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The Formation of a Developmental Literature Program for the Intermediate Grade Level at Wheeler Avenue School, Valley Stream, New York

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THE FORMATION OF A DEVELOPMENTAL LITERATURE
PROGRAM FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADE LEVEL AT
WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL,
VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK.

RESEARCH 700

HARVEY A. DORFMAN

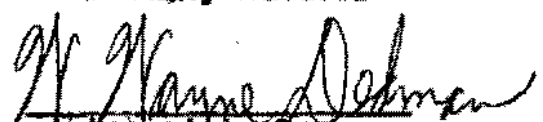
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS LEADING TO THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
BROCKPORT, N. Y.

JANUARY, 1961

APPROVED:


Faculty Advisor


Associate Dean

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I. Introduction

Much of a child's time in school is devoted to reading, because reading is one of the most significant tools in modern life. Since learning is influenced by interest, the need for reading materials which appeal to children and possess literary merit becomes increasingly important.

Books that live on for many years and survive the changes of life's daily pattern must possess certain qualities in order to remain popular. They must be universal, overpowering, convey a special message, and above all, be meaningful to young people. Such books earn the title 'classics'. These are the books which educators should use to full advantage; the 'classics' from yesteryear, the modern 'classic', and the books which are destined to become 'classics'.

This paper will not attempt to advocate the exclusive use of 'classics'. Rather, it deals with the development of literary tastes and interests in young people. The term 'classic' will undoubtedly prove to be a thorn in the side of those who are not aware of the experts' various definitions and attitudes toward the word. It is the writer's hope that Chapter I will expose the findings on the "'classic' problem", and at the same time prevent the semantic confusion which arises whenever the term appears.

Regardless of definition, having children read 'classics' exclusively is neither a realistic nor optimum goal of any educator. The ultimate aim must be to improve through guidance, stimulation, and encouragement, the literary tastes of each individual so he eventually may be able to discover 'good literature', appreciate its worth, enjoy it thoroughly, and through it, satisfy his needs.

The question now arises regarding the amount of 'good literature' a child is exposed to in the elementary school. Is he given enough opportunity to experience the wonders that literature can bring? The answer is, no, not nearly enough.

2. The Problem

Statement of problem -

It is the purpose of this study to (1) review relevant ideas and attitudes which exist in the field of children's literature; and (2) set up a developmental literature program at the intermediate grade level, based on research and using all available media, in order to perpetuate an enjoyment of reading on the part of the children, as well as to cultivate in them the ability to be selective in their choice of reading matter.

Importance of study -

It is important that the program to be developed will not be confused with the 'reading program' already in effect at the Wheeler Avenue School. In the latter program, the

emphasis is placed on the improvement of reading skills. A primary function of the literature program will be to develop and improve the literary background of the pupils. If successful, the study could lead to a unified literature program for all the grades in the school.

Prerequisites for study -

The prerequisite for a study of this nature must be the fact that this type of program does not exist as a functional part of the curriculum. Secondly, there must be agreement, encouragement, and immeasurable assistance on the part of the administrators and faculty members in order for the program to become an integral part of the curriculum.

Fulfillment of prerequisites -

A literature program does not exist at the Wheeler Avenue School in Valley Stream, New York. Since the possibility of the inclusion of such a program into the curriculum was enthusiastically received by administrators, reading consultant, grade chairmen, librarian; and other faculty members, this study was initiated. Appendix B contains the replies of some of the aforementioned staff to an opinionnaire related to the possible development of such a program.

Outgrowth of program -

It is comparatively easy for a teacher to be aware of a child in his room who has come from a home where books play an important role. He is both interesting and interested, His

vocabulary has been greatly influenced and he listens more avidly than the average child. Naturally, because of his interest in books, this child tends to be an above average reader. This interest, or better yet, a love for reading is the key to the success of the entire program. If not present at the outset, the development of a love for reading must be worked toward with all the vitality and vigor the teacher can summon into use. In some cases, this will still fall short of compensating for a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the student.

Children can learn that books hold many riches which they may discover for themselves. This may be encouraged only by having teachers and parents alike helping to furnish these youngsters with equipment necessary to make these discoveries; mainly good books. It is the writer's hope that the program will open up new vistas for the children, aside from providing them with an abundant supply of pleasure.

Methods of dealing with the problem -

Part I -

The first part of this paper will concern itself with the views of many authorities in the field of children's literature. The subject matter will deal with the comparison of ideas and suggestions of these authorities. This information, gathered through the use of library research, will be utilized when setting up the developmental literature program. All

opinions examined, whether conflicting or unanimous, will be given equal consideration before they are either incorporated in the program or rejected. An opinionnaire and other pertinent data will be found in the appendix.

Part II -

Whereas Part I will contain most of the research findings, Part II will concern itself primarily with the application of selected findings to the functions of the program. In the course of the investigation of children's literature, numerous opinions have been expressed and made known to the writer by members of the school faculty. These views, particularly those of the school librarian, will also be influential in the formation of the literature program.

Part II also includes an accumulation of notes taken in a graduate course entitled, "A History of Children's Literature". The instructor of the course stated views which were formed through her experiences in the field and through the experiences of other authorities. This writer has consulted the works of many of the same authorities, yet he feels that the instructor's critical analysis and selection of ideas were responsible for the development of particular chapters in Part II. Footnotes have been used accordingly at the end of these chapters.

Another valuable method of study has been used; direct experience. Between the time of September, 1959 and

June, 1960, the writer applied all findings, used all available media, materials, and methods while conducting an experimental literature program with his fifth grade class. The process of trial-and-error was used as a device in order to benefit the future purpose, scope, and function of the program. Much was gained through this experience, including the realization that children have a deep desire to love books.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the writer, though not setting himself up as an authority, has found it impossible to avoid the occasional use of personal philosophy related to the program, since he was held responsible for its development. Most creations will bear some resemblance to those who create them. With this in mind, the writer has attempted to be as objective as possible in his statements, while at the same time guiding the program to conform with the philosophies and policies of the school system.

Implications for further studies -

It has been stated that this study is aimed at setting up a developmental literature program in the intermediate grades. The implication for further studies is obvious; a similar developmental program at the primary level, which in turn would lead to a complete and unified literature program for the entire elementary school. A program of this nature has also been mentioned under the heading "Importance of study". It is the writer's belief that the possibility for further

study increases the importance of the original study. Further study will be warranted only if a successful program results from this study.

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PART I -

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL LITERATURE PROGRAM

"The elementary school curriculum which does not provide children with literature for enjoyment and for the exploration and illumination of life is an impoverished educational environment. Where children have little or no opportunity to extend their horizons through stories and poems at school, there exists an educational deficiency that cannot be met by any substitute."

The English Language Arts,
National Council of Teachers of English,
Appleton Century Crofts, Inc.
New York, 1952.

CHAPTER I

'CLASSICS' AND/OR GOOD LITERATURE

Much has been said by the experts in relation to 'classics' and/or good literature. A dictionary definition of the term 'classic' seems to be a reasonable point of departure in an analysis of this nature. One source defines a 'classic' as "an author or a literary production of the first rank."¹ This definition will not suffice when attempting to clarify a term used so frequently in the field of children's literature.

Some authorities continually remind us of the important role 'classics' have played in the education of children of past generations. They believe that 'classics' should exert the same influence on the present and future generations. Other authorities warn us to be wary of this school of thought.

Do the experts express their views with a common meaning of 'classics' in mind? Are they willing to tell us which books they consider 'classics', and why?

Most authorities are not willing to commit themselves by listing specific books as being children's 'classics'.

However, they offer in their writings, many views as to what is good, or what is not good literature.

Anne Thaxter Eaton has forcefully declared that,

A classic (or one of the world's great stories, if we prefer the term) is a work which has appealed to a great

1. Clarence L. Barnhart, The American College Dictionary pp. 222-223.

variety of people at widely different periods of the world's history, and is therefore a work which presents permanent and universal truths. A classic not only has something to say, but says it surprisingly well, with simplicity and force, and with a fitness of form to thought. The effect is to quicken and strengthen the reader's imagination.¹

We must also consider the belief that the time has come to strip some of the so-called 'classics' of the haloes they possess. Many of them are 'classics' simply because they had no competition from humane children's writing when they were first committed to print. Adults unwarrantably impose many of these inheritances from an earlier literary age upon children for purely nostalgic reasons.² Such an imposition is not justifiable. Children must be exposed to those books which have the distinction of being good books.

A good book remains faithful to the essence of art. It must offer a child a direct way of knowledge. A good book contains a simple beauty and yet arouses in the child's soul a vibration which can endure throughout his life.³

Books in general must awaken a child's sensibilities in order to allow him to share in great human emotions; to teach him not to hate all that is mysterious in creation and in man; to give him respect for universal life. A book must also contain a deep and profound morality.⁴

1. Anne Thaxter Eaton, Reading With Children, p. 135
2. John J. DeBoer, "Violence in Children's Books-An Editorial", Elementary English, vol. XXXV, p. 473
3. Paul Hazard, Books, Children & Men, pp. 42-45 4. Ibid

Jordan believes that a book has the right to be considered a 'classic' once it has weathered at least one generation and been accepted by the next. Simplicity and sincerity stand out as significant factors, and she believes that the children have the final say in making the decision as to which book becomes popular.¹ In contrast to this is the observation that the appeal of a book is not as important a criteria as whether it is good.² In turn, the criteria for a good book is not its merit as others judge, but rather what the reader benefits from it.³

Any writing, regardless of age, becomes literature for children only when it can bring to the reader, experiences which contribute to an understanding and an adequate interpretation of what is being read. It must also provide a pleasurable experience.⁴

Distorted ideas exist in connection with what is good literature for children. A typical view of this type is that an old book is a good book, and a new book is a poor one.⁵ Arbutnot declares, "Age is not a guarantee of a book's excellence; nor recency, of its significance."⁶

1. Alice M. Jordan, Children's Classics, pp. 3-12

2. S. S. Gordon, "Literature for Specific Age Groups", Scholastic Review, vol. 23, pp. 450-452.

3. Josette Frank, Your Child's Reading Today, p. 35 ff.

4. Blanche E. Wackes, Literature and the Child, p. 3.

5. Ibid.

6. Children and Books, p. 11.

Many people also insist that a book must improve a child morally. The child's interest is of prime importance in the selection of children's literature, rather than a moral lesson.

Phyllis Fenner's words sum up the discussion of classic' beautifully. She concedes that a dictionary may tell us what a 'classic' is, but not when it is. "Nowhere does it say that a book has to be three or two hundred years old, or even a century."² She goes on to say that books have lasted for many years and been used by many people, yet may lack "acknowledged excellence" which her dictionary demands they have in order to be considered 'classics'. Miss Fenner cites Black Beauty as an example; "I don't think any group of grown-ups reading it today would call it a work of excellence", yet children have chosen it as their favorite book for many years.³

The point is made that parents would like their children to read 'classics'. The author reasons, "We have a nostalgia for them and want the children to know them too". She also believes that people are relieved to have the label 'classic' on a book. They feel that it has been proclaimed good and they are therefore free from responsibility. The children are safe with no effort on their part.⁴

1. Blanche E. Weekes, op. cit., p. 3

2. "Classics in our Midst and on the Way", The New York Times Book Review, Children's Book Section, p.2

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

This famous librarian in the Manhasset, Long Island, public schools has supplied a fine conclusion for this chapter by reminding us, lest we forget, that "classics are being born all the time." When the parent complains that her child does not read the 'classics', she does not realize that Mary Poppins and Doctor Dolittle are the "new classics which have been loved for two or three or four decades."¹

"There are new classics in our midst and others on the way."² The term 'classic' will be used more conservatively in the preceding chapters, as a result of the views expressed in this chapter.

1. "Classics in our Midst and on the Way", The New York Times Book Review, Children's Book Section, p. 2.
 2. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

MORE VIEWS CONCERNING GOOD BOOKS

It has been said in regard to children and their reading, that the teacher's, librarian's, and parent's purpose is three-fold. The first part of the purpose is to aid children in reading to the best of their ability; the second part is to make books easily available to children in the home and at school; and the third part is to give each child only good books to read.¹ Another authority lists her views of the ways to bring children and books together. She claims that the first obligation is to make good and worthwhile books accessible through the library and classroom.²

The experts in the field of children's literature make continual reference to "good books". Additional examination of the expert's opinions in relation to good books is in order.

One expert indicates that the development of a love of reading is dependent, to a large degree, on exposure to good books in childhood. If the child finds himself in an environment of good books, and is encouraged by an interested person to read the books, he will shortly realize what wonderful companions good books can be to him.³

1. Alice Lehrer, "Guidepost to Children's Books", Elementary English April 1958, vol. XXXV, p. 215.

2. Eleanor E. Ahlers, "What Have Books to Say to Young People?" Wilson Library Bulletin, November 1954, vol. 29, p. 233.

3. M. Elizabeth Leonard, "Shall Fry Need Good Books", Wilson Library Bulletin, April 1959, vol. 33, p. 358.

Good books shared are important in enriching family living and establishing a true sense of ethical, moral, and aesthetic value. The children who have acquired the habit of going to good books for pleasure and information have incalculable advantages over the children who seldom get beyond comic books, radio, and television.¹

Literary heritage must continue if children are to acquire this habit of going to good books. Parents who have benefitted from literary tradition should pass it on to their children. The realization of the importance of books in people's lives will bring about a respect for literature.²

It is necessary to sort out from the thousands of books which appear each year those good books which offer pleasure and enrichment from those whose only contribution is to further the distribution of mediocrity.³

Pleasure and enrichment are commonly accepted by authorities as desirable goals reached by reading books of good quality. Another measure of the value of a child's book is the extent to which it contributes to his growth as a sturdy, well-balanced, understanding, and happy human being.⁴

1. Bess Porter Adams, About Books and Children, p. 65.

2. Alice M. Jordan, From Rollo to Tom Sawyer and Other Papers, p. 16.

3. Jean Tomson, Books for Boys and Girls, p. viii

4. John J. DeBoer, "Violence in Children's Books - An Editorial" op. cit., p. 473

It has also been noted that the best books for children are those which can be read and reread; those which grow as the child grows.¹ Colby believes that the characteristics of a book of quality for children are the same as for adults: that pleasure and knowledge gained should be the final criteria in evaluating a book.²

A faculty member of San Fernando Valley State College in Los Angeles warns that some adult reactions obstruct real progress in understanding the worthiness of children's books.

He lists the reactions as:

1. "Isn't that story wonderful?" or "Isn't that story awful?"
2. "Is it a children's classic?"
3. "Is it on the list?"
4. "Is it acceptable?"
5. "Who wrote it?"
6. "Was it written for children?"
7. "What unit can I use this with?"
8. "What is a good book for children?"

The author concludes his article by informing his readers that, "This article has intentionally been put in negative terms -- the no's of blind alleys. The positive suggestion here is that in working with children's reading we at least start with the child reading the book."³

We hope that we can and will help children to learn high standards of selection as they read. It is possible to accomplish much if we see that really good and attractive

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1. May L. Hecker, Adventures in Reading p. 5.
 2. The Children's Book Field pp. 7-8.
 3. James Steel Smith, "Blind Alleys in Children's Literature", Elementary English, April 1959, vol. XXXVI, pp. 223-225

books surround them. The child will develop a taste for good books as he reads if we screen properly and provide a varied reading diet with many levels of difficulties and a wide range of topics and treatments.¹

Phyllis Fenner, in a book she edited, included an essay which was actually an advertisement of Henry Holt and Company. It appeared in the February 9, 1946 issue of the Saturday Review. It sums up what makes good children's books live as follows:

It looks like a combination of warmth, sincerity, emotion, personal experience, sympathy, struggle, security, kindness, humor, the triumph of right over wrong. Well, maybe all this does spell Literature. Whatever it is, our children demand it in their books. It might be a better world if what we ask from life didn't depart too radically from these standards as we grew up.²

1. Mildred A. Dawson, "Children Learn as They Read", Elementary English, November 1959, vol. XXXVI, pp. 476-477.

2. Something Shared: Children and Books, p. 63

CHAPTER III

GOOD BOOKS EQUAL GOOD LITERATURE

"Reading is a reflection of life. Every decent influence that you want to exert on a child is reinforced, amplified and anchored by good books."¹ An appreciation of good literature is developed through satisfying contacts with good books.²

The qualities of good books have been discussed at length in the course of this paper. Dealing with the qualities of good literature might appear to be redundant. However, many authorities have expressed the importance of good reading by relating their ideas directly to good literature. Literature for children has a greatness and an entity of its own.³ All related views should therefore be considered.

One of the greatest things we can give a child attending school is a love of reading. Literature should not only be a tool of learning but a pleasure for every child and a means for information during his growing experiences. Without this he has no educational foundation. With it, he has the greatest tool of education, and there is no limitation to the

1. Frederic Wertham, M.D., "Reading for the Innocent", Wilson Library Bulletin, vol. 29, p. 611.

2. Zelma W. Baker, The Language Arts, the Child, and the Teacher, p. 34.

3. Cornelia Meigs, et al., A Critical History of Children's Literature, p. 3.

richness of mind he may reach. Every experience a child has, everything he thinks, may be enriched through good literature.¹ Actually, people who have read good literature have lived more than people who have not. They have lived other people's lives in books and therefore had a "symbolic experience",²

One thing that makes excellent literature excellent is its adaptability to the reader's re-experiencing. Cheap literature lacks the concrete and realizable detail and cannot be felt or experienced.³

Whitehead believes that even in a technical education, the minimum goal should be to make the pupils enjoy literature. He believes that everything else will develop from that point.⁴ Another view is that to know and enjoy good literature, from folk tales and myths to the good writers of today, is to build critical judgment.⁵

Lillian Smith expresses the thought that careful reading of children's literature will lead one to the conclusion that identical artistic standards prevail in both adult and children's literature.⁶

1. Ruth H. Harshaw and Dilla W. MacBean, What Book is That? p. 7.

2. S.I. Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action, p.132.

3. Paul McKee, Reading and Literature in the Elementary School, p. 476

4. The Aims of Education, p. 66.

5. Ruth Toss, Storytelling, p. 24

6. The Unreluctant Years, p.17.

She also points out that there is not much danger that the children of today will be any more willing to relinquish their literary heritage than the children of any other day, so long as good literature is put within their reach.¹ The fact remains that most children require guidance to appreciate literature.²

A literature program could furnish the necessary guidance. The program would have to introduce the children to a wide variety of literature. Poetry and so-called classical prose are important, but biography, myths, travel, and the like must also be included.³ Children may not know how to phrase any questions they might have about life. In fact, they may hesitate to try. Through stories, drama, and poetry they find many of their unphrased and unanswered questions answered.⁴

All that has been said thus far supports the theory that children should be exposed to good books or good literature. The opinion has been offered that guidance is also necessary if literature is to be appreciated by the children. A possible solution has been found in a school literature program. A question now comes to mind. Do many elementary schools have such a program? The question will be dealt with in the next chapter.

1. The Unreluctant Years, p. 17.

2. Nancy Larrick, "Eight Steps to Children's Literature", The Instructor, vol. LXIX, p. 6.

3. Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 478

4. Galvin T. Ryan, "Child Guidance Through Books", Wilson Library Bulletin, vol. 27, p. 156

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DOING ABOUT LITERATURE?

"Literature has a significant place in the curriculum and should not be neglected in favor of mere informative reading." So states the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English in its 1952 publication, The English Language Arts.

What, then, is the elementary school doing about literature? The appendix holds a clue, but the replies to the questionnaire, mentioned in the introduction, concern only one school.

Dora V. Smith is quoted in Leland Jacobs' Curriculum Letter, Number 1, 1953. The letter was issued by the Department of School Services of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. In the letter, which is entitled, Why Have a Planned Literature Program?, Miss Smith is quoted as follows: "Literature and personal reading are in some respects the most neglected phases of education today." In the same Curriculum Letter, Number 1, in 1953, issued by the Department of School Services of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut and entitled Why Have a Planned Literature Program?, Jean Betzner strongly declares, "There has been a general neglect of literature in all too many elementary schools."

Frances Maib claims that one of the justified criticisms hurled at the modern school is that children are woefully ignorant of good literature. In many cases, this one seems to approach the truth.¹

One of the reasons for the neglect of literature in the schools is that many of the basic reading texts have ceased to use classic stories, fairy tales, fables, myths, epics, and poetry.²

Still another authority bemoans the fact that literature is not receiving the attention it needs if it is to make its valuable contribution to child growth and development. Literature must receive its own fair share of emphasis during the school day. Mere exposure to literature or presentation as an incidental experience does not follow the path to a realization of literary values.³

In November 1953, the Department of School Services of Wesleyan University made a survey. It was conceived with current practices in the teaching of children's literature in the elementary school. A questionnaire was sent to almost 15,000 elementary school principals, supervisors, and

1. Frances Maib, "Improving Children's Literary Tastes", Elementary English, vol. XXXVI, p. 180.

2. Ibid.

3. Dr. LaVerne Strong, Children Need Literature, Dept. of School Services, Curriculum Letter 1953-54, No. 9, p.1.

curriculum directors to determine the attitudes of school administrators toward the teaching of children's literature and to discover current elementary school practices in this area. Listed below are some of the findings:

(1) An overwhelming conviction that 'elementary schools should promote wider reading in the field of literature' (94% said "Yes" to this question).

(2) An almost equally strong conviction that (in terms of materials) 'literature reading is not adequately provided for on all grade levels'. (79% so stated)

(3) A definite feeling that what is needed to develop literary appreciation on the part of elementary children is a guided literature program, with more interesting materials, under the direction of enthusiastic teachers. (These three needs were 1, 2, 3, in order of the requirements listed.)¹

The last finding quoted was further strengthened by the replies to another question. When asked how schools can best accomplish a vital literature program, the administrators recommended:

- (1) Setting aside time for guided literature reading.
- (2) Enlarging Classroom libraries.
- (3) Adding sets of supplementary (literary) readers.²

1. Eleanor M. Johnson, How Well Do Elementary Schools Feel They Are Teaching Children's Literature? Dept. of School Services, Curriculum Letter, 1951-54; No. 4, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

Ninety-four percent of the replies said that their schools used a reader specifically designated as "basal". With the replies given above in mind, the indication is that the school executives are clearly aware either that the basal reading program does not have the development of literary appreciation as its purpose, or that it is, in any case, not achieving success in that area.¹

There were some conclusions drawn as a result of the study. First, it was clear that the school supervisors and principals recognized a lack of satisfactory teaching of literature in grades three through six. Second, a significant percentage of supervisors and principals felt that literature should be taught as a definite teacher-guided program. Also, the conclusion was drawn that many school systems were not clear as to the essential differences in the reading skills involved in a total reading program.² (McKee claims that the important difference between the teaching of the fundamentals of reading and the teaching of literature for children is similar to that which should exist between the teaching of the fundamentals of arithmetic and the development of enjoyment of music.)³

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 554.

"The important consideration is to try to determine what can be done to improve the situation in order that our children will not awaken some day to a bleak and empty adult literary world."¹

The developmental literature program being formed for the Wheeler Avenue School is a step in the right direction.

1. Frances Maib, op. cit.

CHAPTER V

GOALS OF A LITERATURE PROGRAM

Most authorities agree on the basic goal of a literature program. Ruth Foote claims that getting a child interested in reading will insure him of rewarding experiences in the future.¹

Nancy Larrick believes the goal for parents and teachers alike is to reach the happy medium of combining freedom to enjoy reading with being guided in appreciating what is being read.²

Another expert tells us that activating the initial interest in reading and developing a continued interest are both goals of the program.³

We are also told that the habit of reading belongs to any effective branch of learning.⁴ The goal of any book program is increased interest in the books themselves and the development on the part of the children toward a wider and more varied choice in good reading.⁵ The basic purpose in the teaching of children's literature is to aid the pupil in building a permanent interest in reading a wide variety of choice material and developing a taste for such material.⁶

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1. Your Children Want to Read, pp. 40-41.
 2. "Eight Steps to Children's Literature, The Instructor, vol. LXIX, p. 6.
 3. Benjamin Giss, "Stimulating Children's Growth in Reading", Elementary English, vol. XXV, p. 529.
 4. Alfred Steffens, The Wonderful World of Books, p. 60.
 5. Ruth H. Harshaw and Dilla W. MacBean, op. cit., p. 12.
 6. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 554.

A curriculum letter contains some commonly accepted goals in literature reading. They are: (1) development of a permanent interest in reading that will extend far beyond school years; (2) establishment of the habit of turning to reading as a worthy use of leisure time; (3) development of the concept that reading good literature will serve as a mentally healthful escape from everyday living; (4) development of new interests; (5) refinement of taste and appreciation.¹

Another list suggests the following as goals in the teaching of literature:

The extension and enrichment of the children's experiences of the complex ways of man's living

Providing opportunity to relive and re-experience the adventures and ideas of others

Enabling a child to gain insight into his own personality and problems

Providing reading materials which help to develop an appreciation and understanding of the problems of others

Developing in the child a love of country and democratic ideals

The pupil's discovery of ethical values which are common to different creeds and which form a foundation of good character in the modern world

Providing ample time for fun and escape

1. Dr. LaVerne Strong, op. cit., p. 1.

The development in the individual, of worth-while tastes and permanent interests in good literature.¹

The above aims are quite specific and the authority relates that the child's enjoyment of literature is the immediate goal to be reached if all other goals are to be realized.²

1. David H. Russell, op. cit., pp. 283-285

2. Ibid., p. 282

CHAPTER VI

A PLANNED LITERATURE PROGRAM

Teachers seem constantly to cry about the lack of time in the school day. Often, it does appear that the hours go by too quickly. This semi-valid excuse must not stunt the growth of a planned literature program. The over-all importance of literature is so great that, if teachers are really concerned about total growth and development, it cannot be slighted. Instead, because of its large contribution to social, emotional, and ethical development, definite periods must be planned for group participation in literary experiences.¹

A planned literature program in the elementary school means bringing the child and literature together through two major contacts. They are:

- (1) Guided group reading under the teacher's direction, with literature material.
- (2) Independent personal reading enables children to browse and pursue their individual interests at home and in the school. An effective guided literature program will stimulate personal reading at school and at home in order to satisfy personal interests. Free reading is a form of checking system on guided reading since the child's own

1. Dr. LaVern Strong, op. cit., p. 2.

choices will indicate how effective the guided reading has been.¹

Only through a carefully planned program of guidance can children achieve breadth and depth of interpretation of literature. The balanced program will give each child guidance in the development of appreciation skills (which are not the same as basic reading skills). It will also give each child his literary heritage.² Learning to know, use, and appreciate our literary heritage is a basic characteristic of the program.³

It has been mentioned in the preceding chapter that the basic purpose of the literature program is to help the pupil build a permanent interest in reading a wide variety of choice material, and to help him cultivate a taste for such material. This purpose has little to do with teaching the pupil the mechanics of reading, except insofar as the interest appeal of the selections read motivate him to acquire greater reading power.⁴ Reading takes on depth when, to interest and motivation, we add experience, competence of interpretive skills and guidance. A preoccupation with basic reading should never leave reading in depth to chance.⁵

1. Eleanor M. Johnson, What is a Planned Literature Reading Program?, Dept. of School Services, A Curriculum Letter, 1953-54, No. 6, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Muriel Crosby, "The Totality of the Reading Program", Elementary English, vol. XXXVI, p. 378.

4. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 554.

5. Eleanor M. Johnson, Reading in Depth: Interpretation Dept. of School Services, Curriculum Letter 1953-54, No. 43, p. 1

The attitude of both the teacher and the pupil should be a recreatory one, and the instructional material and methods used must be those which are most likely to develop the desired interest and taste.¹ The intermediate-grades stage is the time when such recreational reading flourishes. Most children at this level have mastered the mechanical difficulties of reading, but they have not developed the social interests of early adolescence. Therefore, the years from approximately nine to twelve are sometimes called the golden years for reading. It has been stated that various interest studies show that most children do more recreational reading during these years than at any other time in their lives.²

Because literature is intimately related to child development and child living, because literature aids children in enriching their daily lives and in expanding their vision, because literature helps children to develop in reflective thinking and in taste, it deserves time and attention in the lives of children at school.

It is not enough to realize the virtues and limitations of a program intended for children. We must also know the children -- their needs and interests.³ The next two chapters will deal directly with needs and interests.

1. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 554.

2. David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read, p. 176.

3. Leland Jacobs, Why Have a Planned Literature Program? Dept. of School Services, Curriculum Letter, 1953-54, No. 1, p. 2.

4. May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 2.

CHAPTER VII

NEEDS: THEIR CLASSIFICATION AND FULFILLMENT

Literature helps fulfill certain emotional and social needs. Arbuthnot names "security" as the major need which books satisfy in children. Under the heading of security she lists "material, emotional, intellectual and spiritual" needs. Being even more specific she pinpoints the needs as follows: "To be loved; to achieve; (something worthy); to know; and to gain intellectual security."¹

Ford believes that literature also helps the child fulfill the need of gaining insight into family situations.²

Frank's list of needs, which are satisfied by literature, is as follows: need for adventure; for information; for an "emotional safety valve"; for fun and an escape from reality.³

Tooze says that children require good books in order to understand and adjust to the physical and social world. Aside from this children read to meet emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic needs.⁴

Frank adds to this by proposing that good books give youngsters a wealth of literary illusions, imagination, character, and moral and spiritual values.⁵

1. May Hill Arbuthnot, op. cit., pp. 3-11.
2. "Literature As An Aid to Social Development", Teachers College Record, vol. XXIII, p. 378.
3. Josette Frank, Your Child's Reading Today, p. 43ff.
4. Ruth Tooze, Your Children Want to Read, p. 92.
5. Josette Frank, Your Child's Reading Today, p. 169.

Realistic fiction helps to fill some of the needs mentioned by presenting the problems of human relations. This type of story leads to a child's understanding of others through insights and vicarious experience not obtainable in his own environment. Animals Tales play their part in a literature program by giving the child a chance to detach himself from interpersonal relationships. Modern fantasy offers escape from the pressure of reality by giving personality to machines and presenting problems in new space-time dimensions.¹

Taba, et. al., feel that good books bring about an understanding of other's views and problems through identification with people and their problems in stories.²

Siks' opinion is that an individual's needs remain constant throughout life although they change in degree with age, maturity, and learning. She believes that these basic growth needs are physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual.³

Lohrer cites seven basic needs as important to all children. These fundamental needs serve as guideposts to the selection of children's books. The need for security is first. This includes material as well as spiritual and emotional

1. Leland Jacobs, "What Constitutes a Good Literature Program?", Texas Outlook, vol. 39, pp. 16-17.

2. Literature for Human Understanding, p. 1ff.

3. Geraldine Brain Siks, Creative Dramatics, p. 2.

security. Reading aloud to children in the home is very important in meeting this basic need because it brings parents and children closer together through the sharing of ideas from books. A child can never be too young nor too old to be read aloud to. One can read to a child material which is above his own reading level. As children become older and more mature they can be introduced to death and tragedy through literature.

A second fundamental need is the need to belong -- to be a part of a group, a part of a family, of a team, and later to identify with a town, with one's country, and finally with the world at large.²

A third basic need is the need to love and be loved. Children's interests in pets, in animals, and in stories pertaining to them, help to satisfy the need to love and the need to shower affection upon someone or something.³

The need to know--the need for intellectual curiosity--is the fifth basic need. There is a vast amount of excellent material written today for children of all ages and on most subjects of interest to children. These books are written with accuracy, and in a clear, simple style.⁴

A sixth fundamental need is the need for change. Children need freedom from routines of family life, from adult pressure

1. Alise Lehrer, op. cit., p. 216.

2. Ibid. p. 217.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

from practicing codes of manners, from a sense of inferiority, from family troubles. Folk tales are a rich source of escape literature that help to fulfill this basic need. Reading escape literature as a relief from the pressures of life is valuable and necessary to nearly all of us. It is not an indication of running away from responsibilities, but merely a means of giving one's self relief from pressure in order to gain renewed strength to tackle problems that we all face.¹

The need for aesthetic satisfaction, the need to respond emotionally, but not necessarily intellectually, to literature, art, and music is the seventh basic need. Poetry often fulfills this need, as do some of our beautifully written pieces of literature for children that were meant to be read aloud and be shared with others.²

We can encourage children if we realize their needs and guide them toward books that will satisfy these individual needs. It is important, however, to remember that while we must be enthusiastic when recommending books to help satisfy needs, we must not force our suggestions on the children.³

The Needs of a Democracy-

In these years of trying world problems, every means of strengthening our democratic form of government is helpful.

1. Ibid. p. 218

2. Ibid.

3. Phyllis Fenner, The Proof of the Pudding, p. 183.

As Tooze tells us, we live in a democracy which presupposes the opportunity for men to develop and assume all the responsibility they can bear. She feels that a person who reads can usually face the world and cope with it better. Tooze believes that reading is, naturally enough, necessary for getting information.¹

It is as children develop into adults who learn to understand their world through carefully selected books that we look to the future with hope. The people of the world must understand one another and good reading can be helpful in furthering this understanding.²

The Need for World Understanding and the Appreciation of our Cultural Heritage -

In these times the importance of knowledge of our cultural heritage should be emphasized. Jacobs does this when he writes of the school's responsibility to acquaint children with old and new literature, enabling them to have "broad and deep experience in reading from the best". When speaking of literature in relation to filling children's needs, he also claims that folk tales give a child the heritage of the wishes and wisdom of man, which is timeless. American folklore gives a child the true spiritual feeling for his

1. Ruth Tooze, op. cit. p. 20.

2. Mildred A. Dawson, "Children Learn as They Read", Elementary English, vol. XXXVI, p. 477.

country and its symbols of bravery, kindness, and might. Jacobs concludes that literature presents the fundamental problems of human relations, as well as cultural and environmental problems for children to absorb and understand. These experiences, although vicarious, enable a child to gain new insights and will therefore aid him in becoming a better citizen.¹

Hans Gottschalk believes that an acquaintance with many cultures will highlight literature as offering the widest experience of life and as the best way of understanding those cultures.²

The guidance of the reading experiences of the young people in today's free world will contribute greatly to the welfare and success of the free world of tomorrow. To "read about" the customs, habits, and manners of the people of other lands gives excellent opportunity to instill courage, humor, sympathy, loyalty, tolerance, and unselfishness, which are the characteristics of world understanding.³

1. Leland Jacobs, "What Constitutes a Good Literature Program?", Texas Outlook, vol. 39, pp. 16-17.

2. "English Augmented: Diversity or Depth?" New York State Education, vol. XLVII, pp. 14-15.

3. Margaret Selman Riddle, "Let's Try Books for World Understanding" Wilson Library Bulletin, vol. 29, p. 167.

CHAPTER VIII

DEALING WITH CHILDREN'S
INTERESTS

The understanding of a child's needs is important in its own right. But the child cannot be guided toward the satisfaction of these needs through reading, unless his interests are uncovered.

Paul Witty et. al. define interest as a disposition or tendency which impels an individual to seek out particular goals for persistent attention.¹

It should be stated that an adult's opinion should not exert more influence than the child's interest. Children have always had the skill to avoid what bores them. Ever since printing began they have reached around and across adults for such reading matter as they wished.² Children learn how to accept and reject, to use the good and forget the useless.³ Children are given credit for resisting books that adults try to inflict upon them. It is stated the "children have defended themselves".⁴

It is conceded that children's reading interests and tastes do not necessarily agree with adult ideas of what children should like.

1. "Studies of Children's Interests-A Brief Summary", Elementary English, vol. XXXVII, p. 469.

2. May Hill Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 15.

3. Cornelia Meigs, op. cit., p. 5.

4. Paul Hazard, op. cit., pp. 47-49

Ruth Gundiff observes:

Children's reading interests depend upon many things, among which are the children's general intelligence; their growth and development in reading skills; their experiences at home, at school, and in their outside world; their likes and dislikes; their environment: rural or urban; their economic level; their supply of reading materials: that is the availability of books; their social age and sex.¹

Reading interests are also affected by the cultural environment. Other environmental influences on book choices are curricular demands, the recommendations of friends, and possibly the enthusiasm of the teacher.²

Determining factors in reading interests-

It is necessary to keep certain considerations in mind in order to awaken new interests, to improve desirable old ones, and to influence children's choices in reading materials. Reading proficiency and maturity of the individual children should govern the reading program. A wide spread in maturity will necessitate a wide variety of materials. Favorable conditions for reading should be provided. Comfortable seats, good lighting, and a happy and informal atmosphere are necessary. Materials in books should be partially familiar so that the child will be able to interpret and enjoy the books made available to him. Books with swift-moving dramatic action and

1. "Children's Reading Interests", Peabody Journal of Education, vol. 25, p. 2597

2. David H. Russell, op. cit., p. 271.

suspense will probably attract real interest.¹

Research offers definite evidence that improved reading interests result from an accurate study of children's present interests and a varied school program for the development of more desirable reading tastes and habits.² Suggestions for these two phases of a literature program are offered in the following sections.

Classroom study of children's reading interests -

One of the ways a teacher may study the potential and actual reading interests of his class is by observation. In school situations where children may express themselves in many activities, the teacher will often note an interest which he can jot down for his later reference. Another technique for studying reading interests is the interview. The teacher encourages the child to talk about his likes and dislikes in various areas. Questionnaires may be used as check lists of leisure time activities, lists of magazines read, and types of stories enjoyed. A hobby period may also be used to determine a child's interests. The teacher may suggest some materials to enrich present hobbies or lead to new, worthwhile interests. Encouraging children to keep a record of the books they borrow from libraries gives teachers another source of information about reading interests.³

1. Mildred A. Dawson and Marian Zollinger, Guiding Language Learning, pp. 100-102.

2. David H. Russell, op. cit., p. 271.

3. Ibid., pp. 272-273.

Rather, they must be based on the spirit of the whole instructional program. The procedures mentioned have emphasized creating initial interests in books, but follow-up of reading activities can be equally important.

Impact of mass media on interests -

The effect of mass media on children's reading habits is of great concern. Frank feels that mass media may stimulate the reading interests of the child.² She also believes that newspapers, television, or radio offer pieces of information which interest him and stimulate further inquiry into books.³

Tooze thinks that films, such as Disney's nature pictures, help children along the path to books. However, she also believes that mass media tend to confuse children. They hear too much information and too many statements for which they lack the experience to evaluate.⁴

It is never safe to predict children's interests. This is especially true today when the world is so full of many different things.⁵ However, if you know what attracts a child, you can find books that will attract him equally.⁶

1. Ibid., p. 276
2. Your Child's Reading Today, p. 172
3. "What Are Children Reading in this T.V. Age?" Child Study, vol. 3, p. 4.
4. Your Children Want to Read, p. 26.
5. Doris Gates, The Literary Aspects of a Basic Reading Series, Ginn and Company, Contributions to Reading, 1951, p. 1.
6. Nancy Larrick, A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading, p. 77.

Classroom methods for stimulating desirable reading interests-

One of the methods a teacher may use to increase the amount and quality of voluntary reading is a definitely scheduled free reading period when children can enjoy books or magazines of their own choice from the school, public, or classroom library. Teacher will soon know which pupils need guidance in selecting a book suitable in theme and in difficulty. A reading corner should be set up to invite free reading in the classroom. A display of book jackets and pictures will stimulate interest in the books represented, especially if the teacher or pupils give a few hints about the contents. Teachers can read stories which he believes will be well received by the group. Wall charts to indicate the titles of books read by the children are devices which may be used to record and stimulate free reading. A book club may be organized within the classroom and include such activities as corresponding with authors, making posters for special book occasions, and helping to arrange a class story hour for younger children. Book exhibits in some prominent place may stimulate interest in certain books. Programs for book week may be used as a means of stimulating interest in the entire school as well as in the classroom.¹

Developing reading interests is a complex task which must not depend exclusively on the methods and devices noted above.

1. Ibid., pp. 274-276.

CHAPTER IX

SELECTING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Being aware of a child's interests is very helpful in improving instruction in children's literature. Teachers also need a set of standards which can serve as a guide to the choice of reading materials to be placed at the child's disposal.¹

McKee offers such standards as:

- (1) Selections must possess literary merit and a worthwhile reading content.
- (2) Selections must appeal to the child's immediate interests.
- (3) Selections must be interesting in their own right.
- (4) The materials to be used must cover a wide range.
- (5) There should be different forms of reading materials.
- (6) The array of materials must be kept up-to-date.²

Another authority believes that selecting the proper book for a child is a greater problem than discovering their interests and needs. She claims that one criteria stands alone. "A book is good for children only when they enjoy it. A book is poor for them if they do not enjoy it, even though the adults rate it high and feel that the children should like it."³

1. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 565

2. Ibid., pp. 565-568

3. Ruth G. Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 304.

This point of view is supported by Cleary. She lists "yes" and "no" considerations in selecting books:

Consideration should be given to:

Cultural Pattern of a child	Literary tests
Motivation	Adults acclaim
Problems in reading	Authoritative lists
Needs	Contribution to
Interests	literature

Cleary concludes that a book must, in the end, find approval from the young reader.¹

This chapter is directly related to the chapters which discuss the experts' views of good books and good literature. The majority of opinions noted in this paper bring out that the child's desire to read a book is of the utmost importance. McKee's list requires closer examination lest he be misinterpreted. He has listed the possession of literary merit as a first requisite of a book to be selected. Under this heading he says the following:

Reading materials for children fall into four general types: (a) that which reports actual experiences, episodes, and incidents, such as Chapman's Travels of Birds, (b) that which is true to life but does not report actual occurrences, (c) that which makes no pretense of being anything but fanciful, such as nonsense jungles and fairy tales, and, (d) that which pretends, but fails, to relate true occurrences or to be true to life, such as cheap adventure stories. Obviously, the teacher's choices should be made from the

p. 59¹. Florence Damon Cleary, Blueprints for Better Reading,

first three types. Much of the biography, travel, science, and other truthful and interesting reports are representative of the first type. Most of the good poetry and fiction is acceptable as the second type. The straightforward nonsense, humor, and fanciful stories are included as the third type. The fourth type of material should be disregarded.¹

McKee has this to say after the aforementioned section:

2. Each selection must appeal to the child's immediate interests. This does not mean that the child's interests are to be substituted for literary value in choosing selections to be used. Rather, it means that from among the literature of high merit only these selections are to be chosen which can satisfy the child's interests.²

Regardless of semantics and degrees of opinion, interests seem to be uppermost in the minds of most authorities when the selection of books for children is being considered.

1. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 565
2. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 565

CHAPTER X

A LITERATURE PROGRAM'S ACTIVITIES

Since experience is not confined to writing, it is necessary to include in any consideration of children's literature pictures not only in books but wherever found, phonograph records, and the records made over the radio. Moreover, because it is impossible to deal with these materials apart from the forms used for preserving them, books, magazines, newspapers, signboards, children's own writings, the story hour, motion pictures, radio programs, phonograph records, and the theater will be included as appropriate considerations in any program of literature.¹

A wide variety of available materials suggests that there can be no one best method of teaching literature from basic readers or any other source.²

Because literature instruction exists in so many forms, because literary experiences are so varied, and because response to literature is so individual and personal, literature lessons are best not made formal or fixed by research.³

One authority lists and describes the following literature activities:

Oral Reading by the Teacher -

The teacher should read a considerable amount of poetry and prose to the class. More activity of this type should be carried through the intermediate grades than has been done in

1. Jean Betzner, op. cit., p. 2.

2. David H. Russell, op. cit., p. 287.

3. Ibid., p. 288.

the past. Background material should be provided by the teacher before the reading of each selection. The reading may be followed by an appropriate, informal discussion. Under no circumstances should the teacher degenerate the discussion by quizzing the members of the class. Opportunity should be provided for free expression on the part of the pupils.

Oral Reading by Individual Pupils -

Oral reading of literature by children is still an artificial and perfunctory performance in many elementary schools. As one child reads a segment of the selection the others are supposed to keep their places and be ready to read when and if called upon by the teacher. Meaning or enjoyment of literature could not result from an experience of this type.

The modern school, as a rule, would have the reader as the only pupil in the class with a copy of the material being read. He might have come across an interesting selection during a free reading period, and is given an opportunity to prepare for the reading before he presents the selection to the class. Standards must be set for this type of activity. The reader must be heard by all and produce the proper mood or emotion in what he reads. He should enjoy the reading and the audience must listen and act as though they are enjoying it also. There are other fundamental standards to be considered. They are (1) distinct reading; (2) interesting voice; (3) smooth reading; (4) visibility of reader's face, (he

should not block the view of his face with the book); (5) avoiding annoying mannerisms.

Oral Group Reading -

This form of activity is basically a matter of dividing the class into smaller groups, each of which prepares and reads a given selection as a group to the rest of the class. This plan can be particularly valuable in caring for individual differences in oral reading ability.

Free Silent Reading -

A large share of the time spent on literature should be devoted to what is known as free reading. During this activity the pupils are allowed ample time to browse through various materials to find good things to read. They may use the entire period for silent reading of prose or poetry. The activity should be similar to the time spent on free reading in the home or at the library. There is no oral performance. The pupil merely spends the time in reading to himself, while the teacher aids those pupils who might have any difficulty.

The activity requires the availability of single copies of a large assortment of books and children's magazines. They should be the same books used for oral reading of literature for individual pupils. The materials should be on reading tables or book shelves. During the period or at free moments during the day, the child can choose a book from the shelf and sit down and enjoy it by himself. He might find something during the free-reading time which he and the

teacher decide should be read to the class during a later period.

Probably the greatest obstacle to free reading is the lack of sufficient materials. Many schools do not possess enough books for this purpose. In such cases, teachers and pupils may assemble books collectively. The books may be borrowed from the public and school libraries. Children may bring personal copies from the home. These procedures can provide enough books to initiate the activity.

Class Reading -

Some time should be spent in silent reading of a particular selection by all the children in the class. Duplicates of the material must be available so that each child may have a copy. Generally, the procedure is such that each pupil reads the selection or a given part of it silently, after which an informal discussion among the children and teacher takes place.

The discussion must be focused upon enjoyment or experience-getting. It should in no way act as a check on comprehension or retention. The primary purpose is to allow those children who have reactions to express about the selection to do so. The questions asked will therefore deal with the child's reaction to such matters as behavior described, characters, and incidents. The procedure should generally follow the pattern of a conversation among people who are discussing a book they have read.

Giving Book Reviews -

During the literature period, various children may tell the class about books they have read. When giving the review, each child tries to relate those things which the class has decided are needed by the listener in order to decide whether he wishes to read the book. Such items will probably include the title of the book, the author's name, what the story is about, the reviewer's opinion of the book, and where it may be obtained. The reviewer may show his book and read to the class one of its most interesting parts. Class members will be given an opportunity to make comments or raise questions after the review is completed.

Some reviews should possibly be written. They may be composed on small cards and filed in a suitable box. The file may be used by all members of the class as a source of reference.

Some literature periods should be used by the teacher to introduce new books to the class. In presenting a book, the teacher should show the book, explain where it may be obtained and tell those things which the class has decided are important in their reviews.

Singing Poetry -

Some poems are enjoyed more when they are sung. Many schools have the music teacher care for this activity.*

*-note- (Singing poetry is included in the music program at the Wheeler Avenue School. The writer feels that elaboration on this form of activity is therefore unnecessary.)

Dramatization of Literature -

A wonderful way to promote power to experience literature is to make provision for its dramatization by pupils. Such dramatization may be (1) dramatic reading of a selection by groups of pupils, (2) the performance of a play by groups of children, and (3) plays with puppets. There is value in each of these types.

Dramatic reading is the most common form of dramatization of literature. Many stories are easily adaptable to this activity. The story to be dramatized is usually read first as a literary selection. The children then consider it for purposes of dramatization. The actual dramatization consists of the reading of the story by the characters in a dramatic setting after necessary preparation has been made by each character.

The intermediate grades frequently present actual plays. Many of the plays are familiar stories for which pupils are selected to memorize the parts of the various characters. Planning, costumes, and stage settings are integral parts of this activity, whether it is based on original writings or adaptations from familiar stories.

Books of stories in dramatic form are an asset to successful dramatization. There must be enough books available to provide a copy for each character in the play. To increase the interest and to provide a realistic audience situation, the story plays may be given as a make-believe radio broadcast

with a screen to hide the players from the audience, an announcer, simple sound effects, and the like.

Puppet shows enable the children to construct the theater and the puppets. The toy actors vary from a mask and dress used on the hand to jointed figures used on strings. These actors may be of the marionette form, or stiff figures handled on the stage by means of grooves on the floor or pulleys. These figures which walk, talk, have adventures, fight, and run, can do much to help make the experiences of literature real.¹

Another source lists all of the aforementioned activities plus some others. These additional activities are:

Choral Speaking or Reading -

Teachers need not feel that they should have a vast background in speech work before they attempt choral speaking or reading with their class. Choral reading in particular may be an informal activity for enjoyment. Poetry lends itself more to this type of activity than does prose. One advantage of choral work is that it may help the unrhythmical word-by-word oral reader. Possibly even more important is the fact that it gives children a security in the group, a sense of social participation, and an enjoyment of sound and rhythm which individual reading does not always provide.

Dramatic Play -

Dramatic play is differentiated from dramatization by the

1. Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, pp. 574-583.

greater informality of its procedures, by the lesser emphasis put upon verbal activities, and by the fact that it is not done for an audience. Dramatic play is usually individual and spontaneous. It grows from the child's need to express those things which he reads and thinks about. After reading or listening to an enjoyable story some children may express their ideas of it in a picture, others in rhythmic activities, and still others in a form of dramatic play. These activities offer an opportunity for expression of ideas obtained through literature and so help to complete the learning process.

Creative Writing -

Along with the creative activities mentioned above, another literature experience occurs in creative writing. Pupils who have experienced something vivid and interesting wish to talk about them in some way. With teacher guidance they may want to make permanent records of the experience. While preparing these records they may do some writing which can be called literary; but disregarding whether a sample reaches the highest standards, it may be a direct creative experience for the child himself. Such creative writing may be produced on an individual or a group basis. Force must never be used by the teacher in relation to confining a pupil to a specific topic. Rather, the creativity comes in occasional flashes, when the child expresses something particularly well and the others in the group respond to that child's enthusiasm and the teacher's respect for what the

individual has said or written. That is the time for the teacher to have the class members write down what has been said, or suggest it for the beginning of a poem, or ask the class to add to it.¹

A successful literature program should draw from all possible activities. The manner in which they are used will depend largely on the maturity and interests of the group.²

1. David H. Russell, op. cit., pp. 292-294

2. Ibid., p. 295

CHAPTER XI

EVALUATION

Each individual on a school faculty engages in a good deal of formal stock taking as he provides reading experiences for his pupils. Certain questions are reflected on by the teacher. Are the pupils growing in their ability to read with understanding? Are they gaining in their appreciation of books? Do they like to read? These same questions will serve well in a school-wide evaluation of any reading program.¹

We are informed that the evaluation of a child's development is no longer confined to a written test. This is particularly true of literature activities. The usual teacher-made tests have always been unsatisfactory for proper studying of children's development in appreciation and enjoyment of their personality changes through literature as have standardized tests. Modern evaluation grows from the purpose and nature of such procedures as those stated in a program.²

The teacher should measure his work and his pupil's development through such items as:

1. The kind and number of books read
2. The use made of magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets
3. The desire of pupils to read to others selections they have enjoyed.
4. The desire to tell stories that have appealed to them

1. Florence Damon Cleary, op. cit., p. 76.
2. David H. Russell, op. cit., p. 295

5. The participation in dramatization of stories read
6. The quality of children's expressive activities, such as original stories or paintings developing from stories
7. The extent to which children bring available books from home to share with others
8. The number of books borrowed for home reading
9. The use of books in free periods
10. The ease and enjoyment with which children memorize poetry or other selections.
11. The quality of choices in radio programs, recordings, and films
12. The form and maturity of pupils' comments about their tastes and preferences¹

It is improbable that an experience in literature can change a child's personality and values unless it is supported by related experiences in the home, school, and community. The effects of a book or some other material may be too subtle to measure accurately. On some occasions the teacher will have to rely on the posture, the glances, the requests for more or less, the more intangible effects of a literature experience. The items in an evaluation suggested above cannot stand by themselves; but, put together in combinations of small numbers, they may indicate to the alert teacher, supervisor, or principal some results of a literature program.²

PART II -

**A DEVELOPMENTAL LITERATURE PROGRAM FOR
THE INTERMEDIATE GRADE LEVEL AT
WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL,
VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK**

CHAPTER XII

PLACE IN THE CURRICULUM

It would appear at first that literature is merely a part of the language arts -- a free or appreciation phase. Literature, however, cannot be separated from either the language arts or the curriculum as a whole, for it helps in the attainment of objectives in every curriculum area. In return, literature receives help and materials from each area for the achievement of its own purposes. For example, although literature is not concerned with the teaching of facts in the social studies, a variety of literature experiences will provide an extensive knowledge of places, people, and things. Literature then, is an avenue that leads to the enhancement of school activities.

Although a close relationship exists between literature and the other language arts, a distinction should be made between the teaching of literature and the teaching of fundamental reading skills. To illustrate, in developmental reading the child acquires the skills and abilities he needs to read successfully. Wheeler Avenue School has a reading program which emphasizes the development of reading skills. Such a program must accompany and be a contributing part of a literature program. In the literature program, the child will read for personal satisfaction. It is hoped that he will develop a lasting interest in reading once he reads independently and easily a wide variety of excellent materials.

Through literature children become familiar with the collected wisdom, achievements, and dreams of man. They learn that literature is the record of man's experience, both imaginary and real, from which others gain inspiration and enjoyment. Man now has many ways of recording his experiences. Teachers may now expose children to experiences as successfully with magazines, newspapers, recordings, film strips, and moving pictures as they formerly did with books alone. Television and radio are also available as aids in the presentation of literature.

CHAPTER XIII

PURPOSES OF THE LITERATURE PROGRAM

Various experiences gained by participants in a literature program shall be outgrowths of procedures directly associated with the purposes of the program. It is the writer's belief that some of these individual experiences will be unforeseen by him at the time of the stating of aims. It is his intention to state the major purposes to be achieved with the realization that various other individual experiences will result from within the framework of these purposes. For example, the hope that children involved in the program will recognize human weaknesses and strengths when reading biographies is a worthy goal to strive for, but it is only a small branch growing from the body of the literature program.

With this in mind, the following outline has been formed as a general statement of purposes of the literature program:

1. To develop an active interest in reading that will extend through life
 - A. To encourage the habit of reading for sheer fun and entertainment
 - B. To develop in the pupil an active interest in increasing the variety and improving the quality of his reading matter through the development of his literary tastes.
2. To develop an appreciation of language--its beauty, wonder, form, function

3. To give the satisfaction of learning
 - A. To gain information
 - B. To stimulate creative experiences
 - C. To develop new interests
 - D. To develop an understanding and appreciation of cultural traditions
4. To develop habits of reflective and critical thinking
5. To develop high ideals and worthy standards of conduct
6. To help the individual to understand himself, to gain insight into his problems, and to develop an understanding of and a sensitivity to the experiences of others
 - A. To help the individual to experience vicariously what he cannot experience directly
 - B. To develop an understanding of and a respect for the similarities and differences among people

Once the statement of purposes was completed, the writer felt a need to elaborate on a number of areas within the outline. The areas were those which made particular impressions on the writer during the course of his readings on the subject of aims. These areas and impressions have been noted as follows:

1. Helping the child to understand himself and his problems -

The present period of accelerated change, which brings confusions and anxieties to family life,

increasingly forces the child to call upon his own resources to solve his problems. He must learn that he has an important part to play in his family and community. He needs the confidence that comes from identifying himself with problems solved by well-liked story book

characters. He must realize that his present struggles are so similar to those encountered by all boys and girls that he should not consider them with alarm. Literature, with its portrayal of ways in which people solve their problems, helps give that assurance.

2. Offering escape from routine -

The child seeks and deserves escape from routine. When pressures become too strong, he can obtain a measure of safety from literature. For this reason, fairy tales in which miracles occur, stories of home life in which families are united by mutual affection, epics in which the righteous master difficulties, and animal tales in which the reader assumes the role of protector are extremely popular with children. This escape is not a cowardly retreat from reality, but an opportunity for the child to relax, laugh, enjoy beauty, and return to his work with restored spirit.

3. Providing leisure time activities -

Children today look forward to an increasing amount of

free time. Whether they use this leisure time wisely is, in large measure, the responsibility of the elementary school. Children who have learned to associate pleasure with literature will seek the good play, the fine broadcast, the excellent book.

4. Helping the child understand the past -

Literature helps the child clarify and enrich his ideas of people of long ago. He gains perspective as he appreciates man's persistent effort to create a good life. The dreams of people of other times stimulate and inspire. Ideals of the past, beautifully expressed, give understanding to the present.

5. Developing an appreciation of American ideals -

One of the most important objectives of education in America, at this or any time, is to instill in children a deep and abiding love of their native land. Stories of courageous American leaders develop an understanding of the beginnings and growth of this country. Literature provides a means of acquainting children with their American heritage and helps them to appreciate the ideals and spirit of the American way of life.

6. Increasing the child's knowledge and understanding of other people -

Literature helps the child understand other people. True citizens of the world extend their knowledge

beyond their immediate neighborhood to all lands. The comparatively homogeneous nature of our school, and many schools and communities often limit such an understanding. It is here that literature, which draws upon the cultures of every country, can nurture friendship for all peoples. The child learns that his experiences and those of children in other places are similar. Literature, then, can draw people together.

7. Developing ethical standards -

Literature helps the child identify himself with worthy ideals. All really fine books for children have high ethical standards. Many of these books are human in character, presenting a picture of virtues, weaknesses and strengths. Wise guidance helps the child to analyze these qualities in story book characters and leads him to identify himself with moral decisions and noble achievements. Through such activities he develops independent judgment and taste. Eventually he finds expression of his own unspoken thoughts and finds himself in the company of the great of all ages.

In the literature program, certain aims are connected exclusively to interpretation skills. Literature interpretation skills differ from such basic reading skills as

comprehension, organization, location, etc.¹ The enjoyment and appreciation of literature depends on how well the child involved in the program handles the necessary skills. It is the writer's belief that the mastery of such techniques and skills should be a specific goal of the program. The skills include:

Following a sequence of events

Predicting outcomes

Distinguishing between real and make-believe

Interpretating figurative language

Following the author's pattern

Creating mental images stimulated by words

Deriving inferences from clues and hidden meanings

Identifying with characters in the story

Identifying truth to human experiences²

The purposes, aims, or goals of any program can be reached only if the methods used in seeking those ends are selected and applied properly. It must be remembered that the goals and the path to their achievement will differ, in accordance to the needs and interests of the individual participant in the program.

1. Eleanor M. Johnson, What is a Planned Literature Reading Program?, Department of School Services, Curriculum Letter, 1953-54, No. 6, pp. 1,2.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

CHAPTER XIV

CHILDREN'S NEEDS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE PROGRAM

It has been stated that,

Certain basic needs are common to most peoples at most times. A child's needs are at first intensely and narrowly personal, but, as he matures, they broaden and become more generally socialized. Struggling to satisfy his needs, the child is forever seeking to maintain the precarious balance between personal happiness and social approval, and that is no easy task. Books can help him, directly or indirectly.¹

Teachers can help directly. Through the use of careful guidance the teacher can assist the child in the selection of those books which will best help him to meet his needs.

It is the writer's belief that a list, generally representative of children's needs, should be adopted as part of the literature program. This list would be made available to all teachers active in the program and would be useful as a reference resource concerning young people's needs.

Before compiling the list, the writer considered all the expert opinions noted in Chapter VII. Much time was spent in consultation with the head librarian at Wheeler Avenue School. Recommendations by the administrators were also considered. It was a unanimous belief that an effective literature program should satisfy the emotional, intellectual, and social needs of children. Such needs are now characterized as:

1. May Hill Arbuthnot, op. cit. pp. 2-3.

1. Need for security - material, emotional and spiritual
2. Need to belong - to be useful in one's own society and to like and respect one's own associates.
3. Need to love and receive love
4. Need to achieve - to do something or be someone worth while and to have achievements recognized
5. Need to know - intellectual security and satisfaction
6. Need for play - proper entertainment, recreation, and fun
7. Need to experience wonder and beauty
8. Need for spiritual happiness - to have confidence in one's individual beliefs concerning religion and ethical stability

CHAPTER XV

RESPONSIBILITIES CONNECTED WITH A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

The degree of effectiveness of any program is largely determined by the specific responsibilities which both teachers and administrators recognize, accept and provide for.¹

Robert J. Dever, Principal
Wheeler Avenue School
Valley Stream, New York

The above statement was made during a discussion concerning the responsibilities to be met in order to successfully carry out the literature program. While keeping this statement in mind, the writer has attempted to be selective in the choice of responsibilities which will best encompass the many aspects of the program.

Many experts, both faculty members and noted authors, were considerably influential in exposing and emphasizing these major responsibilities. They are as follows:

The literature program should permeate the whole school program -

Each teacher has a responsibility for knowing the books which interpret the subject matter he is teaching as well as for knowing books which deal exclusively with facts. He has the additional responsibility for aiding pupils to appreciate

1. Robert J. Dever, "Factors Involved in the Formation of a Literature Program" Topic of Intermediate Grade Faculty Meeting, Wheeler Avenue School Auditorium, Valley Stream, New York, October 1, 1959.

the significance of facts to be learned. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the use of books which will stimulate the student's interest in the subject and which will excite his imagination by showing the value and importance of the subject area. It might be mentioned that biographies are extremely useful in dealing with this technique owing to the fact that they bring out the human qualities of people who have made important contributions in various fields of endeavor.

The literature program must be a planned program -

The administrator is responsible for the inclusion of literature in the school's program. There should be some opportunity each day for pupils to read, to share what they are reading and to enable reading to become a satisfying experience. The teacher should arrange this reading time and undertake the direct teaching connected with it because there are so many valuable and interesting books not associated with any one specific subject. This part of the school program will then fulfill the school's obligation to make students familiar with our literary heritage and to stimulate appreciation of literature as an art in itself.

The literature program should be a continuous program -

The literature program should actually grow as the child grows. It should begin in kindergarten with picture books and Mother Goose and continue on through the upper grades where many of the books read will be adult in interest, style and

content.

The literature program must be a flexible program -

The teacher has the responsibility of adapting the program to the individual student. The student's interests, personality, ability, experiences, needs, and growth potential should be considered when selecting books for him to read.

The teacher should know and enjoy books -

The teacher, himself, should enjoy reading. He too should read now and have read in the past, for fun, inspiration, and knowledge. He must have discriminating taste founded on an appreciation and a knowledge of books. His recognition of the fact that individual tastes vary is another must, as is the realization that there is no one yardstick for measuring achievement. He will read to and with the pupils and inspire them to read what will be found satisfying.

Adequate materials are required for the literature program -

The responsibility for providing funds to buy books rests with the administrator. The librarian, teachers, and administrators have the responsibility for the selection of the books. They must be aware of what kinds of books are needed in the school and have access to reliable book lists from which to choose specific titles. The teacher will be primarily concerned with selecting books for the class library. A suggested list to act as an aid in the selection of books for intermediate grades appears in this paper as Appendix C. Filmstrips and recordings are additional materials which can

enhance the program.

Materials should be organized so that they are available to all -

The administrator also will be responsible for providing a central library in which books are available to all pupils and teachers. He must recognize the fact that the self-contained classroom is not adequate for the provision of books desired by all pupils. The boys and girls will be able to enjoy and make use of small collections of books they will select from the central library for their own classroom. The librarian will have the responsibility for organizing the books for the most advantageous use. Wheeler Avenue School is fortunate to have a librarian who has been doing all this and more for the children since 1951. This dedicated woman, Dorothy Winch, is a former student of Anne Thaxter Eaton, a foremost authority on the subject of children's literature. The librarian will have the responsibility for knowing the school program and the books and for helping teachers to make the most effective use of the books.-

The librarian shall meet with teachers who will be planning programs so that she may keep abreast of the trends in the classrooms in order to assist in the selection of books or materials for such programs. She is aware of the pupils' interests and preferences and will be able to aid the teachers in a more effective use of the books. Mrs. Winch has, in the past, talked with pupils individually and in groups about

books and the use of the library. She plans to continue this activity in the future.

The literature program will be most successful if teachers are given the opportunities of extending and sharing their knowledge of books. -

Administrators have the responsibility to provide opportunities for the faculty to continue to learn about books and reading for children and young people. This can be done through in-service education programs in which books are read, discussed, and evaluated. Teachers are responsible for participating in these programs. Authorities in the field of children's literature could be invited as guest speakers at faculty meetings or P.T.A. functions. As a point of fact, it should be noted that an in-service children's literature course was offered and well received in the district last semester.

A literature program will be successful only when reading becomes a satisfying experience for the participants. -

Pupils should be encouraged and given opportunities to talk about the books they enjoy, to present books to the class which they have found satisfying, and to express their reactions to books they have read in any creative way they wish. Spontaneous classroom discussions will give the children better opportunities to express their appreciation of the books they have read. Compared to this technique, the writing of formal book reports is less effective.

The physical surroundings should be attractive and comfortable. -

The administrator has the responsibility for providing the space, furnishing it comfortably and practically, and providing for general cleaning. The teachers are responsible for utilizing effectively the available equipment and for making the surroundings physically comfortable, neat, attractive, and inviting. Maps, posters, pictures and above all, books can be helpful in creating a favorable atmosphere.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TASTES AND INTERESTS

The increasing quantity of literature materials presents both an advantage and a disadvantage. These materials may vary from the beneficial to the harmful. If the elementary school is to provide the best in literature, it is essential that it should make a careful analysis of what is offered. This will help to guarantee that all available resources be used, and all undesirable materials be rejected. Such procedures must be followed in order to develop the interests and tastes of children and young people.

Various comments related to the reading interests of children have been presented in Chapter VIII. They are generally concerned with the background, sex, or age of the school child. A typical reaction is presented in an article by Delta Jack. The article states that primary grade children have broader social interests. They like picture books, realistic stories about home, school, and community. The author goes on to say that children in the intermediate grades enjoy stories about other peoples, historical themes, folk tales, and stories in which grown-ups take part. Animal stories are also popular at this level.¹

Generalizations concerning the type of literature experiences children enjoy or should enjoy must be examined carefully. A consensus of the expert opinions in Part I of

¹ "Guiding Children's Reading", Wilson Library Bulletin, vol. 33, p. 355.

this text, supports the belief that a book is good for the child if he enjoys it and if he is a better person for having read it. The majority of opinions, noted in context, entertain the idea that a book is of little value to the child, even though rated a classic, if he is unable to read it or is bored by its contents. The right of the child to make his own choices must be insured.

Guidance becomes the key for unlocking the door to literary experience. Skillful guidance in literature does not force the child to accept experiences selected by adults, but does help him to select those which will benefit him most. The teacher must study carefully the nature and needs of the children in his class and guide them in the development of their interests and tastes. A variety of literature materials should be available so the children can pursue their individual interests. The children should be encouraged to share their enjoyment with others.

Teachers and children should approach literature with a recreative attitude. Enjoyment and appreciation are basically personal and cannot be forced. The development of a child's interests and tastes is limited if the class is always taught as a whole. There will be times when the teacher should read to the entire group to arouse interests, to introduce new books, or to have the children enjoy materials which are beyond their reading ability. Most books, however, should be selected by the child with the expert guidance of the teacher,

and should be in accord with the child's tastes, needs and interests.

Enthusiasm is contagious. The teacher who knows and enjoys children's literature stimulates his children's appreciation for it. This implies that he should know where to find criteria for the selection of desirable literature experiences. If it is possible for him to add the skills of storytelling to his knowledge of books, he can make literature live for his class.

CHAPTER XVII

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

A modern literature program includes a variety of poetry and prose. When children's readiness for literature is respected and when they have pleasant experiences with many types of literature, then their tastes will inevitably be extended and raised. Meager literature experiences or adult prejudices tend to limit children's interest. Children often may reject biographies, drama, poetry, and essays because their initial experiences with them were uninteresting or unpleasant. Before discussing the individual areas within the scope of the literature program, it should again be stated that one of the primary goals of the program is to make the pupil's every literary experience both interesting and pleasant.

Poetry -

Children will be an interested audience whenever poems are selected for easily understood content, for clear message, for fast action, for cadence, and for bright mood. When young children listen to poetry or read it with understanding, they turn to it as a means of emotional experience.

Poems should be selected in terms of meaningful experiences of the pupils. Complex figures of speech should probably be avoided. Children dislike long description in poetry and prose. Most children enjoy poems that are melodic or tell a

story. The variety of available poems is so great and the quality so wonderful that there are many poems for each child to enjoy. The new anthologies are excellent sources of delightful poems.

The presentation of poetry should not be limited to a specific period. Poems may be occasioned by an unexpected interest such as a snowfall. Units of study can be enhanced through poetry. Poems also may be selected and presented on the basis of a theme such as "Poems of Winter" or "Animals".

Children's tastes in poetry will improve as they become familiar with the best. Their reactions to poetry can be seen in subtle ways. They might not respond to a first reading, yet they will chuckle when the poem is repeated. There are times when silence may signify appreciation. The teaching of poetry may be called effective when children start to bring poems to school of their own accord, or if they ask for some poems to be reread, or if they are inspired to create their own verse.

Nursery Rhymes -

For the young child entering school, nursery rhymes are an excellent introduction to literature. Mother Goose has a flock of young admirers whose number never appear to diminish. Although the immediate purpose of the writer is to develop the literature program for the intermediate grades, he feels that nursery rhymes should also be included in the scope of the

program. These rhymes may be useful in piercing a barrier a child might have set up toward poetry. Nursery rhymes may also be the source of much fun in challenging pupils to recall as many of them as possible. Enjoyment may also result from a discussion of the variety of subject matter which includes people, riddles, animals, songs, counting, and nonsense. Nursery rhymes can be of value in the program simply for the fact that children know and enjoy them.

Narratives -

Often, as the child's interests mature, he finds pleasure in narratives in which people, places, and things are vividly portrayed. Many different types of characters are presented through action. As the plot develops, the characters may become so involved with difficulties that the child's sympathies are aroused, and a satisfactory ending becomes all important.

1. Folk tales -

The simplest of the narrative form is the folk tale. In them are found emotions and commonly accepted ideals of people. Simple themes make folk tales appeal to the interest and comprehension of the reader. These stories which range in type from fairy tales of wonder and enchantment to animals who speak, are such favorites that some children will want to read nothing else. Folk tales, which present their moral lessons in colorful style, are to be highly recommended.

2. Fables -

The fable is the shortest type of narrative. Free of description, elaboration, or repetition, the story moves quickly and steadily toward a climax. Animals with all the foibles of men are usually the characters. A moral is drawn at the close. Though fables are brief, their representation of the philosophies of people of ancient times makes them difficult for little children to understand. Children in the upper elementary are most apt to enjoy them. Unlike other stories, fables deal in the abstract rather than the concrete, and the animals frequently lack personality. A limited use of fables during the term is sufficient.

3. Myths -

In contrast to the fable, the myth is a highly involved treatment of supernatural beings. Myths do give the pupil an understanding of the beliefs prevalent in ancient cultures. Gods with human attributes and dramatic action make myths attractive. Difficulties in the adaptation of the story to the reading levels of children limit the availability of suitable material. Oral reading of myths by the teacher will allow the children to enjoy the beauty of language and maturity of presentation found in them.

4. Fanciful tales -

The distinction between folk tales and fanciful tales

lies in the difference between what was and what might be. Where folk tales are simple, fanciful tales contain much embellishment. Supermen, talking animals, and wondrous magic are devices used to set the impossible in print. For the child who seeks escape from dull routine and as a diversion from other literary forms, fanciful tales have a definite place in the program. A practical-minded child may hold a strong dislike for this type of material. Here is another reason why adult conceptions of literature should not be forced upon children.

5. Realistic stories -

Realistic records describe the adventure of everyday living, the common ties which bind a community, and the customs and work of various people. Today a host of materials from all fields, particularly science and history, is avidly sought by children of all ages. For many, realistic stories may prove even more exciting than tales of fantasy. They have the advantage of plausibility and thus may be applied to the practical reader's life. Children want concrete personal experiences about people, animals, and methods they already know and can comprehend. Family stories which are well written may give children a conception of worthwhile group living, which can be readily imitated. As a balance to the chimerical tales, realistic literature is valuable in dramatising ordinary incidents and in making the child feel that there is

glamour in meeting daily problems courageously.

Biographies -

Biography, the story of someone's life, gives human details not present in any other form of literature. Children can identify themselves with the principal character and participate with him in his struggles through adversity toward noble goals. Great care should be taken to select materials that avoid the weaknesses that frequently make biographical treatment boring to children. Children seem to prefer heroes of action to heroes of ideas. The story of Washington, for example, is usually chosen before the story of Jefferson.

The biography should be interesting and authentic. The subject should be portrayed in enough important details to paint a total picture of a personality. Biographies serve as excellent sources of reference for units in every subject, and are valuable as stimulants to discussion, dramatizations, art, and composition. Few better media exist for the appreciation of history. Through biographies, children sense the ~~width~~ ^{strength} of great hearts and at the same time gain a better understanding of themselves.

Plays -

On some occasions a child will enjoy reading a narrative in which speech and action are condensed. Children need the experience of reading this unfamiliar form of literature. Plays are often discovered by the child in his search for a

script for an assembly performance or possibly in creating his own radio or television program. Interest in this form can be stimulated by having the child read and see many good plays.

Current Materials -

Editorials, news reports, and magazine articles, because of their personal treatment and colorful presentation of viewpoint, are forms of literature that can be of use in the elementary school. Careful selection of these literary forms in terms of children's interests will give direct information and will help to interpret current problems.

Letters -

The art of letter writing should, and is, being revived. Letters reflecting the dynamic personalities of famous people are a popular form of literature. Pupils can get equal enjoyment from writing letters themselves. The values to be found in sharing thoughts, expressing kindness, and using tact are not to be neglected. Wheeler Avenue School, always engaged in developing social sensitivity, has found letter writing useful. Children, eager to know people as they are, find letters captivating.

Children's Contributions -

The child's first interest in literature comes from his early attempts to modify nursery rhymes and stories to suit his taste. Often children weave fanciful tales, poems, and dramas from the rich and vivid experiences of their childhood.

Children's writings are displayed in the classrooms, on hall bulletin boards, or in the central library. Boys and girls enjoy what their classmates have written, and, of course, are particularly pleased when they see their own work being enjoyed by others.

Comics -

An amazing, and to some, alarming phenomenon in the field of children's literature during the past years has been the widespread interest in comics. Millions of these books each year have a large reading public of adults and an even larger reading public of children. They have become so widely read that they must be given serious attention in the elementary school.

Comics are distinguished by their ease of interpretation, their absence of unessential details, their continued use of the same characters, their intense drama, and their low cost. The subject matter ranges from the commonplace to the sensational. All these features make them exceedingly popular. In the poorer strips, there is often the portrayal of brutality. Both paper and general format are so inferior as to possibly cause eyestrain. Frequently language and art are at their lowest.¹

What is to be done about comics? Cleary relates that many educators have not expressed a great anxiety in regard

1. Ethna Sheehan, "A History of Children's Literature", Library Education 240, Graduate Course of Study, Queens College Weekly Meetings, Sept. 1959 - Jan. 1960.

to the harmful effects of comic books on the child. In fact, she states that a few authorities hold the position that "good comics" should be encouraged since they furnish a foundation on which finer literature can be built.¹ "Good comics" might be interpreted to connote Classic Comics and similar types.

Forbidding children to read comic books seems only to place a premium upon the reading. Skilled readers continue to buy these books regardless of the entreaties or injunctions of parents. Slow readers often find that these materials are the only kind they enjoy. The fantasy in hero stories, moreover, appears to be a normal part of childhood.

A wise course possibly lies in recognizing comics and employing the best of them, but making certain that there are available to each child many good books that are exciting and colorful. Transferring a child's interest from a comic book to a picture book, such as 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins would be a relatively easy task. Understanding guidance plus a variety of appropriate materials will help the child select the better comics and broaden his interests in the selection of better books.² These appropriate materials will be discussed in the chapter which follows.

1. Florence Damon Cleary, op. cit., pp. 37-38

2. Ethna Sheehan, op. cit.

CHAPTER XVIII
AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS
THEIR USE AND SELECTION

No two schools are alike. Therefore, studies of the kinds of experiences that children have, both in and out of school, are a definite part of the program in literature. There are so many rapid changes in the school community that these surveys cannot ever be considered complete. The collective efforts of pupils, teachers, and parents are necessary to locate in the home, school, and community all the available materials, people, and agencies that might provide literature experiences for the children.

The teacher should be acquainted with the pupil's home background if he is to know whether the child's life outside of school enriches his experiences or limits them. If the teacher has a favorable relationship with the parents, he will be able to obtain information concerning the general cultural patterns of the family. He will also be able to discover the availability of radios, television, newspapers, magazines, books, hobbies, and other resources at home. Parent-teacher conferences, held twice within the school year at Wheeler Avenue School, are means through which discussions of this nature could be perpetuated.

Full use of available school resources in literature is possible only when cooperative relations exist among classes

and there is free circulation of materials and ideas. The use of central book and picture collections, inter-class visits, and variety of assembly programs will help to develop an active literature program. At this time, the writer feels the need to state that Wheeler Avenue School is exemplary in all the aforementioned areas.

A successful program in literature is also related to community life. Theaters, motion picture houses, libraries, and museums are important community resources. People who have had rich experiences are a valuable resource -- the librarian eager to share stories; the veteran eager to tell of far-away countries; the parent eager to recite poetry. These are the people who can make children ignite with the desire to know about experiences that may be found in literature.

The books in use should be as varied as possible. There should be a balance in type, from fancy to fact; in mood, from humor to seriousness; in locale, from community to foreign land; and in difficulty, from the easy to the complex.

For listening to literature, the phonograph and radio are desirable. The goal of having one instrument of each type for a class has been attained at Wheeler Avenue School. Every classroom has a phonograph and a desired radio program may be piped into any room from the central unit of an inter-communication system in the school. Manuals and record collections, some purchased with the literature program in

mind, are source materials. As part of its collection of available materials, the school boasts of eleven television sets on movable stands.

Aside from television sets, picture collections, opaque projectors, film strip and motion picture projectors, and a supply of theatrical props will prove to be helpful to the literature program as visual aids.

Materials should be clear in style. Children should reach the plot with a minimum of delay. Direct vocabulary, action, conversation, surprise, and suspense are sought by children. Materials, where possible, should contain interesting illustrations. Children of all ages are influenced in their choices of books by attractiveness, color, size, and the number of illustrations. Materials should be well made----- binding and paper should be sturdy, print should be clear, and the publication should be adapted to use by children.

Books, magazines, and audio-visual aids will all have their place in the literature program. The books and magazines will be used for the class libraries. The content of the literature program should not be limited by any list but should be constantly augmented by experiences and materials which the teacher, through his own experimentation, has found to be successful with the children.

Audio-visual aids are more complex in use than books and magazines. Pictures become literature materials at the time they are used to narrate or illustrate a story. They serve as

introductory materials in the field of literature to the child. Illustrations in books aid children in their interpretation of the text and bring literature to many who do not read with confidence. Recognizing their value, talented artists have created an abundant amount of picture books for children to enjoy. The pictures which the child draws is an indication of his interest and taste.

Visual materials in the form of film strips and films are standard equipment for the average elementary school. A favorable program will use these resources to develop children's tastes and interests. The teacher is responsible for proper preparation for their use if they are to play a valuable role in increasing the children's enjoyment and appreciation.

Librarians will give evidence that a moving picture dramatization of a novel in local theaters is invariably followed by a demand for the book upon which the picture is based. Films possess a quality of reality for children that they cannot find in any other kind of literature material. There is such a very wide range in the quality of films and television programs outside the school that children should receive help in selecting the better ones. Therefore, it is important that parents, children, and teachers cooperate in setting up guides to television viewing, radio listening, and moving picture attendance.

Educational television and radio have both become means of bringing the best in literature to children. The

programs presented are finished performances that are planned and presented in terms of needs and interests of the children. Quite a number of the scripts are adaptations of books. A listening experience in school is most valuable when the children have been prepared for it in advance and have helped in setting the standards. Phonograph records supplement educational radio. Through these media famous storytellers provide an experience which a child can enjoy again and again.

Models, charts, exhibits, bulletin boards, and scrap books are other forms of visual materials available to aid in the teaching of literature.¹ A list of the specific materials available at the Wheeler Avenue School is included in the appendix. The choice of a particular audio-visual aid will depend upon the teacher's judgment of the learning needs and interests of his class. Related follow-up activities help to broaden interests and increase the enjoyment of good literature.

1. Ethna Shehan, op. cit.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

There are four main 'action areas' in the literature program. This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the four areas. Under these general headings, the writer has also noted some specific areas as sub-headings. In connection with them, he suggests certain techniques which met with success during the experimental program carried on with his fifth grade class.

Free Reading -

Free reading is an enjoyable experience for the child when it takes place in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. Enough time should be provided in the daily program for a child to select a book and read as he would at home or in the public library. The child may proceed at his own rate of speed. He will not be dependent on others. He should be able to read from the widest choice of materials at home as well as in school.

A classroom which stimulates an interest in free reading should contain many single copies of magazines, papers, and books on a diversity of subjects, at different reading levels. Whenever possible, the child should share in the selection of books used in the classroom.

Free reading provides opportunities for the teacher to guide children in the selection of materials suitable to both

their interests and abilities. Studies by the teacher of children's interests and awareness of their independent reading levels will prove to be an effective aid in guidance. Children also need help in their use of school and public libraries. They gain pleasure and satisfaction from their ability to use card catalogues, tables of contents, and indexes. The child will then become more independent in selecting his own literature.

Discussions about books and informal book reports provide methods by which the teacher can check the materials covered by his class. These reports, when given, should be brief and should not become a tedious task for the pupil. In addition, records of class experiences in the form of experience charts, scrapbooks, and compositions should be prominently displayed. Whatever the method employed, the best measure of success in this activity is the improved quality of a child's free reading.

Listed below are some specific areas which can probably be developed through free reading in the classroom. Below each area one or more suggested techniques used to approach these areas in the experimental program.

Area 1 - Making use of children's interests

Hand out a simple questionnaire to the children, asking them to check favorite interests, titles, and hobbies.

Area 2 - Broadening children's interests

Begin a form of pupil cumulative evaluation record, listing book, author, and comment.

Area 3 - Encouraging slow readers

Make a list of suitable stories to be read by the teacher to the class.

Area 4 - Choosing materials cooperatively

Allow the children to make some selections at book requisition time.

Let them examine sample books which are sent to the school.

Area 5 - Arranging materials effectively

Indicate the reading levels of books by painting colored stripes on them, e.g. red indicates an easy book to read, white indicates an average book, and blue means difficult.

Area 6 - Using children's contributions

Invite other classes to hear the selections from the class authors.

Area 7 - Getting acquainted with new books

Make a bulletin board display using book jackets.

Area 8 - Using an office catalogue

Make a card catalogue of books in the classroom library. Offer the books in the classroom to other classes and use the file cards to keep account of the borrowed books.

Area 9 - Sharing poetry

Have a 'favorite poems' period. Allow the children to share poems that they have discovered at home or in school.

Area 10 - Working with the home

Mimeograph a brief list of recommended books for children. Distribute them at parent conferences.

Area 11 - Evaluating personal reading tastes

Make a book-jacket display accompanied by story sketches by the children for another bulletin board later in the term.

Oral Reading -

Reading aloud by the teacher occupies a unique position in the literature program. It gives him an opportunity to share good stories and poems with the children. Many educators believe that a teacher should read aloud to his class at least once a day. Stories which depend on the author's own words for meaning and charm, as well as stories in which pictures play an integral part in the text, should usually be read aloud. Because of poetry's rhythm, word order, and lyric qualities, children enjoy it most when they hear it read. Actually, most poems, because of their reading difficulty, should first be presented to the class by having the teacher read the selection.

The teacher's wide knowledge of children's literature and his preparation of the selection to be read will aid in

creating an enjoyable listening experience for the children. It also will tend to improve the youngsters tastes in selecting books.

Memorization of poetry does have a place in the program. However, a love of poetry can be destroyed by forced memorization. Children may voluntarily memorize a vivid poem. In reviews of their favorite poems, they may recite spontaneously with the teacher. Opportunities for sharing poems in vital situations as room or school assemblies are incentives to the learning of poems. It should be remembered that forced memorization has no place in the program.

Techniques for memorizing a poem as a thought unit rather than line-by-line may very well be taught. The teacher should attempt to make a poem so pleasant an experience that the child will want to memorize it. Memorization which respects the rights of the children to memorize what appeals to them is a desirable literature experience.

Choral speaking or reading is a way in which groups of children can enjoy rhythmic literature together. As they participate in this activity their powers of interpretation are improved and better speech is developed. Teachers, without being experts, can make use of choral speaking with their classes. As a teacher works informally he is able to develop techniques that are effective with his children. The security and joy which children gain from this group experience is really more important than the finished product.

There are times when children have a particularly wonderful experience in literature which they wish to share with others. This desire to share may arise incidentally at the end of a free reading period. In the midst of an open discussion the child may read a well chosen paragraph. More often, the desire to share results from careful preparation on the part of both audience and reader.

The child may choose the material he wants to read from his free reading in the school, at home, or in the library. His preparation for reading aloud must include practice in reading the selection silently and orally before he presents it to the class.

It may be helpful at times for the teacher and children together to set simple standards for audience reading. A short introduction by the child or the teacher will create an atmosphere of readiness for the story. The reader alone should have a copy of the material and then the other children will be a more interested audience. Listening is an art to be cultivated and children can be made more sensitive to the beauty found in the reader's skillful interpretation of a well chosen story.

Areas developed through oral reading are listed below, along with some techniques used to approach them.

Area 1 - Organizing a book club

Encourage the children to join the Summer Reading Club,

(Wheeler Avenue School has a summer school program and

the school library functions as always).

Area 2 - Using unassigned time

Encourage browsing during any unassigned period so the children may select books to be read by the teacher.

Area 3 - Making use of contributions from home

Bring some books for children to school. Invite all the children to add to the collection. The teacher may then select stories from materials brought in by the children.

Area 4 - Preparing for successful reading

Have a period when the pupils try to "sell" their books to other class members. They will then be required to bring out their favorite parts in the book in order to convince the "buyers".

Area 5 - Visual aids

Allow the children to make dioramas, flannel-boards, or other aids to illustrate their story as they read.

Area 6 - Choral speaking

Make use of tongue-twisters to encourage clear, distinct speech. Start a choral speaking club.

Area 7 - Teacher preparation

Read books yourself before presenting them to the class. Refer to lists of children's books in the library. Consult Children's Catalogue and Rus indexes for book suggestions.

Dramatization -

Dramatization, as part of the literature program, is the

spontaneous outgrowth of enjoyment in a story read or told. In a child's world of make-believe when his imagination is stimulated, he will lose his shyness and fears and become an interested and happy participant or spectator.

In early years, dramatization is often play which is developed from social experience. The child pretends to be someone or something he is not, and he is the most important character. The play can begin anywhere and stop anytime since no plot is required and the speech is spontaneous. A character may step out of the play whenever he wishes, yet the play will go right on.

In later childhood, dramatization assumes a more complicated form, with a specific beginning, middle, and ending. There is more detail in this form. The presence of an audience requires careful attention to speech and action in the play. Because each member of the cast has particular responsibilities, the absence of an actor means training someone else to take his part or reorganizing the play. When children work out their own plays for formal presentation, the experience is often more valuable than memorizing a play from a book. An informal atmosphere, simple preparations, an open exchange of opinions, and a willing contribution from the child will make dramatization a pleasant literature activity.

Certain types of literature lend themselves to dramatic presentation. It may be through the use of pantomime, shadow

graphs, puppet shows, or rhythms. These forms of dramatization do not take the place of acted plays, yet they too have educational value. Theaters that present plays and operettas for children are growing in number. There are many high school performances in this area which children enjoy. Professional plays are wonderful but rare experiences for children in the elementary school. A performance of this quality would help to develop a taste for good drama and an interest in fine literature.

Areas and techniques are as follows:

Area 1 - Rhythmics

Play recordings of poems and stories read by professional artists. Use the tape recorder when having a rhythmics period.

Area 2 - Music

Play a music-story such as "Johnny Appleseed". Let the boys and girls give their version of the characters.

Area 3 - Informal dramatization

Have an impromptu dramatization of an exciting incident in the next poem which the class enjoys.

Area 4 - Puppets

Suggest a marionette dramatization of a favorite story.

Area 5 - Professional plays

When talking to the parents, suggest that they take their children to see plays whenever possible.

Area 6 - Pantomime

Allow the children to play charades.

Unifying Experiences -

Literature can be correlated fairly easily with other curriculum areas. At the beginning of a unit in social studies for example, there will be a need for books and materials to be evaluated, interests to be guided, and a reading program to be outlined. Reports, letters, announcements, and plays might be written by the students during the study of the unit. At appropriate intervals pupils can report on their research through book reports, puppet shows, films, dramatizations, handwork, and murals.

Many activities, though they may not be explicitly labeled as literature, will contribute considerably to the program. Visits to the library to learn the use of a card catalogue will help the child to find books independently. A visit to a local bookstore to make purchases will guide the child to spend money wisely. A field trip to a museum or factory will help the child build concepts for a better understanding of literature.

There will be times for incidental experiences in literature for which no specific period is planned. The weather's change, a birthday of a famous person, or an unexpected incident may call for an appropriate poem or story. Assembly programs, lessons, and games may be introduced through literature. The teacher must be sensitive to the

many occasions when literature can be used spontaneously to enrich the activity in progress.

Areas and suggested approaches include:

Area 1 - Introducing a unit

Examine magazines and class library for pictures and books that might arouse curiosity in the current social studies unit. Display them in a prominent place.

Area 2 - Enriching a unit

Keep a class scrapbook to which the pupils may contribute pictures, stories, poems, etc., on the social studies topic. When the book is completed, place it on the regular library shelf.

Area 3 - Building group pride and spirit

Plan an assembly program dramatizing scenes from favorite books and stories.

Area 4 - Getting acquainted with other people

Invite foreign college students to visit the school and talk to the children about their countries. (This has been done for the past several years at Wheeler Avenue School.) Visit the United Nations Building.

Area 5 - Visiting the community

Take the class to see local landmarks. Reserve a shelf in the class library for books and materials related to the school community.

Throughout the text, reference has been made to the individuality of school children. Just as the children are

individuals, so too are those who teach them. The teacher's methods will be determined by his personality, background, and creativity. The chapter has been written with this in mind. It may be used as a guide for approaching the 'action areas' of literature. The actual treatment of the areas will vary, depending on each teacher's approach to the program.

CHAPTER XX

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The evaluation of the program should be consistent with its goals as defined by the school in which it functions. For example, if we honestly believe that a literature program permeates the entire school program and is an important part of each subject-matter area, our evaluation must not be limited to transmitting knowledge related to literature and literary techniques. Rather, we must be concerned with the individual and the experiences furnished him through literature and with determining the extent to which the program is guiding pupils into progressively better and more mature habits of reading.

An expert presents a series of questions which, if considered by the school faculty, may very well help to pave the way for a vital literature program in the school. A suggestive listing of some of her questions follows:

1. What is the relation of the literature program to the total curriculum?
 - A. What does the school conceive to be the main and supplementary functions for literature?
 - B. Do the materials used in the school include those needed in presenting a broad program of literature?
2. What is the relation of the literature program to the other arts in the school curriculum?
 - A. Does the literature program so attract children and

young people that they use it as a source for clarifying, correcting, and crystallizing their own experiences?

B. Is literature used as other products of art are used, to put children and young people in contact with the experiences of others?

C. Do teachers and pupils use literature so that it stimulates interest in all areas of the school?

3. Does harmony exist among all parts of the literature program?

A. Are the ends to be achieved by children and young people through literature understood by all who deal directly with them?

B. Are the processes engaged in using literature in many areas within the school appealing to children and young people, varied, and useful outside of school? Are the procedures used applicable to individual as well as to group use?

4. Are teachers availing themselves of opportunities to increase their understanding of the children through the teaching of literature?

A. Do they value contacts with children and young people in activities where genuine interests and preferences are revealed?

B. Do they study individual pupils to discover basic causes of behavior and to familiarize themselves with

their personal problems?

C. Do they use adult literature as a continuous source of information and as a contribution to personal living?

D. Do they constantly extend their intimate knowledge of books?¹

Miss Betzner's questions should certainly be considered when evaluating the total program. Good as they may be, they are quite general in nature and do not lend themselves to the daily application necessary during the course of any program. This type of day-to-day attention in the literature program will specifically concern appreciation and enjoyment. The focus will be directed to possible changes in attitudes and understandings. Intangibles such as appreciation and enjoyment cannot be measured exactly. Frequently the teacher can judge the success of the program as well as the children's growth through a consideration of the following:

1. The use of books for recreation and fun
2. The number and quality of the books read
3. The increasing use of school and public library
4. The desire to start a personal library
5. The eagerness to share favorite stories with others
6. The selection of worth-while radio and television programs and motion pictures
7. The reports from parents on the amount and quality of

1. Jean Betzner, op. cit., p. 4.

home reading.

8. The creative activities developed from stories; original stories, poems, and paintings
9. The ease with which a child acquires and uses new words
10. The readiness with which the children memorize poetry and other selections.
11. The ability to use illustrations from literature when speaking and writing

Specific evaluation must be made in terms of the personal development of each child as shown by maturing tastes, interests, and purposes. A good program in literature will take into consideration individual differences and therefore include numerous types of materials. An appraisal should be made to determine possibilities for both independent work and group activities.

Evaluation is effective to the extent that it is planned, understood, and used by everyone connected with the program. To aid in planning his program, the teacher should make a cooperative analysis of children's needs, using information from many sources. Children can offer suggestions concerning their interests and they can share in the appraisal of available literature materials. The teacher can use his knowledge of the child's independent reading level; parents can furnish facts about the home and community environment. Supervisors and collaborating teachers can direct attention to the

possible ways literature may enrich each school enterprise, and the principal can help in the co-ordination of activity throughout the school.

The results of evaluation will easily be discerned in the life of the school. Any school program is judged by the changes it makes in the children's behavior. If through literature, the shy child loses his fears, if the aggressive child learns to share, if the indifferent child seeks books during his leisure time, if the children make the joys and wisdoms of the world's best minds their own, then the literature program is successful.

CHAPTER XXI

SUMMING UP

A successful reading program in any school is one that brings children and young people the rewards of having learned the art of reading. Learning the actual mechanical process of reading takes much effort. A child is naturally and properly willing to exert that effort if he has already been shown that there is endless pleasure waiting for him. The very beginning of a favorable reading program is bringing children and young people into friendship with books that give pleasure.

The pleasure of reading is not just entertainment, though it must not be forgotten that entertainment is a good and important thing. A mind that is happily occupied is a mind that is learning and growing and expanding its reach and capacity. Entertainment as satisfaction for a child's sense of fun, and of his need to laugh, is as essential as food or sleep.

The pleasure of reading for one child may be primarily in the satisfaction of learning specific facts that interest him. Another child will enjoy reading about other people and so learning about himself. Some children take their greatest pleasure in adventure, while still others revel in the exercise of imagination that comes with reading fairy tales. Myths and legends will appeal, as will modern stories of fancy. There are books to satisfy the interests and preferences of

youngsters of both sexes, all ages, temperaments, and mental capacities.

It is the responsibility of adults -- parents, teachers, librarians, -- to aid these youngsters in finding their way into books that will satisfy and stimulate every individual's need to grow.

Teachers have the privilege of relating books to all the kinds of learning that children are exposed to during school hours -- the longest and most productive part of every child's day. The most successful way to relate books to all kinds of learning is by sharing pleasure in books. It logically follows that a teacher's best equipment for stimulating wide, varied, and expanding reading interests among the pupils is knowledge of and pleasure in books. People who genuinely love books cannot help communicating enthusiasm to the boys and girls with whom they work.

In the early reading years children must depend on adults to provide books, simply because they themselves do not know what is there for them. This places the responsibility for setting good standards upon adults. The more a book satisfies a child's need for fun, for ideas, for imaginative experience, for adventure, the more eager the child will be to move on to other and more books. One of the major satisfactions of teaching is being able to identify the specific interests of each child and to provide books that will satisfy and develop those interests. Once the ability to read

Independently is comfortably established, a child can begin, with friendly guidance from adults, to find books for himself. People around him who care enough will see that the books he needs and wants are available to him.

Reading is the basis of much independent learning. The best thing that any teacher can do is to teach children to learn for themselves. Children who live in an atmosphere of enthusiasm for reading will soon find out that there are good books to satisfy their curiosities as well as their mental and spiritual appetites. The confidence in reading that comes from knowing what books can do for you yourself as an individual, unique person is what makes reading a lifelong resource for learning, understanding, and pure joy. It is the writer's most sincere hope that the literature program will instill and perpetuate a deep feeling for books in each youngster's mind and heart.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B
OPINIONNAIRES

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL
U.F.S.D. #13
VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Dever, (principal)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below.

Harvey Dorfman

The planned literature program would be a valuable asset to our present curriculum. To find the time remains the primary deterrent, as I see it. Assuming some other area would need to be deleted, or de-emphasized, the problem becomes one of relative values in relation to overall objectives. This selection and evaluation procedure might provide the opportunity for motivation into the literature program if irrelevant items were uncovered by the teachers in their study of the present curriculum.

Robert J. Dever

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL
U.F.S.D. #13
VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Miss Cole, (assistant principal)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below.

Harvey Dorfman

If it can be worked out, it should give the children a fine background for future reading. If they haven't read myths - a reference to Pandora or Mercury (not the car) is over their head. Quotations from poetry are often given which have more meaning if the entire selection is familiar. Pure enjoyment is the main reason for reading literature.

Ina M. Cole

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL

U.P.S.D. #13

VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Winch, (librarian)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below,

Harvey Dorfman

I feel that literature should never be treated as "incidental". As history is a record of facts, so literature is a mirror of culture, and as such, is a part of a child's heritage. Books which deserve the name of literature do far more than give information. They develop the ability to think, stimulate the imagination, awaken emotional responses, improve understanding of people, and refine taste. If a child is to grow up to enjoy good books, he must be introduced to them as early as possible, and not in a haphazard fashion. The mental diet should be just as carefully planned as the physical diet. Just as we plan the

child's physical diet with an eye to calories and vitamins, so we should place before the child books selected for their contribution to mental, emotional and aesthetic nourishment.

A well-planned literature program presupposes individualized reading guidance and a well-stocked central library, as well as the more conveniently located classroom library. If there is a sufficient variety of "quality" books, a child may still exercise freedom of choice to satisfy personal taste and interest.

Of prime importance is a teacher who has not only developed enthusiasm for good books for himself, but who has a fairly wide acquaintance with the best in children's literature, and can impart his enthusiasm to his class.

Dorothy Winch

Dorothy Winch

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL
U.F.S.D. #13
VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Smith, (chairman, grade six)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below.

Harvey Dorfman

In favor of a planned literature program because this is the only sure way that children will receive and absorb the cultural heritage that is their right.

One feeds the best food to a child to insure physical fitness without expecting him to choose it incidentally. Why not systematically feed him the best mental fare? And literature can be quite palatable!

Louise Smith

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL

U.F.S.D. #13

VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Ficks, (chairman, grade five)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below.

Harvey Dorfman

A planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum has merit as long as it doesn't interfere with the time necessary for the basic reading program.

In the elementary program time should be devoted to building up an interest in reading. This should be both supervised and independent reading. Literature could be incorporated in this program to familiarize them and to develop an interest in better reading in classes where this can be handled but not at the expense of a basic reading program.

Bess Ficks

WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL

U.F.S.D. #13

VALLEY STREAM, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Seaman, (chairman, grade four)

Based on the fact that literature is treated as incidental learning within the structure of the basic reading program, what is your reaction toward a planned literature program as a functional part of the school curriculum?

Space for comments is provided below.

Harvey Dorfman

A literature program is one of the more essential parts of a basic reading program. Because of the lack in our present curriculum, children do not realize the joy and entertainment inherent in good reading. How can they find it if we don't introduce them to it?

Genevieve J. Seaman

APPENDIX C

BOOK LISTS FOR CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. American Library Association | <u>A Basic Book Collection for the Elementary Grades</u> (Sixth Edition) | American Library Association
Chicago, 1956 |
| 2. Arbutnot, May Hill | <u>Children and Books</u> (Revised Edition) | Scott, Foresman,
1957 |
| 3. Arbutnot, et. al. | <u>Children's Books Too Good To Miss</u> | Western Reserve University Press
Cleveland, Ohio,
1953 |
| 4. Boys Clubs of America | <u>Summary Junior Book Awards Program</u> | 381 Fourth Ave.,
New York 16, N.Y.
Published Yearly
Boston University
School of Education,
1956 |
| 5. Boston University | <u>High Interest Low Vocabulary Booklet</u> | Same as noted
above |
| 6. University of Chicago Press | <u>Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books</u> A review of children's books | University of Chicago Press.
Published monthly except August. One year subscription \$4.50 |

7. Carr, Constance Substitutes for the Comic Books National Council of Teachers of English, 1951 (Probably revised)
8. Bakin, Mary K. Good Books for Children University of Chicago Press, 1959
9. Eaton, Anne T. Treasure for the Taking, A Book List for Boys and Girls Viking Press, 1957
10. Frank, Josette Your Child's Reading Today Doubleday, 1954
11. Fryatt, Norma (editor) A Horn Book Sampler Horn Book, Inc. 1959
12. Goldenson, Robert Helping Your Child to Read Better Crowell, 1957
13. Hanna, G. Books, Young People and Reading Guidance Harper, 1960
14. Johnson, Siskels Anthology of Children's Literature Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959
15. Junior Reviewers Catalog of the Best Books for Children Wellesley Hills, Mass., 1958
16. Junior Reviewers A magazine reviewing the best children's books, records, and films Junior Reviewers, Box 38, Aspen, Colorado, Published bi-monthly One year subscription \$3.50
17. Larrick, Nancy A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading Doubleday, 1958

18. Meigs, Eaton, A Critical History of
Nesbitt and Viguers Children's Literature Macmillan, 1953
19. National Council Adventuring With Books, A Read-
of Teachers of ing List for Elementary Schools National Council
English of Teachers of
English, 704 South
Sixth Street,
Champaign, Ill. D
C. Heath, 1950
20. Norvell, George W. The Reading Interests of Young
People D.C. Heath, 1950
21. Roos, Jean C. By Way of Introduction, A book
list for young people American Library
Association
Garrard Press,
1958
22. Spache, George Good Reading for Poor Readers W. Wilson Co.,
1952
23. Strang, Ruth, et
al Gateways to Readable Books R.R. Bowker
Company, New
York, N.Y., 1960
24. Turner, Mary C. Best Books for Children
(Including Adult Books for
Young People) Government Print
ing Office,
Washington, D.C.
1953.
25. U.S. Department of The Children's Bookshelf
Health, Education 1217 W. Washing-
ton Blvd., Fort
Wayne
26. Webb, Marian Juvenile Book Fare. Notes on
children's books, their authors
and their illustrators.

APPENDIX DAUDIO-VISUAL AIDS TO LITERATURE AVAILABLE AT
WHEELER AVENUE SCHOOL

Radios - Central AM-FM system - (programs piped into classroom whenever requested)

Television sets - Seven in the school - all on movable stands

Phonographs - One in each room

Filmstrip projectors - Seven

Moving picture projectors - Three (all sound)

Opaque projector - One

Slide projectors - Six

Tables - Roll-a-lock visual aid table (5)

Tape recorders - Three

Certainly, this is far from being a complete listing of audio-visual equipment at the school. The writer feels that the equipment listed can be extremely useful in the literature program. Mr. John Hoffmann has issued a complete list of available materials which is accessible when needed.

The audio-visual department rents all films shown at the school. Most requests are granted so that the responsibility of the classroom teacher to stay abreast of useful materials increases.

Funds are set aside in order to purchase materials requested by individual teachers. Filmstrips and recordings are constantly being ordered as supplementary materials for the functioning curriculum. Lists are again available,

containing all filmstrips and recordings in the school.

Listed below are filmstrips and recordings ordered to date with the literature program in mind. (Intermediate level)

Filmstrips -

Set of American Legendary Heroes -

- a. Paul Bunyan
- b. Rip Van Winkle
- c. Hiawatha
- d. Uncle Remus
- e. Pecos Bill
- f. Ichabod Crane

Individual Filmstrips -

- a. Robinson Crusoe
- b. Louisa May Alcott
- c. The Boy Who Went to the North Wind
- d. Indian Child Life
- e. The Night Before Christmas
- f. Dedication

Recordings -

Stories with Musical Background -

- a. Pinocchio
- b. The Ugly Duckling
- c. Aladdin
- d. A Midsummer Night's Dream
- e. A Sorcerer's Apprentice
- f. Peter and the Wolf

Music About Instruments -

- a. Tubby the Tuba
- b. The King's Trumpet
- c. The Hunter's Horn

Operas, Operettas, and Musical Comedies -

- a. Hansel and Gretel
- b. Madam Butterfly
- c. Carmen
- d. Tannhauser
- e. Porgy and Bess
- f. Oklahoma

Music from Around the World -

- a. Hi Neighbor
- b. Music of the World's People

Christmas -

- a. 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Classical Music -

- a. Prokofieff - Romeo and Juliet
- b. Rimsky-Korsakov - Scheherazade
- c. Debussy - Children's Corner Suite

Vocal Music -

- a. Old American Songs

Recent Additions to the Collection (all types) -

- a. Winnie the Pooh and the Heffalump
- b. Winnie the Pooh and Eeyore
- c. Johnny Appleseed

- d. Babar
- e. Bambi
- f. A Christmas Carol
- g. Pied Piper of Hamelin
- h. The Shoemaker and the Elves
- i. The Happy Prince
- j. Johnny Tremain - Liberty Tree
- k. Listen and Laugh
- l. The Story of Paul Bunyan
- m. Pecos Bill
- n. The Hunting of the Snark
- o. The Reluctant Dragon
- p. Robin Hood
- q. Rootabaga Stories
- r. Songs of Safety
- s. Steamboat 'Round the Bend
- t. Treasure Island

All of the above materials are now available from the audio-visual department.

(signed) *John M. Hoffmann*
John M. Hoffmann

Co-ordinator of Audio-Visual Dept.
Wheeler Avenue School
Valley Stream, New York
October, 1960