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A PROCESS STUDY: DEVELOPING AN ELEMENTARY  
LANGUAGE ARTS GUIDE

by  
Norma Korn

A Project Report  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment  
of the  
Specialist in Education Degree

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
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A final word of thanks to the summer writing team, Edith Arnquist, Dorothy Bickford, Irma Dunton, Thomas Dunton, Joan Schott, and Marjorie Taylor, who have generously given their services throughout the 1970-1971 school year.

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## FOREWORD

The following study of the development of a language arts guide, provides a history of decisions, a description of the guide, a critical evaluation, and revision plans. The intent throughout was to present the material so it would be useful to others considering developing a similar guide benefiting from our mistakes, adopting our successes.

The study developed as did the guide; that is, it emerged despite changing personnel and considerable delay. Initially, this writer established the summer writing team and became responsible for the study. The problems and solutions from the first thread of an idea to the completion of the guide are covered. Many times there were disagreements of ideas but the team's relationship was never disagreeable. The accomplishments of this summer writing team were many, and it is hoped that as one reads the process study that it will encourage others to develop a successful program of change in some education area.

## CHAPTER I

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS GUIDE

#### Background of Community and School

On June 22, 1970, the Lakeview summer writing team was officially established. It is the purpose of this section of the study to trace the major events and decisions leading to the development of the language arts guide and then to describe its subsequent development.

In retrospect, it is tempting to explain the guide as being a natural outcome of a series of events combined with a set of favorable circumstances existing in the Lakeview School System at the time. It could suggest that the establishment of the language arts guide was inevitable. However, our view is that the guide came into being through a number of key people working together making decisions thoughtfully and planfully. It is the purpose of this chapter to review in detail how this was accomplished.

Lakeview, located on the southwest side of Battle Creek, Michigan, has always been a suburb of Battle Creek. Many attempts to annex into the city have been made but have failed. The area of the Lakeview community embraces approximately twenty-five

square miles and has an estimated population of 21,600 people. Lakeview is a suburban-residential area with the majority of residents in professional or commercial enterprises.

The Lakeview School District officially opened as an educational institution on September 19, 1921. Three former districts of Battle Creek Township, numbers three, six, and ten, were merged to form a consolidated school. Since the school overlooked Goguac Lake and was built on what would have been Lakeview Avenue, the name "Lakeview" was selected; since that time our community has been known by the same name.

The first school in the area only offered the students in Lakeview community a kindergarten through tenth grade education. The problem of ever expanding school population required a new elementary school as early as 1931. The next thirty years were years of growth and expansion and produced what is now known as the Lakeview School District; having five elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. At the present time an addition to Woodrow Junior High School is being built, and every school year since 1967 the high school has added two mobile units.

The school budget for the 1970-1971 school year is \$4,340,000. State aid for the 1970-1971 school

year is \$1,916,000. The school district was allocated 8.5 mills by the County Allocation Board; 2.8 mills were levied for building construction and 19.5 mills for operating the schools. There were 5,434 pupils enrolled in the kindergarten through the twelfth grade during the 1970-1971 school year. The state equalized valuation behind each student in the district was \$13,490 in September of 1970. There were two hundred and fifty-five teachers hired to teach in the school year 1970-1971. There are approximately one hundred and thirty-seven teachers with Bachelors Degrees, eighty-one teachers with Masters Degrees, and three teachers with thirty hours of work beyond their Masters Degrees. The administrators and part-time teachers comprise a group of eighteen with Bachelors Degrees, thirty-two with Masters Degrees, one Specialist Degree, and one Ph.D.

Prior to the summer of 1970, a textbook committee had been formed to choose a new language textbook for the elementary school. A group of teachers and the Curriculum Coordinator interviewed all the book companies in hopes of choosing a new textbook to be used in September. There were some teachers who questioned the effects of a new textbook on the existing curriculum. These teachers wanted the curriculum to be revised. The high school had

completely changed their English courses and the middle schools were using a new textbook which emphasized the "linguistic" approach. It seemed to follow, in natural sequence, that a curriculum change in the elementary school would be in keeping with the changing curricula in the other schools.

### Necessity for Involvement

This writer, with the guidance of Dr. Dorothy McCuskey, approached the curriculum coordinator of the Lakeview Schools, William Kritzmire, about completing work on a Specialist Degree. The discussion soon focused on the need for choosing new English textbooks and/or a curriculum revision. An exchange of exciting ideas began taking place; a summer writing team which would develop a new kind of language guide; a unit approach with teaching suggestions; something different that would support modern teaching technique and curricular trends in elementary education. It was felt that the team should have no more than ten members and that members should represent a variety of grade levels.

This was the beginning of the most unusual work ever done in the language area in the Lakeview School. The Curriculum Coordinator informed the teachers that \$2,000 was to be set aside in the budget for

summer curriculum work. Lakeview has always challenged the changing times with dedicated teachers who were willing to work after school and on weekends. This curriculum team was the first paid writing team in Lakeview Schools.

This writer began to think about teachers' personalities and abilities in terms of team work. Surveying the directory and analyzing each name, about twenty teachers' names were chosen. After many phone calls and many discussions, seven qualified teachers volunteered to work on the language arts guide. The team included five fifth grade, and two third grade teachers. It was difficult to decide what to call this group of teachers. English Curriculum Committee sounded ponderous and official. Language Arts Committee really didn't tell the story. This writer finally decided that "summer writing team" seemed to imply a distinct, enjoyable, productive group. And so with this name, the team began to survey the work which had to be done.

#### Developing Ideas Into the Guide

The team decided the first step should be to examine the present curriculum guide. The committee believed that the guide was merely an outline of goals and general activities which were suggested for

teachers to follow when teaching English. This was not what the team wanted as a finished product. It did not have enough specific teaching techniques and ideas which teachers could use. It was not oriented enough toward application of skills. This was where the team felt the emphasis in language program should be. The team believed that throughout the grades the students should be given continuous opportunity to apply writing, speaking, reading, listening, and study skills. The team, believing this, set forth to explore philosophy and to set down specific teaching ideas and techniques which could be used by teachers to give students the opportunity for more application of skills.

This task was new and challenging and the teachers were bubbling with enthusiasm and vigor. Several meetings were spent with a give and take of ideas which generated nothing but enthusiasm. The group soon decided to start putting these ideas to work.

The actual work began with the major objectives. After discussing many ideas, the only thing the team agreed upon was that they were to be stated succinctly. It was then suggested that perhaps we should identify behaviors and experiences. This worked out very well, for it led us directly to the objectives.

The major objectives which were decided upon were:

1. Effective use of language.
2. Competent use of language and reading for use in and out of school.
3. Awareness of language paralleling the responsibility of its use.
4. Growing intellectual curiosity and capacity.
5. Intelligent use of mass media.
6. Selecting broad experiences to enhance personal enjoyment.

Keeping the above objectives in mind, the following questions were brought to the attention of the group: Where are we? Where are we going? These questions directed the team to research. The team organized the collection of all possible research findings and resource materials that facilitated the examining of current trends and thinking in the field. By comparing what was being taught with the current trends and latest research practice, the team was able to determine the priorities. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and evaluation were to be the major areas of concern. The decision was made to emphasize creative oral and written expression, deemphasizing the more traditional mechanical and grammatical approach.

This summer writing team was very vocal. Many of these ideas were discussed with other teachers they



met at the grocery store, on the golf course, and even at church. What was taking place seemed to encourage the members even more for the positive comments of other teachers spurred them on. This kind of communication is scarcely mentioned in the curriculum literature, but informal evaluation makes us feel that casual open talk helped prepare teachers for the guide.

The five major areas of concern were to be developed into subject areas. They were to be called written and oral composition, listening, word study, library and research skills, and evaluation. The next phase was to decide on selections and organizations of content to be taught. All of the members contributed ideas in each of the major areas. The person charged with the responsibility of writing the material for each area used the best of the varied ideas and techniques mentioned by the group members which reflected a consensus of group thinking concerning the area. One member had already asked to be responsible for the written composition area; another had asked for the evaluation area. The other members began to tie together ideas for a subject area of their choice. The whole team was approaching independent study. Using the best scholarly judgment possible, the curriculum workers organized the content of their

areas into teaching-learning experiences to be used in the upper elementary grades, which in this paper will refer to grades three, four, and five.

The emerging language arts guide was designed to serve as the basic course of study. Its two hundred pages include an introduction and goals, instructional materials and ideas to achieve these goals. The teachers have the option of deciding from the suggested teaching-learning experiences and resources provided in each area that which most appropriately suits the specific classroom situation. The teacher has the freedom to work within the framework of any subject area and to make final instructional decisions based on the needs of particular students.

The committee recommended no prescribed textbook. However, a textbook may be used as one of the basic resources for any segment of the language arts guide. It was suggested that perhaps one set of books could be purchased to be used by three rooms and that in the future, a different set might be purchased to be used also, rather than all three rooms having three sets of the same series.

The final step in developing the language arts guide was to design an attractive and functional format. It was to be in loose-leaf form and would provide blank

pages for teachers' notes and comments for consideration in revision and also additions. The summer writing team wanted the guide to be flexible, the format to be simple, attractive, and easy to pick up and use. Educational jargon was to be kept to a minimum.

### Voluntary Use by the Teachers

The team had planned to try out the guide themselves before recommending it to others. However, many teachers expressed the desire to have a guide in addition to whatever other material they were using. Consequently, a meeting was held in September, 1970, to introduce the language arts guide to all of the elementary teachers. Many teachers asked for the guide. In fact, the response was so great that additional copies had to be collated. There are now over fifty copies being used by elementary teachers. Every effort was made to enable teachers to have an opportunity to use this creative resourceful guide.

This chapter has explored the unique development of the language arts guide; it describes the process of selecting and working with the summer writing team. The following chapters will be concerned with description of the guide, evaluation, and recommended changes.

## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS GUIDE

#### Purpose of the Language Arts Guide

The language arts guide under analysis in this study is primarily a language activities book divided into units of study designed to be used in grades three, four, and five. Each unit is written to help develop skills in written composition, oral skills, library research, listening skills, and word study. It may be used in conjunction with any English language textbook or it may be used alone.

The fundamental reason for the development of this language arts guide was to help teachers better develop the basic skills in understanding and effective use of language. The guide stresses creative writing; grammar is deemphasized. This aim is accomplished in the language arts guide by the practical application of language. Blank filling and drills are not included in the guide.

The language arts guide is not intended to be used as a sequential guide from one unit to another as a textbook may be used. The needs of the students in the classroom are effective criteria for its use. The objective of this language arts guide is to develop

continuously through grades three, four, and five increasing competence in oral and written expression rather than the rote study of grammar as a discipline unto itself. It was felt by this writing team that there was a discrepancy between the type of materials and methods often used to teach language and the language skills that this committee felt students should learn.

### Structuring the Units

The language arts guide is organized on a unit basis, and within each unit are specific categories for study. These categories are filled with pertinent activities for use in the classroom. Preceding each unit are stated goals which give depth to the activities. In addition, an evaluation unit is included. The units are distinguished by use of color coded pages and are contained in loose-leaf notebooks.

### Written Composition

The first section of the language arts guide is written composition. It is further categorized into seven areas of study. They include writing essays, letter writing, writing factual reports, making vivid sentences, writing original stories and poems, completing paragraphs, and newspaper writing. Each

area of study is filled with usable material for developing skills necessary to increase the students' competence in written expression. Highlighting the story writing section is a delightful mouse, Archibald, who has won over the student. Archibald gives students a story writing friend to interact and communicate with, which produces exhilarating and exciting stories. This section also has lists of materials for developing skills in communication, literature reading and poetry reading, series of books, and sources of films and film strips. These exercises are used to enrich the students' experiences and to increase their competence in thinking and expressing.

### Oral Skills

The second section of the language arts guide is the unit on oral skills. It has eleven major study areas which are: dramatization, role playing, invitations and announcements, conversations, directions, sharing experiences, story telling, oral reports and speeches, meetings, discussion, and debate. It is designed to help develop skills in oral communication, encourage social courtesies, develop skills in story telling for the enjoyment of others, provide practice in giving information, and using language to produce mood and effect. The highlight might be considered

to be creative oral book reports.

Here the book describes some successful methods and materials which have been used to provide a challenge for children in an individualized reading program. Major emphasis is placed on reading for pleasure. Many practical examples of classroom activities are given which provide imaginative and creative ideas for reporting what the students have read. Described are such activities as selling a book, panel discussions, interviewing the author, introducing the characters, and making mobiles.

#### Library and Research Skills

The third section of the language arts guide is concerned with library and research skills. This section is divided into five categories: introduction to the library, classification of books, card catalog, general reference, and research projects. The materials in the unit are provided to acquaint the students with the library, its materials and functions. The first area introduces the layout of the library and promotes library courtesy. Many suggestions are given to arouse interest in using the resources of the library. This unit introduces the skills of locating information and gives suggestions and examples for using the card catalog. There are activities and duplicating

materials for students to use which describe library procedures, reference books, dictionaries, and parts of books. A vital part of the unit includes individual research projects, in which the students explore various areas of special interest. Included as an integral part of the research projects are note taking, outlining, proofreading, and the written report.

### Listening Skills

The fourth section of the book is concerned with developing listening skills. In this part of the language guide listening skills are classified into two broad areas, (1) those concerned with accuracy of reception, and (2) those concerned with reflection upon what was received. The unit itself is divided into three main topics: word perception, comprehension of ideas, and using ideas to build understandings. In order to develop these areas, a wide variety of situations are suggested. These activities include suggestions for informal conversation, sharing, reporting, social courtesies, telephoning, planning reactions to films, story telling, giving directions, making announcements, interviewing, and dramatizations. The main theme is to give the students a purpose for listening and also an opportunity to react to exercises



which check the extent to which they were able to use what they heard. The listening section is highlighted with a questionnaire for the teachers to evaluate their own listening skills.

### Word Study

The fifth section is the unit on word study, designed to make word study more interesting and alive. This unit is divided into four categories: origin of words, usage, spelling, and materials for dictionary work. The beginning develops understanding and appreciation of the history of words. Using this background information as a foundation, the guide proceeds to build words and their counterpart--usage. Highlighting the unit are six lists of words: commonly misspelled, most used, sight words, demons, and basic life vocabulary. Also, techniques are presented to help motivate and reinforce independence in spelling correctly. The unit contains suggestions for teaching information about dictionaries, and also a variety of short word games, illustrations, and materials for vocabulary development which can be duplicated for use by the students.

### Evaluation

Culminating all of the exercises and activities

is a small unit on evaluation. This unit offers comments and suggestions for use and analysis of student's work. Consideration is given to the questions of "Why evaluate?" and "How may we best evaluate written composition?" Also, other areas of concern are pupil evaluation and teacher evaluation. Emphasis is given to a wide range of factors concerning grading and the effects of this system. Concluding the unit are suggestions for positive evaluation of the student's work. The unit refers to this as "sparkling evaluation". Hopefully, this kind of evaluation will encourage students and result in greater effort.

In designing the units which comprise the guide, the summer writing team attempted to avoid the rigidity of conventional texts and workbooks, and to include practical and creative teaching suggestions which will enable pupils to attain the desired language goals.

## CHAPTER III

### DETERMINATION OF THE OVER-ALL QUALITY

#### Evaluation of Scope and Sequence

As part of the continuous evaluation of the language arts guide and its initial usefulness, the team began evaluating in December. This summer writing team began the evaluation in the upper elementary grades of the Lakeview School District in order to determine whether the attempt was academically successful and to determine the direction to be taken in revision.

To attain this, the team worked with the fifty teachers who were trying out the guide and their students. Opinion surveys concerning the new guide were made and distributed. This initial step of evaluation was accomplished by polling other teachers, the students of the committee, and the teachers on the summer writing team. The survey centered attention upon teachers' opinion and practices relative to the language arts guide as it pertains to the education of third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the opinions and suggestions of the teachers concerning the language arts guide relative to its use and future

plans.

After gaining the cooperation of the principals in the schools involved, survey forms were distributed to teachers. Each teacher was contacted personally and was given an explanation of the survey and its purpose. The teachers were asked to leave the completed survey forms with various committee members.

Thirty-two teachers completed survey forms which were utilized. All of these teachers were teaching students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades during the 1970-1971 school year. Classroom and associate teachers from five different elementary schools participated in the survey.

Each teacher was asked to describe any ideas or techniques which he had used in teaching and believed were especially good in encouraging students' learning in language. The survey forms were collected and the results tabulated.

TABLE 1  
TEACHERS AND COMMITTEE OPINION SURVEY  
ON THE NEW LANGUAGE ARTS GUIDE

Opinion Survey Statements	Highly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1. Guide has been very useful to me.	18	13	1	
2. The guide has helped to improve my language arts program.	16	16		
3. The guide is more useful than the English textbook.	12	15	2	3
4. Use of the guide has helped students in my class to become interested in language.	14	15	3	
5. The guide is easy to use.	14	15	2	1
6. The guide has ample, good instructional ideas and techniques.	15	15	2	
7. The guide adequately covers the important areas of the English curriculum at the third through fifth grade level.	11	18	3	
8. The guide needs some revision.	13	16	3	
9. I want to continue to use the guide.	19	13		
10. The guide's strong emphasis on specific instructional activities is desirable in an English curriculum guide.	19	12	1	

## Conclusions

From the results it was concluded that teachers who participated in the survey agreed, in general, that:

1. The guide is very useful and has improved their English program.
2. The guide has enough instructional materials and is desirable in English curriculum guides.
3. Revision is needed.

## Teachers' Questionnaire

The following questions are duplicated from the "Teachers' Questionnaire." The ideas suggested by the teachers are paraphrased under each question.

1. WHAT MAJOR AREA OF THE GUIDE HAVE YOU FOUND MOST HELPFUL?

Innovations in written composition.

Every area has strong merit.

All areas are better than any textbook.

Book reports inspiring.

Library skills very helpful.

2. WHAT IDEAS, TECHNIQUES OR MATERIALS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCORPORATED INTO THE GUIDE?

More on the history of the English language.

More grammar.

Linguistic terms and materials.

More useful ideas on word study.

More specific instruction.

3. WHAT CRITICISM OF THE GUIDE DO YOU HAVE?

Index desired.

An easier way to find things.

More basic grammar.

Needs a suggested outline of activities for the year to help teachers make better plans.

Many said, "None at this time."

4. WHAT PARTS OF THE GUIDE WOULD YOU CHANGE OR OMIT IN REVISION?

Area of mechanical and structural skills could be expanded (perhaps?).

More ideas categorized for grade levels.

Linguistic vocabulary needed.

Continuously numbered pages.

Some part of evaluation.

None.

5. DID YOU TRY THE EVALUATION SUGGESTIONS?

"Indeed; I like it!" "The most positive comments I received from the parents at conference time were because of the positive comments."

"Yes, very good results."

"As much as possible."

Many of them stated:

"Yes, I have used the positive comments on student's papers."

"Yes, I liked the ideas."

"It humanizes evaluation."

"It's the only kind of evaluation I use now."

"This is the first year I haven't used a red pencil."

6. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

"Composition, in my opinion, should have two grades, one for content, the other for deficiencies."

"In general, this is an excellent guide for some very ambitious teacher."

"I have used the guide in a limited way thus far along with an English textbook. I intend to use it more."



"I feel it is too soon to give a fair evaluation."

"I don't feel I can be critical, for I haven't used it enough."

"Third graders need so much help in the basic spelling skills, sentence structure, sequence of ideas in story writing that much of the guide is too advanced for them."

A special survey was prepared for the summer writing team. The responses from the committee were tabulated under "Greatly", "Somewhat", and "None".

TABLE 2  
SURVEY OF SUMMER WRITING TEAM

Opinion Survey Statements	Greatly	Somewhat	None
<u>I. Concerning Staff</u>			
Did you find the teachers receptive?	2	5	
Do you feel that the teachers wanted a change in curriculum?	2	5	
How has the administration (principals) accepted the guide?	3	4	
Do you feel the teachers are changing their language program?	1	5	

TABLE 2--Continued

Opinion Survey Statements	Greatly	Somewhat	None
<u>II. Relating to Committee</u>			
Do you feel the guide has produced some enthusiasm or sparkle in language?	7		
Do you feel it is helping the teachers understand the students?	4	3	
Is it helping to produce creativity?	7		
Do you listen to your students more?	5	2	
Is there any evidence of difficulty in making lesson plans?	1	2	4
Did the students improve in proper use of grammar?	1	1	2
Has the guide helped to improve your teaching?	6	1	

## Conclusions

1. The guide has, on the whole, had a favorable reception.

2. The emphasis on tentativeness probably increased acceptance and made evaluation a natural step.

3. Most of the suggestions for revision are in the direction of grammar and structure. This indicates to us that the guide does indeed have a potential contribution to make if it can influence teachers in the direction of creativity.

4. The two comments to the effect that these teachers had not used the guide very extensively alerts us to the need to ascertain extent of use in future evaluations.

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY ON THE USE OF THE  
LANGUAGE ARTS GUIDE AS TAUGHT BY MEMBERS OF THE  
LAKEVIEW ELEMENTARY SUMMER WRITING TEAM

The survey concentrated upon students' opinions concerning the language program this school year, in grades three, four, and five.

The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the opinions of the third, fourth, and fifth grade students who have been greatly involved with the use of the language arts guide being used in Lakeview Schools. Opinions relative to academics, with an emphasis on the new language program, were sought.

A total of 145 students in grades three, four, and five took part in the survey. All were students of the teachers of the summer writing team, and had received a great amount of work with language activities outlined by the writing team. The survey was taken in December, 1970.

The following is a duplication of "Student Survey." Beside each survey statement are decimal numerals rounded to the nearest tenth which indicate the percentage of students who circled "Agree," "Undecided," and "Disagree."

TABLE 3  
STUDENT SURVEY

Opinion Survey Statements	Percentage of Student Response		
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1. I believe that learning in itself is usually enjoyable.	80.4	12.6	7.0
2. The more interested I am in a school lesson, the more I learn from it.	85.5	13.8	.7
3. I like being graded in my school work.	70.8	22.9	6.3
4. I am encouraged to learn after being praised (complimented) by my teacher.	71.7	20.0	8.3
5. I am interested in language.	57.7	24.6	17.6
6. Language assignments are fun to do.	63.2	20.8	15.8
7. Creative writing is fun.	85.3	10.5	4.2
8. It is easier to study from a textbook than by another method of teaching language.	16.8	27.3	55.9
9. I would rather have letter grades on my papers.	65.5	17.2	17.2
10. I find creative writing enjoyable.	81.8	10.5	7.7
11. Grammar is more easily understood as it is being taught now.	54.2	36.6	9.2
12. Making up sentences is fun.	71.5	20.8	7.6
13. My learning and understanding of grammar has improved.	70.6	22.4	7.0

TABLE 3--Continued

Opinion Survey Statements	Percentage of Student Response		
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
14. My study of language this year has been fun.	66.0	22.2	11.8
15. It is becoming easier for me to write stories and poetry.	81.3	11.8	6.9
16. It is becoming easier for me to understand poetry.	64.3	28.7	7.0
17. I am enjoying reading more this year.	87.4	9.8	2.8
18. Learning is fun.	75.0	18.8	6.3

### Conclusions

From the results it was concluded that the students who participated in the survey highly agree that:

1. Learning in itself is usually enjoyable.
2. The more interested that they are in a school lesson, the more they learn from it.
3. Creative writing is "fun" and "enjoyable".
4. It is becoming easier to write stories and poetry.
5. They are enjoying reading more this year.
6. Grades are a desirable method of evaluation.
7. The students strongly disagree with one idea-- that it is easier to study from a textbook than by

another method of teaching language. This idea received the lowest support in the "Agree" column of all ideas on the survey, and the highest percentage of disagreement.

8. The students were most undecided about the idea that grammar is most easily understood "as it is being taught now."

THE SECOND PART OF THE STUDENTS' OPINION  
SURVEY OF THE CURRENT LANGUAGE PROGRAM AS RELATED  
TO LIKES OR DISLIKES, IMPROVEMENTS, AND  
EVALUATION IN THE UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES

The survey concentrated upon students' opinions relative to their feelings as it pertains to the current language arts program in grades three, four, and five. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the opinions of the upper elementary students concerning the current language program in order to evaluate and revise the language arts guide. One hundred and forty-five students in grades three, four, and five completed survey forms which were utilized. All of these students were the students of the summer writing team in attendance at the Lakeview Elementary Schools, Battle Creek, Michigan during the 1970-1971 school year.

The six teachers of the students involved in the survey were first presented with "Directions for Administering 'Students' Opinion Survey'." Each teacher then distributed the survey forms entitled "Student Opinion Survey" to the students in her classroom. There were no directions on the survey forms. Each student was instructed to respond to the statements honestly and to describe the way he felt or believed.

The survey forms were collected and the results tabulated. Some forms were incoherent or not legible



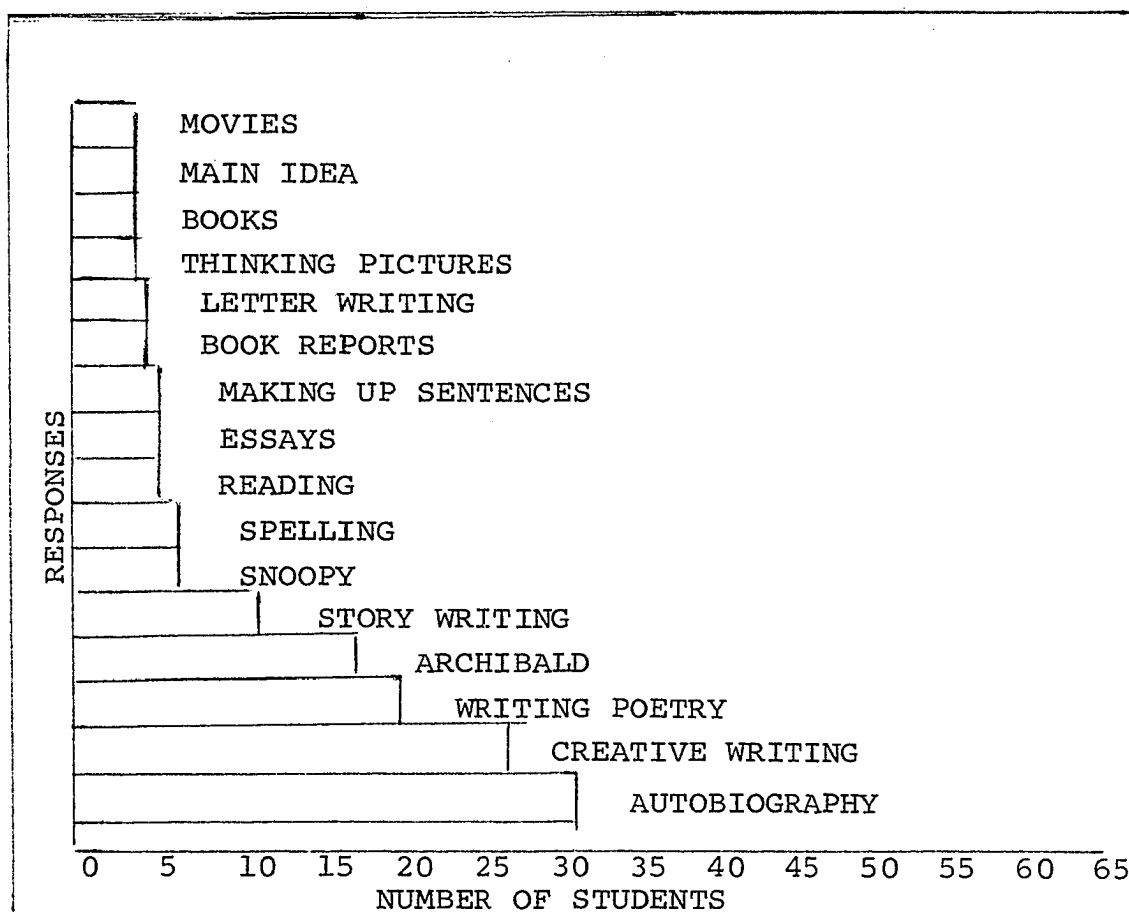
and could not be used in the survey. The survey was conducted during the second week in December.

### Students' Opinion Survey

The following is a duplication of the "Students' Opinion Survey."

1. What assignment did you like best?
2. What assignment did you like least?
3. Choose one word to describe how you feel about studying your language this year.
4. How do you feel when you read the comments on your creative writing papers?
5. Would you rather study language from a textbook?
6. How can we improve our study of language?

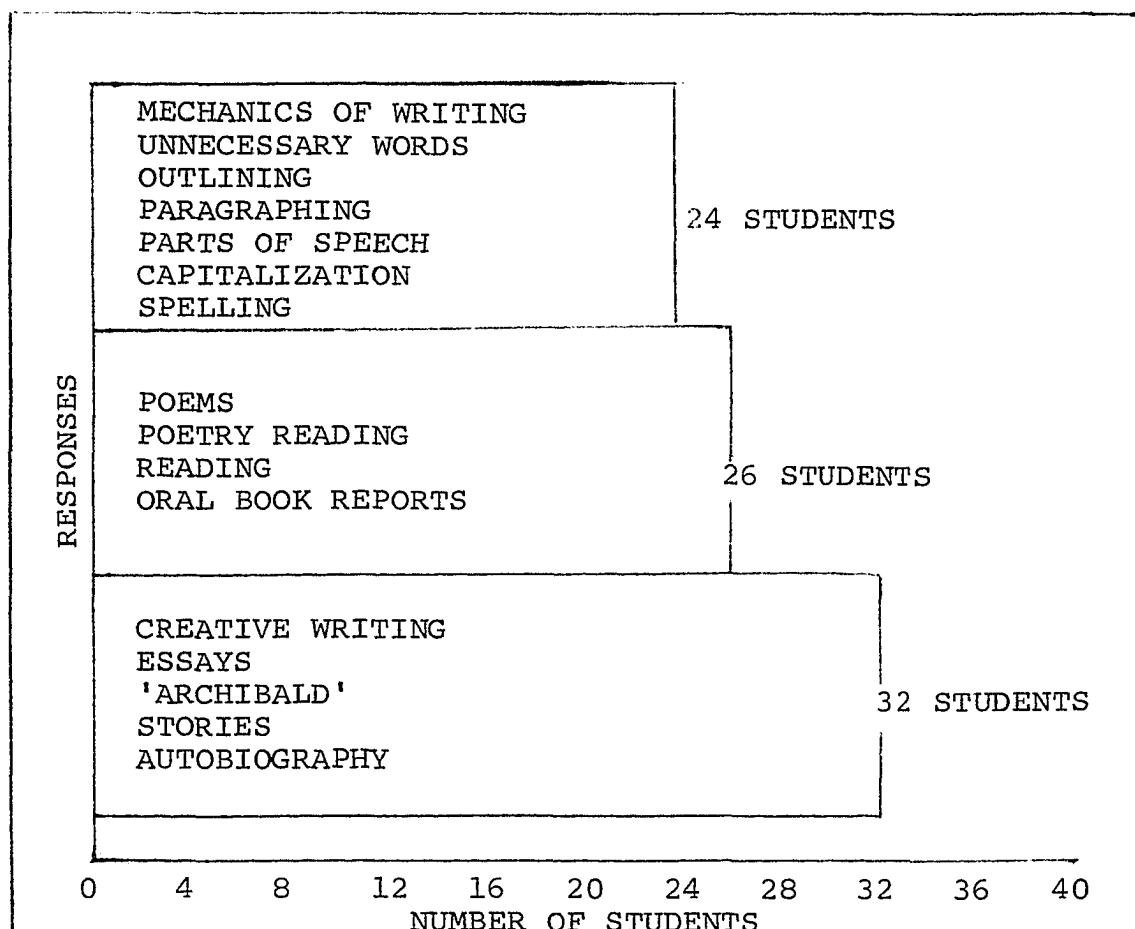
The succeeding pages contain graphs indicating the responses of the students. The graphs vary in form, each being designed to make clear the complex responses to the open-ended questions.



Graph 1. What assignment did you like best?

The following areas of study were cited as the assignments liked best by the students in this survey:

1. Greatest number of students liked creative writing of some form.
2. The other areas mentioned held no significant value in the survey.



Graph 2. What assignment did you like least?

The following were mentioned most frequently:

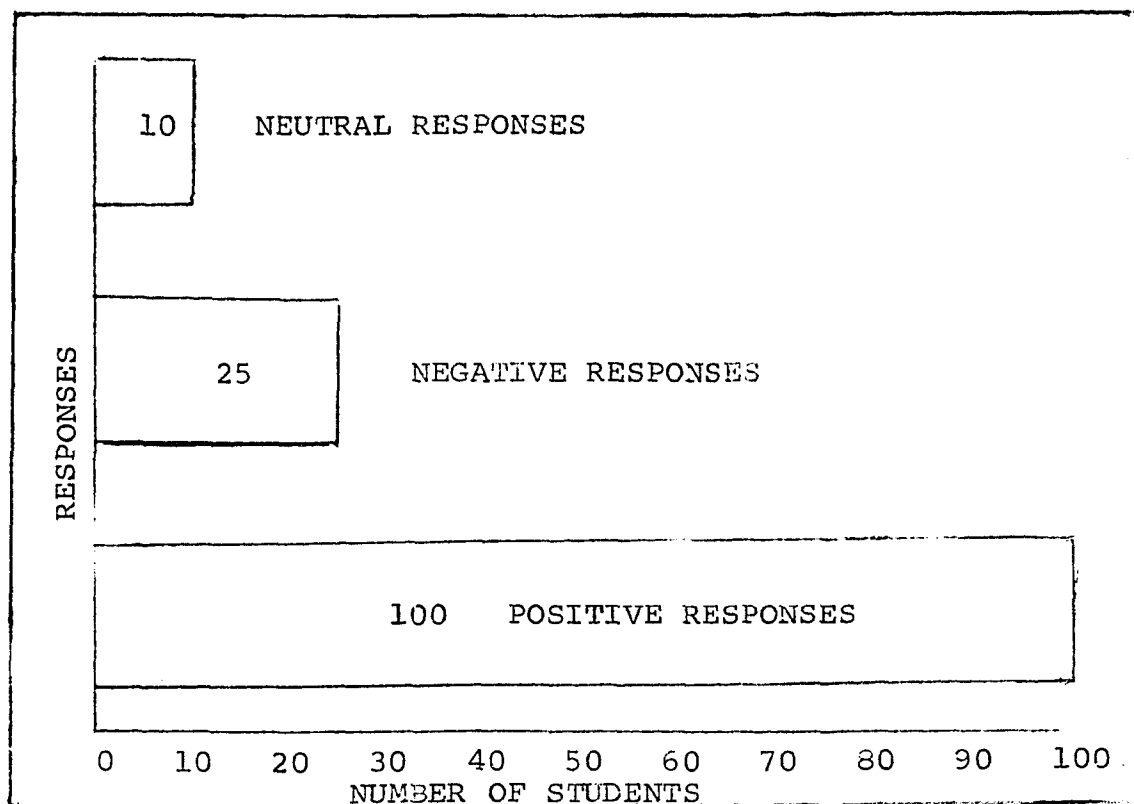
1. Twenty-four students' responses indicated a dislike for working with the mechanics of writing such as outlining, capitalization, paragraphing, unnecessary words, and parts of speech.

2. Twenty-six students' responses indicated a dislike for poems, poetry reading, reading, and oral book reports.

3. Thirty-two students who responded disliked writing. They disliked doing creative writing, essays, 'Archibald', stories, and the autobiography.\*

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\*Students were involved intensely with written composition and consequently most of the responses, both positive and negative, were relative to writing.



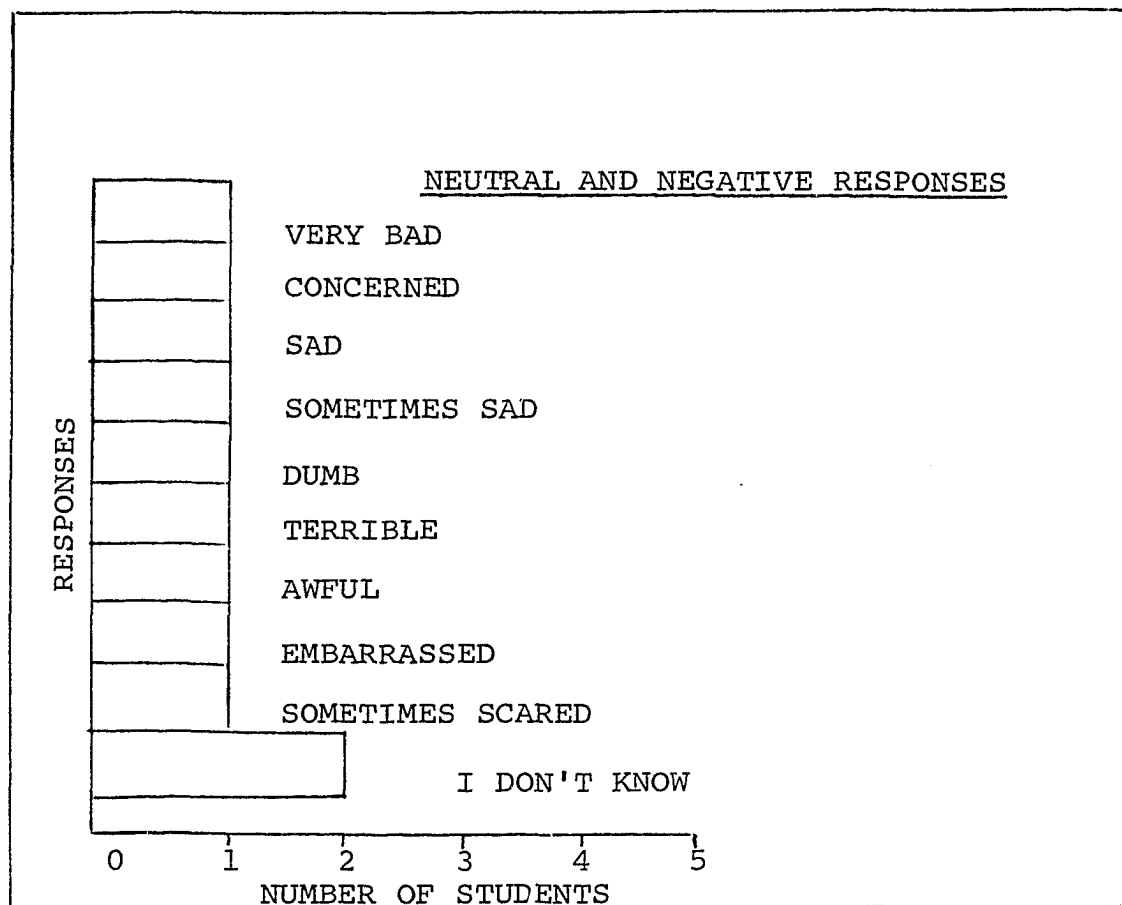
Graph 3. Choose one word to describe how you feel about studying your language this school year?

The following statements are representative of the students' feelings in the survey:

1. An overwhelming majority of the responses were positive, vivacious answers. Such words as "fantastic," "beautiful," "it's the best," "magnificent," "perfect," were used to describe their feelings on the survey.

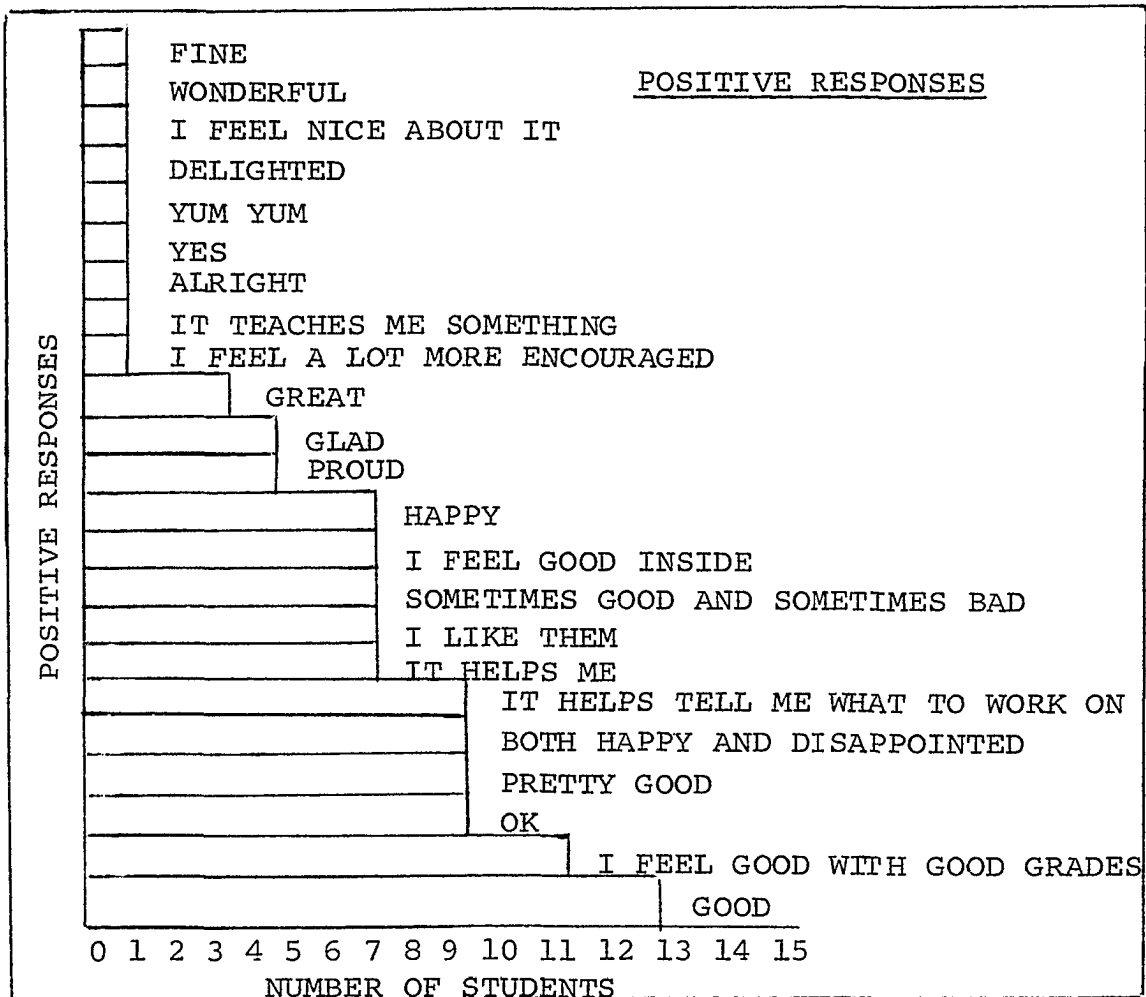
2. There were three students who were undecided.

3. About twenty-five students in the survey disliked language this school year. Such words as disliked, hate, bad, bored, unhappy, were used to describe their feelings on the survey.



Graph 4. How do you feel when you read the comments on your papers?

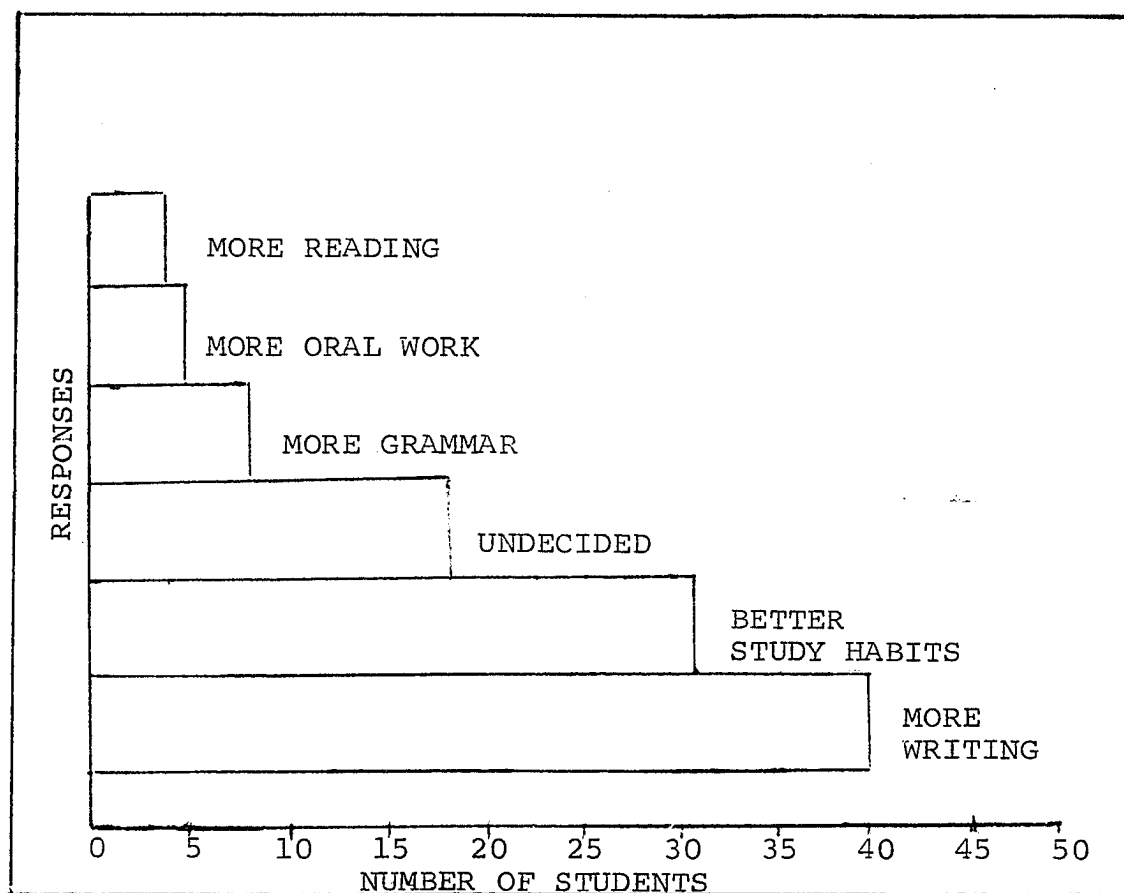
The following paraphrased feelings of the students in the survey showed that approximately twelve per cent were undecided or used negative words in describing their feelings about the comments made by the teachers on their language papers.



Graph 4. Continued

The following paraphrased feelings of the students in the survey showed:

1. The majority of students felt that the comments were encouraging.
2. Over one-third of the students mentioned the word "good" in some way.



Graph 5. How can we improve our study of language?

The following paraphrased ideas and suggestions were proposed by the students in the survey:

1. The greatest number of students suggested more writing experiences in the different areas--stories, creative writing, poetry, essays, and sentence writing.
2. The second greatest number of students suggested better study habits, such as: study more, by listening, working harder, try to do better, and having tests.
3. Oral exercises, grammar, and reading were mentioned. They were a very small percentage of this



survey.

4. Only one student suggested breaks.

5. Approximately twenty students were undecided, didn't know, or had no suggestions.

## Conclusions

From the results it was concluded that the upper elementary students who participated in the survey highly agreed, in general, that:

1. They are very much encouraged after being complimented by a teacher.
2. They enjoy writing more than most other language activities.
3. The students prefer learning situations in which they were active participants.
5. Students' interests are very important as determiners of language experiences.
5. Obvious teacher interest and enthusiasm for what is being taught usually have very positive effects on students' achievements.
6. The students strongly agree with one idea-- that they like studying language the way it is being taught in the classes this year. They prefer variety to studying from a textbook.

### Summary

The following generalizations appear to the summer writing team to pull together some concepts and some feelings as the result of the first year of development, tryout and evaluation:

1. Teachers' positive comments directed toward students do more to encourage learning than do negative comments.
2. Teachers should present students with opportunities to realistically utilize what they learn in school.
3. Many goals in education should be made more immediate and exciting.
4. Students should be placed in more situations in which the attainment of success is highly probable.
5. Teachers should attempt to make learning situations as life-like as possible, allowing students to often be active participants.
6. Teachers should make every effort to make their lessons as interesting as possible. They should concentrate on using good motivational ideas in their teaching.
7. An intensive and student-centered language writing program should be an integral part

of a complete language program.

8. Students should be offered much opportunity to do creative writing. When writing is encouraged on student terms, they enjoy it.
9. Students should be given regular daily opportunities to read books of their choice in class.
10. The activities and methods presented by this language arts guide emphasizing teacher diagnosis and creativity in organization for a particular class, appear to us to provide a more functional educative curriculum than do prescriptive text materials.
11. The creative thrust of the guide was basically approved by that segment of the teaching population who volunteered to try it out.
12. A few regrets for more formal grammar and a structured sequence probably indicate that the total teaching group would not be as approving as the volunteer group.
13. When innovative teaching ideas are made easily available, those who wish to can borrow or adapt practices which, in their own view, improve instruction.
14. The process of involving users of the guide in evaluation and rewriting is probably an

important step in the process of the dissemination and installation of the innovative procedures.

15. The evaluating data showed the guide was not a threat to any teacher who used it and that the guide is adaptable to many styles of teaching.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVISION AND FUTURE PLANS

#### Revision of Goals in Terms of Realism and Function

The efforts of the language arts committee are aimed at improving the effectiveness of the language program. If this goal is to be attained, how can the language arts guide do this? The ideas, activities, and resource materials assembled within the guide must provide the means for helping teachers to organize a more creative teaching experience. The guide must provide the creative ideas which will conserve the time of the teacher and help her to utilize the resources which are available. The team felt that the organization of the guide was not in keeping with the goals.

The short term results of its use have been great; however, the team realizes the teachers involved in the pilot program were greatly responsible for its success. These teachers expressed a change both in their teaching and their participating students. However, the team knows that much more work must be done in order to get the full support of all the upper elementary teachers. Further, there is some interest in developing a comparable guide for

teachers in the primary grades.

### Revisions

In September, 1970, revision began. The summer writing team became the language arts committee and met every month in order to revise the guide. The first step toward this goal was to conduct a survey. The surveys involved those who have used the guide and the students. This gave the committee other opinions to work with and consider

Continuing with the revision, the committee members contacted teachers who were part of the experimental group using the language arts guide and met with them to review and evaluate their ideas.

The teachers consulted suggested:

1. An index.
2. Easier access to materials.
3. Word study unit to include linguistics.
4. More grammar.
5. Suggestions for order or sequence.
6. Complete bibliography.
7. Inservice training.

These suggestions were all considered by the committee and the first step taken toward revision was to incorporate an index. The second biggest problem from the teaching-using standpoint was the

format. Many valuable ideas were crowded together. The spacing was poor, activities and examples were intermixed. On the other hand, the word study unit did not provide the teacher with enough materials dealing with the origin, history, and evolution of words. The committee decided to revise the word study unit and to use a different format. Thus, as other units are revised, they will adapt the new format. The revision has been completed on the word study unit and plans are now being formalized to revise all the units before the end of the year. However, the guide will be used this fall with only one unit completely revised.

#### Future Plans for Use

The committee will organize and lead a workshop. Many examples of the students' work throughout the pilot program were accumulated; these will be used as illustrations. Demonstrations at all grade levels will be augmented and sharing sessions organized. An exchange of classroom visits by interested teachers will be encouraged. Building meetings, area meetings, and group conferences will be held when necessary. The leadership skills of our committee will be tested as we design inservice training for our colleagues.



The future of the language arts guide will greatly depend on the teachers themselves. However, all teachers in grades three, four, and five in all of the five elementary schools in Lakeview, next September, 1971, will have the opportunity to use the language arts guide. During this year of trying out the guide, consultation, discussions, area meetings, talks with administration and parents will be planned. All people concerned will be brought into the evaluation. At the same time, the committee will hope to keep everyone informed with what's going on. At the end of the school year, our committee, which hopefully will include more teachers, will consider all suggestions, edit the material, and prepare for the second revision. It is hoped that teachers will always revise and evaluate in terms of their experiences and the effectiveness of the guide. This evaluation must be based on all of the goals and activities of the program in relation to the times.

Among the instructional resources which the committee feels should be researched are new horizons, such as; instructional television, programmed learning, electronic media and computer-assisted instruction.

A multiplicity of materials must be made available to create many opportunities for success. These new

forms of communication could open the doors to a whole new media-rich environment which might bridge the gap between the outside world and school. Language arts might take on new dimensions, stories for computer, printouts, writing movie scripts for a movie developed by a student or evaluating a speech previously made on video tape. Tomorrow's student needs to be challenged. Technology may be one answer, other sources must be explored and incorporated into the curriculum. Whatever direction the future may take, revision must always be in process, including new teachers and new ideas to meet the new demands of education.

We feel that with the production of this guide, its revision, and the growth of the teachers have taken our school one step into harmony with the present and the future.

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