AN ANALYSIS OF STUDIES ON
THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN HIGH SCHOOL
1917-1950

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BY
GEORGIE BLANCHE LATIMER

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Unquestionably literature is recognized as chief of the humanities but only recently, because of the impact of science on all phases of life, has the study of literature begun to assume its rightful place in the high school curriculum. Some teachers who are aware of the new ideas in the teaching of literature have doubts concerning the use of them due to conflicts in opinions and often hesitate to incorporate them into their course of study. Moreover, teachers who are not aware of the new ideas or of their values continue to teach about literature by using traditional methods. Hence neither group of teachers is cognizant of the effect that the new trends are capable of exerting on the teaching of literature. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to survey the studies dealing with the teaching of literature in the high school from 1917 to 1950 to see what fundamental principles and methods have been incorporated in the field. Although the high school textbooks used by students would be highly revealing to this subject, they will not be used here, for they require another full study.

The division of this study is in four parts arranged according to chronological sequence. It might be well to state that the nature of the material necessitated such an arrangement. Part one consists of a short historical background which gives a basis for the study. Part two gives points of view indicating the break with traditions in the teaching of literature. Part three reveals new trends in the teaching of literature in the high school. The fourth and last part presents a brief summary and evaluation of the views and opinions considered in this thesis.

The writer wishes to acknowledge her appreciation and indebtedness to
Dr. N. P. Tillman, Chairman of the English Department, Atlanta University, for challenging and enlightening advice as he patiently guided this study. Appreciation is also acknowledged to Dr. Lou LaBrant for her helpful suggestions prior to the writing of this thesis and to Mrs. Lucy C. Grigsby for pertinent information which enhanced the value of this thesis.
CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

It is quite common to speak of the social tendencies in education, but it is difficult to give an exact date of their occurrence. The school lagged far behind the rapid changes in society, so much so that obvious gaps developed between our educational system and the society that it was supposed to promote. Consequently, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the schools.

The demand for a change in the school program reached national proportion, and as a result a movement to effect a change culminated in the establishing of the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education in 1911. Other committees grew out of this body, one of which was the Committee on Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools. It was the publication of the recommendations of these two committees in 1913 and 1917, respectively, that marks a milestone in the field of education.

The school program, prior to 1917, was organized to support the cultural theory inherited from the past. The general aim was to educate the select few from the upper and middle classes who anticipated going to college and into professions. The prescribed course of study, for the most part, consisted of intensive and analytical study of highly selected masterpieces in the humanities — Latin, English and Greek; a choice of either history or mathematics, alternating in such a way that a pupil might finish high school

2 Ibid., p. 108
with only a small amount of either; and a minimum of science, in the form of chemistry or physics. The science courses were conducted as lectures with limited laboratory experimentation.  

In the teaching of literature, in which the primary interest of this study is to be found, the selection of materials and the method of procedure were in terms of preparing the pupils to meet the demands of the College Entrance Requirements. Literature examinations were based upon specified prescribed lists and included questions which required a candidate to have an exact knowledge of words and phrases in the listed classics.  

To meet these exacting demands of the College Entrance Boards, the school placed heavy emphasis on such English Classics as: *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Vanity Fair*, *Silas Marner*, *Ivanhoe*, "*I'Allegro*", "*Il Penseroso*", *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* and Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance." The list seemed endless and recommended a scheme that included most of the leading types of literary art. 

Because of the specific nature of the questions on the entrance examinations, the school felt that specific devices designed to prepare pupils to pass specific examinations were of high merit. The approach was in great

1 *Ibid.*, p. 37. See also: The Morehouse College Bulletin, Catalog Number, 1914-1915, Atlanta, Georgia, whose high school program was modelled from the curriculums of the Eastern academies.


4 Charles S. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
detail, almost to the extent that the gist of the story was lost. The methods used in the teaching of poetry and prose illustrate this criticism.

In teaching poetry, some care was exerted so as not to damage its poetic quality in the eagerness to rationalize it. However, excessive emphasis was placed on stylistic elements. To do this, reading aloud was felt to be the best method; there were an analysis of verse forms and the scansion of lines to note accent and emphasis, tone and tempo. An appreciation for the ethical and esthetic was to be gained by an analysis of the poet's meaning, the ebb and flow of rhythm, the picturesqueness of figures and the heightened color of words. Memorizing of a large body of highly selective passages of worth was definite, regular and rigid.¹

In teaching prose, here again, emphasis was put on reading aloud by the teacher and the pupils. The first reading of a selection, done by the teacher, was followed by student-prepared outlines noting plot and subplot, the difference between drama and epic, the novel and the short-story. The second reading, by the class, called for memorizing and presenting of selected scenes by the pupils to clear up difficulties in metrics, words, construction and allusions. Often digressions were made in the discussions of these particular items. Character-study, which led on to the deeper study of the plot, was handled by use of problems and questions designed to master the logic of both. It was felt that at this stage the pupil was ready to discuss the ethics of the work and make a study of the life and times of the author. These procedures having been disposed of, the pupil should have on hand a residuum of notes, outlines, graphic diagrams, summaries and reports in a required note

¹ Percival Chubb, op. cit., pp. 274-76.
book which was examined from time to time and appraised upon scholarly expressiveness.¹

This type of program was not wholly lacking in merit. The pupils were exposed to the best of the great classic masterpieces, because the efforts to satisfy the college entrance requirements made the objectives clear and consistent.² It was the procedure that was unfavorable and objectionable. It was rigid and almost inflexible, making the reading of many classics impossible.³ Two serious objections arose here in connection with procedure. Students were compelled to read literature in which they were not interested and too much time was spent in analytical study of the classics. This made the classics distasteful to many students.⁴

Although the traditional school program was quite suitable in meeting the needs of the scholarly select few of the upper and middle classes for which it was intended, it was far from satisfying the educational needs of the masses that filled the schools in the twentieth century. Particularly was this true in English.

The high school population had increased from 649,951 in 1900 to 1,115,326 in 1910 and by 1917 had reached one and one-half million.⁵ The school now

¹ Ibid., pp. 289-93.

² Polly Heitman, "Emerson in the High School," The English Journal, VII (March, 1918), 203.

³ Ibid., p. 208.


⁵ James Reed Young, "Reorganization of the High School," The Educational Review, LIII (January, 1917), 123.
represented homes of various standards of living and cultural background, widely varying capacities, aptitudes and destinies, as opposed to the qualities of the students who had, heretofore, attended the schools.\(^1\) It was obvious that many of these pupils had not been exposed to home-libraries or to books to any great extent. The lack of association with parental background that had been exposed to the culture of the traditional school resulted in gaps between what these pupils brought and what the selections presented, so that it was difficult for many of them to understand and appreciate the established curriculum.\(^2\)

Furthermore, the broadening of the scope of secondary education brought to the school many pupils who did not complete the full course but left at various stages of advancement.\(^3\) In the old program it was not to be expected that all pupils would complete the secondary program or that no drop-outs would occur due to scholarship or finance. Yet the curriculum continued along the old lines of the past. Drop-outs were alarming and many students were mis-directed. Many a student suited to an entirely different career was given training designed particularly to fit the leisure and professional class at college.\(^4\) It became obvious that these conditions demanded immediate attention. This was the task that faced the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education in 1917.


\(^3\) Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

CHAPTER II

THE BREAK WITH TRADITION — 1917-1930

Nineteen hundred and seventeen was a historic year in the secondary English program, historic because it was the year the Committee on Reorganization of English published its Report. For some time criticisms which had been focused upon the secondary school finally reached a climax in the Report of the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education. In part the Committee had previously stated its principles:

1. The secondary school should adopt its program to meet the needs of its youth population without closing doors of higher education to them.

2. The College should revise the entrance requirements.

3. Any well planned curriculum should meet the requirements for entrance to college.

4. Attention should be focused upon the reorganization of secondary education for the need of a democracy and an increased school population.1

The committee insisted that major emphasis should be directed to reorganizing secondary education for "the needs of a democracy and an increased school population."2 To achieve these objectives, so as to provide for some general integration of culture and discipline of the past with ideas geared to suit the varying interests in a democracy, committees were formed under the direction of a reviewing committee. It was the task of each committee to revamp the curriculum in a specific subject area.3

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1 J. Paul Leonard, op. cit., p. 162.
3 James Reed Young, op. cit., p. 130.
of Teachers of English, in cooperation with the National Educational Association, formed a joint committee on English headed by James F. Hosic.\textsuperscript{1}

The English committee was in accord with the basic principles of the Committee of Reorganization of Secondary Education and the reviewing Committee, which stated:

Secondary education should be determined by the needs of the society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available. \ldots The evidence is strong that such a comprehensive reorganization is imperative at this time.\textsuperscript{2}

Basing its theory of operation on the current needs of all of the pupils and not merely on preparation for college,\textsuperscript{3} the English Committee prepared its report to serve three specific purposes:

1. To provide school authorities with information useful in arranging proper conditions

2. To assist teachers in choosing the most available materials and in handling it according to the best methods

3. To lay a basis for articulating elementary school and high school and college in such a way as to make possible the best type of work in each.\textsuperscript{4}

In general, the immediate aims of the high school English program were two-fold: to give the student a command of the art of communication in speech and writing and to teach them to read thoughtfully and with appreciation.\textsuperscript{5} These broad objectives of the English Curriculum were pertinent to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[2] \textit{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
the teaching of literature and it is from them that the following goals on
the teaching of literature emerged:

1. To get the pupil to read as many good books as possible
2. To develop high ideals of life and conduct
3. To stimulate imagination and emotional faculties
4. To broaden the mental experience of youth

These purposes are embodied in the following broad and topical pro-
nouncements extracted from the Report:

I. Ends to be attained

1. A broadened, deepened and enriched imagination and emotional life of the student
2. An admiration for great personalities, both of author and characters in literature and a raised plane of enjoyment in reading
3. A knowledge of the scope and content of literature that will leave abundance of interesting material, and a trained ability and desire to find intellectual and spiritual food as he may need for growth and pleasure

II. Choice of literature to attain these ends

1. Literature which makes a natural appeal to the pupil concerned should be chosen.
2. Literature, other than supplementary, should be above the level of the pupil's unguided enjoyment.
3. To attain the first end of literature books should contain stimulating thought, sound ethical ideals, normal and strong characters, noble conduct and pure feeling.
4. In general, the trend of choice should favor the "classics."
5. The modern and the easy still have their legitimate place in high school work.
6. The English course should provide a variety of literary types.

Ibid., p. 32.
III. General principles to be considered in forming a course in literature

1. In a purely academic or classical curriculum the course in literature may be made more literary than any other type.

2. For vocational and technical curriculums the literature is for inspirational value.

3. The specific duty of the teacher in the rural school is to open up the practically unknown world of the imagination and range freely over it until the country boy and girl are caught by its glamour and are willing to linger in its beauty and splendor.

4. The time allotment, treatment as well as the course may well differ in different curriculums.

IV. Principles underlying the grouping of literature

1. Grouping should be done according to greater or less simplicity of subject matter and according to chronology in the senior year.

V. Changes needed in the methods of teaching

1. Pedagogy should be a clear realization of the change to be effected in the pupil by the study of literature and of steps to be taken to accomplish that end by both the pupil and teacher. It should lead also to a more careful consideration of relative values of different pieces of literature.

2. A better pedagogy of teaching English will result in a decidedly different treatment of different types of literature.

VI. Various definite means of studying literature

1. Interpretive reading, discussions necessitating some personal reactions, sharing of information, reports, memorizing and home reading

VII. School activities as aids in teaching literature

1. The school library, literary societies, the dramatic club and the school paper

It was expressed that "no committee made a more significant Report
than the committee dealing with English." It represented an excellent adaptation of all of the new principles into the teaching of the key subjects of the curriculum.

The general agreement and faith in the recommendations on the part of the members of the English committee was singular. One would almost expect wide diversity of views in handling a situation of such ramification as this. It is felt that such reactions merit notation and so are stated here:

The new view of the school course and the aims and ideals of the teachers are merely corollaries of our democratic theories and hence it is bound to work itself out to some decisive conclusion." Still further:

The high school is rapidly becoming a common school. That is what it was first planned to be and that is what the people seem now determined to make it. From that point of view the folly of insisting that the high school course in English shall be a college preparatory course is evident. . . . The best preparation for anything is real effort and experience in the present.

The unusual endorsement of the committee members was an indication of how the recommendations were to be received by the public. This, of course, was of greater concern because the recommendations were to be carried out in the thousands of schoolrooms throughout the country. While there was some disapproval, the Report was generally well received. The following survey of reactions of teachers, educators and authorities in the field of English, as found in articles and studies covering the years 1917-1930 will attest to the effective reception of the Report.

1 J. Paul Leonard, op. cit., p. 165.

2 James F. Hosic, op. cit., p. 5.

3 Ibid.
The few who reacted against the Report were in favor of such items as continued use of book lists as set up by the College Entrance Board and the Regents Board. These specified lists of books, they claimed, remained an advantageous thing for the difficult task of educating a very large number of unevenly graded pupils who were characterized by a variety of capabilities and interests, many of whom were of foreign birth and inadequate cultural background. Still others contended that by the use of these prescribed lists "the work became more finely cut and limited to specific objectives." To this, they held, simply should be added a system and sincerity by the teacher.

One of the most vigorous statements against the Report in support of the English classics in the curriculum was made by Grace Goodale, teacher of English at Barnard College. She pointed out strongly that the classics could be correlated with vocational training which was now being introduced into the curriculum. She claimed:

First, the classics are valuable adjuncts and supports to many sorts of vocation training, but of more fundamental importance than this is the preparation of the pupil's personality affected by the studying of the great English classics.

There were others among the negative critics who felt that the

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1 Harrison R. Steeves, "From High School Literature to College Literature," *The English Journal*, XV (February, 1926), 231.


entrance examinations should not be modified. Ernest Cobb attributed the meritorious standards of culture and intellect in the high school entirely to the guiding principles of the entrance requirements. He asserted:

I have treasured the college entrance examinations as the one salvation of our public school system. To me they have been the symbol of that standard of efficiency absolutely needed in such a field of mental endeavor. . . as a matter of fact, I believe the college entrance examinations have set the only important standard of efficiency by which our schools might judge their work.¹

Other teachers who were opposed to the Report felt that the parlous conditions of literature were caused by the misinterpretation and use of the word "culture" as opposed to "practical." These terms as applied to literature should be cleared.²

There were some suggestions of a return to the traditional methods. The opinion was that the reassociation of composition in literature and the "substitution in literature of old standards of authority for standards of vitality" would help to simplify matters in the high school curriculum.³ Other contentions were raised against the suggestion of the Report dealing with memory. These opinions were, in effect, "that there are benefits to be derived from the powers of memory but memory as mere storage could be valued too high."⁴ For without conscious guidance facts and ideas gained through

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² Robert J. Aley, op. cit., p. 126.

³ Carl J. Weber, op. cit., p. 422.

memory could cause conclusions and conviction of undetermined origin.¹

Though the unfavorable reactions were not against the recommend-
dations in toto, the group felt justified in the defense of what they
believed should be retained from the old established high school curriculum.

The praise and enthusiasm of those in support of the Report far out-
numbered the negative responses. The advocates were in accord with the idea
that the over-all aim of literature should be "to broaden the mental view, to
strengthen and to develop ideals, to cultivate a love for further reading,"²
and not just to enlarge one's store of knowledge. This would be the in-
evitable results. Nor should the aim be merely of knowledge of forms, types,
meter and style, but of the idea expressed in a selection.³

Among those who accepted the Report as a whole were people who
agreed, in part, with the negative critics. They believed that "there is no
need to dump classics,"⁴ that there still was great value to be derived from
them, but that exaggerated claims had been made too.⁵ For all who read them
intensively and analytically have not always left them with pleasant
memories.⁶ They felt as Dr. George Robert Carlsen, Professor of Education at

¹Ibid.

²Eunice Meers, "Specific Aims in the Literature Course," The English
Journal, VIII (October, 1919), 488.

³Laura Meier, "Natural Study of Literature," The English Journal,
XI (May, 1922), 261.

⁴W. S. Huchman, "Reading Clubs instead of Literature Classes," The
English Journal, VI (February, 1917), 89.

⁵Edward Smith, "The Coronor on English Literature," The English
Journal, VII (November, 1918), 553.

⁶Sterling A. Leonard, Essential Principles of Teaching Reading and
Literature (Chicago, 1922), p. 218. Leonard is also of the opinion that
method is a powerful factor that practically determines the attitude of a
large majority of a class toward a literary selection.
I read *Ivanhoe* in such a manner, covering approximately two chapters a week for the entire semester. We know all too well, what such a program did to the reading interest of young people. I have never re-read *Ivanhoe*, though people tell me now that it is an interesting piece of writing.¹

Most teachers were aware of the fact that up to 1917 most of the stress was put upon the use of the classics and not upon what the pupils might give in return. They said in defense of their position:

> We make, of course, no absolute and final break with the past. Does anyone think such a break possible in the study of literature? We specifically attempt to emphasize the idea of continuity.²

They further claimed that by placing emphasis upon types of literature, the classics, old and new, could be connected to the school life and the everyday life of the student.³ For they held that all types in the history of literature, except the epic, are contemporary and are being produced today.⁴

Furthermore, some advocates of the recommendations felt that contemporary literature was ideal to use along with the classics. They proclaimed that modern literature, such as the novel, was helping students to bridge gaps that exist between the study of literature and life situations.

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¹ George Robert Carlsen, "The Dimensions of Literature," *The English Journal*, XLI (April, 1952), 180. In this connection, it is well to consider the views of Walter Barnes, who said, "We pry and peer into the mechanism of every speech to see whether it is metaphor or simile — and why? Very few students are interested in such technicalities as this." Walter Barnes, *The New Democracy in Teaching English* (New York, 1932), p. 9.


that many of them had never before experienced.¹

Many of these advocates were in agreement with the idea of the committee that varied methods might be used with various selections and made suggestions to implement the Report. In this way, they felt that the needs and interests of the pupils would be provided for. They expressed the opinion of J. O. Engleman, that "motivation is the key to effective instruction as it tends to harness the pupil's energy."² In addition to this idea, others said, "the first need in right-teaching of literature is a redirection of aims and methods."³ Many teachers agreed with Walter Barnes, Head of the English Department, Fairmont State School, Fairmont, West Virginia, who saw "reading as in life — an individual matter, and therefore, instruction and practice in it should be individualized."⁴

Outstanding educators, as O. B. Sperlin, teacher of English in Lincoln Park High School, Tacoma, Washington, referred to the Report as a basis for suggesting the placing of later literature before earlier literature. In part, the Report had stated that one of the aims in teaching literature should be "to cultivate high ideals of life and conduct through literature of

¹ Wilford Aiken, op. cit., 234.


³ H. E. Fowler, "American Literature for American Schools," The English Journal, VI (December, 1917), 611.

⁴ Walter Barnes, in a discussion, "Individualization of Instruction," Fifteenth Annual Conference of the National Council of Teachers of English, The English Journal, XV (January, 1926), 52. For similar views see also Sterling A. Leonard, in a symposium, "Approach to the Teaching of Literature," The English Journal, X (January, 1921), 51. This discussion was held at the tenth annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in Chicago, November 25, 1920.
power in so far as such appeal is adapted to the understanding and sympathy of the pupil.\(^1\) Sperlin and others felt that the Report could be carried out and earlier literature saved, if eighteenth century literature was taught first. It was further asserted that since the eighteenth century was nearer to the student's own time it would be almost as easy for the pupil to understand and appreciate life as it is reflected in the earlier periods in his own time.\(^2\)

Teachers and educators, for the most part, agreed with the pronouncement on the teaching of poetry,\(^3\) but they felt that memorizing should be done through the pupil's desire.\(^4\) Still others agreed and went so far as to suggest specific methods that would augment the Report. They stated that teachers should "teach classics in such a way as to give a bird's eye view of the whole, then let students discover and enjoy the details."\(^5\) They stated further that teachers should "re-arrange seats in circles and have students give literary recitals, dramatizations, discussions on desired books, old and

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2. Ibid.


new, and on magazines.¹ This group of teachers said, "This may look irrelevant but it is vital and stimulating."²

Two of the many suggestions which have been given to support and to further the cause of the committee Report were the Contract Plan³ and the Dalton Plan of teaching the English curriculum.⁴ Both have been received with wide acclaim to the extent that the Dalton Plan is being used in many schools in London, England.⁵

Thus, the Report and the favorable as well as the unfavorable reactions to it reveal how vast were the needs for reorganization in the secondary schools and that for the most part the general public was in sympathy with the idea of revising the system.

However, a new problem arose — the problem of spreading the information of the Report through teacher-training classes and textbooks on methods so that in-service and prospective teachers might be aware of the new concepts and learn how to implement them in their classes. The Report was worthless unless it was adopted in principle as classroom practice.

A survey of bibliographies on the teaching of English indicates that the number of textbooks for teachers published from 1917 to 1930 was

¹ Ibid.

² W. S. Huchman, op. cit., p. 90.


⁴ Marguerite Durkin, "English under the Dalton Plan," The English Journal, XV (April, 1926), 236.

⁵ Ibid., p. 238.
relatively few. An examination of some of the texts appearing shortly after
the publication of the recommendations revealed that the authors were in accord
with the Report in principles but that they failed to make any specific commit-
ments on methods. The discussions on methods that did occur were used to illu-
strate how principles of choice or procedure have been carried out in actual
classrooms. Otherwise, the content consisted for the most part of essential
principles of teaching literature.1 Other texts were also in accord with the
Report even though they failed to give any suggestions or information on
treatment of materials. They followed the general pattern of presenting the
authors' general creed and argument for the spirit which they felt should
animate the classroom.2

Some others, whose books had been published prior to the Report, now
felt the need to revise or rewrite the previous editions.3 In the later texts
some of them were more precise and definite in their reactions to the recommen-
dations than writers immediately after the Report. Percival Chubb rewrote his
text, The Teaching of English, as he says, "aware of the striking changes in
scene and climate, for great advances have been made in the selection and
arrangement of materials and in the general outlook regarding treatment despite
some menacing dangers, particularly the seeming disregard for the classics."4

The author's views on teaching literature are not limited to any particular

1 See Sterling A. Leonard, Essential Principles of Teaching Reading
and Literature.


4 Ibid.
section, but the treatment is progressive and cumulative. Some chapters that appeared in the first edition were omitted and several new ones were added on specific topics, as story-telling, poetry and its handling, speech and dramatics. There is also a chapter on "silent reading," "projects," "minimum essentials" and similar phases in vogue at this time.¹

Emma Bolenius stated in making changes in her rewritten text that she had taken into consideration certain changes in ideas as to desirable means and ends in instructions. Particularly was this true in marked reaction against the "grind" type of teaching in literature," a subject which is so full of life and feeling."² She felt that it was possible to combine the inspirational element with serious thinking and work. Thus she strikes a golden mean between the two types of teaching English literature previously described, and attempts to reconcile the two attitudes.

The dearth of textual instructional material and the demands of the Report led to experimentation in evaluation of students, subjects and methods. These scientific and objective studies were efforts to prove or disprove certain statements of the Report. Representative of them were the Irions study, whose aim was to note the degree of comprehension difficulties of students in the studying of literature;³ the Shachtman study, whose purpose was to find whether any relationship existed between the elements of English

¹ Ibid.
³ Theo W. Irions, Comprehension Difficulties of Ninth-Grade Students in the Study of Literature (New York, 1925).
and the judgment of poetry,\(^1\) and the Miles study, whose aim was to determine reading ability in its relation to success in other high school subjects.\(^2\)

The Coryell study was an attempt to test two methods of teaching literature: (1) the rapid reading of a comparatively large amount of literature with general comments and discussions in class and (2) the detailed analytical study of the minimum of literature required by the syllabus to study comprehension and appreciation. Of her findings Miss Coryell stated,

> The pupils reading extensively not only read six times as much literature but, I feel, they liked the work better and found a deeper, wider, and more satisfying experience than those who studied intensively.\(^3\)

The recommendations of the Committee led to a great deal of thinking on the teaching of literature and to a great deal of experimentation. The period between 1917 and 1930 was, therefore, somewhat transitional in nature; for there were those who wished to linger in the past and those who were dissatisfied with the status quo and wished to effect a change. The breaking away from traditions is never sudden; in some instances it is never effected completely. Nevertheless, gradually some changes became evident: The inclusion of contemporary literature along with the more suitable classics for high school boys and girls, and the broadening of college entrance requirements in English, which made possible liberalized book lists. Thus during

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this period the teaching of literature, aided to some extent by the use of objective and scientific tests and measurements of students' ability in relation to material, had made some noticeable strides in the direction of the new goals.
CHAPTER III

NEW TRENDS IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN HIGH SCHOOL 1930-1950

The generally favorable reception of the recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Literature was one thing, but knowledge of how to put them into practice was a problem which the schools found difficult to solve. The enthusiasm of the teachers was not matched by effective methods. This was traceable to three major causes: First, the pronouncements lacked specific methods of procedure to guide teachers; second, the teachers themselves had been schooled by traditional methods and were slow to relinquish that which they knew for that which was yet untried; and third, the dearth of books on methods retarded teachers who were alert for changes. Therefore, from 1917 to 1930 there was a failure on the part of teachers to incorporate the recommendations of the Committee into the teaching of literature.

Many educators were aware of these failures. As early as 1921, Bair had complained about the situation:

There is something paralyzingly at fault in our methods of introducing children to the spirit of English letters. The net result of our methods of introducing children to the spirit of our teaching appears to be lethargic --- instead of connecting with a dynamo, we give an anaesthetic or a coat of shellac at best.  \(^1\)

The general contention was, in effect, that success in carrying out the Committee's suggestions could result only from matching theory with effective methods. However, the schools were not doing this. S. D. Shanklin and others who share this view did not hesitate to speak of these conditions. Shanklin

\(^1\) F. H. Bair, op. cit., p. 418.
remarked:

It is a common observation that educational practice lags far behind educational theory. It is not surprising, therefore, that the practice in our schools has by no means conformed with the principles so ably set forth by the Committee of 1917.¹

Although the teachers were filled with zeal and showed commendable fertility of devices for improving what was taught, a survey of English-teaching throughout the country specifically revealed situations that led to discontent.²

One position was that some alert teachers who wished to abandon completely the old methods of regimentation for individualization overlooked altogether one very potent individual difference -- the individual reaction of the child.³ Further opinions were that the specific projects providing for individual differences should be arranged in a logical manner.⁴ Thus the projects should not be chosen on the basis of interest only but on the basis of their relationship to the large social problems which they support. The lack of guidance and provision for student opinion growing out of the large body of


² Dudley H. Miles, "The Council and the Classroom Teacher," The English Journal, XVIII (January, 1928), 3. Miles alleges that the feeling of discontent might be traced to two facts: First, as practitioners in the classroom, teachers are not agreed upon the desired goals; they do not know what is established about the teaching of English. Ibid., p. 5-6.

³ Ibid., p. 9-10.

materials that the students used resulted in an ineffective program. Somewhere between the regimentation of recitation and the individualized projects, critics felt that the informal discussion should develop.¹

John J. DeBoer held that teachers, seeking to free the teaching of literature from the lockstep of the traditional courses of the logicians and the disciplinarians, had in turn fallen into another undesirable practice—that of making fanciful dissections of personality.² The most deplorable aspect of this theory of method, according to DeBoer, was the retarding influence of the public school curriculum in placing literature where it belonged in the reading program.³

Other factors contributing to this growing dissatisfaction with methods were revealed by scientific measurements and psychological studies.⁴ These tests showed that schools were failing to see that all students are not alike. They possess varying degree of capabilities, perceptiveness and tastes in learning.⁵ The most careful investigation in English by prominent teachers in the field and the National Council of Teachers of English indicated that much improvement in the teaching of literature could be derived from a recognition

¹ Herman Horne, "Again the New Education," The Educational Review, LXXV (February, 1930), 92.
³ Ibid., 433.
⁴ Herman Horne, op. cit., p. 94.
⁵ Ibid.
of individual differences.¹

Out of these and other related dissatisfactions with conditions in the secondary school three major consequences affecting the teaching of literature crystallized, namely, (1) the new consideration on the College Entrance Board gave to the demands of the high school for further modification of its requirements in 1930;² (2) the Commission on Secondary School Curriculum formed in 1932 by the Progressive Education Association; (3) the Commission on the Relation of Schools and Colleges formed in 1930 by the Progressive Education Association.³ These phenomena are discussed in the order of their importance.

The first of these is the College Entrance Board. A survey of the examinations in English for the period 1929-1930, as compared to the ones given in the period 1920-1928, reveals that in 1928 the Board provided probably the widest range of modification in its history.⁴ In the period 1929-1930 the examinations were altered further in the light of the newer concepts of secondary education. The new questions provided an opportunity for the reflective student to give a critical and appreciative view of literature, if he chose; but they also provided for the non-literary student merely to demonstrate


² Charles S. Thomas, op. cit., p. 5.


⁴ Charles S. Thomas, op. cit., p. 6.
that he had read the books and stored them in his memory.1

The second consideration which influenced the teaching of literature was the Commission on Secondary School Curriculum, whose task was to focus special attention upon the educational needs of all classes of adolescents in current American society, to suggest methods whereby curriculum problems could be studied and to extend well-considered experimentation in fundamental aspects of curriculum revision.2 The overall aim was to ascertain what the curriculum of the secondary school would be without the restraint of college entrance requirements. In this last respect the work of the Commission paralleled one on the purposes of the Eight-Year Study, which will be reviewed later.

The Commission emphasized, first, the concern of democracy for certain common understandings among its people, such as the worth of the individual, the necessity for group and individual responsibility for promoting common ends and goals, and the recognition of the values of free play of intelligence in the solution of social problems.3 These principles were to be the guiding force that was to characterize the newer outlook in the teaching of literature.

The third and most important factor in focusing attention upon new approaches in teaching was the Commission on the Relation of Schools and Colleges. This was an effort to establish practice centers in various secondary

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1 Ibid. In connection with these changes in college entrance requirements, it is interesting to note the liberal view of the Secondary Education Board stated in 1948 regarding the reading lists. The Board made repeated, specific statements that the lists are not prescriptive but suggestive. Definition of Requirements for 1949 (Massachusetts, 1949).

2 J. Paul Leonard, op. cit., p. 188.

3 Ibid., p. 191.
schools throughout the United States for operation over a period of eight years. Hence, it is commonly referred to as The Eight-Year Study. Its task was to define a good secondary school in terms of college entrance requirements and to cooperate in extending relations between the secondary schools and the colleges to which the former were to send their graduates. Old barriers of curriculums were disregarded and a variety of studies, techniques of evaluations, and methods of curriculum revisions were made. The major principles which the Eight-Year Study felt should guide efforts of reconstructions were:

1. The general life of the school and methods of teaching should conform to what is now known about the ways in which human beings learn and grow.

2. The high school in the United States should re-discover its chief reason for existence.

3. The spirit and practice of experimentation and exploration should characterize secondary schools in a democracy.

4. The curriculum should deal with the present concerns of young people as well as with knowledge, skills, understandings and appreciations of what constitutes our cultural heritage.

5. Teachers in the schools and professors in the college should work together in mutual respect, confidence and understanding.

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2 Ibid.

3 Wilford M. Aikin, The Story of the Eight-Year Study, Vol. I of Adventure in American Education (New York, 1942), pp. 16-20. Although the Eight-Year Study was formed in 1930, its guiding principles were not published until 1942. However, from the beginning of its existence during its discussions and developments, the theory of its operation was of major influence in the schools.

For current trends in curriculum development see Wilbur Hatfield, An Experience Curriculum, the report of a Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English, English Monograph No. 4 (New York, 1935), pp. v-xv, and Angela Broening (ed.), Conducting Experiences in English, English Monograph No. 8 of the National Council of Teachers of English (New York, 1939).
The Eight-Year Study, unlike the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education of 1917, was not confined to the pronouncements of principles. For the first time in secondary education an attempt was made to put fundamental principles into practice in the schools. The Eight-Year Study was thoroughly planned and guided by a directing committee composed of experts in the various schools. By 1932 cooperation of thirty schools and over three hundred colleges and universities had been secured.¹

At the end of the Study in 1940 a Follow-up Staff assembled, tabulated and evaluated the college records of the graduates. To validate further their evaluations the Staff requested a group of distinguished college officials to evaluate the findings of this investigation and to form any conclusions that the data might warrant. One of the conclusions was most revealing and is used here to attest to the effectiveness of the Eight-Year Study:

The results of this study seem to indicate that the pattern of preparatory school which concentrates on a preparation for a fixed set of entrance examinations is not the only satisfactory means of fitting a boy or girl for making the most out of the college experience. It looks as if the stimulus and the initiative which the less conventional approach to secondary school education affords, send on to college better human material than we have obtained in the past.²

Thus the project proved decisively that students may well prepare for college without the study of certain prescribed courses in the secondary school.

As these factors began to effect changes in the secondary school, other committees were formed for various reasons. The one most pertinent to this study was the Committee on Human Relations of the Progressive Education


Association, known as the Committee of Twenty-four.\(^1\) It was formed in 1928 to reveal the place of literature in helping to attain the proposed goals in curriculum revisions.\(^2\) The group issued the statement that "literature can have a real and central relation to growth in the social and cultural life of a democracy but that literature first of all is a form of art."\(^3\) The value to be gained from the study of literature, the report stated further, depends on the response of the learner to it. It should provide social, personal and esthetic exploration by:

1. assisting in producing an understanding of human nature and the indoctrination of ethical standards,
2. helping pupils to make a sound social and ethical judgment, and
3. helping the students to derive pleasure and satisfaction from the reading of literature.\(^4\)

Another contention of the group was that no list of readings should be made for a student unless he is known, for the books should fit the person, nor should a single reaction be expected from the students, for students differ in the learning process.\(^5\)

It is beside the point that these principles were received with favorable and unfavorable reactions. The one great step was the new emphasis that

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\(^2\) Ibid.


\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 262.
they gave to the curriculum and to teaching in all areas of the secondary school. The teachers of English and in turn the teachers of literature were of the same opinion as educators in general. They were concerned about whether or not the average student was likely to emerge from the school with an intelligent understanding of life as a whole and of its major elements in this whole. Consequently, they made adjustments in the curriculum in line with the changes that were being made in education. ¹ Nevertheless, while these changes were being tried out in the school, they effected many new trends which had curriculum implications. They were (1) use of new materials, (2) integration, (3) differentiation, (4) articulation, (5) guidance, (6) socialization, and (7) instructional and developmental reading programs. ²

The effect that these trends exerted on the selection of materials and methods in the teaching of literature represents the major developments in the teaching of literature in secondary schools up to the present time. There is, perhaps, no classroom in which one might find any one of these trends used in isolation. In fact, the best teachers would, no doubt, draw upon each of them as they find need. However, in this discussion, we shall treat them separately for the sake of clarity.

The first of these trends involves the use of new materials — the mass media of communication that have developed in our time. These media are current magazines, newspapers, motion picture, film strips, recordings, the


radio and television. The general popularity of them is unchallenged, for they are made to appeal to all kinds of people with a wide variety of interests. The "pulp" magazines and newspapers are in greater demand by the public than are the better periodicals. In addition, the standards of taste in the motion picture, and on the radio and television are often generally unsuited to adolescent boys and girls. Since this is true, the teacher of literature may wisely implement her assignments by making students aware of what constitutes wholesome values in mass media and by developing within the student a sense of judgment and power of discrimination in the selection and use of them.

Such statements are not to imply that these materials are lacking in potential values in the classroom. Quite to the contrary, they may be used in various ways to motivate the study of literature. The consideration of them is not intended as substitutes for reading but to implement the study of it. Through the use of the radio, television, films and recordings, the teacher may stimulate interest in the great books of the past, such as A Tale of Two Cities, David Copperfield, Wuthering Heights or Vanity Fair, by presenting


3 John J. DeBoer et al., Teaching Secondary English, p. 302.

these classics in the school or by guiding students to see and to listen to
them outside the school. Moreover, current opinions are that these and simi-
lar classics provide the student with an enrichment of understanding of and
emotional response to great characters of literature, and he in turn comes to
understand his personal problems. Poetry, essays, biographies, the novel and
other literary selections may take on new meaning when they are found in
current magazines. Mass media, like literature, should be used as adjuncts
in meeting human needs and not as an end in themselves.

A second trend is the effort to establish integration of literary
types with all subject areas and related experiences. It is accomplished for
the most part, not through conscious combining of different subjects and
activities, but through initiation of vital activities that reach out into the
various fields. The broadening of the course in literature to meet the needs
of the student in solving life-centered problems has resulted in a wide and
diversified reading program. Extensive reading often disregards the bounda-
ries of subject-matter fields and results in integration of educational
experiences. Thus, while classes are conducted under the heading of

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1 Ibid., p. 394.

2 Mabel Bessey, The Current Magazines and the Teaching of English
(Chicago, 1935), p. 201. For suggestions on the use of mass media in the class-
room, see Max Herzberg, "Tentative Units in Radio Program Appreciation," The
English Journal, XXIV (June, 1935), 545, and Edgar Dale How to Read A Newspaper
(Chicago, 1941).

3 Mabel Bessey, op. cit., p. 216.

4 Wilbur Hatfield, op. cit., p. 10

5 Lucia Mirrielees, Teaching Composition and Literature in Junior and
Senior High School (New York, 1943), pp. 5-6.
literature, the relationship between science and the social sciences may be emphasized.¹

Integration in the literature classroom provides the teacher with an opportunity to guide the students into a wide and varied reading program — wide and varied as to types, subject-matter, nationality and time.² The logic of this theory drives relentlessly toward "free reading" as a part of the literature curriculum. "Free reading" or wide reading, as this type of program is called, provides experiences designed to develop creative, thinking citizens, who will be able to understand themselves and the physical world and who will be able to solve their problems in the light of these experiences.³ The best "free reading" programs, however, aim to improve tastes in reading, in addition to allowing pupils to choose and read books and magazines that they will enjoy and understand.

The third trend is the movement toward individualization in the teaching of literature. Changes in the literature instruction at the high school level to provide for individual differences have been of considerable importance within recent years. The emphasis on student needs is noticeably present. Psychological principles of how students learn are the guiding factors in the selection and treatment of materials which were formerly based on chronology.⁴ Individuals vary greatly in interests and needs. They also

¹ Lou LaBrant, An Evaluation of Free Reading in Grades Ten, Eleven and Twelve (Columbus, Ohio, 1936), p. 10.
³ Ibid.
⁴ The Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English on the English Curriculum, op. cit., p. 152.
vary greatly in abilities and hence proceed at varying speed and with varying
degrees of understanding. These factors have exerted tremendous influence on
literature instruction. The current opinion is that a student can not be
cared for by showing him through any given curriculum;\(^1\) nor is it necessary to
continue to teach any particular selection, long or short, to an entire class
at any time.\(^2\) This changed conception of methods has affected the adoption of
new goals of teaching literature. The current primary objectives are: (1) to
have the students recognize literature as focused experience and to enable them
to participate in the pleasures and insights, personal and social, of that
experience, and (2) to get the students so interested in literary selections
that the habit of good reading will continue throughout later life.\(^3\) In order
to carry out these objectives, many varied activities and a wider range of
materials have been brought into the classroom than there was in use pre-
viously.

The fourth trend deals with the place of guidance in the teaching of
literature. The recognition of the relation of literature to the student's
complete environment leads naturally to the responsibility of guidance. This
guidance, which is always based on the growing needs and interests of the child,
is not necessarily in terms of the specialist, though this kind of help need
not be excluded.\(^4\) It is the kind used in the classroom by the classroom

\(^1\) Lucia Mirrieles, op. cit., p. 18.

\(^2\) Earl E. Welch, "Modernizing the English Curriculum at Staughton," The
English Journal, XXIV (September, 1935), 741.

\(^3\) The Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English on the

teacher in helping the student choose, interpret and evaluate literary selections as they relate to the immediate life of the student.¹

The teacher then must be aware of the ways in which literary experiences may help the student to see his problems in a wider context so as to create within him a sense of belonging to the stream of life. This necessitates the teacher's knowing what the student's problems are as well as knowing the literary selection that might help him. An un-self-conscious relationship between the student and the teacher will enable both of them to discuss any problem that the student may have.² It is wise that the teacher should make no attempt to go beyond the fact that literary selections may or may not reach the crux of the student's problem. However, it is most important that teachers realize that the "right book for the right child" may often perform this function for the student.³ Thus, the teacher who wishes to guide pupils in making adjustments to their social and intellectual problems might well find the use of literary materials that will have relevance to the general emotional and intellectual level of the student. Moreover, the provision for a wide range of literary experiences can help the student in adjusting himself to adult life.

The fifth trend is the effort to incorporate articulation in the teaching of literature. It is felt to be of major importance that the student sees the semblance of literary experiences in his personal life. Perhaps in no other subject except literature does the student come in contact with the beauty,

¹ Ibid., p. 248.
³ Ibid., p. 76.
pathos and mystery that characterize life. The teacher is able to reveal to the student many diverse experiences found in literature that the student may later draw on in attempting to solve his own particular problems.¹

The literary selections that allow the student to study characters in various situations and under varying degrees of duress give to the student the opportunity to seek through literature an enlargement of his own experiences. Though he may see some characters as outside himself; yet with others he may make articulate his personal values. In this way, the student is able to look at himself objectively and with more detachment.² Thus, he is able to arrive at a more objective understanding of his own situation and of his own motivation than he would otherwise.

The teacher who helps the student to acquire keen awareness of the colors, sounds and movements of the world about him as he explores the mores of human personality and who makes him sensitive to the effect that these qualities have in conveying ideas of literary episodes, inevitably gives him ethical as well as esthetic values.³

The seventh trend is the desire to inculcate socialization into the instructional methods of literature. Though literature is art, it seems to be more widely powerful than some other kinds of art because of its humanizing influence.⁴ The massive demands for personal and social re-adjustments brought

¹ Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, p. 49.
on by foreign and domestic needs have placed new emphasis on the study of literature. Moreover, the impact of science in daily living has added to the insistence that literature inculcate social values.¹

The teaching of literature can accomplish an important purpose in human relationship. First, it can relieve group tensions by stressing the universals, the basic similarities in life, as it is lived at many different levels and under many different conditions and reveal the stake each of us has in the plight of the other groups.² Students can explore the ranges of thought and feeling of groups of people through the study of literature that at the same time will help them to understand the motivation and the attitudes, the strengths and the weaknesses of many social, racial, and national groups with which they must live and work today.³ Thus they become aware of complex cultural patterns — of the fact that there are groups organized quite differently from their own. Such study aids further in the development of a rational approach to social living. Students need to realize that often in a complex society culturally accepted patterns of behavior and socially approved goals may be completely foreign to their own background.⁴ Perhaps most important of all, literature can reveal that various groups interpret success in life in


² Margaret M. Heaton, "Stereotypes and Real People," The English Journal, XXXV (June, 1946), 328.

³ Edna Ferber, "Remedies for Hate," The English Journal, XXXV (June, 1946), 320-321.

⁴ Louise Rosenblatt, Literature as Exploration, p. 230.
various ways and that kinds of work held distasteful by one's own group may be considered socially valuable by other groups.¹

Other liberalizing influences now finding their way into the teaching of literature are discussions of the rights of minority groups, the dangers of race or religious prejudices and other similar problems confronting the world today.² It is precisely in this realm that literature and the teaching of literature can provide ways of understanding the world of men more plainly and objectively. For without some measure of ability to humanize with the culture of his time and place, to see as it sees, no one can be a useful or a prosperous citizen.³ These current trends release the student from provincialism of time, place and person. For it is the illiterate and unread that participate in a very limited and narrow sub-culture of society.⁴ These vicarious participations in different ways in life can help the student to realize that American society is only one of a great variety of possible structures. The study of literature that imparts these various insights of human values to the individual enables him to look at the society about him with a more rational attitude.

A seventh trend is the new emphasis on the improvement of reading and the inauguration of the developmental reading program in secondary education, which is having its effect on the teaching of literature. Several scientific

¹ Ibid.
² Lucia Mirrielees, op. cit., p. vi. For a discussion on attitudes toward racial groups, see Lou LaBrant, "The Words of my Mouth," The English Journal, XXXV (June, 1946), 323-327.
³ Margaret M. Heaton, op. cit., p. 329.
⁴ The Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English on the English Curriculum, op. cit., p. 10.
studies which were conducted on the high school level in the 1930's revealed that students were in general poor readers, that the students' poor reading ability extended over a wide range and that it was often below the grade placement of the students.\(^1\) Such conditions as these created gaps in the over-all program, which made it difficult for the teachers to instruct the students on the grade level to which they had been promoted. Other studies which were also conducted in the Thirties on the high school level for the purpose of finding the relationship between the various reading abilities and the scholastic achievements in the different subject-matter areas revealed that reading ability is an important factor in scholastic success and that different subjects require special reading abilities.\(^2\) It is obvious that such weakness in student reading ability, as revealed by these and similar tests, would account for ineffectiveness in student response to literature.

Because of the evident need for creating readiness in reading for most students, and the improvement in reading for others, the instructional and developmental reading program was initiated. The program was not aimed directly at the teaching of literature but at the improvement of the literacy of the student, so that he could work well in all subject areas and function intelligently as a citizen. However, it is natural that any improvement in the reading ability of the students in any area is apt to be reflected to some extent in the reading and understanding of literature. Consequently, the efforts on the part of the school to improve the student's vocabulary and reading interests and to

\(^1\) Ester Swenson, *The Relation of Ability to Read Material of the Type used in Studying Science to Eight-Grade Achievement* (Minnesota, 1933).

\(^2\) Eva Bond, *Reading and Ninth-Grade Achievement* (New York, 1938).
develop differentiated attack, a greater rate of speed and comprehension in order to insure his independence in reading, would eventually make the reading of literature less a chore. The student would be able, then, to enter into the spirit of literature, which aims to give pleasure as well as enlightenment.

While this trend, which developed out of the need for a greater literacy, is not a problem bearing on methods in the teaching of literature, it does bear on the over-all reading program. It was discovered in the early efforts in the training of teachers of reading that this work could best be done by the teachers of English, because reading instruction could best be integrated by them into the total language arts program. Thus, English teachers, in their efforts to improve instruction in reading in general and in cooperation with other teachers in the content subjects as well, have been able to improve the caliber of their own work in literature. They have learned: (1) how to determine the nature of reading instruction, (2) how to adjust reading instruction to individuals, in determining readiness to undertake the learning of new areas of subject matter, and (3) how to test the effectiveness of reading instruction. They have gained also useful suggestions on selecting appropriate materials and in guiding students into a fuller educational, vocational, and emotional development. These trends, representative of the latest developments in teaching literature in the high school, are being incorporated in varying degrees by alert teachers in the classrooms.

The third decade of the current century revealed that the teachers had

1 Guy Bond and Eva Bond, Developmental Reading in High School (New York, 1941).

2 Ibid., p. 241.

3 Ibid.
failed to put the recommendations of 1917 into practical use in the classrooms. This failure resulted in dissatisfaction with the school program in general. The effort to rectify the conditions that existed in the schools affected specific consequences that later developed new trends in secondary instruction in general and in the teaching of literature in particular. These trends initiated the use of mass media of communication to implement the study of literature and new approaches to provide for individual differences. They further provided for the development of the student's total personality, in addition to techniques and skills, according to his specific needs and interests in an immediate world. Thus the teaching of literature came to encompass the life of the child in the classroom and in a heterogeneous and democratic society.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

It is revealed in Chapter I that the educational theory in the secondary school prior to 1917 had been geared to educate a select few from upper and middle class society. The graduates of these schools anticipated higher education and a career. As the high school population increased tremendously between the years 1910-1917, the cultural theory of education that had characterized the high schools was no longer adequate. It failed in two distinct ways to provide for the needs and interests of the new population. First, the students came from homes of limited cultural and literary background. Hence, they were unable to articulate the cultural courses with their past experiences. Second, only a limited number of these students anticipated college. Thus the necessity to prepare for college entrance requirements, whether the student planned to enter college or not, made the course of study more unfortunate. Finally, the awareness of these conditions led to discontent, which later resulted in the forming of special committees, namely, the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education, whose task was to reorganize the secondary school in all subject areas, and the Committee on Reorganization of English, which set forth theoretical principles on the teaching of English in general and on the teaching of literature as well. This was a conscious effort to provide for the needs and interests of the new high school population along democratic lines.

Chapter II pointed out that the Report of the Committee on Reorganization of English was in accord with the basic principles of the Committee on Secondary Education and based its theory of operation on the current need of
all the pupils and not solely on preparation for college. This point of view expressed in the Report necessitated changes in the materials and methods of the high school English curriculum. This led to a great deal of thinking concerning the English program in general and the teaching of literature in which the primary aim of this study is directed. In spite of the unfavorable reactions of some few who felt that the classics should retain their former status in the curriculum and that traditional methods should be recognized as advantageous, the Report effected some noticeable changes in the teaching of literature between 1917 and 1930. Alert teachers, by far in the majority, were in accord with the Report and made suggestions to aid in carrying out the recommendations in the schools.

These teachers were now free to select literature which the students could understand and enjoy. Thus, some of the older English classics, which were unduly mature and considered unsuitable for high school boys and girls were gradually replaced by those deemed more suitable. In addition useable contemporary works were adopted. The intensive study of one literary selection, which often lead to dislike on the part of the student, gave way to a wider and more varied reading program. The verity of the principles, as set forth by the Report, had not, as yet, been established; hence, a dearth of textbooks for teachers was evident. However, objective and scientific studies which were initiated to prove or disprove the principles of the Report made possible the measurement of student reactions to the materials he studied. Thus it was evident that noticeable strides in the direction of desirable goals in the teaching of literature had been made between the years 1917 and 1930.

It is revealed in Chapter III that in spite of the newly created enthusiasm of the teachers in the teaching of literature, there was an awareness that
teachers were failing to put into practice the recommendations of 1917. By 1930 these dissatisfactions made possible further modification of the college entrance requirements, which now considered the non-literary student as well as the literary student. New committees were formed to study curriculum revisions and improvement of classroom methods. These efforts gave rise to the Eight-Year Study, which proved through practical classroom theory that college entrance requirements were not necessary to insure a well-prepared student for college. Educators realized that students learn at different rates of speed and in different directions and that they reach different goals.

The years between 1930 and 1950 witnessed the development of new trends which initiated general reform in the teaching of literature to provide for individual differences. First, came the use of mass media of communication along with books to enable students to keep up with current events and to develop within themselves discrimination in the selection, the use and the interpretation of contemporary modes of communication. Second, the effort to integrate the course of study to give the students a wide range of literary experiences in various subject fields was introduced. Third, the trend to individualize instruction was initiated so that each student could proceed at his own rate in the selections of his own choice that would take care of his own needs and interests. Fourth, the need for guidance on the part of the teacher to see that students are exposed to the varied types and kinds of literary works was felt to be of great importance and was included in the new ideal of instruction. Thus students may come to know the great literature and to see what its great value can do for them. Fifth, the desire for articulation to develop within the students in regard to literary selection that they read found its place in teaching literature in order that students might see themselves and their problems with detachment and with more objectivity in the
light of literary experiences. Sixth, the movement toward socializing the instruction in literature was advanced so that the students might understand and respect the many varied cultural levels that exist, not only in their immediate society, but throughout the world. The seventh, and last, trend is the emphasis placed on the need for an instructional and developmental reading program on the high school level and its relation to the development of effective methods of teaching literature. It became obvious that the majority of students possessed poor reading ability, for it was reflected in all subject areas. Thus efforts which were made to improve and develop reading habits of the students in general also contributed to improved instruction in literature in particular.

Consequently, as soon as the values of the new ideas were recognized, alert teachers began to base the selection of materials and methods of handling them not necessarily on time element only but primarily on the needs and interests of the students. The former method had characterized this phase of the school program prior to 1917. Naturally, chronology began to be replaced by literary types. During the period of change between 1930 and 1950, a number of classrooms in modern schools were no longer characterized by stiff and formal recitations. Wide reading or "free-reading," programs made possible rapid reading of a large body of literary works instead of the slow and laborious reading of a few.

Thus, it is obvious that vast and radical departures in educational theory and some changes in educational practices have been made in the secondary school since the forming of the Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education and the Committee on Reorganization of English in the Secondary School in 1917.
Yet, in spite of the changes that have been made between 1917 and 1950 in the teaching of literature, and the wealth of information and illustrative materials that are available through books, studies and organizations, literature is still being taught along traditional lines by traditional-minded teachers in hundreds and hundreds of schools throughout the United States. These teachers still teach about literature rather than the literature itself. This is done regardless of whether the literature program suits the cultural levels of the community or the needs and interests of the students. There is little use made of the newer trends which emphasize the use of mass media of communication along with the prescribed texts. Such efforts to develop the whole personality of the child and not just to cover a mass of material in a specific text receive little attention. There is still insufficient use made of the new trends dealing with the methods which specify the laboratory technique and the instructional and developmental reading program, instead of the recitation-bound classroom.

Many teachers have failed to contribute their share in helping to establish the current ideas in the teaching of literature, and there are three significant factors which have direct influence on the failure of incorporating the trends into classroom methods. First, many teachers have not been trained to handle the newer concepts. Thus they hesitate to experiment with the new ideas or to attempt innovations of techniques. Rather than relinquish that in which they feel secure, they force outmoded materials and methods upon their students. In such schools, the progressive teachers are often regarded with skepticism and resentment. Second, the study of literature has not received the due recognition that has been given to the study of science. Hence, the study of literature, in spite of its humanistic potentialities, has not yet
been projected to a place of prominence in the high school curriculum. Third and last, the facilities needed to conduct this new type of program are often inadequate. The new trends require more than the training and skill of the teacher. Of almost equal importance are well-stocked libraries, well-equipped and adequately large classrooms, as well as provisions for radios and motion picture facilities. Often funds for these equipments are inadequate or not available at all from the school boards.

In addition to contributing to the failure of establishing effective instruction in literature, these factors also contribute to the failures of students to develop desirable reading habits that would serve them now and later in adult life. As an alternative, the students select unprofitable and unfavorable literary materials instead of good books and worthy periodicals and they seek recreational diversions in unwholesome and undesirable places instead of in the library or other desirable places.

Although such conditions obtain in many conventional schools, in the English department of less conventional schools, and to some degree, in practically all areas of literature, the following seven changes are obvious: (1) the disappearance of many of the older classics; (2) an increase in wide reading rather than intensive reading of a single book; (3) the appearance of much modern material dealing with present day problems; (4) the recognition of the teacher's duty to create a democratic atmosphere and to awaken students to the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy; (5) the organization of all material around centers of interest; (6) the instruction in library use to further individual research; and (7) the instruction in the science of reading.

The changes which have taken place in the secondary school, including
the reverse changes in literature practices, have resulted from the efforts of such organizations as the Progressive Education Association. This organization has helped teachers in realizing the necessity of considering pupils as an integral part in planning and carrying out the school program. It has stressed that the educational development should consist of more than the accumulation of facts and skills. In the field of English and courses in literature, the National Council of Teachers of English has provided constant stimulus through books, pamphlets, journals and scientific studies that will aid the teacher to do a better job and to keep ever before her the fact that pupils are people.

Hence the conclusions that may be derived from this thesis are significant. It may give needed encouragement to the teachers of literature in the secondary school who are reluctant to experiment with new materials and new techniques because the majority of teachers may question the value of these trends in the course. For this study proves that the majority of educators in the field of English share the opinion that new materials and techniques have a place in the study of literature. One is not to assume that the newer trends are to take the place of literature but to supplement the teaching of it. There is little to gain by merely adopting these new ideas, but rather by the knowledge and conscious efforts of the teacher in using them in the classroom.

The greatest achievement that the student might gain from the use of the new trends in the study of literature is that he is able to select from liberalized book lists as few or as many literary works as he desires according to his interests and ability. It is also an effective means for him to experience the reading of books by people and about people in many lands other
than his own.

The majority of educators are of the opinion that the current ideas on the teaching of literature in high school are quite flexible, lending themselves easily to adaptation in the curriculum and to the needs of the student. Through proper guidance the thematic units can be worked easily into the curriculum to provide for individual differences, by heterogeneous groupings, thus enabling students to receive any needed attention. Rapid changes in teaching recorded in this study indicate that teachers need to be ever mindful that the current trends require constant planning, motivation and guidance. Therefore, care, time and resourcefulness should characterize the preparation and execution of the literature program. The data advanced in this thesis reveal also that teachers might well keep abreast with objective and scientific studies and newer ideas that are continually being made in the field of literature, if they are to do effective teaching.

It is also indicated that the schools should assume their rightful position as the determining factor in establishing and maintaining a sound literature program. It is an accepted fact that teachers, students and books are no longer enough to insure worthy teaching. The schools must realize the value to be gained by using mass media, and the need to secure many additional books besides the regular texts. The idea is advanced that schools should provide these materials and place them at the disposal of the teachers and students. It is felt that the institution of these currently new trends in the teaching of literature will contribute greatly to the achievement of confidence and intelligence within the student. It is obvious that the success of the student in adjusting to the demands of society are contingent upon the development of such desirable characteristics within himself. This is desirable and wholly possible in the province of teaching literature in the
high school.
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