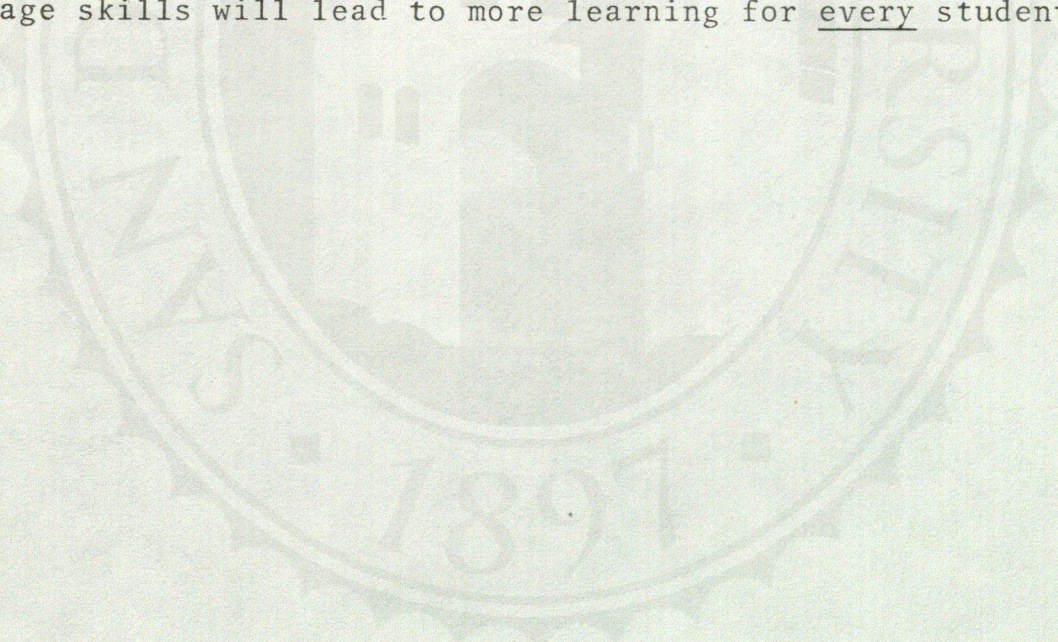




## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN

We use language to share what we know through reading, writing, speaking and listening. This booklet is designed to provide materials which can be used in any class to help students improve their use of language in order to improve their understanding of subject matter. Morse teachers developed these strategies in summer workshops to share with you. They feel that these language activities will help students learn. Activities are suggested for using language more effectively through talking, listening, writing and reading in any subject. In using this booklet, choose from suggested classroom practices those that seem most useful in your class. Try some and see what happens. Improvement of these language skills will lead to more learning for every student.





## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN

### I. Using Language to Learn - Talking

W. O. W. - Watch Our Words

Communication Practice

Listening Hints

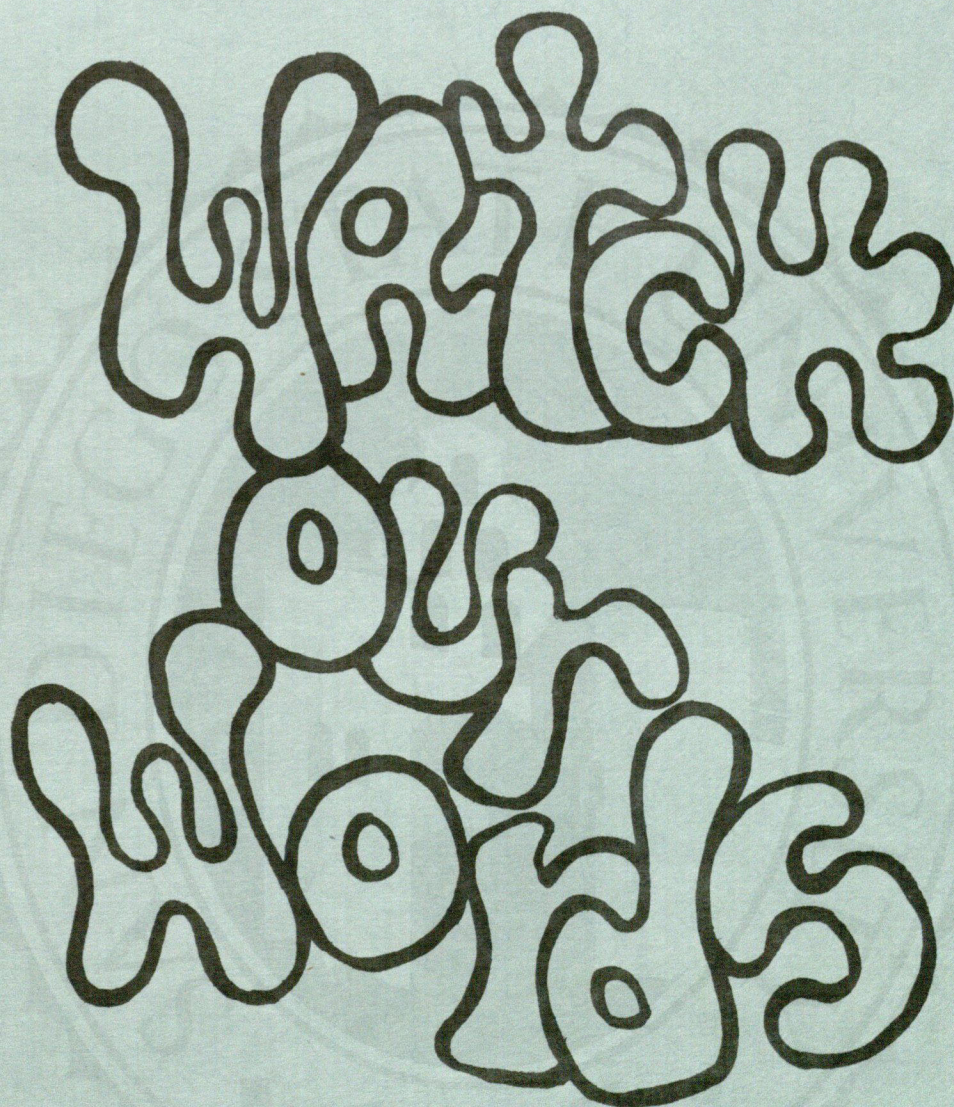
### II. Using Language to Learn - Writing

Learning Logs Across the Curriculum

### III. Using Language to Learn - Reading

Reading Help Across the Curriculum







USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - TALKING

W(ATCH) O(UR) W(ORDS)

PREPARED BY

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## WATCH OUR WORDS--WOW HANDBOOK

### INTRODUCTION

Standard English usage is the dialect of today's job market. As we prepare our students to enter the world of adulthood and work, it is imperative that we cover all bases. Thus, it becomes important to make certain that students can switch into Standard English when it is appropriate to the situation. Whether or not speech patterns should be a viable factor in success, the fact remains that obtaining either a job or promotion may be significantly influenced by dialect usage. Additionally, the inability to effectively communicate in a common dialect can have an adverse effect in many areas of life.

But if he (the student) is not actively, consistently and continuously given the skill of producing correct workplace English, he will discover that the 'kindness' shown him during these prime language learning years was really a cruel hoax, that in a world ever more dominated by language-related jobs, he is ill-equipped to get a decent job with a good salary, a job with future and satisfaction, because he cannot compete with those who do have those skills.

Lorraine Goldman, Director  
English Unlimited

At Morse, we have students of all ethnic groups who need to develop the ability to use fluent, standard English. These students have demonstrated their awareness of this need. In the June survey, 90 percent stated that it is important to be able to use standard English. As a result of this information, we have prepared the following ideas as suggestions for your use in a cooperative effort to meet this mandate.



## TIME LINES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STANDARD ENGLISH COMPONENT OF THE SITE PLAN

OBJECTIVE: By April, 1981, 75 percent of the students at Morse High School will use standard English in the classroom as measured by a teacher survey.

- ACTIVITIES:
1. The first month of school will be used to establish teacher-student relationships so that the sensitive area of speech can be approached in a non-threatening way.
  2. By November 1, 1980, all students will be made aware of the school emphasis on standard English.
  3. Each of us, through a method of choice, will encourage standard English usage in the classroom (see suggested activities).
  4. By April, 1981, standard English will be established as the normally appropriate classroom speech, as measured by a teacher survey and a random student sampling survey.

### BASIC PROGRAM

Following are a few ideas for approaches in your classroom. Of course you are free to expand, experiment, create--whatever. If you choose, keep a record of what you do so that we can incorporate all the good ideas in next year's plan.

Regardless of the approach you take, you may be able to use the following ideas in your introduction:

1. Spend some time introducing your approach to the use of standard English.
2. Be certain to legitimize both standard English and informal or casual dialects. Clarify that there is an appropriate place for each.
3. Explain the concept and need for switching dialects.
4. Relate bidialectical advantages to bilingual advantages.
5. Periodically, directly address the concept of standard English in your class.
6. Watch your own speech habits.
7. Be aware of student attitude.

IMPORTANT: AT ALL TIMES BE AWARE THAT SOME STUDENTS MAY BE SENSITIVE IN THIS AREA. BE TACTFUL AND CALM!



## SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

1. STUDENT-GENERATED LIST--Post on the bulletin board a sheet on which class members will place all non-standard English usages as they hear them in or out of class. This is an on-going activity during the week. Students become aware of most common misused expressions. Once a week this list can be reviewed in a teacher-led discussion.
2. CLASSES SHARING LISTS--This is a variation on number one. A common list for all classes in a given room is a basis for weekly discussion. Teachers may wish to exchange their lists with colleagues to reinforce or to enrich their own class discussions.
3. STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS--Another variation on number one. Students would lead the discussions rather than the teacher.
4. CONCENTRATION ON ONE USAGE A WEEK--Select one common usage problem a week. Through such techniques as job interviews, speech-making, practice drills, etc., emphasize one particular area, e.g., verb tenses, double negatives, etc.
5. INDIVIDUAL, PRIVATE CORRECTION--This should be done in such a manner as not to intimidate or embarrass the student.
6. USAGE EXERCISES--Devise practice exercises which students repeat orally, e.g., use of verb "to be"--I am tired; past tense--she dropped the ball; plurals--he bought two tickets for the dance; double negatives--I didn't miss nothing.
7. STUDENTS KEEP LOGS--Students can be encouraged to keep an on-going log of non-standard oral usage and the standard English equivalent. The teacher may choose to give credit to the student for completion of this log as part of a final evaluation of work.
8. TRANSLATIONS--Have students translate paragraphs into and out of standard English. For example, the teacher can write a paragraph in non-standard form and have students rewrite in standard English. Or, use a standard English paragraph from a class text; have student rewrite the paragraph in non-standard English. Students then can close the text and rewrite the passage in standard English.
9. DO YOUR OWN THING--Use any strategies and techniques which create a comfortable classroom and enhance the mastery of standard English without intimidating students. The teacher, by his/her own English usage should be a role model for the class.
10. MASTER LIST--Use the lists of words and phrases found in the appendix as a springboard for class activity.
11. CARRY OVER TO WRITTEN WORK--Discussions of standard English usage can be carried over to written work and tests.



12. EXPLORATION OF VARIOUS DIALECTS--Discuss and study the various dialects found in America (Appalachian, Italian, Jewish, etc.). Use ideas in *DISCOVERING AMERICAN DIALECTS* by Roger W. Shuy. Have students exchange and discuss words from their neighborhood dialect. Be aware of media usage of dialect.
13. ORAL PRESENTATIONS--Students may give extemporaneous talks on topics of current interest. They may also give prepared talks. Standard English should be the required language format.
14. ROLE PLAYING--This could take the form of simulated job interviews, returning of merchandise, requesting information or assistance, etc.
15. GIVING DIRECTIONS--Have students instruct other students on how to reach a destination, make something, do an assignment, etc.
16. ORAL LANGUAGE MANUALS--Check out the ideas in these resources.
17. GUEST SPEAKERS--You may want to use former students, community people, other teachers, etc., to reinforce the value of being able to use standard English.
18. DIALECT EFFECT--Discussions or activities to make students aware of the role that slang and dialect can play in misunderstandings and communication problems.



# BY THE WAY...

By Joe Black



Black Americans can tell you about the great athletic feats of Joe Louis, "Sugar Ray" Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Jesse Owens, Wilma Rudolph, Jackie Robinson, Jim Gilliam, Roy Campanella, Willie Mays, O. J. Simpson, Gayle Sayers, Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Russell, and Elvin Hays. But despite their apparent enthusiasm and understanding about the various athletic games, Black people don't seem to be able to grasp or recognize the games that society attempts to play on us. It seems as though we are so busy looking for reasons to shout "Racism" that we fail to see the subtle ways in which we are held back.

Some of you are probably asking what the heck is Joe Black talking about now? The answer is simple... Black English. Sure, I realize that some young people who don't want to study will claim that there is a Black language; and all of those do-gooders, Black and White, who have written books about so-called Black English will attest to the fact that Black English is a legitimate communication tool. It is time for Black people to wake up to this rip-off. Don't you realize that much of our unemployment and underemployment is the result of Black Americans not being able to communicate with other facets of society? A profitable Black business is not going to hire anyone who says: "We is selling" or "We be doing it."

My friends, we say "Axe" instead of ask; "Poke" instead of pork; and fail to conjugate verbs because we didn't and don't want to pay the price in a classroom. Other ethnic groups can migrate to this land and learn to speak English within five years; but there are those who are trying to make us Black people believe that although we have been in this country since 1619, we don't have the ability to learn the English language. Of course, the immigrants retain their native language and speak English with a dialect, but Black Americans' native tongue would be an African language. Our parents and foreparents failed to speak correctly because they were denied educational opportunities. What is your excuse... mental inferiority, or are you a victim of the "Super-coon" myth?

*Joe Black*

Vice President  
The Greyhound Corporation





# The value of standard English

By LORRAINE GOLDMAN

The San Diego City Schools have made a bold step in recognizing the tremendous importance of oral language in the education of its youngsters.

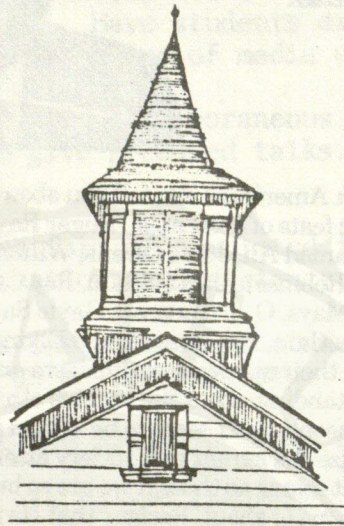
The Oral Communication Instruction Program, according to the recent description (April 23) in The Tribune, is designed to "respect the language students bring to school and not put that language down because one's language is part of one's self." Students are thus allowed to speak the home dialect in the classroom without "correction." This is cited as a way to "open children up," to give them a feeling of self-confidence, to break down barriers between different races and classes of children.

The motivations are commendable, but I question whether the approach will work in the long run. The care and caring of the program appear badly misplaced, because such an approach can ultimately undermine self-confidence and maintain or raise barriers, especially if the home dialect is inappropriate or unacceptable in the working world the child may someday wish or need to enter.

My complaint gets to the heart of what the function of public education is. Why do we send children to school anyway? Isn't it so that they can ultimately function well as reasonably happy, productive, successful adults in the adult world of our country? However we define happy, productive and successful, we must give children the tools to be those things, to be able to make choices and to develop their potential to the fullest.

Thus we expect them to be in school each day and to be on time to class, because these are norms accepted in the adult world of this country. If their home culture is one of unconcern about time and deadlines, they must learn these things nonetheless. There is never an implication that their culture is bad or inferior — no put-down, in other words; we are merely saying that to function in the society of the U.S. they must follow these rules.

If the custom of the home is not to inculcate the children against certain communicable diseases, because of religious scruple, we must nevertheless insist that the children



conform. In no wise is that intended as a slap against home or religion.

If it is the custom of the home to take the children out of school to work in the fields part of the day, or part of a semester, every attempt is made, regardless, to keep the children in the classroom.

Children are taught to say please and thank you and to raise their hands before speaking even if the home feels these customs are inappropriate or unnecessary.

And thus it is (or should be) with language. If a child speaks Farsi or Spanish or Chinese at home, he must learn to speak English as well, as long as he expects to be an economically viable participant in this country. Some might argue that allowing him to speak Farsi in the classroom might in some way help to eliminate misunderstandings that currently exist between Iranians and Americans. But requiring him to speak English might break down the barriers of misunderstanding in a more effective and lasting way, by putting him on an equal footing with native speakers.

This would in no way be saying that his home language is wrong or inferior. It would merely be saying that what is appropriate in one place may not be appropriate in another, which seems to be part of the state (if not practiced) philosophy in the Oral Communication Program. If the school is indeed the place where children learn how to function as adults, they must be given the means to do so, and this includes all areas of language.

No teacher in his right mind would

say a child's home was being put down if the child of illiterate parents were taught to read. Crossing "t's," putting a period at the end of the sentence, saying "we were" instead of "we was" — these are merely the tools and currency of success in this country.

Seeing a child come out of his shell because he is allowed and encouraged to speak is wonderful. But if he is not actively, consistently and continuously given the skill of producing correct workplace English, he will discover that the "kindness" shown him during this prime language learning years was really a cruel hoax, that in a world ever more dominated by language-related jobs, he is ill-equipped to get a decent job with a good salary, a job with future and satisfaction, because he cannot compete with those who do have those skills.

We must stop treating dialects as an integral part of culture maintenance. There are millions of English-speaking children of immigrants in this country who have a strong ethnic identity, and who may speak another language or dialect at home, but who know that success is generally not granted to those who speak immigrant English. This includes blacks and Hispanics as well as European and Asian immigrants and their children. Such individuals frequently know and use more than one language or dialect and they can function well in more than one world.

Just as the school is the appropriate place to learn history, typing, chemistry and music, it is the appropriate place to use and master standard workplace English, as the language of both instruction and general classroom communication.

Essie Smart in her B7 creed recited daily after the flag salute by her sixth grade students, has the right idea, that all children have high value and an important place in the scheme of things, that all are loved. But the anthem is in standard workplace English. Would she even consider having her children speak it any other way?

Goldman grew up in San Diego. She now lives in Washington, D.C., where she has developed a course in standard spoken English for federal government employees.



NON-STANDARD ENGLISH USAGE EXAMPLES GENERATED IN SPRING PILOT PROJECT--1980

You ain't gonna  
Is you  
I be doing it  
I ain't jiving you  
Them people  
I haven't did nothing  
He had went  
Here go the book  
Didn't miss nothing  
She don't like me  
Mine's is  
You be  
She be  
I turns my in  
She do  
We is  
If I was you  
Don't want no  
I fixin'  
I got to go  
Don't bring nothing  
I'm not going to tell nobody  
It really hurted  
They was  
Fixing to go to my pass  
I been had  
She always be doing that  
I done it  
s'up (what's up)  
Yeah man!  
You is stupid  
I ain't got none  
You got somethin' on your shoe

I don't see none  
Fixin to write  
Why you be doing that  
It sin't fair  
I didn't say nothing  
Don't be talking  
I only got  
Ain't me  
Does you  
Do she  
That's why I had did that  
What is you  
Have you ate?  
I never got  
Here go my screens  
This water no good no more  
You know you likeded it  
I didn't have no card  
She got's it  
You ain't going to do it  
Get out ma face  
It ain't a tiger  
She gots  
They ain't got nothing  
I knew they wuz gonna win  
Got's what?  
I ain't got nothing  
Don't be talking right  
Yes, he do  
Is these letters too big?  
Axe you  
Is that what you be doing?  
I still seen it



## UP WITH ENGLISH

### Problem Areas

#### I. GRAMMAR

##### A. It ends in "s"

1. Third person singular: pronounce an /s/ or /z/ sound at the end of the verb:
  - a. She quits work at 5 every day.
  - b. He goes to lunch with his friends.
  - c. He sits and watches the boats every morning.
  - d. It seems like a long time since I saw you last, but it has been only two weeks.
2. Possessives: pronounce an /s/ or /z/ sound at the end of the noun to show ownership:
  - a. This is my mother's s birthday present.
  - b. Be careful not to step in the cat's s water.
3. Plurals: pronounce an /s/ or /z/ sound when you say the plural of regular nouns. (Be careful not to say "mens" for "men")

I paid only 35 centss to have this shirt laundered.

##### B. Did or done? Use the right verb form.

1. Regular verbs: don't forget the "ed" on the end of the verb for past and perfect tenses:
  - a. When I was a child, I walked two miles to school every day.
  - b. I have lived here for 15 years.
  - c. Before his accident, he had always jogged early in the morning.
2. Irregular verbs: do you know the principal parts of these verbs, and do you know when to use them?
  - a. He saw the football game.
  - b. He has seen better playing than that in a high school game.
  - c. They have never seen such an exciting game.
  - d. I had only seen you once before you came to live in Washington.
  - e. Fireflies are often seen here in the summer time.



3. The verb "to be." This is the most complex verb in the language. Thus, it is the most difficult to use correctly. Be careful with the following kinds of expressions:
- a. Don't say: He be going. ("be" needs a helping verb).  
Do say: He is going. He will be going.
  - b. Don't say: They was here.  
Do say: They were here.
  - c. Don't say: He here.  
Do say: He 's here. He is here.
  - d. Don't say: They coming.  
Do say: They are coming.
- C. Double negatives. Avoid using the following "don't say" expressions in the office:
- 1. Don't say: I don't have no money.  
Do say: I don't have any money.
  - 2. Don't say: Won't nobody be able to tell I'm late.  
Do say: Nobody will be able to tell I'm late.
- D. Problem pronouns:
- 1. Don't say "them" when you mean "those."  
Don't say: Give me them books.  
Do say: Give me those books.
  - 2. Watch the "-self" pronouns.

<u>Don't say</u>	<u>Do say</u>
Hisself	himself
theirself	themselves
ourself	ourselves
yourself (plural)	yourselves
  - 3. Don't say "mines" when you mean "mine."  
This book is mine. These books are mine.
  - 4. Don't confuse "he" and "him," "I" and "me," etc.



E. Double subjects.

Don't say: My brother he got married.

Do say: My brother got married.

II. PRONUNCIATION

- A. "-ing" words. Raise the back of your tongue to the roof of your mouth. The end sounds of the following pairs of words should sound different:

pin      ping

thin      thing

sin      sing

win      wing

- B. "th" words. Put your tongue between your teeth to pronounce "th" sounds, wherever they occur:

thin      this      with      without      breathe

- C. Final consonant clusters. Pronounce all the sounds in words like the following:

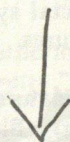
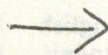
asks      world      picked /kt/      found

rasps      costs

- D. "Wanna, gotta, and gonna." Practice saying the complete form of "want to," "going to," and similarly contracted forms. For informal speaking, "gonna" is acceptable. For formal speech, or with strangers, use "going to."
- E. Make a list of words you commonly have trouble pronouncing, especially words used frequently in your office. Practice saying them.



Good  
Discussion  
MATERIAL



## Talk of the Town

Boonville, California, may look like any other small town in America. It has about 920 residents, quiet streets and lazy dogs that hardly have the strength to bark at strangers. But beyond that, the similarities break down.

To the first-time visitor, the culture shock can be considerable.

The pay phone in town is marked by a sign reading "Buckey Walter." Restroom doors are labeled "Kimmies" and "Dames." And restaurant menus advertise meals such as "hot zeese" and "bthi gorms."

What sounds like jibberish to the uninitiated is actually a language concocted by Boonvillians to keep outsiders from understanding their conversation. "Boontling" is what they call it.

The special vocabulary includes more than 1,000 words and expressions. Among them: *yink*—young man; *tongue cuppy*—sick; *dehigged*—without money; *jenny*—to tattle; *tweed*—child; *high neeler*—law officer; and *applehead*—girlfriend.

Natives of Boonville explain that Boontling started about 1890 in the nearby Beli Valley, probably around a large fire, and spread to haymaking time, dances, deer hunts, sheep shearing sessions, and wherever men gathered.

Or, translated into the native tongue: *Boontling originated at Belk, probably around a huge jetter, but also at mowkeef time, hoos, bushin' tidrics, sharshin matches, and wherever kimmies tidricked.*

## Black English dialect and the classroom teacher

CLARA FRANKLIN ALEXANDER

*A look at Black English dialect, and suggestions for classroom activities for students who speak it.*

THIS ARTICLE offers some practical suggestions for the classroom teacher to use in teaching students who speak a Black dialect. So the readers will know the context within which these classroom activities are proposed, Black American dialect in general is briefly discussed.

What is dialect? Johnson (1977) says it is "a variety of a particular language that differs from other varieties in terms of its lexicon, intonation, patterns, stress, grammar, and phonology."

All English speaking persons speak some dialect of the language. Indeed Smitherman (1977) says that "pure" English is an "abstract." Some dialects do command more respect than others. For example, many Americans are favorably impressed by a person who speaks the British dialect of the educated and "upper" classes, while many Americans feel just the opposite about a person who speaks a Black dialect.

### History of Black dialect

How did Black English evolve? Simply, it evolved the same way other dialects of English did—as a result of the culture, the environment, the needs of the group, and contact with other languages.

In the seventeenth century, the Portuguese, French, and Dutch roved the coasts of Africa. As a result, Black Portuguese, French and Dutch dialects were spoken by Africans who were in contact with these Europeans. Black English began in the same way. The ancestors of most of the Black people in the Western hemisphere came from the West Coast of Africa where there were hundreds of languages with similar phonology and syntax. As the tendency in second language learning is to try to fit the new lexicon into the syntactical structure of one's native language, the English of Africans from different tribes was relatively similar because of similar native



language syntax and phonology. In the Western hemisphere, Black English continued to develop as a result of contact with English speaking overseers.

In the United States, Black English encompasses many dialects today. There are regional dialects and sub-dialects of Black English. Most Black Americans are bidialectal, using a vernacular or casual form and a more "standard" form for more formal occasions. Each is a subdialect of the regional Black dialect. Of course, many other Black Americans also use a non-Black dialect called Standard English. It is sometimes called "media" English, implying that it has the respect of the educational, industrial, and military groups which have much of the power in the U.S.

#### **Myths about Black dialect**

- Before being brought to the Western hemisphere, Blacks spoke "savage gibberish" (Taylor 1971).
- Increased contact with Whites enabled Blacks to speak in a more "civilized manner" (Taylor 1971).
- Due to physical and cognitive deficiencies, Blacks could not learn English properly.
- Speaking Black dialect is part of the pathology of cultural deprivation.
- Children's ability to learn is retarded because of the use of a non-legitimate linguistic system such as Black English.
- Black English dialect is an inferior linguistic system.
- Blacks are nonverbal.

#### **Facts about Black dialect**

- Black people who use a form of Black dialect do not use all of the Black dialectal features at *all* times. Use of these features may vary from sentence to sentence.
- The type of Black English used is determined by sex, age, socioeconomic status, geographical area in which one spent formative years,

speaker's purpose, setting, topic, audience.

- Black English dialect is a legitimate linguistic system with rules.

Let's examine the distinctive features of vernacular Black English, since this is the dialect most teachers have in mind when they refer to "Black dialect." Also noted are some other dialectal systems which share similar features.

#### **Distinctive features of Black dialect**

**Phonology.** Black dialect can be distinguished by the way it sounds. Consider, for example, the sound of the letter *t*. If *t* is the final letter following a consonant cluster, it is dropped. We therefore hear "sɒf" (soft), "ɔk" (act), "adɒp" (adopt). This feature is also found in the British Cockney dialect.

The voiced *th* is often replaced by /d/ in Black dialect. We therefore hear "dis" (this), "doz" (those). This feature is also found in Cockney: "daowz" (those).

For the sound of the letter *e* as in pen, /i/ is often substituted for /e/. For example, "Gimme dat pin." (Give me that pen.) This substitution can also be seen in the Cockney dialect—"stidi" (steady), in the rural New England dialect—"bit" (bet), "yit" (yet) and throughout the American South and southern Midwest.

**Syntactic features.** Some of the syntactic features of the vernacular Black English dialect are as follows.

The copula "to be": The invariant form of "be" is used to denote habitual action or something ongoing. "We *be* playing after school." (We play every day after school.) "He *be* at work at 3 o'clock." (He is not available at 3 o'clock because he's at work at that hour.)

"To be" is deleted whenever one can use a contraction in the sentence being constructed. It is deleted if it would be followed by a predicate adjective, adverb, or noun in the



present tense (Smitherman 1977). "He tired." "She pretty." "This my mother."

The pronoun "it": "It" is used to denote presence, or to introduce statements. "It ain't nobody there." "It wasn't a store in sight." The use of "it is" to introduce statements is found in an Irish dialect. "It's sorry you will be." "It's sleepy I am" (Wright 1913).

Multiple negation: Multiple negatives are used in one sentence. "Don't nobody want no friends like that." In tracing the evolution of the English language one will find the use of *ne* in Middle English. *Ne* was used for emphasis. "He never hadde noþing [nothing]" (Wright 1913).

Plural markers: The Standard English dialect plural marker -s is omitted when there are other words in the sentence that indicate pluralization. "I got two book." "He have 10 cent."

Possession. Possession is indicated by position and context, not by the possessive marker 's. "Carrie hair pretty." "That John cousin."

Subject stress: Subjects in a sentence are sometimes stressed by following a subject with a subject pronoun. "My father he be taking me out on Sundays." Scottish and other English dialects tend to use subject/noun-pronoun redundancy when emphasis is desired. This happens more frequently when the subject/noun is a proper name (Wright 1913). "Mr. Smith, he came to my house."

*Lexical features.* The most well-known and widely used aspect of vernacular Black English is the vocabulary, which is in a constant state of change and also influences other dialects. As the larger community adopts certain Black vocabulary, shifts appear in the Black lexicon so that the meanings of the words may vary in the two communities.

Smitherman gives "rap" ("rap sessions") as an example. In Standard

English dialect it means serious talk. In vernacular Black English dialect it means romantic talk designed to win affection or sexual favors.

Style: There are many distinctive features in the style used to project Black dialect. However, the following are probably of most interest to classroom teachers.

Besting or stealing. A teacher who is not trusted or is disliked may be "bested." One initiates or responds to the teacher with the "ultimate" repartee, designed to deprecate or belittle the teacher in front of others. Everyone else but the teacher will know that s/he has been "put down." Subtlety is paramount.

Loud talking challenges the teacher. It is intended to push the teacher into doing or saying something reckless. It's great fun seeing a teacher lose self-control.

"Playing the dozens" is familiar to most teachers. This involves insulting an opponent's family, preferably in rhyme. The participant who slings the most devastating or unanswerable insult is greatly admired and respected by the onlookers.

O'Donnell (1974) explains that to many Blacks "language is not only a communicative device, but also a mechanism for control and power."

Two additional elements of style in users of Black dialect are sharply angled body movements (Hurston 1934) and intonation. Black dialect uses a wide range in pitch from very low to high falsetto-type sounds. This stems from the African languages which (similar to Chinese dialects) utilize various levels of tone to denote different meanings for the same word sound. To a lesser degree, Standard English employs the same technique.

#### In the classroom

What does all of this theory mean? What can classroom teachers do? The following points may provide



some answers.

- Not all Black dialect speakers use Black dialect all of the time, and they understand the syntax of Standard English dialect.

- Speakers of Black dialect use a legitimate language system and are also capable of learning an additional dialect.

- Although we should help students become bidialectal, since everything is relative, please understand that bidialectalism is not the first priority in the classroom. Teachers' priorities are as follows. Develop an understanding of language and how it develops and changes. Become familiar with the dialect of your students. Try to develop a respect for Black dialect as a language system which reflects a culture. Transmit this respect to your students. Recognize that Black dialect is a low-prestige dialect and some students are very aware of this. Demonstrate to your students that you truly believe that they are capable of handling two or more dialects. Introduce them to other English dialects, such as those to which we are exposed when we travel.

Dialects of ethnic subgroups offer good examples. In "The Joys of Yiddish," Rosten (1971, p. 72) discusses the "priceless nuances of contempt that are achieved in Yiddish simply by shifting the stress in a sentence from one word to another." "Two tickets for her concert I should buy?" (I'm having enough trouble deciding if it's worth one.) "Two tickets for *her* concert I should buy?" (Did she buy two tickets to my daughter's recital?)

The Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, which is a combination of Rhineland German, Swiss, and English, would be interesting to many students. Some charming examples may be found in *The Language of Man* (Littell 1971). "Don't eat yourself so full already—there's cake back yet—

and Sally you chew your mouth empty before you say." "When I was in town today, I bought myself poor—buying new shoes for the kinner reaches me so in the pocket-book."

The students will enjoy hearing, saying and translating various dialects into their own or into Standard English dialect while at the same time learning that there are many English dialects.

- Help students to understand the role of a lingua franca. At one time French was the international language, but today Standard English dialect is the language which is spoken all over the world. Advise them that they may have no idea now of what paths they will take when they are older and that it is wise to be prepared.

#### Does dialect affect comprehension?

Some teachers feel that Black dialect interferes with students' ability to comprehend oral and written Standard English dialect. Black dialect users do "acquire receptive control... although they may not USE these dialects themselves" (Goodman and Buck 1973). Students from low socioeconomic groups are avid TV watchers and are thus exposed to a variety of language styles. We may thus assume that many Black dialect users are able to understand oral Standard English dialect.

Teachers may ask about students' substitution of Black dialect features when they read orally. Kenneth and Yetta Goodman have done much pioneering work in this area. They contend that if a child reads orally "They took pictures of they mother" (They took pictures of their mother), we should not conclude that there is a comprehension problem or error. If a child reads a passage silently and then retells the story in her/his own words, giving the salient points but using Black English dialect, is there a



"reading problem"? Most certainly not.

Dialect-involved errors (miscues) do not hinder comprehension (Goodman and Buck 1973). Bean (1978), in studying the Hawaiian Island dialect, agreed with Burke (1976) and Goodman (1967), Rigg (1974) and Sims (1972) that dialectal errors "did not interfere with meaning." If the deep structure expressed is similar to the writer's deep structure, surface structural variations should not be interpreted as evidence of poor or non-comprehension.

#### **Black dialect and writing**

Writing presents more of a problem. Students' written compositions will reflect 65% of Black dialect features—and interestingly, these features may not be related to their spoken linguistic system. You will find omission of markers such as past tense *-ed*, possessive *'s*, plural *-s* or *-es*, lack of subject-verb agreement, and sentence fragments. It is a good idea to get writing samples from your students early in the school year and analyze them for the linguistic features which you should teach. Students cannot learn Standard English dialect constructions unless they are taught.

#### **Dialect and testing**

Some teachers are concerned about culturally-biased tests and the Black English dialect speaker. If you share this concern, find out about test construction yourself. Learn how to develop your own informal tests that will give you the information you want. For example, you may wish to know whether your students can understand a particular passage, or whether they can write one. If you know how to construct a test, you can evaluate your students' growth whenever you wish.

In addition, find out the format of the standardized tests students must

take and give your students lots of practice in using that format, for 5 to 10 minute periods. Go over the answers. Discuss why answers were right or wrong.

Classroom teachers cannot eliminate testing. Those students who aspire to fit into the mainstream cannot avoid taking tests. Employers must eliminate job candidates and one of the strategies used is to require candidates to take tests. Colleges require test scores before they will consider applicants, and many professions require the passing of tests before licenses are issued. Prepare your students accordingly.

#### **Allowances for dialect**

Finally, should "allowances" be made for speakers of Black English dialect? There are several facts we must remember: Speakers of Black English dialect are no more disadvantaged than speakers of any other dialect; vernacular Black English dialect reflects a culture; as a group, users of vernacular Black English are not too "slow" to learn Standard English dialect; vernacular Black English dialect is a low prestige dialect, but this is more a reflection of society's attitudes than of the speakers' ability to learn. If we remember all of these things, we will not feel it necessary to pamper Black English dialect speakers or to feel sorry for them.

#### **Classroom activities**

Have your students read some of the poems of Black literature which offer opportunities for performance-response, perhaps the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks and Langston Hughes.

Use student-developed stories (experience charts) which reflect shared experiences of your students. Students may read them orally.

Discuss the major dialect areas in the United States.



Discuss reasons for the different dialects and why we should respect dialectal differences.

Read passages in other English dialects to your students to help them appreciate the variability of English and the legitimacy of their own dialect.

Discuss and role-play different situations in which vernacular Black English dialect and Standard English dialect would be used.

Teach the grammatical constructions of Standard English dialect. Provide time for practice of grammatical constructions.

Use pattern practice drills to help students develop understanding of both Black English dialect and Standard English dialect.

I talked to Mary Ellen every day. I  
been talkin' to Mary Ellen.  
I talked to Mary Ellen a long time ago.  
I been done talked to Mary Ellen.

Have your students conduct a television survey and note which programs use noticeable dialects.

Assign students to watch a particular TV news program for one week. Have them observe the body language and speech of the commentators. Ask them to select one of the personalities and in class set up a panel in which they will role-play, mimicking the newscaster's speech, style, and mannerisms.

Have groups of students write skits for role-playing, employing both Standard English dialect and Black English dialect.

Play recordings of speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a bidialectal master. See if students can hear in his speeches the call-response style of the Black preacher as well as the Standard English dialect style of the international man.

Examine your own speech patterns and read to your students regularly (no matter how old they are). At times, they might read along silently while you read orally.

Teach Standard English dialect punctuation and capitalization. Provide opportunities for practice. (Students would enjoy contrasting German capitalization.)

Teach new vocabulary words every day. Provide opportunities for practice of known words.

Dictate passages which contain the language constructions to be reviewed. This provides students with practice in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, while enlarging their vocabularies. It also provides them with a Standard English dialect model.

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SURVEY RESULTS--544 STUDENTS

STANDARD ENGLISH--PILOT PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE--STUDENTS

1. Do you feel that the lessons on standard English have helped you?

Yes--77%

No--23%

2. Are you embarrassed by someone pointing out that what you say is not said in standard English?

Yes--15%

No--85%

3. Do you like your teacher to go over these things with you?

Yes--86%

No--11%

Sometimes--3%

4. Does the pointing out of errors in standard English make you angry?

Yes--6%

No--93%

Sometimes--1%

5. Do you think that the school should help you in your use of standard English?

Yes--90%

No--9%

Sometimes--1%

6. Do you think that it is important that you be able to use standard English at certain times?

Yes--96%

No--4%

7. Please write any suggestions that you have as to how we could improve instruction in standard English.

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Mal King



## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - TALKING

### COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

Talking so that we can be understood clearly is a skill that is of vital importance in everyone's daily living. In the classroom students improve their thinking skills as they explain and discuss new ideas. In assessing what everyone can do to talk, we often overlook areas in which we can improve. It takes time and practice to be confident in using language to meet our needs.

## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - TALKING

### COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

In general, we use language to meet our needs in five general areas:

1. We use language to describe the behavior of others; for example, questioning, praising, suggesting, threatening.

#### PREPARED BY

Dominic Calabrese  
Crandallyn Graham  
Jane Parker  
Pat Phelan  
Al Rodriguez  
Martin Van Boskirk  
Sue Walters

2. We use language to give information; for example, planning, practicing, explaining, telling.

3. We use language to offer information; for example, offering information, answering, advising.

4. We use language to maintain social relationships; for example, leaving, taking, giving, borrowing, leading, showing.

5. We use language as an expression of our imagination; for example, story-telling, role playing, speculating, dramatizing.\*

The following class activities are examples of ways in which students can improve their communication by practicing with material related to subject matter. These activities are intended to assist in performing one or more of the five functions listed above. They are designed to be short in time, address the student's understanding of the subject and also improve speaking skills.

\*Barbara Wood, "Development of Functional Communication Competencies: Grades 7-12", Theory & Research into Practice, 22(1), 1973.



## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - TALKING

### COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

Talking so that we can be understood clearly is a skill that is of vital importance in everyone's daily living. In the classroom students improve their thinking skills as they explain and discuss new ideas. In assuming that everyone knows how to talk, we often overlook areas in which students need specific help. It takes time and practice to be competent in using language to meet our needs.

In general, we all use talking aloud to meet our needs in five general areas:

1. We talk to control the behavior of others: for example, commanding, persuading, suggesting, threatening, refusing.
2. We talk to express our feelings: for example, blaming, praising, disagreeing, tale-telling.
3. We talk to inform by seeking or offering information: for example, questioning, answering, justifying, demonstrating.
4. We talk as part of a ritual to maintain social relationships: for example, greeting, leave-taking, taking turns in conversation, teasing, shocking.
5. We talk as an expression of our imagining: for example, storytelling, role playing, speculating, dramatizing.\*

The following class activities are examples of ways in which students can improve their communication by practicing with material related to subject matter. These activities are intended to assist in performing one or more of the five functions listed above. They are designed to be short in time, adding to the student's understanding of the subject and also improving speaking skills.

\*Barbara Wood, "Development of Functional Communication Competencies: Grades 7-12", Theory & Research into Practice, ERIC, 1977.



You are encouraged to write your own oral communication activities to help students improve their thinking in your subject. (See the district publication "Talk to Learn: All Subject Areas", Stock No. 41 - 0 - 9422.) Encourage students to evaluate the effectiveness of their talking by becoming aware of the five functions which talking performs in our lives and how proficiency in these areas can work to their advantage.

#### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN FIVE AREAS

##### Function: CONTROLLING

You are a bandmaster in a high school. You are entering the band in a competition. Explain to the band what you expect of them in such a way that you will improve their chance of winning.

You are George Washington. You have a tired, cold, hungry, bedraggled army. Talk to them in such a way that you infuse them with a will to win the war against the British.

You are selling \_\_\_\_\_ door to door. Present your sales pitch to a person answering the door. Remember the following: use a strong opener, dominate the conversation with tact, keep your approach interesting and informative.

You are interviewing for a position as a \_\_\_\_\_. Use your best language manners and convince the interviewer that he/she need look no further, because you are the best person for the position. This will require study and research into the nature of the requirements for the position. (The interviews could be videotaped.)



You are a Confederate soldier who has been captured by the Yanks. You must convince them that your cause as a rebel is just, or be shot.

You are a German colonel who has been captured by members of the Allied forces in the Second World War. You must convince your captors that your operation of a concentration camp was fair and necessary.

You have been asked to go to a dance. You do not want to go, but do want the person who has invited you to continue to like you. Tell how you would refuse the invitation and still keep the friendship. With another person, demonstrate the conversation.

Function: FEELING

You have just lost a pet you have had for many years. Describe how you feel in terms of experience with the pet, what the pet meant to you and how your life will change with the loss.

Have a speaker make a 2 to 3 minute presentation to the class in another language. (Students should not know that the presentation is to be done in a language foreign to them.) After listening, students could respond in writing first, then discuss their reactions. Sample questions: How did you feel during the presentation? Could you understand anything of what was being said? Would a non-English speaker in this class feel the same way?

You are General Wolfe, commander of British forces during the Revolutionary War. Tell why you did not win the war, blaming the rebels.



You are having a disagreement with a member of your family. With another person, plan a dialogue between the two of you in which you state your feeling clearly so that there is no doubt about your position, but also so that the conversation can continue and communication is not cut off. (Some possible areas of disagreement: money, friends, time, parent demands.)

Have students think of something happy. Tell them to smile while frowning. While frowning, use the entire body to do the frowning. Then, greet someone you really want to see. Let that person know you are pleased to see them, while your body and face are frowning. Recognize how each person's body wants to and needs to communicate; the voice and words cannot do it alone.

You are a member of a class committee which is planning a picnic. You disagree with the things they are planning to bring to eat. Tell how you can say this in ways that will make your position clear but not get into an argument.

Function: INFORMING

You have come home two hours later than you expected. Explain clearly and logically why you are late. Concentrate on communicating information so that you can be understood clearly. Avoid communicating feelings alone.

Assign each student the task of teaching a specific skill (for example, tying a knot, cooking an egg, cleaning a house) to be done in a specific length of time. Ask class members to evaluate how well each skill is taught.



Arrange a panel discussion on the best form of business organization: (1) single ownership (2) partnership (3) corporation. At least three students develop presentations for the class to listen to. While the panel is presenting its materials, the members of the class should be listening and taking notes. At the end of the presentations students can be broken into smaller groups to discuss and determine which form of business organization is best and why.

Students select a simple task (for example, opening the door and going down porch stairs, cleaning a fish tank, making lemonade). Individually or in small groups, explain to a Martian visitor how to do the task in written form, or in pantomime without using any words.

Students research a country, people, culture, food, profession, etc., in groups of 4 to 6. Group presentations may be made to the class in various forms (audio visual, role playing, reporting - news). Discuss how the group selected the information it presented. Discuss how the group would alter its approach if given the same assignment a second time.

In a given subject the teacher introduces a concept by presenting a word or short description to the class. Students then raise all of the questions which come to their minds that might be asked about the concept in order to explain it. For example, if the given word was "CELL" in a biology class, students might ask such questions as What is it? How does it work? What color is it? How big is it? Where is it found? Questions would vary depending on the subject. After many questions are raised, then the class could begin to find the answers.



Function: RITUALIZING

Demonstrate as many different ways as you can that two people greet each other. For example:

- two people who are friends
- two people who are enemies
- two people who have never met
- two people who meet after a long absence
- two people who have been trying to avoid each other

Initiate a class discussion about leave-taking. Have students list ways to say goodbye in various situations. Students may wish to write about their leave-taking experiences in a journal for a week. Role play leave-taking behavior. Discuss what makes particular leave-taking behavior appropriate or inappropriate.

You are at a large family gathering at dinner. You have something you want to say. Explain how you could politely get a turn in the conversation, then demonstrate exactly how you would do this.

You are with a group of friends when another small group comes over. People in the two groups do not like each other and want to make this attitude clear in their speech. Demonstrate how the two groups would talk to each other. Then, reverse the process, assuming that the arriving group is friendly. What would they say and do? How do these greetings differ?

Pretend that you are talking to someone who knows you fairly well. You want this person really to pay close attention to you, so you make up a tall tale (exaggeration) which will shock this person. Demonstrate what you would say and how the other person would react.



You are a teacher in a math class. It is raining and cold outside. You need some rulers which are stored in the supply room. Ask a student to get these for you. Make the request in such a way that you feel sure the student would be willing to do this. Then practice the same request in such a way that you feel sure the student would not be willing to run the errand. What are the differences?

Function: IMAGINING

Using some historical event as background (for example, the assassination of an important figure, a scientific discovery, a political occurrence) have at least two students develop and write a dialogue against this setting which they then present to the class.

You are a Jew who was in Hitler's Germany, but now you are a resident of San Diego. Plan and prepare a short talk to high school students in which you describe your experiences, the breaking apart of your family, life in a concentration camp.

Divide into groups of 5 to 7 students OR work individually. Give each group the same story with the ending missing. Assign each group to complete the story verbally, on paper, in pantomime, or in script. Each group demonstrates the ending of the story. The class compares and contrasts different ways in which each group finished the story. Why did you choose a particular ending?

Pretend you are God looking down at earth. What would be some things you like and some things you don't like? Tell about these. Then explain how you would change human beings if you had it to do over again.



You are a famous scientist who has just discovered a cure for the common cold. Imagine what this cure is and how you discovered it. With some other students who act as reporters, dramatize a press conference in which you tell the world about your discovery.

Create a contemporary fairy tale. Drawing on personal experience and knowledge, tell a story which uses today's surroundings and society in an entertaining but outlandish fashion. Keep your story tied together and logical. You may create situations that are against reality, such as flying or invisibility.



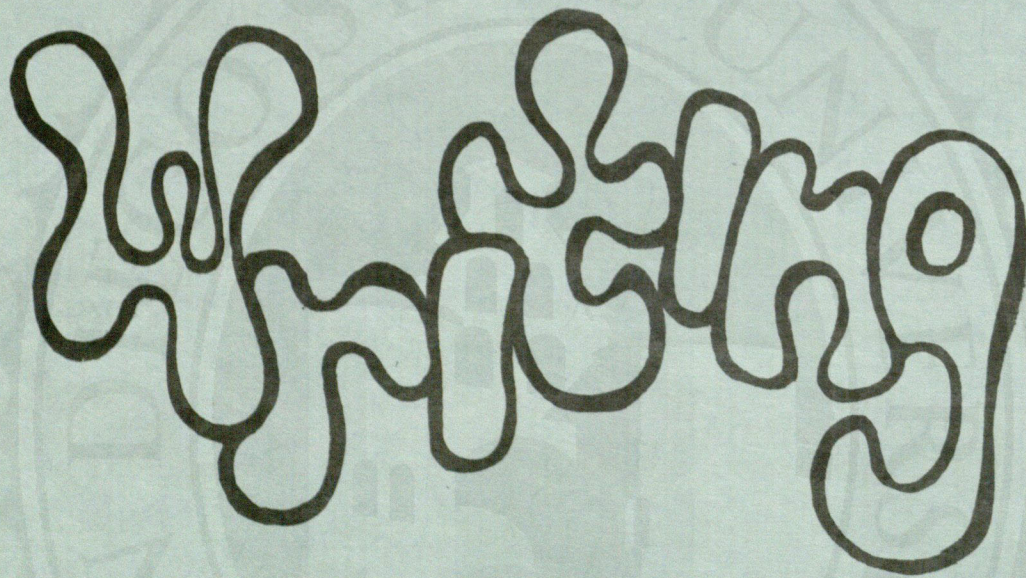
## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN

### LISTENING HINTS

Encourage students to listen carefully to what is being said around them. While we are listening all the time, we need practice to "hear" clearly what is said and what is really meant. Suggest that students listen in some of these ways.

1. Listen to develop skill in making your own judgments about a speaker's point of view.
2. Listen to others so that you will clarify your own thinking on a particular subject.
3. Listen to be able to add your ideas to a discussion in helpful and creative ways.
4. Listen to become aware of ways in which new ideas you hear are related to other ideas you already know.
5. Listen to become aware of language which is standard or non-standard English, to decide whether the language you hear is appropriate to the situation.







USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - WRITING

LEARNING LOGS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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## LEARNING LOGS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

### Learning Logs--What are they?

Learning Logs are very short writing assignments, often ungraded (see feedback section), which encourage students to write to various audiences about what they have learned and the connections they are making between this new knowledge and their own experience. This kind of writing helps students clarify their own thinking. Reading the Learning Logs allows teachers to see how the information they present is being received by their students so that new lessons can be planned effectively.

Writing is one tool to help students find out what they know about a subject. Writing encourages us to sort through the collection of facts and impressions inside our heads, arranging these ideas in a form that makes sense. This new teaching strategy is intended to help the teacher communicate ideas more effectively and the student to learn more efficiently. Try a few in your own subject area and see how they work for you and your classes.

### Learning Logs - How do I use them?

Learning Logs are used to help find out what students are thinking about the subject at a given moment, how much they understand and how they perceive the information which has been presented to them. With this in mind, ask students to write for 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the period to see what they are thinking right now so that you can plan tomorrow's lesson. They can write on half sheets, in composition books, or any way you like. Assign a Learning Log in the middle of the period to help students direct their thinking. Have them read their short



writing to each other in order to extend their thinking by sharing with someone else. Then continue the lesson with this background to direct class attention. The Learning Log assignments suggested here can be changed and altered to meet your needs in your own classes. Use them any way they can be of most benefit to you. The feedback section has suggestions for ways to handle Learning Logs after they are written so that they will be a useful tool for the teacher, not another task to perform.

Learning Logs Feedback - What do I do with them now that I have them?

This writing should be short, not take up much of the student's time or the teacher's time. It is intended to help the writer clarify his/her thinking and the reader to find out about another person's thinking on a given subject.

Ways to use the Learning Logs include:

1. The teacher reads through the logs quickly to find out what the student has said in order to plan lessons for the future.
2. Students read each other's Learning Log entries, sharing ways they have responded to the assignment, learning from each other about different ways of viewing the same information. This can be done in pairs or small groups.
3. The teacher may save all Learning Log entries to show progress in thinking/writing skills and increased subject understanding as the quarter progresses.



4. Students may save their Learning Log entries to study for tests.

**\*\*5.** The teacher saves some especially interesting Learning Logs, sending them to room 313 or putting them in Pat Phelan's box so that they can be duplicated and shared with the whole staff, subject area, or student body.

Ways for the teacher to respond to the student's writing include:

1. Record on the paper and in your grade book credit for doing the assignment or no credit if it is not turned in.
2. Read the paper quickly for content, using a ✓, +, -.
3. Assign a small point value to the doing of the assignment. If you wish the student to rewrite and edit this first draft, or expand it into a polished piece of writing, that would be an additional assignment.
4. Use stickers, gold stars, stamps of various kinds.
5. Write short, positive comments on each paper now and then.
6. Write questions to show students where their thinking is unclear to you or where they need to get more information in order to understand the concepts better.

**\*\*7.** Most importantly, do not correct every mistake on the paper. These are short, quick writings, not careful, edited second drafts. You want to find out what a person knows about the subject



you are teaching at a given moment. Not everyone is intended to be an English teacher or an editor. If you wish to grade a carefully written paper, give students an opportunity to correct and re-write. That kind of assignment is not a Learning Log assignment.

### Learning Logs - How do I write them?

If you wish to write more assignments, here are a few hints to help you.

1. Start with the audience you wish the students to keep in mind as they are writing.
2. Think about what function you wish the writing to perform. For example, do you want a quick survey of what students understand at the moment, or do you want them to do a short piece of writing which requires application of some concept previously taught to a new situation?

Please share some of your own Learning Log assignments with us. If you will send your ideas to 313 or put them in Pat Phelan's mail box, we will duplicate new ideas and distribute them to the total staff.



### Learning Logs - Do they help me in my subject?

Using a new idea takes time and practice. We want to know if the Learning Logs have helped to make your teaching easier and more efficient. We want to know if you think the Learning Logs have helped the students to understand your subject better. A form similar to the one below will be placed in your mail box just after the end of each grading period. Please return the completed form to Mr. Frey.

#### LEARNING LOG PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The questions below concern your use of Learning Logs.

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

When were Learning Logs used?

☐ more than once a week

☐ once a week

☐ monthly

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

What was the reaction of the class?

☐ Students enjoyed Learning Logs.

☐ Students tolerated Learning Logs.

☐ Students were unresponsive to Learning Logs.

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

How have Learning Logs affected the students' learning?

☐ increased understanding of content

☐ no noticeable difference

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan on using this technique again?

☐ yes

☐ occasionally

☐ I would like some assistance.

On the back please list an idea for a Learning Log assignment which you would like to share with the total staff.



## LEARNING LOG ASSIGNMENTS

## GENERAL

Explain to a student who is considering dropping out of school, reasons to stay in school, attend regularly, and have a high school diploma as a realistic goal.

Explain to a foreign exchange student by letter our Morse High School policy on homework.

Write a letter to the newspaper telling what you think life will be like in the U.S. 50 years from now.

Describe your favorite time of the day in such a way that your friend can experience the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of that time.

Write a telephone conversation between two people talking about the kinds of body language used by students and teachers which bother you.

In a note to your friend, describe or tell about something that happened which amused, angered, or interested you in your last class (the class you were in before you came here.)

Explain to your brother, sister or parents, what it is about this room that makes you feel comfortable, uncomfortable, or somewhere in between. Are there any physical changes you could suggest that would improve the atmosphere of the room?



GENERAL - continued

Pretend you are one of your parents. Write down what you think your parents would say to me (your teacher) about you at Open House.

Explain our Morse attendance policy to a student habitually tardy and give him or her reasons for attending on time.

Explain to your friend how you'd feel about eating foods you'd never had before and those you couldn't even identify by sight or smell.

Tell a friend from another school how you feel about being at Morse High School.

Explain to a friend what you'd do if you were walking home and you met up with a big, growling, stray dog.

Write a paragraph telling me what you have learned in this class during the past week.

Write a paragraph telling me how you feel about the class. What makes it good and/or how could it be improved?



## GENERAL - continued

Describe a celebration which would be related to our last unit of work for this class. Plan the date, what activities others will have for this activity.

Write a letter to a friend expressing your feeling about being in this classroom today.

Explain to an alien, the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. Use your own words. Do not quote any part of the Pledge.

Write a note to your parents explaining what you learned/discovered about yourself from reading a particular (story, period in history, art work, selection of music.)

Using two characters, write a short TV script about people on our planet developing much more acute senses of hearing, touch, taste, smell.

Write a monologue of a ten foot tall, ugly, smelly but harmless space alien.

Write a confession to ASB for your littering our campus and explain what you're willing to do to help in the future.



## GENERAL -continued

Our planet will destruct within 24 hours. A space mail ship is waiting for the "last letters" to friends on another planet. Write to your friend telling all of your best accomplishments and how you plan to spend the last few hours.

You are an empty milk carton which has been tossed into the bushes. Talk about the people who notice you and what they say.

Write a letter to our campus newspaper giving the consequences of a scientist discovering a harmless chemical which dispels feelings of anger and aggression in human beings.

Write a letter to a newspaper predicting the consequences of many people beginning to live longer than 100 years.

Write a dialogue between space visitors concerning 2 humans on earth who have just developed the skill of mental telepathy. They have recently learned that their 10 year old child had been capable of mind reading for the past year.

Write your own epitaph.

Tell me what question or questions you still have about the topic we discussed today.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Explain to a relative what is meant by the term "life sport" and why it is an important concept.

Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement: PE classes should meet for a longer time 3 days a week instead of the present one period 5 days a week.. Direct your opinion to the Board of Education.

Write a notice to the local newspaper giving information about your team's current standing. What would you say?

You are a student at Morse High School in the year 2,000. Tell a friend what sports you and fellow students will be playing and why.

Write to a student who was absent from class explaining the rules in soccer.

Write a bumper sticker with one important rule on it from a game you like to play.



## YOU AND THE LAW

At 4 AM there is a loud knock on the door. Bleary-eyed, you go to the door and open it. Three police enter your house and state that you are under arrest for dealing in marijuana. After searching through your house, they find a little less than one ounce of marijuana. You are taken to jail and booked. Prepare a legal brief for your own defense.

A very large percentage of crimes in the U.S. is now being committed by juveniles. This includes the serious crimes such as murder, rape and grand theft. Write a memo to a judge giving your argument for or against juveniles (ages 15-17) being sentenced as adults.

You are a member of a jury. Write an argument stating why an illegal alien who has committed a crime, should be tried under U.S. laws.

You are a boxer who has just had your jaw dislocated. Write a legal brief stating how you would try to bring a case against your opponent.

Pretend that there is a law discriminating against people who are left handed. Write a newspaper editorial urging high school students to organize to get this law repealed.



## SCIENCE

Explain to a friend what evidence is and give examples of different kinds of evidence.

Explain to your grandparents the reasons you and your family rely on so many "fast and easily prepared" foods. Also explain the nutritional values of those foods you choose most often on "cook's night out."

Explain to a foreigner visiting the U.S. the reasons we purify our whole water supply, rather than just purify our drinking water.

Write a newspaper article for our Morse Code as to why oceanic pollution is a world concern.

Explain by letter to a new classmate our laboratory safety procedures.

Explain to an older friend what "adaptation" is and ways in which you have "adapted" to specific situations.

Explain to a younger friend in detail how you go about investigating a problem.



## SCIENCE - Continued

Explain to a fellow classmate what subject matter would be covered in a biology class.

Write a short magazine item in which you discuss any three recent biological contributions to the 20th century.

Write a letter to a relative explaining why you feel biology should be a required subject in high school.

Explain to your family how biology influences our lives.

Write a letter to a friend explaining how adaptation might be a key to survival.

Write an argument for and an argument against "euthanasia." Direct the letter to the director of your local hospital.

Write an epitaph for the burial of the last North American bear.



## SCIENCE - Continued

You are awarding the Nobel prize for science. Explain to the Nobel Committee what the discovery was and why it should receive the prize.

Biology

Write a telegram to the National Science Foundation identifying 5 biological problems still unsolved. Tell which two you think should require a first priority.

Write a letter to the teacher giving the reasons you should be considered for an advanced biology class.

Write a letter to your congressman expressing your concerns over our development of germ (or chemical) warfare.

Write a letter to the local TV station protesting or supporting "genetic engineering."

Write a wanted poster to be hung in the post office that would warn people of Back Teria, Fun Gus, and Vi Rus.

Write a letter to your new spouse giving the reasons your new home should have solar energy components.



## SCIENCE - Biology - Continued

Imagine you're an analgesic, just swallowed by someone. Describe what's happening to you from the moment you are swallowed.

### Advanced Biology

Should a technique be developed wherein a human egg could mature into an individual outside the womb? Explain your opinion in a memo to a scientist.

Explain to a friend how you feel about the creation of artificial intelligence by recent innovations in computer science.

### Physics

A rocket has just taken off from Cape Kennedy and you are the ghost of Isaac Newton. Explain how you feel about your part in this accomplishment.

Explain to a friend the various uses of the term "Energy".

Imagine you are Copernicus. Explain to a friend what has led you to believe the earth revolves about the sun.



## SCIENCE - Continued

### Geology

You are a recently found microscopic bacterial fossil rock. What's going to happen to you back at the lab? Describe your ordeal to neighbor rocks in the rock box.

You are a meandering stream. Explain to your rocky friends how you got in that shape and what you used to look like.

You and a friend are S and P waves traveling together after an earthquake. Explain in a letter to a relative where you're going and what you plan to do.

### Chemistry

Imagine you are in the field of marketing a new hydrogen fuel. Write an advertisement extolling all the advantages of the new fuel.

In a paragraph to your teacher explain the properties of metals, nonmetals and metalloids.

In a letter to a friend identify and explain why certain elements are classified as "inert".



SCIENCE - Chemistry - Continued

Write a letter to your teacher giving your qualifications for being considered for advanced chemistry placement.

Imagine you are a water molecule. In a paragraph written for your teacher, describe as much about yourself as possible.

You are an atom in a rock being energized by a U-V light. You're now glowing. What things took place to turn you on.



## MATHEMATICS

Your parents don't understand the metric system. They want you to help them. Explain the different parts of the metric system to them and show how it works.

Your younger sister doesn't understand what "x" and "y" are in algebra, or what  $x+y=10$  means. Write an explanation to her so that she will be ready for algebra next year.

Pretend you are a computer salesman and you are trying to make a sale to an elementary school. What would you say to show them that the students would benefit from having a computer?

Write a word problem for this class using the formula Area of a rectangle is equal to length times width ( $A=LW$ ). Think of regular rectangular objects that are used often. Then solve the problem.

Write down for yourself the steps that you would take to buy a house. Assume that you have \$20,000.00 in the bank.

You are a high school track coach and your best runner is flunking math. Write a letter to him explaining how math is useful in sports and in his future career choice.



## ROTC

You are sitting in a weekly staff meeting with three other lieutenants, one captain and a major (the chairperson). You have some information that leads you to disagree with a decision that the major is making. Explain exactly what you should say and do.

You are the captain in charge of a group of cadets on a weekend training session. While climbing a wall, one of your men falls and appears to have broken his leg. Explain to your commanding officer what actions you took to help him and why.

Write a newspaper editorial explaining to a group of pacifists why a strong military is essential to the maintenance of peace.

Write a memo to your platoon leader explaining the difference between a rifle and carbine.

You are the instructor. Explain to a class the role of the infantry in a limited nuclear war.



## ENGLISH

Explain to your parents why you did so well or so poorly on your last essay or test.

You are a comma, constantly abused and misused by tenth grade writers. Explain to students why you get so upset and what students might do to get along with you better.

In rhyming verse (either abab or aabb rhyme scheme) complete this poem so that it has four lines:  
"I've always thought of Saturday,

Using all the letters of your last name to begin words, make a list of descriptive terms for your best friend.

Describe to a blind person what your new car looks like.

You are your favorite word. Talk about all the times and places where you are used.



## ENGLISH - continued

A time machine has taken you back to the 1930's to visit George Orwell when he is writing 1984. Tell him which of his predictions are right and wrong.

Write a psychiatrist's notes about the main character in Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart."



## ART

Find a picture you like on the wall. What attracts you first in this picture? What does your eye travel to next? Can you discover a pattern? How does your eye leave the picture? Write a paragraph telling me how your eye travels around this picture.

Select a culture whose art forms you like and tell me why you like its art forms. What makes these art forms unique to the culture?

Plan a project for this class and describe how we should go about doing it. Be sure to include materials needed as well as instructions for the processes.

Write a paragraph telling me what you know about colors on the color wheel.

Write a letter to a friend telling your friend how to make a Notan expanded square.

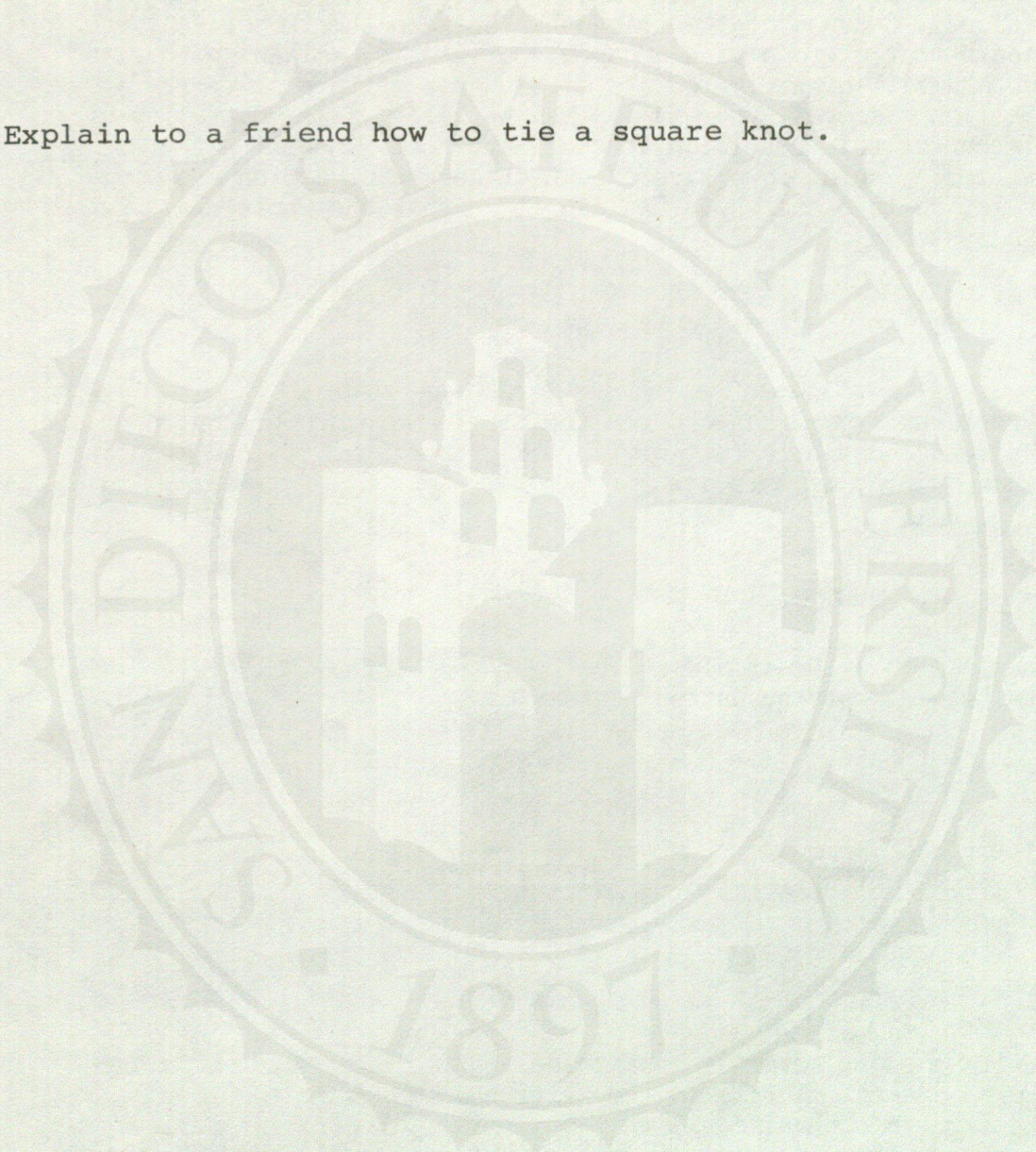
Think of your favorite color and tell a friend about what has caused that color to become your favorite and what pleasant associations you have with that color.



## ART - Continued

Write a diary entry. Pretend you are a medieval artist. Who might be your teacher? What sort of art work might you do? Will anyone know you did it?

Explain to a friend how to tie a square knot.





## SOCIAL STUDIES

U.S. History

You are a white, 16-year old in the state of Georgia in 1860. You have been raised with Sam, a slave, and he is your best friend. Because of the friendship between the two of you, you learn that a group of slaves in your area is planning to rise up and kill owners. You are afraid that if this slave rebellion succeeds, your family may be killed. If you tell your father of this rebellion, chances are that Sam will either be killed or sold "down river." Which course of action are you going to take and why? Explain it so that the whole class can understand.

President Truman has ordered the atomic bomb dropped on Japan. Write a short note (one or two paragraphs) to a friend, stating your opinion of this act.

Explain to a 10year old student why the South, in 1861, decided to secede from the United States.

Write an obituary for Adolf Hitler.

Write a short advertisement to be sent to Europe to encourage Europeans to emigrate to the British Colonies in the 1600's. Be sure to emphasize all the good points of life in America.

John Brown has just died (1858). Write his obituary.



## SOCIAL STUDIES

American Government

Write a slogan (no longer than 10 words) for a current candidate.

Prepare a wanted poster for Demark Vesey.

Write a nominating speech for President Carter, emphasizing all of his positive achievements.

Do you think it would be a good idea to limit the President to one 6-year term? Explain your opinion in a letter to a senator or congressman.

What are some ways by which a constituent can make his views known to a representative? Explain these ways to your classmates.



## CONSUMER/FAMILY STUDIES

Explain to a friend the steps you follow when you make chocolate chip cookies.

Tell a child of five what the dangers are in a kitchen and how to avoid being hurt.

You want to sew a new dress. Explain to your teacher all of the things you need to do before you begin to cut out the dress. List these in the order you would do them.

Write an newspaper advertisement for the perfect fabric or the perfect food, or the perfect record.

You are a student at Morse High School in the year 2,000. Write a note to a friend describing the sort of clothing you are wearing. Why?



## INDUSTRIAL ARTS

### Auto

Explain to a friend in auto class the procedure necessary for removing and replacing the distributor.

Explain to a friend who has not taken or is not in an auto class, the procedure for finding the compression stroke of a cylinder.

Explain to the class the difference between the contact point and the magnetic pick-up distributor.

### Metal

Explain to a student, who is not in a metal class, the procedure for lighting and adjusting a cutting torch.

Write a letter introducing yourself and your abilities to the ABC Metal Company.

You are entering a welding project contest, but you cannot send the project and you don't have a picture to send. Describe your project so that it may be judged in the contest.



## INDUSTRIAL ARTS - continued

### Graphic Arts

Describe (a tool) to a person on the phone who has never seen, used, or heard of (the tool). Do not use the name of the tool.

Explain to a new student safety precautions necessary for use of a specific machine.

Draw a quick sketch of the room for a new student, labeling equipment.

Explain to a new student how a silk screen works.

Write a suicide note for your finger when you fail to observe standard safety precautions in using the paper cutter.

### Wood

Explain to your older brother or sister the procedure for calculating board feet.

Explain to your teacher the differences between hard and soft woods. Give some examples of each.



## INDUSTRIAL ARTS, Wood - continued

Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, outlining the future of our forest reserve.

You are a tree and the chain saw is running. Write your last will and testament before you fall.

## Electronics

Describe to the class the interrelationship between voltage, resistance, and current and how changing each one will affect the other two.

Explain the meaning of the term "inductance" to your girlfriend or boyfriend.

Explain to your parents the difference between a vacuum tube and a transistor.

## Drafting

Explain to a student who is not in a drafting class the difference between an oblique and a cabinet drawing.



INDUSTRIAL ARTS, Drafting - continued

Why is it important to know the scale of a drawing?  
Explain to a prospective client.

You have just received a quantity of inferior drafting paper. Write a letter to the company informing them of the defect and request that they replace the paper in your next shipment.



## MUSIC

Explain to a student in sixth grade what a written music scale is and how it is used.

After listening to the music that was played, write a note to a friend describing the mood the music creates for you.

Describe to your grandmother your impressions of the school where you performed today.

Write a bumper sticker telling why musicians have more fun.

Be any musical instrument. Describe how you are played and how it feels.



## FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Describe to classmates a (name of language class) custom or food or style of dress which has found its way into American culture and tell why you think it came into American culture.

Explain how verb conjugation drills in this (name of language) class have helped you to understand the English language better. Address your explanation to your English teacher.

Write an advertisement to students encouraging them to take a foreign language.

Pretend you are on a plane, headed for (Paris). Plan your agenda for the first three days there.

You are a part of speech (noun, verb, adjective or adverb). Tell the class how you work and what makes you different from your neighbors.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Imagine you're a fat person who just died from over-eating. What should be given as your epitaph? You may write it in poetry.

You have heard that your best friend has accepted a ride home from a dance with a person who frequently drives recklessly and you have noticed that one of his tires is bald. Write a note to your friend giving advice.

Explain to a friend the steps you would take to change a tire.

Write a safety message to be read on the radio, warning people of the dangers of improper maintenance of their car.

You are a bean burrito who has lived in the cafeteria for the past three days. What would you want to tell a prospective consumer about yourself?

What are some ways to tell what a driver in front of you, either in your lane or approaching you, is going to do before that driver even signals? Explain this to a younger brother or sister.



## BUSINESS

You are applying for a job at McDonald's. Write a letter recommending yourself to the manager.

Your pen pal is having a difficult time in business class learning to center titles. Write a note telling how you learned to do it, explaining each step.

Write an advertisement to students, encouraging them to take a business course.

You stock shelves in a supermarket. After telling your immediate supervisor about a new way to organize items on the shelf, he tells the store manager without giving you credit for the idea. He gets a \$50/wk raise because the manager is so impressed with "his" idea. Explain to your parents or best friend how you are going to deal with the situation.

You are now working at McDonald's. Write a message to someone your age who will be living here one hundred years from now explaining what McDonald's is and what your job is like.

Explain to an accounting trainee the meaning of the terms "debit" and "credit." Assume you are the trainee's supervisor.





Reading



USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - READING





## USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN - READING

One of the ways in which we learn new ideas is to read about them in books and magazines. If the material presented in a class is too easy, a reader may be bored and lose interest. On the other hand, if material is too hard, a reader may feel that the task is hopeless and give up trying to understand the assignment. This presents the teacher with a number of problems. Students in a given class will be able to read material at different levels of difficulty, while most textbooks are written on one level. How can the teacher find out the reading level of textbooks currently in use in a class? How can the teacher find out what the individual reading ability of students is and specifically how well these individuals can read the textbook? After finding out these things, then what can a teacher do to help students who may have trouble reading the assignments?

Materials included here are intended to assist the teacher with these specific situations.

1. Use the Cloze test (see p. 2 ) to determine how well students can read your textbook in three levels of reading skill: independent, instructional and frustration levels.
2. Use the chart (see p. 3 ) to determine the readability level of your textbook by counting sentences and syllables to find out if the book is very simple, simple, difficult, or very difficult.
3. Choose from suggested activities for improving the reading comprehension of students in your class (see pp. 4 to 8 ): USSR Reading, Radio Reading, REQUEST Reading, Directed Reading Activities.



## THE CLOZE TEST TO DETERMINE READING LEVEL

Select a representative sample of 100 words from a regularly assigned textbook. Duplicate this sample, leaving a blank for approximately every tenth word. Students are to write in the blank the exact word that is missing. The total list of words may be supplied from which they choose the appropriate ones, or they may guess.

Interpreting the results:

1. The student who misses 1 or 2 words out of every 100 read is able to read independently.
2. The student who misses 3 to 5 words is reading at an instructional level.
3. The student who misses more than 5 words out of every 100 read is reading at a frustration level, which means that the material is too difficult for the student to understand.

## LEVELS OF READING

### I. INDEPENDENT READING LEVEL:

This is the level of reading at which a child is able to read and understand without help. The material should cause no difficulty and have high interest value.

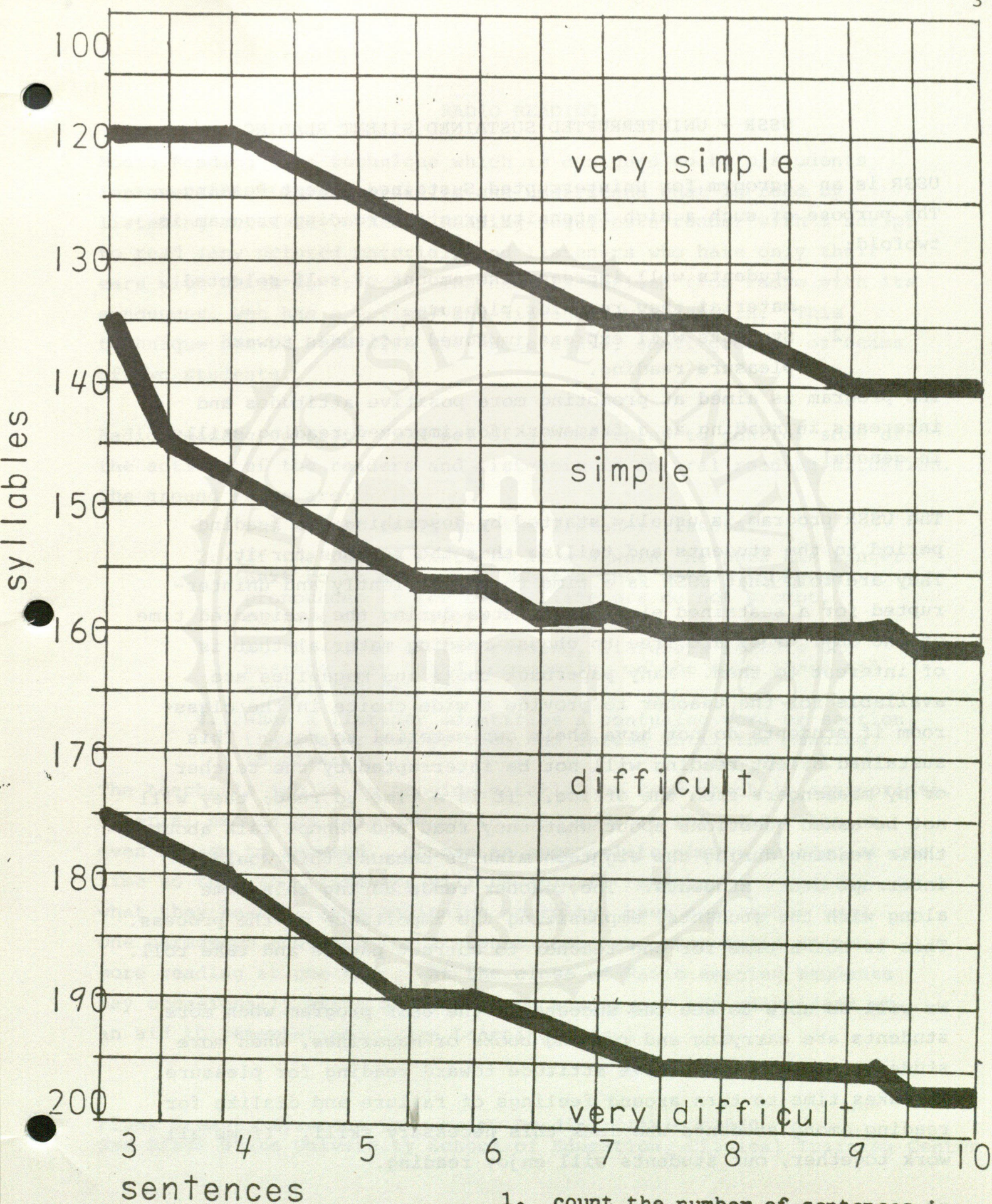
### II. INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL:

This is the level of reading at which a child is able to read and understand with some help from the teacher. The material may be challenging but not too difficult.

### III. FRUSTRATION READING LEVEL:

This is the level of reading at which a child is unable to read with minimum teacher help. Comprehension is poor and frustration results.





1. count the number of sentences in 100 words
2. count the number of syllables in 100 words



## USSR - UNINTERRUPTED SUSTAINED SILENT READING

USSR is an acronym for Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. The purpose of such a high intensity practice reading program is twofold:

1. Students will increase the amount of self-selected material they read for pleasure.
2. Students will express improved attitudes toward pleasure reading.

The program is aimed at promoting more positive attitudes and interests in reading as a framework for improved reading skill in general.

The USSR program is usually started by describing the reading period to the students and telling them the reasons for it. They are told that USSR is a time to read silently and uninterrupted for a sustained eighteen minutes during the designated time of the day. They are free to choose reading material that is of interest to them. Many paperback books and magazines are available for the teacher to provide a wide choice in the classroom if students do not have their own material to read. This sustained silent reading will not be interrupted by the teacher or by messengers from the office. It is a time to read; they will not be asked questions about what they read and cannot talk about their reading during the eighteen minutes because this would interrupt other students. The teacher reads during this time along with the students, emphasizing the importance of the process. This is not a time for the teacher to correct papers and take roll.

We will be able to see the success of the USSR program when more students are carrying and reading books or magazines, when more students express a positive attitude toward reading for pleasure. It takes time to turn around feelings of failure and dislike for reading among students who lack this necessary skill. If we all work together, our students will enjoy reading.



## RADIO READING

Radio Reading is a technique which is designed to help students improve their listening skills and understand what is read by listening carefully. Radio Reading requires a reader with a script to read (any printed material) and listeners who have only their ears with which to listen. The name is derived from radio with its announcer, who has a script, and listeners who tune in. This technique can be used with the whole class, small groups, or teams of two students.

Radio Reading consists of a set of ground rules to control some of the actions of the readers and listeners in an oral reading situation. The ground rules are:

1. The reader reads and the listener listens.
2. If the reader wants to know a word, he puts his finger next to it and says, "What's that word?" Someone pronounces it for him. Listeners do not prompt, correct or interrupt the speaker.
3. At the close of the reading, listeners restate the message they heard, commenting on the main ideas and supporting details.
4. When a listener identifies a confusing word or section, the reader may go back and reread until the meaning is clear.

The teacher's job is to provide material to read which is appropriate. Material should be easy enough to read so that the reader has an even chance to succeed. Choose an appropriate amount to read at one time so that the listeners will be able to remember and restate what they heard. As a beginning activity, have the reader read one paragraph and stop for listener response, then build up to more reading at one time. At the close of Radio Reading students may occasionally write a five minute summary of the main ideas as an aid to remembering. (See Learning Logs.)

Frank Greene, Syracuse University Reading Clinic, 1970  
San Diego State University School of Education, Clinical Training Center



## REQUEST READING

ReQuest Reading is a technique for improving reading comprehension which combines silent reading with oral questions and answers. An advantage of this reading strategy is that it helps students to sharpen their thinking by asking questions of different kinds about the material they are reading. These are the steps in ReQuest Reading:

1. Use any reading material you normally assign to the class.
2. Give these directions to students: "The purpose of this reading activity is to improve understanding of what you read. We will all read the first paragraph silently, then take turns asking questions about what the paragraph means. First, you will ask questions for me to answer. Try to ask the kind of questions a teacher might ask you (i.e. requiring facts, connections, opinions). When answering your questions I will close the book. Second, I will ask you some questions and you close your books to answer."
3. Begin with the whole class, reading the same paragraph silently. When most have finished reading, ask the students to question you. Answer the questions as completely as you can without looking at the book. When students have asked as many questions as they wish, they close their books and you may ask them anything of importance in the material which has not been covered.
4. Go on to the second paragraph using the same technique. As a teacher, you serve as a model of good questioning behavior. Encourage questions which are thought-provoking, requiring answers which allow critical thinking and full comprehension. Comprehension will be shallow if only factual recall questions are asked. Students may take turns in your role while you sit down with the class. Once they understand the steps, ReQuest Reading also works well with students in pairs or small groups.
5. Continue this activity long enough to get the class thoroughly into the assignment. Then ask them, "What do you think is going to happen in the rest of this section? Why?" (i.e. What have you read that allows you to make a guess?) When the answers show that students can predict and support their answers, have the class read silently to the end to see if their predictions are right. Use any usual follow-up activity to the reading.



## DIRECTED READING ACTIVITIES

One of the skill areas that most affects every area of learning at Morse is the one of Comprehension. No matter what the assignment, if the student does not understand the material read, no learning takes place. There are four levels of comprehension in understanding material.

- Literal: Recalling or restating information explicitly stated in the text.
- Interpretive: Formulating ideas or opinions that are based on the material read but not stated explicitly in the text.
- Applicative: Connecting and integrating the information, ideas, and values with one's own experience or applying that in other contexts.
- Critical: Analyzing or evaluating the ideas or presentation on such grounds as accuracy, significance, generalizability, and distortion by omission; in general, developing effective problem-solving techniques.

Some of the activities that promote development of comprehension skills and can be utilized in any classroom in any subject area:

1. Provide frequent opportunities for the silent reading of materials that students select for themselves from a wide choice of kinds of texts (such as magazines, books newspapers, guides) presented at different levels of difficulty. (See USSR.)
2. Provide frequent opportunities for the silent reading of materials selected by the teacher from the assigned text; the reading will be used as the basis for small group comprehension development activities.
3. Use classroom or school required reading lists, or require the students to read a specific number of books.
4. Directing attention before students begin a reading assignment is vital to helping them understand what is read. (See Learning Logs for a similar approach in writing.) Develop prereading activities (oral and/or written) in which students:
  - a. Formulate questions, prior to reading the text, from predictions they have made from examining the title, contents page, illustrations, and other clues.



- b. Discuss the topic or relate personal experiences about the topic.
  - c. Assess what they already know about the topic, describe what they expect or want to learn, and formulate questions about the topic.
  - d. Survey the text (pictures, headings, subheadings, charts) and predict (1) a summary of the scope of the story or article; (2) the scope of the story or article; and (3) questions to be answered after reading.
- 5. Focus on comprehension during reading by:
  - a. Limiting oral reading to specific purposes, such as encouraging students to use effective meaning-getting strategies (such as using context clues to identify unfamiliar words).
  - b. Pausing to allow students to hear their own reading and encouraging them to make sense from the text without the teacher's supplying words or making judgments.
  - c. Pausing to encourage predictions of upcoming events, lines, or words in the materials being read.
- 6. Develop post-reading activities (oral and/or written) in which students:
  - a. Retell the story (material) in their own words.
  - b. Answer factual and inferential questions about the text.
  - c. Write a story sequel.
  - d. Imagine another theory to equate.
  - e. Write their own version of the material.
- 7. Encourage teacher and peer questioning and discussion among students at all comprehension levels in either oral or written form.
- 8. Provide relevant direct or vicarious experiences (e.g., film simulations, drama) appropriate to the age level before students read required texts on unfamiliar topics.
- 9. Have students locate and read two or three books or articles expressing differing points of view on a controversial issue and analyze the various texts for accuracy, logic, or techniques of persuasion.
- 10. Have students use a problem focus to develop an hypothesis; then have them experiment, and verify and apply the results with or without written materials.