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# A Language Arts Program for Pasco Senior High School Arrived at Through Group Participation

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A LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM FOR PASCO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
ARRIVED AT THROUGH GROUP PARTICIPATION

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington College of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
Doris L. Lisk  
August, 1961

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In the years since World War II, education has come into its own. Prior to this time, oftener than not, serious attempts to teach young people to think, read widely, and reason logically met with parental opposition. No longer is this true. Parents are clamoring for serious and practical learning opportunities for their children. Business, too, has given vocal recognition to the desperate need. This is evidenced by the following comment from the General Electric Community Newsletter of March 25, 1960:

Many prominent citizens believe we are in a technological race for national survival. Some feel the ultimate answer lies in whether the communistic or democratic system best prepares youth for the world of modern science. There is no doubt that our system must encourage the development of scientists and engineers. . . . Even so, many of our scientists and engineers would be the first to point out that a sound education involves more than having a technical background. Knowledge of man's machines is perhaps less critical in the Twentieth Century than knowledge of men's minds. . . . The world has shrunk a great deal in recent years, and it will shrink more. We can permit our understanding of people and values to shrink with it only at our peril (7:1-4).

Encouraged and challenged by the attitude exemplified in the preceding statement, the English faculty of Pasco Senior High School decided to analyse whether students used wisely the hours spent studying the language arts. Needless to say, the conclusion was negative. The following study

was an attempt to devise a practical program that would give a student fundamental learning he might adapt to any broad use.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This study through group consideration, attempted to devise an actual course of study for the language arts at Pasco Senior High School, Pasco, Washington, that would (1) insure basic achievements in each of the language arts for each student; (2) eliminate duplication in teaching previously learned material; (3) give the student opportunity to do makeup and/or catch-up work if necessary without the competition presented by more advanced students; (4) keep alive and foster (by advancement) students' interest in English; (5) give opportunity for the student to cover as much of the language arts as his ability and ambition permit; and (6) make the program practical for both the college-bound student and the terminal student.

Importance of the study. Harl Douglass states in The High School Curriculum that "Changes in American society and in public opinion are reflected in the curriculum" (3: 418). It is accepted that the public schools must be sensitive to the desires of their constituencies. The field of language arts has undergone a share of the criticism stemming from the newly aroused interest in education. Big



Business alone spent an additional \$40,000,000 in 1959 educating or re-educating and intensifying the education of their employees with broad and varied courses. The need for this is indicated by General Electric Company personnel, who consider as only secondary the ability to know and use the English language. Data released by the company indicate the vital interest and growing needs in the areas basic to all understanding. Information compiled from a questionnaire submitted to the 13,586 college graduates who work for General Electric revealed the following:

The first question asked was: "What areas of college study have contributed most to your present position of responsibility with the General Electric company?" Among non-engineering employees a great majority said courses in the writing and speaking of the English language had been of the greatest value in their business careers. Engineers gave first place to mathematics and second place to English. Both engineers and non-engineers put English first--this time English literature--when asked what areas of college study had contributed most to their use of leisure time. The conclusions reached from this study were that the colleges seem to be aware of the lesson this information teaches by giving adequate instruction in this field, but too often they find the task too difficult and sometimes, an all but hopeless one because of the poor preparation of the students who come to them. It is the first responsibility of the elementary schools and the secondary schools to give their pupils a good grounding in the English language. The boys and girls who are permitted to finish high school without it, as all too many do, suffer a handicap they will find it difficult to overcome (9:122-28).

The foundation laying and foundation checking is placed squarely on the shoulders of high schools, and it is up to those in this field to accept the challenge.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Group dynamics. In this study group dynamics refers to the participation of the English staff members in finding the best solution for a common problem.

Language arts. The English language arts include reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Pasco Senior High School. Pasco Senior High School, Pasco, Washington, located in the Columbia Basin where the Snake and Columbia Rivers converge, is a three-year school with approximately nine-hundred-fifty students.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written about techniques to be used in the various areas of the language arts, but little has been written until recently about subjecting students to much the same material year after year. Some educators feel that if students were not given the fundamentals of grammar until later junior high or early high school and then in much the same manner as for foreign language study, more could be accomplished in less time.

G. Robert Carlsen says that "in the past ten or fifteen years leaders in the field have been re-examining the whole concept of the teaching of language arts in an attempt to make the study broad enough to include all the good things of the earlier periods and at the same time include all the new. It is the new pattern of the closeness of the world that makes effective use of all of the language arts imperative (2:27-46)."

#### I. LITERATURE ON NEEDS FOR NEW CONCEPTS

The High School Curriculum by Harl Douglass gives a thorough study of some of the prevalent needs. Mr. Douglass states, "Today many pupils are being carried along as dead weight in courses for which they have neither ability

nor interests necessary for success. Attempts are being made to remedy the situation by segregating students into low, medium, and high ability groups" (3:453). He indicates, however, that there are many weaknesses in this situation. Too often the same text is used, and frequently very little difference is made in the plan of study. In an effort to avoid the above-mentioned weakness, careful study was given to the choice of textbooks for the varying levels of instruction at Pasco High School, particularly within the grades, and separate texts were selected to meet the needs and abilities of each group. These will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

In recognition of the many problems facing the English teacher, the National Council of Teachers of English organized a Commission for the study of the English curriculum. After several years of study, this Commission recommends in The English Language Arts in the Secondary Schools that the language arts must include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Any unit of study must be broad enough to permit each student to (1) work in cooperation with his class, (2) pursue special interests in a wide range of materials and experiences suited to his ability, (3) think clearly and logically, (4) plan with the teacher, (5) assign tasks and assume responsibility as individuals and as groups, (6) learn to use the library and research technics, (7) practice

speech and writing, (8) direct attention given to the skills as needed, (9) do informative reading, expository writing, and persuasive speaking, and (10) make use of current information (4:70).

## II. LITERATURE USED AS GUIDES FOR NEW CONCEPTS

The following information suggested by Harl Douglass in his book The High School Curriculum describes an experimental plan tried in an effort to adjust instruction to the capacities of the individual student.

All pupils are required to take ninth-grade English as a foundation course. Some students with unusual ability advance to the next course within a few weeks. An examination tests three things: reading comprehension and speed--this is tested with the Traxler Silent Reading Test, and the student must have a reading level of 8.6; general knowledge of English--this is tested in a standardized test, the Wisconsin Language Usage Test, and the student must score within ten points of the norm; writing a short composition or letter under supervised conditions--the student must use decent sentences reasonably free from mechanical errors. Failure to meet the requirements in any two, places the student in a special opportunity class where individual instruction is possible. Opportunities to take the tests are given every nine weeks.

This same system is followed for each level of work with increasing requirements for passing. All courses for upper level students are of one-half year duration. These

courses are modern literature, world literature, English literature, laboratory composition with journalism, pre-college composition with research (senior), dramatic literature, and advanced speech. Pupils qualifying for the upper level courses may elect freely with no special sequence. The only specific requirements are that all students have three years of English and that college-bound students have at least one year of upper level work.

Many benefits are to be derived from such a program. The pupils are allowed to work at their own capacity. The ambitious and able qualify for advancement and avoid repetition of the fundamentals. The normal student follows usual progression, while deficient students are permitted the benefits of teaching on their own level without the bored competition of advanced students (3:435).

### III. SUMMARY

Many of the old concepts when used with these concepts would give a student opportunity to meet his individual needs in a curriculum broad enough at its base to include areas of interest for all and to enable the student not only to "know" his material but to be able to "use" it as well. These suggestions made by Mr. Douglass served as the basis for Pasco High School's course of study in the English Language Arts. Adjustments were made in the original suggestions to fit the particular needs of the local school.

## CHAPTER III

### EVOLUTION OF THE PASCO PROGRAM

Members of the Pasco High School English department believed that more could be offered students in the language arts, that although greater depth and richness were a necessity, in order to make the necessary improvements, English as a study would have to get out of its present rut. In attempting to find direction, a study was made of the results of the standardized achievement tests all ninth and eleventh graders take, of the standing of the seniors on the Scholarship Qualifying Tests and the University of Washington Predictive Test, and the success of college students from their own appraisal of strengths and weaknesses as well as from grades reported to the high school from the colleges. Also studied was the success of students who had gone directly from high school into the labor market where their success depended particularly upon knowledge of the language arts. From this appraisal a common core of agreement as to necessary improvement began to appear.

In order to know what was being done elsewhere in the state and nation, curriculum guides were ordered from the Washington State Department of Education at Olympia, from numerous schools throughout the state, and from a number of schools in other parts of the nation, schools that were

comprehensive in their teaching and consistently placed a number of winners in the Scholastic Aptitude Tests. A composite of what a high school graduate should know was ordered from the Row-Peterson Company of Evanston, Illinois, publishers of the Building Better English series. All these materials were studied earnestly for ideas and helps. It was discovered that the language arts study all over the United States was either in need of overhaul or undergoing the same. Further study was given to The English Language Arts in the Secondary Schools, prepared by The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of the Teachers of English, The High School Curriculum by Harl Douglass, and consistently to The English Journal, the official secondary school publication of the N. C. T. E.

It was decided to invite interested junior high and elementary teachers to join in the discussions. At this point the administration realized that the study was taking on serious proportions and engaged Mr. Lewis McNew of Washington State University to come once a week to serve as consultant to staff members in their planning.

The decision was finally reached that ideas should be drawn from all of the reading material and from all the experience available on the staff. These helps then should be adapted to meet the local needs.

The needs given consideration were dictated by the fact that Pasco has a high percentage of professional families



who work with the Atomic Energy Commission at Hanford, while at the same time there are many mobile families in the area for construction work. In contrast to the problems presented by what is termed transient families, many of these are families of engineers and highly trained technical workers who are vitally interested in the education of their children and in finding some sort of continuity of education despite their mobility. This in itself necessitates a flexible and up-to-date program of study. In addition to these, there is a fair-sized negro populace. Combined with these is what in any area would be termed the "average" group.

How to meet these needs? Charles Bish stated well the planning problem: "Our goal for all youth but certainly for the talented is to set goals commensurate with his ability and present condition of knowledge so that he may pursue goals to the point of his optimum development" (1:515-18). The problem faced was how to achieve these goals (given the great variety of intellect and ambition each teach met each day) in a way that would meet administrative approval. To challenge everyone with a course of study tough enough to meet his own needs posed a problem, as Mr. Archibald Shaw said:

Tough for whom? Tough for what? No course is equally tough for all students. It may be impossibly impervious to some, yet pre-chewed pemmican to others. It may be mind-stretching, challenging--and challenging implies the possibility of success or failure--a stimulation to action an assurance of the worth of success and a feeling of satisfaction or of dignity in failure (8:15).

Here another point of agreement was reached: to devise a course of study that would challenge but not be impossible to all levels of ability and ambition.

On the immediate staff was an accumulation of approximately 95 years of teaching experience, ranging from 2 years for two members to 20 years for two members and a variety in between. In addition to this, much invaluable assistance came from Mr. Lewis McNew as consultant. (During the first year of trial run, Mr. Tom Sullivan, the new Secondary Curriculum Coordinator for Pasco Schools, made an outstanding contribution). This membership made available to the study the newest techniques being taught in the colleges and also years of experience that had seen many educational technics and fads come and go.

It was now necessary for the English Department staff to state concretely a common core of agreement in order to add direction to the work. After much discussion it was agreed that the following six paragraphs should serve as a philosophy and goals.

The philosophy indicates that the means justifies the end. The desired end is that as high school graduates a student should be capable in the following ways:

As a reader he should be thoughtful, discerning, and discriminating--capable of reading on the highest level his native ability will permit. He should be able to

appreciate reading materials for technical information, relaxation and enjoyment, and simply to become acquainted with the best of world thinking. He should also be able to detect slanted writing, and he should also know the structural forms of different types of writing--all within the limits of his ability.

As a speaker he should be acquainted with the levels and acceptability of the different levels of speech; he should be able to express himself grammatically at all times. He should be able to organize his thinking and present his ideas in such a way (both in short statements and more formal speeches) that his hearers will be interested and will also be able to tell exactly what he means.

As a listener he should be aware of all that can be learned from this simple art, and he should know the importance of this from the standpoint of courteous attention.

As a writer he should be proficient in the same manner that he should be as a speaker. In addition to this, he should be able to express himself legibly on paper, have a thorough enough knowledge and understanding of grammar that he has a foundation for continuous growth as an adult who will be writing and speaking in an adult world.

It was further agreed that in order to best meet the needs of all the students, an attempt at homogeneous grouping should be made.

After recognizing departmental weaknesses, studying available materials, and considering suggestions and ideas, it seemed wise to take the best of these findings and adapt them to fit the local situation. Mr. Lewis McNew was engaged to serve as a consultant to the staff, and concrete plans began to take shape.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESUME OF PROGRAM

The teacher in a language arts program must see himself as a kind of opportunist--one who sees and grasps every opportunity to develop the student's language capacity. Each teacher must be thoroughly acquainted with the foundation laid before a student comes to him, so he can continue to build. This program has been designed to implement these ideas. This kind of knowledge eliminates two staff problems: the feeling that "nothing was really taught before he came to my class," and the boring, stultifying repetition of drills and exercises that often become the recourse of the teacher as he tries to "help the student catch up."

#### I. SUBJECT MATTER

Literature. Literature in all groups and in all grades forms the basis for the year-long study in the classroom. A basic text is assigned to each student (these are listed on the following page), and there is a wealth of supplementary text material available to be used as needed or desired for enrichment. Magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly, Reader's Digest and Scholastic are purchased in class-size subscriptions in order to reach all ability groups with contemporary reading materials. In addition to these, single copies of

Manchester Guardian Weekly from Manchester, England, The South Carolina Israelite, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times, are received for departmental use in the varied classrooms.

A departure from the usual as far as literature content is concerned will go into effect in the fall of 1961. The usual literature survey course ordinarily taught on the sophomore level is to be dropped and all grades will be programmed as follows:

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>TEXT, AUTHOR, PUBLISHER</u>	<u>SUBJECT MATTER</u>
10	average	<u>Adventures in American Literature</u> by Gehlman, Bowman, Potell, and Kinnick Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.	American literature
10	accelerated	<u>The United States in Literature</u> Robert C. Pooley, general ed. Blair, Hornberger and Farmer Scott-Foresman, Co.	American literature
11	average	<u>Adventures in English Literature</u> by Inglis and Spear Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.	English literature
11	accelerated	<u>England in Literature</u> Robert C. Pooley, general ed. Farmer, Thorton, and Anderson Scott-Foresman, Co.	English literature
12	average	<u>Adventures in Modern Literature</u> by Freier, Lazarus, and Potell Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.	World literature

GRADE	GROUP	TEXT, AUTHOR, PUBLISHER	SUBJECT MATTER
12	honors	<u>An Introduction to Literature</u> by Barrows, Heffner, Ciardi, and Douglas Houghton Mifflin Company	World literature

Grammar and composition. Another departure from usual procedures in teaching the language arts comes in accepting the fact that sophomores in high school have been thoroughly exposed to the prescriptive and formal aspects of grammar; therefore, grammar as commonly taught has been eliminated. Proper use of the English language is not ignored, but every subject, every idea, every problem becomes an opportunity for the development of language ability. In the programming, it is referred to as functional grammar teaching. For example, as an error shows up consistently on a student's papers or as it becomes obvious that there is a class weakness on some point, special study is given. (Three different sets of grammar texts for each grade are available and can be taken to the rooms to be used as desired, although grammar texts are assigned to the students for special assignments only. Three sets are used because of varied strengths in each). Student compositions are kept in individual file folders, and each individual is responsible for correcting his own errors and being able to make explanations of the corrections. Because students do most of this correcting on their own time, it gives the teacher time to deal with the individual's problems in a way impossible by the old method. An added blessing

comes, too, as students are able to understand well enough to help each other.

When time is given for literature to form the basis of the language arts study, it can serve as the source for ideas in learning to write well. It can be the "jumping off" point for effective composition within a wide range of possibilities. For example, honors seniors can do an outstanding bit of writing in making a comparison of the techniques employed by Poe and Gogol when combining fantasy and realism in a short story. At the other end of the learning ladder, sophomores show talent and understanding in characterizing some one who is well known to them after becoming acquainted with some of Saroyan or Steinbeck's characters.

In composition it is the aim of the staff that every student shall write one thought-provoked paper each week and as many others as can be effectively managed. Even writing for ten minutes at the opening of the class period while roll is being checked and admits signed provides an excellent time for writing practice. Some techniques that can be used effectively in this way are simply keeping a diary expressing personal hopes, ambitions, disappointments, etc. in a notebook which can be used each day and isn't too bulky to be turned in. Another is keeping a reading diary--in which students list and comment on anything they have read in the past twenty-four hours. Simple topics can be listed on the board--such as "Feet," "Books," "Sidewalks," etc., allowing the



students to write either imaginatively or informatively as they may choose for only ten minutes. This is an effective means of using instruction given on unity, coherence, and emphasis.

Creative writing is emphasized in the sophomore and junior years, expository writing on the senior level. Letter writing is taught on all grade levels with emphasis placed on different types in different grades.

Speech. Oral composition, also important, is treated in much the same manner as written composition. Impromptu, extemporaneous, and planned speeches are given as time permits. The goal is to have each student speak before the class a minimum of ten times during the year. This is one of the most effective means of teaching grammar useage as students begin to recognize another's mistakes and to be more conscious of their own. This is time better spent than in workbooks--exercises and drills.

## II. FLEXIBILITY--THE KEYNOTE

The program as a whole has been planned with the keynote, Flexibility. No plan is to be followed so closely that it hampers the ingenuity and imagination of the individual teacher. For example, during the past year, a class of accelerated sophomores became interested in modern art while learning the technics of precis writing. Bit by bit they

spontaneously began bringing copies of art works from their homes. While the teacher deviated for almost four weeks from her planned program, the students did perceptive research and reporting and writing. They made a tour of the high school art department, a before-school tour of the art department at Columbia Basin College, and a Saturday tour of the Spokane Museum of Art. In this unique project all the language arts played an important part.

### III. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION

One of the projects of this plan of study has been to help all teachers feel some responsibility toward the development of facility in the use of the language arts, to realize that developing this capacity is an impossibility if left solely to the English teachers. Therefore, an effort is being made to work in close cooperation with teachers in all subject areas, making the language arts a practical tool in any area.

### IV. GROUPING

One of the cornerstones of this plan of teaching is grouping students according to ability and ambition. The staff believed that all students should be permitted to achieve on their own ability levels. In order to honestly achieve, students need to have work geared to their abilities. Therefore, students were to be grouped by the

following criteria: past performance, teacher recommendation, achievement test scores, and if necessary, I.Q. scores, although these are to have little bearing except in unusual cases. The grouping is to be kept flexible in case a student need to be up-or down-graded. In every case--for psychological reasons--where there is doubt, it is better to place the student in the lower group, thereby making it possible to upgrade if need be, rather than vice versa.

In order to best achieve the goals accepted in the core agreement, it was decided to develop on an experimental basis a two-track program. If it later seemed advisable to add a third track, this could be done without any major overhaul of the plan. The two-track plan was to include an accelerated program geared to college-prep training and an average program planned for basic skill development on the sophomore and junior levels. An average and an honors program was planned for the senior year. It was decided that English in the senior year should not be a requirement. Already 65 per cent of the seniors were enrolled in English 12, and it was believed that if the study could be proved profitable, interested persons would enroll and more could be accomplished because they would be there of their own volition. This has proved to be true thus far.

#### V. FUTURE PLANS

It has been concluded that a third track should be

planned for the sophomore and junior years in order to better meet the needs of students who need special help in order to meet the minimal standards necessary to being a capable citizen. This track will be planned and worked out during the '61-'62 school year. Still in the future but in the hoped-for stage are classes in creative writing and semantics. It is hoped that the class in etymology which now meets at 7:30 a.m. as an extended day class will soon be added to the regular school day, thereby making it available to more students.

## VI. SUMMARY

At Pasco High School a program was planned to meet the needs of different levels of ability and ambition. The time previously given to drills and exercises in formal grammar study is now given to teaching literature with more depth and composition with more meaning. The entire course of study<sup>1</sup> is kept flexible within a framework of desired goals in order not to stifle creative teaching.

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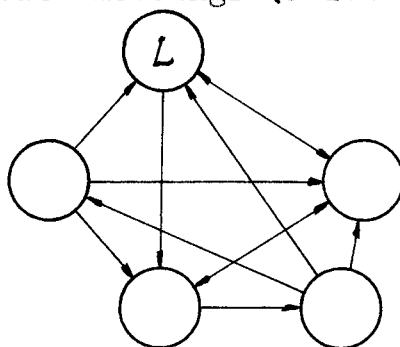
<sup>1</sup>A copy of the curriculum guide will be on file in the Curriculum office at Central Washington College in the fall of 1961.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DYNAMICS OF GROUP PARTICIPATION

What is the best way to sell a staff on a new program? The author concluded at the end of this study that helping plan the program through group participation was by far the best means available. It then becomes a group project to see through to successful implementation. All teachers on the English staff were asked to consider problems needing attention. Not all teachers were interested in giving the necessary time. It was concluded that work should be done on a voluntary basis as far as group meetings were concerned because it would be a time and energy consuming project. Group meetings were held for the first five months after school for one and one-half hours each week. For the remaining four months of the school year, meetings were held in the evening once a week for two hours. Many sub-committees met between regular meetings.

Meetings were patterned much after Daniel Griffith's plan for member-centered meetings (5:164-184). His diagram follows:



Members of the group served in the following capacities.

## I. GROUP ORGANIZATION

Group leader. As Chairman of the English Department, the writer acted as group leader. The group leader prepared a tentative agenda for each meeting. This, a necessity, is to be recommended if time and energy expended are to reap the greatest rewards. This agenda was distributed to group members as much in advance of the meetings as possible. The advantages to this are three-fold: the members have time to think through the problems to be discussed and are able to bring any available notes or research to the meetings, it helps the leader keep to the point at hand without seeming autocratic, and it helps the group know if progress is being made.

Any group member could testify to the importance of the group leader as a stimulant in starting the discussion and in keeping it from bogging down. Also it is important that the leader act as guide in keeping to the point, as a mediator in arguments which inevitably arise, and as a director in helping the group reach a decision.

It was also the responsibility of the leader to secure group participation in furnishing coffee and cookies in the meetings held directly after school. (This is a must

at this hour, and serves as an aid to a harmonious atmosphere).

All in all, much that is accomplished is dependent upon the leader--the leader must be one with all the qualities the name denotes.

Group recorder. A different group recorder appointed at each meeting recording all contributions suggested by group members and listed all decisions reached. Often the recorder was called upon to recount what had been contributed thus far at the meeting in order to clarify thinking. The group recorder also dittoed the recordings of each meeting and passed them to group members following the meeting. This proved to be an invaluable aid to giving individual consideration to discussion and decisions when not under the influence of the group. Often aspects of a problem would come up when one was alone that needed more consideration even after a decision had been reached.

The technic of using a recorder and of passing minutes to each group member is heartily recommended to any group considering any form of group work.

Group observer. The group observer noted the times each individual made a contribution to the discussion, and a record of this was given to the group leader after each session. While Griffith's plan (5:173) was not followed in its entirety as far as the duties of the observer were concerned,

it had one important function for the group making the study: it helped the leader in trying to "draw out" the less vocal members of the group minimizing the monopoly of some members.

Group consultant. The group consultant was invaluable. A consultant is necessary in such a study. If someone considered an outside authority is not available, it would certainly be recommended that someone be found locally who could at least look upon the problems under discussion from an objective point of view. The specific help received from Mr. Lewis McNew as consultant came in his helping to clarify the problem and pointing out a number of possible remedies. He brought specific and inspiring suggestions as to new trends and how these could be adapted to local needs. He kept the group continually progressing by well-directed questions and suggestions as to deadline dates for portions of the study to be completed. He brought many books for consideration as possible text materials, and most of all he encouraged the group to pursue their belief that progress isn't always made by sticking to the "tried and true."

Group members. The group rapport was healthy when members came because they were interested in solving a common problem. More was accomplished when two members not interested in working on the project were not there because negative I-don't-care-attitudes are extremely detrimental to



group processes. Work on this sort of project should certainly be on an optional basis.

Each interested member chose one area for special study. As these studies were reported to the group, discussions took place; then a deadline was set for having the decisions written into a workable unit for the curriculum guide.

Happy, cooperative group members are produced when work is optional and they can see progress is being made. Without this attitude group success would be impossible. The author recommends that any leader study his staff to see which group processes will achieve the desired end and then act accordingly.

## II. BY-PRODUCTS OF GROUP PARTICIPATION

One of the by-products of group work has been the establishment of excellent group sharing of ideas. An "idea" chapter has been planned and is in the making for the curriculum guide in which each teacher will have access to successful techniques used by others in the department. This will be of particular benefit to both experienced and inexperienced teachers. It will show the way for the inexperienced and help keep the experienced out of a rut.

Another sharing technique in use is staff demonstrations. During the past winter two teachers who do an outstanding job in teaching poetry--one an expert in teaching

the mechanics of poetry and the other an expert in inspiring creativity and appreciation--teamed and taught a series of lessons with dittoed helps to the rest of the staff. Another teacher who is successful in stimulating wide reading among all levels of students demonstrated technics used. This, in the author's opinion, is one of the most important aspects of the group work--the spirit of cooperation created when everyone knows what everyone else is doing and what everyone else can do well and the willingness to share and to help one another. This, then, leads to the goal for all teaching--to give the very best to every student.

### III. TO AGREE OR DISAGREE--FLEXIBILITY, A NECESSITY

In any kind of group decision involving as many details as a curriculum study, it goes without saying that everyone cannot always be in accord with all the decisions made. The author recommends that any program of this sort be kept flexible enough so that any teacher who feels he would like to try an old method again could do so. Out of this can come two things: suggestions that would improve the old or perhaps the new ways, or conversion to the new. (In the experience of the author, this method proved to be a great converter). This flexibility has also helped make each teacher an enthusiastic salesman of the total program.

## IV. SUMMARY

While most busy teachers shun any group work as extensive as this study without special time allotments or special pay, it has been proved that group effort at solving a common problem is the best way and produces a cohesive, cooperative group. It is an aid in eliminating individual weaknesses. It is beneficial in providing every teacher with knowledge as to what has been taught before and in helping the teacher build on the foundation that has been laid. Best of all there is coherence and economy as the effort is made to make the language arts a usable, enjoyable study to teen-agers.

While it was the author's feeling that time could be saved if only one person worked out a curriculum guide, this group effort has been one of the outstanding experiences of the author's professional life. It has proved that group participation is the best way to solve a group problem.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY

To make the study of the language arts a functional, enjoyable basis for continued growth in any field of interest, changes were made in the Pasco High School English curriculum.

One of the basic changes was in homogeneous groupings. In grouping, consideration is given to ability, ambition, and interest. Past performance, achievement tests, and teacher recommendations are checked. In doubtful cases the I. Q. scores are given consideration. Special textbooks and supplementary reading materials have been chosen to meet the needs of the varying levels within each grade.

All English classes are based on a year-long study of literature and composition.

One of the most unusual departures from standard procedures is in the teaching of grammar and composition. Grammar books are not assigned to students as texts, but different sets are kept in the rooms for necessary student reference. Composition is given an equal place in the overall study with literature. From the study of literature comes much inspiration for meaningful composition. The student's compositions are kept filed, and he can make his corrections as he has time. This method gives the teacher opportunity to work individually

with each student. His understanding is expected to be complete enough so that he can then explain it to others. When it becomes obvious that a group or an entire class has a common problem, then time is taken to teach the necessary material to the group needing it. In this way grammar becomes functional, the student sees his own errors needing correction and understands how to make the corrections.

Oral composition or speech plays an important role. Students learn to think on their feet while becoming careful about their manner of expression. Time is available to practice this art when grammar drills and exercises are eliminated.

The English staff decided not to require senior English as is commonly done. The challenge to the staff in making senior English valuable enough to be desirable is producing a course of high caliber. Also, students are enrolled because they feel a need; therefore, much of practical value is accomplished.

The dynamics of group participation has played an important role in this curriculum study. Intra-staff appreciation and cooperation have grown and a course of study has been devised that has the active backing of the staff who prepared it. It is recommended that Daniel Griffith's plan (Chapter VIII of Human Relations in School Administration) for group organization be considered in setting up the working arrangements for group assignments in curriculum planning.

Surely the study has given the teachers of Pasco High School a knowledge that they have worked together to plan an effective program in the language arts. However, one of the significant benefits has come to the author with the realization of the true dynamics of group planning and participation.

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