



University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst

**"How can the traditional fourfold aim: To read, to understand, to speak and to write the foreign language be attained in the limited time of the two-year college course?"**

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HOW CAN THE TRADITIONAL FOURFOLD AIM:  
TO READ, TO UNDERSTAND, TO SPEAK AND TO WRITE  
THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE BE ATTAINED IN THE  
LIMITED TIME OF THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE COURSE?"

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"HOW CAN THE TRADITIONAL FOURFOLD AIM: TO READ,  
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TWO-YEAR COLLEGE COURSE?"  
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By

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Problem submitted as partial  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I. The History of Teaching Modern Foreign Languages in the United States	1
CHAPTER II. Analysis of Methods Used in the Last Forty Years	7
CHAPTER III. Traditional Objectives	11
CHAPTER IV. The New Objectives	43
CHAPTER V. Outline of Modified Class Procedure	66
CHAPTER VI. Experimental Course	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	75

67-1910 Gift

## T A B L E S

	Page
I. Indiana State Teacher's College's Experiment in 1930-1931, Grammar-Translation vs. "Direct Method" Difference of Means for First Semester	21
II. Same as No. I, for Second Semester	21
III. Experiment with the "Eddy Series", One Year of High-School Work Done in One Semester	26
IV. Same as No. III, Two Years of High School Work Covered in Two Semesters	27
V. Miss Eddy's Survey of Secondary Schools Under Newer Type Teaching and Under Standard Type Practices	33
VI. 1932 Ranking Order of the Categories of Research and Experimentation	36
VII. Experimental Class	59
VIII. Scores on the Cooperative French Test	74

## INTRODUCTION

World shaking events such as wars make people realize that society has been changing more rapidly than they ever had suspected. Teachers and educators are under no illusions that they have settled all problems of education or that they ever will. They recognize that the schools are merely part of a dynamic society which is accelerating the pace of its change. As old problems are solved, new ones will arise. It has been the duty of intelligent and progressive teachers to remain alive to change and to welcome the challenge of new problems.

What the world really needs is a universal language. Take for instance, the problems of world politics. Unfortunately these get dangerously distorted sometimes through misunderstanding language. But as long as we have no universal language there is an urgent need for learning modern foreign languages in order to promote better understanding among peoples, and to build a creative and enlightened world citizenship. Besides the social, cultural and pedagogical factors which I am going to discuss later, there are other utilitarian values of foreign language study. The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers appointed a committee in 1932,



to study the bread and butter values that foreign language teaching might offer. The report<sup>1</sup> listed 16 occupations in which knowledge of foreign language is the primary requirement, 13 occupations in which knowledge of foreign language is a distinct advantage or a secondary requirement, and 31 occupations in which it is an asset in achieving success in life. Through radio, movies, communication, transportation, and increased demand for research, the importance of modern language has been greatly enhanced.

It might be a safe statement that the teaching of modern foreign languages has its definite place in the curriculum. In a more specific and practical vein, Walter V. Kaulfers,<sup>2</sup> engaged in the training of foreign language teachers at Stanford University, suggested 32 results, grouped under five main headings, which are attainable through experience in the study of a foreign language.

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1. W. L. Schwartz, L. A. Wilkins and A. G. Bovée: "Vocational Opportunity for Foreign Language Students", *Modern Language Journal* XVI, April 1932, pp. 545-582.
  2. W. V. Kaulfers: "Outcomes As Objectives", *French Review* IX, February, 1936, pp. 224-230.

1. Building desirable physical health.
2. Understanding, adjusting to, and cooperatively improving the social environment.
3. Understanding, appreciating, adjusting to, and improving the physical environment.
4. Development of vocational efficiency.
5. Worthy use of leisure.

If we now accept the idea that the teaching of modern foreign languages has its definite place in the curriculum, what are the objectives, and are these objectives valid in the light of present educational trends and aims?



## CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
IN THE UNITED STATES

Modern foreign language teaching is a natural outgrowth of the classical language study and its two typical tendencies:

1. Preoccupation with formal grammar
2. The restriction of reading material to difficult classical texts, translated or deciphered laboriously for pedagogical purposes.

Before the student was able to read simple text, advanced reading was thrust upon him mostly for practice in grammar only. The tremendous amount of real formal grammar was a tool for mental discipline and there existed the fallacy that because the pupil had mastered difficult constructions he was therefore capable of applying the easier ones.

The report in 1898 of The Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America was a milestone in this specific field in the U. S. A. The Committee laid down the new principles of teaching, and from that time on the fourfold aim of reading, understanding, speaking, and writing the language studied has been rather accepted. The primary objective, posited by the committee was: To read with enjoyment.

In 1924 - 1926 Michael West published the results of his research: "Bilingualism", "Learning to Read a Foreign Language", and "Language and Education."<sup>1</sup> West's chief contribution was to demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching English to Bengali boys by using word frequency lists, simplified texts, and standardized tests.

The "Study" (Modern Foreign Language Study) was organized in 1924. The attention of the Carnegie Corporation had been called to the confusion and lack of

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1. Michael West, "Language and Education", Longman, Green and Company, 1926.

principles in modern language teaching, and to the need for a scientific investigation. After the trustees decided to finance the inquiry for three years, a committee on direction and control composed of twenty leading modern language workers from the United States and Canada and a Committee on Investigation was formed. The result has been the collection of the most valuable data concerning almost every phase of modern language teaching published in the two Analytical Bibliographies of Modern Language Teaching 1927-1933; 1933-1937, and "Experiments and Studies in Modern Language Teaching" by Algernon Coleman. The Committee on Investigation - whose membership is as follows: Algernon Coleman, University of Chicago, secretary; J. P. W. Crawford, University of Pennsylvania; Robert Herndon Fife, Columbia University chairman; H. E. Ford, University of Toronto; V. A. C. Henmon, University of Wisconsin; R. K. Hicks, University of Toronto; and E. B. de Sauze, director of foreign languages, Board of Education, Cleveland-formulated the following statement of objectives for up to date modern

language teaching:

Immediate Objectives:

1. To read the foreign language.
2. To understand.
3. To speak.
4. To write.

Ultimate Objectives:

1. To read the foreign language with ease and enjoyment.
2. Ability to communicate orally with natives of the country whose language has been studied.

In 1929 Algernon Coleman from the University of Chicago formulated a new statement of objectives to supersede the fourfold aim of the American and Canadian Committee, and which can be considered a revised formulation of the "Study's" tentative list of objectives.

1. Ability to read books and magazines within scope of student's interest and intellectual power.



2. Only such knowledge of grammar as indispensable for reading.
3. Ability to pronounce correctly, to understand and to use language orally within limits of class material.

The first definite step in putting the recommendations of the "Study" into practice was a revision of the College Entrance Examination Board requirements as adopted in April 1932. The College Entrance Examination Board, which has the duty of examining about twenty five thousand students each year for admission to college, is still very conservative in its modern language examinations. The requirements heretofore posited by the Board go back in the main to the Report of Twelve of 1898 and, with exceptions of a few minor changes, the prescriptions for French and German have not been altered for about thirty years. In the fall of 1929 a committee of modern language teachers were asked to investigate the necessity for revision and the following spring this committee presented a report recommending revisions in line with some of the ideas set forth by the Committee on Modern Language Teaching. But as a whole, the requirements of the College

Entrance Examination Board are still very conservative, and they do not parallel the practical need of the undergraduates. At present the College Entrance Examination Board emphasizes "Reading Ability", but the definite meaning of this aim is not yet clear, giving rise to much controversy and uncertainty in the field of modern language teaching.

There seems little opposition to the general proposal that the one great objective of our teaching should be the acquisition of the ability to read the foreign language with ease and enjoyment. There is, on the other hand, a definite divergence in opinion as to how this may best be accomplished.



## CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF METHODS USED IN THE LAST  
FORTY YEARS

In studying the methodology of foreign language teaching in the last forty years we find six major groups.

1. The Grammar Translation Method, described by the Committee of Twelve as follows:<sup>1</sup>

"The pupil is first put through a volume of paradigms, rules exceptions, and examples which he learns by heart. Only when he has thoroughly mastered this book is he allowed to read; and even then his reading is usually regarded as a means of illustrating and emphasizing grammatical principles, rather than as a source of inspiration or of literary education."

2. The Direct Method, with its six characteristics:<sup>2</sup>

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1. From the Report of the Committee of Twelve, p. 14.
2. "Modern Foreign Languages and Their Teaching" by R.D. Cole, Appleton Series in Special Methods, 1937, p.57.

- "a. Much attention given to pronunciation, usually with more or less emphasis on phonetics;
- b. Extensive oral work in the foreign tongue, excluding the vernacular as much as possible;
- c. Much free composition based on themes taken from familiar experiences;
- d. An inductive but systematic teaching of grammar mostly in connection with oral work;
- e. Translation to English reduced to a minimum;
- f. Real reading for comprehension stressed, often with the design of teaching about the country whose language is being studied."

The principal names associated with the direct method are: Heness, Sauveur, Kroeh, van Daell and Berlitz.

3. The Psychological Method, which made its appearance in connection with the high tide of psychology shortly after the first world war. The principle involved was the Association of ideas and the habit of "Mental Visualization". First oral presentation, then writing and reading at a later stage. Its chief proponents were: Gouin, Betis, Kron, Swan and Knorr.
  
4. The Phonetic Method. Insistence on spoken language and use of the foreign tongue from the beginning. Its basic principle is: pronunciation, training of the ear and of the vocal organs. Printed texts in phonetic notation are used. Written exercises of familiar material. Systematic grammar and translation come last.
  
5. The Eclectic Method might be considered as a combination of the best features of the previously mentioned four methods. It employs grammar drill and translation, but at the same time gives training in speaking, understanding and writing.

6. The Reading Method was first described by the members of the Modern Foreign Language Study in 1929. This method attempts to speed up reading ability and to subordinate all other phases in the specific language study.

Almost every intelligent teacher wonders what effect his subject can possibly have actually or subsequently on his pupils' daily lives and how it can reasonably be expected to affect their behavior and their growth. This question is in response to the demand of both parents and youth for teaching in our schools and colleges, not on the basis of credits but in terms of growth and understanding, widening of mental horizon, and of practical values. Here arises a question:

(1) Are the objectives - the traditional fourfold aim or the "reading ability" - valid? (2) Which approach is the most effective in providing the student with such knowledge as might be useful to him with regard to mental growth and daily life?



## CHAPTER III.

## TRADITIONAL OBJECTIVES

A survey made under the auspices of the Modern Language Study of the opinion of more than 6,000 graduates of school and college, the results of which were compiled by Professor O'Shea,<sup>1</sup> shows that the interest of those students whose course was limited to two years, appears to have remained inactive after graduation, and that, even for those who studied French, German, or Spanish for a longer period, the strongest feeling is a vague sense of ungrasped opportunities. Members of classes now under instruction reflect a picture of general uncertainty as to the motives for their election of a particular language or for shifting from one language to another. Conservatism, outworn methodology and material, meaningless shibboleths seem to be the real obstruction to the desirable results. The fact that about 57 per cent of the students who begin the study of the foreign language do not continue it beyond one

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1. "The Reading of Modern Foreign Languages" (Department of Interior Bulletin XVI, Washington D. C., Gov. Printing Office.)

year and 83 per cent not beyond the second year, and that all the evidence points to poor results leads us to the conclusion that something must be fundamentally wrong with our present teaching of foreign languages. It is this that has stimulated the interest in experimentation and the effort to determine concrete facts and to collect data. But the nationwide investigation of the committee led to conflicting results. This difficulty lies in part in the variety of setup of schools and colleges: the length of the total course and the percentage of the pupils who continue into advanced classes; the ability and background of the teachers; the pupil's age, intelligence, background, homogeneity of group, etc., although the use of standardized tests facilitated to a great extent the comparison of the various methods and the evaluation of their efficiency with regard to the accepted objective. Another difficulty lay in the fact that the experimental groups were drilled upon the material which was to be tested in order to prove the efficiency of the procedure. So one prominent college preparatory school, where the method employed could almost be termed



grammar-translation, consistently made the highest scores in all parts of the American Council French Test. Another school secured almost as good results through the direct method. A third school obtained very good results by the eclectic method. The Committee on Investigation of the Modern Foreign Language Study was clearly conscious that it could not solve all the problems which emerged from the jungle of modern language teaching, but it hoped, at least, to contribute to the solution of some fundamental practical questions:

1. What should be the specific objectives of the two year course, since 85 per cent or more of pupils study the language for two years or less?
2. What should be the curriculum content of the two year course?
3. What methods are most effective in realizing the objectives of the two year course?

4. What standard of achievement may be expected and how should it be expressed?

These are questions of fundamental importance and there are still great differences of opinion among foreign language teachers. Their solution in the last analysis rests upon adequate experimentation. That is why I have chosen to work on the present problem whose chief purpose is to give a terminal value to the two year college course. During the two years the students should get such a thorough foundation of language experience that they will be able to build upon it without further guidance in their post-college period.

My experience in teaching modern foreign languages in various types of schools leads me to the conclusion that the traditional fourfold aim, if carefully limited and organized, is more valid than the reading objective. Whatever value is derived from the study of the foreign language must be found in the first

two years. There must be a terminal function.<sup>1</sup> This course must have a value per se. Reading is not a terminal value because the process of reading a foreign language is complex and it includes aural comprehension, oral expression, some writing and reading. If "reading" is understood to mean the direct comprehension of the printed page and not merely deciphering, those elements cannot be isolated, and the fourfold aim, although in basic form, must be attained.

Before discussing my own procedure, let us have a brief look at what results have been achieved through the different methods in this country and what their statistical data reveal.

The Indiana State Teachers College<sup>2</sup> conducted an experiment in 1930 and 1931 to compare the grammar-translation method with the direct method. Twenty-eight

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1. Louis C. Curcio, "Terminal French Courses for Colleges", *Modern Language Journal* XXIV, October 1929, pp. 31-34.
  2. M. O. Peters, "An Experimental Comparison of Grammar-Translation Method and Direct M. in Teaching French," *Modern Language Journal* XVIII, May 1934, pp. 528 - 542.

first and second semester freshmen were divided into two groups, after having been equated on basis of mental ability. One group was taught by the direct method, that is, by one type of direct method, because there are as many types as there are direct method teachers, and there is no general agreement as to what the direct method is. In this group the following standards were observed:

1. Association of words with concept rather than words with their English meanings.
2. Care given to pronunciation.
3. Extensive oral work and oral treatment of text.
4. Grammar taught inductively in connection with oral work.
5. Written work based on material which had been thoroughly assimilated by hearing and speaking it.
6. Translation into English reduced to a minimum.



7. Reading for comprehension stressed.

In the Grammar translation group, the following standards were observed.

1. Vocabulary (list of disconnected words)
2. Grammatical rules and exceptions.
3. Oral translation from English into French and vice versa.
4. Written translations.
5. Practice in reading aloud and listening to some spoken French.

Tests and their calculation:

1. Otis Self-Administering Test of Mental Ability; Higher examination; Form B. given to both groups.
2. Iowa Placement Exam. Series F. A. Revised A. Foreign Language Aptitude Test.
3. The Charters Diagnostic Language Test and Pressey's English Test covering grammar, punctuation, capitalization and sentence structure to determine weaknesses in English.

4. Examination given at end of each grade.  
(Every six weeks)
5. H. V. Wann's French Achievement Test given  
at end of fifth period.
6. American Council Beta French Test, Form B +  
A given at end of first and second semester.
7. A special test devised to test two groups for:
  - (a) reading for speed and correct pronunciation.
  - (b) Aural comprehension, (c) Dictation,
  - (d) Grammar, (e) Translation, (f) vocabulary,
  - (g) Comprehension (written questions),
  - (h) Appreciation.
8. Study of ratio between difference of means and  
the probable errors of these differences to  
determine significance of difference between  
the two methods.
9. Zero order correlation calculated to measure  
relation between intelligence quotient and  
scores on tests.
10. Methods of comparison between two groups  
determined by coefficient of correlation and  
by significance of the difference of means.



11. Garrett's Table was used to determine significance of difference.

### Procedure

- Ad. (1) I. Q. mean 104.8 Grammar-Translation Group  
I. Q. mean 104.5 Direct Method Group

- Ad. (2) Scores showed advantage for Direct Method Group.

Conclusion: Iowa Placement Test has no relationship to I. Q. It isn't useful data for present experiment.

- Ad. (3) Given at beginning of first semester.

Results: advantage in favor of direct method group.

- Ad. (4) Scores ranked and averaged. Mean used in computation of correlation of scores.

- Ad. (5) Tables and graphs showed that achievement of direct method groups lower than that of grammar-translation groups at end of first semester. Difference of means (examination marks) 8.13 in favor of grammar-translation, and C. R. equals 4.05 (significant). In

dictation slight advantage by direct method over grammar-translation group. (End of first semester).

- Ad. (6) Beta Test given to both groups. Table number 1, shows significance of difference in means of direct method and grammar-translation method in average of examination marks for first semester. Difference of means in second semester is 0.98 in favor of direct method; C. R. is 4.47 which is significant.
- Ad. (7) Difference in means in Speed and Pronunciation Test is 23.31 in favor of direct method, P. E. of difference 5, C. R. - 4.56. In aural comprehension direct method 3.4 minutes better than grammar-translation method. Dictation: 72 words; difference in means in favor of direct method. Completion (grammar) slightly in favor of direct method. Translation: Grammar-Translation M. Advantage. Comprehension; no difference. Appreciation: answers scored by two persons independently; average of marks given by two persons taken as means. Difference of scores shows advantage for direct method.

TABLE I.

	Group	
	<u>G. T.</u>	<u>D.</u>
M + P. E. <sub>M</sub>	79.18 + 1.977	71.05 + 3.545
Difference in Means		8.13
In Favor of		G. T.
P. E. Difference		2.005
Ratio of Difference to P. E. Difference		4.054
Chances in 100 that true difference is significant		100

Conclusion: Grammar-Translation achievement greater at end of first semester.

Table II, shows difference of means for second semester.

TABLE II.

	<u>G. T.</u>	<u>D.</u>
	M + P. E. <sub>M</sub>	58.763 + 8.002
Difference in Means		0.98
In Favor of		D. M.
P. E. Difference		0.219
Ratio of Difference to P. E. Difference		4.47
Chances in 100 that true difference is significant		100

As further means of comparison: Otis Self-Administering Test and American Council Beta French Test A + B given to two groups of City Schools: 1st. group - X. Y taught by grammar-translation method. 2nd. group - Z taught by direct method. Results coincide with those of the Indiana State Teachers College: end of first semester grammar - translation higher achievement; end of second semester direct method shows advantage over grammar-translation method.

Conclusion: With grammar-translation method progress in early stage; with direct method more achievement at the end of first year. Direct method leads to greater ability in reading than grammar-translation method does.

Advantages: (a) Translation, (b) Vocabulary, (c) Pronunciation, (d) Aural Comprehension, (e) Appreciation, (f) Grammar with direct method.

But oral skill has not been measured and that leaves an important factor still open. Certainly the ability to read (pronounce) a language correctly has a definite bearing on the ability to comprehend. Thus alongside of reading attainment comes the ability to pronounce fluently and to understand the language through the spoken as well as the written medium.



Cheydleur<sup>1</sup> made a comparison between the reading method and the eclectic method at the University of Wisconsin in 1927 - 1928. He applied the Bond Reading Method for his experimental sections (3 classes) and the Cleveland Plan (eclectic method) for the three control sections. The chief features of the Cleveland Plan are:

1. Exclusive use of foreign language in class.
2. Inductive treatment of the smallest possible units of grammar.
3. Intensive rather than extensive reading.
4. Much oral and aural training.

Instructors in both groups paired off in scientific manner as A. B. C's in teaching ability and so were the students according to their intelligence and to their achievement.

1,352 pages reading covered by experimental section  
450 pages reading covered by control section.

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1. F. D. Cheydleur: "The Reading Method" vs. "Eclectic Method", French Review, IV, January 1931, pp. 192-214.

The results measured by the Columbia Research Bureau Test were in favor of the Cleveland Plan and they show that we learn best by a multiple approach or in other words by oral, aural, visual and motor approach. This experiment reveals the striking difference between two doctrines and practices in methodology: while they both agree on reading power as the primary goal, the Bond Plan assumes that we learn best to read by "direct" reading, all other skills being subordinated; the Cleveland Plan assumes that we learn best to read by multiple approach. Note the considerable difference in the amount of reading done under the two plans.

Miss Helen Eddy and Miss Grace Cochran of the State University of Iowa carried on experiments in their laboratory school and in the John Marshall High School of Minneapolis. They used their own mimeographed material that constitutes now the "Eddy or Chicago French Series" consisting of "Beginning French", "French Workbook", "Si nous lisions" and "Pierille". The results as measured by the American Council and Columbia Research Bureau Tests showed an average gain in reading power of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years over the norm. Up to 1933 this was the most valuable experiment on "direct reading" method.



In 1930 - 1933 the Committee on Modern Language teaching conducted an experiment at both school and college level to test the effectiveness of the "Eddy Series" compared to the national norms. Fifty schools and colleges, 2,400 students, and 200 teachers were involved in this experiment. In Table III, are included all the institutions of collegiate rank that covered the one year of high school work using the Eddy Series in one semester. It reveals that the whole group is 4.3 composite percentile rank points or 8.3% above the national or 31% below in grammar and 2.4 points or 19% above in silent reading.

In Table IV are included all the colleges that covered two years of high school work in two semesters. The medium composite percentile rank is 8 points or 2% higher than the national average, in vocabulary 6 points or about 21% above, grammar 16.2 points or about 32% below, and silent reading is 1.5 points or about 10% above.

TABLE III

College	C. P. R.	Vocabulary		Grammar		Silent Reading		N
		Rank	Median	Rank	Median	Rank	Median	
1. SSS	63.7	1	34.9	2	27.3	2	16.4	156
2. NN	62.6	2	33.1	3	26.4	1	16.9	169
3. OO	59.5	3	32.4	5	23.5	3	16.1	223
4. PP	53.1	4	27.6	4	25.1	4	14.3	615
5. QQ	52.5	5	24.8	1	33.2	5	12.5	47
6. RR	32.5	6	22.5	6	20.3	7	7.9	65
7. SS	31.9	7	17.0	7	17.0	6	10.4	13
All Col.	56.3		29.5		25.2		14.9	1,288
National	52.0		23.8		36.4		12.5	.....

As the upper quartiles and lower quartiles are all about 34 per cent higher than Q1 and Q3 for the national scores we might safely conclude that reading ability is superior to the national performance, to the detriment of grammar.

TABLE IV.

College	C. P. R.	Vocabulary		Grammar		Silent Reading		N
		Rank	Median	Rank	Median	Rank	Median	
1. TTT	61.3	2	37.3	1	42.0	2	17.4	341
2. UUU	54.2	3	37.2	9	28.3	1	18.9	87
3. TT	53.8	4	34.3	2	39.5	3	16.2	27
4. UU	50.0	1	38.0	4	33.8	7	14.0	24
5. VV	43.9	5	31.5	8	30.0	4	15.8	21
6. WW	41.4	6	31.2	5	33.4	6	14.2	61
7. XX	38.9	7	29.5	7	30.7	8	13.8	23
8. YY	33.0	8	25.7	3	39.0	9	13.1	38
9. ZZ	32.3	10	20.3	6	32.8	5	15.5	64
10. AAA	23.3	9	25.5	10	24.5	10	11.7	38
All Col.	52.3		34.7		34.8		16.4	724
National	51.5		28.7		51.0		14.0	...

As far as I am concerned, I would not attribute a great importance to these findings, because only single phases were tested and compared; oral-aural comprehension, writing and cultural knowledge were omitted. As already pointed out, the language should be broken up into different skills only for learning purposes, but in a language ability - test all the skills have to be included. Furthermore, a course organized primarily for testing a specific phase of language study, which in this case is "silent reading" - is inconclusive because it goes without saying that there was a drill on the specific skill to the detriment of all other phases of the language. In connection with the above described experiment, Professor Rice<sup>1</sup> says: "It seems to be a reasonable conclusion from this investigation that those students who are to study a language for only two years should concentrate on the acquisition of a large vocabulary and a ready comprehension, rather than upon systematic study of grammar. But for those who intend to master a

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1. G. A. Rice, "Studies in Modern Foreign Language Teaching" Publ. of the Amer. and Canadian Com. on M. L., New York, Macmillan Company 1930, p. 462.



language an ever increasing need for grammar develops."

Professor C. E. Young and Professor Vander Beke conducted experiments in 1 and 2 year French courses at the University of Iowa with the principle aim to test reading ability. They had a scientific set-up of experimental and control sections. Use of aptitude tests, pretesting and testing with objective examinations to show progress. Material used: Henmon French Word Book and Idiom list. Procedure: Vocabulary building, drill on minimum grammar-essentials and the utilization of comprehensive questions. Results: More reading done in experimental class and attainment surpassed that of control class.

One of the most interesting and most valuable experiments is the "Laboratory Study of the Reading of Modern Foreign Languages" by Professor G. T. Buswell. Aim: To discover the reading maturity of 173 cases in French, German, Spanish and Latin, at elementary, high school and college level by comparison with 19 experts as norms of mature performance. Eye movements of subjects were photographed to ascertain number and time duration of fixations per line required for comprehension. The outstanding findings were as follows: Direct Method means: direct association of foreign symbols with their

meaning without intermediary use of the vernacular. Two years of high school French showed about the same maturity as two years college French. In no case did the reading maturity of the median student in a second year group approach closely that of the expert group; which would imply that the elimination of certain objectives may be necessary in the 2 year program or that more than two years are needed if all the objectives are retained.

To fall back on probable disciplinary values when an ability to read with ease and enjoyment or the ability to comprehend the spoken language is not attained is of doubtful warrant.

It is beyond any doubt that the work of the Committee on Modern Foreign Language Teaching and its results compiled by A. Coleman under the title "Experiments and Studies in Modern Foreign Language Teaching" and "Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the United States." (1929 Mcmillan Company) revolutionized modern language teaching in the United States but the crystallization process is yet far from being completed. The objective set up by the Committee on Modern Language Teaching (Coleman's Report), namely that of "reading", gave rise to misunderstanding and much confusion. The "reading

objective" is the cause of many fads. R. E. Monroe<sup>1</sup> states it as follows:

1. "Anything but translation.
2. Do nothing that is hard pattern.
3. French without tears.
4. General language courses which he calls emasculated courses, depriving students of time in which they might have gained some knowledge of any of the languages."

Miss Helen Eddy<sup>2</sup> formulated the principles of a new type of course based on the recommendation of the "Study":

1. Informal manner,
2. Ear-training is stressed,
3. Easy reading material,
4. Silent reading: as much meaning as possible without translation,

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1. R. E. Monroe, "An Adventure in Teaching Foreign Languages" Modern Language Journal XXIII, Jan. 1939, pp. 243-257.

2. Helen Eddy, "An Appraisal of Newer Practices in Teaching French", M. L. J. XIX, February 1935, pp. 369-374.

5. Dictation,
6. Grammar taught functionally rather than formally.

Miss Eddy made a survey of public secondary school practices and found that the general trend in content and teaching foreign languages did not accord with newer proposals of Coleman's Report. In connection with this survey she conducted the following experiment. Teachers received equal rating: 10 years teaching. Pupils had about the same socio-economical status; library facilities and other school equipment identical. Otis Self-Adm. Test of mental ability: I. Q. average 108. Table V, shows average achievement in French of equated Secondary School pupils under newer type teaching and under standard type practices.



TABLE V.  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Schools	Pupils	Average Scores	Stand. Dev.	Difference of Averages	S. E. Diff.	Ratio	Chances in 100
Newer T.	54	122.74	48.46)	26.22	7.36	3.56	999.8
Stand. T.	54	96.52	23.16)				
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL							
Newer T.	103	123.95	44.47)	19.48	5.87	3.31	999.5
Stand. T.	103	104.47	39.94)				

The results show that higher achievement in tests is associated with newer type practices

Missouri-Experiment. Reading method vs. grammar method. Miss Clarahan<sup>1</sup> conducted an experiment with five sections of first year German at the University of Missouri High School. Three sections were taught by the reading method and two sections by the grammar-method. When tested by the same test those of the reading group excelled in oral and silent reading and even in applied grammar.

Cole<sup>2</sup> in 1925 got about the same results when testing two sections in advanced French, after having equated them on the basis of intelligence test and achievement marks. The first section was taught by a purely grammar method while the second one by a method of multiple approach with much free composition and aural-oral work. When tested by the American Council French Tests at the end of the year the second group surpassed the first in all four phases of the work: vocabulary, grammar, ability to read and ability to write. These experiments have shown that reading and

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1. M. M. Clarahan, "An Experimental Study of Methods of Teaching High School German", Univ. of Missouri Bulletin Ed. Series Vol. 1, No. 5, 1933.
  2. R. D. Cole, "Modern Foreign Languages and Their Teaching", Appleton Series in Special Methods, 1937, pp. 87-88.

speaking are so inextricably bound up with each other that it is futile to try to separate them. Dr. Price said: "If we are honest we must admit that the only feasible aim of modern language courses must be to lay a foundation on which the pupils can build if they have the desire and ability. The foundation should consist of fourfold activities of

1. Hearing and understanding,
2. Speaking,
3. Reading,
4. Writing."<sup>1</sup>

In December, 1932 the Executive Council of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers appointed a committee to survey American research and experimentation in the field of modern foreign language teaching. 1,000 questionnaires were sent out. The following Table<sup>2</sup> shows the ranking order of the categories of research and experimentation in German, French and Spanish. (See Table VI) In 1933, Robert D. Cole made a survey of research done adding to his questionnaire a new question: "What changes

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1. W. R. Price, "Foreign Language Teaching in American High School", French Review III, Oct. 8, 1929, pp. 17-23.
  2. O. F. Bond, "A Preliminary Survey of Research and Experimentation in M. F. L. Pedagogy," M. L. J. XVIII, May 1934, pp. 551-556.



TABLE VI.  
Ranking Order of The Categories of Research and Experimentation

1936 Rank	1935 Rank	1934 Rank	Category	Description	1936 H.S.	Cases Coll.
1	3½	2½	<u>Course Planning</u> :	Unification of aims, minimum essentials	35	11
2	3½	1	<u>Methods</u> :	Reading, individualized, group oral-aural etc.	19	17
3	1½	4½	<u>Reading</u> :	Testing, materials, teaching techniques values	10	19
4	1½	2½	<u>Vocabulary</u> :	Techniques, devices, lists, testing, control	7	17
5	7½	4½	<u>Testing</u> :	Techniques, placement, progress, achievement	10	8
6	11	7½	<u>Teaching</u> :	Teacher training, surveys, practice procedure, results	2	13
7	5½	13½	<u>Special Courses</u> :	"Survey," "honors," "scientific," etc.	8	6
8	14	9	<u>Foreign Contacts</u> :	Overseas study, radio, films, "realia"	2	11
9	11	7½	<u>Oral-Aural Training</u> :	Aids, time values, methods, tress, testing	6	4
10½	7½	11½	<u>Psychological Factors</u> :	Forgetting, correlations, processes, aptitudes	2	7
10½	11	6	<u>Phonetics and Pronunciation</u> :	Testing, methods, stress	1	8
12	5½	10	<u>Grammar and Syntax</u> :	Frequencies, testing, time values	3	2
13½	14	15½	<u>Language Failures</u> :	Causes, correction, sectioning, etc.	2	2
13½	16	13½	<u>Language Errors</u> :	Types, analysis, correction, prevention	1	3
15	14	11½	<u>Composition</u> :	Marking, planning, errors, values, testing	1	2
16	9	15½	<u>General Language</u> :	Planning evaluation	1	0
17	17	17	<u>Memory Work</u> :	Types, values procedures	0	0



have been made or proposed in foreign language curriculum?" Ranking order of researches in Table VI: column 2. In 1936 the Committee on Modern Languages made a survey on a still broader basis. About 5,500 questionnaires were sent out and 907 questionnaires (17%) were returned. Of these 92 were invalid, 608 were negative and 20 (23%) were affirmative reporting research as shown in Table VI, column 1. All in all 34 different curricular changes were reported, the first four being considered the most important major changes. They are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. More stress on ability to read.
2. Less time devoted to grammar.
3. More emphasis on culture.
4. Beginning time year or two later.

60% of the total changes bear on vocabulary-studies, 25% on syntax of the verb. About one half of the latter group deals with student's errors of 52 titles of studies listed for 1933-1936; 16 relate to vocabulary, 6 to grammar, 5 to method, 5 to cultural material and 4 to prognosis. The results from the grammar studies indicate

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1. R. D. Cole, "M. F. L. and Their Teaching", D. Appleton Century Company, Inc., 1937, p. 107.

that greatly reduced list of items suffices for the reading attainment.

Two Analytical Bibliographies, 1927-1932<sup>1</sup> and 1932-1937<sup>2</sup> published 109 theses on modern language teaching topics (98 M. A. thesis and 11 Ph. D. dissertations).

There is a fundamental agreement that there is something wrong with our present teaching system, but no common proposal has as yet been made. These surveys and researches have shown that foreign language teachers are trying to do too much and that this range of objectives, if not limited to basic requirement, is unattainable under current American conditions of enrollment and time. There are tendencies which challenge the modern language teacher:

1. We have to break down barriers which separate school from life.
2. To curtail grammar to the minimum.
3. Quality rather than quantity.

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1. A. B. of M. L. Teaching 1927 - 32, by Algernon Coleman, University of Chicago Press, 1933, XIII, p. 296.

2. A. B. of M. L. Teaching 1932 - 1937 by Algernon Coleman, 1938.

4. "Sprachgefühl."
5. Cultural approach stressing social and institutional life and not as it is often done dwelling on stylistic qualities of language.
6. To raise language teaching from the level of drill work to the level of a social subject.
7. Danger of dissipation of energies in the effort to teach complex material within the prescribed time.
8. We have to lay a proper and solid foundation so that it will hold the subsequent structure of the language.

Modern language teachers at large are aware of the necessity of radical changes and they wish to reform the teaching along the above mentioned lines, although there are still a great number of high school teachers and college professors who consider modern foreign language teaching as a tool subject for mental discipline and who believe that their pupils will profit from an introduction into the mysteries of grammatical abstractions and who

find intensive drill on form and syntax, (independent of their use as elements in thought-expression) helpful both for instruction and testing.

The greatest handicap in the teaching of modern foreign languages in the United States is the influence of the college entrance examination and the college testing system which still is based on formal grammar and translation. Until such time as the colleges change their requirement, the pupils must be guided by the requirements set forth, which have been changed very little since the Report of the Committee of Twelve, in 1898. That is why modern language teachers are looking with great interest toward the outcome of the Eight Year Experiment. In 1932, the Commission on the Relation of School and College presented its plan: to get as many colleges as possible to release from entrance requirement for a period of 8 years the graduates of a group of secondary schools, during which time carefully controlled experiments could be conducted with many plans for definition of objectives, curriculum betterment, and methodology. The emphasis in this plan is based upon the urgent need for a more realistic set-up in our teaching system as a whole. In other words, to teach less abstract and more concrete material which will be useful for the



student's future life. Wilford M. Aikin describes the principles of the experiment as follows:<sup>1</sup>

"The educational emphasis in this plan is based upon a conviction that the secondary schools must become more effective in helping young people to develop the insight, the powers, and the self-direction necessary for resourceful and constructive living. We wish to work toward a type of secondary education which will be flexible, responsive to changing needs, and clearly based upon an understanding of the qualities needed in adult life.

We are trying to develop students who regard education as an enduring quest for meanings rather than credit accumulation; who desire to investigate, to follow the leadings of a subject, to explore new fields of thought; knowing how to budget time, to read well, to use sources of knowledge effectively and who are experienced in fulfilling obligations which come with membership in the school or college community."

Over 250 colleges agreed to the plan and 30 different high schools were chosen. In this reform movement the foreign language teacher holds an important place. Paul B. Diederich, a member of the Commission representing foreign languages prepared a statement including the proposed innovations and changes:

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1. W. M. Aikin, "The Purposes of the 8 Year Experimental Study", Educational Record, January 1935.

1. Basic vocabularies drawn from the word and idiom lists and published by the American and Canadian committees.
2. To curtail tremendously the work in formal grammar.
3. Emphasis on oral and silent reading.
4. Cultural Approach.

As a whole the experiment is aimed to simplify the teaching, to make it more flexible, and to adapt it to the needs of every-day life.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE NEW OBJECTIVES

This brief survey of what has been done in the field of modern language teaching in the United States and of its trends leads us to the conclusion that there must be something wrong in our system. We stress theory rather than language. The future of this subject as a unit of the school and college curriculum depends not on propaganda for its supposed cultural and practical values, but on the power of demonstrating that the American student can acquire through modern language teaching really useful abilities for the practical and cultural concerns of life.

The question arises now: how can this be done in the time limitation of the 2 year college course? What should be the specific objectives of the 2 year course? Would the reading ability as defined by Coleman: "To read the language with moderate ease and enjoyment for recreative and vocational purposes,"<sup>1</sup> or would the fourfold aim to read, speak, understand and write the language even on a basic scale, offer greater pedagogical and psychological motivation for continued language study? On basis of my personal experience, I am convinced that it is futile to emphasize one skill of a language knowledge to the neglect of the others. A terminal value of a modern language course must be a thorough

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1. Coleman, Experiment and Studies in M. L. T., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1934, p. 20.

linguistic foundation based upon the fourfold activity of

1. Hearing and understanding;
2. Speaking;
3. Reading;
4. Writing.

The objective of the course being stated, I should like to discuss the best means for reaching this end. It should be said at this point, that all my suggestions and plans are based on a 8 years' teaching experience in Europe and on a thorough training under the guidance of such well-known language experts as Louis Meylan, Gymnase de Jeunes Filles and Henri Sensine, University of Lausanne who are authorities on methodology, their special field being the training of French teachers for foreign-born students and W. T. MacCallum from the University of Vienna. Sensine is the author of many textbooks, among others "L'emploi des Temps en Français",<sup>1</sup> W. T. MacCallum revolutionized the language teaching at the University of Vienna during the years 1926-1936. His chief accomplishment was to simplify the teaching procedure and to emphasize the cultural and practical values of a living language which justifies the study of its technical aspects. In my later discussions, I am going to refer to their procedures and to their principles.

What I am trying to do is to adapt my European Experience to American college conditions. For help in

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1. Payot, Paris, 1930.



doing this I should like to express my sincere thanks to Professor W. S. Welles, head of the Educational Department and to Dr. Charles Fraker, of the Department of Languages and Literature at Massachusetts State College, Amherst, Massachusetts, who made it possible for me to conduct an experimental French Course at Massachusetts State College, which I am going to describe later.

Division of Emphasis in the 2 Year Course:

1. Sprachgefühl.
2. Basic Vocabulary.
3. Oral-Aural Approach, (pronunciation).
4. Reading.
5. Cultural Information.
6. Attitudes.

One of the most important factors relative to language learning and language teaching is the development of the "feel" for language - the Sprachgefühl. This ought to be the main concern of the 2 year course.

1. Sprachgefühl

Sprachgefühl is the foundation upon which further language experience is built. Engel<sup>1</sup> defines the expression of Sprachgefühl as follows: "Spontaneous and

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1. E. F. Engel, "Initiating Sprachgefühl", M. L. J., XVIII, October 1933, pp. 21-26.

harmonious adjustment and response of acquired language habits to the form and content of discourse in the given language." The experience of the student in expressing himself gives him satisfaction and through this satisfaction lasting benefits for further studies will be obtained. The development of self-expression will quicken the interest of students in the learning process and stimulate their activities in the specific language. Once the curiosity is aroused and the correlation between classwork and daily life is motivated, it is easy to enkindle enthusiasm that will not end after graduation. The first impression of a foreign language is received through the ear combined with optical and muscular associations through reading and writing. From the very beginning the material presented must be such as to enable the student to express himself in simple oral and written sentences and to fixate through practice the newly acquired patterns. The student should have a mental picture for every new word and thus he will be trained to think in the foreign language from the beginning. The dual process of translating slows down speed and efficiency of assimilation of the foreign language, but if the new habits are integrated a direct response will be easy. By expressing simple ideas within the range of

material at his command and by frequent repetition and practicing the student will be guided by his feeling for correct expressions. Language is to a certain extent like music and the ear has to be trained to discriminate between correct and false notes or forms. The correct use of the German "der, die das" is a question of language "feel" which can be developed just as well as all the other skills of a language. The development of "Sprachgefühl" depends upon the mastery of fundamentals and upon its practicing through hearing and speaking the language. Sprachgefühl can be considered as the basic element of the language and furthermore one of those elements which need guidance in order to be acquired. But once developed it is a foundation to which other skills may be added. It is to be regretted that this important phase of language teaching gets so little consideration in the American curriculum. Peter Sanmartino<sup>1</sup> tells us about an interesting experiment at New College (Columbia Teacher's College) which is aimed to develop "Sprachgefühl". There are no prescribed courses; no time requirements. Upon entering college students take a comprehensive examination consisting of: conversation,

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1. Peter Sanmartino, "Foreign Language Work at New College", M. L. J., XIX, 1934, pp. 267-277.



dictation, aural comprehension, and a standardized test, During 6 months the student can pursue whatever phase of language practice he wants. One third of the class period is dedicated to singing French songs. The students get practice in pronunciation and word study and there is plenty of informal oral work and conversation. After 6 months the students are retested and considerable improvement has been noted.

## 2. Basic Vocabulary

The acquisition of a basic vocabulary is of utmost importance to the student of a foreign language. In the time limitation of a 2 year course we can teach only a minimum, but this minimum should be thoroughly done. The term basic vocabulary does not mean a dry collection of isolated words learned by rote and perhaps classified as to species, but it means symbols of active mental pictures. The new words must be integrated with the old ones and this requires constant review and application so that the student assimilates his vocabulary and uses it, almost unconsciously. The recognition that there is an absolute need for a basic vocabulary is one of the greatest merits of the organization of the "Modern Foreign Language Study" and of the "Committee on Modern Language



Teaching". In fact, nothing marks the shift of attitude during the last 10 years in the direction of standardization more clearly than the introduction of various word and idiom lists.

Henmon's<sup>1</sup> French word list appeared in 1924 and was the first based upon scientific foundation. He counted the frequency of occurrence of about 400,000 running words.

Vander Beke's list is an improved revision of the former and contains 6,136 words from a count over 1,000,000.

B. Q. Morgan's German word list contains 2,400 root-words based upon Kaeding's "Maufigkeitswörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache", a list of 10,910,777 words in 290 sources divided into 16 categories. Morgan's German word list is made on the principle of range as well as frequency of occurrence. Wadepuhl, Wood and Cartright tried to synthesize the heterogeneity of these lists, but we can't consider their lists either as too helpful. Later Purin, Engel, Keniston and Beker presented their

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1. V. A. C. Henmon, "A Standard Word Book Based on Count of 400,000 Running Words", University of Wisconsin, Bureau of Education, Research Bulletin No. 3, September 1924.

word lists.<sup>1</sup> These lists have two drawbacks:

- (1) Repetition of similar words and superfluous words;
- (2) Omission of fundamental words.

At the Yale meeting of the American Association of Teachers of German in 1933, the committee (B. Q. Morgan, E. W. Bapster-Collin, A. B. Faust, C. M. Purin and W. Wadepuhl) presented a report on a minimum standard vocabulary for the 2 year college course in German based upon the Morgan-Kaeding German Frequency List. The advocates of the reading objective will find this vocabulary very valuable, but those who believe that more attention should be given to a speaking vocabulary will find it less valuable. Morgan<sup>2</sup> gives the following definition: "Standard implies that every word listed is useful and that the lists represent a good working vocabulary. Minimum implies that whatever else the student knows at the end of the second year (College) these words should be familiar to him."

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1. See R. D. Cole, "M. F. L. and Their Teaching", Appleton Series, 1937, pp. 149-155.
  2. B. Q. Morgan, "A Minimum Standard Vocabulary for German", M. L. J., XVIII, December 1933.

All the basic word lists that are available in the United States are based chiefly on texts generally used in school and college and consequently it is a one-sided frequency-count of a purely literary vocabulary. Thus these lists are of value only in a course where reading is the objective. But when we wish to provide the student with a foundation in all 4 phases of the language study (hearing, speaking, reading and writing), and if this basic language knowledge should be useful to the student in his every-day life, we ought to have a basic speaking vocabulary. We use a different set of words in our daily life from that which we encounter on the printed page; we find different words in current magazines, newspapers and on the radio than those included in our basic lists and taken solely from literary texts. There is an urgent need to supplement these lists with a count of words most frequently used in speaking and in current writings. A most valuable work has been done in providing foreigners with a minimum standard vocabulary in English for every-day use. C. K. Ogden director of the Orthological Institute in Cambridge, England, made a frequency word count of current spoken words and laid down the principle that the 850 words of his "Basic English" form a complete language in which everything may be said



for all purposes of every-day existence. Dr. Richard<sup>1</sup> from the Orthological Institute of China concentrated upon the effort of providing Chinese students with a language structure with a minimum of vocabulary (under 300 words during the first year) that may be mastered comparatively quickly and extremely thoroughly, so that during the second year he will be able to turn his whole attention to the subject matter of his studies in history, science etc. and follow them all in English. T. W. MacCallum at the University of Vienna used about 2,500 words in his 2 books: "Englisch Lernen ein Vergnügen" and "Perfect English" (about 1,000 words in the former and 1,500 words in the latter). He succeeded in demonstrating on about 20,000 graduate students that the mastery of this vocabulary is sufficient for understanding and speaking English, for reading English newspapers and magazines, for enjoying English moving-pictures, scientific and documentary films, etc. - Ogden's Basic English Vocabulary is for the use of people with lower schooling, while MacCallum provides his students with a complete structure for a living language. There is an imminent need for such a vocabulary including the spoken as well

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1. H. Walpole, "Teaching Language as Logic", Modern Language Journal, XXIII, April 1939.



the written language for the use of the American student of modern foreign languages.

We are often misled by the false notion held by the advocates of extensive reading, that size of vocabulary is the most essential, and we forget that only a vocabulary that has become a part of the student can be considered as basic. About 1,200 words would be an adequate vocabulary for the 2 year course, but this vocabulary must be mastered thoroughly; by this I mean that recognition of the words is not enough, but the student must be able to use them properly. The student needs an "active" vocabulary which he can actually use in speech and writing. The thing we must never lose sight of is that we have to lay the foundation properly and solidly so that it will hold the subsequent structure of the language.

### 3. Oral-Aural Approach

The ability to understand the language when spoken is intimately related to its pronunciation. It is psychologically as well pedagogically sound to learn a language, even if reading or writing ability is stressed, through the acquiring of correct pronunciation, from the very beginning. Written signs for sounds do not survive long by themselves, unless they are associated with aural and kinesthetic impressions and all are linked together.

That is why it would be futile to segregate the language skills and emphasize only one to the neglect of the others. Pronunciation contributes to sensory and motor experience. The more experience in pronouncing, the more permanent association with the new symbols. The more mental pictures, the easier the assimilation of the foreign language. The shortest way to read and write is to speak a language first. Already the Missouri Experiment has shown us that reading and speaking are so bound up with each other that they cannot be separated. Data<sup>1</sup> taken from examination papers submitted by teachers for oral approval in French in New York State tend to show that the students who have taken courses in which the foreign language was largely or predominantly the language used in class by both teacher and pupil alike have a fluency and linguistic equipment about 9 times greater than those whose courses were conducted in English. Pronunciation is one of the hardest problems of the class-room. The easiest way of acquiring the correct sounds of the new language would be constant hearing and imitation of them. That is why many American colleges have sent their juniors abroad for a whole academic year. But due to the

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1. Curtis, C. D. Vail, "Modern Language Objectives", Modern Language Journal XVII, January 1933, pp. 249-59.

present world situation, this is not possible; furthermore, we are mainly concerned with the possibilities of a two year course. The use of the foreign language as class-room medium, phonetic script, phonetic drill, phonograph, radio and foreign language moving pictures can produce very satisfactory results in pronunciation. The problems of pronunciation from the phonetic standpoint are not to determine how the combination of letters is pronounced, but rather to determine of what speech sounds the word is composed, how to form them and then to observe how those speech sounds are represented in the ordinary spelling. Cole<sup>1</sup> summarized the advantages of the use of phonetics in the class-room in the following statement:

- "1. It is the quickest method of insuring good pronunciation.
2. It is so definite that it enables one to pronounce new words without consulting the teacher.
3. It promotes accuracy in pronunciation in that at first the spelling of the word is disregarded, and it is the script that is the basis of all pronunciation.

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1. R. D. Cole, "Modern Foreign Languages and Their Teaching", Appleton Series in Special Methods, 1937, p. 321.



4. It prepares one to use the dictionary intelligently.
5. It assists in helping one spell correctly, provided that along with the symbols the combinations producing each symbol be learned thoroughly.
6. It enables one to reconstruct words heard for the first time provided the pronunciation is remembered; then these words can be found in the dictionary.
7. It lessens need for aid in pronunciation and so gives time for other phases of the work."

In the first stage of language teaching I do not use phonetics, but rather emphasize vocabulary plus classroom instruction given in the specific language. In the second semester of the first year I provide my class with mimeographed sheets presenting the phonetic symbols of vowels and consonants. During six weeks, one third of the class period is dedicated to phonetic-drill. First the vowels, then the consonants and finally vowels in combination with consonants. After this introduction into phonetics, I use a phonograph. While listening to



the record the students follow the text in silent reading from the mimeographed sheet. After having heard the record for two to three times, a certain number of students will read the text aloud. American students have the greatest difficulties in French with u, eu, r and the "nasal" s, while in German with a, ch and sp, st when initial. It is very helpful to write 10-15 of these difficult words on the black-board and have the student read it aloud. Mr. S<sub>+</sub>owell C. Goding<sup>1</sup> gives a very fine list of all the records which might be useful for teaching purposes. In case of special difficulties, the use of a dictaphone will be recommended, as most of the colleges have already established a Phonetic Laboratory. The student listens first to a record spoken by a native. Then he reads the same text into the dictaphone. After that, he listens to his own record and compares his own production with that of the native. Here it should be remembered that pronunciation does not depend only upon the assimilation of the oral-aural organs, but also upon that of the different muscles of face and mouth. Up to the age of twenty-one, it is comparatively easy to re-educate and to habituate the muscles involved, but after twenty-one the results might

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1. "Neglected Treasures", Modern Language Journal, XXIV, October 1939, pp. 34-42.

be questionable.

#### 4. Reading

Although the "reading objective" has been accepted by the Modern Foreign Language Study in 1924 and by the American and Canadian Committee on Modern Languages in 1933 and although the argument that it is the only attainable objective in a two year course has made an impression - there is still no general agreement as to what "reading ability" is and how it can be attained. As it already has been pointed out earlier in this writing, I consider the fourfold aim a more valid objective of the two year college course, then the reading ability. And in this set-up oral, aural and written work is not subordinated to reading, but all four phases have an equal part in the two years' work. Before we start with reading a small vocabulary of at least one hundred words must be mastered because the best way to learn to read a language is to speak it first. Easy graded texts should be used and more emphasis put on intensive rather than extensive reading. We need graded texts appropriate in kind and in length for the students' actual knowledge of the specific language. Reading is a very complex activity and ranges from the deciphering stage through the period of recognition of thought groups.

to the easy comprehension of larger units which culminates in reading habits. The slower we proceed in the early stage, the more attention we pay to individual difficulties, the better results and faster progress we may expect in the second year. To the extent that reading habits are developed in the beginner's course, to that extent lasting benefits of study will be secured.

In about 10% of our foreign language students the inability to read cannot be contributed to difficulties in the foreign language; the causes have to be found in general faulty habits of reading. Reading involves the visual mechanism, the auditory, the kinesthetic, the central mechanism and various parts of the motor mechanism. The proper integration of the different sensory impulses coupled with adequate motivation leads to the development of normal reading habits. Dorcus and Shaffer<sup>1</sup> state the following factors as immediate causes for reading disability or for faulty reading habits:

1. Mental deficiency;
2. Visual disorders;
3. Auditory disorders;
4. Speech mechanism disorders;

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1. "Textbook of Abnormal Psychology", The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore; 1939, pp. 110-114.



5. Malfunctioning of association processes;
6. Faulty methods of teaching;
7. Emotional maladjustment toward reading.
8. Inadequate motivation.

The remedial treatment of general reading difficulties is not the duty of the language teacher. Whenever she detects such difficulties she should hand over these cases to specialists who are in charge of remedial reading. All the foreign language teacher can do is to watch that the formation of new habit-patterns in the foreign language should be correct, and what is still more important, to make the adoption of these new patterns easy for the students. Here comes in the fallacy of translation as adequate means for the attainment of reading ability and as means to test it. In college and college preparatory courses, much attention is paid to the rendering of a text into English, as translation is the means used to test the achievement. In recent years the College Entrance Examination Board has attempted to test comprehension by newer methods. It is to be hoped that as a result of the 8 year Experiment, further changes in the right direction will be made. Oral-aural use should supplant translation. The material presented at the very outset should be such as to enable the student



to express in oral and written sentences what he has read without mediation of his native tongue. Translation trends to focus attention on English and distract from unfamiliar foreign words, and consequently interferes with the natural process of assimilation. The American student when reading in French, German or Spanish establishes a dual process of seeing the foreign printed language and translating its meaning into English even before he grasps full meaning of the text. This dual process is a waste of time and energy, slows down speed and cuts reading efficiency. To read French in French, or German in German, the student must first learn to think in that language. This can be accomplished only through slow and careful building up of

1. Basic vocabulary
2. Reading of graded and interesting texts
3. Oral and aural training.

From what has already been said the following conclusion seems to be justified. The ultimate objectives of a two year college course should be:

1. To develop the language "feel" (Sprachgefühl)
2. To learn to think in that language.

Through adequate approach by multiple avenues and through proper presentation of a simplified basic material these

ultimate objectives can be reached in the time limitation of the two year college course.

We are constantly confronted with the question, how much grammatical knowledge is needed and what kind of knowledge must it be? We all are aware that the intensive "grammar-translation" procedure of 1890 survives vigorously today in many hundreds of class-rooms in all parts of the country. While voices are raised in favor of an inductive presentation of grammar and condemnation of formal instruction of it is heard, there are still many pedagogues who believe that formal grammatical drill is indispensable for mental growth. Those teachers put the cart before the horse; they present theories and not language. They are cramming the student with grammar-rules and exceptions and when he comes to use it, he stammers incoherent sentences. "He cannot find the way out from the labyrinth they created for him."<sup>1</sup> Instead of increasing, we make him lose confidence. Grammar should be incidental, if not postponed, until facility in reading and speaking has been attained. Oral conjugation of verbs should precede their use in sentences. Explain grammar rules only in connection with reading or writing; emphasize the functional and never the formal aspect of it. The Student should find

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1. Bruno Schoeman, "Teaching Foreign Languages in Adult Education", Modern Language Journal XXIV, Oct. 1939.

the most important rules for himself. No grammar rules should be committed to memory without proper understanding. Dictation of prepared texts and their correction through class discussion is the best method to provide the student with the necessary grammatical information. In correcting their mistakes they will learn by doing and the mysteries of grammatical abstractions will be reduced to comprehensible forms. Some schools, for instance, waste all the time of the two year course in attempting to teach the rules of the German inflections; first the three groups of nouns, then definite article, and nouns, then definite article, nouns plus adjective, etc. - instead of emphasizing comprehension through hearing, reading and speaking, since with comprehension the "feel" begins to grow and prepares the ground for applied grammar.

#### 5 & 6. Cultural Information and Attitudes

One of the chief values of a language course is the cultural aspect. This cultural information embodies not only literature, but integrates the picture with artistic, social, folkloristic and political information. This selection of material should open up the whole life of the foreign nation whose language is to be studied and arouse interest for the post-school period. Professor



MacCallum, at the University of Vienna advocated informal class meetings. He would enter even the beginner's class with recent magazines, periodicals, and newspapers under his arm and the students were welcomed to look them through. A good language teacher will interweave at every opportunity some detail pertaining to the specific foreign culture, custom, or tradition. It does not matter how unimportant this information might be; it will contribute its share in bringing the foreign atmosphere into the class-room. During two weeks, I measured the time spent on this incidental information and after adding up the figures, the result showed that one fifth of the class period was given to this kind of information. This makes teaching vital, arouses the student's interest, and promotes a favorable attitude. It is up to the teacher to limit these digressions and to find his way back to the main topic. I use the cross-sectional illustration to stimulate interest among the students. If there are too many questions, they will be answered after the class period and there will be hints for additional informational material. The foreign language teacher should encourage students to listen to foreign broadcasting, to see foreign



films. The student should be required to show whether or not he has understood what he has seen or heard. These verbal or written descriptions are excellent drill material.

CHAPTER V.  
OUTLINE OF MODIFIED CLASS PROCEDURE

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF THE TWO YEAR COLLEGE COURSE: THOROUGH LINGUISTIC FOUNDATION BASED UPON THE FOURFOLD ACTIVITY: (1) UNDERSTANDING; (2) SPEAKING; (3) READING; (4) WRITING.

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES: (1) DEVELOPMENT OF SPRACHGEFUHL; (2) TO LEARN TO THINK IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

Departure from traditional procedure with emphasis on the following phases of language:

1. Sprachgefühl
2. Basic Vocabulary
3. Oral-aural approach (pronunciation)
4. Reading (omission of translation)
5. Cultural information
6. Attitudes.

CHAPTER VI.  
EXPERIMENTAL COURSE

In order to illustrate how these theories can be translated into actual class-room practice and how they can be adapted to special American situations, I shall give a brief description of the experimental course given at Massachusetts State College. Unfortunately, I cannot submit the referring statistical data, as the final outcome of this experiment is not yet known. I hope to present it at a later date after the final examination. Although the class was far too small and the time too short for concrete evidence, I still hope that my work will bring to light some minor points and thus contribute my very modest share to the solution of the problems concerning the re-orientation of modern foreign language teaching.

Experiment started: February 11, 1941.

Class-periods: 45 minutes, 3 times a week.

Testbooks used: Elton Hocking and Joseph M. Carriere:

"Transition to Reading and Writing French":

Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1940 and

Bovee, Cattanes and Robert "Promenades Littéraires et Historiques", Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y., 1940.

TABLE VII.

## EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

Name	Age	How Many Years Of French	Marks in 1st. Sem.	Average Mark 6th week	Coop. Test Scaled Scores
1. Bishop, L. J.	21	1	Below 60	12	41
2. Eaton, M. B.	20	5		40	63
3. O'Leary, R. E.	19	3		72	85
4. Pearson, R. D.	21	3		72	63
5. Walker, D. B.	19	4		62	66



First Week, February 11-14. Reading 7 pages from Robert and some additional 2 pages from Carriere. Testing of grammatical knowledge during reading. Review of fundamental grammar: avoir, etre, articles and elision. I wrote all the unfamiliar words on the blackboard and asked the students to copy them. Three times a week oral drill on about 20 new words and 10 from previous lessons. In connection with reading, I outlined two chapters from the grammar textbook and gave the students sentence completion and recognition exercises to test comprehension. During the first week I gave them a phonetic chart with the simple vowel and consonant symbols and devoted a whole class period to fundamental drill on phonetics. Class directions were given in French, followed by English translation. At the end of the first week the class took a "dictee preparee" from Robert consisting of 33 word units; time 10 minutes, and a quiz of ten minutes on verbs studied this week.

Second Week: February 18-21. Discussion of errors made in dictation. All the home-assignments and quizzes had to be corrected and handed in the following class period. Two irregular verbs were assigned for every class period. Chapter 3/I, and 3/II, dealt with the use of past tenses and with the subjunctive mood. Here I met with real difficulties, because the text book

was far too difficult for the actual knowledge of the students. Using the vocabulary and the idioms of both textbooks, I made up special exercises to point out the meaning of the subjunctive mood and its use in the sentence. Everything depends on having meaning first in a real language experience. This week and the following three, we proceeded very slowly in reading, in order to fixate and associate the new grammatical patterns. Class-work and home-assignments were intended to develop grammatical points inductively. Students were asked to identify the various tenses in their reading. This preliminary exercise was followed by verification, completion, mutation and matching exercises, combined with drill on vocabulary and pronunciation through oral and aural approach. At the end of the week, I gave the class a ten minute dictation of familiar material. Before and after dictation, I read the text very carefully and had the students watch the position of my mouth and tongue. There was a short quiz on irregular verbs assigned for that week. This procedure is the best assurance that the students will study their assignments.

Third Week, February 25-28. Same procedure as above. Gradual progress to original sentence forming orally and written with given words and idioms.

Fourth Week, March 4-7. As I believe in slow procedure, at least one third of the class period was given to review combined with new presentation, in order to promote assimilation and integration. The more advanced topics of "Carriere" were preceded by reviewing the referring fundamental grammar in applied form.

Fifth Week, March 11-14. Because of the fact that the class has to fulfill the College Board Requirements and because the final examinations will include grammar and translation, I was forced to modify my procedure to a certain extent. The second handicap was the shortage of time. That is why I decided to emphasize the grammatical remedial treatment during the first six weeks and to straighten out individual difficulties, so that smoother working should be possible for the next eight weeks. During the first six weeks the home assignments were aimed to integrate grammar with vocabulary. The students had to make a list of all the new words and idioms. I gave them sentences with the verb in infinitive and blanks for the noun and adjective. These exercises had special indications as to what mood and tense should be used. Later these exercises will be modified. The verb will be given in English and the proper French tense will be required.



Sixth Week, March 18-21. Reading ability of the class was poor. The students had great difficulties in pronouncing u, ou and the "nasals". From time to time, I put on the blackboard ten to fifteen words with "ou, u, n, m, nm, ng", and had them read it. I encouraged students to correct the mistakes of their class-mates whenever they could detect them. Weekly dictation and quiz given.

Seventh Week, March 25-28. Material covered during first six weeks:

1. Review of fundamental grammar and uses of tenses;
2. Phonetic drill upon vowels and consonants;
3. Carriere: 11 chapters (6 from part I and 5 from part II);
4. Robert: 29 pages.

Summary: Emphasis on remedial treatment of grammar and pronunciation.

Eighth Week, April 1-4. Up to this time, we used alternatively Carriere and Robert. From now on we used both books together, as reading, grammar, and oral work will play an equal role in the teaching procedure. The students had now an active vocabulary of about 350 words plus 80 idioms, which had been drilled upon during the



previous eight weeks. Now the instruction was aimed to develop the learner's power to express himself in the foreign language by means of his own vocabulary. From fact questions the transition was made to topical questions involving reproductions and resumes with abundant use of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms. The exercises and questions in Robert proved to be very helpful for this purpose. During reading, I provided the class incidentally with abundant information about France, French Culture, life, folkways and mores, food, institutions, etc. I usually made my statements in French, asked leading questions to ascertain comprehension and if needed, I would repeat the statement in English. Unfamiliar words were written on the blackboard. The weekly quizzes included some questions on this type of information. There was no translation done during the whole course and the use of the vernacular was very restricted.

At the end of the eighth week, the class took the Advanced Form Q of the Cooperative French Test, Revised Series. Results are shown on Table VIII.

TABLE VIII.

## American Council on Education - Cooperative French Test - Revised Series - Advanced Form Q.

Names	Reading		Vocabulary		Grammar		Total	
	Scaled Scores	Per-centile	Scaled Scores	Per-centile	Scaled Scores	Per-centile	Scaled Scores	Per-centile*
Bishop, L. J.	25	9	57	42	43	11	41	5
Eaton, M. B.	62	74	62	64	62	80	63	75
O'Leary, R. E.	88	99	83	96	73	97	85	97
Pearson, R. D.	33	1	62	64	63	82	63	35
Walker, D. B.	64	80	57	42	73	97	66	84

\* In computing the total percentiles, I took an average of 2-year high school French, although the actual range of previous French studies is from 1-5 years.

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