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A COMPARISON OF TWO METHODS OF TEACHING
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION:
UNIT CONTRACT METHOD AND CONVENTIONAL METHOD

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A COMPARISON OF TWO METHODS OF TEACHING
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION:
UNIT CONTRACT METHOD AND CONVENTIONAL METHOD

An Abstract of a Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Committee on Secondary Education
Appalachian State Teachers College

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

by
Ruby Akers
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The writer of this thesis had a threefold purpose in making the study on the contract and conventional methods of teaching grammar and composition: (1) to improve the methods used by the writer herself, (2) to aid other teachers in discussing and using more effective methods of teaching grammar and composition than those they are now employing, and (3) to aid college teachers in more effective training of prospective English teachers.

Information used in writing the thesis was derived from four sources: review of literature, both periodical and other; the return of 210 questionnaires of six hundred mailed to English teachers of secondary schools in Mississippi; the return of sixty-five questionnaires of the one hundred sent by the writer to her former pupils; and a classroom experiment conducted by the writer of the thesis in Appalachian High School, Boone, North Carolina, during the Spring Quarter of 1953.

The study indicates that few teachers returning questionnaires appear to be using the contract method to teach grammar and composition, even though they use it to a greater extent for book reports and other parts of the study of literature. Periodicals carry little concerning that

method as it applies to grammar and composition. Many English teachers who returned questionnaires desired information concerning the use of the contract method, in order that they might employ it in their teaching.

Of pupils returning questionnaires the vast majority preferred the contract method in grammar and composition and deemed it superior to other methods used to teach those phases of English. They found it especially good for individual differences and in groups of average and below average in number and for such groups of pupils having average and above average ability in senior high school. Pupils commended the method for its objectivity, its wholesome competition, and its motivation power. Some teacher objections were based on the belief that the method is impractical for slow pupils and large classes.

The experiment revealed nothing concerning advantages of one method over another, as far as original composition is concerned. It did, however, reveal from standardized testing that pupils in the experimental group (those taught by contract method) made almost three times as much progress as did those studying under the conventional method.

As a result of the study the writer of the thesis recommends the following:

1. That teachers who employ the contract method of teaching grammar and/or composition write articles for publication in professional magazines.
2. That more teachers use the contract method, especially to teach grammar.
3. That education teachers, especially those teaching methods classes and educational psychology classes, instruct prospective teachers in the use of the contract method along with other methods.
4. That the following studies be conducted:
 - (1) An experiment on other types of contract methods besides the type studied by the writer,
 - (2) A year's experiment using groups in which pupils are carefully paired,
 - (3) A three-month experiment with six groups of high school pupils (a. two of superior pupils, b. two of average pupils, c. two of below-average pupils),
 - (4) An experiment to find the effectiveness of the contract method for college preparatory pupils as compared with non-college preparatory pupils.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED, AND PROCEDURE

Since claims for various methods of teaching grammar and composition have been based on mere observation rather than on experimentation and other scientific study, there appears to be need for scientific investigation of the effectiveness of those methods.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This study was made to determine whether the conventional method of teaching high school grammar and the contract unit plan of teaching bring results which are appreciably different.

The objectives. The three-fold objective of making the study was (1) to improve the methods used by the writer herself, (2) to aid other teachers in discovering and using more effective methods of instruction in English grammar and composition, and (3) to aid college teachers in training more effectively prospective English teachers.

Importance of the study. The writer is vitally concerned with the lack of effectiveness of methods employed by many English teachers. Limited time devoted to the teaching of grammar and composition, because of the inclusiveness of

the English curriculum, makes knowledge of effective methods of such teaching decidedly urgent. It therefore seems worthwhile that several approaches be taken in order to gain such knowledge.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Group discussion. The term group discussion in this study will be interpreted to mean all communication carried on concerning grammar and composition within the groups of the experiment and will include the discussions conducted by the class as a whole, led by the teacher or a member of the class, as well as that presented in the form of a panel, forum, round-table, or other oral media.

Exercise. The term exercise will be used throughout the study to mean a written activity or drill, whether a composition, a dictated paragraph, or a set of sentences.

Conventional method. Conventional method will be used by the writer, for want of a better term, to include a variety of familiar practices frequently employed by teachers without reference to any formalized method or plan of procedure. Such practices include general assignments, oral and written drills, explanations by pupils and teachers, general questioning and answering in class, and any other practices commonly associated with the term "conventional"

as widely employed in the field of education.

Time contract. A definite agreement was made between the class as a whole and the teacher (but no written contracts were signed) that any individual who completed six units of work within the nine weeks devoted to an experiment would earn an A; five units, a B; four units, a C; three units (or half of the six), a D (the lowest passing mark). This definite agreement was set up as the time contract.

Unit. The writer will employ the term unit here to mean, specifically, the study of each of the six phases of an experiment: Unit I--eight parts of speech and major elements; Unit II--dictation of a friendly note and of isolated sentences; Unit III--five major errors (1) lack of agreement of subject and verb, (2) confusion of punctuation of direct and indirect quotations, (3) sentence fragments, (4) run-on sentences, (5) misspelled and mis-used words; Unit IV--case and use of pronouns; Unit V--logical subordination; Unit VI--original composition.

Group I. The section of eleventh grade English pupils taught by the conventional method was designated as Group I

and is referred to by that term throughout this study. These pupils form the control group.

Group II. The section of eleventh grade English pupils taught by the time contract-unit method was designated as Group II, and the pupils are referred to as the experimental group.

III. PROCEDURE

The writer secured data through four procedures:

(1) a review of literature, (2) returns from questionnaires sent to six hundred English teachers throughout the state of Mississippi, (3) returns from questionnaires sent to one hundred pupils who had been taught by the time contract-unit method, all former pupils of the writer, and (4) an experiment made with two groups in Appalachian High School, Boone, North Carolina.

Literature. More than three hundred fifty books on education, especially those dealing with methods and principles of teaching, were examined (by tables of content and indexes) for references bearing directly or indirectly on contract methods of various kinds. All literature in Appalachian State Teachers College library referred to in Education Index from July, 1935, until September, 1952, whether it had direct or oblique bearing on the study, was

reviewed. Two theses, as well as a doctoral dissertation in English borrowed from the University of Indiana, were reviewed. All pertinent materials in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Revised Edition, by Monroe were read, and Good's Dictionary of Words was consulted for terms used. All state bulletins on English and language arts found in the Appalachian library were examined and pertinent materials in them read.

Questionnaires to teachers. The writer mailed six hundred questionnaires to teachers of English in the state of Mississippi, to ascertain what methods they had used, why they preferred to use them, and what conclusions they had drawn.¹ Of the six hundred sent out, 210 were returned, and the results were tabulated.

Questionnaires to pupils. To one hundred former pupils of the writer were sent questionnaires concerning which method of teaching English had been most conducive to learning and under which method or methods these former pupils had learned grammar and composition which they considered most beneficial to them.² The writer went to the

¹ See "Questionnaire to Teachers," Appendix, p. 92.

² See "Questionnaire to Former Pupils," Appendix, p. 93.

office of the superintendent of New Albany (Mississippi) City Schools, where roll books were filed, and selected names of pupils from nine consecutive senior classes of New Albany High School, from 1943 through 1951. In order to secure a sampling, the writer chose from each year's senior class names of pupils whose grades ranged from highest to lowest in the class.

Beginning with the Class of 1943, she chose eleven pupils from each senior class for nine years. To make an even hundred pupils, however, she chose twelve from the Class of 1951--six boys and six girls. From the preceding eight classes she alternated the number of boys and girls chosen; for instance, she chose from the Class of 1943 six boys and five girls; from the Class of 1944, five boys and six girls; from the Class of 1945, six boys and five girls, etc. To those one hundred pupils were mailed questionnaires. Of those to whom the questionnaires were sent sixty-five returned them, and the results were tabulated.

Experiment. To aid further in determining whether the conventional method of teaching English grammar and composition or the time contract-unit method is more effective, two sections of eleventh grade pupils were set up in Appalachian High School. Each section contained twenty-four pupils with comparable ability and background. Any difference

in their achievement could reasonably be attributed to any distinct difference in teaching methods. The experiment covered a period of nine weeks.

At the beginning of the experiment, standardized tests were given and the results tabulated. Also, under the observation of the writer and another English teacher all pupils wrote compositions, which were scored separately by two English teachers (other than the writer) and the writer herself. In order that progress might be noted and comparisons might be made, another form of the same test was given and compositions were written at the end of the nine-week period. The same three teachers scored the essays by the same standards that they had used at the beginning of the experiment.

In Group I, the control group, instruction was carried on through group discussions using six days for the material covered in each of the six units. Those in Group II, the experimental group, covered the same six units or as much as each pupil could cover at his individual rate of speed. At the end of six days written exercises were administered over the material covered during the given period. For the last unit, however, only four days were available.

In Group II, the experimental group, the pupils were given written exercises each day. The teacher made all necessary explanations, answered questions, and then gave

exercises, letting each pupil progress to the next unit as soon as he had completed an exercise without an error. He was permitted to use notes, textbook, reference books, dictionary, hand books, etc.; but pupils worked independently of one another.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Even though much has been written on teaching literature and composition, less may be found concerning grammar and its relationship to composition. The laboratory method, contract plan, and units are discussed widely in periodical literature in relation to social science and literature; but little may be found on this use in grammar and composition. Authors of texts and reference books in the field of education, however, have made applications in connection with well-known plans or methods of teaching.

Literature on the practical aspects of grammar and composition. Most writers whose works were read generally agreed that all grammar and composition taught must be functional; however, they did not agree on the teaching of technical grammar. Most writers did agree on the fact that the sentence is the unit of vital consideration in teaching both grammar and composition. Hook¹ stresses students' building their own sentences. Dakin² says, "Personally, I think the sentence is best taught from the grammatical approach."

¹ J. N. Hook, The Teaching of High School English (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), pp. 275-77.

² Dorothy Dakin, How to Teach High School English (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1947), p. 124.

Many other writers make similar statements concerning one view or the other.

Even though many writers agree that teaching formal grammar is often necessary to achieve correct, forceful composition, Spear³ sets forth the idea in her doctoral dissertation that it has no advantage over incidental teaching of grammar. Many writers, such as those who contributed to the Texas English Bulletin, 1952, the authors of which specified certain drills in the correction of commonly made errors,⁴ and the Nebraska study, recognizing the same need,⁵ favor teaching technical grammar leading into composition. The writer approaches the present study from the point of view that grammar deserves some degree of formal presentation, that incidental treatment is not sufficient.

Literature on plans similar to or parallel with the contract plan. The writer looked through more than three

³ Josephine Spear, "A Comparison of Two Methods of Teaching Grammatical Usage," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, The University of Indiana, Bloomington, 1951).

⁴ Suggestions for Teachers of English (Texas Education Agency, Bulletin 528, Austin, Texas: State Board of Education, March, 1952), p. 17.

⁵ Leo P. Black, George E. Rotter, and Nettie M. Clark, editors, English for Nebraska High Schools (Lincoln, Nebraska: Department of Public Instruction, 1949), p. 28.

hundred fifty books in the library of Appalachian State Teachers College and examined them by tables of content and indexes for such terms as contract method, Dalton Plan, Morrison Plan, and Winnetka Plan. From them she found that many authors use as synonyms to contract plan the last three. Very often she discovered in them, in The Education Index, and in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature cross references from Dalton Plan to contract plan and vice versa.

Yoakam⁶ says in speaking of various plans:

The Dalton Plan with its contract and the Morrison Plan with its study guide and unit plans are perhaps the most famous of these. Winnetka, with a scheme of individualizing instruction, has been scarcely less influential.

Of the various plans discussed by the various writers of books on education the writer of this thesis deemed it wise to discuss three in considerable detail because they have influenced trends in methods, procedures, and planning of many teachers in all sections of the country.

a. Dalton Plan. Rivlin,⁷ among others, gave a concise history of the Dalton Plan, introduced in 1920, in the

⁶ Gerald A. Yoakam, Ph. D., and Robert G. Simpson, Ph. D., Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 202.

⁷ Harry N. Rivlin, editor, and Herbert Schueller, associate editor, Encyclopedia of Modern Education (New York: The Philosophical Library of New York City, 1943), p. 213.

Encyclopedia of Modern Education, stating that it was introduced in the school system of Dalton, Massachusetts. The plan is so called because of its name.

The pupils and teacher signed mimeographed or printed contracts for one month's work. Daily portions called problems were turned in by the pupils. Topics suitable for and suited to the subject, as China, in geography, are used in the Dalton Plan. A graph kept by each pupil shows how much that pupil has done on his contract.

Pupils move from room to room and spend the necessary amount of time in each subject. No bells announce class periods. A meeting of each class is scheduled about once per week, during which time the pupils and teacher carry on a socialized discussion.

Of the Dalton Plan, Jacobson⁸ says:

Three basic principles were considered necessary for the successful operation of the plan: (1) freedom for a pupil to pursue his work without interruption, (2) cooperation and interaction of group life, and (3) the budgeting of time for the accomplishment of pupil learning.

Under this plan, because of the nature of the work done and the varied speeds of the pupils, it is necessary to have classrooms adjoining laboratories.⁹

⁸ Paul B. Jacobson, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, Duties of School Principals (second edition; New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 406.

⁹ Loc. cit.

Instead of the usual grade room in which pupils doing identical work are segregated, the Dalton Plan provides subject laboratories, each laboratory being in charge of a subject specialist.¹⁰

Naturally, the Dalton Plan demands cooperative planning of the teachers whose pupils are being taught under such plan.

Helen Parkhurst set forth the "Dalton Laboratory Plan" as a solution to some of the problems of teaching in secondary schools. She did not offer it, however, as a panacea of teaching ills. She knew that the plan was susceptible to modifications, to revisions, just as she knew that it was not the sole solution to the many problems facing teachers.¹¹

Although this plan has been widely used, "it has not been copied in its entirety."¹² On the other hand, it has been modified and used to fit circumstances. From the Dalton Plan, the contract part has come to mean many things. In many instances the contract has taken on the characteristics of what is now called a unit. "So much has been

¹⁰ V. T. Thayer, The Passing of the Recitation (New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1928), p. 192.

¹¹ T. P. Nunn, "Introduction," Helen Parkhurst, Education on the Dalton Plan (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1922), pp. xvi-xvii.

¹² Rivlin, op. cit., p. 213.

incorporated into the concept of contract that it can mean just what a teacher wants to read into it."¹³ Holley¹⁴ uses Dalton Plan as a synonym for contract plan, as many other authors have done. Good¹⁵ writes that the contract plan is the basis of the Dalton Plan, and it "usually provides not only for self-instruction but also for drill activities and appraisal of progress. . . ."

b. Morrison Plan.

The term "learning unit" has frequently been identified with the Morrison plan. . . . Morrison considered a unit to be a significant and important aspect of the world of every individual who lives in a civilized society.¹⁶

Further, Morrison¹⁷ maintains that a unit must be understandable, not just capable of being memorized, that it must also be comprehensive and have unity, and that the test to

¹³ Rivlin, loc. cit.

¹⁴ Charles Elmer Holley, Ph. D., The Teacher's Technique (revised edition; Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1949), p. 228.

¹⁵ Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education (first edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945), p. 97.

¹⁶ Jacobson, op. cit., p. 407.

¹⁷ Henry C. Morrison, The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School (revised edition; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 232, 234.

be applied is not, "Does the pupil need to know?" but "Will it help the pupil to understand the structure of his discourse?"

This plan classifies secondary school subjects into five types: science, appreciation, practical arts, language arts, and pure practice types.¹⁸

The teacher is primarily the organizer of the unit, the learner having practically nothing to do with diagnosing his own needs or with evaluating his own progress.¹⁹ Simpson²⁰ further says that the teacher must teach, test, teach, and re-test and that the cycle includes five steps:

- (1) Exploration to help pupils discover what they know already and what they need to learn,
- (2) Teacher's presentation of main ideas of the unit,
- (3) Students' assimilation of information,
- (4) Organization of information into an understandable unit,
- (5) Recitation by students, oral or written, presenting findings in the particular unit.

"The Morrison plan has been used most generally with science teaching; nine per cent of the secondary schools

¹⁸ Jacobson, loc. cit.

¹⁹ Ray H. Simpson, Improving Teaching-Learning Processes (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1953), p. 401.

²⁰ Loc. cit.

in the country reported using this plan in 1932."²¹

Simpson²² says that the primary goal in the Morrison Plan is to teach subject matter; hence he feels that such a goal decidedly restricts any plan. He does grant, however, that the plan has the merits of thoroughness, of training the pupil in mastery, and of presenting units of material rather than fragments.

Bayles²³ condemns the Morrison Plan because the promoter of the plan assumes that all thinking is reflective. Simpson²⁴ goes so far as to say:

In its purest form it is seen that the Morrison Plan is too complicated for actual use. Some phases of it have been used successfully by teachers whose primary goal is the teaching of subject matter.

c. Winnetka Plan. In 1919 Charles W. Washburn adopted a plan in the public elementary and junior high schools of Winnetka, Illinois, which took the name of the

²¹ Walter S. Monroe, editor, Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Project of American Education Research Association (revised edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 569.

²² Simpson, op. cit., pp. 400-401.

²³ Ernest E. Bayles, The Theory and Practice of Teaching (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1950), p. 109.

²⁴ Simpson, op. cit., p. 401.

city, Winnetka. The plan is still in operation.²⁵ Before Washburn enacted the plan he had worked with Burk and received inspiration from the same. It had been Burk's viewpoint that the "lock-step" in education should be supplanted and, as a result, championed individual education. From Head of the Science Department of San Francisco State Normal School, Washburn went to Winnetka to establish Burk's plan, now known as the Winnetka Plan because of its success in that city.²⁶

Washburn divided the curriculum of the schools into two parts: (1) common essentials and (2) socialized and creative activities.²⁷ Pupils are to progress at their own rate of speed, primarily by means of workbook assignments and drills, in the common essentials part of the curriculum.²⁸ About half the forenoon and half the afternoon is set up for each of the two divisions.²⁹

Common essentials cover what is known as tool subjects--

²⁵ Good, op. cit., p. 452.

²⁶ William Carl Ruediger, Teaching Procedures (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), pp. 385-86.

²⁷ Good, loc. cit.

²⁸ Loc. cit.

²⁹ Ruediger, op. cit., p. 386.

arithmetic, reading, language, spelling, and essentials of geography, history, and elementary science.³⁰ The pupils were tested on the common essentials part of their studies, but no measurement of achievement was attempted in the social activities division of the curriculum. Much group work was done in the latter named part of the curriculum.³¹

Ruediger³² says of the latter:

Group activities include field trips; opportunities to develop appreciation of art, music, or literature; discussion of live issues; self-government; dramatization; handwork of all kinds. . . . These activities are to be given as much dignity and importance in the school curriculum as in the mastery of tools. It is a basic function of these activities to assist in the development of social personality.

Washburn divided the common essentials part of the curriculum into units which took from a few days to several weeks, according to the unit itself. Each pupil did his drills and exercises, checking them to see whether he had mastered the skill at hand. If the exercise was not free from errors, he studied and did additional drills until he found no errors. (He checked his own work by the aid of a guide or key.) After he had made 100% on each drill, he

³⁰ Good, loc. cit.

³¹ Loc. cit.

³² Ruediger, loc. cit.

asked the teacher for a test, which determined whether he was to progress to the next unit.³³

The procedure continued; each pupil progressing in the tool subjects at his own rate. As set up by Washburn, the same plan is now in use in Winnetka. Regardless of the exact application of the contract plan to subject matter, authors praise it as an incentive for caring for individual differences, even though it involves extra-careful planning and diligent work on the part of the teacher.

Mayer-Oakes,³⁴ in his discussion of the use he made of the contract plan in his school, praises it highly, but he points out that the above-average pupil is the one who benefits most from this plan.

Other literature concerning the laboratory method.

For years writers have recommended that the laboratory method be used, especially with senior high school and college groups. Its application was discussed in connection with functional grammar and composition by several authors. In Chisholm, Minnesota, the seniors were taught by this

³³ Ibid., pp. 386-87.

³⁴ G. H. Mayer-Oakes, Ed. D., "The Dalton Plan in a Small High School," Education, 57:224-28, December, 1936.

method in order to solve problems in English, says Miller.³⁵ Pupils took five steps: (1) formulating the problem, (2) planning their investigation, (3) collecting data, (4) organizing the data, and (5) drawing conclusions.³⁶ In other instances the authors recommended that the laboratory plan be extended so far that students report to instructors only when they need help, following the theory of well-known plans discussed above. Other writers had found that the plan worked best when the library was the scene of such plan.

Other literature on the unit plan. Several writers discussed the unit plan, most of them in relationship to social studies or literature, not grammar and composition. Walters³⁷ points out that the success of this method depends decidedly on the skill of the teacher in handling it and on the teacher's industry. Too, he points out that a unit might center about thought, instruction, understanding, work, and drill, as well as around a social problem.³⁸

³⁵ George E. Miller, "Teaching Composition by the Laboratory Method," Education, 59:164, November, 1938.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 165-66.

³⁷ T. L. Walters, "The Unit Plan of Instruction," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, 34:86-87, May, 1950.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

Lawson³⁹ maintains, "A good unit is a broad comprehensive experience, closely related to social life and composed of meaningful learning activities within some phase of human conduct or knowledge."

Even though a few authors recognize the applicability of the unit plan for tool subjects, most of them discuss it in relationship to social studies and point out its possibilities in the study of literature, rather than in that of grammar and composition.

Literature concerning the employment of group discussion. Many authors discuss their various experiences by using discussion groups to motivate composition. One subject widely discussed by such groups was literature. Variations on group discussions have been employed by English teachers for such purposes; however, group discussion, it appears, has not been employed to any extent as a plan to teach grammar.

Many writers favor breaking a class down into several small groups and letting a representative from each small group bring back to the whole class when it re-convenes the essentials of the various discussions completed by the small groups. The following illustrates such advice:

³⁹ Douglas E. Lawson, "A Critique on the Present Status of Unit Teaching," Educational Administration and Supervision, 26:429, September, 1940.

Work in small groups frequently. For, too often, the teacher is the only hardworking member of the class. When the members work in groups within the class. . . , each pupil tends to feel greater responsibility for the success and welfare of the group. . . .⁴⁰

Repeatedly, writers point out the necessity for the teacher to let the pupils feel that they must participate in the class discussion.

Several points concerning discussions have been made again and again:

- (1) Upper classmen handle discussions and profit more by them than do lower ones.⁴¹
- (2) Emotionally mature students, however, prefer lectures, and those less mature emotionally prefer discussion methods.⁴²
- (3) Discussion to be of value must be directed at specific aims. It differs from ordinary conversation by having a definite goal. The aim is not to argue, but to lead to new and better understanding.
- (4) By sharing, pupils develop initiative and learn democratic ways of life.

⁴⁰ Leo P. Black, George E. Rotter, and Nellie M. Clark, editors, English for Nebraska High Schools (Lincoln, Nebraska: Department of Public Instruction, 1949), p. 27.

⁴¹ John Pratt, "Who Are the Leaders in Permissive Discussion?" School and Society, 73:282, May, 1951.

⁴² Clifton L. Hall, "Methods--i.e. Paths," Peabody Journal of Education, 28:292-93, March, 1951.

- (5) The real test of group discussion is a changed attitude on the part of the pupil.
- (6) The teacher's importance in guiding class discussion should not be under-estimated.

Limitations of previous studies. The literature on the application of the methods under consideration was found to have only oblique bearing on the teaching of composition and especially of grammar by means of a type of contract plan. Apparently little scientific work has been done in this realm.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED
FROM
ENGLISH TEACHERS IN MISSISSIPPI

During the week of April 13, 1953, the writer mailed six hundred questionnaires to high school English teachers throughout the state of Mississippi. Since her former teaching had practically all been done in that state and since at the time of mailing them she contemplated returning to Mississippi to teach, she thought it wise to question teachers in that state. The questionnaire was prefaced by a letter explaining its purpose.¹

To secure a mailing list, the writer consulted the Mississippi Teachers Directory, 1952-53, which carried names and addresses of white teachers in all eighty-two counties of the state. Questionnaires were mailed to a random selection of English teachers in each county.

Those receiving questionnaires were teachers in all types of schools: city systems, as Jackson, Gulfport, Meridian, and Greenville; rural schools, as Bond School, Randolph High School, Mooreville High School; large consolidated schools, as Leland, Cleveland, and Crystal Springs;

¹ See Appendix, p. 92.

schools in separate school districts, as New Albany High School; small town schools, as Sherman, Chalybeate, Puckett, Lean, Itta Bena, and Bogue Chitto.

Of the six hundred questionnaires mailed to teachers, two hundred and ten, or 35 per cent, were returned to the writer. Some were answered only in part.

The table below shows that of the 210 teachers who returned questionnaires, forty-nine had used a type of contract method to teach grammar and composition, and 161 had not;² that is, of the two hundred and ten teachers, 23.3 per cent had used the contract method for this purpose.

Experience of the teachers ranged from less than one year to thirty-eight years, with an average of a little more than twelve years.

The complete distribution is shown in Table III-1.

The following pictures the range of teaching experience:

Twenty-four teachers: One year or less (one of these
one half year)

Fifteen teachers: Two years (one of these listed as one
and one half years)

Eleven teachers: Three years

² See Table III-1, p. 26.

TABLE III-1

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF 210 ENGLISH
TEACHERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
AND DATA SHOWING HOW MANY HAVE USED
THE CONTRACT PLAN OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION

Years	Number	Yes	No
1	24	2	22
2	15	0	15
3	11	3	8
4	12	1	11
5	9	1	8
6	5	0	5
7	8	1	7
8	3	1	2
9	5	2	3
10	10	4	6
11	10	2	8
12	10	3	7
13	1	0	1
14	3	0	3
15	13	4	9
16	2	1	1
17	5	2	3
18	6	2	4
19	3	1	2
20	9	3	6
21	2	0	2
22	5	3	2
23	3	0	3
24	6	3	3
25	8	1	7
26	1	1	0
27	2	1	1
28	2	1	1
29	0	0	0
30	6	3	3
31	4	2	2
32	1	1	0
33	1	0	1
34	0	0	0
35	0	0	0
36	0	0	0
37	0	0	0
38	1	0	1
No reply	4	0	4
Totals	210	49	161

Twelve teachers: Four years (one of these listed three
and one half years)

Nine teachers: Five years (one of these said four and
one half years)

Five teachers: Six years

Eight teachers: Seven years

Three teachers: Eight years

Five teachers: Nine years

Ten teachers: Ten years

Ten teachers: Eleven years

Ten teachers: Twelve years

One teacher: Thirteen years

Three teachers: Fourteen years

Thirteen teachers: Fifteen years

Two teachers: Sixteen years

Five teachers: Seventeen years

Six teachers: Eighteen years

Three teachers: Nineteen years

Nine teachers: Twenty years (one of these listed nine-
teen and one half years)

Two teachers: Twenty-one years

Five teachers: Twenty-two years

Three teachers: Twenty-three years

Six teachers: Twenty-four years

Eight teachers: Twenty-five years

One teacher: Twenty-six years
Two teachers: Twenty-seven years
Two teachers: Twenty-eight years
Six teachers: Thirty years
Four teachers: Thirty-one years
One teacher: Thirty-two years
One teacher: Thirty-three years
One teacher: Thirty-eight years

Four of the number did not designate how many years they had taught.

Of the forty-nine answering yes to the question: "Have you ever used the contract method to teach grammar and composition? Yes____, No____," the distribution is as follows:

Two: One year's experience
Three: Three years' experience
One: Four years' experience
One: Five years' experience
One: Seven years' experience
One: Eight years' experience
Two: Nine years' experience
Four: Ten years' experience
Two: Eleven years' experience
Three: Twelve years' experience
Four: Fifteen years' experience

One: Sixteen years' experience
Two: Seventeen years' experience
Two: Eighteen years' experience
One: Nineteen years' experience
Three: Twenty years' experience
Three: Twenty-two years' experience
Three: Twenty-four years' experience
One: Twenty-five years' experience
One: Twenty-six years' experience
One: Twenty-seven years' experience
One: Twenty-eight years' experience
Three: Thirty years' experience
Two: Thirty-one years' experience
One: Thirty-two years' experience

Of the one hundred sixty-one answering no to the same question, the distribution follows:

Twenty-two: One year's experience
Fifteen: Two years' experience
Eight: Three years' experience
Eleven: Four years' experience
Eight: Five years' experience
Five: Six years' experience
Seven: Seven years' experience
Two: Eight years' experience
Three: Nine years' experience

Six:	Ten years' experience
Eight:	Eleven years' experience
Seven:	Twelve years' experience
One:	Thirteen years' experience
Three:	Fourteen years' experience
Nine:	Fifteen years' experience
One:	Sixteen years' experience
Three:	Seventeen years' experience
Four:	Eighteen years' experience
Two:	Nineteen years' experience
Six:	Twenty years' experience
Two:	Twenty-one years' experience
Two:	Twenty-two years' experience
Three:	Twenty-three years' experience
Three:	Twenty-four years' experience
Seven:	Twenty-five years' experience
One:	Twenty-seven years' experience
One:	Twenty-eight years' experience
Three:	Thirty years' experience
Two:	Thirty-one years' experience
One:	Thirty-three years' experience
One:	Thirty-eight years' experience

Four did not designate the number of years' experience. In other words, there was also a wide distribution of years' experience among the teachers who answered yes and those who

answered no.

Those who have used the contract plan were asked:

"If so, to what extent have you used it? Once____, occasionally____, frequently____, exclusively____."

Of the forty-nine teachers checking yes to this question, seven said they had used the contract method only once; thirty-seven, occasionally; five, frequently; and none exclusively.³ The majority of that group who indicated that they use the contract method use it only occasionally.

The fourth question asked was this: "List your opinions on the contract method (a) advantages, (b) disadvantages" (with five numbers after each).

Seventy-eight of the two hundred ten returning the questionnaire listed advantages and/or disadvantages in using the contract method to teach grammar and composition. Thirty-three members of this group had not used the contract plan. Of that thirty-three, eight listed only disadvantages; none, advantages; and twenty-five, both advantages and disadvantages.

Forty-five persons who expressed opinions on the contract plan had themselves used the plan. Three listed advantages only; none, disadvantages only; and forty-two, both advantages and disadvantages.⁴ Four of them did not comment.

³ See Table III-2, p. 32.

⁴ See Table III-3, p. 33.

TABLE III-2

TABLE SHOWING THE FREQUENCY WITH
WHICH FORTY-NINE TEACHERS USE THE
CONTRACT METHOD OF TEACHING

Once	7
Occasionally	37
Frequently	5
Exclusively	0
Total	49

TABLE III-3

DISTRIBUTION OF LISTING OF ADVANTAGES AND
DISADVANTAGES BY SEVENTY-EIGHT TEACHERS
OF THE 210 WHO RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES

Those who checked <u>no</u>	33
Listing only advantages	0
Listing only disadvantages.	8
Listing both	25
Those who checked <u>yes</u>	45
Listing only advantages	3
Listing only disadvantages.	0
Listing both	42
<hr/>	
Total	78

Of the forty-nine teachers who have used the contract plan, forty-five, or 91.84 per cent, of them listed advantages and/or disadvantages of the contract method; while of the one hundred sixty-one who have not used the plan only thirty-three, or 20.49 per cent, listed advantages and/or disadvantages. It is natural that those using the plan have more definite ideas concerning its value than those who have not used it.

Even though there are too few cases to draw conclusions, it is interesting to note that eight of those who had not used the contract form listed only disadvantages and none of them listed advantages only; whereas three of those who have used it listed advantages only and none disadvantages only. In general, the advantages and disadvantages listed by both groups were similar.

It was a difficult task to tabulate under logical grouping the comments on advantages and disadvantages. The writer, nevertheless, listed on cards the advantages, then the disadvantages. Taking all the advantages, then all the disadvantages, she grouped in as logical, objective manner as it was possible each of the two groups.

The 197 advantages listed by seventy teachers were classified under nine headings, shown in Table III-4, along with the frequency of replies for each heading:⁵

⁵ See Table III-4, p. 35.

TABLE III-4

SHOWING 197 POINTS CONSIDERED ADVANTAGES
BY SEVENTY-EIGHT TEACHERS RETURNING
"QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS"

I.	Provides for individual differences.	52
	Of entire class.	23
	Of above-average pupils.	19
	Of slow pupil.	7
	Of busy pupil.	2
	Of average pupil.	1
II.	Motivates and challenges	58
	In general	44
	Creative work.	5
	Wholesome competition.	3
	Initiative	2
	Proficiency and mastery.	2
	Investigation.	1
	Good learner participation	1
III.	Is objective	28
	In general	9
	Definite work and contract	8
	Grading definite and fair.	7
	View of whole work	2
	Pupils doing own evaluation.	2
IV.	Acquisition of skills and habits	12
	Thoroughness	8
	High standard of skills.	2
	Concentration encouraged	1
	Neatness taught.	1
V.	Time saving.	9
	Through progression.	3
	For pupils	3
	In general	3
VI.	Adaptable.	6
	Variety afforded	3
	For written and oral work.	1
	Easy for substitute.	1
	Easy for pupil to make up work	1

TABLE III-4 (continued)

SHOWING 197 POINTS CONSIDERED ADVANTAGES
BY SEVENTY-EIGHT TEACHERS RETURNING
"QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS"

VII.	Careful planning and organization necessary.	13
	Gives chance for student-teacher planning	8
	Purposeful planning.	4
	Fits into unit-planned course.	1
VIII.	Transfer	7
	Practical use.	5
	Chance for correlation	2
IX.	Results in desirable personal and social outcomes.	12
	Satisfying to pupils	5
	Develops sense of responsibility	3
	Easier for pupils.	2
	Rewards effort	1
	Encourages good teacher-pupil relationship	1
Total		197

- I. Provides for individual differences
- II. Motivates and challenges
- III. Is objective
- IV. Acquisition of skills and habits
- V. Time saving
- VI. Adaptable
- VII. Careful planning and organization necessary
- VIII. Transfer
- IX. Results in desirable personal and social outcomes

Fifty-two comments concerned the contract method's taking care of individual differences. Of those comments, twenty-three were directed at classes as a whole. Nineteen specified the method's advantages for the above-average pupil; seven, for the slow pupil; two, for the busy pupil, as athletes and others taking part in other extra-curricular activities; one, for classes of average pupils.

Fifty-eight comments favored the contract method because the teachers making such comments believed the method motivates and challenges pupils. Forty-four teachers stated merely, "It motivates," "It challenges," or "It is good motivation." Five said that it encourages or motivates creative work. Three said it causes wholesome competition, one stating that pupils compete with their own records rather than with one another. Two pointed out that it encourages pupils to exercise initiative. Two others stated that the

contract method challenges pupils to achieve proficiency and mastery; one, that it motivates investigation; and another one, that it encourages good learner participation.

Objectivity was listed by twenty-eight persons as an advantage to using the contract method. Nine of these comments were rather general. Eight persons said that the pupils like the definiteness of contract work and enjoy knowing just what is expected under a contract. Seven said that because the pupils know what grades they will make when they have completed each unit, there is an advantage, because it is fair. Two others thought that the pupils' being able to view the whole scope of work is an advantage; while two more said that pupils' having a chance to evaluate their own work is objective.

Twelve persons commended the contract method because they believed that it encourages pupils in the acquisition of skills and habits. Eight of these pointed out its value in achieving thoroughness; two, its high standard of skills; one, its incentive for pupils to concentrate; and one other, its challenge for pupils to be neat in their written work.

Nine commended the contract method on its being time-saving. Three of them said that it permitted pupils to progress at their own rate of speed and thus saved time; three commended it because "it saves time for pupils," one of these saying that pupils who already know certain skills

do not have to waste their time repeating them; the other three merely listed, "Time saving."

Six teachers said that the contract method is advantageous because it is flexible and adapts itself to various needs. Three of these said that the method affords variety; one, that it is adaptable for written and oral work; another, that it is easy for a substitute teacher to assume teaching duties under the contract method; and still another, that it is easy for pupils to make up work by contract if it has been necessary for them to be absent from school.

Thirteen persons pointed out as advantages of the method that the contract method demands careful planning and organization of work. Eight of these said that it gives a chance for co-operative planning between pupil and teacher; four, that it requires purposeful planning; and one, that it fits into unit-planned courses.

Seven teachers mentioned the method as having transfer value. Five of them said that which had been learned by contract could be used, and two said that it is helpful in other subjects.

Twelve teachers believed that the contract method results in desirable personal and social outcomes. Five said that it is satisfying to pupils; three, that it develops a sense of responsibility; two, that it is easier for pupils; one, that it rewards effort; and another one, that it encourages

good teacher-pupil relationship.

From the foregoing comments one sees that the seventy teachers who listed the one hundred ninety-seven advantages deem the contract method advantageous for varied and numerous reasons, with those that concern motivation and challenge mentioned most frequently and those concerning provisions for individual differences running a close second.

Seventy-five persons listed one hundred thirty-eight disadvantages in using the contract method. Not counted among these seventy-five persons were two other persons who evidently misinterpreted the meaning of contract method, for one said, "Too many contractions ruin written work," and the other said, "Pupils tend to shorten too many words often and make wrong contractions." The latter had also listed under advantages, "Makes spoken words more natural."

Of the one hundred thirty-eight disadvantages listed, sixty-two related to particular types of pupils or certain groupings. Thirty-eight teachers objected to the contract method for the slow pupil. Twenty-one persons indicated that the method is not desirable for large classes, some saying it limits the size of classes and others saying it is not practical for large classes. Three persons said that the method is not practical with junior high school pupils.

Twenty-two teachers objected to the contract method because they considered it to be time-consuming. Fourteen

TABLE III-5

SHOWING 138 POINTS CONSIDERED AS DISADVANTAGES TO
THE CONTRACT METHOD OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION
BY SEVENTY-FIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS RETURNING
"QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS"

I.	Not good for certain groups	62
	For slow pupils	38
	For large classes	21
	For junior high school pupils	3
II.	Time consuming.	22
	For teachers.	14
	In general.	6
	Wasted motion	1
	Too hurried	1
III.	Bad for teachers.	16
	Planning difficult and specific	10
	Requires specifically trained teachers.	3
	Prevents originality.	2
	Requires teacher to give individual help.	1
IV.	Emotional disadvantages	9
	Emphasis of grades.	3
	Too much pressure	1
	Encourages cheating	1
	Rigid	1
	Feeling of being doomed (by pupils)	1
	Causes jealousy	1
	"Mob" influence lost.	1
V.	Weak on skills.	5
	Sacrifices fundamentals	1
	Pre-supposes aptness in skills.	1
	Various skills not stressed	1
	No mastery.	1
	Skills not practical.	1
VI.	Miscellaneous limitations	24
	Not usable for discussion	6
	Too much motivation necessary	4
	Stressing of quality, not quantity, of work.	4
	Scarcity of materials	3
	Uncertainty of lasting results.	2
	Too difficult to plan and grade	2
	Field too broad	1
	Duplicates text book.	1
	Does not take care of individual differences	1
Total		138

thought this applies to teachers, who are especially busy persons; six, that it is time-consuming for all concerned, students and teachers; one each, that there is too much wasted motion, and that it is too rushed to be effective.

There were sixteen who thought the plan disadvantageous for teachers, besides the fourteen already mentioned above, in that they held it to be time-consuming. Ten of these sixteen said the planning is too difficult and specific for teachers, two of these saying it requires special planning; three, that it requires especially trained teachers; two, that it prevents the teacher's being original; and one, that it requires the teacher to give individual attention to pupils.

Nine teachers listed disadvantages which the writer classified as emotional, since they concern feelings and tensions. Three of these said the contract method emphasizes grades. One each objected on the following grounds: that the pupil felt under pressure, that the contract method encourages cheating, that it is a rigid method, that the pupil feels doomed from the first, that it causes jealousy, and that "mob" influence is lost. How one would consider losing "mob" influence a disadvantage the writer could not understand.

Five objected to the contract method on the grounds that they believed it weak for teaching skills. The separate

comments were that it sacrifices fundamentals, it presupposes aptness in skills, various skills are not stressed, there is little real mastery, and the skills taught are not practical.

Twenty-four objections to the contract method were based on various grounds, shown in Table III-5 under "Miscellaneous limitations." Six said that the contract method does not lend itself to discussion, or socialized recitation; four, that too much motivation is necessary; four others, that quality of work, rather than quantity of work (or material covered), is stressed; three, that more teaching materials are necessary for the contract method than the conventional method and that those materials are often not available; two, that the teachers are uncertain of the lasting results; and one each, that the field (grammar and composition) is too broad for that method, that the method duplicates the text (the writer admits that she does not understand the meaning of this objection), and that the contract method does not take care of individual differences.

It may be noted that some points were listed as advantages by some teachers and disadvantages by others; for instance, "quality, not quantity, is stressed;" and "it requires careful planning."

Opposites of opinions were expressed in another manner. Some teachers thought the contract method saves

time; others thought it too time-consuming. An appreciable number thought the contract method especially advantageous in caring for individual differences, but one person thought it fails to care for individual differences, and several objected because they believed it is not advantageous for certain groups, including slow pupils, average pupils, and very bright pupils. Some thought it good for motivating pupils; others felt that pupils considered themselves doomed or under too much pressure.

According to the opinion of the teachers answering the question, the most advantageous phase of the contract method is that it cares for individual differences and is good motivation. Further, it appears that the opinion of those returning the questionnaire is that average, above average, small classes, senior high school pupils can use the contract method to better advantage than can the below-average pupils, pupils in large classes, and junior high school pupils.

To the fifth part of the questionnaire: "Make any additional comment that you would like to make," one hundred six made comments (thirty-two of those who had stated that they had used the contract method and seventy-four of those who had stated that they had not used it).⁶

⁶ See Table III-6, p. 45.

TABLE III-6

TABULATION OF 106 COMMENTS FROM AS MANY
TEACHERS WHO RETURNED "QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS"

I. Apologies	15
For not being able to help on thesis. . .	11
For being late in returning questionnaire	4
II. Mere personal comments and questions.	10
III. Statement of using the contract method for purposes other than grammar and composition	21
IV. Stated that they do not know what contract method is	7
V. Re-stated advantages and/or disadvantages . .	53
<hr/>	
Total	106

The comments were not often pertinent to the subject at hand. Fifteen apologized for not being able to help the writer with the thesis or for being late in returning the questionnaire. Ten made personal comments, wishing the writer good luck or asking where they might find information on the contract method or whether results of this study would be available to them.

Twenty-one teachers said that they had used the contract method for other fields than grammar and composition, such as book reports, literature, social studies, mathematics, term papers, extra credit in projects, elementary school. Seven merely said that they did not know what the contract method is. The remaining fifty-three re-stated or commented on their listings of advantages and/or disadvantages.

So far as the study is concerned, part five of the questionnaire might have been left off; however, it did, in many instances, reflect the eagerness of many of the teachers who returned it to be helpful and to discover for themselves anything that will aid in better teaching.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS FROM FORMER PUPILS

On June 19, 1953, the writer mailed one hundred questionnaires to former pupils, whom she had taught in New Albany High School, New Albany, Mississippi. Since she had used contract method teaching during the nine years of her teaching experience in eleventh and twelfth grade English in New Albany High School, she knew that all pupils to whom she sent questionnaires had studied grammar and composition by contract for one to three six-week periods.

During the school year 1942-'43 the writer used such a plan with the seniors for one six-week period. During the term of 1943-'44 she used the plan for a six-week period, both with juniors and seniors. During the following seven school years she used the plan once each semester (twice per year) with the twelfth grade English classes and once per year with the eleventh grade English classes.

Each six-week period was set up with six units of work. Pupils completing the requirements of all six units received A's; those completing five, B's; those completing four, C's; those completing three (or half), D's (the lowest passing mark). Completion of the unit was similar to the Winnetka plan, except that the teacher checked all exercises and returned them to the pupils before each pupil began

another exercise. Pupils progressed at their own rate of speed.

The first part of the one-hour period was spent in discussing, questioning, and note-taking. Then exercises worked out by the teacher were passed to the pupils, according to the unit on which they were working that day. The units were worked on successively, I through VI, and pupils were not permitted to skip about, as the units were arranged in logical sequence; for instance, a unit on case choice followed one on elements of sentences. Composition fell last in the sequence.

Pupils were permitted at all times to use notes, reference books, handbooks, texts, dictionaries, and any other source available; however, each pupil did his own exercises in class independently of any other pupil.

The writer made her mailing list from class rolls in New Albany High School. In order that the persons questioned be a cross-section of graduates for nine years, she chose names of pupils who had ranged from A to F on each year's work. Beginning with the class of 1943, she chose eleven pupils from each senior class for nine years, ending with the class of 1951. To make an even one hundred pupils, she chose twelve from the class of 1951--six boys and six girls. From the other eight classes she alternated the number of boys and girls chosen; for instance, from the Class of 1943 six

boys and five girls were selected; from the Class of 1944, five boys and six girls; from the Class of 1945, six boys and five girls, etc.

Former pupils were following various pursuits at the time they received their questionnaires. Some had chosen day labor; some, marriage; some, clerking; a few, businesses of their own; some, farming; one, missionary work; still others, religious education and teaching, as well as other pursuits.

The writer requested in a letter prefacing the questionnaire that each person give his candid, objective opinion, without letting the opinion of another, or what he thought the opinion of another to be, influence him.

Of the one hundred questionnaires mailed to former pupils, sixty-five were returned filled out, at least partially. Three others were returned post marked unclaimed.

Tabulation of responses to the questionnaire is shown in Table IV-1.

To the first question, "Do you recall studying high school English taught by contract method?" all sixty-five persons checked yes. It seems that any method which pupils all recalled would have had some pronounced merit (or demerit). Here, since the vast majority also preferred that method, as indicated in item 3, Table IV-1, it impressed the pupils greatly.

TABLE IV-1

TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE
MADE BY 65 FORMER PUPILS OF THE WRITER
AMONG GRADUATES OF NEW ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL,
NEW ALBANY, MISSISSIPPI, IN CLASSES FROM 1943 TO 1951

1.	Those who recalled studying high school English taught by the contract method.	65
2.	Number of six-week periods by contract	
	One.	2
	Two.	26
	Three.	36
	Not specifying	1
	Total	65
3.	Those who liked contract plan better than other methods	
	Yes.	61
	No	4
	Total	65
4.	Impressions of former pupils as to the advantages and disadvantages	
	a. Number of recommendations.	7
	b. Number of objections to its use.	22
	c. Number of commendations.	109
	d. Number making no comment	10

According to the count on question two, "How many six-week terms did you have English by contract?" two persons checked one; twenty-six persons, two; and thirty-six persons, three. One did not specify the number of periods he had studied by contract. The majority of pupils had either two or three terms of contract. Of the twenty-six checking two periods, one wrote a note stating that he thought his answer was correct, but he was not positive.

Of the sixty-five persons answering the questionnaire, about three per cent had spent one six-week period out of his last twelve such periods (two school years) studying his English by contract; forty per cent, two; and more than fifty per cent, three.

The third question asked was: "In comparison with other courses you had in English (not taught by the contract plan), did you like the contract plan any better than the others?" In reply four checked no and sixty-one checked yes.

Since each of the four who checked no signed his name, it was possible to discern that two were boys and two, girls. Of these four, one commented that he had, nevertheless, learned more by contract method and that the results had been evidenced in his college English. Another commented that by means of the contract plan he had been taught to concentrate and not make careless errors. A third commented that she had remembered the work completed by contract better

than she had remembered English taught by any method other than contract and that the contract method has more advantages than it has disadvantages. The fourth pupil said that she felt that contract demanded perfection and that all she had accomplished thereby had been awareness of detail. The replies indicate clearly that contract method, in perspective, is liked by the vast majority of pupils who answered the questionnaire.

Of the sixty-one persons who checked yes in answer to this question, three said that, even though they liked the method at the time of filling out the questionnaire, they had disliked it at the time of studying by that method. One of these three gave as his reason for disliking it that he had believed at the time that the work thereby was too difficult.

Because the writer wanted the persons questioned to express their beliefs and feelings concerning contract method, she added a fourth question: "Do you have any impression as to the advantages and/or disadvantages of the contract plan? If so, please discuss your views."

Any grouping of such information had to be somewhat arbitrary; however, the writer made as objective a tabulation of the information as it was possible for her to do. She listed the answers on cards, grouped them, and then tabulated the answers by groups.

Ten of the sixty-five pupils answering the questionnaire and returning it made no comment. Each of the fifty-five pupils who did comment made from one to five comments. These fell into three categories--(a) recommendations concerning the plan, seven; (b) objections to its use, twenty-two; and (c) commendations, one hundred and nine. All ten of those not commenting checked yes to the question: "In comparison with other courses you had in English (not taught by the contract plan), did you like the plan any better than the others?" Of these ten two had taken English grammar and composition two terms by contract, and the other eight had studied it three terms of six weeks each. A tabulation of these comments is shown in Table IV-2.

Of the seven suggestions made in favor of the use of the contract method, three were that the contract method of teaching English grammar and composition be extended throughout high school.¹ One of these designated high school to mean six years--both junior and senior high school, or from grades seven through twelve; one designated it to mean four years, or grades nine through twelve; and the others did not designate the number of years. Three suggested that contract method include laboratory work during senior high school for the grammar that had been taught by other methods

¹ See Table IV-2, p. 54.

TABLE IV-2

IMPRESSIONS OF 65 FORMER PUPILS OF THE WRITER CONCERNING
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE USE OF CONTRACT METHOD
OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION FROM
SIXTY-FIVE RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES

I.	No comments made	10
II.	Recommendations.	7
	1. That it be used for all high school years	3
	2. That it be used only as laboratory for seniors	3
	3. That all pupils be permitted to complete all units over a long period of time.	1
III.	Objections to contract method.	22
	1. Too much continual pressure	1
	2. Too difficult for high school pupils.	2
	3. Fear of failure	2
	4. Too much work for teacher	2
	5. Too difficult and tedious	4
	6. Demands perfection.	4
	7. Lack of knowledge of units beyond those completed	7
IV.	Commendations.	109
	A. General commendations	12
	1. Recommended the method for use	1
	2. Gives firm foundation in grammar	5
	3. Plan effective	6
	B. Desirable motivation.	29
	1. Eliminates fear of failure	1
	2. Accurate measurement	2
	3. Definite goal.	2
	4. Swift plan and individual progress	10
	5. Friendly competition	5
	6. Dull subject made interesting.	9
	C. Desirable way to teach mechanics and exactitude	38
	1. Learned to follow directions	1
	2. Teaches concentration.	3
	3. Makes for accuracy	7
	4. Easy to remember	12
	5. Thoroughness	15
	D. Desirable preparation for college	30

in previous years. Then one person suggested that every pupil be permitted to finish all units set up under the plan, even if it took some of them all year.

There were twenty-two points of objection listed and/or discussed. One objected on the ground that such work caused the pupil to be under too great pressure; he commented, notwithstanding, that it was, therefore, a good policy to use the method for only a six-week period. Two persons stated that grammar and composition taught by contract seemed too difficult when they had been taught by it. One of these two commented further, however, that he had changed his mind about its being too difficult when he had taken freshman English in college. Both pupils who said that they had feared failure admitted that they had learned more grammar and composition by this method than by any other method. Two of the pupils stated that the method imposes too much work on the teacher, one of whom stated that she deemed it, in spite of that, most helpful for the pupil.

One out of the four who stated that the work was "hard and tedious" admitted, as well, that it was fun; and all four, even though they found it more difficult, liked it better than other methods. Four objected to the contract method on the grounds that it demanded perfection. Each of the four said that he still liked the plan.

Seven pupils regretted that they had no chance to

know anything about units of work beyond that which they completed. It was they who made most of the recommendations for its use in all four years of high school, for its use in all six years of junior and senior high school, and for the teacher's permitting everyone to take the work by contract until he had completed all units in the contract, the amount of work carrying with it an A.

On the other hand, commendations were more numerous and, in some instances, less definite than were the objections. Twelve of the commendations were so general in nature that the writer merely grouped them under the heading "general commendations." One stated that he had cast his vote of confidence for the method; five said that the method gives a firm foundation in grammar; while six others stated that they thought the method very effective.

Twenty-nine persons believed that the contract method of teaching English affords motivation which other methods do not. One stated that it eliminates fear of failure; two more commented on its being an accurate means of measuring and that it, thus, eliminates uncertainty for pupils and teacher; two others praised it as being objective, in that both pupils and teacher have a definite goal set.

Ten pupils liked the method because they believe it eliminates waste of time and does not require pupils who already know the material to lag with those who do not know

it. One pupil said that the method is, no doubt, the best way to take care of individual differences in heterogeneous grouping. Five persons commented on the method's affording friendly competition or challenge, both between one's past record and his present, and among all pupils within the class.

Nine pupils indicated that the contract method made interesting a subject which they had formerly considered dull. One of the nine called it a "New Deal in English."

Thirty-eight pupils stated that the contract method is a desirable way to teach mechanics and exactitude. One of these said that through that method she had learned to follow directions, and she cited as proof that she had detached, as directed, the letter from the questionnaire which she was returning. Seven stated that they had learned to be accurate, and three, that they had learned to concentrate. Twelve said that the subject matter learned through this method is more easily remembered than through others. One of these twelve stated that, although she had forgotten most other subject matter learned in high school, she well remembered grammar and composition taught by the contract method. Fifteen pupils commended the method because they considered it to be thorough.

Various commendations, totaling thirty, were made in praise of the method under consideration as a desirable mode

of preparation for college. Some of these comments follow:

"I had no trouble with freshman English, even though pupils from bigger high schools than mine found it very difficult."

"It helped me in courses in college other than English, also."

"I doubt if I could have gone through college without it."

"Freshman English was easier because of this."

"It helped me considerably in freshman English."

"I learned nothing in freshman English beyond what I had learned in high school except that there is no such word as undoubtedly."

Because the writer believes that the attitude of the pupils toward the study of high school English is an important consideration, she believes that the returned information from former pupils has significant implications for curriculum planning.

CHAPTER V

CLASSROOM EXPERIMENT

On March 9, 1953, the writer began a nine-week experiment in Appalachian High School, Watauga County, Boone, North Carolina, used as a laboratory school by Appalachian State Teachers College, where she was teaching eleventh grade English and remedial reading. Because she thought that the experiment might yield valid results if pupils in the school did not know that classes were being used as means of experimentation, the pupils used for that purpose were not paired.

The writer had previously looked over the records of grades and the intelligence quotients of pupils in all three sections of English which she was teaching, tabulated them, and studied the pupils' economic and cultural status. From such data she decided to use the second and third-period classes, since those two were more nearly comparable than any other two combinations. In general the two groups were highly similar, each being an unselected group.

Group I was designated as the control group. This class consisted of twenty-four pupils. During the experiment the pupils and the group were taught six units of work by conventional day by day assignments for study, recitation, and discussion.

Group II was designated as the experimental group.

This class also consisted of twenty-four pupils, who worked at their own rate of speed on a contract basis, as previously described.

Both groups met during morning periods, five days per week for fifty minutes each day. During the nine weeks four days were used for testing, two at the beginning of the experimental period and two at the end. A total of thirty-four days was used in actual classroom instruction, seven class periods in each section being missed for various extra-curricular activities.

In Group I each unit was discussed and exercises done on it for five days, and on the sixth day a test was given. Unit I consisted in studying and identifying the eight parts of speech and the following major elements: (1) simple subject, (2) simple predicate, (3) direct object, (4) indirect object, (5) objective complement, (6) predicate nominative, and (7) predicate adjective. Unit II included writing from dictation a friendly note and a set of isolated sentences. Unit III dealt with the study of five grave errors: (1) lack of agreement of subject and verb, (2) confusion of the punctuation of direct and indirect quotations, (3) sentence fragments, (4) run-on sentences, and (5) misspelled and misused words. Unit IV consisted of a study of case and use of pronouns. Unit V treated logical subordination. Unit VI consisted of writing an original composition.¹

¹ See Appendix, pp. 94-100.

For each of the first five units, Group I (the control group) took a test on the sixth day. For Unit VI the essay was written on the sixth day, but it was considered as part of the final check-up. (The essay was scored by three English teachers, including the writer of this study.) The method employed to teach the control group was designated as the conventional method.

Both groups used the same classroom; the same materials were available; the same three teachers checked the essays at the beginning and the end of the experiment; and the same teacher (the writer) taught both groups and checked the standardized tests. Any difference in progress made by the two groups could reasonably be attributed to the difference in methods employed.

In Group II (the experimental group) the same six units of work were taught, but each pupil knew that his grade depended on the units completed without significant error. References, which the pupils were advised to study as home work, were cited for each unit. The exercises were done in class. All pupils began on Unit I the first day. Since two pupils, J. E. B. and F. J., passed Unit I on the fourth day, on the fifth day two pupils were working on Unit II, and the other twenty-two were working on Unit I. On the sixth day a third pupil passed Unit I; hence on the seventh day three were working on Unit II and the others on Unit I. Others

passed as time went on. On the fourteenth day four pupils passed Unit II. Then on the fifteenth day those four were working on Unit III; while the other pupils were on Units I and II. The pupils progressed at their own speed.

Ten days after the beginning of the experiment, one girl in Group II, the experimental group, asked, "Why are the pupils in third-period English class not taught by the contract method, as those in sixth period and those in our class are?" (Pupils in a third group of eleventh grade English were also taught during the period of experimentation by the contract method, even though they were not part of the experiment.)

The writer explained that she found it monotonous to teach three sections of English exactly the same way. Evidently, the pupil and other members of the class were satisfied with the explanation, for no one else in the class asked about the matter again. No pupil in the control group asked for an explanation of why the same method was not used in all three eleventh grade English classes.

In setting up and deciding on the sections to be used for experimentation, the writer used the rating scale applied in Appalachian High School for computing arithmetical means of grades: A+--12 points, A--11, A---10, B+--9, B--8, B---7, C+--6, C--5, C---4, D+--3, D--2, D---1, E--0, F--1.²

² See Appendix for scale, p. 101.

Then she averaged the grades of each pupil for five semesters' work (two in the ninth grade, two in the tenth grade, and one in the eleventh), all the work taken in high school by each pupil. A tabulation of the grades is shown in Table V-1. Pupils in Group I had an average of 5.56 (or a high C); while those in Group II had an average of 6.43 (also a high C, or .87 of a point higher than Group I). Individual averages in Group I ranged from 1.41 (or a D-) up to 9.80 (or an A-), a range of 8.39 points; those in Group II ranged from 2.92 (or a D+) to 10.04 (or an A-), or a range of 8.12. The average of grades made by the two groups was very similar and the range of differences was slight, in fact, only .27 of a point.

Table V-2 shows the range and arithmetical averages of the intelligence quotients of pupils in each of the two groups. Pupils are listed (by initials) alphabetically. These scores, taken from the permanent records of the pupils, were computed scores made on the Otis Quick Scoring Test given by the Guidance Department of Appalachian High School on October 3, 1951. The quotients of the twenty-four pupils in Group I ranged from 77 to 130, a range of 53 points. The intelligence quotients of the twenty-four pupils in Group II ranged from 72 (five points lower than the lowest in Group I) to 104 (twenty-six points lower than the highest in Group I). The arithmetical average of the intelligence quotients of Group I was 94.71; that of Group II, 92.13.

TABLE V-1

TABLE SHOWING THE ARITHMETICAL MEAN OF THE
SCHOLASTIC GRADES OF ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED
INDIVIDUALS IN GROUPS SET UP FOR
EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES IN APPALACHIAN HIGH SCHOOL

GROUP I (Control Group)			GROUP II (Experimental Group)		
Pupils' Initials	Grade Rating	Grade Average	Pupils' Initials	Grade Rating	Grade Average
Cl.A.	5.36	(C)	V.B.	6.00	(C+)
Co.A.	1.41	(D-)	B.B.	6.36	(C+)
B.J.B.	3.28	(D+)	J.B.	8.11	(B)
B.C.	7.77	(B)	J.E.B.	8.68	(B+)
E.G.	4.78	(C)	M.J.B.	4.80	(C)
E.M.G.	4.52	(C)	S.B.	3.92	(C-)
J.H.	5.44	(C)	B.S.C.	4.80	(C)
E.H.	7.72	(B)	J.A.C.	10.04	(A-)
P.H.	3.44	(D+)	F.C.	9.80	(A-)
J.L.	7.20	(B-)	F.G.	3.41	(D+)
J.Mc.	5.92	(C+)	H.G.	7.25	(B-)
G.M.	1.68	(D)	H.H.	6.08	(C+)
P.J.M.	7.92	(B)	M.H.	8.84	(B+)
R.M.	9.80	(A-)	J.J.	4.95	(C)
W.M.	5.36	(C)	F.J.	7.55	(B)
B.J.N.	8.32	(B)	J.M.	5.80	(C+)
E.N.	9.24	(B+)	B.L.M.	6.68	(B-)
J.P.	2.26	(D)	A.M.	5.60	(C+)
H.P.	5.16	(C)	K.P.	9.32	(B+)
B.R.	6.16	(C+)	N.Q.	4.04	(C)
M.S.	8.72	(B+)	B.J.S.	2.92	(D+)
R.W.	3.00	(D+)	B.W.	5.56	(C+)
D.W.	6.14	(C+)	J.W.	6.20	(C+)
G.W.	2.94	(D+)	N.D.W.	7.70	(B)
Total	133.54		154.41		
Average	5.56 (C+)		6.43 (C+)		
Range	1.41 to 9.80 or 8.39		2.92 to 10.04 or 8.12		

TABLE V-2

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF PUPILS IN TWO
GROUPS USED FOR THE EXPERIMENT IN TEACHING
BY CONVENTIONAL METHOD AND TIME-CONTRACT METHOD

GROUP I (Control Group)		GROUP II (Experimental Group)	
Pupils' Initials	I.Q.	Pupils' Initials	I.Q.
Cl.A.	101	V.B.	85
Co.A.	93	B.B.	100
B.J.B.	77	J.B.	104
B.J.C.	117	J.E.B.	99
E.G.	80	M.J.B.	90
E.M.G.	88	S.B.	93
J.H.	82	B.S.C.	88
E.H.	115	J.A.C.	103
P.H.	87	F.C.	101
J.L.	92	F.G.	86
J.Mc.	87	H.G.	87
G.M.	88	H.H.	83
P.J.M.	99	M.H.	95
R.M.	130	J.J.	95
W.M.	85	F.G.	99
B.J.N.	91	J.M.	99
E.N.	100	B.L.M.	88
J.P.	82	A.M.	91
H.P.	90	K.P.	91
B.R.	104	N.Q.	72
M.S.	101	B.J.S.	86
R.W.	85	B.W.	75
D.W.	115	J.W.	102
G.W.	84	N.D.W.	99
Arithmetical average		94.71	92.13
Range		77--130 or 53 points	72--104 or 32 points

Even though the range was greater in Group I than in Group II, the average was slightly higher.

In order to measure progress in both composition and grammar, two inventory tests were given all pupils in both sections under consideration. At the beginning of the experiment, an essay was written in class, and the Bm form of the Barrett-Ryan-Schrammel English Test was administered on the following day. At the end of the experiment two similar tests were given to determine the amount of progress made by each pupil within both sections, as well as that made by each section, or group. Form Cm of the standardized test was given the day following the writing of an informal essay.

For essay writing, the pupils were given subjects familiar to them, from which each pupil was to choose one and write from two hundred to three hundred fifty words in pencil, correct the essay, and copy it in pen and ink.³

Three persons (the head of the English Department of Appalachian High School, another English teacher of Appalachian High School, and the writer) scored the essays as objectively as possible, setting up a possible score of sixty for each essay, according to the following criteria:

General impression of the essay	10 points
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³ See Appendix for essay topics used, p. 102.

Punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing	10 points
Clearness, variety, and maturity of sentence structure	10 points
Originality	10 points
Following directions	5 points
Word usage	5 points
Spelling	5 points
Completing the work in the given time	5 points

A tabulation of these results is found in Table V-3.

The gain for pupils in Group I, the control group, was 4.43 points. For Group II, the experimental group, the gain was 3.55 or .88 points less than Group I.

For Group I, the following indicates points of change in progress:

One,	no progress
Three,	one point of progress
Two,	two points of progress
Four,	three points of progress
Two,	four points of progress
Six,	five points of progress
One,	six points of progress
One,	seven points of progress
One,	eight points of progress
One,	eleven points of progress
One,	thirteen points of progress

TABLE V-3

SHOWING THE CHANGE IN SCORES ON TWO ESSAYS
WRITTEN AT THE BEGINNING AND AT THE END OF THE
EXPERIMENT (POSSIBLE SCORE OF 60)

GROUP I (Control Group)				GROUP II (Experimental Group)			
Initials	First Essay	Second Essay	Change	Initials	First Essay	Second Essay	Change
Cl.A.	46	47	+ 1	V.B.	36	38	+ 2
Co.A.	10	(Did not write)		J.B.	43	48	+ 5
B.B.	25	33	+ 8	B.B.	41	44	+ 3
B.J.C.	38	42	+ 4	J.E.B.	39	43	+ 4
E.G.	23	25	+ 2	M.J.B.	33	34	+ 1
E.M.G.	31	36	+ 5	S.B.	44	44	0
J.H.	28	31	+ 3	B.S.C.	21	30	+ 9
E.H.	38	51	+13	F.C.	49	49	0
P.H.	29	32	+ 3	J.A.C.	46	50	+ 4
J.L.	41	43	+ 2	F.G.	29	(Did not write)	
G.M.	23	26	+ 3	H.G.	25	37	+12
R.M.	44	49	+ 5	H.H.	33	38	+ 5
P.J.M.	46	51	+ 5	M.H.	38	46	+ 8
W.M.	32	38	+ 6	J.J. (Did not write)	35		
J.M.	35	36	+ 1	F.J.	49	52	+ 3
B.N.	43	43	0	J.M.	31	34	+ 3
E.N.	45	49	+ 4	B.L.M.	40	42	+ 2
J.P.	21	26	+ 5	A.M.	39	41	+ 2
H.P.	36	37	+ 1	K.P.	43	47	+ 4
B.R.	39	46	+ 7	N.Q.	11	17	+ 6
M.S.	41	46	+ 5	B.J.S.	36	37	+ 1
R.W.	27	32	+ 5	B.W.	36	36	0
D.W.	26	37	+11	J.W.	37	41	+ 4
G.W.	31	34	+ 3	N.D.W.	44	44	0
Total Gain			102				78
Average Gain			4.43				3.55

Of those in Group II, the pupils were ranked as follows in change in creative composition:

Four,	no progress
Two,	one point of progress
Three,	two points of progress
Three,	three points of progress
Four,	four points of progress
Two,	five points of progress
One,	six points of progress
One,	eight points of progress
One,	nine points of progress
One,	twelve points of progress

On the days that the pupils wrote their essays, the teacher told them that they were at liberty to make use of any references in the room (text books, handbooks, dictionaries, spelling books, or any other that might be available), as long as each pupil did his own work. Three pupils in Group I and also three in Group II used a dictionary in writing and revising the initial essay. No other reference books were used, even though the entire group in each instance had been told that they could use any available reference for the purpose of revising their essays. While pupils were writing their final essays and revising them, ten persons in Group I (the control group) used dictionaries; none of them used text books, handbooks, or other reference books. On the other hand, in Group II (the experimental group) fourteen

used dictionaries, two used their text books, one used another handbook, and two more used other references. Almost twice as much use was made of references by pupils in Group II as those in Group I.

Bm and Cm forms of Barrett-Ryan-Schrammel English Test, for grades 9 to 12 and college, were given at the beginning and end of the experiment, respectively.

Progress as measured by these tests was regarded as being a more objectively determined measure than that on the essays.

A tabulation of the measures of variability or scatter on the scores derived from the standardized tests, as well as the range of scores on them, is given in Table V-4. Since the range might be decidedly varied by fluctuation of one score alone, the writer decided to show the standard deviation, since this is generally regarded to be a more useful measure of variability.

Since a small standard deviation means that a group is relatively homogeneous, a large one means the opposite. It is thought by Ross to be the most important measure of variability.⁴

In the control group, Group I, the standard deviation was 27.95 on Form Bm and 24.95 on Form Cm. In the experimental

⁴ C. C. Ross, Ph. D., Measurement in Today's Schools (second edition; New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1947), p. 236.

TABLE V-4

SHOWING THE STANDARD DEVIATION OF SCORES MADE ON FORMS
BM AND CM FOR GROUPS I AND II ON A CLASSROOM EXPERIMENT

$$\left[\text{FORMULA USED: } \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f d^2}{n} - c^2} \right]$$

GROUP I (Control Group)		GROUP II (Experimental Group)	
Bm	Cm	Bm	Cm
135-139	1		
130-134			
125-129			
120-124	1		
115-119		115-119	2
110-114		110-114	
105-109	1	105-109	
100-104	1	100-104	2
95- 99	1	95- 99	3
90- 94	1	95- 99	2
85- 89	3	90- 94	1
80- 84	2	85- 89	3
75- 79	4	80- 84	1
70- 74	4	75- 79	2
65- 69	2	70- 74	3
60- 64	4	65- 69	6
55- 59	1	60- 64	2
50- 54	1	55- 59	2
45- 49	2		

Range 51-107 or 56; 45-137 or 92 Range 55-103 or 48; 75-115 or 40

S. D. 27.95; 24.95

S. D. 17.40; 21.40

group, Group II, it was 17.40 on Form Bm and 21.40 on Form Cm. These tabulations are found in Table V-4. According to the standard deviation, one might say that pupils in Group II were more homogeneous than those in Group I.

Of the twenty-four pupils in Group I who took both forms of the test, the scores on Form Bm ranged from 107 to 51 and on Cm from 137 to 75, with a coefficient of correlation of more than .6. Of the twenty-three pupils who took both forms in Group II, the scores on Bm ranged from 103 to 55 and on Cm from 115 to 75, with a coefficient of correlation less than .7. There is comparatively little difference in the coefficient of correlation in the two groups. Table V-5 shows the tabulations above.

From the tabulations in Table V-6 it is evident that the average progress from Form Bm to Form Cm for Group I (the control group) was 4.29; that for Group II (the experimental group) was 11.74. Looking at Table V-6, one sees that pupils in Group I rated from twenty-eight points lower up to thirty points higher on the second test than on the first. Those in Group II rated from twelve points lower to thirty points higher on the second test than they did on the first.

In Group I ten pupils made lower scores on Cm (second test) than on Bm; one showed no change; while the other thirteen of the twenty-four made higher scores on Cm. Of the twenty-three pupils in Group II who took both Bm and Cm,

TABLE V-5

THE COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION OF GROUP I AND GROUP II
ON TWO FORMS OF BARRETT-RYAN-SCHRAMMEL ENGLISH TEST
AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF AN EXPERIMENT
IN METHODS OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION

$$\left[\text{FORMULA USED: } \rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} \right]$$

GROUP I
(Control Group)

Initials	Score on Bm	Rank on Bm	Score on Cm	Rank on Cm	D
E.H.	107	1	137	1	0
P.J.M.	106	2	121	2.5	.5
E.N.	105	3	103	5	2
R.M.	102	4	121	2.5	1.5
B.J.N.	96	5	105	4	1
B.J.C.	92	6	89	9	3
M.S.	84	7	93	6	1
E.M.G.	81	8	71	16	8
P.H.	80	9.5	68	19.5	10
B.R.	80	9.5	77	11.5	2
J.L.	75	11	85	10	1
W.M.	73	12.5	69	17.5	5
G.W.	73	12.5	45	24	11.5
G.M.	72	14.5	72	15	.5
B.J.B.	72	14.5	77	11.5	3
C.A.	69	16.5	68	19.5	3
J.M.	69	16.5	57	22	5.5
R.W.	68	18	69	17.5	.5
D.W.	66	19	75	13.5	5.5
J.H.	64	20	90	7.5	12.5
C.A.	63	21	90	7.5	13.5
J.P.	60	22	63	21	1
E.G.	58	23	49	23	0
H.P.	51	24	75	13.5	10.5

$$\rho = .621 \text{ or } .6+$$

TABLE V-5 (continued)

THE COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION OF GROUP I AND GROUP II
ON TWO FORMS OF BARRETT-RYAN-SCHRAMMEL ENGLISH TEST
AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF AN EXPERIMENT
IN METHODS OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION

$$\left[\text{FORMULA USED: } \rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} \right]$$

GROUP II (Experimental Group)					
Initials	Score on Bm	Rank on Bm	Score on Cm	Rank on Cm	D
J.A.C.	103	1	115	2	1
S.A.N.	100	2	104	3.5	1.5
F.C.	94	3	118	1	2
N.D.W.	90	4	85	11	7
F.J.	88	5.5	104	3.5	2
K.P.	88	5.5	99	6	.5
B.J.	87	7	73	22	15
J.B.	81	8	100	5	3
J.M.	78	9	96	7	2
J.E.B.	76	10	77	16	6
A.M.	73	11	82	12	1
J.E.C.	72	12	87	10	2
H.G.	70	13	78	14	1
J.M.	68	14	75	20	6
M.H.	67	15	88	9	6
V.B.	66	17	76	17.5	.5
H.H.	66	17	72	23	6
M.J.B.	66	17	75	20	3
B.L.H.	65	19	78	14	5
B.S.C.	64	20	78	14	6
B.B.	62	21	92	8	13
B.W.	56	22	76	17.5	4.5
N.Q.	55	23	75	20	3

$$\rho = .656 \text{ or } .7-$$

TABLE V-6

COMPARISON OF THE PROGRESS MADE ON BM AND CM FORMS OF
BARRETT-RYAN-SCHRAMMEL ENGLISH TEST
BY THE TWO GROUPS IN AN EXPERIMENT

GROUP I (Control Group)				GROUP II (Experimental Group)			
Initials	Bm	Cm	Change	Initials	Bm	Cm	Change
Cl.A.	69	68	- 1	B.B.	62	92	+30
Co.A.	63	90	+27	J.B.	81	100	+19
J.B.B.	72	77	+ 5	J.E.B.	72	87	+15
B.C.	92	89	- 3	S.B.	100	104	+ 4
E.G.	58	49	- 9	B.S.C.	64	78	+14
E.M.G.	81	71	-10	J.A.C.	103	115	+12
E.H.	107	137	+30	F.C.	94	118	+24
P.H.	80	68	-12	H.G.	70	78	+ 8
J.L.	75	85	+10	H.H.	66	72	+ 6
J.M.	69	57	-12	M.H.	67	88	+21
G.M.	72	72	0	J.J.	76	77	+ 1
P.J.M.	106	121	+15	F.J.	88	104	+16
R.M.	102	121	+19	J.M.	78	96	+18
W.M.	73	69	- 4	B.L.M.	65	78	+13
B.J.N.	96	105	+ 9	A.M.	73	82	+ 9
E.N.	105	103	- 2	K.P.	88	99	+11
J.P.	60	63	+ 3	N.Q.	55	75	+20
H.P.	51	75	+24	B.W.	56	76	+20
B.R.	80	77	- 3	J.W.	68	75	+ 7
M.S.	84	93	+ 9	N.D.W.	90	85	- 5
R.W.	68	69	+ 1	V.B.	66	76	+10
D.W.	66	75	+ 9	B.J.S.	87	75	-12
G.W.	73	45	-28	M.J.B.	66	75	+ 9
J.H.	64	90	+26				
Average Gain 4.29				Average Gain 11.74			
Range: Bm, 51 to 107 Cm, 45 to 137				Range: Bm, 55 to 103 Cm, 72 to 118			
Change, -28 to +30				Change, -12 to +30			

two pupils made lower scores on the Cm than on Bm, but all the remaining twenty-one pupils made higher scores on the second.

Regardless of the slight evident advantages, sometimes for Group I and more often for Group II, the progress of Group II over Group I was so decided that it appears that the contract method of teaching had its bearing on that progress.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In beginning this study, the writer desired to use a variety of approaches in order that conclusions drawn concerning the use of the contract method to teach grammar and composition would be based on substantial evidence.

Regardless of any conclusion which the writer of this thesis draws or any recommendation which she makes, she thoroughly realizes that no one method will fill all needs in the teaching of grammar and composition. Any method employed for the teaching of any subject or any phase or part of a subject is influenced greatly by the personality, individuality, industry, stamina, vitality, knowledge, and intelligence of the teacher employing it. Any method employed would, naturally, vary from teacher to teacher, from pupil to pupil, from school to school, and from location to location.

I. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The writer's aim in making this study was to reach conclusions based on sound evidence, in order that she might, as a result, improve her own teaching methods and that she might make recommendations to other English teachers and to teacher-training institutions.

Data were secured from four sources: (1) study of

literature which has both direct and oblique bearing on the subject, including periodicals from 1935 until the date of study; (2) information acquired through returns of 210 of six hundred questionnaires sent to English teachers throughout the state of Mississippi; (3) information acquired through returns of sixty-five of one hundred questionnaires sent to former pupils of the writer; and (4) a nine-week experiment conducted in Appalachian High School.

Findings from these four sources have been presented in Chapters II-V and form the basis for the following conclusions and recommendations.

Periodical literature has little to say concerning the employment of the contract method to teach grammar and composition. The dearth of references in periodical literature is evidence that the contract method is being employed to a limited degree, for a considerable amount has been published during the past few years on trends of various kinds. Never before have teachers, those who write well and those who write poorly, been encouraged by persons in the field of education to tell what they are doing in their public school classroom, on the playgrounds, and in the entire community.

The writer found that few teachers with whom she talked and who answered the questionnaire take advantage of suggestions that are theirs for the reading in numerous books

in the field of education. It seems rather evident that few of these English teachers mentioned adapt the contract plan to the teaching of grammar and composition. Discussions by numerous writers on unit plan, Morrison Plan, Dalton Plan, Winnetka Plan, plans for individual differences, etc. furnish abundant suggestions for variety of contract method in the field of grammar and composition, just as it does in social studies and literature.

Weaknesses, as well as advantages, to the use of the contract method were listed by teachers returning questionnaires. Both those who had and those who had not used that method favored it for its motivating effects on pupils and for its possibilities in caring for individual differences. Since it demands careful planning, some teachers consider it advantageous; others, only a few of them, consider it disadvantageous.

The greater number who objected to the use of the contract method were those who thought it impractical for certain groups, especially for large classes and slow pupils. It appears obvious that any method is more successful with small and medium-size classes than with large ones, that any method is more advantageous with pupils of average and superior ability than with pupils of limited ability.

Comparatively few teachers of those returning the questionnaire knew the contract method as it applies to

grammar and composition well enough to use it. Many of them expressed a desire to learn more about the method and its application to grammar and composition. It therefore appears that the vast majority of the teachers in that group were willing to learn, in order that they might try the contract method.

Pupils who returned the questionnaire overwhelmingly approved the contract method of teaching grammar and composition in high school, especially in senior high school. Even though many of them suggested making improvements in the variety employed by the writer of this thesis, they commended it highly for teaching mechanics and exactitude, as well as for its motivating effect. Both pupils who attended college and those who did not attend commended the method for various merits, including the motivating effect because of the novelty of its use.

The pupils' favorable attitude toward the contract method does not prove its superiority over other methods. It is possible that pupils like or dislike a method because they like or dislike a teacher. In the instance of the pupils to whom the questionnaires for this part of the study were sent, nevertheless, they had studied grammar and composition by other methods as well as by the contract method under the same teacher (the writer).

Some of the major objections to the contract method

expressed by pupils who returned the questionnaire were that the slower pupils did not have a chance to master units which they failed to cover, that perfection was demanded, that pupils often feared failure, and that the work was too tedious and difficult.

Since most of the pupils who answered the questionnaire appeared to recall vividly and pleasantly their study of high school grammar and composition taught by the contract method, even though it had been from one to ten years since they had been in high school as pupils, their strong recommendation of its use merits, at least, consideration of the plan by high school English teachers

Progress is often more real than evident. It is not likely to measure the acquisition of such things as good study habits, efficient use of reference books in making revisions, etc.; however, pupils in the experimental group appeared to acquire more efficient study habits than did the control group. The former made more extensive use of dictionaries, handbooks, and other reference books in writing their final essay than did the latter group.

On the basis of standardized tests it was evident that pupils of Group II (the experimental group) made greater progress in the study of grammar and the mechanics of composition than did the pupils of Group I (the control group). Yet there were several variables that may have accounted for some

of that progress. The progress, however, in the experimental group (the one taught by contract method) was so much greater than that of the other group that the contract method could easily be credited as a significant factor in the progress in that given situation.

On the other hand, those in the control group, according to the scoring of three English teachers, made slightly more progress in original compositions than did those in the experimental group. The difference in progress, however, was too slight for the writer to draw conclusions as to any advantages on behalf of methods employed.

Summary of conclusions. From the writer's questioning, experimenting, and observing, the following general conclusions are formulated: (1) that the contract method has more advantages for teaching grammar than for the teaching of composition but that it has advantages for the teaching of both grammar and the mechanical aspects of composition; (2) that much of its appeal to students is based on its novelty; (3) that its principal advantage is that it develops precision and motivates pupils to polish and revise their work; and (4) that it deserves wider use.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. To high school English teachers. The writer recommends to teachers of eleventh and twelfth grade

English the use of the contract method, especially for teaching grammar to pupils of average or above-average ability, if such teachers are enthusiastic about its use and if they are willing to do detailed planning and daily checking necessary to its use. One or two grading periods each school year seem to be a desirable amount of time. To them she further recommends that they try more than one variety of the contract method, that is, types of contracts different from the one described in this study.

- B. To education teachers. The writer recommends that teachers of prospective teachers instruct in the theory and practice concerning contract method, along with other methods. Both educational psychology classes and methods classes are appropriate areas for such instruction.
- C. To educators in general. The writer recommends that educators submit for publication in professional magazines more articles on the contract method.
- D. To those wishing to do further scientific study. She recommends that the following studies be made:
 - 1. That a similar experiment to this one be conducted on other types of contract methods.
 - 2. That a year's experiment be conducted using groups in which pupils are carefully paired.

3. That a three-month experiment be conducted with six groups of high school pupils--(a) two paired groups of below-average pupils, (b) two paired groups of average pupils, and (c) two paired groups of above-average pupils.
4. That an experiment be conducted to find evidence on the effectiveness of the contract method for college preparatory pupils as compared with non-college preparatory pupils.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS

The letter and questionnaire which it prefaces are examples of those sent to six hundred teachers of English in the state of Mississippi.

April 13, 1953

Dear Fellow Teacher:

Will you please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return to me at your earliest convenience. Since I am also a Mississippi teacher, this information is very important to me in writing my thesis.

Sincerely yours,

Ruby Akers

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS

1. How many years have you taught English? _____
2. Have you ever used the contract method to teach grammar and composition? _____
3. If so, to what extent have you used it? Once _____, occasionally _____, frequently, _____, exclusively _____.
4. List your opinions on the contract method.
 - a. Advantages:
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
 - b. Disadvantages:
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
5. Make any additional comment that you would like to make.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO FORMER PUPILS

One hundred copies of the following questionnaire and the letter prefacing it were sent to former pupils of the writer of this thesis.

June 19, 1953

Dear Former Pupil:

Will you please detach the following questionnaire, fill it out, and return it at your very earliest convenience, in order that I may have the information for one chapter of my thesis.

Truly, I shall appreciate your being as objective as you can in answering the questions. Do not let what anyone else thinks influence you.

Sincerely yours,

Ruby Akers

QUESTIONNAIRE TO FORMER PUPILS

1. Do you recall studying high school English taught by the contract method? Yes _____ No _____
2. How many six-weeks' terms did you have English by contract? (1) One _____, (2) Two _____, (3) Three _____.
3. In comparison with other courses you had in English (not taught by the contract plan), did you like the contract plan any better than the others? Yes _____, No _____.
4. Do you have any impressions as to the advantages and/or disadvantages of the contract plan? If so, please discuss your views.

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT

Following are exercises which may serve as samples of some of those used in both the contract teaching and the classroom method teaching.

1. For Unit I (Elements and Parts of Speech)

- a. Pick out the major elements (simple subject, simple predicate, direct object, indirect object, objective complement, predicate nominative, and predicate adjective) in the following sentences. Label each.
- b. Tell what part of speech each word in the exercise is.

- (1) "Many are called, but few are chosen."
- (2) Slowly, he walked down the aisle.
- (3) You can work the last problem.
- (4) I am sure of that.
- (5) Martha, come here.
- (6) If it rains, we shall not go with you.
- (7) Where is he?
- (8) This is one of the sentences.
- (9) He gave me no reply.
- (10) We elected him mayor.

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

2. For Unit II (Dictation)

[The first part of the exercise was dictated to be written on one side of a page; and the second part, to be written on the other side. After each part pupils were given from three to five minutes to revise.]

Part One

- (1) When John left, everyone was unhappy.
- (2) Mary bought the groceries, but she didn't pay for them.
- (3) On April 6, 1951, he left for an unknown port; therefore we do not know where he is.
- (4) Please take the baby into the nursery and bathe him.
- (5) It's time for the boy's reply.
- (6) Three days before, she had been uncertain about the matter.
- (7) We had been hoping that the girls' team would win the championship.
- (8) She read "In Memoriam" by Tennyson; yet she did not understand it.

Part Two

"Good morning, Mrs. Brown," said Sue. "May I come in?"

"Of course you may," replied Mrs. Brown.

Sue continued, "I came to see about my cat. Have you seen him--a little gray cat?"

"Have you lost your cat, Sue?" inquired Mrs. Brown.

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

3. For Unit III (Major Errors)

Decide what is wrong with the following, correct the error, and indicate in parentheses the error which you have corrected. If there is no error in the construction, write the word correct after it.

Example 1:

- (1) Peaches and cream are an excellent dessert.
- (2) The work has been done well, hence you have your reward.
- (3) Being the only person near.
- (4) Don't give up.
- (5) He said, "I'd like to see that."
- (6) What did you do, asked he.
- (7) Under the bridge floats the paper boats.
- (8) It is I who is ready to see you.
- (9) You are here now, aren't you?
- (10) Isn't that all right?
- (11) Can you go, or do you need to stay here?
- (12) If it is to late, do not go.

(Types of errors included: (1) Lack of agreement of subject and verb, (2) Misused and misspelled words, (3) Confusion of the punctuation of direct and indirect quotations, (4) Sentence fragments, and (5) Run-on sentences.)

Example 2:

- (1) I am right about this, aren't I?
- (2) It is permissable to be absent once.
- (3) I, said she, am ready to go with you.
- (4) He said, however, that he would pay the bill.
- (5) There was three persons absent yesterday.
- (6) The spectators heard the Boston Pops orchestra.
- (7) Jim asked Where did it come from?
- (8) Many of the students at the college, but not all of them.
- (9) Bacon and eggs are my favorite breakfast food.
- (10) Each of the boys have odd hobbies.

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

4. For Unit IV (Case and Use of Pronouns)

Choose the correct pronoun for each blank. For those which have nominative and objective, tell which case you chose and its use in the sentence (as subject of a verb, direct object of a verb, subject of an infinitive). If the choice is between two possessives, indicate the number (singular or plural) and give a reason for your choice.

- (1) Was _____ the one of whom you spoke? (she, her)
- (2) I think, however, Sally could be _____.
(she, her)
- (3) I want you to be _____. (he, him)
- (4) Every one of them helped _____ plate. (his, their)
- (5) Was that John by _____ he marched? (who, whom)
- (6) I want Mary and _____ to help me. (he, him)
- (7) If Mary and _____ help, I shall call. (he, him)
- (8) You may sit near _____ boys. (we, us)
- (9) That is _____ in the car. (they, them)
- (10) Give Ted and me the book for _____. (he, him)
- (11) I handed you and _____ the answer sheet.
(she, her)

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

5. For Unit V (Logical Subordination)

Take each number below and make of the construction a simple or complex sentence; that is, have only one main clause in each. When you have finished the exercise, be sure that you have at least one example of each of these constructions: adjective clause, adverbial clause, noun clause; compound predicate; appositive; infinitive phrase, gerund phrase, participial phrase, and prepositional phrase. Be sure that your final sentences are mature and logical and that you have included all ideas which are now expressed in stringy or choppy constructions.

Example 1:

- (1) He lived in a house. It was an old one. It was also not painted.
- (2) William Percy was a Mississippian. He was one of our most polished writers. He died only recently.
- (3) The girl screamed. A man was lying at her feet. He was dead.
- (4) The flowers are fresh, and they are pretty, and we cut them this morning.
- (5) I want you to return early. I also want you to pay some bills. The bills are due today.
- (6) You made the dress, and it is pretty, and you can now sell it.
- (7) We swam the distance of the lake. Doing so was fun.
- (8) Mr. Jones is a wise man. He neither buys nor sells on a credit.
- (9) The horse was pibald. I rode him often.
- (10) She was a good writer. She took great pains with her writing. She also wrote many pieces of literature.

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

5. For Unit V (continued)

Example 2:

- (1) These taste good. They have been baked right.
- (2) There is Nenia. She cleans the kitchen every Thursday.
- (3) I believe something. She is right.
- (4) I spoke to John Hayes. He is our neighbor, and he is also a friend of ours.
- (5) Lady Macbeth told Macbeth to wash his hands, and she told him to put on his nightgown.
- (6) Susie helped her mother. She helped her with the dishes.
- (7) He was an old man. He was respected.
- (8) I enjoy sports. Some of them are swimming and playing tennis.
- (9) She boiled water, then she made the tea, and then she served us.
- (10) This is a short story. It was written by Edgar Allan Poe, and it is named "Murder in the Rue Morgue."

EXERCISES USED IN THE EXPERIMENT (continued)

6. For Unit VI (Composition)

In from 200 to 350 words write a clear, mature essay on one of the topics listed below. Write the rough draft in pencil, rapidly, for the thought. Then revise, correct, and change any part you need to change. Afterwards copy in pen and ink.

"How to Make an A in English"

"Why Boone Attracts Tourists"

"What's in a Name?"

ARITHMETICAL SCALE FOR RANKING PUPILS

The following scale, used to rank pupils in Appalachian High School, is the one the writer employed to study the grouping and decide on it before beginning her experiment in teaching methods.

A+	-	12 points
A	-	11 points
A-	-	10 points
B+	-	9 points
B	-	8 points
B-	-	7 points
C+	-	6 points
C	-	5 points
C-	-	4 points
D+	-	3 points
D	-	2 points
D-	-	1 point
E	-	0 points
F	-	-1 point

LIST OF ESSAY TITLES FOR TESTING

The following topics are those suggested to pupils in the eleventh grade English classes of Appalachian High School at the beginning and at the end, respectively, of the experiment conducted by the writer of this thesis.

1. First list:

- (1) Why I Like (or Dislike) School (or anything else you may choose)
- (2) How to _____ (Make a Dress; Prepare a Field for Tobacco, Cabbage, etc.; Make an A; Study a Lesson)
- (3) How to Treat a Common Cold
- (4) Why We Had an Accident
- (5) The Weather in Boone (or any other place you choose)

2. Second list:

- (1) How _____ Should Be Taught (name of subject or phase of some subject)
- (2) Advantages and Disadvantages of Our Club Program (or either)
- (3) How to Make _____
- (4) The Advantages of a Five-Period Day
- (5) Why I Like (or Dislike) _____ (name of person, food, school subject)
- (6) People Who Delight Me
- (7) People Who Annoy Me