on the written page, should be listed under school fun.

⁶⁸ Virginia J. Craig, op. cit., p. 136.

⁶⁹ Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 125.

The News Story.⁷⁰ This is a form of composition that links up with all the child's contacts in the home, school, church, society, and the court.

The topics in the news story may be outlined as follows:

- a. Current News: Accidents, reports, assembly speeches, elections, interviews.
- b. Sports: Reports on the extra-curricular activities, such as basket ball; before the game, the game, and the result.
- c. Social: Receptions, dinners, and outings.
- d. Personal Mention: A mere statement.

Features, The Story With a Human Interest. A drive for better play-ground privileges, or new uniforms for the band, or instruments for the band, a better library, or any appeal that is humanitarian in interest, may be classed as "Feature." Also interesting happenings in school and community may be so classed.

Editorials. The editorial interprets or reports the news for the day. It may take the attitude of a boost, a comment, an opinion, or an explanation. School life is rich in attitudes, and pupils will express themselves freely if properly encouraged.

Letter Writing. Letter writing in the public school has been a mere dabble.⁷¹ The junior high school student never has

⁷⁰Jay Newlin, "A High School Newspaper," The High School Teacher, December 1930, p. 416.

George G. Wells and Wayde H. McAllister, Student Publications, (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1930), p. 45.

⁷¹W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 52.

been immersed in it sufficiently to be qualified for social and business contacts, should he leave school or remain.

Schools are stressing it now for the following reasons:

- a. It is a form used in the home and business.⁷²
- b. It is a form best for developing natural and informal expression.⁷³
- c. It is a form that teaches courtesy through the written page.⁷⁴
- d. It is a form that motivates for accuracy and skill in the mechanics of speech.⁷⁵
- e. It is a form that develops clearness and accuracy in business contacts.⁷⁶
- f. It is a form in which the greater part of the world's work is done.⁷⁷
- g. It is a form which is demanded by the College Entrance Requirements.⁷⁸

⁷²W. S. Barnes, op. cit., p. 52.

⁷³Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p. 239.

Dora V. Smith, "Highways Versus Detours in English," p. 109.

⁷⁴Virginia J. Craig, op. cit., p. 130.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶George Burton Hotchkiss and Celia Anne Drew, "Business English (Chicago: American Book Company, 1916), p. 12.

⁷⁷Sarah E. Simons, "Problems of Expression, Hints for Solution," op. cit., p. 127.

⁷⁸"Report: College Entrance Requirements." English Journal, Volume XX, November 1931, No. 11, pp. 7, 114.

Types of Letter for the Junior High School.⁷⁹ The three types of letter which lie in the experience of the junior high school student are the informal social letter, informal note and reply, and the simple business letter. Each type is individual in form and content, and should be presented to the child as a separate objective.

The Informal Social Letter.⁸⁰ The letter as a whole includes the heading, salutation, body, complimentary close, and address of the envelope.

The form of the various parts must be correct according to latest usage. As an objective for a "clear and precise medium of expression, with some regard to decencies and traditions of the language," the letter must not develop unsocial and non-business-like habits.

The heading should give the full address of the sender, and the date of sending, correctly placed, spelled and punctuated. Stress full punctuation, whether there be one or two lines, as it harmonizes with that in ordinary composition and is also demanded by the Post Office Department.

The salutation and complimentary close should be worded in harmony with the relationship existing between the sender and the recipient, and correctly placed, spelled, and punctuated. It is better to use the colon as a form of punctuation for either social or business letters.

⁷⁹ George Burton Hotchkiss and Celia Anne Drew, op. cit., p. 12.

⁸⁰ Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., pp. 240-241.

Differentiation in punctuation for salutations will cause confusion. The colon, further, establishes the "listen to what follows" idea.

The form of the body should be correct as to position, paragraphs, and mechanics of speech. The language should be natural and informal in style.

The regular business size 8 1/2 x 11 stationery should be used for all letter writing to establish the correct business form.

The contents⁸¹ must show that the writer is conscious of his relationship to the recipient and the immense consequences his letter may have. The letter should be:

- a. Prompt in reply to inquiries.
- b. Courteous in requests.
- c. Courteous recognition of favors shown.
- d. Free from offensive statements.
- e. Tactful in confidentials.
- f. Restraining in condolences.

The social letter must be motivated through urge, lest it have a half-hearted effort.

A fire in February,⁸² followed by a deep snow, motivated a years' practice in letter writing. An absent school mate in the expression class had to be told about the narrow escapes on the ice in skating. Letters were written and the one chosen

⁸¹Virginia J. Craig, op. cit., p. 139.

⁸²Thomas C. Blaisdell, op. cit., p.

by lot was sent to the school mate in California. The reply letter requested a letter each week for the year. At each writing a new letter was chosen by lot until all had had a letter to California.

The Informal Note.⁸³ This form of letter is the same as the larger informal social letter. Its contents are very subjective, hence it becomes a mere note. Apology, invitation, recognition of favors shown, replies for same, condolence and reply, are some of the contents of the informal note.

The Simple Business Letter.⁸⁴ No form of written composition is so imperative for clearness, correctness of form, and courtesy as the business letter.

It is always from the reader's point of view, hence it must be brief, for economy of time and effort.

Examples of business letters that are brief and concise are:

- a. Answer to advertisements.
- b. Orders without order blanks.
- c. The inquiry.
- d. The answer to the inquiry.

These letters train for leaving out non-essentials.

Answer to an advertisement need be merely the courteous request.

⁸³

Virginia J. Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁸⁴

George Burton Hotchkiss and Celia Anne Drew, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

The order should include details of:

- a. Description
- b. Manner of shipment.
- c. Statement of inclosure of money.
- d. Manner of remittance.
- e. Date of shipment.
- f. Name and address in full.

The inquiry should have as many paragraphs as inquiries are made.

The Business Project.⁸⁵ A correspondence club between classes created real business letters, the kind they use in offices. In this project the letters were credited back and forth as regular composition work.

The teacher gave suggestions. Some manufacturers and professional men were included in the letters. These letters covered almost all phases of business and social contact.

4. Summary of Written Composition. The one goal in the written work of the junior high school is accuracy. The student must be able to write sentences that are complete and correct and correct as to:

- a. Form.
- b. Meaning.
- c. Punctuation.
- d. Agreement and case of pronoun.
- e. Use of verb.

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Eleanor Corneia, op. cit., p. 109.

- f. Use and position of modifiers.
- g. Unity and emphasis.
- h. Graphic vocabulary.

He must also be able to write a paragraph with:

- a. Smooth connection between sentences.
- b. Emphasis through variety of sentences as to form, meaning and arrangement of parts and modifiers.

As another achievement he must be able to write a theme at some length that will be:

- a. Interesting in its contents.
- b. Orderly in its arrangement.
- c. Clear in its explanations.
- d. Convincing in its arguments.
- e. Graphic in word pictures.
- f. Interesting portrayal of events, incidents, and experiences.

His last achievement is the written letter. He must be able to write a correct and interesting social letter, a brief, courteous, informal note, and a simple business letter, correct in form, courteous and concise as to purpose of content.

There is no lack of emphasis on accuracy of expression in written English for the junior high school. As a process of living, all efforts should be directed toward the one essential: "Responsibility⁸⁶ for doing things right."

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C. H. Ward, op. cit., p. 303.

III. CONCLUSION

Two powerful mechanical teachers, the radio and screen, are rapidly overpowering the influence of the natural teacher in the school room. The hours of their influence outnumber those of the natural teacher. In the home and in the community, these machines are taking advantage of the gullible and inarticulate populace through clever speakers. Too often these speakers are hired for selfish commercial greed.

The junior high school contains the common elements of which our democracy is made. The junior high school, too, is the stopping place in education for many of these common elements. They will function in the world's work just as they have been prepared. If they go back into the world without ability to think constructively, and speak convincingly, they will be just as gullible and inarticulate as their parentage.

The polite conversation of the classes must be the privilege and habit of daily living among the masses. Their weapon of defense against propaganda must be the ready and convincing speech in the community assemblage.

I recommend that the makers of the curriculum of the junior high school provide every available means to give to the masses:

1. An art of living through courteous and thoughtful conversation.
2. A weapon for defense and preservation of ideals of democracy through oral and written speech.

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