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ABSTRACT

This bulletin reports on studies dealing with the major role of composition and the supporting roles of discussing, dictating, illustrating, spelling, and handwriting in improving the language skills of elementary school students. Chapters include "Composition in Primary Grades," which stresses the importance of teaching children to express themselves in writing by the end of the primary grades and lists 136 selected references; "Written Composition in the Intermediate Grades," which discusses the results of research in grades 4, 5, and 6 showing effective teaching methods which produce high quality writing; "Grammar in Language Teaching," which concludes that for the teaching of English idiom and the standard use of the remaining inflections in the language, neither old nor new grammar is an efficient tool for improving composition; "Handwriting and Children's Composition," which explores the inconclusive evidence about handwriting and suggests certain directions for more research; "Research in Spelling," which, in addition to reviewing the literature and suggesting new directions for research, contains a 319-item bibliography; and "Evaluating Children's Composition," which presents numerous ideas and ways of evaluating written composition. (RB)

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Children's Writing: Research in Composition And Related Skills

Prepared by the National
Conference on Research in English

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Children's Written Composition: Introduction

To collect, present, and interpret research data pertinent to children's composition is no easier than to teach the arts and skills of writing. Many skills and abilities go into the complex act of committing experience, thought, feeling, and imagination to written form; many dimensions of personality are involved. Investigation of composition must therefore be concerned with a broad range of activities and problems, both human and technical. Hence, the material of this bulletin includes studies of the leading role of composition itself and the supporting roles of discussing, dictating, illustrating, spelling, and handwriting.

Varied and complicated as are these components of written expression, the job of identifying them in children's learning has been in progress for a long time. Study of the skills in writing has gone on since before the Civil War in this country and considerably longer in Europe. Composition has been studied as a whole; likewise the interdependent parts thereof have been subjected to analysis, experiment, and to evaluation. Indeed, it appears that somewhat more attention has been given to the mechanical aspects of writing than to the essential ones of invention or to children's basic motivation for writing.

The committee has searched both the published and the unpublished literature for reports, whether of action or experimental research, status or historical research. Each contributor has been free to use his own judgment in selecting the material he thought valid. Exchange of opinion within the committee has been limited but functional.

In reporting research studies one question is how to present a picture of present knowledge and performance without repeating material

already widely known. In general, the attempt is made to report here those studies done early in this century that seem necessary for a clear understanding of current practices and current problems. However, the larger emphasis is given to studies of the last three decades.

One other question of scope and content has been answered by including in briefest form those general treatments of composition which were not in themselves research studies but which set the stage for detailed investigation and in other ways shaped many of the forms of present day teaching. Pioneer efforts of Mearns reported in *Creative Youth* (Doubleday 1929) and of the National Council of Teachers of English publication, *An Experience Curriculum in English* (Appleton Century, 1935), did much to build Twentieth Century attitudes and beliefs. Many studies of writing have been based upon one or more facets of these two dynamic departures from more limited approaches.

The committee is mindful of the unique strength of the written word in an era of mass media of communication, and of the new relationships and stresses brought to bear upon writing in this technological age. It is both challenging and rewarding to bring together these research findings and thus to further the clarification of insights into the nature of the writing experience as well as to illuminate ways and means of teaching children to express themselves with honesty and clarity, with satisfaction to themselves, and with continued growth toward new heights of beauty.

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MARGARET B. PARKE

Composition in Primary Grades

Although it is commonly conceded that the first language needs of young children are those of oral expression, both personal and social values are realized by children who learn to write well in the primary grades. Marked progress has taken place during the last two decades in teaching six-to-eight-year-olds to express their ideas in writing. This progress has been an outgrowth of new insights and procedures in a number of areas. The vitalization of the curriculum through the introduction of a wealth of firsthand experiences has provided reasons and motivation for writing as well as topics. Increased communication among children in primary grade classrooms in a more permissive atmosphere has added significantly to the joy of writing. Research about child growth in general and language development in particular has given new clues to the teacher. The introduction of manuscript writing has simplified the writing process for the young child immeasurably and laid the groundwork for establishing common symbols for all language teaching. Influenced by these factors, primary grade teachers have made great effort to simplify and relate the various aspects of language teaching and to base it on the life experiences of the children concerned. It is the purpose of this paper to find some answers to questions such as these: What have been the contributions of research in this field? What changes have taken place as a result of such research? What remains to be done?

Teaching Written Expression in Relation to Other Language Arts, Firsthand Experiences, and the Total Curriculum

Three books were powerful in pointing up the direction that language teaching should assume at all levels. Hatfield (15), writing for the National Council of Teachers of English, analyzed the aspects of writing, reading, and speaking, stressed the unity of the various language arts areas, and stimulated thinking about the interrelationships among them. Yearbooks of the Department of Elementary School Principals (11) and the National Society for the Study of Education (23) crystallized Hatfield's point of view still further. Wright (35), Biber (3) and other teachers in private schools, wrote vivid accounts of exciting experiences in teaching six- and seven-year-olds in new ways in which "doing and learning" were inextricably interwoven. Brown (4), Dawson (9), Goodrich (14), Strickland (30), and others pioneered in working with publishers to produce manuals for teachers on how to teach English in primary grades. Curriculum Bureaus of states (1, 5, 31), counties (29), and cities (6) turned out guides to help teachers understand new approaches to the development of the total curriculum in primary grades. Publishers produced valuable books to guide teachers in planning the total curriculum

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of which English was a part (12, 13, 17, 18, 28). Excellent books on the teaching of English helped to give perspective to the sequential development of language throughout the elementary schools (7, 8, 10, 16, 19, 21, 32, 33).

In New York City an extensive curriculum experiment in the activity program for elementary schools (22) was followed in the early 40's by an intensive experiment on the teaching of first-grade children. Two publications (24, 25) set forth the conditions that facilitate the development of a good program for young children, stated conclusions and implications, and recommended that the newly developed practices be spread to other schools in the city. In 1944 experimentation in curriculum development in language arts for elementary schools began in a serious manner and eventuated in a series of publications (26) that were and still are used extensively throughout the city. In addition, many publications on reading were produced by the Bureau of Educational Research.

In 1954 Artley, Hildreth, Townsend, Beery, and Dawson wrote a significant bulletin for the National Conference on Research in English which summarized the research which had been done on the *Interrelationships among the Language Arts* (2). Their findings emphasized the high correlations found among the language skills by investigators, pointed out the inherent unity among the communication areas and the close relationship by content, use, purpose, and development. Since high achievement in one language ability tended to be associated with higher than average achievement in the other language abilities, they concluded that there should be a greater integration in teaching and that "the language arts program should be modified in the direction of a language program rather than a skills program in a given content area." Hildreth, who concentrated particularly on the interrelationships between written expression and the other language arts, foresaw the need for more valid and reliable compara-

tive studies of separate and integrated teaching.

Research on interrelationships among the language arts which deals with children in the first and second grades has yielded sufficiently different results from those reported by investigators at other levels to call for careful interpretation. Martin (20) found little relation between speaking, reading, and writing abilities among six-year-olds. She used seven types of instruments to measure language factors for 240 first-grade children in Austin, Texas. Oral language was studied by means of the recording machine for total number of words used, number of different words, and average length of sentences. Interrelationships among language variables at the beginning and end of the first grade were studied. Fourteen cases were studied intensively. She discovered that children could learn to speak and read well without learning to write. Some could copy at the end of first grade and not be able to read. The relationship of oral language to reading readiness at the beginning and reading achievement at the end of the first grade was virtually negligible, but there was a small definite relationship between drawing and the language variables. Martin concluded that "growth in each variable followed an individual developmental pattern and was unrelated to other variables. Parallel development in the language variables should not be expected of first grade children." Parke (27), working more informally with ten highly selected classes of six-year-olds in the public schools of New York City, made similar discoveries.

The findings of Winter (34), a second grade teacher, tended to confirm those of Martin. She studied 240 children during the first year and had complete data on 101 for the second year. She, too, carried fourteen case studies. Data were analyzed at the end of the first and the second years to ascertain the relationship among these factors: motor ability, oral language, drawing, reading, writing, and spelling. The majority of correlations repre-

sented either a low stable degree of association between language factors or no significant relationship. Only the two vocabulary measures—total length of response and number of different words used—were found to be highly dependent upon each other. A moderate degree of relationship was found to exist between reading and spelling. This study upset certain assumptions commonly made about children in the primary grades, such as: (1) the first-grader who speaks fluently and knows how to write his name in full from memory when he comes to school will succeed in every phase of language learning; (2) all good readers will be good spellers; (3) success in spelling is highly dependent upon success in reading. Since the association between reading and spelling is only moderate among children in these early years, the two must be taught independently of each other as well as in relation to each other. The quality of these first and second grade children's development seemed to result from the action and interaction of many factors within themselves and their environment. The primary child's skill in writing by copying appears to be completely independent of his skill in the thought levels of oral communication. Motor responses are completely or relatively independent of language factors. The relationship between reading and drawing are relatively independent. Unique skills in each variable require many learning activities independent of the other. Learning to read reveals little or no dependence on oral language as tested in children's show-and-tell situations. (This conclusion, however, leads one to question if Miss Winter included any children in her study who were learning English as a second language or who entered school with a background in oral language far below par.) The first and second grade child's achievement in writing is dependent to a small degree upon his ability in reading.

These important studies should cause teachers to consider both the relationships and

lack of relationships which have been detected for first and second-grade children. It would seem wise to proceed cautiously enough with total integration to discover points at which the separate teaching of skills is highly desirable.

The Picture Dictionary as a Promising Text in Language Instruction

One drawback in the progress toward integrated teaching of language arts in primary grades may lie in instructional materials. Hildreth (40), Taylor and Frackenpohl (42) and others have, for some time, advocated the development of a common core vocabulary to be used in all facets of language teaching in the primary grades. It is possible that in an attempt to produce good sequential materials throughout all of the grades in the separate aspects of language—reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting—insufficient attention has been given to the interrelationships among these various materials at each grade level. It is for this reason that the pretty picture dictionary challenges attention as a basic English text in primary grades.

The movement to use the picture dictionary in teaching reading, writing, spelling, and other language skills was started by Watters and Courtis (43) in 1939. Use of a picture dictionary presented a way of simplifying writing experiences for children by providing them with words which they had learned to read. It established a purposeful way of learning the alphabet to find words needed in writing and helped to systematize their search for words.

There are many picture dictionaries available today. Values to be derived from their use have been described by Breitenstein (36), Buswell (37), Dunser (38), Eakin and Brooks (39), Parke (41), and Whitney (44). With a picture dictionary, teaching can be done in the early grades in an integrated way at times, but separate teaching of skills can also be planned as needed. What is more, the inherent pos-

sibilities for its flexible use make it a natural tool in a program of individualized instruction. Further research will be needed to test these and other values more fully.

Teaching Children to Express Their Thoughts in Writing

Research in child development as well as in language teaching has indicated the therapeutic value of writing to the individual. To be able to express one's feelings in writing is one way of "letting off steam" and getting emotional release. In addition, there are many practical situations in life which call for ability to write clearly, concisely, and correctly. The obligation to meet these objectives is commonly accepted by elementary schools today. The important question concerns how this instruction can be given most effectively.

Interesting books and pamphlets have been written on the topic of teaching children to express their ideas in writing (45, 46, 49, 57, 58), and there is fairly common agreement among these authors on certain points. Composition writing is essentially a thinking process. The desire to write grows with writing. In stimulating children to write, the teacher has a major responsibility to create an atmosphere for writing, to utilize common class experiences as well as personal experiences outside the school, to develop background for writing through literature and the fine arts, and to help children accept reasons for writing. The establishment of standards does not "just happen." The teacher guides children toward the attainment of standards by giving adequate encouragement for effort. "Balance" is a key word. Overemphasis on high standards leads to dislike for writing and even plagiarism. Methods of helping the child reach for higher levels of attainment are of great importance. There should be an underlying respect for his ideas and his ways of thinking. Teaching should be concerned with the selection and organization of materials for a purpose. Effort should be directed toward

helping him say better what *he* wants to say. The program should include sharing of written work, sincere help in developing social awareness and in formulating values, occasional return to literature to examine how other people express ideas, opportunity to continue writing without interruption when interest is high, and ample experience and help in proofreading his own work. Attention to the mechanics of expression at the proper time and in the proper way contribute immeasurably to the child's success in writing and to the enjoyment he encounters in the process, but the mechanics of writing should be subordinated to the substance of ideas. Folders of written products are considered to be the most useful measure of progress in composition and handwriting since growth in sentence power appears to be the best single measure of developing maturity in expression.

Bear (47) and Heffernan (52) have indicated that effective written expression is influenced by some of the same factors which make for good oral expression, namely, an extensive vocabulary, good sentence structure, and organization of interesting ideas. In addition, there must be sufficient motor coordination to succeed in the writing act and motivation to communicate with someone at a distance or to record experiences for future use. Kidd (56) wrote an interesting digest of approaches to creative writing. Weil and Parke (58) outlined the relationship which should exist between reading and the various aspects of written expression for children at different developmental levels.

Zirbes (67) listed twelve steps that schools should take to give children a taste of the satisfaction that can be theirs in writing. Hildreth (2) summarized from the literature the stages through which young children progress in the modern school as they learn to express their ideas in writing.

In the first step, children speak freely and spontaneously. Hughes and Cox (54) compared

spontaneous oral language of 45 first-grade children with that found in preprimers and primers. They concluded that children's spoken language was superior to that of the books in variety of vocabulary vitality, and sentence structure maturity. Smith's study (62) approximated the average vocabulary of six-year-olds to be 2500 words, but more recent studies have shown that this figure needs revision upward (60, 63). The second step, according to Strickland (30), involves dictation and appears to call for more precise and organized thinking than is required in spontaneous storytelling. Betzner (48) described the form and content of original compositions dictated by children of from five- to eight-years of age. Studies by Shaw (61), Wilson (65), Kidd (56), and others have reported satisfying results when the teacher served as scribe. Rewarding results of children's writing at the independent stages are found in the abundance of articles written by teachers and in collections of children's writing (10, 30, 49, 58).

To help children bridge the gap between telling stories and writing them, Oftedal (59) tried "picture writing" with 25 third-grade children. The children planned, organized, and recorded their stories on drawing paper folded into parts to tell a story as a sequence of events. The children then "read" their stories from the pictures. Two picture-written stories and two handwritten stories of each of the 13 pupils were analyzed for elements of expression. The picture-written stories were superior in number of ideas, number of new ideas, amount of original fantasy, adequacy of vocabulary, length of story, length of sentences, and reduction of projection of past experiences. This study verified her belief that writing tends to inhibit the thought of young children.

In an extremely significant study, Howell (53) investigated differences in compositions written and dictated by seven-year-olds about topics that grew out of shared learning experiences and about topics that were assigned.

She analyzed 240 compositions from 12 girls and 12 boys. Half of these were on assigned topics; the other half grew out of shared experiences. Following each writing experience, each child dictated on the same topic about which he had written. Compositions were analyzed for number of running words, number of different words, and number of generalizations. Contrary to the usual notion, there was no significant difference between the general linguistic ability of boys and girls when both oral and written compositions were taken into account. Boys did better in the dictated compositions, and girls did better in the written ones. Children were able to write more running words and more different words about a shared experience than on an assigned topic, whereas they dictated more on an assigned topic than about a shared experience. There were more running words, more different words, and more generalizations in dictated compositions than in written compositions, but there were more generalizations per running word in the written compositions. A significantly greater number of generalizations and of generalizations per hundred running words were found in compositions about shared experiences. There was a correlation of .489 between running words and generalizations. Over a ten-month period there were significant increases in all factors measured.

These findings led the investigator to conclude that seven-year-olds create longer compositions, use more extensive vocabularies, and express more generalizations when they are free from the mechanics of written expression. Shared experiences are more conducive to generalizing than assigned topics. Changes over a period of time may be caused by the topic of composition and by additional experience. Opportunities both to dictate and to write compositions should be given as well as opportunities to create compositions about assigned topics and shared experiences. Written and dictated compositions can serve to check the ac-

curacy and completeness of children's understanding. Since it seems that the mechanics of expression stand in the way of boys more than of girls at the age of seven, more support and help should be given to boys when they attempt to write.

Witty and Williams (66) made an interesting analysis of children's compositions written in response to a film, Sucksdorff's *Hunter in the Forest*. First-grade children responded in an egocentric manner. They began sentences with I, labelled objects in relation to themselves (such as *I saw a deer*) used elements of surprise, asked questions which they often left unanswered, and gave reasons for observation. They responded to music and claimed that it made them think more about the picture. Second-grade children continued to be egocentric, continued to ask questions but gave longer answers, mentioned appeal of music more frequently, and tended to be more sensitive to the details of the picture if they used the question form. Third-grade pupils continued to ask questions, but made more attempts to answer them. They wrote longer compositions with greater objectivity and with more frequent description of their own emotional reactions. Poetry was written more often, and other forms of spontaneous language expression were more frequent.

Although it is true that the mechanics of expression should be subordinate to the aspects of thinking involved in composition writing, the mechanics of expression should not be neglected. The child begins to develop awareness of sentences as he sees the teacher write his own sentences on the chalk-board and as he reads. The teacher helps him understand where punctuation marks and capital letters belong. The recommended approach to usage is to analyze the problems of the group being taught and to teach them what they need (30). Studies (50, 51, 55, 64) to determine the kinds of errors children make in the mechanics of writing have been made from time to time on

third-grade children and above. They indicate that the errors in punctuation, capitalization, and usage are legion, but that good results follow when instruction is adjusted to the needs of pupils.

Handwriting

Effective research in the field of handwriting has resulted in drastic change in teaching primary grade children to write. Implications of the research have been made available by Freeman (76), West (90), and others. City (85), state (73, 78, 82), national (75, 89) and world (83) surveys have been made of practices and reasons for these practices. A trend to teach manuscript writing in grades one and two swept the nation during the period between 1935 and 1949 and continued until, at present, this form of writing is accepted almost universally. Arguments for using manuscript symbols were well supported by studies of Ames (68), Hildreth (80), Washburne and Morphett (89), Voorhis (92), and others. The evidence concerning whether or not to change from manuscript to cursive writing has been less conclusive. Hildreth (81) strongly advocated the continuance of manuscript throughout the grades for purposes of simplifying and promoting greater legibility. Herrick and Jacobs (19), Parke and Bristow (85) summarized the reasons which held schools back from moving in this direction in terms of the social acceptance of cursive writing, the inconclusive evidence on speed, the strong pull for a cursive signature in the business world, and the pressure brought to bear on the school by the children themselves who want to write like grown-ups. Certainly the time has come for more intense study on the extent to which the writing of children is retarded by the change to another writing system soon after they have begun to write. Swenson's (88) study of the illegibilities of third-grade children provides a good start.

Investigators have been concerned about

when to begin to teach handwriting and when to make the change from manuscript to cursive writing. Surveys report that most schools begin to teach writing before the end of the first year and make the change somewhere during a year-and-half period prior to the fourth grade. Perhaps this is all that should be said. Teachers, with a wide range of abilities before them, need a chance to make adaptations which seem best to them. There are, however, additional clues for the observant teacher. After reviewing the research studies pertinent to readiness for writing, Beery (69) concluded that a child might safely be taught to write when:

1. He has spontaneously shown an interest in learning to print his own name.
2. He has developed facility in the use of scissors, crayons, the paint brush, and the pencil in a variety of informal activities.
3. He can copy simple geometric or letter-like characters with proper orientation.
4. He has established a dominant hand.
5. He has participated in composing and sending written messages.
6. He senses a personal need to learn to write.
7. He can be introduced to a writing program that is geared to his level of maturity.

Parke and Bristow (85) cited these signs of readiness for cursive writing:

1. A desire on the part of the child to write in cursive style.
2. Adequate physical development so that there is coordination of muscles of the arm, hand, and fingers.
3. Ability to write all letters of the manuscript alphabet from memory.
4. Ability to read simple passages written in cursive writing.
5. Ability to copy a selection in manuscript at a rate varying from 20 to 45 letters per minute and to maintain a quality of 35 to 50 on the Conard Scale or an equivalent quality on another scale.

Herrick and Jacobs, Strickland, and others warn of the danger in teaching cursive writing be-

fore children enjoy writing in manuscript.

Whether to teach incidentally or systematically has been a big issue. Some kindergarten children can write their names and all letters of the alphabet without school instruction whereas some third- and fourth-grade children are not sure of all letters of the alphabet. (85) There is enough evidence to indicate that some children learn to write a great deal without being taught formally. There is also evidence to show that some children develop poor habits and are handicapped by lack of adequate formal instruction and follow-up in handwriting activities. Guides (74, 85, 90) on the teaching of handwriting advocate sound teaching when new elements are introduced. They direct attention to the advisability of working at points of need as needs are revealed. Freeman (76) has emphasized the importance of applying the principles of selection and repetition. According to the former, the writer must recognize whether he is writing to express ideas or to improve his writing skill. Each purpose is a legitimate one. When his goal is to improve the skill, words and letters are chosen so as to represent an advancing scale of difficulty. Practice then goes from easy to difficult, and there is concentration on one difficulty at a time. According to the second principle, the child encounters difficulties which call for attention, as he writes. Although much learning can take place incidentally, planned exercises probably help him make the greatest gain in a given time.

Considerable time has been spent by experts to determine which letters cause the greatest number of difficulties both in manuscript and cursive writing. Conrad (72) found letters *a*, *e*, *g*, *m*, *q*, *y*, *r*, and *x* to be most difficult for children when learning to write in manuscript. Newland (84), Pressey (87), Swenson (88), and others analyzed handwriting to determine causes for illegible cursive writing. According to Newland (84) 14 out of 279 forms of illegibility account for almost

half of the total number of illegibilities. They were *e* closed, *d* like *cl*, *a* like *u*, *a* like *o*, *a* like *cl*, *t* with cross above, *r* like *s*, *b* like *li*, *t* like *l*, *i* with no dot, *r* like *n*, *o* like *a*, *b* like *li*, and *n* like *u*. Forty-five per cent of the errors were made on four letters—*a*, *e*, *r*, and *t*. Most investigators agree on the first three. Parke and Bristow (85) indicated the need to teach thoroughly the letter forms *b*, *e*, *f*, *k*, *r*, *s*, and *x* because of the radical change in letter form when the transition is made from manuscript to cursive writing. Teachers who are aware of these studies do not teach each letter with equal emphasis. They help children discover the kinds of difficulties which occur in their writing and practice at points of error.

Young children need many opportunities for meaningful writing. There is little evidence to support the use of particular devices. Hertzberg (79) found the direct copying of the model to be the most superior of four methods. Tracing with the pencil was slightly superior to the groove and finger tracing method. Gates and Taylor (77) concluded from their study that tracing and writing were quite different functions although they embraced some common elements. Practice is necessary but the amount can be reduced by the use of writing in situations which have meaning and purpose.

Speed and legibility must develop side by side; one should not be pressed at the expense of the other. Just as in typewriting, increased emphasis can be placed on speed only when there is accurate writing of high quality. Speed should be cut to the point where quality can be produced. Borass (70) showed the influence of speed on certain letter forms, particularly the curved letters with no distinguishing characteristics. Help that is in any way related to speed of writing should be given on an individual basis in primary grades.

There is little evidence to substantiate some of the present recommendations concerning materials to be used by children in the primary grades. What evidence there is favors the use

of the adult pencil rather than the large beginner pencil (91). Blackboard and easel writing have value as an opportunity for free, large writing, but in no way substitute for the writing most individuals will do the rest of their lives.

The best way to evaluate hand writing is in terms of readability. Writing scales have been devised by Ayres, Freeman, Gray, and others. The teacher can arrange specimens of pupils' writing in order of merit and use them as a scale (76).

Spelling

More insight has been gained from spelling research than has been put into practice. Many of these insights were described in the two excellent texts written by Fitzgerald (98) and Hildreth (108). Horn (112) wrote an elaborate and helpful description of spelling instruction in an elementary school. Research has been well summarized in technical journals as well as in popular form for teachers (100, 111, 119, 125, 130, 131). Word lists have contributed valuable knowledge concerning the frequency of use of words by children (98, 126), semantic count (114), the accuracy with which words are spelled (103), and the kinds of spots in words that are hard to spell (101).

A strong need has been felt by many educators to break the rigid lockstep method of teaching spelling as an isolated subject in favor of individualizing instructions simplifying it, and relating it more effectively with teaching in the other areas of language arts and the total curriculum. Strickland (131) reduced spelling objectives to two, namely, "to help each child develop an effective method of learning to spell words and to spell accurately and confidently as many as possible of the common words of English." Hildreth (107, 108, 113) proposed new procedures for teaching spelling and organized a spelling list of basic words by learning levels. Burrows (96) suggested a sequence of learnings in spelling. Fitzgerald

(99) condensed defensible generalizations about spelling research.

Periodicals have offered many articles written by teachers who are seeking better ways of teaching spelling (95, 102, 104, 109, 116, 124). These teachers recognized the need for spelling in much functional writing. Some worked from a core vocabulary. Others felt that the child's spelling vocabulary should grow out of his needs in written expression rather than any other prepared list. Howell (113) found that:

1. Children, in their writing, use many of the words of spelling lists.
2. Children, in developing their writing vocabularies, use words that are listed in vocabulary lists below and above their organized levels.
3. Children, in developing spelling through their writing, use many more words than those in the basic word lists.
4. Children, in developing their spelling through writing, tend to have more favorable attitudes toward spelling and writing.

Bristow, Parke, and others in New York City (120) experimented with learning levels in spelling in relation to the sequential development of language as set forth in a chart, *Growth and Development in Language Arts* (26). Following experimentation, the Bureau of Curriculum Research of the New York City Schools, in an attempt to meet the pressing needs of an extremely diversified school population, broke tradition and produced their own spelling materials for the City's elementary and junior high schools including individual spelling lists for children, supplementary teaching materials, a guide for experimentation, and finally a syllabus.

The New York City Research Project in Spelling has been described by Parke (121, 122, 123). Wagner (132) devised a scale for evaluating this kind of spelling program. Salisbury (128) used the New York City materials in Los Angeles to promote pupil-teacher planning of spelling lessons. Other schools, such as Portland and Spokane, have taken steps to

produce and experiment with similar kinds of materials.

Despite the gains that have been made, many problems of method in spelling are still unanswered. Dolch, Fitzgerald, Horn, Strickland, and others believe that a multiple-sense approach should be used in learning to spell. Questions on phonics, are being revitalized by Betts (94) and others, and some answers are tending to move educators in new directions. There is fairly common agreement that instruction in phonics can facilitate growth in both reading and spelling. The questions are what kind, when, how much, and in what relationship. Moore (118) reported that readiness to discriminate among regularly spelled speech sounds is not complete with all children at the close of grade one, but that this ability is measurable and developmental. Cordts (97), Hildreth (106), and others have emphasized repeatedly the need for teaching sounds as they occur within words from the very beginning and not in isolation. Hildreth (106) has again pointed out in her new book on reading that the phonic skills needed for reading are just the opposite of those that serve in spelling. The task of the reader is to recognize the sounds of the letters and letter combinations as they recur in printed words. In spelling, the writer must call to mind the letters that represent the sounds in the words which he wishes to write. The first process is an analytic one; the second is synthetic. Horn (110) has pointed to the problems children face in spelling the sounds they hear in words. He believes they should learn *the ways*, not *the way*, in which each sound is spelled. He makes a plea for emphasis on word patterns, syllables, word position, meanings, the adding of suffixes, and adjacent influencing sounds that show considerable consistency. Furthermore, children should grow in ability to draw generalizations regarding these characters for themselves.

The advisability of using the test-study method or the study-test method with young

children has been a cause of concern to Fitzgerald (100) and students of Horn, namely Hilber (105), Montgomery (117) and Shubnik (129). Artley (93) would lead us to the application of principles in the improvement of spelling ability.

Summary of Conclusions and Needed Research

Research has brought about rapid progress in the last two decades in teaching primary grade children to express themselves in writing. There appears to be a keen interest at the present time in exploring the worth of unifying and individualizing instruction in the language arts. Results of studies on interrelationships among the language arts should be examined separately for children in grades one and two as they seem to be at variance with studies in the higher grades where high intercorrelations among the language skills have been reported in numerous studies. Investigators are, therefore, recommending that careful planning of experiences for young children should include both integrated experiences and separate teaching of the basic skills, at least until more facts are known. In approaching individualized instruction in language teaching, openmindedness accompanied by a knowledge of the research now available should open new vistas.

Obviously, children in the primary grades are seriously handicapped by the mechanical aspects of writing. Ample provision for experiences in dictating and in picture writing have been advocated for all children to accompany those in written composition. In general, boys appear to be more in need of assistance than girls even when they have more ideas to express. In the light of research and new developments, some cherished beliefs may well be subjected to further study. Research is needed in the following areas:

1. Variability among individual growth patterns of first-grade children points to

the need to experiment further with ways of introducing children to the study of language. It could be that very vocal children, including many boys, might approach language study by much talking about things about them, books read to them, and pictures seen. Another child's approach might be through writing something from a book which someone has read to him. Still another child might have an insatiable desire to learn to read from the time he comes to school. The evidence of research is not as convincing as was assumed that *all*—boys and girls—should go through the readiness exercises of listening and talking before reading and through a set block of reading experiences before writing. Is the sequence of "listening, speaking, reading, and writing" to be applied in the learning of *all* children in primary grades regardless of their background?

2. New trends in the production of instructional materials and materials for remedial purposes could do more than anything else to hasten the process of improving language teaching in primary grades. For years there has been great concern about the vertical organization of each facet of language teaching with relatively little concern about relating the work of authors of speech materials, reading, writing, and spelling, at specific grade levels. The teacher deals more with the horizontal organization than with the vertical organization of curriculum. She must plan listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in relation to the child's needs. If reading texts have not dealt with words that appear in the spelling book, she must teach the child to read the words as well as spell them. Certainly more attention should be given to an examination of the relatedness of instructional materials used at a given grade level and to the values inherent in the picture dictionary as a basic text in a language program. The use of a common language symbol in the form of manuscript type for reading and spelling has been suggested as one way to facilitate the young child's learning.
3. The use of television, films, tapes, and recordings as means of stimulating chil-

- dren to write and as ways of improving expression are still relatively unexplored. What purposes can be served by these materials in contrast to those served by firsthand experiences and books? How can materials on wheels be made to serve each classroom more effectively, namely califone, tape recorder, dictaphone, noiseless typewriter, and projectors of various kinds?
4. Longitudinal studies of the writing of the same children over a period of years would produce evidence of the growing maturity of expression under known conditions.
 5. Thought aspects of language development should be studied apart from those aspects which are more primarily concerned with motor skills. Examination of compositions in respect to concepts of time, space, and number resulting from different instructional situations would be worthy of further study.
 6. The best practices used by teachers for developing and maintaining standards of written expression with deep respect for child personalities should be explored in greater detail.
 7. Some studies should be made in the field of handwriting: (a) to determine more conclusively the relative merits of manuscript and cursive writing in grade three and above with respect to speed and the advisability of teaching cursive writing, (b) to explore ways of simplifying the change from manuscript to cursive writing, and (c) to determine the best design of an adequate writing instrument for young children as well as the preferred value of one over another at a particular time.
 8. More complete evidence is needed on the principal ways in which each sound is spelled in various word positions, on errors made by children in spelling each sound, on phonetic rules which might be practicable to teach, and on the effect of teaching any kind or amount of phonics on spelling efficiency (111).
 9. Parents and teachers need to work closely together in behalf of children in the primary grades. What should parents know about how children are being taught to write so that they work cooperatively with schools? What practices are yielding the best results?
 10. Many teachers are confused concerning what they are to do in integrated situations and what separate teaching of skills should be done in a good language program. Effort should be made to clarify answers to this question more constructively.
 11. Some gains have been made in establishing language sequences in terms of child growth and development to replace arbitrary grade placement standards. More research is needed in this area immediately or the progress which has been made thus far will be lost.
 12. Every investigator in handwriting is faced with several ways of making the letters of the alphabet. If some decisions could be made nationally to standardize a few routine items of this kind, steps would be taken toward the simplification of materials used in this classroom and by parents at home with their children.
 13. The relation of emotion and attitudes toward the learning process needs much exploration at the primary grade level.
 14. The establishment of the dictionary habit in relation to written expression can now be begun in the early grades owing to the introduction of the picture dictionary. Intensive research in the effective use of this important book is long overdue.
- Additional problems for research have been summarized by Hildreth (2), Parke (41), Heffernan (52), Beery (69), Artley (134), Labrant, Marcus, and Steinberg (135), Spache (136).

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Writing in the Intermediate Grades

An examination of the literature of research concerning writing in the intermediate grades reveals results which are, to some extent, conflicting and inconclusive. Though a considerable amount of research has been done in the total area of writing, comparatively little of it has dealt with elementary school children. A good portion of that done is limited in terms of major generalizations which can be derived from it. There are, however, a number of studies about writing in the intermediate grades contributing significantly to instructional improvement.

The literature reveals that most of the investigations in writing tend to group themselves around the following major areas:

1. Writing as a way of identifying and motivating gifted pupils
2. Experiences forming the bases for children's stories
3. Pupil interests and the selection of writing topics
4. Methods and materials appropriate for teaching writing
5. Writing and total personal development

During the first half of the twentieth century there has been an almost overwhelming shift of communication from writing to oral forms of language, through the use of the telephone, radio, and television. At the same time, rapid changes have taken place in other facets of modern living. It would seem that because of these vast changes, there is an increased need for writing as a permanent form of communication. Writing ideas down makes it easier to examine, criticize, and correct them. Careful writing might be looked upon by some as a device for teaching careful reading, but it is also infinitely more both for author and reader.

Writing as a Way of Identifying and Motivating Gifted Children

A recent study by Witty and Martin (24) has dealt with the potential of silent films in building interest and motivation for creative expression. Witty especially noted the quality of the compositions written by gifted pupils of the sample and pointed out that compositions themselves are a significant means of identifying the gifted pupil.

Using a film to build interest and to create a reservoir of feeling is one thing, but to use films to predetermine children's writing content is another. Perhaps this question is pertinent to the procedure used in Witty and Martin's study.

More than 2,000 pupils were shown the film, *The Hunter and the Forest*. Although the eight-minute film has no dialogue, it does include a musical background and sound effects marking the appearance of birds and animals.

The film was introduced as "a story without words." At the end of the film, the pupils were asked to write their own stories about the film experience. A film guide developed especially for teachers suggested related language experiences and guided teachers in helping the children write.

Criteria for judging the children's compositions are as follows:

1. The expression of genuine feeling
2. Sensitivity of particular words, phrases, and larger language units in expressing their feelings
3. Response to the film maker's intent and to the materials presented
4. Use of correct and appropriate English

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Although there was no grade-by-grade breakdown with regard to quality, approximately 60 per cent of the children were reported to have written effective prose or poetry. Ten per cent of the total number of compositions were rated outstanding. Another 189 or nine per cent of the group were rated good, and 320, 16 per cent, were judged poor.

Stories and poems written by intermediate grade children were described by Witty and Martin as more detailed and imaginative than those done in primary grades. According to Witty and Martin, many of the pupils had definitely mastered the basic writing skills of expressing themselves clearly and artistically by the end of the sixth grade. In the fourth grade, pupils wrote longer compositions than did those of the earlier grades; their products were of a more imaginative nature and included a greater amount of poetry. The fourth grade pupils frequently attempted to pass judgment upon the actions of the main character. The writing of the fifth and sixth grade pupils was reported to be distinctly superior to that of the lower grades.

Although the sixth grade pupils were said to have acquired the necessary skills to express themselves clearly and creatively, their compositions varied in length from short paragraphs to five and six pages. Sixth graders also reacted more frequently to the symbolism of the film and tended more often than pupils in the earlier grades to interpret the film. Finally, they more often used unique expression and originality in form; "greater use of metaphor and original fresh language of a humorous type" characterized their work.

These findings, reported in Witty and Martin's study, demonstrate that the silent film is a valuable instrument for stimulating creative expression, and consequently for identifying pupils who show outstanding talent through their compositions.

The high correlation between intelligence

and language development was cited in a study of an exceptionally gifted pupil by Witty and Blumenthal (23). Creative written expression is an area in which the gifted child can find continuous challenge and satisfaction of achievement.

Experiences Forming the Bases for Children's Stories

In general agreement with Witty's findings that children write well from vicarious experiences are those of Edmund (7). The latter analyzed the stories of a sample of 90 seventh-grade pupils selected at random to determine the relationship between their prior experiences and the quality of their creative writing.

Creative quality was defined in terms of originality, wealth, and value of ideas in a story, and the facility of the writing. Experience was dichotomized into *direct* and *derived*. Direct experience included that which actually and directly involved the writer—people and places he had known first-hand. Derived experiences were those acquired through books, radio, television, films, and other vicarious means. Statistical analysis of the stories resulted in a rather high relationship between derived experience and creative quality. In fact, the relationship was significant beyond the .01 level of confidence. Derived experience-based stories contained a significantly greater number of words and descriptive words than did direct experience-based stories. The two groups of writers did not differ in their desire to write scores nor in the number written during the school year; nor did they differ in intelligence.

In order to determine the variations of the derived-experience-creative-quality relationship between grades, Edmund (10) studied the stories of fifth-graders and ninth-graders, employing the same design and procedures as previously used with seventh-graders. At the fifth grade level, the findings were substantially the same as in the case of the seventh grade. However, at the ninth grade level, the relation-

ship between derived experience and creative quality was not significant at the .01 nor .05 levels of confidence (9). That is to say, pupils writing from direct experience wrote stories of approximately the same quality as did those writing from secondary experiences.

What do the above findings mean? There are a number of interpretations; for example, young children of our culture have a seeming preponderance of derived experiences. It becomes easier to imitate or project themselves through the ideas, forms, and styles of writing they have read and enjoyed than to master language appropriate for expressing their day-to-day experiences. Secondly, direct experience may require a gestation period before becoming useful in creative writing. Too often children are encouraged to catalogue events with little or no emphasis given to understanding and describing them. Finally, fifth and seventh grade pupils have not learned to observe, to understand, and to think creatively about what they have experienced first-hand.

It is entirely probable that the idea of writing about their own problems, failures, and successes does not readily occur to intermediate grade children. They need to feel that others would be interested in their aspirations and anxieties, and that writing about these personal concerns is a healthy and creative thing to do. At the same time, it is quite likely that too few elementary teachers encourage children to write about their experiences, choosing freely topics of their own interest. Edmund (12) found in a recent survey that more than half the children in the sample never had had the opportunity nor responsibility for choosing their own writing topic.

Children not only lack the proper encouragement about their problems, they actually lack adequate experiences. In a study of 127 seventh-graders of central New York, the writer discovered that the average number of stories written during a school year was less

than four, 3.98, to be precise (11). The survey was designed to determine the attitude of seventh grade children toward writing stories and obtaining information about their story-writing behavior.

A story was defined, in the above study, to include a narration of past events, an account of some incident, a report or statement, an anecdote, and narratives in prose or verse.

Seventy-three of the 127, fifty-eight per cent of the pupils, stated that they liked to write stories. The mean number of stories written by this group was 4.65 for the school year. Thirty-two of the seventy-three had written one or more stories outside of school.

Forty-three or thirty-two per cent of the total group stated that they did not like to write. The mean number of stories for this group was 2.08 for the school year. Most of their stories were written in school, with nine members reporting that they had written one or more stores outside of class assignment.

If the findings of this study are indicative of the emphasis currently placed on writing experiences of children, it appears obvious that more attention is necessary. That writing is important is unquestioned, yet the main reason why our children do not and cannot write well, may mean simply that we haven't taught them. Four compositions per year would hardly seem adequate to do the job.

Pupil Interests and the Selection of Writing Topics

Sofelt (21) made a study in 1929, in which she attempted to determine if children's compositions based on self-chosen topics were superior in writing mechanics, organization, and literary quality to compositions based on assigned topics. Three hundred and four children, grades 4—6, from three Pittsburgh Schools wrote five compositions in a rotated manner. That is, the first, third, and fifth compositions were assigned and the second and fourth were "self-chosen." Two weeks elapsed between the

writing of each composition, with the study running from April 19 to June 14, 1929.

The subjects assigned were as follows:

1. What Can I Do to Promote Safety?
2. A Narrow Escape
3. How I Should Like to Spend My Vacation.

Thirty minutes were allotted for writing, and teachers gave no assistance to individual pupils, except in spelling words. The instructions to pupils differed only with regard to those concerning the topic. In one instance, the topic was assigned, but in the other the teacher stated that it was more fun to write about subjects of one's own interest.

The "Hillegas Scale" was used to rate the compositions. The averages made on all compositions written on self-chosen subjects were better than the averages made on all compositions of imposed subjects. However, she noted that the lower grades seemed to profit more from being allowed to choose their own subjects than the intermediate grades. The investigator pointed out also that assigned subjects of high interest value brought higher scores than uninteresting subjects, and that pupils showed a wide range of interests.

A more recent study of the effect of children's interests on their creative writing was that done by Edmund in 1958 (8). The investigator asked a sample of sixty-three fifth grade pupils to make a list of activities, ideas, objects, people and/or animals in which they were interested. One week after the lists were collected, each pupil was asked to write a story on any topic that interested him.

Pupil interests varied widely, with some pupils listing as many as fifteen different ones. However, the number of interests listed ranged from zero to fifteen. The mean number was 6.5. Swimming appeared most frequently, with baseball, football, and basketball appearing next in order. Reading, horses, and horse-back riding, collecting, and dancing also ranked near

the top of the list. It is interesting that reading ranked among the top activities in interest value. However, the more formal classroom subjects rated considerably lower than reading. Spelling was listed by nine pupils, social studies by three, arithmetic by two and English by one. Writing was listed by none.

The findings of Edmund's study showed that less than one third of the sample wrote about their stated personal interests, yet all the pupils participating were permitted to choose their writing topics. Why did pupils not select topics of personal interest?

In attempting to answer the question, the investigator has suggested two reasons why fifth grade pupils do not base their stories on genuine personal interests. First, they have not been taught to do so. Children, like adults, generally reveal their personal thoughts and feelings only to persons they trust completely. It becomes necessary for teachers to develop good relationships between teacher and pupil, and pupil and pupil.

Secondly, and equally important, children are not always able to identify their interests. While capitalizing on interests helps to develop written expression, written expression is a good way of helping children identify and develop interests, including an interest in good literature.

Methods and Materials for Teaching Writing

Various kinds of motivating techniques have been centered around books. Rideout (19) reported a study in which a group of fifty-seven seventh-graders wrote books, bound them, displayed them at the public library and discussed them from the local radio station. As a result of the book binding project, Rideout enumerates several possible learnings derived from it:

Pride in work well done, how to cooperate with each other, appreciation for home and community with power of words, that writing is good leisure time activity, and that it helps improve usage.

In 1943, Smith (20) made an extensive study of procedures for encouraging creative writing. The investigation involved a population of 17,941 pupils and 508 teachers selected from 40 elementary school systems. Pupils were heterogeneously grouped with respect to general ability and ethnic background. Ten thousand four hundred forty-seven pupils and 342 teachers from eleven of the 40 school systems were selected for detailed study.

Smith defined creative writing as any writing in which the pupil is free to choose the time of composing, the subject matter, and the length and form of the composition. She analyzed teacher responses to questionnaires, observed writing in the classroom, interviewed teachers, pupils, and administrators, and analyzed the creative writing of the children.

Ninety-five per cent of the sample, according to the investigator, achieved successful results. Findings of the study indicate the following procedures were most useful in encouraging creative writing:

1. providing attractive classrooms, rich in materials
2. encouraging pupils to write from their own interests and needs
3. providing rich experiences about which a child can express himself
4. developing sensitivity to good writing which in turn helps a child improve his own experience
5. using real needs of children or helping them develop new ones
6. providing freedom from fear and helping pupils gain confidence in their ability to create
7. providing abundant time and opportunity for writing in many areas and in many forms
8. developing skill in mechanics without sacrificing spontaneity
9. sharing the end products of writing
10. evaluating the writing in terms of the total growth of the child

Smith reported several other procedures which were considered controversial in nature.

For example, slightly more than half of the teachers questioned or reported negatively on these techniques: (1) encouraging pupils to plan and think through what they have to express before writing, (2) guidance through dictating or writing, (3) encouraging pupils to check content and mechanics of their writing, (4) experimentation with colorful words, (5) experimenting with words or other vocabulary study, (6) publishing children's writing in the school newspaper, and (7) encouraging children to evaluate their creative products.

Three approaches to creative writing are discussed by Creed (6). The first one requires preparing yourself for writing. Pick a favorite word, and explore its meaning. Secondly, explore what to write about, and third, keep at it. Creative thinking is a requirement, she stated, but she thinks it is possible to "train yourself to write in your mind."

Listening is one area of the language arts which has received comparatively little attention. Certainly it has not been widely considered as a means of developing ability. However, Burrows (2) has strongly emphasized the inter-relationship between writing and listening. There are two recent studies supporting Burrows' view.

Treanor (22) described an approach which involved listening before writing. The pupils listed and discussed sounds they would expect to hear in familiar situations, for example, in the circus. Twenty-minute oral lessons were held three times a week. Treanor did not report the number of pupils in his study nor did he make any statistical estimate of the method's effectiveness. He did, however, state that listening experience as described, contributes to "ideas" for composition, and implied that fourth graders in his selection found the method helpful in their writing. Perhaps Treanor's hypothesis will be tested more rigorously in future studies.

Another study in listening with significant

Implications for writing is that of Moyer (17) A control group and an experimental group of seventy-three pupils each, from grades four, six, and eight received ear training through the use of tape recorders for two sixteen-week periods. No written exercises were used. Instruction periods were given to recording and analyzing the effectiveness of the language in the stories, reports and so on.

At the end of the experiment, pupils of the experimental group from each grade level made greater progress than did those of the control, in language usage. Other results reported were the high motivating value of ear training through the use of the tape recordings, the improvement of attitudes about language as a tool, and the improvement of speech habits.

Moyer concluded that where ear training is used as a method for improving oral communication, it might be combined with written instruction based on the needs of pupils to write about their own feelings, ideas, and experiences.

In 1906, Colvin and Meyer (5) reported a study done to obtain data on the growth of the imagination in school children and its relation to other elements in children's mental life. They analyzed 3,000 compositions of pupils in grades four through twelve to determine their imaginative content. Pupils from these grades wrote on one of the following topics:

A Funny Story I Have Read or Heard
 What I See On My Way to School
 How the Flowers Were Colored
 A Fairy Story
 A Good Joke

High school pupils had a slightly wider choice, as noted in the following topics:

A Voyage in an Airship in the Year 2000
 How the Flowers Got Their Colors
 What I Can See With My Eyes Shut
 My First Visit to the Theater
 Adventures of a School Desk
 Displays in the Shop Windows
 A Laughable Story

A Poor Family
 A Comical Character
 The Woods in Autumn
 Jokes I Have Played

Subjects participating in the study received no help from teachers regarding content or its treatment. The assignment was handled as a part of the pupils' regular work.

A record was made of the visual, auditory, tactile, pain, olfactory, gustatory, organic, and muscular images. These were assessed as the more simple forms of imagery and termed the "lower types." The more complex types were categorized as scientific, fairy story, nature myth, heroic, dramatic, religious, and melancholic images. They were labeled "higher types."

The science category included machines and devices, uses for electricity, and other natural forces. The fairy story and nature myth included pixies, goblins and so on. In the heroic grouping were stories concerning virtues as self-forgetfulness, courage, and devotion, while striking situations and stirring climaxes characterized the dramatic. The religious involved the supernatural and devotional. Melancholic images were concerned with feelings of sadness and depression.

The investigators concluded that in general, imagination of school children showed a decline during the years studied. While they stated the possibility that the decline in children's imagination might be due, to some degree, to the reticence of adolescent youth to express their vital feelings, Colvin and Meyer suggested that the decline was probably due to the lack of educational effort to cultivate imagination in children. In fact, they suggested that school influence toward the development of imagination was negative rather than positive.

Visual imagination was the only kind of type showing growth throughout the grades and the investigators report that it was largely devitalized and mechanical. At the onset of puberty there was a tendency for the "lower"

types" of imagery to disappear and for the "higher types" to come into prominence. This tendency, however, was slight and not considered significant. Growth of feeling was reported to be constant, and formal correctness improved thought.

A final interesting conclusion was that there seemed to be little room for humor in school work—that humor tended to decline from grade to grade. The schools placed a premium on mechanical exactness and formal correctness and ignored, if not actually hindered, expression of the "deeper self." Though the above study was reported in 1906, this writer believes that the questions it has raised are still sufficiently significant to be carefully considered today.

Several investigators have attempted to check the responses of pupils through various kinds of writing situations. Clark⁶ taught thirty-six sixth grade children an hour a day for one school year. He presented them with twenty-one different kinds of writing situations which evolved as the class went along, and in addition the children wrote several compositions voluntarily. The situations ranged from topics such as "A Stitch in Time," and letters to pen pals in Japan to reactions to pictures on a bulletin board, and highly personal compositions. The only criteria for writing were: Does your composition adequately express your feelings? Does it say what you would like it to say? Does it satisfy you? The findings appear below:

1. Children wrote longer sentences and used more dependent clauses in their highly personal writings.
2. A subjective analysis of the writing done led the investigator to believe that when children wrote about themselves—their feelings and emotions—they responded freely and usually achieved highest quality and interest.
3. Better writing was done on impersonal subjects when the writer told how he felt about it.

4. Children responded best to situations which were highly personal.

The investigator concluded that the greater percentage of a child's writing should be concerned with his personal experiences.

Clark's conclusion represents the thinking of a number of writers in the creative writing field. For example, the authors of a recent text on language arts for elementary school children state that: "Motivation is stronger when a child can express his own ideas and experiences. The language is more colorful and vivid (18).

Three methods of developing imagination in pupils' writing are reported by Littwin (15). He worked with equated groups of seventh and eighth graders who were tested on two compositions, one at the beginning and one at the end of a ten week period. The methods consisted of picture study, study of literary models, and sense training. The procedure was described as follows:

1. The pupils looked at a picture, described it together, then each pupil took one look at it and wrote for ten minutes.
2. The pupils studied picture-making words, wrote them and discussed how the author made pictures, and then wrote for a ten minute period.
3. Pupils were given visual and audio preparation; for example, they took a piece of fruit, felt it, smelled it, looked at it, tapped and tasted it. Then they were asked to describe it in ten minutes.

The stories were rated on the Van Wageningen scale. The best results were obtained through developing power in imagination by use of sense training, next by models, and least by picture study. The experimenter concluded that first-hand experiences are more effective in developing imagination than experiences of a vicarious or second-hand nature. Note that Littwin's findings are somewhat in conflict with those of Edmund, with regard to the quality of creative writing based on direct experiences

done by fifth and seventh grade children.

Garbe (13) reported a study done in 1930, in which she found that sixth grade pupils correlating English compositions with content subjects showed a marked growth in fluency of expression, as indicated by three criteria: the number of words used in the initial and final composition, the number of compositions written, and the reduction in the percentage of errors between the initial and final composition. As a result of the investigation, Garbe concluded that children may be expected to write freely when encouraged to do so. She stated that some increase in the number of errors is likely as the form becomes more complex. However, she suggested that the rules of grammar be taught as a means of improving the communication of the writer's ideas. Although Garbe expressed concern for the creative aspects of children's writing, her evaluation appears to be preoccupied with writing mechanics.

Leonard (14) reported a study by Willing and Whitman done at the Lincoln School, Columbia University in 1926, involving two groups of 19 eighth grade pupils equated on the basis of composition correctness and in related matters. Whitman taught one group by means of weekly assigned themes written in class, checked by him outside, and then read and criticized by pupils in class. Approximately 100 minutes per week was devoted to written work. The other group, taught by Willing, was given 20 minutes drill daily in proofreading, "individualized according to preliminary diagnosis of needs." No writing was required. Both Whitman and Willing conducted all aspects of writing, other than proofreading drill, in exactly the same way. The experiment ran from November 1 to April 1. The stories of pupils given 20 minutes daily drill, according to Leonard, were superior to the one-composition-a-week group in reducing errors in composition.

Lyman (16) directed a study employing 31

teachers working with 1,039 pupils of grades 6, 7, 8, and 9, in 20 junior high school and in elementary schools located in the vicinity of Chicago to determine the extent junior high school age children could be taught to discover and correct language errors in their own compositions. Secondly, he sought to determine the extent to which a limited number of experiences in composition can establish work patterns, and finally, to determine the effects of five consecutive weeks of laboratory work upon the quality of children's compositions.

Pupils of the sample wrote seven compositions, beginning with one written on the assigned topic, "When I Got What I Deserved," and designated the "pretest." Following the pretest, compositions 1-5, inclusive, were written in the order listed:

- Composition 1. My Favorite Sport
- Composition 2. The Class I Like Best in School
- Composition 3. A Good Playmate, Plaything or Pet
A Kind Deed I Tried To Do (choice of one)
How I Did an Errand
- Composition 4. My Funny Experience as a Carpenter, Cook, A Housekeeper or Repairman. (choice of one)
Things I Would Do With \$500
Funny Mistakes I Have Made
- Composition 5. Mischief My Kid Brother (or Sister) Get Into (choice of one)
Some Things I Know about Birds (or _____ any noun substituted for birds)

During the class period on Monday, the topic was assigned and a plan in the form of a diagram was made by each pupil. On Tuesday, each using his own plan, wrote the first draft of his composition. He carefully examined his first draft on Wednesday, attempted to dis-

cover and correct all errors, and made other changes which he believed would improve the composition. This usually required about 15 minutes. Each pupil copied his composition on Thursday, observing his own corrections, with the idea of turning in the finished copy.

Teachers assisted pupils in discovering errors on composition 1 only. Compositions 1-5 were followed by the "final test," a composition written on the assigned topic: "What I Like to Do on A Holiday." Pupils were permitted to use portions of class time for four days or write the composition all at once. They were allowed to follow or not follow a plan, as they saw fit.

Patterns for planning compositions in the form of a series of diagrammatic representations of wholes made up of parts, were introduced in composition 2. For example, Lyman reported that a story about a Ford car might follow this chain-link pattern: It is cheap; it always goes; it is easy to drive. Each statement would be contained in a chain link, and each pupil wrote his composition, corrected and re-wrote it as described above.

Lyman reported that results of the "final test" showed that pupils of the sample discovered and corrected three-fifths of their own errors. Though no objective evidence was reportedly derived from the experiment to indicate the degree to which the "Composition cycle" was established as a pattern of work, teachers stated that all but a few pupils separated the work of composition into the five stages described above.

One hundred eighty-three sixth grade pupils showed a median gain of .50 in composition growth, as measured by the "Wisconsin Scale for the Judgment of Composition Quality." This amount of growth is regarded as the normal for one year by junior high pupils. Neither the 283 seventh graders nor the 259 eighth graders were reported to have made appreciable improvement. The investigator made no at-

tempt to explain the significant gains of the sixth graders as compared with the other grades represented in the study.

Creative Writing and Personality Development

Cole⁴ stressed the value of having children write about their problems. She stated that they feel a real need for writing about their own problems and that something good is learned from writing about them. Cole's conclusion is based upon her success in helping thirty-five children with behavior problems. Writing has a therapeutic value for all children, concluded Cole, whether they have behavior problems or not.

Burrows (1) and Cole (4) have pointed out that children will be able to meet their daily problems to the extent that we can help them communicate successfully. Children's stories often reveal that they do have numerous conflicts. Food and clothing and sometimes boy-girl relationships are examples of how everyday concerns can become major problems for some children.

Creative writing, according to Burrows, (2) is more than an art form. She has stated:

It offers opportunities for the projection of personal power to a sympathetic listener. The interaction of writer and audience is reciprocal, active, releasing. Imaginative, subjective expression, it would seem, can serve emotional needs as a stabilizing, constructing force. But other kinds of written expression also serve personality development.

No careful reader can seriously doubt the existence of a strong relationship between written expression and personality development, after examining the case studies presented in chapter six of Burrow's extraordinary book on children's writing. While she and her co-workers made no attempt to measure specifics of writing in any statistically rigorous manner, the samples of children's writings from the four year on-the-job study, offer unmistakable evi-

dence of personality development and writing growth. The selections of writing, the procedures outlined, and the principles derived from the Burrows study, provide an excellent background for those interested in furthering research in children's writing. Determining cause-and-effect relationships between personality development and such art forms as writing seems to this writer to be an especially fruitful area for further research.

Summary

Witty has pointed out that identifying gifted pupils through their writing is both practical and profitable. Witty and Blumenthal discussed the high relationship between intelligence and language ability. Obviously creative writing grows out of all kinds of experience and is an activity calling for high order mental behavior. However, it can be both challenging to the gifted child and satisfying to the slow learner, where in the one case quality of the end product is stressed to a high degree and in the other, the major emphasis is placed upon the enjoyment of the creative process.

The findings of Edmund showed that high quality creative writing results from sources of derived experience. However, the relationship between the quality of creative writing and derived experience ceased to be statistically significant by the ninth grade level.

Soffell suggested permitting pupils to choose their own writing topics as a means of reducing errors of usage and improving literary quality. Edmund's work indicated that intermediate grade pupils are not frequently allowed to choose their own topics for writing, and less than a third of them select topics of personal interest when permitted to select topics independently.

Methods described by Rideout, Creed, Colvin and Meyer, Clark and Littwin, Garbe, Leonard, and Lyman and others were discussed. In general, methods outlined by these writers

appear to be consistent, and to reinforce each other.

The work of Burrows, Ferebee, Jackson and Saunders, though not designed as a formal study, is extensive compared to that of any other individual or group working within the area of children's writing. Their work touches upon all aspects of writing herein discussed and goes far beyond.

This examination of the research in writing of intermediate grade children discloses seemingly few conflicting findings regarding writing and effective methods for producing it on a high quality level. Those conflicts occurring may well be due to failure in rigorously applying scientific methods. In other instances, the causal factor may have been ascribed to what may be only a partial cause. Some conflicts of opinion inevitably arise when conclusion and high order abstractions go beyond the facts of the data obtained.

Careful readers will note that much of the work reported in this chapter does not meet the criteria for rigorous research. Comparatively little research has been done in creative writing, especially in the intermediate grades. It is hoped that this discussion has raised significant questions in the minds of readers, which may be answered through better designed research.

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Grammar in Language Teaching

In medieval times, grammar was one of the three "inferior studies" of the Seven Liberal Arts. Even in those days, mathematics and astronomy enjoyed a high priority in the academic hierarchy. In this respect the times have not changed a great deal—the humanities are still among the "inferior" studies in comparison with the space age sciences. Rockets and missiles have a grammar of their own.

Earthbound teachers of English, however, must still concern themselves with questions about the teaching of grammar. Does the study of grammar improve speaking and writing ability? If so, how much and what grammar should be taught, and to whom? In what stage of the learning process and by what methods should it be taught? If grammar is of little use in the improvement of language skill, should it be taught at all? How much of the new "structural" grammar should be included in the instruction? How much of the vocabulary of grammar is needed by all American youth? The following discussion is intended to review some of the attempts to answer these questions.

Is Grammar Necessary?

From time to time, doubts have been expressed about the usefulness of grammar study in the secondary school. Indeed, there is a widespread impression that the teaching of grammar is disapproved of in contemporary educational thought. Thus in a recent publication a British author states, "Those who have failed to explore the possibilities and to persevere in experiment can hardly be blamed, because the value of teaching grammar has been frequently questioned, and at times it has been vigorously denied in print, at conferences and at refresher courses (25)."

Notwithstanding this general impression, which certainly prevails in many American lay and professional circles, it is difficult to find

examples of specific statements by responsible writers which would give support to the elimination of grammar from the program in general education. Perhaps the discussions of the *kind* of grammar which is commonly taught have given rise to the erroneous belief that the educational profession has discouraged the teaching of all grammar.

Certainly the nature of grammar instruction in American high schools has been subjected to vigorous criticism. A typical example of such criticism is found in an article by Professor Fred G. Walcott of the University of Michigan:

"In visiting English classrooms and talking with teachers of English, one is impressed with the persistence of their faith in a knowledge of formal grammar and in the drill-book exercise by which formal rules are supposedly applied automatically to the self-expression of the pupils. One is impressed, too, by the extent to which this formal learning and formal drill still dominate the classroom activity, and still supplant the true exercise of the self-expression to which they are supposed to contribute (58)."

Criticisms such as these could be multiplied indefinitely. They generally stem from two beliefs: (1) that the kind of grammar taught is not in harmony with current linguistic science; and (2) that the methods used contradict our best present knowledge of how language is learned. The first of these beliefs is justified by evidence that many textbook rules are unsupported by the reports of trained observers of our language. The second belief rests upon skepticism about the transfer value of memorizing rules and performing isolated grammar exercises. Stated positively, the criticisms of

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prevailing instruction in grammar imply (1) that the grammar taught should be in harmony with the scientific observation of the facts of spoken and written English today; and (2) that grammar should be taught directly in connection with the communication needs of students. They imply further that the student is to gain genuine mastery of the language as it is; and in this process, by one method or another, he acquires familiarity with the grammar of the language.

Current Practices

Whatever the theorists may advocate, it is certain that the schools are demonstrating a strong belief in the efficacy of grammar, chiefly formal grammar. Surveys of current practices in New York (52), Wisconsin (42), Illinois (17), and Georgia (19) have revealed that teachers of English prevaillingly emphasize grammatical analysis and terminology in their instruction. Moreover, the most recent of the surveys of teachers' attitudes toward grammar (6) shows that the *type* of grammar preferred by teachers is formal, systematic, and normative. Analyses of current textbooks and courses of study made by Pooley (40) confirm this conclusion.

Pooley also conducted a poll of twenty experienced teachers of English from various parts of the United States, including chairmen of English departments in high schools, supervisors of English, and present and past officers of the National Council of Teachers of English. In an effort to secure their estimates of teachers' attitudes toward grammar, as reflected in classroom practices. His major conclusion is significant enough to quote in full:

"In the high schools of 1956, in a sampling covering representative centers of the whole United States, the majority of teachers hold the view that 'Grammar is the means to improved speech and writing. Because it explains usage, grammar must be learned to support usage instruction. Grammar skills are best gained by learning the parts of speech, the elements of

the sentence, and the kinds of sentences. These skills are usually all taught before the end of the ninth year. Drill and practice from textbooks and workbooks establishes grammar, which will then function in composition (40:51)."

If it is true that the results of instruction in English writing are disappointing, it appears that most teachers are applying more of the remedy that has been unsuccessful in the first place.

Are Current Practices Sound?

The resistance of so many teachers of English in the elementary and high school to the recommendations of linguists and educators with regard to the teaching of grammar justifies periodic re-examination of the evidence on the subject. This evidence must be derived from two sources: (1) our knowledge of how children learn language; and (2) experimental studies of the effectiveness of instruction in formal grammar. Neither of these sources gives support to prevailing practices in the use of grammar for the improvement of speaking and writing.

It is clear that the basic patterns of the native language are not learned by means of the abstract principles or the definitions of formal grammar. As Bobbitt points out, "By the time a child is six years of age, and before he has begun to read, he has as good a knowledge of grammar as he has of vocabulary or pronunciation; and this is very considerable. Yet, he cannot define a sentence. He has never heard of the parts of speech. He has not met the terminology of technical grammar. But he has as thorough a knowledge of its fundamentals as he has of anything (6)." Moreover, it is doubtful whether the average person or even the professional writer or the orator fashions his sentences either consciously or unconsciously with the aid of grammatical generalizations. The SVO (subject-verb-object) pattern is a description, not a prescription. The child uses declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative sen-

tences long before he has heard of these terms, and many college students who use compound-complex sentences do not know the meaning of the relative clause. It is not necessary to be a linguist to use language, or even to use it effectively.

In this view, the functional value of grammar is chiefly remedial and editorial, largely in connection with writing. To many students, the grammar of English is a fascinating study for its own sake. Moreover, the terminology of elementary grammar is part of the vocabulary of most cultivated people. Radio and television announcers and commentators who insist on "whom" when "who" is correct by normative standards could profit from the study of traditional grammar. But for the basic improvement of young people's speaking and writing, the study of systematic grammar does not appear to be the most effective instrument.

The experimental evidence on this question has been frequently summarized. A much-quoted article by Smith (51) represents an early effort to generalize from available findings. Loban (35) in a later article cites studies which deal with the role of grammar in the improvement of English and lists a number of conclusions based on those studies. Similar conclusions, based on more numerous investigations, are drawn by Greene in a still more recent report (24). Other summaries are found in special issues of the *Review of Educational Research* (16, 47). While certain studies are mentioned in all of these summaries, we have been unable to find in one place a listing of all the pertinent investigations. The following paragraphs bring together the various research reports in the order of their publication, from 1903 to 1957. They include only those dealing directly with the relation between grammar teaching and children's language expression, omitting others which might throw light on the problem indirectly. The statements of findings are necessarily brief, and for that reason in some instances perhaps oversimplified.

Probably the earliest published study was

conducted by the pioneer in educational research, J. M. Rice.¹ He examined 8,300 children in 22 schools in 9 cities. From their work he selected for intensive study some 2,000 papers, which he evaluated on the basis of "models" that anticipated the composition scales of two decades later. Among his observations is the following: "...all the schools in which the pupils had displayed a high degree of intelligence in arithmetic also produced very creditable work in that great intellectual barometer, English composition, while composition was frequently at a very low ebb where the pupils were apparently well versed in grammar (45)."

Hoyt tested 200 ninth-grade pupils in Indianapolis in grammar, composition, and ability to interpret a poem. His conclusion: "There is about the same relationship existing between grammar and composition and grammar and interpretation as exists between any two totally different subjects, as grammar and geography (28)." Rapeer drew the same conclusion from a study of ninth-grade pupils in Minneapolis (44). Briggs identified nine typical claims for the disciplinary value of formal grammar and tested these claims in experiments with two seventh-grade classes in Horace Mann School and with pupils in five Illinois schools. He reported, "These particular children after the amount of formal grammar that they had, do not, as measured by the means employed, show in any of the abilities tested improvement that

¹This was conducted in 1903, the year in which Rice, through *The Forum*, founded the Society of Educational Research. Rice's work antedated by about twenty years the so-called "scientific movement" in education. In *The Forum* for July, 1903, he declared, "...it is becoming quite generally appreciated that the results of our various educational experiments should be recorded and systematized in accordance with the dictates of science, so that practical school people might be able to formulate their plans of instruction upon a more substantial basis than that of mere opinion" (p. 118). Rice is perhaps better known for his earlier *Forum* article, "The Futility of the Spelling Grind."

may be attributed to their training in formal grammar (9)."

In a study of children's errors in oral English, Sears and Diebel found more mistakes in the use of pronouns in the eighth grade than in the lower grades. They asked, "Is the present teaching of pronouns leading to a more confused state of mind in the eighth-grade child than existed when he was in the third grade and was entirely unconscious of the rules of grammar governing the use of such words (48)?" The question is a fair one, but it should be noted that the older children use more complicated sentences and therefore have more opportunities to make mistakes. Like Hoyt and Rapeer, Boraas found little relationship between knowledge of grammar and ability in English composition. Indeed, he found a higher correlation between knowledge of grammar and knowledge of history and arithmetic than between knowledge of grammar and ability to write (7). Asker reported similar results (2). So also Segel and Barr declared, after comparing high school students' performance on formal and applied grammar tests, "...no more relationship exists between the two sorts of grammar than there is on the average between any two of the high-school subjects of any curriculum (49:402)."

Numerous investigations of the problem were made in the decade of the thirties. Symonds found that drill on the right and wrong usages was twice as effective as grammar in improving pupils' writing. He observed that only the very bright pupils can successfully transfer grammatical knowledge to real language situations (57). Low relationship between grammatical knowledge and ability to correct sentence errors was also found by Catherwood (11). Cutright compared the effectiveness of six methods of improving language usage among upper-grade elementary school children. She got best results with drill on right *vs.* wrong forms followed by oral repetition of right forms (14). Ash found it

more effective to emphasize clarity of thought and elements of style independently of formal grammar (1). The value of oral drill was demonstrated in a study of seventh-grade children by Crawford and Royer, who found this approach as effective as grammar (13). Catherwood's findings were confirmed in a University of Iowa thesis by Benfer, who found a low relationship between knowledge of grammar and ability to correct sentences for lack of completeness. It is of particular interest to note that in Benfer's study a special effort was made to teach the application of the grammatical principles to speech and writing (5).

Frogner compared two methods of improving sentence structure, using 47 pairs of ninth-grade pupils and 60 pairs of eleventh-grade pupils in Minneapolis and Bemidji, Minnesota. "The aim was to compare the improvement made by pupils who were directed to approach problems of sentence structure entirely from the standpoint of the adequate expression of thought with the improvement made by pupils who, besides having their attention directed to the clear expression of thought, were also given the drill needed to ensure an understanding of the grammatical construction of the sentence." Although the "thought" approach required only 80 percent of the time required by the grammar method, it was definitely superior in effectiveness with pupils of 105 IQ and below, and just as effective with superior students (22).

The usefulness of grammar in improving pupils' ability to punctuate correctly was studied by Evans. He conducted an experiment with 831 pupils in 19 city school systems of the Middle West, and discovered that significantly superior results in punctuation could be obtained by teaching punctuation directly as an aid to comprehension on the part of the reader (18). Barghahn experimented with equated groups of high school students in an effort to find out the value of diagramming sentences as a means of improving English usage

or reading comprehension. Again the results were negative—practice in diagramming improved only the ability to diagram (3). Diagramming proved useless also in somewhat more detailed studies by Barnett (4) and by Stewart (54). Butterfield followed up Stewart's study, with similar results (10). Greene summarized and interpreted the Barghahn, Barnett, Stewart, Butterfield, and Evans studies at Iowa in a widely quoted article (23).

The most recent investigation of methods of teaching sentence structure that has come to our attention is the study made by Kraus of the relative merits of three methods of dealing with the problem. In her first procedure five units of sentence structure were logically presented and taught according to the thought approach. Students did no original writing. The second procedure was the same, except that students were assigned weekly themes which were not discussed after their return. In the third procedure all sentence structure items were taught only as the result of errors made in weekly themes which students wrote in connection with a literature unit. Kraus found that the third method was superior in nearly all respects, and that it required only one-third of the time required by the other methods. In her judgment, sentence structure can best be taught by "the explanation of sentence structure according to the relationship of the idea to be expressed rather than according to grammatical rule (31)."

The foregoing descriptions of the studies of the relation between the teaching of formal grammar and the improvement of pupils' speaking and writing, extending over a period of fifty-five years, representing many parts of the country, and covering both the elementary and high school levels, exhibit a degree of unanimity that is rare in the field of educational research. The findings dramatically confirm the views of modern psychologists as to the way in which language is learned. Language learning is a complex task, and it requires abundant

and constant practice in meaningful, supervised communication.

It must be admitted that the total number of studies published or cited in publications over this long period is small compared to the number reported for other problems perhaps no more important, such as the teaching of reading. Moreover, a close examination of some of the reports of investigations of the effectiveness of grammar instruction might reveal flaws in research design or conclusions not fully warranted by the evidence. The impressive fact is, however, that in all these studies, carried out in places and at times far removed from each other, often by highly experienced and disinterested investigators, the results have been consistently negative so far as the value of grammar in the improvement of language expression is concerned. Surely there is no justification in the available evidence for the great expenditure of time and effort still being devoted to formal grammar in American schools.

It has been suggested that the results might have been different if the grammar had been properly taught. Pulliam, for example, raises the question "whether generalizations about the English language can be taught in such a way that ordinary pupils will apply them to their speech and writing (43)." The debate over transfer of training was still fresh at the time he wrote, and he felt that in the light of the then current research in the psychology of learning, grammar teaching might be more effective if there were a more conscious attempt at application. But in the later studies a special point was made, especially by Benfer and Frogner, to teach the grammar functionally, and the results remained negative.

In assessing the significance of the research on the teaching of grammar, we must keep in mind a number of related considerations. First, there are reasons other than the improvement of speaking and writing for teaching some grammatical concepts and terminology, at least to superior pupils. Second, the findings of the

studies are based on average scores. Averages and correlation coefficients are revealing, but they may also conceal factors that are operating in a learning situation. Thus it is quite likely that some pupils under some conditions are greatly helped by the conscious application of grammatical generalizations. Generalizations about grammar may play only a small part in language learning, but there are occasions when that small part is important. Bobbitt was perhaps not unduly evasive when he wrote: "Should our schools help pupils to a knowledge of technical grammar? The obvious answer is, there should be a great deal of it for those who need a great deal, a moderate amount for those who need a moderate amount, and little for those who need little. Differences among persons in the need of looking after the technical niceties of expression are large (6)."

How Much and What Grammar?

The grammar with which the studies described in the preceding paragraphs were concerned was traditional, conventional, formal, systematic, prescriptive, normative grammar. During the period in which these studies were undertaken, particularly in the last three decades, there have been three major developments with respect to the recommended content of the grammar to be taught in school.

The first of these developments was the restriction of grammar content to functional items. Thus, for example, the distinction between a gerund and a present participle is important in grammatical theory, but of very little use in the teaching of speaking and writing. Efforts have accordingly been made to discover the specific items of grammar and usage which give trouble in children's language expression. Error counts were used for the purpose of determining what elements in grammar may be considered "functional." Typical of such studies were those made by Charters and Miller (11), O'Rourke (39), and Stormzand and O'Shea (55). The last-named contributed a valuable device called the "error quotient," the

ratio of the total number of errors on a specific item to the number of opportunities for making the error. On the basis of such studies, various writers have made recommendations as to points of emphasis in usage at the successive grade levels (31, 41:194-195).

For the elementary school teacher, the significant generalization to be drawn from these lists is that grammar and usage below the seventh grade should be taught informally and the items stressed should be those most commonly encountered in children's speech and writing. Textbooks treating language in the elementary school (15, 26, 56, 9) stress this point. Burrows, for example, declares, "Nor is recourse to teaching 'grammar' any less wasteful. For, in the first place, real grammar cannot be taught to children in the elementary school. A few may learn to identify nouns, verbs, and even the other parts of speech largely by repetitive examples. But this is a far cry from understanding and applying the science of language relationships (9:152)."

The second development has been the substitution of descriptive for prescriptive standards for determining what is "right" and "wrong" in grammar and usage. The notion that prevailing language practice rather than *a priori* principles of language form and relationships determines correctness has slowly but steadily influenced the writers of school textbooks. Indeed, a very few of the newer textbooks are based entirely on the descriptive approach. The National Council of Teachers of English has been especially helpful in making available the findings of modern language research. Among its publications in this field are studies by Leonard (33), Marckwardt and Walcott (38), Kennedy (30), Pooley (41), and Fries (20).

The descriptive approach encourages teachers to accept the English language as it is, rather than fight a losing battle in behalf of forms and constructions which may have had academic sanction but are not characteristic of

contemporary speech or writing. Thus it recognizes the fact that word inflection has sharply declined in English, while variations in meaning are increasingly expressed by means of word order and function words. Arbitrary rules such as those against splitting an infinitive or ending a sentence with a preposition are giving way to more accurate descriptions of current language standards.

The descriptive approach to grammar and usage does not imply a deterioration of standards of "good" English. It implies rather the substitution of fact for fiction in the determination of what "good" English really is. Learning the facts about the real language is fully as rigorous a process as diagramming sentences. It calls for wide reading, perceptive listening, and fine discrimination with respect to the social situation in which language is used. "Substandard" English is no more acceptable in English classes following the descriptive approach than in those dominated by the traditional grammar. And by concentrating on those items which are by general agreement illiterate usages, the teacher of descriptive grammar is more likely to be successful in promoting mastery of standard English.

The third development has been the emergence of what is known as "structural" grammar. In his *American English Grammar* (20) Fries had emphasized the importance of word order in modern English as a device for expressing meanings. Later, in his *Structure of English*, he developed this concept by examining in greater detail the characteristic patterns of the English sentence, and the "word classes" that make up the parts of these patterns (21). Other linguists, notably Whitehall (59), Smith and Trager (53), Hill (27), Lloyd and Warfel (34), and Roberts (46) have followed in pioneering studies of the basic forms and patterns of speech. Structural linguists are primarily concerned with formal clues and signals rather than with "lexical" meanings. They hold that the new approach will avoid what they regard

as confusions and contradictions in the old grammar. One writer even hints that the new grammar would be more effective than the old in improving composition: "Arguments based on current experience are irrelevant, for the grammar has not been English grammar (29)."

That structural linguistics represents a new, fresh, exciting, even revolutionary phase in the study of the English language cannot be denied. It is clear also that the movement is spreading rapidly. A recent study reveals that fully one-fourth of college language classes for prospective teachers of English are based on the new developments in structural grammar (50). Whether the new approach will provide a solution to the problem of teaching standard English is, however, quite another question.

The rapid growth of structural grammar in the teacher education curricula gives some ground for believing that many elementary and secondary schools may soon follow. There is room for debate whether the time is ripe for the introduction of the "new grammar" into the common school classroom, except for optional study by superior pupils in advanced high school classes. The foundations of what must be regarded as an essentially new science are only now being laid. Terminology as used by different writers is not yet uniform, although efforts are being made to overcome this difficulty. Quite possibly the elementary and the high schools, which for the most part have not yet caught up with the usage principle, can afford to wait until the experts and the popularizers have had opportunity to offer a system and a method which the classroom teacher and the textbook writers can manage.

As to whether the new grammar will be more effective than the old in raising the level of literate expression, evidence is as yet necessarily lacking. Marckwardt, for one, is skeptical: "Nevertheless, as long as we continue to educate an ever-increasing proportion of our youth, we shall be dealing with students who come from homes where standard English is not habitually

spoken. With them, part of our responsibility amounts to teaching them to substitute a particular prestige dialect of English for that which they normally employ, for Standard English is currently a social dialect and historically a regional one Among other things, we must recognize that language habits can be changed only through constant drill, and that the number of new habitual responses which can be firmly established within a given period is very small indeed (37)."

For the teaching of English idiom and the standard use of the remaining inflections in the language, neither the old nor the new grammar is likely to be a very efficient tool. For the most part grammar must remain an area of study valuable for its own sake to those who can understand its intricacies. For such fortunate ones, it can be a fascinating realm of thought and discovery.

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Handwriting and Children's Composition

Research in handwriting in America has been directed at problems of the efficient and legible formation of letters and words within a given language structure. In Europe, much more attention has been paid to the study of handwriting as an expressive act which reveals the character, temperament, education, vocation, and sex of the individual doing the writing. Up to the present, however, little attention has been paid in any country to the effect the writer's perception of the various cognitive, social, and personal dimensions of his writing task has on his handwriting and conversely, no one has paid much attention to the relationship the writer's perception of his handwriting—its form, standard of quality, physical and physiological limitations, etc., has on his willingness to write, his style, and his form and control of writing.

In this review of the research in handwriting, therefore, little attention will be paid to the numerous surveys of instructional practices in handwriting or to the extensive European and American research in graphology. For excellent reviews of present practice in the teaching of handwriting, the interested reader is referred to the following references (31, 57, 18, 38). For representative references to graphology see (62, 24, 26, 36, 14). An attempt is made here to confine attention to the studies which bear as directly as possible on the nature and function of handwriting in written language.

Handwriting Has To Do With A Given Language and Its Conventions of Letter Formation

One of the hard facts of handwriting is that its form and capacity to communicate is determined by the nature and structure of the par-

ticular language being used. Think, for example, what would happen if one would try to transpose the left to right movement, connected script, letter and word spacing and finger-arm movements necessary to English to the writing of Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, or German script.

In America (23) English has been the common language and the cursive and manuscript letter styles have been the context within which writing development of children took place. Of course great variation has existed in cursive styles. Handwriting remains a personal act. Owens (56) pointed out that intra-individual differences were greater when the motor performances of the same person were compared than when inter-individual differences were compared among the performances of different persons on the same motor performance. This suggests that the different phases of writing performance in the same person may show greater variability than comparisons of different individuals on the same writing phase. Owens showed further that variations between repetitions of the same motor act by the same person would be one-seventh to one-eighth the magnitude of individual differences. This discussion and subsequent researches show that one important learning task in the development of handwriting is the internalizing of the normative limits within which an individual will control the variation of his own handwriting performance. This development is not likely to be the product of a single writing style or of the efforts of a single teacher or school year. Three aspects of perception seem to be important in this process—

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perception of form, perception of limits of adequate control in form, and perception of a level of aspiration. Little research (44) has been done on this phase of handwriting.

Breitkopf (10) in studying the intra-individual graphological differences in the writing of 200 men could account for them only on the basis of 1) the principle of special affinities for certain modes of expression, 2) the principle of the significance of the situation for the individual, and 3) the principle of the specific expression as part of the whole expression complex. Dorothy Leggitt (49) proposed that learning to write is the general adaptation of the handwriting movement to a gradually developing perception of form and showed in her study that training in the recognition of basic stroke characters in letter formation improved the handwriting of 15 junior high school remedial writing cases. Treanor (69) showed the effect of establishing a self defined level of writing aspiration on the compositions of an English class. Cole (15) based her whole program of writing instruction on the process of "self-analysis."

The point of the above studies is further underscored by Crider (20) who showed that handwriting is a language and that it is influenced by physiological, psychological, and personality factors. Birge (6) and Wells (22) point out, however, that while the intra-variations of an individual's handwriting cannot be explained purely on the basis of differences in a motor skill and that personality, perceptions of aspirational norms, and psychological factors do contribute to them. The corollary of this conclusion—namely that handwriting can differentiate personal histories and personality traits—is not necessarily true. Bracken, (9) through comparing the writing behavior (pressure) of twins (identical and fraternal) showed that there was no greater similarity between the writing of identical pairs of twins than there were between non-identical twins. He concludes that his study does not support the

inheritance of the characteristic of writing. Garth (33, 34) through his studies of the handwriting of Negroes and Indians shows that when age and school grade are equated, both Negro and Indian children write as legibly and as rapidly as do white children. These groups of studies suggest that we place less emphasis on heredity and ethnic factors and more on the cognitive, aspirational, and perception aspects of learning in the task of learning to write and in the use of penmanship as a tool for writing.

Little Agreement on Ways Letters Are to be Formed

The ways in which children are taught to use to form words, phrases, and sentences play an important role in a child's writing and in programs of writing instruction. Most people assume that all programs of instruction are universally agreed on the way upper case, lower case, and numerals are formed in both manuscript and cursive systems of handwriting. Most people assume also that there is ample evidence supporting advocated letter symbols. Unfortunately both assumptions have little foundation in fact.

The concept that handwriting is primarily a tool of communication and that legibility should be the major criterion has resulted in a trend toward simplicity in letter and numeral forms. In most cases "simple" is defined as the form most appropriate to the development of children. How this was determined is seldom if ever made clear. It is probable that most symbol forms were determined primarily by adult logical analysis of what seemed to be the easiest method of producing a given letter or numeral. The answer to the question, "Should common letters and numerals be taught?" is, therefore, in doubt. If simplicity is to be the criterion of choice, the question becomes: "simple to whom?" What is simple to one child may clearly be far from simple to another.

Surveys of practice and contrasting studies of good and poor handwriting using legibility as a major criterion have identified three major

groups of factors which seem to differentiate good and poor writing: 1) quality and economy of letter formation (speed while always a factor here is considered least important); 2) the relationships and uniformity of letter and word formation (size of letters, alignment, line quality, proportion, spacings, beginnings and endings); and 3) the relationship of the position of the individual to the act of writing and his writing behavior 73, 32, 3. (pp. 22-30). These findings and those which follow, while revealing the importance of "proper" letter formation and alignment, also show that no single element in writing behavior is sufficient in itself to differentiate individual samples of writing. The totality of the writing act is clearly more than the simple sum of its parts.

The studies by Pressey (58), Newland (53, 52), Boraas (8) of the illegibilities in the writing of children and adults offer further information on problems of the formation of writing symbols. Pressey's analysis of 3,000 illegibilities found that 12 per cent of them involved the letter *r*. Seven letters, *r*, *u*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *s* and *t*, accounted for over half of the difficulties in reading. Five malformations—*n* like *u*, *r* like *i*, *e* closed, *d* like *cl*, *c* like *a*, accounted for one-fourth of these difficulties. Newland found that *S*, *O*, *2*; *a*, *e*, *r*, and *t*; and writing *e* like *i* caused most of the illegibilities of writing. Four types of difficulties in letters caused over one-half of all illegibilities: a) failure to close letters, b) closing looped strokes, c) looping non-looped strokes, and d) straight up rather than rounded strokes. Boraas' study shows why the curved letters with no distinguishing characteristic cause most of the illegibilities. All agree that letters *r*, *e*, and *a* are the major trouble makers (65, 60).

Other Factors and Conditions in the Writing Act

The anatomy and physiology of the hand has naturally come in for its share of attention in the study of handwriting. Callewaert (13) in analysis of the anatomy of the hand and its

movement identifies two basic movements necessary for writing: 1) movements of the index finger, thumb, and the middle finger in forming the single letter (inscriptive function) and 2) the movement of the hand along the line (cursive function). Good handwriting, then, according to Callewaert, grows out of the coordination of the inscriptive function and the cursive function of the fingers and forearm thus insuring good formation of letters, natural slant, and flow of the writing along the line. Unfortunately the studies by Woodworth (78) and Myers (51) are not supportive of Callewaert or of each other. Meyers measured the various dimensions of the hand and found its volume by inserting the subject's hand into a calibrated container partially filled with water. While he claimed a "more or less fixed relationship between writing quality and hand measurement," careful examination of his data by the author revealed little or no support for this conclusion. There is no research known to the author which demonstrates any factor related to the physiology or anatomy of the hand which is critical in good writing other than that any normal hand and arm is necessary in the act of writing.

Rowley (61) followed this general line of inquiry and examined the role of low muscle coordination in the production of slow cramped illegible handwriting. Measures of tapping, horizontal and vertical arm movements, and finger movements as measures of muscle coordination showed that slow-cramped handwriting was not the result of low muscle coordination but more likely due to training. Ames (1) in studying the postural and placement orientations of young children showed that the place of their initial writing on the paper moves from lower right to center, to top center, to top left. The passive hand moves from bottom left (2-3 yrs.) to center left (4 yrs.) to top left (5-6 yrs.) to center left (7 yrs.) to bottom left or off paper (8-10 yrs.).

Broden (11) shows that the most efficient

angle of pursuit lies between 135° — 160° . The most difficult is 45° to 70° . This finding, supporting slanted handwriting, agrees with other studies.

It is likely from this that given a healthy child and the opportunity for him to make intelligent adaptations in his orientations to the writing act, good handwriting is a matter of learning and not simply one of motor coordination and psychology.

Townsend (68) realizing that the beginning handwriting of young children is drawing and copying before it becomes a smooth coordinated means for the expression of ideas studied the copying ability in children. His population was 287 New York school children aged six years one month to nine years three months. His tests were copying tests of geometric figures, form perception tests, and various tests of motor behavior. He concluded that copying skill was closely related to chronological and mental age up to the age 7 and 8, then copying showed errors which were not attributable to differences in these variables, but rather to individuals, and different writing tasks. This suggests that unless comprehension and purpose of the writing soon becomes an important part of writing instruction, the child's ability to copy will not carry him much beyond the writing tasks of the first grade.

Surveys of instructional practice reveal that the experience of teachers with children has agreed with Townsend's finding. Floyd (28) in his survey found that seventy per cent of the sampled teachers, provide many opportunities for every child to write in ways that are purposeful.

The problem of how to move from copying to rapid efficient writing has been related during the past half century to the three components of the velocity or speed of the writing movement, the kind of written stroke (vertical, slanted, horizontal, up-down, left-right, right-left, curved, etc.), and the pressure phenomena. Binet and Courtier (5) in 1893 using

unusually modern methods concluded that the velocity of the hand is modified by four principal factors—size of letter, combination of the letters, the nature of the stroke being made, and the direction of the stroke. One specific conclusion of importance to the question of the nature and role of rhythm in handwriting is Binet's observation that one cannot voluntarily force one's hand to move with uniform velocity.

Kircher (48) examined the nature of handwriting development over the eight grade school years with special attention to the first year. Some of his conclusions are important and correspond with recent studies. Maturity in handwriting expresses itself in less and more even pressure (41, 40); the velocity of movement (travel time per millimeter) becomes almost constant with considerable practice; the greater part of writing time is consumed in pauses; and greatest pressure is exerted in the last down stroke.

Dietrick (22) examined carefully the six characteristics of size of letters, width of letters, length difference of letters, way in which letters and words are joined, degree to which letters and words are joined, and angle of slant to see if they are related to each other according to certain laws.

He found that the size of letters is the most important characteristic in regularly occurring relation with other characteristics. Size, width, and angle are closely related. There is no relation between size and the way letters are joined together. Pauses between letters cause larger, narrower, and slower writing. If a person writes fast, he is more likely to have a consistent relation between these six factors; if he writes slowly, the writing is more likely to be unnatural and more under the influence of a certain model. All this suggests the importance of helping the child to move beyond copying to the development of his own patterning or style of the writing act—an act which becomes an integrated complex of form, speed, and relationships in letters, words, and space. The

unifying element must be meaning, since neither letters, strokes, nor words have a common uniform velocity or rhythm.

Rhythm in Handwriting

The introduction of cursive handwriting in our elementary schools usually follows a definite system of procedures. The only outstanding characteristic which is common to all is the dependence upon rhythm and the rhythmic count. The three most frequently used systems—Palmer Method, Zaner-Bloser, and the New Laurel—all recommend counting and having practice in "correct rhythm." It is common practice to develop a series of melodies or rhythmic sayings to aid in the practice of handwriting. It seems important to review the research on what seems to be a universal practice in handwriting instruction.

Drever (25), using apparatus devised by Judd, made one of the early studies of the mechanism of the writing act. Using grip pressure as his referent, he found rhythm was absent from the child's early writing and appears about age eleven. In adults, the rhythm is extremely regular. "The writing has ceased to be drawing—rhythmical point pressures correspond to rhythmical variations in grip pressure—and are analogous to a certain extent to the rhythm of speech." Rhythm here is not the rhythm of time but a rhythm or regularity of pressure exerted on point and grip of the writing instrument.

Studies by Nutt (54) and West (74) tend to accept the presence of a timed rhythm in handwriting and attempt to discover its relation to age (Nutt) and how it can be influenced by timing (West). It is hard to determine what is called rhythm by each author. West suggests his definition when he says, "... good writers among adults made less variation from their average length of time both on the up stroke and down stroke as well as on the total of both than poor writers, but very poor writers may show better natural rhythm than most good writers." While this statement

helps suggest his criterion of what constitutes rhythm, his conclusion about its presence in good and poor writing is confusing to say the least.

The best study on the problem is the one made by Irish (47) in 1948. She measured the actual writing time of each letter, as well as the most frequently used letter combinations, in order to discover whether a rhythmic count would emerge from the timing. Adults were used in order to insure the presence of any possible rhythm pattern. She argued that if handwriting is rhythmical then the time recorded for single letters will vary definitely from letter to letter in accordance with the length of the stroke, the direction of the strokes and the number of strokes. The time recorded for letters in combination or context will remain fairly constant with the time recorded for single letters. Her findings do not show a rhythmic pattern or timing in handwriting. The time for writing any single letter is very close to the time for writing any other. There is a greater range between various measures taken of the same letter in different situations than there is between the measures of different letters. She concludes that the time of writing does not vary, to a degree with the length of stroke, the direction of stroke, or with the number of strokes which would justify a rhythmic count as a teaching procedure. Apparently, our instructional procedures are not in harmony with our research findings.

The Manuscript—Cursive Problem

Most elementary schools in America teach both manuscript and cursive writing. Less than one in twenty-five schools teach either one exclusively. Most schools introduced manuscript writing between the years of 1935 and 1949, with the general practice of starting the instruction of handwriting using manuscript and then between the second half of the second grade and the last half of the fourth grade changing to cursive writing. Thus most children in

America are taught two kinds of letter symbols and two forms of writing.

The arguments for using manuscript symbols rest on three propositions:

First, the straight line, the circle, and spacing forms of the manuscript writing are more in line with the motor and eye-hand-arm coordinations of the young child than are the complex movements and formations of the cursive system. There is plenty of empirical evidence to show that five and six year olds can be taught to write manuscript symbols. There is also some research evidence to support this contention (46, 68, 37).

The second argument bears on the correspondence between the printed symbols the child is learning to read and the manuscript writing symbols often called print-script. Hence the child will not have to learn to read two forms of written language when he is already overwhelmed with the magnitude and complexity of his total learning task. This argument makes sense and facilitates the ease with which all forms of language can be used to support and relate to every other. Most schools which changed to manuscript writing in the primary grades were able to observe a significant increase in the child's story writing when compared with their previous experience with cursive writing.

The third argument in favor of manuscript writing is that it is more legible—an argument well supported by research (70, 30).

The objections to manuscript revolve around five main arguments. First, the common socially accepted form of handwriting is cursive; therefore why teach the child something he will have to change anyway? This duplication is claimed to be wasteful of the child's time in school. The social acceptance of cursive writing is a social value and cannot be judged by research. If duplication is bad, then why teach cursive at all?

Second, there is the claim that manuscript writing is slower and more cramping (tension

producing) than cursive (77, 19, 63, 71, 45). Conrad and Offerman concluded that the factor making manuscript writing less fast was the number of pauses. Increased speed in manuscript was accomplished by cutting down the time of pauses. Winch in examining the data of his six experiments would not take a position that print script was more or less facile than cursive. Hildreth, on the other hand, found that eighth grade pupils copied the unjoined strokes faster than they copied the joined, and concluded that manuscript writing can be as fast as, if not faster than, joined letter writing. The "Correspondent" found the speed decisively in favor of the unjoined hand. Washburne and Morphett (91) found cursive a little faster than manuscript up to the junior high school period when manuscript becomes somewhat faster. Thus the evidence on comparative speed seems to be inconclusive. One is about as fast as the other. Under extreme increases in speed, the quality of the manuscript writing deteriorates less rapidly than cursive.

Third, the evidence on cramping and increased tension in handwriting is meager and completely inadequate. No one has been able to devise a good measure of tension or cramping.

Fourth, there is the claim that the manuscript signature is not legal. Manuscript signatures are legal in most states if it is the usual signature of the individual concerned.

Fifth, manuscript writing has been criticized because of its lack of individuality and character. There are many samples of individual and artistic writing using manuscript symbols both in England and America. On the other hand, it is probably much easier to get consistency, and uniformity, in manuscript, and thus high legibility.

A recent comparative study by Templin (66) of three different writing styles of 454 high school graduates in 1946 from twenty communities located on the eastern seaboard gave promise of shedding light on the effect

that different writing styles have on the nature and quality of adult writing. Unfortunately a microfilm of the thesis could not be obtained and her abstract had to be used for review purposes. On the basis of her abstract, the two major hypotheses: 1) that the legibility of adult handwriting may be affected significantly by the extent to which handwriting is used, by the sex of the writer, and by occupation held by the writer; and 2) that manuscript writing in adult life is more legible than cursive handwriting, could not be substantiated. Perhaps in adult life, the handwriting style itself is not particularly important. The adult may make his own writing style do whatever he wants to accomplish with it. Perhaps more can be done with this problem.

The Transition of Manuscript to Cursive

As has been indicated, most elementary school children change from manuscript to cursive somewhere between the second and fourth grade. It is important, therefore, to determine the effect of early training on later writing (21, 35), the most effective time for change (2), and the procedure which assists in the transition (12). Goetsch and Crider agree with the previous studies of Washburne and Morphett that children can easily make the shift from either cursive to manuscript and vice versa. Learning of one assists in the learning of the other. Arnold, on the basis of records of students in the Germantown Friends School kept over an eight year period, concluded that the fourth grade was about the best time to make the change. No tables or other data are presented to show the basis and evidence for this conclusion.

Again, the author of this review could find no adequate research on the problem of when to make the transition; no adequate criterion is presented which would allow the statement that the second, fourth, and sixth grade is best. The best time is probably determined by the

nature of the instructional program, the convenience of teachers, and the convictions of the teaching staff and community rather than factors in the development and learning of children.

The suggestions (64) for teachers trying to help children make this transition are: 1) help children understand and practice what they are trying to do, 2) do not let joining spoil the clear simplicity of letters, 3) keep "packing" of letters close and in general, 4) avoid loops.

The Left Handed Child

The left-handed child faces many unique difficulties in learning to write. The Wisconsin Survey showed that 62 per cent of all schools studied reported that no special provisions were made for the left-handed child. Of those that did, only one procedure was common to a large number—that of allowing writing to slant to the left. Other procedures mentioned were reversed lighting, special manuals, reversed position and grip, and stub pen points. In general, five groups of suggestions were made as to ways to provide for left-handed writers: 1) body position, 2) use of equipment, 3) special aid in letter formation, 4) special seating arrangement, and 5) special equipment. The lack of help given the left-handed writer is further confirmed by the New York study (7).

Guilford (39) confirms what is the general observation—left handed children do not rank on par, in quality and speed, with those using the right hand. The comment is made that a school situation planned for right-handed writers and the general inability of right-handed teachers to demonstrate a left-handed technique may have had an important role in producing the result.

Cole (16, 17) has written extensively about the problems of left-handed writers and makes many suggestions, based on her analysis of the problem, for their help.

The most recent and perhaps the most com-

prehensive study of the use of the left hand in handwriting has been done by Enstrom (27). He studied 1,103 left-handed writers in grades five through eight. The left-handed writers were classed into two general groups: 1) those who kept the writing hand below the line of writing, and 2) those who kept the writing hand above (wrist hooked). Fifteen different adjustment positions were identified and studied from the point of view of their relative efficiency to produce legible, efficient (speed), and non-smearing handwriting. For those who wrote below the line, three positions proved superior—Position IE—Paper is turned to right (clockwise) more than the reverse of right-handed placement, usually between 60° and 70° with front edge of desk; the angle between axis of forearm and paper ruling is greater than 90° usually 110°; the slant is generally forward. Position ID—Paper placement is reverse of that used by right-handed writers, approximately 30° turn to right; axis of forearm makes 90° angle with paper ruling. Position IF—Paper ruling is 90° with front edge of desk, angle between forearm axis and paper ruling is approximately 130°, / is generally forward. For those who kept hand above line of writing (wrist hooked) only one adjustment proved good (highest in quality but with smearing possibilities). Position IIAA—Paper is turned leftward (counterclockwise) as for right-handed writers. Angle with front edge of desk is usually 30°, there is pronounced hooking of wrist and writing hand above line of writing, wrist is turned on edge, movement is predominantly wrist flexing with some finger action.

This study gives us the first real evidence on the nature of desirable positions for the left-handed writer. The three superior positions identified by Enstrom suggest that the trend of practice of recent years is in the right direction and that the further exploration of the relationships of arm, wrist, writing instrument, and paper marked out by Enstrom will gradu-

ally remedy the present injustices being done to left-handed children.

Handwriting Instruments and Materials

Down through the ages (50) handwriting has been tied up intimately with the development of writing surfaces, instruments, and media. Relatively speaking, astonishingly little comparative progress has been made in writing instrumentation and materials. Man's writing instruments and materials are not too different from what they were 100 years ago.

The Wisconsin Survey (3) (page 39) of the specific instruments used in handwriting programs found the following in indicated order: adult pencil, beginner pencil, fountain pen, chalk, crayon, ball point pen, pen and holder, and the mechanical pencil.

The adult pencil is most frequently used, with fountain and ball point pens increasing in use. The least used instruments are the mechanical pencil and the pen holder and steel nib. In a study of instrument preference, Herrick (42) found that the preferred writing instruments were, fountain pen, ball point pen, and adult pencil. Otto (55) found that in 1948, the majority of large city school systems still restricted the initial use of ink to the pen holder and steel pen. In slightly more than one-half of the schools, however, permissive use of fountain pens was given. Wiles (76) showed that there is no evidence to support the use of the beginner's pencil as an initial writing instrument for children. What evidence there is favors the size of the adult pencil. Whittaker (75) in his study of the efficiency of steel pens and fountain pens found that fountain pens produced writing of higher quality and were preferred by children as writing instruments. The evidence seems to support the use of fountain and ball point pens in programs of writing instruction.

Herrick (43) in a study of the essential characteristics of writing instrument design (shape, thickness, weight, center of gravity,

point of grip, and angles of inclination and rotation) for both children and adults showed that human preferences indicated a round instrument slightly less than half an inch in diameter, a weight of approximately 18.5 grams, center of gravity between two to three inches from writing tip, point of grip averaged 1.22 inches from point of instrument and that there was little or no difference in sex preferences.

Three sizes of paper are generally used in handwriting periods, the half size or extra large with one inch and one-half inch spacing in kindergarten and grades one and two and the regular size (8½x11) with 3/8 inch spacing for all upper grades. Newsprint, easels, and blackboards are commonly used in writing in the primary grades.

There is considerable evidence that adult type writing instruments and materials suitably adapted to their use by children will be in common use in schools. It is probably more important that the writing instrument be efficient and of suitable length than that it represent a unique size or shape.

This Matter of Quality

The common scales for evaluating handwriting are the Ayres (4), Freeman (29), and West (73, 67) scales all developed over twenty years ago. Yet the need to develop a more effective means for helping the child and his teacher to evaluate his handwriting still remains before us. Thorndike emphasized the value of a total judgment of the general goodness or merit of a sample of handwriting—a composite of such factors as legibility, beauty, character, etc. Ayres emphasized the point that the major purpose for handwriting is to be read and stressed legibility (readability). Freeman wanted scales to help a teacher or pupil to analyze their handwriting in terms of letter formation, spacing, quality of alignment, and uniformity of slant. Quant (59) used eye movement photography to study the readability of handwriting samples when Freeman's five factors were systematically varied.

He found compactness in spacing and regularity of slant were the ones favoring legibility.

It seems true that no simple single factor of handwriting distinguishes between samples of good and bad handwriting alone. There is plenty of evidence, however, that one can distinguish between two samples of handwriting as to legibility and recognize which is better. As yet it is not possible to point to the single factor essential in this difference. This suggests the importance of more research in this area and the increasing need for means which will enable the child to make constructive evaluations of his own writing. It is in this direction that the greatest promise for the future in handwriting development seems to lie.

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Research in Spelling

This report of spelling research is intended to provide a ready reference for language teachers to locate studies pertinent to areas of frequent interest and need. It is not a duplication of the comprehensive reports of Horn (13), Fitzgerald (9), and others, but a selected bibliographical listing of research, together with an introductory reference section and a discussion of research implications for the improvement of modern spelling instruction. A more comprehensive bibliography will be made available in a National Conference on Research in English bulletin, to be published this year by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Introduction

Concern with spelling ability (25) and achievement is evident in the voluminous research completed during the past thirty years. Recognizing the fact that spelling is an integral part of the writing (26)-reading (2, 27) and speaking-listening (4, 29) facets of language, researchers have also interested themselves in social and psychological interactions.

Research problems concerning perception (5) in terms of auditory-visual discrimination (5, 29) and imagery, also relate to such areas as generalizations; individual differences; orthography; rules; phonetics (24, 27, 29); grouping of words; and retention (28). Considerable work has been done with regard to remedial teaching, including special attention to spelling difficulty and superior pupils.

Because spelling is an outgrowth of language development (20), research has been done with regard to speaking vocabularies (7) and writing vocabularies, with special attention to adult vocabularies (3, 2, 19); child vocabularies (1); non-school vocabularies; spelling

text vocabularies; and the overlap between child and adult writing vocabularies (6)

Research involving methods of studying spelling (9, 12, 13, 14) has been supplemented by research attention to such matters as: test-study *vs.* study-test (11, 17, 21), the corrected test (11, 17, 21), word presentation by list *vs.* context, use of special equipment, homonyms, incidental teaching, syllabic presentations and attention to syllables (15, 23), and word analysis (23), including marking hard spots.

Tied in with spelling methods are studies concerning word lists and their use with conclusions that are pro and con, time allotments, interest in spelling, motivation, and spelling needs. Some interesting comparisons of instructional materials with known research have been made for both spelling texts and workbooks.

Considerable research has also been completed relative to the evaluation of spelling (8). In connection with evaluation and methods of instruction, significant work has been completed with spelling scales (10), identification of difficult words, and spelling errors (16), including initial errors.

Some implications of research for the improvement of modern spelling instruction

Selection of words to be studied: For the purpose of security in most writing, a spelling program should be built around a central writing core of from two to three thousand words (14). It is a waste of educational time to argue over whether adult or child writing vocabularies should be the basis for the spelling course of study; rather, the central core should in-

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clude those high frequency words needed by both children and adults (6). The extension of individual writing vocabularies from the central core begins in the intermediate grades, at least, and continues throughout the student's formal schooling (14). It is during this period of extending and refining personal writing vocabularies that composition, creative writing, and such study skills as use of the dictionary must carry a major part of the instructional load. The period of extending and refining is also the time in which writing vocabularies become more and more individualized, eventually separating the fine writers from the mediocre ones (14).

Learning to spell: Recent surveys of spelling texts and workbooks indicate acceptance and use of teaching methods which have been shown to be inferior. One of the most widespread of such inferior methods is the contextual approach. Since Hawley and Gallup published their early study, the list presentation of words has been shown to be more efficient than contextual presentation (8).

The comprehensive study by Gates indicated the superiority of the test-study over the study-test method of spelling for the second half of grade three and grades four through six. Subsequent studies completed more recently indicate the superiority of the test-study approach in grade two (11, 17, 21) and grade three. Early objections to the test-study approach on the basis of persistence of initial errors proved to be unfounded.

As part of the test-study approach, the corrected test technique, in which each pupil corrects his own spelling test while the teacher spells each word orally, has been shown to be the most efficient single procedure for learning to spell (11, 17, 21). Other studies have indicated the advantages of the corrected test, but not to the extent found in the studies just mentioned.

Syllabication seems to have some possibilities for improving spelling, though presenting

words visually in syllabified form or by syllabic pronunciation (15) seem to have no advantage. As yet, the effect of a combined presentation of visual syllabication and syllabic pronunciation has not been tested.

The most promising form of word analysis and use of spelling rules appears to relate to suffixes (9). Marking the hard spots in words has little or no value.

Although some recent studies have explored the possibilities of teaching phonic generalizations, it is clear that only those generalizations which have few exceptions and apply to many words should be used. There is little doubt that the numerous sound-to-letter relationships, with their consistencies and inconsistencies, should be a part of spelling instruction. However, the role of phonics in spelling instruction should be supplemental to the direct study of needed words, not as a substitute for direct study.

The many studies on relationships between reading and spelling, and investigations concerning incidental learning show that, for many pupils, a substantial number of words are learned incidentally through reading. Unfortunately, the relationships have misled some educators to conclude that each spelling word should be presented in a contextual setting, both for the visual impact and for purposes of developing meaning. While teachers must check constantly for erroneous or inadequately developed meanings, the basic core of spelling words has ordinarily been in the pupils' speaking, understanding, and reading vocabularies for some time. It is through the use of the test-study method, utilizing the corrected test, that words already known through incidental learning are identified and pupil study is applied only to those words which they do not know how to spell (14).

Teachers have long noticed that children may spell words correctly on tests, then misspell them in written work in other curricular areas. This is almost always a sign of poorly

developed spelling consciousness and conscience. Students must be shown that spelling is personally important to them, that the words they are learning are those most likely to be needed in both the present and the future, that the study methods being used are efficient, that spelling is important in practically *all* writing situations and not just the spelling period, that they are making progress in spelling as a class and as individuals and that satisfaction and pride in good spelling are worthwhile (14). No less important than pupil attitudes toward spelling are teacher attitudes. Dull, lackluster, perfunctory attention to spelling holds little hope for satisfactory spelling achievement.

Evaluation of spelling: Standardized tests provide objective measures of spelling ability, are simple to administer, inexpensive in cost and use of time, and the results lend themselves to statistical analyses (14). Useful as standardized tests are, teachers should understand certain inherent issues, such as validity and reliability of the tests (8, 14). The use of spelling scales (10) should also be helpful if their limitations are recognized (8, 14).

Teachers sometimes suggest that true evaluation of spelling ability lies in the general writings of children (14). Measurement of this kind does have validity in terms of spelling needs and does indicate to the students the importance of spelling in all areas. However, adequate evaluation of the general writings of children is extremely expensive in the use of teacher time and the time required for rather unwieldy tabulations. This method is not as precise as others and the results are often difficult to interpret (14).

A defensible solution to the problem of adequate spelling evaluation is the use of a standardized testing program conducted annually, probably each January. This may then be supplemented by teacher and pupil attention to correct spelling in other areas and consistent concern with pupil, teacher, and parent attitudes and reactions toward spelling (14).

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Evaluating Children's Composition

The headmaster of a school on the fringe of London has a delightful method of helping children to evaluate their own growth in written expression. As is true of most schools in England, each child in this school has in his desk several notebooks in which he writes for different purposes. One notebook may be his diary, another for work in the social studies, another for "sums," and the like. Each child has one notebook that is his "rough" book. In it he may try out any ideas or write anything he wishes, even to lampooning the teacher, because this book is private—no one looks into it without being invited to by its owner. As each child in the school finishes a book he has written other than his "rough" book, he takes it to the office of the headmaster. Together they look it over to see how much the child has improved from the first page to the last. After they have discussed it the child leaves his finished book in the office and goes back to his classroom with a new book and the determination to make this one even better. The headmaster keeps and binds together all of the books a child has finished from age six to the age of eleven-plus, when he goes on to secondary school. Some time during the first term in secondary school the children are invited back to their primary school in groups of six or eight to look over their accumulation of notebooks with the headmaster, then to take them proudly home as a record of their growth through six years.

A great deal has been written regarding standards for the evaluation of children's writing. Teachers often feel defeated and frustrated as they see children content to do work that is less than their best in spite of the teacher's efforts. It would appear that the key to good work may lie not in the standards the school sets for the children's writing, but in the standards each child is helped to set for himself,

because those are the standards he takes with him out into life after he leaves the realm of the teacher's authority. Showing respect for children's compositions by keeping them in some sort of permanent form which makes possible both self-evaluation by the child and evaluation by the teacher over a period of time long enough to show growth is one method of helping children to take pride in their growth and motivating them to stretch upward to new heights.

The Art of Writing

The art of writing as of speaking consists in having something to say and knowing how to say it. It is taken for granted that what one has to say should be worth the effort of speech or the far greater effort of writing. Content and style must be thought of together since in any good composition content should determine form. Few people would agree with the statement quoted from a 1941 report to the Glasgow Education Authority which declared that, "... it is not the duty of the examiner in English to assess the worth of the subject-matter of composition. His concern is not with the thing said but with the saying of it" (27, p. 119). Teachers who wish to help children become writers turn their attention first to what the child wishes to say and his purpose in saying it, and, last to an appraisal of the form in which the ideas are set forth. "Good English," says Vicars Bell, is "that which is forceful, direct and intimate writing of a style peculiar to the writer." Correct English is "that which is composed, spelt, and punctuated according to the best usage" (2, p. 77). Good English is the child's first need. It is impossible to correct or improve a pupil's expression un-

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til he offers enough of it to work with. When it is flowing as freely as he is capable of at the time, he is ready for help with form and correctness.

Writing is one of the language arts, and it is highly dependent for its growth on the growth in the other language arts. The quality of writing is closely related to the quality of speech. While an occasional secondary school student or adult writes better than he talks, it is a rare child who writes, at least in the early grades, any better than he talks. Few write as well as they talk. If a child rarely uses a complete or grammatically standard sentence and still more rarely twists his tongue or his mind around a compound or complex sentence, his written sentences will be as weak as those he speaks. The sentence structure and grammar a child brings to school are those of his home and neighborhood. He has learned them thoroughly by the time he enters school at the age of five or six. Many years of intensive effort will be required to change them.

Writing is a form of expression; therefore, the writer must have something to express. The subject matter and the ideas for writing are obtained through observing, listening, reading and other types of experience. The quality of what is expressed in writing depends upon the quality of thinking that undergirds it. If the ideas a child expresses orally are meager, immature, and lacking in clarity, his writing will exhibit all of these problems in even greater measure.

Essential Types of Evaluation

Evaluation of composition in the schools requires looking at composition in a variety of ways and from a number of angles. No one type of evaluation will serve the needs of any teacher or any class or school. At least six types of evaluation will serve the needs of any continuous application and some for periodic application: 1. There is the evaluation of a piece of writing. Teachers and pupils do this in one way or another practically every day. 2.

There is the evaluation of the growth of an individual child from day to day, within the school year, and from year to year throughout his school life. 3. Teachers are concerned with the growth of the class as a whole and with comparisons among classes. 4. Administrators and supervisors as well as teachers are concerned with the quality of composition within an entire school. 5. Both the school and the teacher evaluate methods of teaching writing. 6. There is periodic evaluation of the total curriculum in writing within grade levels, within the school as a whole, and within the school system. Parents, employers who hire the school's product, and the general public are concerned with the quality of writing the school produces, but their concerns will be dealt with only indirectly in this article.

Evaluating a piece of writing or many of them is an almost daily occurrence at all levels of schooling beyond first grade. How it is done depends on the level of maturity of the writer, the purpose for which the writing is done, and the needs of the writer at the time. Evaluating the growth of a child is a longitudinal process and is the task of all teachers who deal with the teaching of English. Evaluation of the writing of a class is a continuous process though some measures may be applied only intermittently. Studies of the quality of composition in an entire school or school system, evaluation of methods of teaching, and of the total curriculum in writing may be periodic studies carried on by the entire staff at stated times or as need arises.

Methods of evaluating composition differ at the different levels of the school's program. The emphasis placed on content and on form depends on the stage the pupil has reached. In the earliest grades children may furnish the content, but the teacher assumes full responsibility for the form in which it is set out. By the end of the secondary school pupils are expected to assume responsibility for both content and form. A good program of evaluation is ac-

complished through adjusting criteria and methods of evaluating to the level and needs of the individual, class, or school being studied.

The Beginning Stage of Composition

Young children's first compositions are dictated for the teacher to write. Frequently this dictation is guided by the teacher's comments and questions and thus represents both child and teacher. The teacher is responsible for the form which the material takes on the paper, its spelling, punctuation, and arrangement. The child furnishes the ideas and expresses them in his own way with a minimum of guidance. At this stage, the teacher's evaluation of the child's composition deals with the quality of the child's ideas and the evidence these offer of the richness or meagerness of his background of experience as well as with his powers of expression. The purpose of evaluation is clearly that of determining where the child stands with regard both to content for composition and skill in expression so that the teacher knows where to start her guidance and how to proceed with it. Her comments regarding what the child dictates are designed to draw him out, to help clarify his thinking, and to aid him in expressing his meaning.

Anecdotal records help the teacher of beginners to study each child's language ability and his needs. These records tend to show the child's attitude toward himself, the freedom and ease with which he speaks, and the quality and maturity of his language and of his thinking. They make clear the child's needs so that the teacher can devise means of meeting them.

The child's own evaluation of his composition lies in the satisfaction he finds in watching the teacher transfer his words to the paper and the use to which his contribution is put. Since expression is not forced and the child himself determines its content, the values for him are found in satisfying expression and in the concepts of form that emerge as he sees his words take shape under the teacher's hand. The message of the composition is the most im-

portant item for consideration in the mind of the child and should be kept so.

These same values obtain as the child begins to write his composition for himself. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and arrangement on the paper are guided by the teacher as she helps the child to say in writing what he wants to say. All types of writing tend to be managed in this way as long as children need such help though emphasis on independence and the use of self-help resources—word lists, picture dictionaries, models, and guide sheets for headings and the like—are encouraged as the child is ready for them. The teacher's evaluation of the child's progress is a continuous one. The personality traits that the child shows, the amount of help he needs, his growth in interest, in initiative, in sustained attention to the writing task, in independence, as well as in technical skills of handwriting and spelling are all a part of the evaluation. The teacher's observation of the child's behavior, her anecdotal records, and the writing the child produces form the materials for evaluation. Though the teacher evaluates the child's writing for content and for form, what is happening to the child is more important than what he produces.

The lack of controlled research concerned with evaluation of the compositions of young children points to the fact that personality development and development of ability to write are completely interwoven. Grading papers and assigning marks or ratings to them is completely inappropriate at this stage. Also inappropriate is the assigning of writing which the child is to do independently and turn in for the teacher's comments. All writing of any consequence should be done when the teacher is free to guide and to help while the child writes. This early stage in learning to write is a critical one. If a child is asked to write only when he has something to write, has a purpose for writing, and can write with all the help he needs, he is on the way to becoming a writer.

Every teacher of older children and every adult knows that there are people in any group who dislike and actually dread attempting any writing task. It appears true that for many, if not most of them, aversion to writing was developed at least in part by unwise requirements during this critical early period. Children who, during this period, find satisfaction and fulfillment in writing go on to achieve at higher levels. Those who find writing a laborious, discouraging and distasteful experience carry throughout their lives the attitudes built during this period unless at some later time a wise and understanding teacher takes active steps to build in these individuals a sense of personal worth and confidence in the worth of their ideas.

Every piece of writing produced by a child in the primary grade is a reflection of the oral work that goes on in that grade. A former Inspector in Her Majesty's service in England has declared, "... the atmosphere and general attitude that give rise (to good writing) are almost always those of constant conversation and oral alertness. It may be safely said that if a teacher is having difficulty with the written English of his school, and finds the children wooden, unresponsive, and unwilling to put their thoughts on paper, the first thing he should look at is the oral side; it is probable that the fault is there" (6, p. 65). Evaluation of the child's level of operation in oral work must accompany evaluation of his ability to write and probably should actually precede it. The two cannot be separated because one is clearly the outgrowth of the other.

A recent study throws light on children's use of sentences in their speech and therefore indicates what they are potentially capable of in their writing. Templin (21), in a study which brings up to date the earlier studies of Davis (7) and McCarthy (14), found that children today use longer responses and fewer one-word responses than did children of three to eight years of age twenty to thirty years ago.

This difference becomes significantly greater when the older subjects are compared. Children of upper socio-economic status groups consistently used longer remarks than did children from lower socio-economic status groups. When the sentence usage of the 8-year old sample was taken as a measure of terminal status over the five-year span studied, there was a decrease in the proportion of incomplete sentences, little change in the use of sentences without a phrase, and an increase in the use of all types of sentences that involve increasing complexity of sentence structure such as coordination or subordination (21, p. 103, 104). It is interesting to note that Templin found no essential differences in the use of various types of sentences by boys and girls. Of particular significance is the fact that the structure of adult grammar has already imposed the pattern of word selection upon children by the age of three.

An early study by Betzner shows the range of content and form found in original compositions dictated by children (3). It would be interesting to know how different such dictated composition might be today if children used the entire range of the possibilities they are capable of conceiving. Television, travel in parents' cars, books available in every supermarket, and the breadth of other experiences available to children today may have pushed their potential limits considerably higher.

Types of Written Composition

Several types of writing emerge as the curriculum in writing expands through the grades. These can be roughly distinguished as personal and creative, utilitarian, and critical and intellectual. Utilitarian writing is found at all age levels as an integral part of school work. Personal and creative writing are encouraged from the beginning and form an important part of the curriculum in writing from the primary grades upward. Critical writing is found infrequently in the early grades but appears oc-

asionally even there as children indicate in writing their reaction to characters and episodes in stories they have read or heard.

Many teachers maintain that the bulk of work designed to develop skill in dealing with form and correctness should be done on the practical, utilitarian writing. The elementary school child should be encouraged to do as much free, creative writing as he is willing to do. Unless this is to be kept for permanent use or enjoyment it is not corrected and put into final form but merely shared with the group through reading aloud by the author or the teacher. Creative writing may take the form of imaginative stories, poems, plays, or, with the older children, essays though it may be of the personal sort represented by personal letters, anecdotes, descriptions, and narratives based on personal experience. Utilitarian writing, on the other hand, is a service-type of writing growing out of classroom needs and activities. It may take the form of business letters, announcements, reports, directions and how-to-do-it papers, and the like. Critical writing consists of expression of thought and opinion by means of short editorials, book reports, critiques of literature, and research papers. Usually these are treated as teaching-learning experiences which call for reworking and refinement of original drafts.

Writing in the Middle Grades

Children in the middle grades do a number of kinds of writing and for a widening number of purposes. The emphasis on imaginative, creative writing continues with thought given to what makes it interesting and how to achieve it. Class discussion of quality may include attention to an opening sentence or paragraph which catches attention and interest, a plot that is built up in an interesting manner, and a conclusion that is clear and satisfying. Through discussion and comparison of their own stories with those in books they become increasingly good judges of quality. Revision may follow evaluation or the child may lay aside this at-

tempt and try to incorporate points of improvement into his next effort. Writing, sharing, evaluation by the class and self-evaluation are closely interwoven. The teacher enters into the class discussion to raise children's sights regarding techniques, help them appreciate the growth of the child who finds writing difficult, and to spur the competent or gifted child on to higher levels of aspiration.

Personal writing that is to be shared with the group or used to serve a purpose—an anecdote, a report of experience, or possibly a personal letter may be evaluated and revised if the occasion warrants it. This may be done by the teacher with the individual child or it may serve as material for class discussion depending on the teacher's judgment of the worth of such discussion to the child or the group.

Utilitarian writing that is to serve a class or individual purpose is usually carried through several stages of refinement. After the material for the report, announcement, or business letter has been assembled, the pupil writes a rough draft, reads it for clarity, completeness and satisfactory presentation of content, reads it again for form to catch and remedy any problems of spelling, punctuation, and the like. He may then take it to the group or the teacher for reading and criticism before turning out a final, carefully executed draft.

In the middle grades, as in the primary grades, evaluation is a part of the writing process. It is an integral part of the entire teaching-learning scheme. Assigning writing tasks, grading them and marking the errors, and handing the papers back to the pupils is profitless activity because it omits the best opportunities for teaching while interest is at high level. The end result of such procedure is usually little actual teaching and still less learning. At intervals, a set of papers may be studied by the teacher to determine the progress of the class as a whole, to assess her own teaching methods, and to compare the work of the class with that of other classes or with available norms.

Watts recommends the assignment of three-sentence compositions as a method of developing disciplined writing. He would require children from time to time to write all that is of interest or importance to them about a topic in no more and no fewer than three sentences. This compels children to exercise their judgment and skill for a perfectly definite purpose. They learn through this experience to get quickly off the mark, to distribute ideas among the sentences, and to give thought to sentence construction and emphasis. The sentences children write differ according to age and maturity. Class discussion and evaluation of the product provide children with goals to work toward in their writing yet allow for individual differences in style as well as maturity. Watts has devised a three-sentence written composition scale for judging the maturity of such compositions. (22, pp. 141-142).

Development of sentence structure and "degree of grammaticalness" (a useful phrase coined by the structural linguists) enter into any appraisal of the growth of writing competence in the middle grades. The most informative research on the development of the sentence in the writing of children is doubtless that of La Brant (12) who analyzed the writing of over a thousand pupils from eight years upward, with a view to classifying the various types of dependent clause used at different ages. She found: (1) that dependent clauses increased in frequency as writers became more mature and that at the same time writing increased in complexity and clarity of thought; (2) that the relation between sentence-complexity and chronological age was closer than between sentence-complexity and mental age, suggesting that experience plays an important part in the mastery of language; and (3) that the dependent clauses least used were noun clauses and adverbial clauses of condition, concession, place, purpose, result, and comparison. These constituted at each mental level less than 6 per cent of all clauses used.

One wonders whether this record would be different if elementary schools placed less emphasis on formal grammar and more on an approach suggested by the studies of the structural linguists and their analysis of English. As children progress in maturity they can be led to realize that sentences can be made to express thoughts with increasing clarity and interest by the addition of movables of a variety of sorts. The simple subject-predicate sequence, "Tom came," can be enriched by the addition of movables which tell where, when, why, how and for what purpose, as in the following examples: "Tom came home yesterday to visit his parents." "Yesterday, because it was their anniversary, Tom came home to visit his parents and surprise them with the gift of a new car." Changing the verb in the predicate slot adds new possibilities, as in: "Because yesterday was their anniversary, Tom flew home to surprise his parents and delight them with his unexpected visit." Children learn how to weave ideas together into well-constructed longer sentences through opportunity to play with movables and arrange them in different positions in relation to the two essential slots, subject and predicate. They detect the fact that a change in position may alter emphasis or create a new shade of meaning. Intonation and meaning determine punctuation within the written sentence (9, 17, 22).

While it is true that length of sentence and number of dependent clauses are indicative of growth beyond the simple sentence, mere increase in the number of dependent clauses must not be overweighted as evidence of progress in the use of language. It may be found that a single sentence pattern is used over and over again as it is in the folk story, "This is the house that Jack built." Use of a variety of types of subordination represents a higher level of skill than much use of only a few forms. As children's writing skill advances they tend to use simple sentences containing prepositional phrases and infinitive expressions in place of

clauses (22). Examples such as the following begin to appear: "To his surprise, the boy returned quickly," in place of "He was surprised that the boy returned quickly," or "Being very tired, he sat down to rest," in place of "He sat down to rest because he was very tired." Compression and use of fewer words may be evidence of greater sophistication and command of language than the use of a larger number of words.

Children of middle and upper grades learn to plan their composition with increasing skill, to utilize many resources for the gaining of content and ideas and to use effectively the dictionary, handbooks of form and style, and other self-help resources. Careful proofreading follows the writing of a first draft and making a final copy climaxes the effort of making the necessary revisions in expression of ideas, statement of fact, sequence, phraseology, and spelling. The making of the final copy provides the writer with the experience of putting every part of his work into shape that will be a credit to him. It reinforces what he learns from the corrections he has made. While these final steps may seem to some children laborious and distasteful, if the purpose for which the writing is done is one that the child can identify with, he tends to view his final product with real satisfaction. Self-evaluation with recognition of personal needs and awareness of personal growth can be encouraged through utilizing children's writing in a variety of satisfying ways and in the kind of longitudinal overview provided for by the English headmaster mentioned at the beginning of the article.

Composition in the Secondary School

In 1917 the Hosié report on English in the secondary school criticized the program in composition as too ambitious, formal and literary, too little concerned with speech and too much concerned with grammatical and rhetorical analysis. (11). It recommended a broad range of composition activities with attention to both utilitarian and imaginative writing. It

called for more emphasis on practical activities and less on the purely literary, more time devoted to actual writing and less to theory. It foreshadowed present day emphasis on oral expression and on the teaching of functional grammar.

Many writers from that time to the present have reiterated the points made in this early report. There have been far more studies of composition on the secondary level than on the elementary. These are admirably summarized in the section on English in *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* (18). The trends which developed from early studies were brought into focus in *An Experience Curriculum in English* (10), published in 1935. This publication marked what was probably the first attempt to describe growth sequences from kindergarten through twelfth grade. That a unified program throughout this span has not been achieved is evidenced by the fact that the Conference on Basic Issues in the Teaching of English held in 1959 listed as one of its major recommendations the development of such a unified program on a nation-wide scale.

Emphasis on grammar still holds a large place in the composition program of the secondary school though there is little agreement as to its value and the weight it should carry in the total program. The research on grammar is well summarized and thoughtfully evaluated by DeBoer in this series. An attitude that appears to be growing in England as well as in the United States is set forth by Smith. "The plain fact is that no one ever wrote a whole better for having an outdated English Grammar open by his side, and it should be realized that the grammarians' efforts to reconcile ever-changing usage with their set formulæ must inevitably leave them well in the rear of current practice The belief that one can write and speak well only out of a background of grammatical knowledge is a strongly-held superstition" (19, pp. 130-131).

A question asked by the members of the

Conference on Basic Issues in the Teaching of English participated in by members of the American Studies Association, College English Association, Modern Language Association, and National Council of Teachers of English is, "Could national standards for student writing at various levels be established, and what would be their value?" The Conference recognizes that evaluation of student writing is difficult. "Some teachers," they admit, "mark only mechanical and grammatical errors, leaving students with the impression that learning to write is a negative matter—the avoidance of such errors. Others go too far in the other direction and grade very subjectively, leaving the student with the impression that the art of writing well is merely the knack of appealing to the tastes and whims of his particular teacher." Reconciling these differences and helping teachers understand what writing is and how it can be developed may prove more valuable than any sort of norm. The research that is available indicates what every teacher knows—that the range of ability in any class is very wide. It would appear on the surface that national norms are unworkable though research might prove that some type of scale, flexibly applied, would be useful.

Evaluating a Piece of Writing

Any manuscript written by a student should be written for a definite audience and should reach its audience. Some papers are written for the class, some for the teacher. In any case there should be some reaction to what has been written. If the paper has been written for the class the author may read it himself, or the teacher may read the whole or selected parts of it to the class. Often, the author prefers to have the teacher read it and lead the discussion regarding it. If, in the reading, the teacher corrects unacceptable usage this is in itself a way of teaching that is highly acceptable to the author. The author's name should not be divulged unless he is willing to have it known. The evaluation may be more fruitful without it.

Good discussion, La Brant says, takes time for thought (13). Students should be encouraged to take a moment for thinking before commenting on a composition that is read to them. At all times, the first comments should deal with the message of the paper and the purpose it is designed to serve. Evaluation should not result in rating the paper *good* or *bad*. It should deal with the thought that is conveyed, and young people should be led to realize that a *good* paper is one that does something important to the reader or hearer. All discussion should encourage the author to continue writing and to write increasingly well.

Marking papers that have been handed in calls for the same care and the same attention to the psychological reaction of the writer that is true of class discussion. Red-penciling errors and putting down a grade is profitless expenditure of the time and energy of the teacher. A less well-trained person than he could do that. The student who receives a paper with many errors marked and a poor grade rarely studies his problems and corrects the errors. In consequence, the same errors appear on the next paper and the next.

The comments on a student's paper should cause him to dig a little deeper, think through his topic and his purpose more carefully, and put his thoughts down more clearly and accurately. Attention must include form as well as content. If the writer is clear about his purpose and knows what he has to say, he usually writes in complete sentences, but if the thinking lacks clarity the writing will present the same problem.

Evaluating the Growth of an Individual

Case studies of children's progress in reading are found in many books but similar studies of children's writing are rare. Probably the most extensive and inclusive studies available in the literature are those of the Bronxville children studied by Burrows and others (5). These studies present detailed sketches of each child as a person with all his strengths

and problems and the traits that are uniquely his. The samples of the child's writing are fitted into their setting and portray the growth taking place in the child himself as well as in the writing.

Some principals have selected samples of children's writing added each year to the children's folders in the official cumulative file. The series of compositions from a school in Baltimore which appears in the chapter on Writing in the book *Language Arts for Today's Children* (15) is such a collection. Through it one can see growth in power to compose sentences, to spell, to write and to express ideas clearly and vividly. The emergence of individual style is interesting to trace.

Many teachers arrange a folder for each child in which samples of his work are accumulated. Children find as much interest in the accumulation as the teacher and frequently come to her, a paper in each hand, to say, "Look, this is the way I wrote a way back last fall. Don't you think I'm doing better now?" Children find great satisfaction and real motivation in evidence that they are growing in power. The teacher's evaluation of each child's progress is always with reference to himself—the distance from the point at which he started to the point which he has achieved. Children are not judged by the application of an arbitrary standard nor expected to attain an established norm. Each child's work is judged with relation to his own potential. Slow children develop pride in what they can accomplish, and gifted children are encouraged to expand their powers as rapidly as their capacity permits.

Surveying Composition in a School

An evaluation of composition in a class or school is a composite of appraisal of each individual's ability to communicate his thoughts and feelings in various written forms appropriate to his purpose, to the specific occasion, and to the reader whom he intends to reach. Since the language act grows out of the experience of the individual, the situation in which the act

is performed, and the skill of the individual in the situation exact measurement is extremely difficult. Language power and thought power, Smith states (19), go hand in hand. One cannot be assessed without attention to the other. Language is a social instrument which cannot be isolated and measured in the same sense that spelling or arithmetic skill can be measured. For these reasons, evaluation in language has remained an inconclusive field of educational research.

Whether the evaluation being attempted is evaluation of the work of a class or of a school or school system some of the variables must be identified as a starting point for the building of criteria. Smith (20) used the following in her study of the English program in the elementary schools of New York: the wealth and originality of ideas and the facility of expression in handling the mechanics of language. The three variables that are almost certain to appear in any list of criteria are content, logical sequence, and mechanics of expression.

The administrative and supervisory staffs of a school or school system study the status of composition at intervals or as need arises. A setting may be arranged within which all children will write, possibly in response to a film, a dramatization, or some school-wide occurrence. Witty and Martin report a study of compositions children wrote in response to a film (24). An administrator may ask for a set of papers from a class or sets from all the classes in a school or school system. Papers may be evaluated by a committee and analyzed for content, mechanics, and style. Seattle has a program of evaluation which is geared to their course of study (16). Portland, Oregon carries on a program of city-wide evaluation (25). Composition scales are difficult to devise because of the social content of writing. The survey committees which evaluate the compositions tend to devise their own rating scheme to fit the situation and the type of composi-

tion which was required.

One standardized test may be of limited service in a school survey of composition skills. The *Language Arts* tests of the SRA Achievement Series for grades 4-6 and 6-9 constitute a basic literacy measure in the form of a proof-reading test of capitalization, punctuation, and usage.

No single measure can be accepted as accurately portraying the level of development of any writer. Several kinds and units of writing from each individual should be examined before passing judgment on writing skills.

The purpose of evaluation is to find weaknesses to be strengthened and strengths to be expanded, refined, and deepened. Any program of evaluation comes back finally to the individual. Since growth in writing is closely tied up with all other aspects of individual growth, the individual must be strengthened in order to strengthen his writing. Expanding the individual's contacts, deepening his insights, helping him to think more clearly and feel more deeply—all these will improve the content of his writing. Individual help with problems of form in which he is weak will improve his handling of mechanics.

Children can learn to take pride in their own good writing, and to recognize quality in the writing of others. It is thus that standards for composition become the writer's own and take on lasting value.

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