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THE  
EDUCATIONAL  
LEADER



CONTENTS

The General Education Movement:  
Its Development, Its Future  
W. Hugh Stickler

Report of Communication Workshops at K. S. T. C.  
Communication—A General Definition  
Jean McColley

A Statement About the Communication Course  
at K. S. T. C.  
Robertson Strawn

Review of "*The Sable Arm*"  
by Dudley Taylor Cornish  
Major John H. Cobb

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# THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER

VOLUME XXI • NUMBER 1

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## The General Education Movement: Its Development, Its Future <sup>1</sup>

By W. HUGH STICKLER, Director

Office of Educational Research and Service, Florida State University

The general education movement has now been under way for something like a third of a century. During this period American institutions of higher education have devoted constantly increasing attention to a re-examination of their purposes. Hundreds of institutions have already launched new programs designed to give their students a systematic and realistic grasp of the basic problems confronting mankind today. Scores of other institutions have such programs in the blueprint stage. The general education movement has achieved substance.

This morning I come to you primarily as a reporter. In that capacity I wish to discuss with you very briefly seven topics: (1) the genesis and rationale of the general education movement; (2) the goals of general education; (3) characteristics of the movement; (4) philosophical approaches to general education; (5) differences between liberal and general education; (6) accomplishments of the general education movement during the past third of a century; and (7) probable developments during the next third of a century. You will note that the first five topics are largely in the nature of review; in dealing with these topics I shall rely heavily upon the writings of other contributors to the general education movement. The last two topics deal with certain research now nearing completion in the Office of Educational Research and Service at the Florida State University.

### Genesis and Rationale <sup>2</sup>

For hundreds of years prior to the late nineteenth century the traditional classical curriculum had been calculated to satisfy the needs of all college students. Knowledge by present-day standards

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1. An address presented before the faculty of the Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas, September 7, 1956.

2. See Chapter XXIV, especially pp. 414-415, of Stickler, W. Hugh, ed., *Organization and Administration of General Education*. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company, 1951.



was limited and broad; college courses were few. Seldom did the number exceed a few dozens or, at most, a few scores. Tremendous increases in knowledge, however, outmoded the classical curriculum. The reform, introduced by President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, led to the so-called free elective system. Soon after the turn of the century almost every liberal arts college in the nation had followed Harvard's lead. The free elective system was almost universally accepted.

The new system had its merits. It recognized the great advances of science and the emergence of many new fields of learning which had had no place in the classical curriculum. It recognized also the many new purposes which brought students to our colleges and universities. The free elective system, at least in its early stages, still maintained the ideal of the rounded man, one enabled through broad college training to develop his own talents and to live effectively as a person and as a member of society.

But things began to happen within the free elective system. Two developments which Eliot could not possibly foresee served to make his reform the basis for changes which might have appalled him. The first was the increasing pressure on colleges to offer practical training—that is, training which, whatever its contribution to the making of a rounded man, would equip the graduate to earn a living, or at least to get a job. Once the bonds of the classical curriculum were loosed, *utility* became the prime criterion in selecting courses and the door was open to a plethora of new courses including purely vocational ones. The second development, a corollary to the first, was the increasing social and economic value of the baccalaureate degree in America, which tended to make a college education the normal prerequisite for almost every kind of white collar job. The upshot of these trends was a tremendous growth in college enrollments. And here in the mid-twentieth century the end of this increase in enrollments is by no means in sight.

The intentions of the free elective system were good; the outcomes were unfortunate. The rationale recognized the ever expanding body of knowledge and the individual differences of students as reflected in their needs, interests, and abilities. The result of the new flexible system, however, was a proliferation of courses such as to stagger the imagination. Over a period of time a situation developed in which it was not at all unusual for universities to offer courses numbering into the thousands. At best the student could not take more than a smattering of courses and these were frequently

unrelated. In spite of its good intentions the free elective system led to fragmentation, splintering, and dissolution of the unified curriculum. Departments multiplied and specialization became the order of the day. In their rebellion against the classical curriculum the colleges and universities sacrificed the rounded man for the pointed one.

General education is an attempt to restore a reasonable degree of unity to undergraduate education.

### The Goals of General Education

General education has been variously defined. President Dwight Eisenhower described it as that education ". . . which helps the student achieve the solid foundation of understanding of man's social institutions, of man's art and culture, and of the physical and biological and spiritual world in which he lives. It is an education which helps each individual learn how to relate one relevant fact to another; to get the total of relevant facts affecting a given situation in perspective; and to reason critically and with objectivity and moral conscience toward solutions to those situations and problems."

Earl J. McGrath uses a shorter definition: "General education is that which prepares the young for the common life of their time and their kind." A decade ago the President's Commission on Higher Education spoke of general education as ". . . the term that has come to be accepted for those phases of non-specialized and non-vocational learning which should be the common experience of all educated men and women." The California Study of General Education in the Junior Colleges defined the term thus: "General education is that part of education which encompasses the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by each individual to be effective as a person, a member of a family, a worker, and a citizen." The faculty in my own institution, the Florida State University, worked out a number of years ago this definition: "General education is that part of the total educational program which, as distinguished from vocational and professional education, seeks primarily to develop in the student those skills, understanding, attitudes, and that set of values which will equip him for effective personal and family living and responsible citizenship in a democratic society."

Here are five definitions of general education. There is some divergence among them. There is, however, perhaps as much agreement among them as there would be among five different definitions of liberal education. I would maintain, moreover, that within this

apparent divergence there is a dominant unity of *purpose*. There is a determination, a dedication, a commitment to educate young men and women to understand, uphold, and improve the freedom which is their heritage and to imbue them with the zeal to become informed, intelligently critical, active, and responsible citizens in a democratic society.

The number of sets of objectives developed for programs of general education is almost legion. You here at Kansas State Teachers College have a set; we at the Florida State University have a set; a set was developed during the California Study of General Education in the Junior College; the Committee on Design of General Education of the American Council on Education produced a fine set; and the President's Commission on Higher Education came up with perhaps the best known set of all. Scores if not hundreds of other statements of general education objectives are in existence.

Since the statement of goals of general education developed by the President's Commission on Higher Education is so widely known and since it has been endorsed and accepted by so many institutions, suppose we review it briefly here.

According to the Commission,<sup>3</sup> it is the task of general education to provide the kinds of learning and experience that will enable the student to attain certain basic outcomes, among them the following:

1. To develop for the regulation of one's personal and civic life a code of behavior based on ethical principles consistent with democratic ideals.
2. To participate actively as an informed and responsible citizen in solving the social, economic, and political problems of one's community, state, and nation.
3. To recognize the interdependence of the different peoples of the world and one's personal responsibility for fostering international understanding and peace.
4. To understand the common phenomena in one's physical environment, to apply habits of scientific thought to both personal and civic problems, and to appreciate the implications of scientific discoveries for human welfare.
5. To understand the ideas of others and to express one's own effectively.
6. To attain a satisfactory emotional and social adjustment.
7. To maintain and improve his own health and to co-operate actively and intelligently in solving community health problems.
8. To understand and enjoy literature, art, music, and other cultural activities as expressions of personal and social experience, and to participate to some extent in some form of creative activity.

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3. President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy*. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Vol. I, pp. 50-57.

9. To acquire the knowledge and attitudes basic to a satisfying family life.

10. To choose a socially useful and personally satisfying vocation that will permit one to use to the full his particular interests and abilities.

11. To acquire and use the skills and habits involved in critical and constructive thinking.

Concerning statements of general education objectives let me point out two things. First, there is a high degree of agreement regarding the purposes of general education; we know pretty well what it is we are trying to do. Second, it should be noted that the outcomes of general education are ultimately to be evaluated in terms of action, of performance, of behavior, not in terms of mastering particular bodies of subject matter *per se*.

### Characteristics of the Movement

A decade ago Earl J. McGrath launched *The Journal of General Education*. In the very first issue of that periodical he wrote an editorial entitled "The General Education Movement."<sup>4</sup> I think it is a classic and I should like to review with you the points he made concerning the characteristics of the general education movement. Virtually all of the material in this section is taken from this editorial.

McGrath listed seven characteristics of the general education movement as follows:

1. *General education is not concerned with the esoteric and highly specialized knowledge of the scholar.* It does not include the factual minutiae of investigations at the frontiers of knowledge. Rather, it deals with common knowledge and with immature minds.

2. *The salient feature of this movement is a revolt against specialism.* Even elementary courses have come to reflect the specialized interests of the scholar. Much instruction is organized as if all students will pursue advanced courses in that area. Such education is not appropriate for the average student who will not specialize in that field of learning.

3. *Another characteristic of the general education movement is its reaction against vocationalism.* Vocational courses have multiplied nearly as rapidly as have highly specialized courses in the common disciplines. Even many of the liberal arts courses (*e. g.*, chemistry, physics, mathematics, economics, art) have been vocationalized or professionalized. General education has no quarrel with specialism or vocationalism. It only seeks to re-establish some measure of balance in the student's total program.

4. *The reaction against specialism and vocationalism is accompanied by an effort to integrate the subject matter of the related disciplines.* The various disciplines guard their borders like hostile nations guard their frontiers. A

4. McGrath, Earl J., "The General Education Movement," *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. I, No. 1 (October, 1946), pp. 3-8.  
larger proportion of the total college program is being prescribed. This

scholar dare never "get out of one's own field." That is a cardinal sin. Yet general education emphasizes the interrelatedness of learning. In promoting integration of knowledge among the various areas of learning general education seeks to do precisely that upon which the specialized disciplines frown.

5. *To increase further the scope of education and to combat specialism a larger proportion of the total college program is being prescribed.* This prescription, as I have said earlier, is an effort to re-establish balance in the curriculum. Not infrequently the prescribed general education program amounts to one or two full academic years of work.

6. *Exponents of general education believe that education should be more closely related to the vital needs and problems of human beings.* A matter so important as that of having a student see the relationship between college instruction and real life problems cannot be left to chance. General education seeks to enliven instruction by using real issues and concrete experiences as a point of departure. This approach is replacing the earlier methodology of teaching based on the internal logic of the subject.

7. *Lastly, those interested in general education seek an improvement in the teaching of the general student.* Changes in the curriculum and new teaching aids will not automatically improve instruction. Unless the teacher is adequately prepared for his professional duties and unless he accepts the teaching of general education courses with enthusiasm and dedication his teaching will often be spiritless, aimless, and ineffectual. The advocates of general education seek superior teaching for the hundreds of thousands of undergraduates who do not intend to become specialists in given areas but who need and can profit from instruction which will prepare them for an intelligent, responsible, and full life.

Thus we see that general education is a reaction *against* some things; it is a movement *for* some things. It is *against* education limited to specialized knowledge; it is *for* greater unity in the learning experience. It is *against* the traditional organization of subject matter into more or less isolated academic disciplines; it is *for* interdisciplinary organization of subject matter. It is *against* the notion of an especially educated elite; it is *for* a common educational experience for all. It is *against* learning as merely reading, listening, memorization, and reflection; it is *for* learning as an application of thinking to personal and social problem-solving. It is *against* college curriculums merely as preparation for graduate study; it is *for* a curriculum that can be both preparatory and useful in itself. It is *against* liberal arts courses taught so as to seem irrelevant to human living in our time; it is *for* the construction of courses that will relate twentieth-century problems to the age-old problems of man, society, and the search for truth. It is *against* the sharp separation of general education from vocational or specialized education; it is *for* integration of the entire learning experience.<sup>5</sup>

5. See Schwertman, John B., "General Education and Specialized Education," *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (October, 1955).

### Philosophical Approaches to General Education

Even if we accept the goals of general education and the characteristics of the general education movement set forth earlier there is still room for philosophical differences as to how the goals can best be achieved. Here we turn to President Harold Taylor<sup>6</sup> of Sarah Lawrence College to whom we are indebted for his excellent analyses of different philosophical approaches to general education. Taylor identifies these philosophical foundations in three general divisions of thought.

*Rationalism.* The philosophy of rationalism is neo-Thomistic in its orientation. Its advocates hold in common the belief that within the work of the classical thinkers is to be found a set of objective principles and of absolute values which reflect factors inherent in the universe and inherent in the relation of man to nature. In view of the fact that the distinctive factor in man is his rationality, the cultivation of man's reason is the sole aim of education or of life itself. Since the reason is a separate entity, cut off by definition from its social and physical origin, and since it is everywhere the same, education must be everywhere the same. It follows, therefore, that the clue to a program of general education is to be found in a serious study of the past. Such a curriculum is valid for all students and at all times.

In terms of the philosophy of rationalism there is no direct relationship between general education and personal or social action. Rather, the practical program of the rationalists consists of lectures, discussions, and reading of material drawn from the history of literature, philosophy, science, and the arts. The aim of general education in this system of philosophy has been achieved when it can be demonstrated through examinations that the content of these materials has been perceived, remembered, and understood. It is assumed that the student who has been educated in the rationalist style needs only the ability to reason on the basis of his knowledge of the Western tradition in order to carry out the responsibilities of citizenship.

*Eclecticism or Neo-Humanism.* The philosophy of eclecticism or neo-humanism assumes a dualism between mind and body. It not only separates mind from body, but also reason from emotion, and thought from experience. It differs from rationalism in its refusal to state a general or specific philosophy to which all students

6. Taylor, Harold, "The Philosophical Foundations of General Education." In *General Education* (Fifty-First Yearbook, Part I, National Society for the Study of Education), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952.



should be committed, and according to which a curriculum should be constructed.

In terms of the philosophy of eclecticism or neo-humanism, practical proposals for educational programs provide little means for the emotional, personal, and social development of the individual student except as these can be found in the study of the subject matter of the curriculum itself. The assumption here is that knowledge is itself a good and that knowledge of the good will lead to a commitment to the good. The criterion of selection of the materials and programs of the curriculum thus becomes one of faculty discussion and a pooling of ideas as to what knowledge is appropriate for the subject matter of education in the four major fields: humanities, social science, biological science, and physical science. There is no reference to contemporary research in the field of emotional development or in those phases of social psychology which have to do with education. The reforms in general education under this philosophy deal almost exclusively with subject matter. The assumption must, therefore, be made that emotional and social development follow normally as a natural sequence from academic study.

Eclecticism or neo-humanism is perhaps the most common philosophical system in operation in general education today. The search for unity under this system has ended in an objective order of subject matter which can, by its selection of significant ideas and information, form a common body of knowledge of contemporary education. In many instances, planning for general education has meant simply the reformation of book lists, the requirement of general courses, and the construction of course syllabuses.

*Instrumentalism.* Instrumentalism finds its origins in the teachings of John Dewey. This philosophy of general education puts its chief emphasis on the uses of knowledge. Reason and emotion, that is knowing and wanting, are described as parts of an organism at work in ways natural to itself, and emphasis is placed upon integration and continuity—the integration of the passions and the intellect, of thought and action, of heredity and environment, of the individual and society, of the past and the present, of knowledge and values, of matter and mind. Decisions as to what should be taught and the way it should be taught are made by reference to the usefulness of knowledge in everyday life. *Relevance* is the key word. Knowledge is conceived, not as an end in itself, but as a means to a “more abundant personal life and a stronger, freer social order.”

The social philosophy underlying the instrumentalist position is explicitly that of democracy. The instrumentalist in general education takes the position that it is the data from psychology and the social sciences which provide the clue for making an educational program, not the body of knowledge which the rationalists and neo-humanists refer to as the great tradition or as Western culture.

It may be noted that throughout its statement of aims for general education the President's Commission on Higher Education emphasizes the social role of education and both directly and by implication takes the instrumentalist position.

We have reviewed here three philosophical approaches to general education as set forth by Harold Taylor. In some institutions the philosophical position may not be clearly established; there may, in fact, be an intermingling of philosophies. In most instances, however, the general education programs in the United States can be placed on a continuum somewhere between rationalism at one extreme and instrumentalism at the other. One thing seems to be fairly clear: among American colleges and universities the emerging trend in general education seems definitely to be in the direction of the philosophy of instrumentalism.

### Differences Between Liberal and General Education <sup>7</sup>

Some educators believe that liberal education and general education are the same—that there is no essential difference between them. But others contend they are not the same, particularly when the general education is of the instrumentalist persuasion. Drawing from several sources, particularly from H. T. Morse, I have tried in the comparisons below to summarize the differences which these educators believe exist between traditional liberal education and instrumentalist general education.

#### *Traditional Liberal Education*

1. Liberal education is concerned first with a body of subject matter content drawn largely from the cultural heritage of the Western World.
2. Liberal education has a content that is largely fixed; it is that which in the stricter sense may be called culture.

#### *Instrumentalist General Education*

1. General education is concerned first with the learner as a human being who has certain needs and desires that make him distinct from his fellows.
2. General education has a varying and changing content, drawn from many and less traditional sources, suited to the individual, and adjusted to the times.

7. The material in this section has been adapted and expanded from several sources. Chief among these sources is Morse, H. T., "Liberal and General Education—Partisans or Partners?" *Junior College Journal*, XXIV (March, 1954), pp. 395-399.



*Traditional Liberal Education*

3. Liberal education curricula are organized around various fields of knowledge.
4. The goal of liberal education is intellectual development coupled with stimulation of the creative and reflective processes.
5. Liberal education is considered by its devotees in its pure form as divorced from any pragmatic intent.
6. Liberal education is concerned with *thought*. It assumes that thought carries over into action.
7. Liberal education is essentially aristocratic in concept and operation; its values are for the more gifted and privileged.
8. Liberal education concentrates on depth and intensive cultivation of student experiences; it is assumed to require at least four years of a student's time beyond high school graduation.
9. Although liberal education may tolerate extracurricular activities—sometimes begrudgingly and on sufferance—it is not, in theory, concerned with the phases of a student's life and activities other than his intellectual development.

*Instrumentalist General Education*

3. General education curricula are more frequently organized around the needs, interests, and activities of students or the problems of modern life.
4. General education, while not decrying the goal of liberal education, is more concerned with development of the individual on a broader scale—intellectual, emotional, social, personal.
5. General education is intimately concerned with action and keeps the workaday world constantly within its range of vision.
6. General education is concerned with *action*. It vigorously challenges the assumption that thought carries over into action.
7. General education is democratic in spirit; it stresses insights and skills necessary for a satisfying and effective life in a democratic society.
8. General education emphasizes breadth as well as depth of student experiences and understanding; the basic aspects of the "breadth concern" of general education can usually be completed in two college years.
9. In general education extracurricular activities are welcomed, encouraged, and shaped with a view to their supplementing, reinforcing, and vitalizing the learning drawn from the curriculum.

Sidney J. French, Dean of Rollins College and editor of the volume *Accent on Teaching*, summarizes these differences in these succinct words: "In general education courses we bend subject matter to the needs of the student; in [liberal arts] departmental courses we bend the student to the needs of subject matter. The difference [between general education and liberal arts education] can be as clean cut as that."<sup>8</sup>

8. French, Sidney J., *Accent on Teaching*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954, p. 15.

### Accomplishments in General Education

So far we have reviewed several aspects of the origin and development of the general education movement. In this review I have drawn heavily upon the writings of several major contributors to the general education movement. Now let us turn to something different and, in a sense, new. If I have an original contribution to make in this address it will be in the part which follows.

The Office of Educational Research and Service at the Florida State University is about to complete a study in which you may be interested. In this survey we asked a selected number of educators and other leaders of American thought two questions: (1) What have been the most important developments in general education during the past third of a century? (2) What will probably be the most significant developments in the movement during the next third of a century? The response was unusually good. More than one hundred usable replies from virtually all sections of the United States were received in time to be included in the study. The study, of course, makes no claim to statistical precision. The findings, however, seem to be rather clear cut. I am glad to share a preview of these findings with you.

In the interest of your time I shall only list the major findings here. I shall not document the findings with supporting statements by contributors. The study is to be reported in much greater detail in a journal article in the spring of 1957. Possibly some of you may want to read the full report when it appears.

The participants in this study identify five major developments in the general education movement during the past third of a century. These developments are as follow:

1. *The most important development in general education during the past third of a century has been the emergence, rise, and acceptance of the general education idea itself.*

2. *General education has resulted in extensive and intensive efforts in curriculum construction and revision, in curriculum experimentation, and in the development of courses and programs especially designed to advance the objectives of the general education movement.*

3. *Substantial progress has been made toward an interdisciplinary, integrated approach to the general education aspects of education in courses and in programs.*

4. *General education has placed the student rather than subject matter at the center of the educational process.*

5. *General education has had a profound effect for good upon the philosophy, organization, and teaching of regular liberal arts courses.*

Three additional developments were mentioned with sufficient

frequency to merit your attention: (1) The goals of general education have been clarified and established; (2) improved citizenship among college students and graduates has resulted from the general education movement; and (3) general education has been responsible for greatly improved student personnel services, including counseling services, in American colleges and universities.

### Future Developments in General Education

So much for developments in the past. What do these educational and lay leaders think will be the most significant general education developments during the next third of a century? Here again by coincidence, five major developments are anticipated for the future:

1. *During the next third of a century general education will continue to develop, will consolidate its gains, and will solidify its position in American higher education.*

2. *Better general education curriculums, better instructional materials (including textual materials, audio-visual aids, and television), and better teaching techniques will be developed.*

3. *The trend toward integration will continue and efforts at integration will become more effective.*

4. *Increasingly the student rather than subject matter will be set at the center of the educational process.*

5. *General education will place more and more emphasis on citizenship education, including education for international understanding and world citizenship.*

In addition to these five major developments the participants in the study mention five other developments often enough to justify listing them here: (1) Evaluation in and of general education programs will be much improved during the coming decades; (2) general education will enjoy tremendously increased growth in the community-junior colleges; (3) increased emphasis will be placed on general education research and experimentation; (4) graduate schools will prepare for the profession more broadly trained and more appropriately trained teachers in the various areas of general education; and (5) general education will place more and more emphasis on critical and creative thinking.

### Concluding Statement

In the role of a reporter I have discussed with you very briefly seven topics, five of which are in the nature of review, and two of which report survey findings. By way of summary, let me list them for you again: (1) The genesis and rationale of the general education movement; (2) the goals of general education; (3) char-

acteristics of the movement; (4) philosophical approaches to general education; (5) the differences between liberal and general education; (6) accomplishments in the general education movement during the past third of a century; and (7) probable developments during the next third of a century.

All things considered, it seems to me we can say that the general education movement has made substantial progress—perhaps not as much progress as its advocates might wish, but probably as much as they have any right reasonably to expect. To be sure, the movement has made its advances against stubborn opposition. Many of the forces of academic life have been against it. Traditional liberal education of the neo-classical variety has frequently constituted a formidable road block. Faculty opposition has been encountered. Some faculty members have not understood; others have had closed minds. There has been unenlightened self-interest, prejudice, dogmatism, and preference for the routine. Teachers of specialized subjects have had vested interests and efforts at “empire building” are not unknown.

General education calls for an interdisciplinary approach and integration while the forces of specialization have admonished one never to “get out of one’s own field.” General education calls for imaginative and bold teaching techniques while college faculties have tended to teach as they have been taught. Unfortunately this kind of teaching is not good enough; too frequently, as W. H. Cowley has pointed out, it “resembled lead.” So far the graduate schools have given little or no help in preparing college teachers adequately or appropriately equipped to deal with general education. Finally, general education demands that the student be set at the center of the educational process while traditionally subject matter has occupied the center of the educational stage. All of these forces—and still others not here mentioned—have militated against the development of effective general education.

All these forces notwithstanding, the idea of general education simply will not stay down. The idea of better and more meaningful education for the general student has so much merit that it continually forces itself into the schemes of thinking faculties. It haunts us, and I think it will continue to haunt us until we deal with it realistically.

Our work is cut out for us and our goals have been established. General education is here and, in my judgment, it is here to stay. In spite of all the forces which oppose it I believe the the general education movement has a heartening future.

## Communication—A General Definition

By JEAN MCCOLLEY

Many colleges are now offering courses which are called *Communication*, and many high schools are using the communication approach in their English classes. Since a great variation is noticeable in these courses, a definition of the term can be stated only in general objectives.

Generally speaking, all of these are designed to give the students an opportunity to improve in the four skills necessary for successful communication of ideas—reading and writing and speaking and listening. Another common objective is to build into the course, activity which will give the students enough practice so that these skills are really developed, rather than merely to give information about such items as punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing, outlining, etc. They must, if the course objectives are realized, be able to write and speak using all these principles effectively at the end of the course.

Beyond these two objectives, different courses vary. Because the goals of Communication courses are difficult to achieve, much experimentation is being done by various departments and individual instructors in an effort to produce better results than have been gained in the past. Therefore a more specific definition can be given only by examining some of the courses which are being given at the present time.

## A Statement About the Communication Course at Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg

By DR. ROBERTSON STRAWN

Head of the Department of Language and Literature

It is not surprising that there are various conceptions of the meaning of "communication" as that subject is being included with increasing frequency among those taught in our high schools and colleges. From the viewpoint of title, "communication" is a relatively new subject, and each of us is likely to think of the subject in terms of his knowledge of a particular "communication" course with which he is familiar. The result, naturally, is a wide variety of conceptions regarding the meaning of the term.

From the viewpoint of content, there is nothing really new in the reading, writing, speaking, and listening of a communication course. For a long time we have had separate courses in writing and speaking, and reading and listening have been an integral part of all courses but with little attention given to improving these skills. The common feature of all "communication" courses seems to be that improving these language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening have become the stated objectives of a single course.

In addition to bringing these language skills together as a unit, thereby giving emphasis to their common purpose—communication—the introduction of the new courses in "communication" has had a tremendous effect on teaching methods. Teachers of these courses have frequently been stimulated to discover more effective and efficient means of teaching writing and speaking and are giving more attention than formerly to improving skill in reading and listening. This improving of teaching methods is certainly not a necessary part of a "communication" course but has frequently been a result of including reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a single course.

Another effect of the introduction of "communication" courses has been that frequently the methods developed by "communication" teachers have been introduced into English and speech classes. In fact, the teacher being willing, there is probably no material or method used by the teacher of a "communication" class that cannot be utilized in an English or speech class.

The communication division of Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg has set up the following objectives for its freshman course. Each instructor will work out his own methods with which to accomplish these goals.



## Communication Workshops at Kansas State Teachers College

Every year for the last seven years, a communication workshop has been held at Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg. Each has been led by an outstanding authority in this field. These leaders have been Dr. Harold Allen of the University of Minnesota; Dr. Thomas Dunn, head of the English Department at Drake University and coauthor with Doctor Allen of a communication text; Dr. Albert H. Marckwardt, of the University of Michigan; Helen Rand Miller, author of many articles and texts and formerly from Evanston High School; Dr. Cleveland Thomas, dean of the Winnetka Country Day school, Winnetka, Illinois; and Dr. John Withall, a specialist in group dynamics and now in the employ of the National Education Association, at Washington, D. C.

These leaders have suggested new ideas and techniques, but all have encouraged experimentation and originality on the part of workshop members because all of them either stated or implied that English teachers need to use individual approaches and techniques, testing these by experience to accomplish the exceedingly difficult task which is theirs as they attempt to teach English as Communication.

Some of the provocative ideas presented in the most recent workshops may help to give a definition of the term—communication.

### FROM NOTES ON THE LECTURES OF DR. CLEVELAND THOMAS

#### (1) Concerning the Nature of Language

The student in order to use language effectively must first understand what it is. It is first a tool. Language or words are merely symbols of the things they represent. There is no necessary connection between a word and what it stands for because men can give things, ideas, and desires any name they wish.

When a person uses a symbol or a series of symbols, the symbol represents an image or thought in his mind and calls to the listener's mind a similar image. This process is communication.

It is not always a smooth or successful operation, such as when a speaker uses the symbol *skunk*, thinking of a smelly animal, and the listener receives an image of a deodorized pet. In this ex-

ample, though the words are the same, the ideas are different. Communication takes place only when the images are the same.

Communication also involves moods or emotions. As a speaker says, "I have a stomach-ache," he may be communicating an emotion of self-pity or of impatience. As he says, "Good morning," he may communicate a mood of friendliness or one of superiority.

A student must understand these qualities of language so that he can use language to reflect reality. Students must learn to test their language to see that it does reflect reality. Students must develop a moral responsibility in their use of language, so that they will avoid deliberate misrepresentation with intent to deceive and so that they can detect this quality in the language of others who may attempt to deceive them.

A communication teacher must help students to realize that language does more than to convey facts—it conveys feelings and attitudes. A teacher can never force anyone to appreciate anything. He must face the fact that some cannot read and then look for the causes by studying the student and his behavior.

## (2) Concerning Reading

If the student has been trained in the context method of learning new words, he will have less trouble. If he learns the trick of holding the meaning in suspension until he has found the subject, he will read more efficiently. If he learns to read punctuation correctly, he will read with more understanding.

To learn all this, he will need practice in the classroom. Here the teacher should use initiative and originality to invent activities to do in the classroom which will help the student to develop these skills.

## (3) Concerning Grammar

The purpose of instruction in grammar has always been given as the purpose of developing the ability to use language. But investigations of the results of study of formal grammar show that it does not eliminate materially the errors made (*Elementary Journal*, September 1916), that students who had studied grammar showed no inclination to write (Dora Smith), and that a study of grammar does not increase skill in the use of language or give a working knowledge of the language (Revised Edition of the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 1950).

If we accept the results of such research, we must shift the emphasis from verbal forms to units of meaning. Thus grammar



should be taught constantly in relation to meaning. It should always be taught inductively, using examples to discover principles. The class must be allowed to use its own judgment as to relationships and meanings. The meaning must be kept constantly before the learner and grammar frequently helps to obscure meaning.

Meaning depends on context. Whenever grammar has something to do with meaning, grammar should be examined. Students are interested in distinguishing meaning and in recognizing grammar as it reveals meaning. Then after the students see the distinction, they can learn the grammatical terms. When the concept is clear, then they should be given a chance to reproduce it themselves by writing similar sentences of their own. Then drill sentences should be given—sentences from their own papers, sentences from books or magazines, and sentences which they use to tell a story but which also illustrate sentence patterns.

#### (4) Concerning the Slow Students

The teacher must recognize that slow students can understand only simple ideas, that they lack the ability to abstract from experiences and to generalize, that they have no capacity for self-criticism, and that they are often antisocial with undesirable character traits.

Therefore for them the teacher must provide more specific instructions—specific and direct, requiring no generalization. It is useless to try to teach this group to generalize about the meaning behind grammar. They must be given short units and small amounts of work. For them grammar is useless if based on technical explanations.

#### (5) Concerning Bright Students

The teacher knows that these bright students are capable of thinking well in abstract terms and symbolic language, that they are capable of good self-criticism, that they lose interest when occupied with details and routine, that they have originality and initiative, that they learn from their mistakes, and that they read well.

Handled with respect and kindness, they are easy to discipline. They must have work beyond the regular work—a higher more complex activity. They should not do many exercises but should have large amounts of work and be expected to co-ordinate what they do.

### (6) Concerning Average Students

These students can do more complex work than one might expect. They can do abstract thinking. Ordinarily they do not write well, but they do like to use initiative. They can do long term assignments, but these should be broken into segments. Nothing is more stultifying than a daily assignment. Assignments should be for a week or for six weeks or even for a semester.

Much experimentation is being carried on by teachers who have attended workshops. After the 1954 Workshop, Maryalice Braum used the following plan.

### A LANGUAGE STUDY

By MARYALICE BRAUM,  
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During a workshop at Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg, a group of teachers set up a resource unit entitled "An Introduction to Language as a Symbolic Process." From that study I expanded the unit to form a background for further understanding of our language and of our use of words. Below is the introduction to my study with my procedure. Each question introduces the problem; the assignment, together with classroom discussion and activities, clarifies and applies the answer.

1. Why does a word stand for a certain idea or object? From a controlled list of words, have the students try to determine the origin of words as *football*, *transport*, *Nabisco*, *sandwich*, *sauerkraut*, *winterize*, *smogoggles*, etc. Discuss the customary methods of selecting names, the appropriateness of names, other possible labels, etc.

2. Why does an object have more than one name, or why are there so many names for a thing? List all the labels that might be attached to ten different objects. (For *dog* there could be *pooch*, *my pal*, *a mongrel*, *a noisy cur*, etc., and for *my brother* there would be *Johnny*, *Freckles*, *Red*, *Mother's pet*, *the life of the party*, *a prospective engineer*, etc.) In class note that synonyms enrich a vocabulary and a language, that they may be favorable or unfavorable, and that they may refer to different periods of time.

3. What does a word mean to different people? Any of the following assignments could be used. (1) Have each student interview eight people to find the meaning of a word. (*Money*, *school*, *war*, *work*, *red*, and *time* bring interesting responses.) (2) List ten objects in your home and state what each represents to you. (This study generally gives the symbolic meaning.) (3) Explore the meaning of a word by an impromptu panel. A tabulation of any of the three studies shows a wide variety of meanings.

4. How does one know what a word means at different times? To promote interest in the study of a word in context, have each student coin a word for some idea or object and use his word in six sentences. (One student who was confused by *pardon me* and *excuse me* coined *parcuse*.) In class have students read the sentences while others listen to discover the meaning of a new word in context.

5. Why do writers use exaggerated expressions or highly imaginative language? Have students find examples of figures of speech in popular songs, pep songs or yells, or in the speech of their associates. ("A pretty girl is like a melody." "Bulldogs, fight! fight! fight!" "Our team is red hot.") In class have the students reduce the figurative language to literal statements to decide which form is more effective. They can see that figurative language is not a poetic ornament—it is a necessity.

These suggestions show that each assignment is aimed at a single concept of understanding. The project could be continued to include some or all of the following studies: The specific and the abstract; the language of emotion and intent; the English language—its beginnings, its relationship to other languages, its characteristics, and its changes; levels of usage; taste in the choice of words; the confusion of the grammatically correct word with current usage; simplified spelling; punctuation to give meaning; literary, mythological, and historical allusions. Material for explanation and illustration can be readily found in newspapers or magazines, from the radio or television, and in the speech of a locality or of an entire country.

After an introductory unit has been presented, I have found that the most effective method is to follow through with short studies in the usual units of English or to introduce an explanation when some incident gives an opportunity or when some question is asked. Such a presentation can enrich a unit that otherwise might be meaningless or fail in its purpose.

A study of mechanics and style is not enough in the understanding of language. There must be some explanation of the process by which meaning is produced. A real satisfaction will come when the teacher knows that she is presenting classwork that will better interpret life and will help students to use words honestly.

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Mary Shular, of Wichita High School, East, has used the following plans for arousing student interest and for sharing responsibility with students.

### "DICTIONARY OF TEENAGE LINGO"

By MARY SHULAR,

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The ten-page "*Dictionary of Teenage Lingo*" by the Second Hour Kool Kats of Room 303 was an outgrowth of a class discussion on slang. It shows what even mediocre and slow sophomores can do when they work as a group on a project of their own choosing.

This booklet was completely planned and produced by the students; from the moment the leader, or "editor-in-chief," was chosen, the teacher had no part in the project except to convince the class that only one booklet should be made, to begin with. (Inexperienced sophomores often "get carried away with themselves" and attempt too large a project which bogs down.) This is somewhat the procedure the students used:

The class divided itself into three groups of nine students each. Individuals then brought slang words and expressions with definitions for group lists, which were in turn used for compiling the final list of entries. Since the students had previously agreed that only two full class periods would be devoted to the project, they planned and worked well. (After evaluating the project, one would seem justified in allowing more class time.) Of course, a few minutes during several additional periods were needed for details. For instance, the class had to choose the title, the kind of paper for the cover, the design to be used, etc. It may interest the reader to know that in the final booklet, the jazz band is on the outside cover and the hot rod is on page 1 with the "Contributors."

As one might guess, the most difficult part of the work was arriving at a suitable definition for meanings of some terms, and what the students learned from that agreement. Determining parts of speech, which was also difficult, was left to volunteers, who did a remarkable job. Typing of the text was done by nine students, who met in the evenings; and the printing on the cover page and on page 1 was done by the two boys who were enrolled in printing. As it ended, the project involved much work; for after the initial booklet was finished, the members made thirty more copies at 15 cents each (to cover paper costs). No booklets were sold to people other than class members although many others came to buy the "Lingo Books."

In the students' year-end evaluation of the course, this idea was found on almost every paper: "Of all the things we did this year, I thought the "Dictionary" was the most fun. Let your classes next year make one too." Every class should make a slang dictionary if the opportunity arises and if the class interest is present. If not, then perhaps something just as interesting and valuable will evolve from some discussion. Whatever that may be, the students will learn and have fun doing it because they will be working as a group on a project of their own choice.

The 1955 Workshop was led by Dr. John Withall, of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C. This is the preliminary statement which was given to the group at the beginning of the workshop.

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### FROM NOTES ON THE WORKSHOP LED BY DR. JOHN WITHALL

(NOTE OF EXPLANATION: Dr. Withall conducted the workshop by having the group work together, not by lecturing. These notes are from the instructions given the group and from conclusions drawn by the group from their experiences together. This subject was chosen for the 1955 workshop because, in the plans and suggestions for making the instruction of English more functional, creating a democratic or natural atmosphere is basic. This workshop was intended to help teachers answer for themselves the question: How can we have a democratic or permissive atmosphere in our classrooms?)

Since, if communication of an idea is to be natural in a class, the class must become a natural group with the teacher a part of that group instead of set apart, the use of group dynamics is important in a communication class.

The first step then is to give the class an opportunity to become acquainted with one another either by introducing each other or by introducing themselves to the group.

#### What Is a Group?

1. A group is composed of two or more people.
2. These people have common interests, goals, or needs.
3. They must have a face to face relationship.
4. They must have a nominal or an emergent leader. The teacher is usually the nominal leader, but leadership should be encouraged in the group.
5. The group should offer the individual a certain status, prestige, reward, and satisfaction which comes as a result of being part of the group.

#### What Does the Teacher Do for the Group?

1. The teacher motivates the group.
2. He helps the group to find the satisfaction of a need by guidance.
3. The teacher has certain duties in the group:
  - a. He raises questions.
  - b. He makes notes of the discussion.

c. He recommends reading books or magazines which will provide facts needed for solving the common problems.

d. When no one speaks immediately, he sits quietly and waits for contributions, instead of quickly providing an answer.

e. He takes all suggestions and assesses none.

### What Is the Best Atmosphere for Learning in a Classroom?

The group was instructed to watch for and to assess the motivation of the students, the climate of the classroom, and the participation by the members. Then a demonstration was set up by organizing two classes, both with Dr. Withall acting as teacher. The observers decided to watch for the answers to these questions:

1. How is the topic introduced?
2. Who does most of the talking?
3. What is the *esprit de corps*?
4. What is the pace of the lesson?
5. What is the amount of the progress of the group?
6. What is done to insure full participation?
7. What is done to prevent domination?
8. How often does the teacher repeat verbatim what the student says?
9. What is done with a disagreeing member?

The observing group assessed each group in this way:

#### Group A

1. The teacher was aggressive, with an authoritarian manner.
2. He evaluated all ideas.
3. He dominated the group.
4. The pace was too rapid.
5. The group made no progress.
6. The teacher announced that the group "had to do the work" and made no effort to motivate them to want to do it.
7. He assigned chairs and made a list of items to be learned.
8. The group banded together against the teacher.

#### Group B

1. The teacher was quiet and guided the group, motivating it without seeming to.
2. All wrong answers were accepted as an honest contribution.
3. He helped the learners to evaluate their own ideas.
4. The teacher and the students participated together in the work.
5. The teacher suited his pace to that of the learners.
6. The group made progress.
7. The teacher said "we" not "you" in speaking of the group.
8. The teacher said, "Let's see whether we can make a list of the things we wish to find out."
9. The group worked with the teacher.



### Conclusions Drawn From the Demonstration

This demonstration proved to the workshop members: (1) That what the teacher does in the classroom makes the difference; (2) that a demonstration with certain items to watch for is a more effective way of teaching *when you wish to change opinions* than is lecturing, and (3) that a class can very efficiently assess its activities if given an opportunity.

#### How Can We Analyze Group Progress by Observing the Verbal Behavior of the Teacher and Learner?

Doctor Withall has developed a method of analyzing the atmosphere of a classroom by observing for a short period the language of the teacher. This is recorded in a chart which has seven categories.

1. *Praising, reassuring, and encouraging statements.* This category is marked by phrases such as, "That is a good contribution," "I am sure you are right in one point," etc.

2. *Therapeutic or acceptance statements.* Accepting an emotional statement has a therapeutic value. If a teacher or counselor accepts a point of view or sympathizes, the student's tension is released so that he is more ready to learn.

3. *Problem structuring statements.* Statements which belong here are "What is the first problem you want to raise?" or "How can we best attack this problem?"

4. *Neutral statements.* Many remarks in the classroom have no effect on the atmosphere, such as "We will meet in Room 105" or "I did not hear."

5. *Directive statements.* Such orders as "Sit here," "Raise the window," or "Stop talking" belong in this category.

6. *Reproving or deprecating statements.* These create a negative atmosphere. Examples of this group are "You did a lot of work, and I guess everything considered it is pretty good," "I told you so," or "If you had listened to me, . . ."

7. *Teacher-supporting statements.* These are statements which support the teacher's ego—"I didn't intend it that way."

Research students who used this method to record the atmosphere in many classrooms found it to be reliable. If 50 percent of the statements made by a teacher fell in the first three categories, the classroom had a plus atmosphere and presented a learner-centered situation. If 35 or 40 percent fell in the last three categories, it was a negative climate and showed a teacher-centered situation.

The workshop group felt that this chart provided a concrete way for a teacher to assess himself to discover whether he is really creating the class atmosphere which he wants in his classroom.

### How Can Students Be Helped to Work Well in a Group?

Each student must realize that he must assume a certain part or role in the group if the group is to function efficiently. Three roles must always be assumed: leadership, recorder, and process observer.

#### Leadership Role

Leadership is of two kinds. There is the nominal leader, who may be the teacher or a student. His duties are those previously given in describing what the teacher does for a group. The leadership role may be played by several others in the group. It consists of raising issues, asking questions, or giving information.

#### Content Recorder Role

The group recorder should keep a running comment of the discussion so that at any time he can report what has been discussed.

The recorder notes these points:

##### AREA I. *Major contributions to the discussion:*

1. Problems raised or identified.
2. Major points of information given.
3. Suggestions for action.
4. Divisions of opinion.
5. Points of agreement.
6. Points of disagreement.
7. Points mentioned but not picked up
8. Group decisions.
9. Actions taken.

##### AREA II. *When recording:*

1. Record fully what happens but be selective.
2. Avoid use of names. (Tell what is said but not who said it.)
3. Do not evaluate.
4. Note the time in the margin occasionally.
5. If you need to, ask for clarification.
6. At the end summarize and, if necessary, reorganize.
7. Be ready to give content back to the group at any time.

#### Process Observer Role

1. Assess the leadership function. Is it facilitating or inhibiting?
2. Note who does what to hinder or help discussion and hypothesize why he does what he does?
3. Try to identify semantic difficulties.
4. Note evidences of frustration, aggression, withdrawal and the like.
5. Note the distribution of participation, including that of the nominal leader.



6. Try to identify the different roles that are filled.
7. Try to guess at the causes when the discussion "bogs down."
8. Evaluate the group's productivity and efficiency.
9. Assess the extent to which the group potential is being released and used.
10. Note the rate of progress toward the goals of the group.
11. Raise these specific questions with the group:
  - a. Are we all clear as to what our goal is?
  - b. Do we realize the amount of time spent on this issue?
  - c. What do you think enabled us to move so rapidly?
  - d. What helped to slow us down?
12. Feed back these observations and hypotheses at the group's request only.

### Other Roles Which Are Filled in a Group

Many other roles are played in any group. Members should be able to identify and understand roles which they and others fill. Some of these roles are Initiator, Energizer, Orientor, Facilitator, Encourager, Spokesman, Summarizer, Analyzer, Evaluator, Information-giver, Information-seeker, Co-ordinator, Mediator, Recognition-seeker, Dodger, Dominator, Help-seeker, Blamer, Blocker, and Aggressor.

### "Reality Practice" or Role Playing

The group learned the value of "reality practice" for solving problems. In one such situation, a group of teachers discussed how to grade students. In this practice situation, the group observed these deliberate techniques being used by the leader:

1. He accepted all that was said.
2. He greeted each member and introduced himself informally.
3. He put the administrator at the head of the table.
4. He sat at the side as one of the members of the group.
5. He set a time limit.
6. Twice he summarized and tried to identify common elements.
7. Often he asked someone else to summarize, thus identifying others as sharing responsibility.
8. He often asked, "How does that fit in with our problem?" This kept the group on the problem.
9. Often he asked a non-participating member a pertinent question.
10. He accepted the emotional problem of a too-talkative person.

### Self-evaluation

If a group is to mature, the individuals of the group must grow in their roles in the group. This can be done only through self-evaluation. The process-observer's report is an evaluation of the work by the group itself, and as the group matures it will accept

more pointed reports. Along with this, each member must be examining his own contribution and development. This self-evaluation, both of the group and of the individual in the group, is an essential step in using the group approach to solving problems. For this to work successfully, some method of evaluation must be used.

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In conclusion, it might be interesting to note statements made by several students concerning the value to them of various phases of the communication skills course at K. S. T. C. at Pittsburg.

Teachers of communication always see a marked personality development which is noticeable as the student gains skill and self-confidence. This is their justification for continuing to search for better methods.

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"This course has been of more help to me than all the other English courses combined. In other English classes, the emphasis was always placed on grammar, which was the knowledge of what ever was in the construction of the sentence, such as pronouns, verbs, and modifiers. After a while, this was just another group of words and was soon forgotten. While in the communication class, the emphasis is placed on the activity of writing, which encourages practice and critical examination of what we write. It is my belief that an individual can learn more through practical experience, than through any other learning process."

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"I believe that what I have learned best in this semester is how to use punctuation and sentence structure. I am combining both punctuation and sentence structure because without one the other can't be obtained. I never before gave the proper amount of attention to the correct way of forming sentences and punctuating them, but I just rambled along with a line and threw in a comma where it seemed to sound right. I'm still having trouble with this habit, but I have become more conscious of how sentences are constructed and now notice this in my every day reading."

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"The thing I like best about communication is the informal atmosphere. It is quite simple to see the advantages of this classroom procedure. The first and probably best reason for informality in communication class is to give everyone a chance to speak. Were

the discussions held in a more formal manner some people would not feel so free to speak. As it is, a person may speak without difficulty or without being afraid.

"My second reason for favoring informality is the relaxed manner of the recitation. Time is spent as required and is not rationed as in other classes. In many classes only so much time can be spent on a phase of the subject regardless of time needed. In communication this has not been the case.

"My final point is the seating arrangement. This is very good in that it makes the student feel he is speaking to the class when involved in a discussion or answering a question. The vertical row arrangement in other classes makes the student feel that he is speaking only to the instructor. I think that this is an aid both to the student and to the class because teaching a person to speak before others is one main objective of the class itself."

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### AN AID IN PAPER-GRADING

By MARY SHULAR

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Here are helpful tricks in solving the ever-present problem of how to ease the paper grading of the English teacher:

1. Have each student hand in three themes on a day which the class has set.
2. On that day the class divides itself into four-man groups, whose duty it is to rate each member's set of themes as 1, 2, or 3.
3. The best, or number 1, is handed to the teacher for grading; the other two are filed away in the student's folder. Perhaps the teacher will wish to grade them later; perhaps the student will use them for analysis during grammar work or in some other way.

This idea seems to have several advantages in addition to those usually found in group work:

1. Each student has a chance to read nine themes besides his own.
2. Student attitudes toward the teacher are improved because pupils like having their best papers graded.
3. Teacher's grading is light, but student's work is comparatively heavy.
4. Sometimes pupils cannot agree as to how the themes should be ranked; then they realize that the teacher has the more difficult task of arriving at a letter grade for each paper, they are more understanding in the grading problem and are less likely to register complaints. This, then, betters pupil-teacher relationships.
5. Students do some critical thinking in evaluating papers.
6. If groups choose to read papers aloud, students have a listening lesson. It takes concentration to listen to only one paper when several other interesting ones are being read at the same time.

## Review of *The Sable Arm*

By JOHN H. COBB

THE SABLE ARM (337 pages)—Dudley Taylor Cornish—Longmans, Green and Company.

The American Civil War has, since its beginning, provided a prolific source of material for writers of both historical fact and historical fiction. Innumerable volumes, letters and articles exist recounting the most minute details of leaders, great and small; battles and skirmishes; individual corps, divisions, brigades and regiments; and the equipment, personality and attitude of the "common soldier." This prodigious mass of documentation has been aligned in an imposing array of historical fact. With one flank securely planted at Fort Sumter it stretches along the great rivers; the Mississippi to Vicksburg and the Tennessee to Shiloh and the lesser streams; the Bull Run, Antietam Creek and the Chickahominy. It runs along the rocky slopes of Lookout Mountain at Chattanooga, into the picturesque Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and continues to the tangled undergrowth of the Wilderness, the rolling hills of Gettysburg and the scorched earth of Atlanta until it comes to rest, with an equally strong second flank, at Appomattox. When confronted with such a formidable line, dedicated, it seems, to holding fast against the never-remitting attacks of time which dull the memory of a nation for the heroism and sacrifices of her soldiers, one must think: What more can be said? However, until recently a close examination of this bulwark of printed work would have shown that in at least one area the line of defense, for all its outward appearance of strength, was dangerously weak. Doctor Cornish, with "*The Sable Arm, Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*," has now taken decisive action to strengthen and fortify this weakness in a manner which places the exploits, deeds and accomplishments of the Negro soldier alongside those of his white contemporary.

On the face of it, why should there have ever been any question about the Negro fighting for his own freedom; and once he was given the opportunity why should not he, as well as any other soldier, have been given full and accurate recognition for his accomplishments? This is a question which Doctor Cornish sets out to explore with "this fresh examination of the record to fill this historical hiatus."

Even before the exchange of gunfire at Fort Sumter in 1861, the

author points out that the question of what part, if any, the Negro would play in the ensuing conflict had arisen in the North. During the early months of the war there were many who advocated the use of colored troops in the Union Army. However, volunteer Negro military organizations in New York City were warned by the chief of police that "they must desist from these military exercises, or he could not protect them from popular indignation and assault." At the same time that colored companies were being refused in the North several of the Confederate states were taking action to recruit "all free males of color between the ages of fifteen and fifty." The policy of the Lincoln administration was, in the beginning, clearly in opposition to an "abolitionist war," a primary concern being to prevent the border states from secession. "One good way to retain the loyalty of Union men and slaveholders in those states was to quiet their fears of invading abolitionist armies bearing emancipation on their bayonets." Near the close of the year 1861 Simon Cameron, secretary of war, became more outspoken in favor of arming and organizing the Negroes as soldiers. This attitude, clearly at odds with Mr. Lincoln's policy, was instrumental in provoking the removal of Secretary Cameron from office.

The year 1861 saw little progress for the Negro as a soldier; however, as the war wore on the need to exploit the military manpower potential of the Negro became more and more apparent. By the fall of 1862 this potential received official recognition both "by War Department order and as a part of the administration policy." Meanwhile, commanders of the Union Army in the field were faced with devising a practical solution to the problem of what to do with contrabands, as the escaped slaves were called. Their solutions, occasionally defended by military necessity, were many and often at variance with government policy. Nor did they receive any direction from public opinion during the early stages of the war, it being in complete discord as to whether the Negro should be used at all as a soldier and if so, in what capacity. Many northern papers expressed the opinion that Negroes were either not needed or that it was improper to expose them "to the brunt of battle and the liability of capture." It is not surprising then that "By and large, the generals followed what had come to be known as the 'Butler' policy of using contrabands as teamsters, cooks, officers' servants and laborers." With the stage thus set, *The Sable Arm* proceeds systematically and vigorously to give an account of Negro forces serving with the Union Army from mobilization to deactivation.

After a number of premature attempts and false starts Negro regiments began to take form under Union commanders in South Carolina, Louisiana and Kansas. "The first colored regiment to become an official part of the Union Army" was the 1st Regiment, Louisiana Native Guards. However, notwithstanding the fact that they had not been officially mustered into federal service other regiments were making great strides in recruiting and even combat. This was particularly true in Kansas, the first of the free states to muster Negro troops. Here under the forceful leadership of General Jim Lane, who recruited with little regard to color, members of the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers became the first Negro troops to fight in an engagement.

Even after the organization of colored troops was authorized by the federal government initial progress was slow. The methods used, granting authority to various officers and state officials to raise one or more regiments of various types, accomplished neither rapid nor uniform organization. Then, during the spring and summer of 1863 momentum began to increase; the War Department being determined "to push the Negro soldier's recruitment and employment." In order to accomplish this, two notable developments were affected. First, General Thomas, the U. S. adjutant general, was dispatched to the Mississippi valley where he was instrumental in the "organization of better than 40 percent of all the regiments of United States colored troops who bore arms in the Civil War." Secondly, a separate office known as the Bureau for Colored Troops was established by the War Department. The control and supervision of Negro troops came under the jurisdiction of this bureau rather than under any individual department commander or state. The reorganization was complete even to the standardization of the designation of most colored regiments. Thus, the 1st Louisiana Native Guards became the 73rd U. S. Colored Troops, the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers became the 79th US CT and so on with the majority of colored regiments. Under the supervision of the bureau, the difficult task of providing some 7,000 suitable and competent officers of the Negro units was accomplished through a selective system administered by several examining boards throughout the nation. After these actions, Negro units were well established in federal service. Doctor Cornish makes it clear, however, that in order for this organizational achievement to be meaningful, the Negro regiments must prove themselves in battle. A full realization of the Negro's value as a combat soldier materialized slowly. Although by the end of 1863 Negro units had seen action