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THE ACTIVITY METHOD IN TEACHING LITERATURE

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THE ACTIVITY METHOD IN TEACHING
LITERATURE

by

ANNA PATRICIA GARVEY

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Science Degree

Massachusetts State College

1939

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Literature is a subject which has been taught in schools for a long time. It was emphasized by the Athenian Greeks, the first of Europe's scholars to produce written material which has endured through the ages. These teachers distinguished two types of literature: "poetry" (imaginative creations) and "history" (facts). Poetry was then subdivided into three groups, "epic", "lyric", "dramatic", and taught by its originators and their disciples to various groups of Athenian boys.¹ Homer wrote the first great reading books of the Greeks. His "Illiad" and "Odyssey" became their Bible. After these had been mastered, works of Hesiod, Theognis, Greek poets, and Aesop's fables followed.² Developed as it was by the outstanding minds of the world, Greek teaching spread to Rome, Constantinople, and Asia. Later, western Europe felt its influence, Greek scholars having been driven from Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.³ Forced to earn a living by teaching, these scholars found western Europe ready and anxious to learn.³

1. Students Reference Book Vol. III p.1082

2. Cubberley, A. P., History of Education pp.7-17

3. Boas and Smith, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1925 pp. 11-15

(1) Older Methods of Teaching Literature - From the process of telling and learning by heart as the Greeks were forced to do, methods of teaching literature have undergone a slow but steady change. Let us omit those used in other countries and consider only a few outstanding methods which have affected the literature of boys and girls in our high schools. Probably the process of assigning a certain number of pages for the next day's reading and study, coupled with questions and answers concerning the homework, was practiced first. This may have been followed by a too thorough method of analyzing a novel as to technicalities of its literary style, its background and the details of its material, as well as probing for an author's inward thoughts and hidden meanings. Teachers were apt to keep notes, using them when teaching the same works, year after year. Their dependence upon these annotations developed "Rut-teaching", as R. A. Sharp⁴ calls it; this hurt the teacher as well as her pupils, since it killed all spontaneity on the part of both. Until fairly recently, eight to ten weeks were devoted to the examination of each novel. Of necessity, a few books very thoroughly studied, comprised a year's course in literature. That curriculums have changed is evidence of the fact that pedagogues are convinced that appreciation, sympathy, and carry-over were not natural results of long and protracted investigation.

4. Sharp, R. A., Teaching of English in High School, p. 52

(2) New Methods of Teaching Literature -

Bolenius⁵ claims that "The growing teacher never teaches the same thing in the same way twice". Whether modern teachers read and believe her work or merely come to the same conclusion, their reactions are alike. Seldom does one find a teacher today, "rut-teaching"; and seldom does one find more than five or six weeks devoted to any classic. Through the years, this time has been shortened and more books have been studied. The desire to promote reading enjoyment has replaced that of establishing scholarly examination of reading material to such an extent that our slogan has become, "Make the pupil want to read". In the words of Reed Smith⁶ "The teacher of literature must induce pupils to like literature as well as to understand it". Five weeks is the time limit for most reading periods; therefore, technical study has, necessarily, been limited, if not dropped altogether. Spontaneous reading results from understanding, but moves along under its own power. In order to meet a changing time schedule, new methods developed. More time was given to teach each lesson assignment in order to clarify ideas before a pupil began to read and to show him that his lesson constituted a natural division in a classic. Thought provoking questions, carefully chosen, became a natural addition

5. Bolenius, E. M., Teaching Literature in Grammar Grades and High School p.6

6. Reed Smith, Teaching of Literature p.9

to class assignments. On the day following, discussions took the place of the old question-answer period. As time progressed, these discussions became less formal, and today we find them socialized. Some teachers advocate the class meeting type of lesson. This is most effective when a unit of work, decided upon previously by the teacher has been completed. To be successful, it requires cleverness and inspiration on the part of the supervisor, and will obtain the intended results only under two conditions;

- a. only an intelligent, well-disciplined group may be used,
- b. chairmen must possess the quality of leadership.

Several new practices, less spectacular than the socialized recitation have come into vogue to enliven teaching plans. A brief oral or written quiz at the beginning of a lesson has become popular as a method of testing and review. The literature period is now looked upon as the best opportunity for character building, so discussions are apt to center around the application of the ideas of a classic upon known situations. Less time is being given to the study of plot; more, to character and setting. The idea is to develop a "wholesome attitude toward the problems of life by enrichment through vicarious experience". Reed Smith's⁷ quotation is worthy of restatement at this moment. He claims

7. Reed Smith, Teaching of Literature p. IV

that an English teacher's duty is "to act as guide, interpreter, and friend of high school expeditionary forces on their annual pilgrimage to the Realms of Gold". With these ideas in mind, reading lists have been compiled for supplementary work. Outside reading is stimulated by giving extra credit. A system of book reports, initiated to check this extra credit reading, necessitated teaching readers how to review and evaluate a book. Such a lesson is as important to the average man or woman as is the love of reading. The change in methods of teaching literature has been brought about because pedagogues have made honest efforts to meet the average person's need for literature. Realizing that only by reading can a wealth of experience come to the average citizen, the road to romance has been made as straight as possible. We have progressed from the long drawn out telling-learning period of the Greeks through tedious investigations of a century ago, and the scientific method, by which every phase of life was examined, during the last half century, to the modern trend of painless learning. At the present time our aim seems to be "a maximum of reading and pleasure with a minimum of study and effort". Still our methods seem to change at a snail's pace. After her survey of literature in United States public junior high schools, Mary M. Stroh⁸ lists, among others, these

8. Stroh, Mary M., Columbia University Contributions to Education pp. 90-91

pessimistic observations:

1. A significant proportion of the schools are still using a comparatively small body of traditional material which apparently forms the greater part of their curriculum in literature.
2. There is still evident a noticeable tendency to analytic study and discussion of literary material, and an undue proportion of time devoted to such study.
3. The range of voluntary reading is relatively narrow and confined for the most part to types of material conventionally regarded as interesting, but showing little evidence of extensions in other directions. The fact that there is so little agreement of opinion on many selections might indicate that there would be a widely scattered range of votes on different materials. This is not confirmed, however, by the small list of additional material. Its narrow range and the small number of schools reporting its use would tend rather to lend support to the first consideration.
4. Apparently towns of small size are still without adequate school or library facilities.

5. There is a noticeable tendency to continue the memorizing of traditional material and to prescribe its range.
6. The magazine reading of pupils is of fair quality and range with no very noticeable pernicious tendencies. There is no evidence at hand, however, concerning the possible values of school subscriptions to magazines and the extent of such subscriptions.
7. There is considerable evidence to indicate that the wide range of material suggested in courses of study is either not available to schools or is not used.

(3) The Activity Method in Literature - Kilpatrick decided that education might progress with better results if pupils were allowed to work out projects of their own choice in their own way. His decision met with immediate approval and classes, the country over, experimented with this revolutionary idea. As time went on, the method proved to be no cure-all; many former advocates met with failure and denounced it to such an extent that it lost favor, took on an appearance of wild experimentalism, and gradually slumped. Possibly the trouble came through lack of adult guidance. As in group work, all pupil action needs the inspiration and check of a mature mind. Bode⁹ writes:

9. Bode, R. H., Progressive Education at the Crossroads, pp. 60, 61, 84

"Every freedom is subject to some kind of limitation, and a guiding principle is clearly necessary. When interests or values collide, --and adjustments have to be made, social relations ordinarily enter in. Our educational theory thus becomes a theory of social relationships. The alternative is to keep forever rotating on the axis of "pupil interest".

The teacher should aim at "wise influencing", at "better self-directing" and at "somewhat better lines" for self-direction.

Use of the activity method requires considerable planning on a teacher's part. She must decide, beforehand, just what results she desires to accomplish and must work toward these results using activities as the means to an end. The right activities may accomplish as much, perhaps more, to bring about the end in view than traditional methods.

Elizabeth Collette¹⁰ met with success when conducting a library project at which pupils prepared individual topics concerning Anglo-Saxon literature. Sterling Leonard's¹¹ enthusiastic reports of class dramatics adds another optimistic note in praise of progressive education. A. T. Hill¹² carried to success a most unusual group of projects while teaching "Northwest Passage". The activity method, then, may still be a good one. Can it be used, and should it be attempted occasionally?

10. Collette, Elizabeth, Highroads to English Literature, pp. VIII-IX.

11. Leonard, S. A., Essential Principles of Teaching Reading and Literature, pp. 289-337

12. Hill, A. T., "Northwest Passage in the Classroom", The English Leaflet

(4) Lack of Objective Studies in Literature -

Although one guesses that much has been done in the field of activity work, since teachers everywhere have opinions of one kind or another upon the subject, comparatively little has been written concerning actual project experiences in literature. A dearth of objective studies is particularly noticeable in regard to high school activity work. Chapter II contains a detailed account of all the material bearing upon this subject which I have been able to uncover in library files. It is hoped that this objective study of the value of the activity method in literature will be followed by other studies of a like nature.

Conclusion - This study is an attempt to apply objective methods of experimentation in discovering what can be done effectively in the field of activities regarding two classics which are taught in high school. It is an attempt to measure, objectively, the results of this teaching in order to estimate its value as a method.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

In order to find material which has direct bearing upon this thesis, articles suggested by the "Reader's Guide" 1932-1938 and the "Education Index" 1932-February, 1939 have been examined. Very few articles concerned high school activities in literature and none dealt with "Silas Marner" or the "Vicar of Wakefield". The following summary, however, describes material gleaned from magazine articles, theses, and chapters from books which portray actual creative programs that have been or might be carried out, and that coincide, more or less, with my plan of procedure. Most of the work herein described might fall under two or more of the headings indicated, but for the sake of coherence, will be mentioned only once.

(1) Social Activities Concerned with Life Situations - Enna Pigg¹ introduced her pupils to the town's public buildings and their custodians. Her articles, entitled "Billy's Neighbors" stated that her object was to correct one problem child by dispelling fear and disrespect of public servants. Because the project concerned her class as a whole and encouraged individual but cooperative work, it is

1. Pigg, Enna, "Billy's Neighbors", N. E. A. Journal, XXVII, pp. 196-197 (Oct. '38)

worth mentioning here. Madeleine Schoenhof² has described an activity program conducted in Public School 78 of the Bronx under conditions far from ideal. This project involved an entire school whose pupils with an average I.Q. of 85 had shown disinterest, restlessness and disobedience. The project revolved about the subject of social studies and taught all subjects in relationship to the neighborhood as seen from the school roof. Pupils became so interested that the truancy problem vanished as did bedlam when freedom of action was granted within and without the building.

M. L. Jordan³ in an article called "Special Correspondence" describes a project in which English, art, orientation, and social science were correlated in the theme, "What can we do to improve Cleveland?" Individual subjects were chosen and college freshmen worked alone or together as they chose. A bi-weekly paper and thirty page report gave the class as a whole the opportunity to check and organize the work of many individuals. This program shows how students may select a problem, gather information, weigh evidence, draw conclusions, and see what can be done about it.

2. Schoenhof, Madeleine, "Activities at the Ann Hutchinson School, N. E. A. Journal, XXV (Dec. '36) pp. 283-285

3. Jordan, M. L. "Special Correspondence", School and Society, XLII (Aug. 14 '37) pp. 213-216

R. H. Lane⁴ claims that an activity program can be made useful in all types of class work because it is easy to base its progress upon the philosophy of education.

Elizabeth Collette⁵ compiled an anthology as a library project. The book, complete, may be used for a long course of study, or divided for a short one. In either case, however, use of the library is called for. The method suggested for completing this library assignment allotted two thirds of the library program to individual study and one third to a combination of teacher guidance and group discussion.

(2) Dramatics as an Activity Method - Natalie Luccock's⁶ "Teaching Through Activity Units" claims that any kind of class may proceed along activity lines, provided that tool subjects are used in acquiring knowledge and in sharing it. She suggests that auditorium exercises show results of finished projects. One statement worth remembering is, "The classroom becomes a learning situation for the teacher as well as pupil, for she is obliged to enter in fields of knowledge".

4. Lane, R. H. "Activity Program and its Teaching Methods", Education LVII (Feb. '37) pp.322-324

5. Collette, Elizabeth, Highroad to English Literature, pp. VII-XI

6. Luccock's, Natalie, and Downer, Effie M., "Teaching through Activity Units", Journal of N. E. A., XXVII (Feb. '38) pp.46-47

Mary L. Connor's⁷ club which she calls "Marionetteers" produced "Pied Piper", an opera given in cooperation with the music department of her high school. How the pupils made puppets and stage, and rehearsed lines and music behind curtains, along with puppet manipulation on the stage, and how they correlated work in music, art, elocution, and library departments, has direct bearing upon this thesis.

Sterling Leonard's⁸ chapter on dramatizations is most enlightening. He discusses dramatic reading, play writing and production, and stage settings. He explains several tricks by which most effective results are produced very simply and cheaply. To make his meanings perfectly clear, he has added sample plays which might be presented by any grammar or high school classes of average ability. He has stated reasons for and results of these productions and has added many personal helpful criticisms.

(3) Artistic Activities - Frances S. Corson's⁹ French class obtained a photograph of a medieval home which these pupils proceeded to construct, and to which they added furnishings, typical of France in the fifteenth century.

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7. Connor, M. L. "The Marionetteers Produce an Opera", School Arts, XXXVIII (Nov. '38) pp. 75-76
 8. Leonard, Sterling A. Essential Principles of Teaching and Literature, pp. 289-334
 9. Corson, Frances L. "Medieval House Model", Industrial Arts Educational Magazine, XXXVIII (Jan. '36) pp.52-53

D. P. Latta¹⁰ has described the "Value of the Visual" to Latin classes. Among other aids she has made use of are listed "colorful murals, whimsical maps and charts, clay modeling, plasterline work on glass topped tables, and collections of antiquities or reproductions", all of which could be instructive to English classes if one had extensive equipment.

(4) Composition as an Activity Unit - Belle McKenzie's¹¹ class decided to write a play which would display the problems of high school students. After considerable research and discussion, they did this. Then they decided upon actors and produced it. This dramatization, although more ambitious than those of my classes, has definite relation to this thesis.

A. T. Hill¹² carried out a most enlivening project when teaching "Northwest Passage" to Culver Military Academy boys. These exercises are worthy of any book study:

-
10. Latta, D. P. "The Value of the Visual", Education XVII (Apr. '37) pp. 486-489
 11. McKenzie, Belle, "We Write a Play", Scholastic VXXIX (Oct. 29 '38) pp.17-24
 12. Hill, A. T. "Northwest Passage in the Classroom" The English Leaflet, N. E. A. (Apr. '39), the entire leaflet.

"Snapshots of People

Historical Scavenger Hunt

Map Study

Conversation

Snapshots of Places

Candid Camera Shots

The Town of St. Francis as it looked one hundred
years ago

A map of your own home town with a letter to Major
Rogers telling him just how and when to attack --
and how to escape"

Caswell and Campbell¹³ discuss at some length the
reasons for and advisability of project teaching and then
present a complete unit of study for a social studies class.
This unit, entitled "The Western Movement, and Growth of
Transportation and Communication" is carried out by means
of every kind of activity, each of which is stated.

13. Caswell and Campbell, Curriculum Development,
pp. 226-247, 358-360.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE

CHAPTER III

Statement of Problem and Summary of Procedure

The phase of the subject which this study seeks to solve is whether the activity method of teaching literature is superior to ordinary methods or not. In particular the problem is as follows:

(1) Statement of the Problem - Do pupils in grade 10 achieve more in the study of certain selected works in literature when taught by the activity method than equivalent pupils taught by ordinary methods?

In effect, this study has the appearance of two experiments. This was made necessary by the fact that the literature was being taught to four classes, two of which were relatively superior to the other two. The superior group will hereinafter be designated as group A; the relatively inferior group will be group B. Each group was paired separately and divided into a control and an experimental section. These experimental sections will be known as A4 and B6; control classes, as A3 and B1 since these are the designations given the classes in school.

(2) Subjects - 88 pupils in grade 10 in Holyoke High School comprised the following sections:

Group A	control-----	Boys 0	Girls 25
	experimental--	Boys 8	Girls 17
Group B	control-----	Boys 0	Girls 19
	experimental--	Boys 0	Girls 19

Holyoke, Massachusetts, a city with a population of 56,000 is located on the west bank of the Connecticut River and is situated on land which slopes in terraces from Mt. Tom to the river bank. A great stone dam which crosses the Connecticut, connecting Holyoke with South Hadley, forces water through a series of canals to furnish power for various manufacturing plants along the canal banks. These plants are the backbone of the city since the majority of the population depends upon them, directly or indirectly, for its livelihood.

Holyoke High School comprises a group of three buildings which are called Main Building, Annex, and Household Arts Building. Its campus, not including an athletic field, is enclosed within two city blocks in approximately the center of population. This area is bounded by Pine, Franklin, Beech, and Hampshire Streets. A faculty of twenty-eight men and thirty-seven women teach subjects in college, commercial, general, and household arts courses to boys and girls whose enrollment had reached 1750 on Oct. 1, 1939.

(3) Materials - The material used was as follows:

- a. Several tests constructed by teachers in the English Department of Holyoke High School.

- b. The usual material for an activity project of this type including the following projects:
 - 1. Drawings: pictures, characters, cartoons.
 - 2. Dramatics: charades, readings, plays, puppet shows.
 - 3. Construction work: A miniature village with miniature people, a small stage, puppets, marionettes.
 - 4. Original composition: Play writing, newspaper editorials, diaries.

(4) Procedure - The steps utilized in this study were as follows:

- a. Construction of the units in "Silas Marner", "The Vicar of Wakefield" and collection of the activity material to be used.
- b. Pairing of the pupils. The pupils were paired on the basis of intelligence, chronological age and school marks. The results of the grouping are seen below.
- c. Testing the pupils at the end of each unit. For each group, eight different tests were given. A sample test is shown in Appendix 2.

d. Tabulating and summarizing the data.

For this purpose the frequency distribution, and the critical ratio technique of computing reliability, were utilized. Further description of this method is found in Chapter IV and Appendix 3.

(5) Results of Grouping - The means of the twenty-five pupils secured in Group A on the basis of the criteria used in pairing were as follows:

Group A

Criterion	Control Group	Experimental Group	Difference
Age Oct.1, 1938	15 yr. 1.56 mo.	14 yr.10.56 mo.	3 mo.
Intelligence Quotient	103.2	102.88	.32
Junior High averages as stated on record cards	83.48	84.31	.83

Group B

Criterion	Control Group	Experimental Group	Difference
Age Oct.1, 1938	15 yr. 5.64 mo.	15 yr.5.28 mo.	.36
Intelligence Quotient	92.36	92.63	.27
Junior High averages as stated on record cards	75.11	75.97	.86

The grouping, therefore, resulted in control and experimental classes which were sufficiently equivalent for the purpose of this study. For further description of procedure one should consult the following pages.

SUMMARY OF DATA

CHAPTER IV

Summary of Data

The results of the testing undertaken to measure the achievement of the control and experimental classes for the two groups appear below. Each unit will be considered in turn.

Unit I. This unit concerned Silas Marner's early life in Lantern Yard, and later, in Raveloe. The disappointments and disillusionment which met him at every turn are offered as causes of his becoming a hermit and a miser. A True-False test, the results of which may be seen in Table I, show what knowledge was obtained by each of the four classes described in a previous paragraph. Notice that in each group the mean percentage received by the experimental group was higher than that received by the control. In Group A, for example, A4's mean percentage, 91.3 was 11.1 higher than A3's mean which was 80.2; Group B, with a mean percentage of 80 in the B6 class, showed a gain of 3.5 over B1, the control division, whose mean percentage was 76.5. The critical ratio of the difference between the two classes in Group A is 3.8. By convention¹ a critical ratio of 3.0 or greater is required to give assurance of a significant difference between means. So

1. Garret, Henry E., Statistics in Psychology and Education, New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1935 317 pp. Chapter III

Table I

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the True-False Test of Unit I

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
99	3	3		
96	1	3		
93	0	2		
90	1	4		
87	0	2	1	6
84	1	5	3	2
71	0	3	3	1
78	3	0	3	3
75	5	2	3	3
72	6	1	1	1
69	3	0	0	0
66	2	0	1	1
63			2	1
60			2	1
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	80.2	91.3	76.5	80
Standard Deviation	10.8	9.3	8.4	8.3
Standard Error of Mean	2.2	1.9	1.9	1.9
Standard Error of Difference		2.9		2.7
Difference		11.1		3.5
Critical Ratio of Difference		3.8		1.3

far as Group A is concerned, the experimental class, therefore, achieved significantly more in the test for Unit 1. The critical ratio of the difference between means for Group B. is 1.3 and is, therefore, not large enough to indicate statistical significance.

Unit II dealt with Silas' lonely life as a hermit, to the moment his money was stolen. The minor plot was introduced and connected to the major plot by the robbery. At

Table II

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the Matching Test of Unit II

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
99	4	0		
96	0	0		
93	3	0		
90	1	2	0	2
87	5	0	0	1
84	2	5	1	1
81	1	5	2	2
78	7	6	2	1
75	1	3	2	3
72	1	2	3	3
69	0	1	2	2
66	0	1	0	2
63			1	2
60			1	0
57			5	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	87.2	80.6	70.7	76.7
Standard Deviation	8.1	5.7	9.2	8.3
Standard Error of Mean	1.6	1.1	2.1	1.9
Standard Error of Difference		1.9		2.8
Difference		6.6		6
Critical Ratio of Difference		-3.5		2.1

the end of Unit II, a Matching text was given; Table II shows its result. A mean percentage of 87.2 was obtained by Group A's control division; a mean of 80.6, by the experimental. 6.6 was the difference between these two means. The critical ratio of the difference between the classes in Group A is 3.5. In this case it proves that the control division achieved significantly more in the test for Unit II. The critical ratio of the difference between means for Group B is 2.1. This does not show that either method is preferable.

Unit III concluded Part I of the novel. This unit was longest and afforded the best opportunity for character study. Results of a Brief-Answer test given at the close of the unit are shown in Table III.

Table III

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective Classes on the Brief-Answer Test of Unit III

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
100	1	0		
96	3	3		
92	1	0		
88	5	3	0	6
84	4	6	3	3
80	5	2	2	2
76	2	3	1	1
72	4	5	1	4
68	0	3	1	1
64			6	2
60			3	0
56			0	0
52			2	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	86	81.9	70.24	85
Standard Deviation	7.7	8.4	10.1	8.4
Standard Error of Mean	1.5	1.7	2.3	1.9
Standard Error of Difference		2.3		2.99
Difference		4.1		14.76
Critical Ratio of Difference		-1.8		4.93

Group A's control group received a mean percentage of 86; the experimental section, one of 81.9. The difference between these is 4.1. Group B's experimental group received a mean percentage of 85; its control group, one of 70.24. The difference is 14.76. In Group A the critical ratio of the difference is 1.8 and is too low to have statistical significance.

The critical ratio of difference between the two classes in Group B is 4.93 which is reliable and which shows that the experimental method is a better one for teaching Unit III to the inferior group.

Unit IV considered Part II, the conclusion, and in some ways, the most important section of the novel. Retribution, after a lapse of sixteen years, was paid each important character, and an Identification test was given when the unit was finished. Its results may be judged by Table IV.

Table IV

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the Identity Test of Unit IV

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
100	3	1		
98	3	0		
96	2	0		
94	5	0		
92	5	1		
90	2	4		
88	2	2		
86	2	3	1	0
84	0	4	0	3
82	0	5	0	1
80	1	1	0	3
78	0	1	1	1
76	0	1	2	5
74	0	1	2	1
72	0	1	2	2
70			1	2
68			2	1
66			1	0
64			3	0
62			2	0
60			2	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	94	85.5	70.3	77.7
Standard Deviation	4.8	5.9	6.8	4.8
Standard Error of Mean	.96	1.2	1.5	1.1
Standard Error of Difference		1.5		1.9
Difference		8.5		7.4
Critical Ratio of Difference		5.7		3.9

In the case of each group, the critical ratio is reliable. A3, Group A's control class, received a mean percentage of 94; A4, the experimental division, received one of 85.5. Their difference is 8.5. B6, experimental division of the B group received a 77.7 mean; B1, the control section, received a 70.3 mean. Their difference was 7.4. 5.7 is the critical ratio of the difference between the divisions in Group A. It tells that the control method is more effective than the experimental in teaching Univ IV to Group A. The critical ratio for Group B is 3.9. It shows that the experimental method is the more useful for teaching this unit to the inferior group.

Unit I w of the "Vicar of Wakefield introduced the Primrose family, showing that in their simplicity, happiness flourished along all walks of life. Since true happiness fled with Squire Thornhill's arrival, the unit naturally ended at this point. A True-False test was given. See Table V for results. A3 received a mean percentage of 88.6; A4, one of 85.3. Their mean difference is 3.3. B6 received a 78.4 mean; while B1 received 71.9. Their mean difference is 6.5. The critical ratio of difference between the means in Group A is 1.5; in Group B, it is 2.4. Since neither is large enough to be reliable, no conclusion in favor of either method may be drawn.

Table V

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the True-False Test of Unit I w

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
100	1	2		
96	5	0		
92	4	2	0	1
88	7	7	1	2
84	2	2	1	1
80	3	7	1	3
76	1	3	2	6
72	1	1	5	2
68	1	1	2	2
64			5	1
60			0	1
56			1	0
52			1	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	88.6	85.3	71.9	78.4
Standard Deviation	7.7	7.9	8.6	8
Standard Error of Mean	1.5	1.6	2	1.8
Standard Error of Difference		2.2		2.7
Difference		3.3		6.5
Critical Ratio of Difference		-1.5		2.4

Unit II w showed a cloud of ambition overshadowing the Primroses' early happiness and closed with Olivia's elopement. A Matching test, the results of which Table VI illustrates, was given. In Group A, A4 received a mean percentage of 91.5; A3, one of 82.62. Their difference is 8.88. The mean for the B6 class was 82.5; that of B1 was 73.3. Their difference is 9.2. Table VI shows that in Group A, a critical ratio of the difference between classes is 4.67. The critical ratio between the means of Group B is 3.5. Both

Table VI

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the Matching Text of Unit II w

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
99	1	2		
96	0	5		
93	1	5	0	1
90	4	5	0	1
87	1	1	0	1
84	1	3	2	7
81	4	2	0	4
78	6	2	3	1
75	3	0	1	1
72	4	0	5	0
69			4	2
66			1	1
63			2	0
60			1	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	82.62	91.5	73.3	82.5
Standard Deviation	7.26	6.15	8.6	7.2
Standard Error of Mean	1.45	1.23	2	1.7
Standard Error of Difference		1.9		2.6
Difference		8.88		9.2
Critical Ratio of Difference		4.67		3.5

are reliable and prove the experimental method to be the better one for teaching Unit II w to both of these groups.

Unit III w described the vicar's sad, weary journey in search of a daughter whom he ultimately found, only to learn of her shameful plight. Loss of the Primroses' worldly goods through fire climaxed this morose portion of the novel. Table VII shows the results of a Brief-Answer test given at this point in the story. A4 received a mean percentage of 85.4; A3 received a 79.4 mean. The difference is 6. In Group B,

Table VII

The Percentage Grades Made by the Respective
Classes on the Brief-Answer Test of Unit III w

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
96	1	1		
92	1	6		
88	2	3	1	2
84	7	6	0	4
80	3	3	3	2
76	2	2	3	5
72	3	2	5	2
68	1	1	4	1
64	2	1	1	2
60	3	0	1	0
56			0	1
52			1	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	79.4	85.4	73.8	78.2
Standard Deviation	10.1	8.2	7.7	8.5
Standard Error of Mean	2	1.6	1.8	2
Standard Error of Difference		2.6		2.7
Difference		6.		4.4
Critical Ratio of Difference		2.3		1.6

the experimental division received a 78.2 mean; while 73.8 is the mean for Bl. Their difference is 4.4. The critical ratio of the difference between the means of Group A is 2.3. This ratio in Group B is 1.6. Both critical ratios are too low to possess statistical significance.

Unit IV w concluded the novel, proving that only the good and the repentant may prosper. An Identity test was given. Its results are stated in Table VIII. In Group A, the experimental class has a mean of 85.6; the control, one of 79.3. The actual difference between these means is 6.3

Table VIII

The Percentage Grade made by the Respective
Classes on the Identity Test of Unit IV 3

Mark	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
90	0	3		
88	2	7		
86	0	6	0	1
84	3	2	2	2
82	2	2	0	0
80	2	1	1	3
78	5	1	0	2
76	3	1	3	0
74	6	2	0	4
72	2	0	3	1
70			0	0
68			4	1
66			1	4
64			1	0
62			0	0
60			1	1
58			3	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	79.3	85.6	71.3	76.2
Standard Deviation	4.6	4.7	8.2	7.3
Standard Error of Mean	.92	.94	1.9	1.7
Standard Error of Difference		1.3		2.5
Difference		6.3		4.9
Critical Ratio of Difference		4.8		2.0

and the critical ratio of their difference is 4.8 which is reliable and indicates that the experimental method is preferable for teaching Unit IV w to Group A. In Group B, the experimental class has a mean percentage of 76.2; the control class has one of 71.3, and the difference between these is 4.9. The critical ratio of this difference is 2.0, which is too small to be of statistical value.

Retention Test - After these Identity tests were returned to their owners for correction, fifteen weeks elapsed before "Silas Marner" or the "Vicar of Wakefield" were again referred to. At this time, part of the midyear examination was devoted to an objective test of these two novels. The results of these scores of both groups may be seen in Table IX.

Table IX

Scores Made by the Respective Classes on the
Mid-Year Examination of Units I - IV w

Scores	Group A		Group B	
	Control	Experi- mental	Control	Experi- mental
66	1	2	1	3
63	6	0	1	5
60	3	5	5	4
57	2	6	3	1
54	4	3	2	4
51	2	2	1	0
48	3	1	0	1
45	0	2	1	0
42	1	3	2	0
39	3	1	1	1
36	0	0	0	0
33			1	0
30			1	0
Number	25	25	19	19
Mean	55.9	55.1	53.6	60.1
Standard Deviation	8.2	7.5	10.2	6.7
Standard Error of Mean	1.6	1.5	2.3	1.5
Standard Error of Difference		2.2		2.7
Difference		.8		6.5
Critical Ratio of Difference		.4		2.4

Group A's control division with 55.9 shows an .8 higher mean score than the 55.1 of the experimental group; Group B6, with a 60.1 mean, shows a 6.5 rise over the 53.6 mean in B1. The

critical ratio of difference between the Group A classes was .4. This difference between the Group B divisions was 2.4. Both ratios were too small to show which method had the greater retention value.

Summary - Of the eighteen objective tests given, results may be judged reliable from eight. Six critical ratios in Group A amounted to more than three points; in Group B, three rose above that number. In Group A, three of the five reliable critical ratios showed that the experimental method was the more effective in teaching units I, II w, and IV w; the remaining two vouched for the control method in Units II and IV. The experimental method proved to be a better one for Units III, IV and II w in Group B. No other conclusions could be drawn for this division because all other critical ratios were low. The following gives the summary in outline form, showing the critical ratios for each group in each unit.

Unit	Group A	Group B
I.	* 3.8	1.3
II.	*-3.5	2.1
III.	-1.8	*4.93
IV.	*-5.7	*3.9
I w.	-1.5	2.4
II w.	* 4.67	*3.5
III w.	2.3	1.6
IV w.	4.8	2
Midyear	- .4	2.4
<u>Total</u> - 19 tests	5 starred	33 starred

Legend * a significant critical ratio.

- a critical ratio favoring the control class.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, CONCLUSIONS
AND LIMITATIONS

CHAPTER V

Statement of Problem, Conclusions and Limitations

The problem which this study sought to answer was as follows.

(1) The Problem - Do pupils in Grade 10 achieve more in the study of certain selected works in literature when taught by the activity method than equivalent pupils taught by ordinary methods?

(2) Conclusions - From the results in previous chapters it would appear that the following conclusions can be made:

- a. Eight of the eighteen critical ratios showed a significant difference between means; ten were not sufficiently large so that the difference between means could be said to be statistically reliable.
- b. Of the eight significant critical ratios 6 gave assurance that the experimental method was superior and 2 that the control method was superior.
- c. From the above it is evident that the experimental method has not proved itself to be definitely better. That is, there is not sufficient evidence to state that the activity method of teaching literature results in higher achievement than the usual methods.
- d. The activity method did not result in superior retention of the material taught in literature.

(3) Limitations - Were this experiment to be continued the author feels that certain weaknesses, evident in this present experiment, should be eliminated.

They are:

- a. The number of cases, if increased in pairs, should increase the reliability of the conclusions.
- b. If this experiment were extended so as to include another book or two, and if twenty rather than ten weeks were devoted to the study, more reliable results might be obtained.
- c. More boys should be included in the groups.
- d. More study should be made of why some critical ratios were positive and some negative.
- e. More reliable results would be obtained perhaps, by utilizing standardized tests if they could be obtained.
- f. If methods could be obtained by which to measure possible intangible results in such an experiment and with such a teaching method, the results might be more significant.

THE ACTIVITY PROCEDURE IN THIS STUDY

CHAPTER VI

The Activity Procedure in This Study

(1) Restrictions - The amount of activity work which may be done in school is limited more by ability of the pupils in a group than by the cost and availability of materials needed to work a project. Good imaginations, plus certain skills, will do wonders with the most meagre supplies, provided that pupils become enthusiastic before the work has started. Drawing, dramatization and composition fit in nicely with any English program, so it is easy to make use of these fields of endeavor. Construction work, on the other hand, must be done outside the classroom. The time to do that becomes a problem since it might be questionable as to whether the hours spent are worth the effort. The teacher may have faith in this kind of task, but the author has found that supervisors will not, so it is best to restrict construction work to that which can be done at home, unsupervised.

(2) Preparation for Individual Activities -

The following passages will describe, in detail, types of activity work which were completed by the A4 and B6 classes, during this experiment. Methods of procedure will be noted and discussed along with benefits resulting from the study.

First of all, a series of activities was assigned in

order to discover talent, in various fields. A whole group received one assignment each day. Every pupil worked on his own activity but had no choice in the type of thing to be done until he had tried each kind of activity demanded by the teacher. This trial lasted for approximately two weeks.

The following extract from the assignment page of a notebook will illustrate what was called for in this period of trial.

"38-9-27 Draw a road map to illustrate the Primrose's journey to Wakefield. Indicate stops along the route at which important events take place.

"38-9-28 Show by cartooning every interesting detail of these three scenes.

1. The meeting with the landlord.
2. Preparation for the Landlord's visit.
3. The arrival of the squire at the Primrose home.

"38-9-29 Construct a cottage similar to the parsonage at Wakefield.

"38-9-30 A. Write an editorial similar to the "Herald's" in which you voice a protest against swindlers at the county fair.

B. Write an advertisement to be used in connection with the fair.

In these and other activity assignments, each pupil is forced to accomplish one certain task in order that he may find a particular field in which he can best express himself. After he has made that important discover, he is free to select his own kind of activity, to make known his knowledge of a lesson. He must remember, always, that details are extremely important and that they can be found only by intensive perusal of the lesson's reading material. Once these details are located and made use of, it is certain that a pupil will not soon forget them.

(3) Types of Activities Used - Teachers using this experimental method should be on the alert to discover talent in boys and girls.

(a) Drawing - To find in one's class an artist, however amateurish, is always a joy. More can be shown clearly in a picture than by any other means. The artist needs little imagination once he lists his facts before him. Such work is always enlightening to the class as well as to him who draws. It is seldom, however, that one finds pupils talented enough to draw lifelike figures so one turns to cartooning as a second best form in the field of art for this purpose..

Cartooning at its best shows possession of talent in the field of caricature which is as hard to find as the ability to draw portraits. But pupils may be encouraged to

draw stick cartoons to exemplify episodes. All kinds of action may be depicted by employing simple line figures, and the details of a situation may be clearly seen, once the cartoon is completed. Most boys and girls in these classes enjoyed working with such figures, and after some experience, handled them nicely. Cartooning was found to be most useful in illustrating an episode or series of events, such as these: "Events which made Silas Marner lose faith in God and Man", "Thoughts which flashed through Dunstan's mind on the day he disappeared from Raveloe", or "The Vicar's journey in search of his daughter".

(b) Dramatizations may be worked out in various ways. A game of the order of charades, in which the action of a scene was portrayed in pantomime, proved quite popular with the B6 class in this experiment. First, a group decided upon a scene which lent itself to such a performance. Then they rehearsed the scene outside of class, acted it, and called upon someone in the audience to describe aloud what action had taken place. This was useful for review as well as for new material, and seemed to please the shy type of pupil who wanted to perform but not to speak.

Other dramatizations worked out well with the A4 class which contained many who liked to talk before a group and

were well able to do it. It combined composition with drama since the sketches written were original although based upon books read. Any episode or character sketch might demand the services of many people for each of its scenes was written by a single pupil and portrayed by a group of players. To illustrate, let us examine this sketch of the Cass family:

Scene I. The Quarrel between Godfrey and Dunsey.
(Two boys)

Scene II. Breakfast in the Red House. (Two boys,
one of whom is a new character)

Scene III. The Sale of Wildfire. (Three boys, two
of whom are new characters)

Scene IV. The Robbery. (Two boys, one of whom
is new)

In all, four writers and six actors are needed to complete the ideas which George Eliot had in mind when she included the minor plot of "Silas Marner". Ten people, then, were actively engaged in demonstrating her psychology. The audience should have found the portrayal instructive as well as entertaining, and I believed it did.

(c) Construction Work - Two kinds of dramatizations called for construction work, and involved the whole class

in their makeup. One portrayed the village of Raveloe, the setting of Eliot's "Silas Marner". Each pupil selected one item from a list, constructed it at home, and set it up in its proper place upon the class room table. The following is an extract from the list mentioned above.

"The Stone Cottage	Silas
Stone pits	Eppy Part I, Part II
Eppie's Garden	Mr. Macey Part II
Church	Major characters of Cass
Red House	family
Rainbow Inn	Nancy Lammeter, Parts I and II

When the village was completed, the dolls made were moved about to indicate important incidents of the plot. Three or four people were called upon to move characters about each time a change was called for. Those watching demanded these changes. The activity was used for review after each part of the novel was finished.

A second, more pretentious project was carried out for the "Vicar of Wakefield". This was a puppet show which necessitated the construction of a stage as well as puppets, so once again, every pupil in the class participated in some part of the activity. Four pupils wrote scenes which depicted all that was important in the novel's outline. Four boys built and painted a stage which was placed upon

the school room table. Several made and dressed puppets, each representing a different character; and the remaining members of the class read the lines which had been written for the scenes. A group of three pictures illustrate this activity by portraying the following ideas:

- (1) This is a view of the stage taken from the room and shows just what pupils see as they watch the action.
- (2) Four boys who constructed the stage stand beside it, as do three girls and one boy who wrote the scenes portrayed.
- (3) Girls holding puppets are showing those they made. Behind and beside them are boys and girls who read the lines which the puppets act.







Both A4 and B6 used the stage made by the A4 boys. A4 used finger puppets with heads made of paper, while B6 made marionettes, moving them about by means of strings. Both enjoyed these activities immensely, but A4 was particularly fortunate in being invited to perform at club meetings outside of class.

(d) Composition was used extensively throughout activity periods. Its assistance in the field of drama has been shown, but more often it became an activity in its own right. There were good opportunities for its use. One group of eight, for example, began a weekly newspaper to which each member contributed editorials concerning news of Raveloe (or Wakefield), pinning these articles in newspaper style, to the bulletin board every Wednesday. Each group wrote under the direction of an editor and all articles were checked by proof readers. Others who chose composition as a means of expression wrote diaries, from day to day, supposedly. Each pretended to be a character in the fiction being studied who confided at night, to a diary, the sights he or she had witnessed during the day as well as thoughts which had passed through his or her mind. Written in detail as each entry was, these diaries proved to be welcome sources of information, once review was begun.

Several original compositions were attempted by individuals who tried to write modern versions of a novel's highlights in the form of night letters, radio broadcast scripts, police reports and even a proclamation. Generally, it is the pupils who write well, naturally, that choose composition for activity work, so that which has been written is more than likely worth reading. The actual practice of writing is helpful, moreover, and deserves encouragement at all times.

In all activity work, the motive is the same. Pupils are forced to "learn by doing", by individual study, probing, and delving into reading material, and by the knowledge gained through study in some original way. Thus, everything of importance must be sorted, sifted and recreated into some personal conception of an author's idea. This process of recreating and building images should so enforce itself upon the minds of the creators, that a clear memory of projects accomplished should remain long after the study has been completed.

(4) Comparison of Two Types of Procedure - The following excerpts from a plan book shows how one lesson, "Raveloe after Sixteen Years" was taught to both the experimental and control groups. One may notice, at once, the liveliness of the experimental lesson as compared with the

straight pedagogy of the other.

Sample Lesson Hour: Control Group

"Silas Marner" Chapters XVI and XVII

1. Five minute vocabular test. Correct
2. Assign home work for the following lesson.

Read Chapters XVIII - XX.

- a. Be able to discuss Godfrey's confession.
- b. What characteristic of Godfrey's is shown by this sentence: "It had never occurred to him that Silas would rather part with his life than with Eppy."
3. Class discussion upon three subjects:
 - a. Changes in Raveloe made during the period of sixteen years following the robbery.
 - b. Content in the stone cottage contrasted with discontent in the Red House.
 - c. Eppy's plan for the future.Show how Nancy's strong will has influenced A, B and C.

Sample Lesson Hour: Experimental Group

"Silas Marner" Chapters XVI - XX

1. Five minute vocabulary test. Correct

2. Assign home work as follows:

Group 1. Write a playlet in two scenes:

- a. Scene at the Red House after the discovery of Dunstan's body.
- b. The scene at the stone cottage that evening.

Those not included in Group 1: Write the part of one character which you would prefer to portray in an imaginary playlet.

3. (A village has been constructed. Each pupil has made one or two pieces so that the collection is complete.)

Class Work: Arrange the village and characters so that the scene described in XVI is portrayed. Hold an informal talk concerning those changes and have figures moved about to indicate traveling from the church to the citizen's respective homes. Show Eppy and Silas sitting near the stone pits. Discuss their conversation. Show Nancy and Priscilla in the parlor of the Red House. Discuss their conversation.

APPENDIX 1

THE CRITICAL RATIO METHOD

An Example of the Method of Finding a Critical Ratio

Group A3

96	1	1	4	4	16
92	1	1	3	3	9
88	11	2	2	4	8
84	1111 11	7	1	7	7
				<u>18</u>	<u>40</u>
<hr/>					
80	111	3			
<hr/>					
76	11	2	-1	-2	2
72	111	3	-2	-6	12
68	1	1	-3	-3	9
64	11	2	-4	-8	32
60	111	3	-5	-15	75
		<u>N25</u>		<u>-34</u>	<u>130</u>
				<u>-16</u>	<u>170</u>

Group A4

100					
96	1	1	3	3	9
92	1111 1	6	2	12	24
88	111	3	1	3	3
				<u>18</u>	<u>36</u>
<hr/>					
84	1111 1	6			
<hr/>					
80	111	3	-1	-3	3
76	11	2	-2	-4	8
72	11	2	-3	-6	18
68	1	1	-4	-4	16
64	1	1	-5	-5	25
		<u>N25</u>		<u>-22</u>	<u>70</u>
				<u>-4</u>	<u>106</u>

$$M = \text{Mid} + \left(\frac{\text{Efd}}{N} \times I \right)$$

$$= 82 + \left(\frac{-16}{25} \right)$$

$$= 82 - 2.56$$

$$= 79.44$$

$$= 79.4$$

$$M = \text{Mid} - \left(\frac{\text{Efd}}{N} \times I \right)$$

$$= 86 + \left(\frac{-4}{25} \times 4 \right)$$

$$= 86 + (-.64)$$

$$= 85.36$$

$$= 85.4$$

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\text{Efd}^2}{N} - \frac{(\text{Efd})^2}{N}} \times I$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{170}{25} - \frac{(-.64)^2}{1}} \times 4$$

$$= \sqrt{6.80 - .40} \times 4$$

$$= \sqrt{6.4} \times 4$$

$$= 2.52 \times 4$$

$$= 10.08$$

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\text{Efd}^2}{N} - \frac{(\text{Efd})^2}{N}} \times I$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{106}{25} - \frac{(-.16)^2}{1}} \times 4$$

$$= \sqrt{4.24 - .03} \times 4$$

$$= \sqrt{4.21} \times 4$$

$$= 2.05 \times 4$$

$$= 8.1$$

$$\sigma_{M3} = \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$= \frac{10.1}{5}$$

$$= 2.0$$

$$\sigma_{M4} = \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$= \frac{8.1}{5}$$

$$= 1.6$$

$$\sigma_{\bar{a}} = \sqrt{\sigma_{M3}^2 + \sigma_{M4}^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{4 + 2.56}$$

$$= \sqrt{6.56}$$

$$= 2.6$$

$$DR = \frac{D}{\sigma_{\bar{a}}}$$

$$= \frac{6}{2.6}$$

$$= 2.3$$

APPENDIX 2

A SAMPLE TEST

APPENDIX 2

Sample True False Test Used in Unit 1

Read each statement carefully. Decide whether each is true or false. If you believe it to be true write T in the space provided before each statement.

1. George Eliot was a contemporary of Charles Dickens.
2. "Silas Marner" is generally considered her greatest novel.
3. "Silas Marner" reminds one of Eliot's own childhood.
4. It was during one of Silas' fits that the Lantern Yard crime was committed.
5. The knife which was found in the deacon's room was a real clue to the true criminal.
6. Silas was accused of murdering the deacon of Lantern Yard.
7. Lantern Yard's weavers used a system of casting lots to prove Silas guilty because they disliked him.
8. Silas' belief in God had always been blind and trusting.
9. Results of the casting of lots took from Silas his belief in God and man.
10. Because of Silas' proven guilt, the community demanded that Silas leave Lantern Yard.
11. When Silas first settled in Raveloe he had hopes of becoming popular with the townspeople.
12. Jem Rodney became Silas' first friend.

- __13. The little boys of Raveloe enjoyed visiting him because he was kind to them.
- __14. Silas' nearest neighbor made several kindly attempts to become his friend.
- __15. Silas' work at his loom was the only link that remained between his life in Raveloe and his life in Lantern Yard.
- __16. Silas' work was responsible for his peculiar appearance.
- __17. Silas' first fifteen years in Raveloe were spent in weaving and hoarding money.
- __18. Silas obtained his knowledge of medicine from a witch woman he had known before going to Raveloe.
- __19. Silas' success in curing Sally Oates of heart trouble brought many visitors to the stone cottage.
- __20. Silas refused to grant these people the favors they desired.
- __21. The Sally Oates incident exiled Silas from all social contact with Raveloe's townspeople.
- __22. Silas' struggle to patch together his old, brown water jug illustrates his determination not to waste money.
- __23. Mrs. Osgood paid Silas the first gold he had ever earned for his own use.
- __24. Silas' love of gold pieces shows a desperate loneliness rather than a miserly character.
- __25. The desire to earn money prevented Silas from losing his mind.

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