

Dr. Steven ten Brinke

The complete mother-tongue curriculum



Wolters-Noordhoff-Longman

Dr. Steven ten Brinke

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A tentative survey of all the relevant ways of teaching
the mother tongue in secondary education

Wolters - Noordhoff - Longman

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Contents

Introduction 9

What this book tries to offer/The application of the approach/English as lingua franca/Acknowledgments/The organization of the book

Part A. The conceptual instrument

1 – Terms and procedures 19

- 1 Aims, objectives, results 19
- 2 Options and imperatives 20
- 3 Dimensions 21
- 4 The combined application of the two paired concepts:
 - 1 option/imperative; 2 objectives/dimension 24
- 5 Presentation 28
- 5.1 Solving the problem of abundance 28
- 5.2 The need for further improvement of my 'curriculum mathematics' 29
- 6 A note on 'knowledge' 31
- 7 Working climate 33

2 – Dimensions of objectives of mother-tongue teaching and their arrangement 35

- 1 Procedure 35
- 2 The nature of the objectives 36
- 3 The arrangement of the dimensions 40
- 4 The dimensions and the classifications applying to them 41
- 4.1 Dimensions sub I, Direction and technical properties of texts 41
- 4.2 The dimension Subject (II) 42
- 4.3 Dimensions sub III, Approach 44
- 4.4 Dimensions sub IV, Miscellaneous 49
- 4.5 The dimension Functionality (V) 50
- 5 Remarks 50
- 5.1 The dualistic nature of listening and reading 50
- 5.2 Not all values within the various classifications are freely combinable 51
- 6 Some examples of how the 14 classifications apply to concrete objectives of mother-tongue teaching, or: looking into a kaleidoscope
- 6.1 Fiction: the 'Doctor's Novel' 52
- 6.2 Grammar: the dangling modifier 56
- 6.3 Writing assignment: Write a Police Warning 59

Part B. Normal functionality *versus* scholastic functionality

3 - Outline of the theory	65
1 Definitions	65
2 Is scholastic functionality a legitimate option?	67
3 Application of the principle	69
4 - Learning to read and listen for practical purposes (in a normally functional way)	71
1 Reading fiction	71
1.1 Some characteristics of the ideal teaching-learning strategy	71
1.2 How some manuals see it	85
1.3 Summary of characteristics	99
2 Reading non-fiction	100
2.1 Outline of the ideal teaching-learning strategy	100
2.2 How some manuals see it	104
5 - Learning to write and speak for practical purposes (in a normally functional way)	107
1 The production of fiction	107
2 The production of non-fiction (writing, speaking)	107
2.1 Outline of the ideal strategy	107
2.2 How some manuals see it	113
2.3 A note on discussion	115
6 - Intellectual learning and the principle of normal functionality	116
1 'Practical' versus 'intellectual'	116
2 Possible intellectual objectives of mother-tongue teaching	117
2.1 Studying	117
2.2 Playing	119
3 The rather far-reaching consequences of the principle of normal functionality	120
7 - Sacrosanct purposes	127
8 - Mixing practical and intellectual points of view	133
9 - Motives for choosing	136

Part C. The other dimensions

- 10 – Disciplinary** **141**
- 1 The principle 141
 - 2 Discipline or Non-Discipline for intellectual purposes 145
 - 3 Discipline or Non-Discipline for practical purposes 153
- 11 – ‘Dangerous subjects’** **161**
- 1 The problem 161
 - 2 The freedom to have, or not to have, a taboo 162
 - 3 The imperative of free interchange of ideas on social and political ideologies 164
 - 4 A control case 169
- 12 – Lingual correctness** **171**
- 1 The principle 171
 - 2 Teachers’ attitudes toward correctness: imperative or optional? 171
- 13 – The ‘Cultural Heritage’ motif** **175**
- 1 The principle 175
 - 2 Attitudes on the issue of old texts and their consequences for teaching methods 175
 - 2.1 The practical point of view 176
 - 2.2 The (semi-)sacrosanct point of view 177
 - 2.3 The intellectual point of view 178
 - 3 The manuals 183
- 14 – Creation or elaboration?** **185**
- 1 The principle 185
 - 2 Creativity: imperative or optional? 189
 - 3 Some implications of creativity for teaching practice 191
 - 4 The manuals 192
 - 5 Creativity in relation to some other dimensions 193
- 15 – Cooperation and individual achievement as educational aims** **194**
- 1 The principle 194
 - 2 Learning to cooperate, imperative or optional? 196
 - 3 Two neglected aspects of ‘teaching cooperation’ 199
 - 4 The manuals 204

16 -	Should we stimulate personal expression?	205
1	The principle	205
2	Personal <i>versus</i> impersonal expression from the practical point of view	206
3	Personal <i>versus</i> impersonal expression from the intellectual point of view	208
4	The manuals	214
5	A note on emotions	215

Epilogue to part C

Part D. The position of 'mother-tongue teaching' in the curriculum

17 -	The content and nomenclature of mother-tongue teaching seen against the background of the school curriculum as a whole	221
1	Point of departure: the subject curriculum	221
2	The road to an answer	221
3	The territory of mother-tongue teaching, bit by bit	223
3.1	Four bits, a principle and a dart-board	223
3.2	Full elaboration of the dart-board	230
4	Application of the scheme to a particular school	234
5	The identity of 'mother-tongue teaching'	237
5.1	Chaos?	237
5.2	The look of 'mother-tongue teaching'	239
5.3	What shall we call it?	243

Summary of aspects essential for reading and applying The Complete Mother-Tongue Curriculum	245
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Footnotes	248
----------------------------	------------

References	252
-----------------------------	------------

Index	258
------------------------	------------

Some abbreviations

MT	Mother Tongue
MTT	Mother-Tongue Teaching
MTB subjects	Mother-Tongue-Based subjects (e.g., history, biology, chemistry, mathematics)
NF	Normally Functional
p.p.	practical purposes
i.p.	intellectual purposes
s.p.	sacrosanct purposes

Introduction

What this book tries to offer

- 1) In this book I have tried in the first place to describe all of the different ways of teaching the mother tongue that can be considered legitimate.

This description is confined to secondary education.

The manuals for mother-tongue teaching to which I have had access and which have been published in various countries, do not offer an equally complete description. Each of them presents a certain way of teaching the mother tongue, i.e., the way favoured by the author of a particular manual. Of course, such handbooks may be excellent (I shall discuss several superior manuals for mother-tongue teaching). But the fact remains that they are one-sided in the sense that they are limited to one particular type of mother-tongue education.

This book, then, tries to present all of the legitimate possibilities within the mother-tongue curriculum. By legitimate I mean a curricular variant that serves educationally acceptable aims, uses teaching-learning methods and evaluation methods, and whose contents are all unambiguously consistent with these aims. Unfortunately, as most readers will be only too well aware, many teaching practices, many text-books, and also a high proportion of the manuals in the field of mother-tongue teaching, must be considered partially or completely 'illegitimate'. These 'illegitimate' views will also be discussed in this book.

- 2) In the second place, I have tried to describe all of the possible (and legitimate) positions mother-tongue teaching can take in a secondary school in relation to other subjects (for example history or science). Because mother-tongue teaching is, as we shall see, a subject with a great many completely different facets, these positions are numerous. In manuals on mother-tongue teaching, this topic is either completely neglected or only touched on superficially (for instance, just by mentioning the slogan 'Every teacher is a mother-tongue teacher', a phrase which, unless amply elaborated, says either too little or too much). In a time in which the conviction is growing, at least in the minds of the educational avant-gardists, that the secondary-school curriculum must be seen as a whole, it seemed necessary to try to arrive at a reliable answer to the question of what positions mother-tongue teaching could occupy in this whole.

Two more things should be said about this book to make its nature clear.

- 3 First, I have tried to do more than just describe all of the legitimate ways (or 'strategies', as they are called officially) of teaching the mother tongue and all of the legitimate positions this subject can take within the school curriculum: I have also attempted to do this as systematically as possible. In doing so, I was not impelled by sheer love of systematization and abstract definitions. There simply was no other way available. A recapitulation of what the various manuals on mother-tongue teaching advocate would have meant creating a chaos in which everyone, the author included, would immediately lose his way. Furthermore, the secondary-school curriculum as a whole has so many different facets that it would have been futile to attempt to tackle it with only a primitive conceptual tool.

For describing all the legitimate ways of mother-tongue teaching, I have developed a system by which they can be handled as completely and 'transparently' as possible (as the reader will soon discover, this system is not perfect). According to this system, a number of dimensions relevant to mother-tongue teaching are distinguished. Next, the question of the legitimate options within these dimensions is examined. If there is only one legitimate option within a particular dimension, that option is called an imperative.

For describing the various legitimate positions of mother-tongue teaching in secondary education, I have constructed a scheme. The most characteristic feature of this scheme is that it makes a distinction between (1) a common curricular area of educational objectives (to which all subjects can contribute), (2) a complementary area of objectives (to which mother-tongue teaching can contribute, either alone or together with other subjects), and (3) a specific area of objectives (to be reserved for mother-tongue teaching).

All in all, this book contains much more 'system' than is found in the average handbook on mother-tongue teaching. As I have tried to explain, this was made necessary by the complexity of the problems. A manual which concentrates on just one favoured variant of mother-tongue teaching and does not deal at some depth with the topic of the position of mother-tongue teaching within the secondary-school curriculum, can do without much of the terminological apparatus that had to be developed here. Let me illustrate this by a few examples.

One of the basic principles chosen by Moffett (*S-c L.A.C.*) as a point of departure, is:

'Most profoundly considered, a course of language learning is a course in thinking. A writing assignment, for example, is a thinking assignment. Conceiving and verbalizing must be taken together.'

We may agree with this statement, but it raises the question of whether physics, history, or mathematics teach thinking and, if so, what then should be considered the special task of mother-tongue teaching?

The basic principle from which Whitehead (p. 12) starts is that the aim of mother-tongue teaching is to help the students develop:

'... the ability, one might say, to use one's native tongue effectively in all its modes, in listening and speaking as well as in reading and writing, in its everyday utilitarian functions as well as for the more subtle imaginative and emotional purposes which make up the province of literature.'

Unfortunately, this too does not provide a firm basis for a theory about the task of mother-tongue teaching because, leaving 'the province of literature' out of consideration for the moment, much of what is formulated here is also attended to by good teachers in other subjects.

Helmerts states at the beginning of his book that the aim of mother-tongue teaching is language ability (for a complete rendering of the passage in question, see Chapter 17, p. 242). This raises essentially the same problem: what about the other subjects? However, the theoretical basis of Helmerts' book is weakened even more by the fact that in another part of it the author defends language study (*Sprachbetrachtung* or: 'language contemplation') as an aim for mother-tongue teaching with a value of its own – which is not necessarily incorrect but is not at all the same thing as 'language ability'.

Mary Elizabeth Fowler (p. 50) states:

'The main obligation of the teacher of English is the teaching of critical thinking.'

This formulation shows the same weakness as those of Moffett, Whitehead, and Helmerts I have just quoted.

What we see here is that some definitions which at first sight seem acceptable and quite sound, and which may suit the purpose of the author of a particular manual very well, cannot cope with questions extending beyond the restricted domain of mother-tongue teaching. They make it clear, I think, that to treat the topics of the present book properly we need a comparatively elaborate and solid conceptual system.

There is one last feature of this book which deserves brief mention here: that it tries to transgress national borderlines. In this respect it is certainly not the first of its kind. Steps in the direction of internationalization have

been recently taken by the Unesco Institute for Education at Hamburg (*Mother tongue teaching* 1972, and *Mother tongue practice . . .*, 1972). Moreover, it forms only a very modest contribution toward true internationalization of the study of mother-tongue teaching because only four countries, all of them representing the highly industrialized West, have been taken into account: England, Western Germany, the United States of America, and The Netherlands. Those who are interested in figures may care to know that about 22 per cent of the books and articles quoted are British, about 14 per cent West-German, about 38 per cent American, and about 25 per cent Dutch. Eight manuals have been chosen from the literature to function – to varying degrees – as basic material, and consequently I shall refer to them comparatively often. These manuals are:

England

Doughty, Pearce, Thornton

a Language in use

b Exploring language

Flower

Language and education

Whitehead

The disappearing dais

Western Germany

Helmers

Didaktik der deutschen

Sprache (The teaching of German)

Ulshöfer

Methodik des Deutschunterrichts

(The pedagogy of teaching German)

United States

Fowler

Teaching language, composition, and literature

Moffett

a Teaching the universe of discourse

b A student-centered language arts curriculum, grades K-13

Rodgers

New design in the teaching of English

The books and articles from a given country referred to in this book should not be seen as entirely representative of the state of the art in that particular country. Of course, they are not completely unrepresentative either: most of the manuals in question have considerable status within their national borders. Nevertheless, they cannot give the reader more than a vague, unreliable, and incomplete picture of what is going on in the field of mother-tongue teaching in the particular country. In short,

1) waarom geen hand boek uit Ned. erbij?

the present book should not be seen as an educational atlas of four countries.

As these remarks indicate, internationalization has been a secondary intention, but the penetration of at least some borders has, I think, been useful, because it enlarged my basis considerably. More concretely, it provided me with a much larger terrain for legitimate manoeuvring in the teaching of the mother tongue than I would have acquired if I had confined myself to the views expressed in just one country.

It is quite likely that this terrain could be enlarged by the inclusion of more manuals from more countries (especially non-Western countries) and therefore I sincerely hope others will continue on the road I have been able to travel for only a comparatively short distance.

The application of the approach

As the foregoing indicates, this book attempts to explore the entire region of mother-tongue teaching, and it tries to do this in such a way as to make the results of the exploration as well organized as possible. For these two reasons in particular, mother-tongue teachers in many countries may derive some profit from reading the book. The profit, if any, will probably not be felt immediately. Every mother-tongue teacher is confronted with so many practical problems (available material, the kind of students he has, colleagues' views, examination requirements, etc.) that it is almost impossible to apply immediately a new insight one has acquired (see Taylor's findings in *How teachers plan their courses*). In the long run, however, such application seems feasible in many cases.

I also hope that this book will have some influence of a more affective kind, namely by giving those concerned with mother-tongue teaching more certainty and by fostering tolerance.

As I have already said, decisions about the choice of a particular strategy for teaching the mother tongue or about the position of mother-tongue teaching in relation to other subjects, are always complicated. Consequently, teachers may be expected to feel more sure of themselves if they can at least acquire a clear idea of the 'region' of the problems they are trying to handle. What has not been said thus far is that choices concerning curricular strategy in the field of mother-tongue teaching are very often determined by what we call value orientations, in other words by people's opinions about politics, ethics, and other personal and societal values. This situation leads to the problem of tolerance.

The notion that mother-tongue teaching has strong political and ethical roots is gradually being recognized and accepted by those concerned with

the subject. There is, for instance, a growing interest in the politico-educational question of how the school should function with regard to the socially disadvantaged – as a conservative, a compensatory, or an emancipatory institute.

In the first case (conservative), the school should keep departing – as it did during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century – from the social stratification existing in industrialized countries. In the second case (compensatory), it should aim at providing lower-class children with white collar knowledge, abilities, norms, and feelings. In the third case (emancipatory), the education of lower-class and middle-class children should be directed toward mutual understanding of their respective differences in norms, outlook, etc., and of what they have in common (which, according to Marxist thinking, is that both the lower and the middle classes are essentially powerless).

It is obvious that different views on these ideological issues inevitably lead to different views on mother-tongue teaching, for instance on the question of whether lingual¹ correctness is important and what children should be asked to write or read about. These points will be dealt with in Chapters 5, 11, and 12.

There are other value orientations – besides the political or ethical – with a strong influence on one's choice of strategy for teaching the mother tongue. They may be less spectacular and therefore not have caught the attention of specialists in the field to the same extent as, for instance, the politico-educational issues, but as 'curriculum determinators' they are nevertheless important.

Let me illustrate this briefly by two views on the teaching of grammar. Robert Ulshöfer, author of the manual *Methodik des Deutschunterrichts* and founder of an influential journal (*Der Deutschunterricht*), sees the teaching of grammar as a very valuable part of the mother-tongue curriculum. Accordingly, it should in his opinion be taught by the time children have reached the age of about 10 years. Once learned, all grammar should as a matter of principle be applied to reading, listening, speaking, and writing. For example, the ability to consider a text from a grammatical point of view should enable students to acquire a clear insight into the nature of the texts they read. Ulshöfer's views will be discussed more extensively below in Part B.

Frank Whitehead, author of *The disappearing dais* and one of the first chairmen of the National Association for the Teaching of English, shows himself highly sceptical – to put it mildly – about the teaching of grammar. He examines a number of possible reasons why it might be taught,

but rejects almost all of them (the only possibility he does not exclude entirely is teaching grammar to students of 16 years or older). What is significant is that in this context he does not once mention the main motives in Ulshöfer's thinking (to read, write, etc. more 'contemplatively').

The deep cause of this 'omission' is a difference in value orientation: these two authors have different mental images of the kind of person they want their teaching to develop. Roughly speaking, Ulshöfer has in mind the intellectual person operating on a sound philosophical basis, whereas Whitehead's thinking is dominated by the conception of a person who tends to use his intuition much more. Grammar taught in the way Ulshöfer describes fits harmoniously into his conception of an educated person but not into Whitehead's.

In general, a situation of 'value-loaded pluriformity' asks for mutual understanding and tolerance without which the struggle to get one's views across invariably degenerates into the futile debates characterizing many secondary-school staffrooms, or even into a verbal battle in which irony, sarcasm, and gross oversimplifications are the main weapons. One can easily imagine such primitive controversies arising between adherents of the Ulshöfer and the Whitehead 'schools'. This is not meant to imply that opposing the ideas of some other person or group is bad in itself. On the contrary, it often seems necessary to me. But in a reasonable society such fights should always take place on the basis of a complete understanding of the viewpoints of the other party.

Unfortunately, the handbooks on mother-tongue teaching to which I have had access all advocate a single preferred strategy and do not deal seriously with strategies differing as to underlying value orientation (and consequently also to aims, content, and teaching-learning methods). Ulshöfer almost completely neglects the possibility of having mother-tongue teaching foster creative, 'playful', intuitive thinking; Whitehead does not see any point in cultivating disciplined thinking. In the technical terminology to be used in this book, the traditional manual on mother-tongue teaching presents only imperatives. Excellent though such imperatives may be in themselves, they certainly do not carry us any further in the direction of tolerant pluriformity. It was mainly in the search for a solution to this problem that I began to write this book.

English as lingua franca

English is not the author's native language. Consequently, the language in which this book has been written does not give evidence of the verbal

ability and versatility which authors of manuals on mother-tongue teaching as a rule possess. It is my hope that English-speaking readers in particular will understand that this is the inevitable consequence of internationalizing a topic.

Acknowledgements

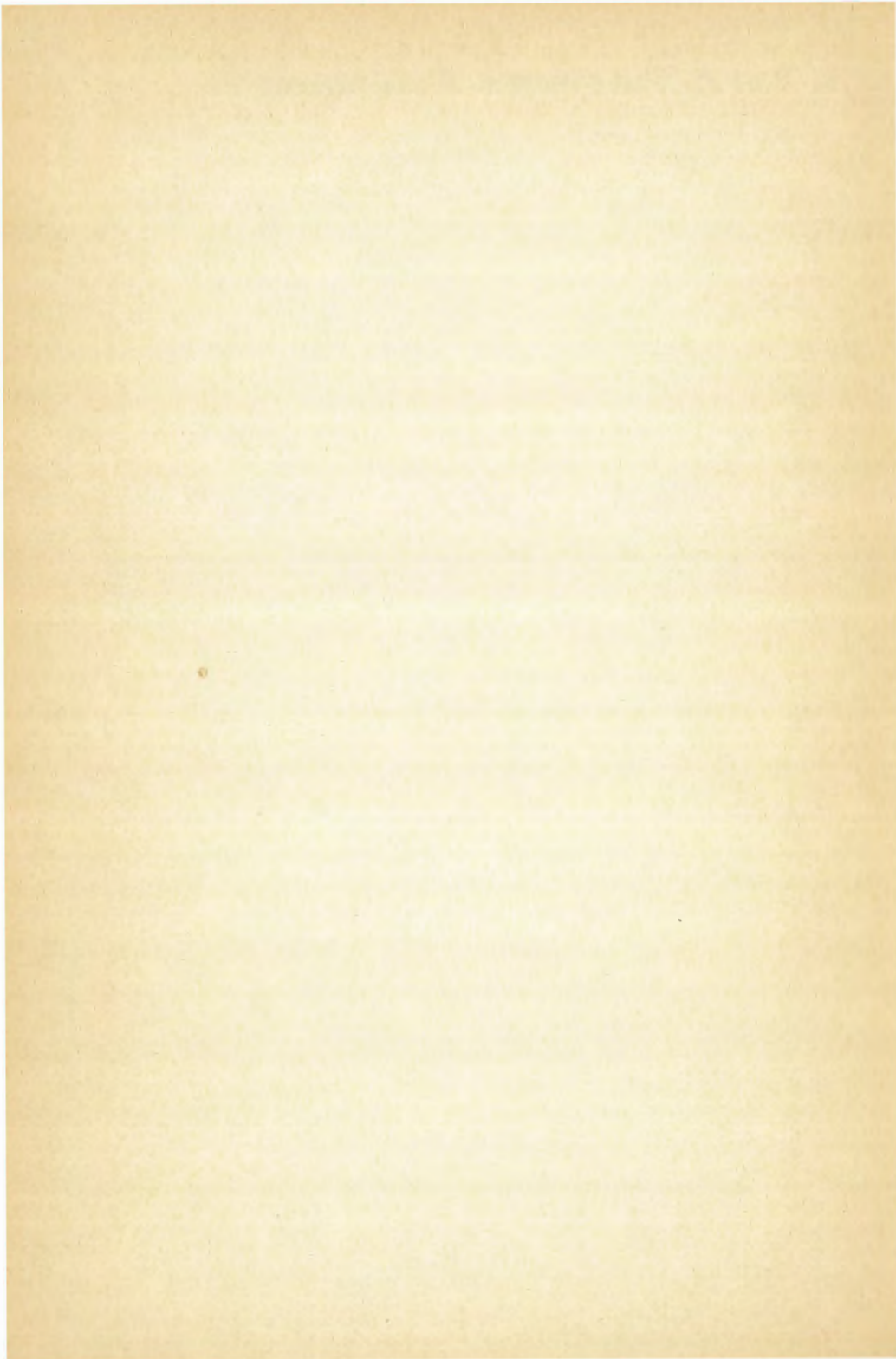
The basic ideas of *The complete mother-tongue curriculum* have functioned for some time within the LOLA² project, a programme now being developed with the aid of the Netherlands government and having aims similar to those described in this Introduction. One of the important differences is that this programme will apply to the entire school system (except tertiary education), whereas the book is confined to secondary education. Moreover, the LOLA project includes training and counseling activities, which this book does not.

I am grateful for the assistance, and sometimes resistance, of Dana Constandse, Truus van den Heuvel, and Tineke Wierda, all members of the LOLA team, during discussions on the ideas in this book.

The organization of the book

The book is divided into four parts. PART A provides the conceptual framework; PARTS B and C deal with imperatives and options (B being wholly devoted to the imperative of normal functionality); and PART D describes the territory of mother-tongue teaching, which in fact resembles a simultaneously shrinking and expanding universe. At the end there is a SUMMARY. For a picture of the overall organization of the book, it could even be read before going on from here.

◀ Part A The conceptual instrument



Terms and procedures

The subject matter presented in this book is rather complex. Consequently, a simple but clear set of terms and a simple but clear procedure are needed to deal with it. In the following, the set of terms and procedures intended to serve us as tools will be explained and briefly illustrated.

Readers who prefer not to go into the rather technical matters presented in the first two chapters – either because they would rather plunge directly into ‘things which really matter’ or because they dislike ‘such a cold way of talking about an essentially human thing like teaching’ – can turn directly to Chapter 3 and can consult Chapters 1 and 2 if they come to feel the need for some sort of conceptual basis. This does not mean, of course, that Chapters 1 and 2 are superfluous. On the contrary, without a conceptual tool of some sophistication we would soon be lost.

All discussions in this book pertain to what is usually called mother-tongue teaching, to be abbreviated as MTT. For a long time I considered using the term first-language teaching – as opposed to second-language teaching. I decided against this for two reasons. In the first place ‘first-language teaching’ is a rather uncommon term; and secondly, since, as will soon become clear, the indications mother-tongue teaching and first-language teaching are both inadequate, because a mother-tongue teacher who does what he should do, does not confine himself to teaching ‘language’, it seemed to me that if both terms were wrong, I might just as well use the traditional one.

The problem of how a really adequate designation would be formulated will be discussed in Chapter 17. Till then, the term mother-tongue teaching (MTT) will be used simply as a technical indication with a ‘richer’ content than it suggests.

Other subjects like physics, history, and mathematics, in which the mother tongue forms the means of thought and communication, will be called mother-tongue-based subjects (to be abbreviated as MTB subjects).

1 Aims, objectives, results

The starting-point of every argument in this book is formed by the concepts aim (or objective) and result.

The difference between aim and objective is, roughly, that the former is more abstract than the latter (for a more detailed terminology with regard to aims, see Wheeler, Ch. I).

The difference between aims and objectives on the one hand and result on the other is that the latter refers to what really happens in the classroom, whereas the former refer to what the teacher hopes will happen. As a matter of fact, in the field of curriculum planning it is much more realistic to think in terms of results than in terms of aims or objectives, because this keeps your feet on the ground instead of somewhere in the stratosphere, one of the main dangers threatening a paedagogue's sanity. Moreover, it is not difficult to transform an aims-and-objectives terminology into a results terminology: instead of speaking of aims and objectives, one could use the designation hoped-for results – which would remind the reader, every time it was used, of the dramatic difference between ideal and reality. Nevertheless, even though it would have been technically possible, I have not converted the widely accepted aims/objectives terminology into a results terminology. By way of compromise, I will use both types of concepts, while still favouring the traditional type. Consequently, the attentive reader will notice that the main stream of the argument still flows through the aims/objective channel and that the results terminology shows up only from time to time.

2 Options and imperatives *ducken 08*

If an MT teacher has a right to aim at a particular objective but legitimately could equally well not aim at that objective, such an objective will be called optional. Not aiming at that objective would represent the opposite option (in many cases it will prove practical to have a third one, viz. the '50 % option': the teacher recognizes the objective as relevant but not very much so).

An example. In Chapter 12, lingual correctness will be dealt with. After we have explored the philosophies underlying the various positions that a teacher may choose with respect to lingual correctness, we shall find that paying much attention to lingual correctness is as legitimate as paying moderate or almost no attention to it (as long as the written or spoken texts remain comprehensible). In other words: all three positions are optional.

If, with regard to a particular objective, the MT teacher has no other legitimate choice than to acknowledge it, aiming at that particular ob-

jective will be called imperative, (instead of optional), or an imperative. A good example of such an imperative can be found in Chapter 3, which deals with the issue of normal functionality *versus* scholastic functionality. Applied to the teaching of verbal ability, normal functionality means, roughly, that the student is always given assignments that reflect normal (not artificial) speaking, writing, listening, and/or reading situations, whereas scholastic functionality refers to the opposite strategy. For instance, a well-known strategy for teaching students to write expository texts is:

- a* to give assignments which hardly interest them;
- b* to 'correct' the text written by paying attention only to lingual¹) errors, composition, logic, etc., and completely ignoring whether what the student has written is relevant (to him, to the group he belongs to, or even to his teacher).

Such a strategy will be called scholastically functional, because it apparently does not aim at texts that have all the functions a text would have in everyday life (i.e., to convey something to other persons which, as information, is relevant).

A strategy will be called normally functional if:

- a* students are as a rule only asked to write about subjects which interest them personally or which are of obvious importance to the group they belong to, and
- b* the products are read and commented on by the teacher in a way showing that he considers them to be information, not 'texts to be corrected'.

To aim at scholastic functionality is educationally untenable – as will be shown in Chapter 3 – or put more stringently: educationally illegitimate. This means that aiming at normal functionality is an imperative.

onhoudbaar

3 Dimensions

At first sight, the procedure for establishing the options may seem to be rather simple: one tries to find out first what objectives are important for MTT and then what options these objectives have.

Unfortunately, it is not so simple to produce a list of important MTT objectives. The problem is not mainly practical in nature. It is true that manuals and articles on MTT do not use a uniform terminology in discussing such objectives, but this is not really a great difficulty. In the

first place, the problem is a logical or rather a phenomenological one. I shall briefly characterize it and explain how it can be solved by introducing the concept dimension.

Let me demonstrate the problem by means of a less evasive phenomenon than 'educational objectives'. I shall take the phenomenon 'passenger car' as an example. If someone asks you:

'What kinds of passenger cars are there?'

you would need to know, to answer adequately, what the person asking the question has in mind. If he is thinking of speed, you can inform him that there are comparatively slow and comparatively fast passenger cars. If it is makes he is interested in, you can tell him about Chevrolets, Morrisies, Volkswagens, Citroëns, and DAFs (as I have explained in the Introduction, this book tries to internationalize!). If he has in mind the distinction between private and public, he can be told that there are privately as well as publicly owned cars which are suitable for the transportation of human beings.

It is not a simple matter to compose a list of such cars, because several points of view may be relevant to the question. In the example just given I have only mentioned three possibilities:

- 1 speed
- 2 make
- 3 public/private ownership

but I could have added other things, such as:

- 4 colour
- 5 price
- 6 power
- 7 'amphibiousness',³

each new point of view 'generating' new types of cars: red/black/white, cheap/expensive, and so on.

Another difficulty is that these points of view do not fit comfortably into a coherent system. We could bring points 1, 6, and 7 under a single heading (technical quality), but the other would have to remain more or less separate. As a result, the list will be more or less chaotic.

With regard to the question 'What objectives are there for MTT?' the situation is essentially the same. We shall have to enumerate all of the relevant points of view – or dimensions, as I will call them from now on – and try to arrange them in a more or less logical system. This will be done in Chapter 2. The following examples of such dimensions are short

descriptions attempting only to give a vague idea of what is meant (for a more complete discussion, the reader should consult Chapter 2):

1 *The direction* taken by the text: there are objectives referring to speaking and writing (producing) and other objectives referring to listening and reading (receiving).

2 The degree of what I will call '*disciplinarity*'; if an objective is 'disciplinary' in nature, it demands explicitness and a systematic approach; otherwise, intuitive thinking is called for.

3 *Creativity*: there are objectives referring to creativity, but others referring to its opposite, elaboration: writing a poem is, as a rule, a creative act; analyzing it by means of a fixed set of analytical procedures is an elaborational act.

4 *Fictionality* and *Non-fictionality*: some objectives of MTT have to do with fiction, other objectives refer to non-fiction; e.g., understanding a poem *versus* understanding an expository text.

In all, Chapter 2 contains 14 such dimensions, constituting a fascinating but at the same time bewildering jungle of types of MTT objectives. I hope that the small number of dimensions I have just mentioned have served to show that, as in the case of the passenger cars, it is not easy to arrange the dimensions into a completely coherent system. Nevertheless, I shall attempt to do so.

There is no manual for MTT I know of that touches on these problems. Whenever the authors of these manuals take the trouble to explain what objectives MTT has in their view, only a comparatively simple set of aims is presented. Helmers even suggests that the easy solution he presents is based on an objective criterion. According to him (p. 33), the basic classification of MTT objectives should be of the speaking-writing-listening-reading type, because these phenomena represent 'four generally recognized fundamental categories' (*vier allgemein anerkannten fundamentalen Kategorien*). Now, 'generally recognized' is more easily said than proved. Mary Columbro Rodgers starts from an entirely different basic classification (p. 5):

language
literature
composition
communication

whereas Mary Elizabeth Fowler finds a bipartite classification adequate:

language
literature

Moreover, it would be hard to prove that the dimension 'direction taken by the text' (the first dimension just mentioned by way of example, which generates the types producing an receiving), is more fundamental, as Helmers claims, than other dimensions such as creativity, fictional and non-fictional, and the many other dimensions we will have to deal with in this book.

I do not mean to blame the manuals for the way they 'terribly simplify' (to borrow an expression from the French) the problems associated with MTT objectives. The information they try to convey is comparatively simple. They inform their readers about a set of imperatives: they tell you how they think the mother tongue should be taught. For that purpose, a simple classification will suffice.

Many years ago, this volume too started as a book about imperatives, but what I hit on was the rather surprising phenomenon 'option'. Soon, this phenomenon materialized in a great many forms. Put more simply, I found a great number of options. Since this complicated the subject-matter I had to deal with enormously, I had to use a more sophisticated classification to avoid utter confusion.

4 The combined application of the two paired concepts:

- 1 option/imperative;**
- 2 objectives/dimension**

Let us start by returning to the passenger cars. They are more concrete than educational objectives – which is not always an advantage, as one may discover by being hit by one of them.

The phenomenon 'passenger car' proved to have a number of dimensions, e.g. speed and make. If we were to explore options and imperatives with regard to passenger cars, we could do this best in three steps, by

- 1) a composing a list of dimensions, and then
- 2) b designing a simple classification within each dimension.

For example:

- within the dimension 'speed' we could classify according to given ranges: 0-10 mph, 10-80 mph, 80-150 mph;
- within 'makes' we could take a more complicated classification based

on the names of the major manufacturers (General Motors, Leyland, Fiat, Volkswagen, etc.).

Those who know something of statistics, will see that in the first case we have in fact constructed what is called a continuous scale (ranging from something to something), and in the second case a nominal scale (which has no gradations).

Now we can take the third step.

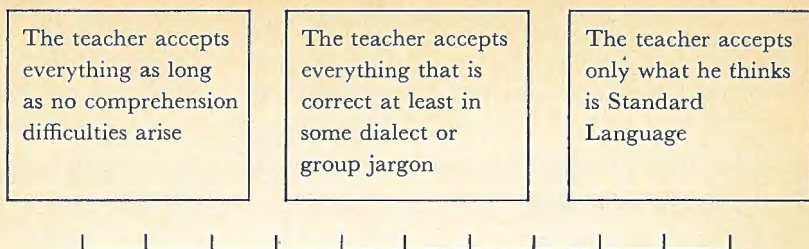
3) c applying the imperative/option distinction.

This distinction fits easily into the conceptual scheme set up by the first two steps. With regard to the 0-10-80-150 mph classification we may find (it is not important, of course, whether what is said now is really true) that every choice on this scale is optional, and that whatever choice you make has a particular, acceptable rationale behind it. For instance, if you live in a village where cars rarely come and you only need to travel a few miles at a time, you could buy a car with a top speed of 10 mph; if you are a businessman with many clients whom you want to see frequently and these clients live at some distance from each other, you might prefer a 100 mph car. For the dimension 'make' the situation is essentially the same (i.e., every choice is optional).

If with regard to a particular classification you find that you have no legitimate choice, you are in an imperative situation. You would be in such a situation if you had included 'safety' as a dimension, and then had to make a choice on the continuous scale 'un-safe/rather safe/very safe cars'.

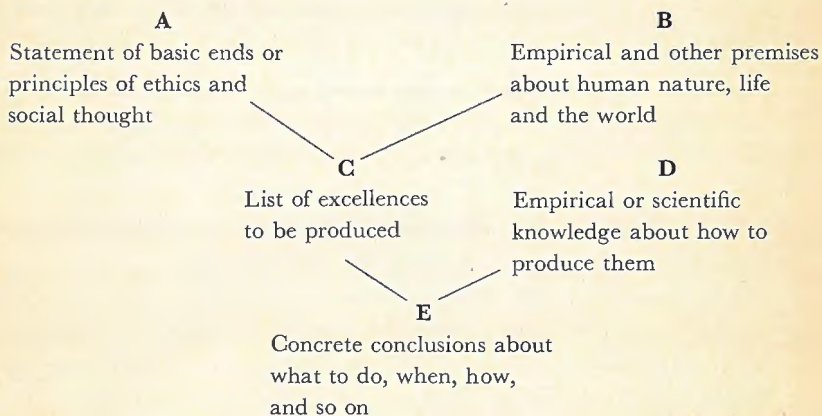
The three-step procedure briefly described here is exactly the same as the one we are going to apply to the problem of the possible strategies within the MT curriculum. We will start (1) by describing a system of dimensions of objectives, and (2) continue by designing rough classifications within each dimension; after which (3) we will try to find out what options exist with respect to each of the classifications.

For example, if we list *lingual correctness* as a dimension (this dimension is in fact one of the more trivial ones, but it still seems to be highly esteemed by an appreciable number of MT teachers) we can classify the 'space' within this dimension by means of the following (continuous) scale (see also p. 48):



MT teachers have options all along this scale. Some teachers will tend to use the righthand part of it, others the lefthand part. The philosophy underlying the first choice can be, roughly, that orderliness, correctness, and uniformity are virtues in themselves, whereas those who choose a lower position on the scale usually start from the idea that it is information which counts, not lingual correctness, and that as long as you can easily understand what is spoken or written there is nothing serious the matter. In recent years this issue has taken on political implications.

It is not unusual for an issue concerning a particular dimension – in this case lingual correctness – to acquire cultural and political implications. In general, this means that the ideas underlying a particular educational controversy, form a complex system. This need not to surprise us. William K. Frankena, quoted by Magee, produced the following map of educational decision-making:



Point A in this diagram represents prescriptive convictions, points B and D descriptive understanding. I will not try to explain this diagram completely. For the problem we are dealing with now it will suffice to say that under points A, B, and D all kinds of stands can be taken, together

forming a highly heterogeneous body of convictions and facts. In other words, this scheme indicates that conclusions sub E – and that is the level on which the issues treated in this book lie – can be arrived at in many different ways.

Because of this heterogeneity, the possible philosophies underlying any particular stand on a particular issue will only be touched on in this book, not systematically described: the latter seems impossible, at least to me. A more concrete and systematic dissection of these intricacies should be left to individuals who are actually trying to understand each others' views in a particular situation.

As has already been said more or less implicitly, political ideology is only one aspect of the philosophy underlying this book. Especially during the last few years, the leading authors in some countries seem to feel that education is all politics. I do not share this viewpoint. In this book, politics is just one the issues of life. There are many others – for instance playing *versus* working, imagining *versus* doing, being practical *versus* being intellectual *versus* being a 'believer'.

I realize that groups of educators who at this moment are tenaciously fighting for such things as a decent education for lower-class children, feel that talking about playing *versus* working is less important than discussing the question of how to emancipate the working class. However, this is not a fighting book intended for a specific innovational situation; what it is trying to provide is broad information about all of the important factors that influence mother-tongue teaching in general – the play/work issue being only one of these factors. I hope that reading between the lines will convey how strongly I sympathize with the fighters. I have tried, however, to keep feelings of this kind out of the book as much as possible.

One last remark. Besides the many options in the field of mother-tongue teaching there is at least one extremely important imperative. This imperative concerns the continuous scale:

normally
functional

scholastically
functional



An objective is considered normally functional if it reflects a normal life situation and scholastically functional if it reflects something which does not occur outside the school walls. For instance, writing a paper on a subject which interests you personally and which your teacher comments on in a way that shows he is interested in it as information, or which can

serve as material for a group of co-students working on a particular subject, is a normally functional assignment serving a normally functional objective. It is something which in everyday life is accepted as quite normal and valuable. An essay on some subject which leaves you cold and which the teacher does not comment on but just corrects, is a scholastically functional one. Between these two extremes there are an infinite number of gradations, and therefore I have represented the classification in the form of a continuous scale.

In Chapter 3 I shall try to show that choosing a position on the right side of this scale is educationally untenable, and that choosing a position on the left side of the scale is therefore imperative (right and left on this scale should be taken without ideological connotations!). As a matter of fact, this conclusion runs contrary to much MT teaching practice.

5 Presentation

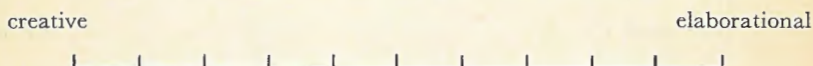
5.1 Solving the problem of abundance

In parts B and C I shall try to describe the various options existing within certain dimensions, together with their respective underlying philosophies.

Of course, many examples from teaching practice will have to be given to avoid making the whole exposition too abstract. What is more, to enable the reader to determine whether the whole argument makes any sense, I shall have to use the inductive method, i.e., I will have to develop generalizations from concrete examples.

These examples confront us with a special problem in that the dimensions will be dealt with successively, whereas for every example one takes from teaching practice, not only the dimension one is talking about applies, but many others as well.

Let us suppose that we are dealing with the dimension creativity, already mentioned in § 3 of this chapter. The space within this dimension can be classified according to the following continuous scale:



Now, if we want to develop a philosophy concerning the options that exist – or do not exist – within this space, and if we want to do this on the basis of concrete examples, the problem is that most other dimensions also apply to every example of creativity and elaboration. In other words, any concrete example of creativity we give will refer not only to that category but also to:

a either the producing of texts (e.g., creative writing) or the receiving of texts (creative reading, although almost entirely unnoticed as a possibility by manuals, is perfectly feasible);

b either disciplinary or non-disciplinary activities;

c either fictional or non-fictional texts.

This means that at least three more dimensions apply to the examples of creativity: *Direction taken by the text*, *Disciplinarity*, and *(Non-)Fictionality*.

Thus, if we want to pave the road to generalization with good examples completely – i.e., to the extent that the whole universe of possibilities is reasonably well covered by those examples – we would be compelled to produce an enormous number of them. In the example just given only four dimensions were allowed to play a role, because these four had been mentioned previously. The total number of dimensions we are going to discuss in this book amounts, however, to 14. The number of examples we would have to provide for only four dimensions would be $2^4 = 16$. For 14 dimensions it would run into thousands (at the end of Chapter 2 it will be shown how all 14 apply to just one concrete example).

The practical solution to this problem of abundance is of course sobriety. Therefore, when discussing a particular dimension and needing examples (either for developing a theory or applying it), I will include just two more dimensions. In most cases, these will be the dimensions *Direction taken by the text* and *(Non-)Fictionality*. In other words, examples will concern the producing and receiving of language with regard to both fictional and non-fictional texts. In some cases other dimensions will be briefly mentioned if this throws an interesting light on the theory or its application.

5.2 The need for further improvement of my 'curriculum mathematics'

In this book I make use of a certain kind of simple mathematics. By mathematics is understood a set of rational procedures to deal with certain things – in this case the mother-tongue curriculum. Some of these have been taken from existing publications. For instance, implicitly or explicitly, the curriculum mathematics described by Wheeler is incorporated into the discussion. The nucleus of this system is formed by the procedure for dealing systematically with all relevant aspects of curricula. According to this procedure, one must deal successively with:

- 1 aims, goals, and objectives,
- 2 learning experiences,
- 3 content,
- 4 organization, and
- 5 evaluation.

All of these aspects have reciprocal relations, to be visualized as follows:



The concept strategy can be defined by means of this scheme. On this basis a strategy is a coherent set of objectives – learning activities – content – organization – evaluation. If we combine the second and the fourth elements into ‘teaching-learning methods’, we get another definition: a strategy is a coherent set of objectives, teaching-learning methods, and a method or methods of evaluation.

Other parts of the mathematics of this book had to be developed especially for the problem it tries to cope with. The notions dimension and scale were taken from other social disciplines, whereas option/imperative had to be added as a new kind of tool (before this, as already noted, those concerned with the mother-tongue curriculum thought mainly in terms of imperatives where essentials were involved).

The addition of the dimensions and of the option/imperative concept makes the conceptual framework of this book rather complicated, particularly the former. On the whole, the curriculum mathematics in this book is more intricate than is customary in books dealing with curriculum design, just how much more intricate can be judged by comparing our set of basic terms and procedures with those in the manuals mentioned on page 12.

Of all these manuals, in my opinion, *New design* by Mary Columbro Rodgers has the most elaborate conceptual basis. She has tried to create a sound and, what is more important, a clear terminology and set of

procedures – in short, a mathematics that would enable her to cope with her subject quickly, clearly, and systematically (her book contains some very effective visualizations). Nevertheless, she confines herself to dividing MTT activities into a number of adjacent fields, together forming the total field of MTT as she sees it. This indeed reflects the simple, one-dimensional way things are normally arranged in MTT manuals. For this book such a simple method would have been unworkable: all questions discussed here cut right through most or all of the fields one could delimit. (This is not the place to go into the question of whether Mary Columbro Rodgers' 'map of MTT' is satisfactory for other purposes.)

A certain amount of 'mathematics' is indispensable in any attempt to handle complicated subject matter. Moreover, its use may generate new ideas, ideas one would probably not have had, or not that soon, if one had kept on looking at things opportunistically. And it is also true that complicated subject matter requires a correspondingly complicated conceptual instrument.

On the other hand, there is a kind of reader who wants to read, understand, and apply, and who does not want his brain maltreated. I have tried to respect this humane and practical criterion as much as I could. However, this has had its effect on mathematical purity: the conceptual framework is not consistent in many respects. To mention one of these inconsistencies: in Chapter 3 an essential option (practical or intellectual goals?) has not been related to a dimension.

There will undoubtedly be readers, too, who are able to find simple remedies for inconsistencies of this kind. If and when they do, I would greatly appreciate hearing from them.⁴

6 A note on 'knowledge'

Throughout this book, the word 'knowledge' occurs repeatedly. This is one of the concepts a team associated with the American psychologist Benjamin Bloom has attempted to define in a way acceptable to teachers and educators in the United States. English being the most influential lingua franca in the scientific world, their *Taxonomy* has become well-known internationally.

In my book 'knowledge' does not refer to exactly the same thing as Bloom *c.s.* want it to. Because one of my reasons for writing this book was to promote internationalization of my study of MTT, it is only logical to devote a few words to the differences in terminology and explain why the *Taxonomy* terminology is not completely adhered to.

options. This has not, however, been done here. In the first place,

- 1) 'working climate' is a general phenomenon applying to subjects in general,
- 2) not to MTT exclusively. In the second place, combination of the already complicated set of 14 dimensions which apply to MTT objectives with this new dimensional system would drive the reader – and probably the author – out of his mind . . .

in touch! Still, there are important interrelationships between a teaching programme one designs and the working climate it is supposed to function in. Not every programme will function within every working climate. For instance, it seems impossible to let students do personal writing (see Chapter 16) if one maintains an autocratic atmosphere. Therefore, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that while writing this book I constantly had in mind a working climate of a particular type. This climate is roughly characterized by three features:

1 The prevailing mode of decision-making is democratic: decisions are made by the group. Not all decisions should be made in this way, only the essential ones; otherwise, decision-making will consume too much time. It should also be noted that a great many essential decisions influencing classroom activities to a high degree have already been made by others, e.g. by educational authorities.

If a group (teacher + class) operates democratically, this does not necessarily mean that the teacher's influence is equal to that of any student in the group. As a rule, in the working climate I am envisaging this is not the case. I see the teacher as someone who, in general, has more experience and knows more about certain things, which inevitably gives him more influence than any individual student. This influence, by the way, will also be expressed in the way students express their preferences or cast their votes. In other words, the one-man-one-vote principle does not necessarily coincide with all-men-equal-influence.

2 Decision-making as well as all other forms of teacher-student interaction (and, if possible, all student-student interaction), should be based as much as possible on the principle of reasonableness.

3 Mutual sympathy between teacher and student should prevail.

Of these three features, only the first is not generally accepted in educational manuals. I shall not go any further into the many aspects and problems of democracy in the classroom, because the restricted purpose of this book does not require it.

For additional features of the working climate, which apply to a special type of teaching-learning activity, see Chapter 16, p. 212 ff.

Dimensions of objectives of mother-tongue teaching and their arrangement

1 Procedure

If we wanted to bring some order into the dimensions I have mentioned with regard to passenger cars (e.g. speed, power, price, shape), the first thing we would have to do is decide what a passenger car is. We would have to describe some of its characteristics:

it is a vehicle

it is propelled by an engine

it protects the passengers from rain,

etc.

Next, we could try to design a system of Main Dimensions, e.g. technical aspects, esthetic aspects, economic aspects, social aspects, make. Then we could try to give the dimensions of the first type mentioned (speed, etc.) a place somewhere in that system. As a result, we could arrive at something like this:

<i>Main Dimension</i>	<i>Dimension⁵</i>
I technical aspects	1 power
:	2 speed
	3 safety
II esthetic aspects	4 shape
	5 colour
III economic aspects	6 price
	7 fuel and oil consumption
	8 maintenance
IV social aspects	9 public/private
	10 status/utility
V make	11 make (identical to Main Dimension)

Whatever set of Main Dimensions we devise, from a logical point of view it will not be a very perfect one. The set just described for illustrative purposes shows all kinds of imperfection. For example, with regard to some cars – such as racing cars or very fast sport cars – the shape can be considered a technical aspect. And one may ask oneself whether economic aspects should not be included in the social aspects instead of being taken as a separate category. This problem should not keep us from

designing any kind of system, but we ought to realize that it should only be judged on its practical and not on its logical merits.

With regard to MTT objectives, we can proceed in the same way as we did for passenger cars. And we can expect to land in the same situation of semiperfection.

2 The nature of the objectives

The first thing we must do is establish the nature of the concept MTT objective. It has become common practice among educators to define educational objectives in terms of behaviour. It seems wise not to deviate from this practice. Accordingly, one of the constituents of the nature of any MTT objective is the element 'behaviour'.

We may go further and ask: 'What kind of behaviour?' I think we may safely say that in all cases this is verbal behaviour. In the following, I shall first briefly illustrate the concept verbal behaviour. Next, I will try to show that all MTT objectives can indeed be defined in terms of it.

I define verbal behaviour as the producing (writing, saying) or the receiving (reading, listening to) of texts. It should be noted that the concept verbal ability (or verbal behaviour) must not be associated solely with the concept language: verbal ability is more than language ability. Knowledge of language does play an important role in verbal ability, but it forms only part of the total set of categories which together constitute verbal ability, the rest being non-lingual¹ in nature.

To produce an adequate text, for instance answering the question: 'What is your opinion of modern curriculum development?', one needs not only knowledge and ability in the lingual field (e.g. one should know the meaning of the words used in the question) but one must also have non-lingual knowledge and ability. One should, for one thing, know something about modern curriculum development. Otherwise, one's text might be linguistically correct but complete nonsense nonetheless. This example shows that according to the definition of verbal ability just given, the production of an adequate text must be seen as the production of a text that is adequate as to information, and the adequate reception of a text as adequate reception of the information contained in the text. (Receiving requires non-lingual knowledge and ability as well. To provide a simple example: if one does not know that rain is wet, the word 'so' in the sentence 'It rained, so I put on my raincoat' is incomprehensible.)

It would be interesting to try to determine the exact difference between

lingual and non-lingual. I shall not attempt to do so here, because it is a rather complicated problem, not to be solved in a few words, and, furthermore, because it is not necessary for a correct understanding of Chapters 3-17.

So much for the definition of the concept verbal behaviour. Let us now turn to the question of whether all MTT objectives can be defined in terms of verbal behaviour.

According to the *Taxonomy*, (cognitive) objectives can be of two kinds:

- a* they may belong to the category knowledge (see Ch. 1, § 6 above), or
- b* they may belong to the category ability.

Now, the fact that all MTT objectives having something to do with ability can be translated into verbal behaviour hardly requires illustration. It is clear that such things as being able to arrange heterogeneous material into a coherent statement or to judge whether a discussion has been relevant, can be easily formulated in terms of verbal behaviour, viz. as actually writing a statement or telling what one thinks about the discussion.

It can be easily seen that MTT objectives falling under the heading of knowledge can also be translated into verbal behaviour. Let me first mention some potential MTT objectives having a 'knowledge' character: knowledge about a simple grammatical system; knowledge about what novels have been written recently; knowledge about the function of different registers.

And to mention a less academic but no less important kind of knowledge that students may acquire during MTT lessons: knowledge about things which make people laugh; knowledge about some of the ambitions of a fellow-student with whom it has been difficult to cooperate in a group. All these objectives can be translated into two forms of verbal behaviour: the understanding of a particular text, viz. of a question (e.g., 'What makes people laugh?'), and the production of a particular text, viz. of an answer (e.g., 'Sudden deviations from the normal course of things . . .'). This is the way in which the team that designed the *Taxonomy* translated all kinds of knowledge (and intellectual abilities) into verbal ability. For instance, 'knowledge of how a scientist operates' has been translated in the *Taxonomy* into:

- a* The 'sub-ability' to understand the following text (*Taxonomy* I, p. 85): 'When the scientist is confronted with a problem, his first step towards solving it should usually be to

- 1 Construct or purchase equipment.
 - 2 Perform an experiment.
 - 3 Draw conclusions.
 - 4 Urge other scientists to cooperate with him in working it out.
 - 5 Gather all available information on the subject.'
- b The 'sub-ability' to produce text '5'.

In sum, all of these kinds of knowledge can be translated into question-answering behaviour (which, of course, need not necessarily take the form of an objective test. In other words, they can be translated into the production of a text (e.g., nr. 5) as a reaction to another text (the question).

Of course, to call nr. 5 a text is provocative, but there is no other logical way to designate it. Naturally, a 'provocative' situation only occurs when knowledge (or some kind of intellectual ability) is tested by means of a multiple choice procedure. This procedure can be characterized as demanding the understanding of a comparatively long text and producing a comparatively short one. In 'normal' questioning, this disproportion does not always occur. It should be realized, though, that the shortness of text nr. 5 is not its most relevant property. The information conveyed by nr. 5 is not numerical, but something like the following. 'After having scrapped 3 as completely absurd, and 1 and 4 as possible but not very likely, I have thought a bit about 2 and 5; 2 is what I think is usually done (I would do it, anyhow), but the text does not ask what is usually done but what should be done; that is why I chose 5'.

This little example shows that we should distinguish between the meaning of a text and the information it conveys. Or, within a frame of reference of a still more general nature, the operant behaviour need not be identical with the 'action structure' underlying it. The term 'action structure' is borrowed from C. F. van Parreren, the Dutch psychologist, who uses the term *handelingsstructuur*. The text just produced - 'After having scrapped ... 5' - is an example of such an action structure. Another example: the operant behaviour (or: verbal behaviour) '35', produced as a reaction to the problem

$$7 \times 5 = \dots$$

may cover several action structures:

- a production of the answer directly from memory;
- b recitation of the multiplication table for 5, up to 7;
- c adding $5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5$ (cf. also *Taxonomy I*, pp. 15-16).

This complication implies that although it is logically right to accept

verbal behaviour as a common denominator for MTT (and other) objectives, this way of looking at such objectives should not blind us to the fact that seen from this angle many relevant aspects of objectives remain invisible.

For example, looking at texts produced by students solely from the point of view of verbal behaviour would make it impossible to discover, and take into account, the phenomena creativity and 'personalness' (which are so important that they form the core of two chapters – 14 and 16 – in this book). You cannot see from just looking at a written text, or listening to a spoken one, whether that text gives evidence of, for example, creative abilities. If you want to know that, you should determine whether the student has made use of problem-solving procedures carefully explained to him by his teacher – in which case we would have 'elaborating' rather than 'creating' behaviour (Chapter 14) – or has invented almost everything himself. In other words, in a case like this the 'action structure' is at least as relevant as the verbal behaviour.

Thus, the choice of verbal behaviour as a common denominator of objectives is a matter of logic. As such, it has its merits and, as has been shown, its limitations. Some of the merits will, I hope, become clear in Part D of this book.

The question of whether not just cognitive but also affective objectives can be translated into verbal behaviour will be left out of consideration here. Although affective considerations will play a large role in the expositions in Parts B and C, they will not be put on the level of objectives, but rather on the level of conditions that MTT lessons should satisfy. Logically, this is incorrect. Nevertheless, I found it to be necessary for practical reasons: the complexity of the material to be dealt with would be unduly augmented if we were to obey Logic too slavishly.

What we have done so far – translating the categories knowledge and ability into behaviour, i.e., verbal behaviour – is a common procedure in educational reasoning today. Some readers may find it difficult to think within this new frame of reference. From personal experience I know, however, that one gets accustomed to it quite rapidly. It should also be remembered that what we are doing here is mainly a logical operation, serving a logical purpose: we are, in fact, designing part of the 'mathematics' for the expositions to follow (see Chapter 1, § 5.2). When Parts B and C take us into the field of practice, the 'behavioural' terminology will not be strictly adhered to, so as to avoid giving the reader the feeling that things are constantly formulated in a (tricky) way he would not have used himself.

Nonetheless, the attentive reader may have grown suspicious for quite another reason. He may have become aware of the fact that it is not only MTT objectives which can be translated into verbal behaviour – that this also applies to all other subjects in the school curriculum (physical education and the like excepted).

This discovery is not difficult to make if one looks at the example taken from the *Taxonomy* (p. 37 above): the multiple choice test demands verbal ability in the field of science. This means that, as far as verbal ability is concerned, mother-tongue teaching is of essentially the same nature as history, physics, etc. According to the proposed approach, all these subjects can be said to teach verbal ability (it should, of course, be kept in mind that verbal ability is not the same as language ability, as already pointed out above).

This may cause many a reader to raise his eyebrows, because he has grown accustomed to the idea that MTT is essentially different from other subjects. This idea is partly correct, partly incorrect. The actual situation can be concisely characterized as follows:

- With respect to the common feature that all objectives can be translated into verbal ability, there is no essential difference between MTT and MTB⁶ subjects.
- Within the common goal of verbal ability, MTT has its own function. If the MTB subjects in a given school cover a narrow range of educational objectives, the function of MTT is to some extent unique; if the MTB subjects cover a broad range of objectives, MTT is just one of the subjects, not very different from the others.

It is not possible to characterize the possible positions of MTT within the school curriculum in a few words. In fact, we will need the whole of Chapter 17 to find out what its essentials are.

3 The arrangement of the dimensions

Having completed the first step in the procedure – definition of what the common denominator of all MTT objectives is – we can proceed to design a system of Main Dimensions. I have tried out several of these systems. The one that seemed to meet practical conditions best is the following one.

Main Dimension I: Direction and technical properties of text

This dimension refers to whether a text is produced or received, whether there is interaction, and whether the text produced or received is oral or written.

Main Dimension II: Subject

waar gaat het over

This dimension refers to what the verbal behaviour is about.

Main Dimension III: Approach

The concept approach is hard to define: attempts always seem to end in some kind of tautology. Some examples of approach:

- a a subject can be approached creatively;
- b a subject can be approached emotionally;
- c a subject can be approached disciplinarily.

Main Dimension IV: Miscellaneous

gemeend, afwiesend, veelzijdig

This Main Dimension is a catch-all for dimensions which can be given a place in some kind of system only by forcing things. The inclusion of such an open category in a system is normal practice in the social sciences.

(een rest-categorie dus?)

It has been listed as IV instead of V because the dimensions it includes show a greater affinity to those belonging to III than to those belonging to V.

Main Dimension V: Functionality

The Main Dimension *Functionality* refers to whether or not the verbal behaviour required of a student corresponds with verbal situations in normal life. For instance, asking a student to explain something is considered 'normally functional', whereas asking him to write a number of words which are difficult to spell correctly, without giving him some direct practical use in view, is considered 'not normally functional' (or, in Chapter 3: 'scholastically functional').

Let us now see how this system of Main Dimensions can be elaborated.

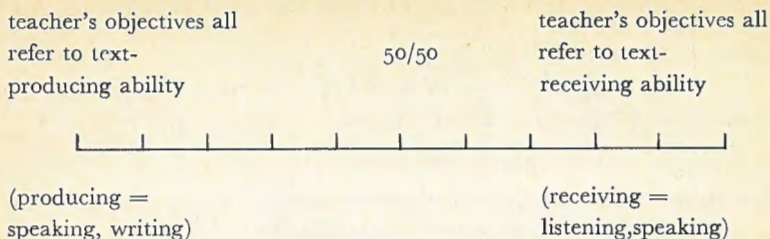
4 The dimensions and the classifications applying to them

4.1 Dimensions sub I, Direction and technical properties of texts

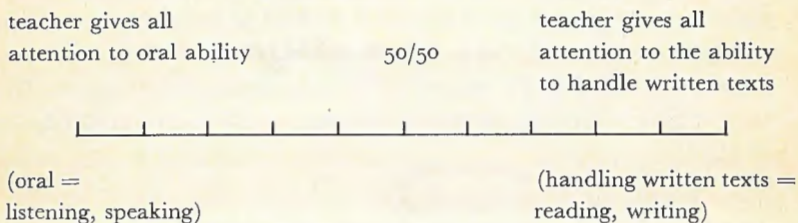
Within this Main Dimension the following dimensions, as well as the relevant classifications, are distinguished.

- 4.1.1 *Di 1: Direction.* A quantitative classification will be applied to this dimension. This classification has as its two extreme values:
 (at one end of the scale) teacher only sees text-producing ability as a relevant objective;
 (at the other end of the scale) teacher only sees text-receiving ability as a relevant objective.

This can be represented schematically as:

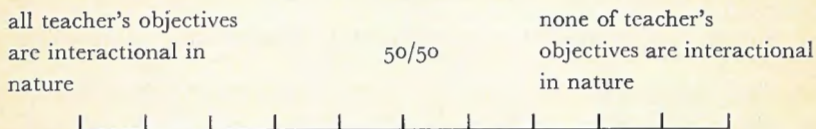


- 4.12 *Di 2: Oral/Written*. The classification within this dimension can be represented by a continuous scale:



- 4.13 *Di 3: Interactionality*. Under interactionality I understand a situation in which either two people respond frequently to each other or many people are responding to each other.

The classification with regard to this dimension can also be represented by a continuous scale:



In statistical terms, this scale contains two continua. In the first place, there is the continuum: teacher's attention either to interaction or not. The second continuum is interactionality itself: there is more interactionality when seven people are having a discussion in which each of them is eagerly participating than when two people mutter something to each other every two minutes. To avoid undue complexity, I combine these two continua into one scale.

4.2 The dimension Subject (II)

In this case, main dimension and dimension coincide. I will list this dimension as *di 4*.

- 4.21** All of the teacher's objectives refer to specific subjects. If, for instance, the teacher wants his students to know something about linguistics – i.e., in the behavioural frame of reference we have accepted in this book (see § 2 in this chapter), if he wants them to be able to understand and say something about linguistics – the subject is: linguistics. If he wants them to understand a novel, the subjects are those which are dealt with in that novel; if he wants them to write a personal impression, the subjects are: the personality of the person in question and the thing this person reacts to.

It is extremely difficult to design a manageable classification within this dimension. The term subject covers a vast area of human experience, in fact all human experience. It is obvious, that it would be virtually impossible to classify logically and consistently this area, which is almost identical with life itself. It is also obvious that we do not need such a sublime classification, but only one which provides us with a kind of a guideline.

For this purpose I have made use of Phenix's *Realms of Meaning*, a book which for good reasons has become rather well known not only in the United States but also in the international world of education. As he himself states repeatedly, Phenix does not pretend to have developed a watertight classification; his six categories are highly interdependent. Nevertheless, his book can serve us very well as a guideline, the more so because the author constantly gives evidence of a broad understanding of the main principles of the various universes of human knowledge. The concept meaning, as used by Phenix, is a unifying concept not just for rational knowledge and insights, but also for elements belonging to the domain of feeling, conscience, imagination, and 'other processes that are not rational in the strict sense' (p. 21).

All these entities have in common that they have a certain meaning for man. 'Human beings are essentially creatures who have the power to experience meanings. Distinctively human existence consists in a pattern of meanings' (*op. cit.*, p. 5).

Logically, the concepts meaning and subject are not identical. The system of meanings designed by Phenix can, however, be used without much difficulty as a system of subjects. It is only necessary to separate the notions meaning and discipline, which in Phenix's system are connected: his book refers to disciplines of knowledge and education. In this book the notion discipline is not inherent to subject. A subject may be either of a disciplinary or of a non-disciplinary nature; e.g., 'the physical characteristics of heat' (disciplinary) and 'The feeling I had when the two

old men in the bus told me to offer my seat to the lady' (non-disciplinary) are both subjects.

If we transform the 'realms of meaning' into 'categories of subjects' in the way I have just indicated, we get the following classification.

a Symbolics

This category comprises ordinary language, mathematics, and various types of non-discursive symbolic forms.

b Empirics

This category comprises the physical world, living things, and man (e.g., physical, biological, sociological subjects).

c Esthetics

This category includes subjects pertaining to the various arts.

d Synnoetics

This category pertains to personal knowledge.

e Ethics

f Synoptics

The category pertains to insights which are comprehensively integrative; they combine empirical, esthetic, and synnoetic insights into a coherent whole. This category includes history, religion, and philosophy.

- 4.22 There is another distinction within the realm of subject which is rather unorthodox in nature but which sometimes plays a rather spectacular role in MTT problems, viz. the distinction into:

a forbidden subjects (e.g., to some people: sex, politics, extreme scepticism), and

b not-forbidden subjects.

For further discussion of this distinction the reader is referred to Chapter 11 (*Dangerous Subjects*), which is devoted to the issues related to this sub-dimension.

4.3 Dimensions sub III, Approach

This Main Dimension comprises the greatest number of dimensions.

- 4.31 *Di 5. Disciplinarity* An approach to a subject is considered disciplinary if it is explicit and systematic. For instance, a disciplinary approach to

the subject just mentioned – ‘The feeling I had when the two old men in the bus told me to offer my seat to the lady’ – would imply that this feeling was to be analysed according to some officially accepted psychological procedure. A non-disciplinary approach – which in the case of two non-professional people having a conversation on the subject would be the normal approach – would not be based on a scientific procedure. The latter approach would develop in a comparatively chaotic way, and contain a great many of difficult-to-define, intuitive observations.

The classification within this dimension is of the same type as that in *dis* 1–3. It can be represented by a continuous scale:

teacher gives all attention to objectives of a disciplinary nature	50/50	teacher gives no attention at all to objectives of a disciplinary nature
--	-------	--



As in the case of *di* 3, this scale comprises two continua: ‘teacher’s attention’ and ‘degree of disciplinary’ (an approach can be more, or less, disciplinary; see the two examples of an analysis of the poem on Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, p. 142 ff).

The phenomenon disciplinarity is not confined to the world of grown-up people: it is virtually independent of age (the same applies to complexity (see § 4.41). Four-year-old children can act explicitly and systematically. To realize this, one could think of a situation in which a child is constructing something systematically, while telling you all the while what he is doing and why.

- 4.32 *Di* 6. Personalness. Approaches can vary from personal, i.e., not open to objective criticism, to non-personal or objective. For instance, in the case of understanding a poem, non-personal understanding implies trying to reach an interpretation which, after some discussion, can be accepted by others; personal understanding does not exclude such discussion but it does not aim at reaching a uniform interpretation.

The continuous scale – which, in a way analogous to *dis* 3 and 5, comprises two continua – representing the classification relevant to this dimension, is:

all of the teacher’s objectives are of a personal nature	50/50	none of the teacher’s objectives are of a personal nature
--	-------	---



more
less
unif
vs
mult

- 4.33 *Di 7. Emotionality* This dimension refers to the extent to which emotions play a part in the approach to writing, speaking, listening, and reading. There are teachers who consider emotions to form an essential and integral part of the human personality, and accordingly encourage their students not to take only a rational attitude. Other teachers like to stay within the restricted area of reason.

The dimension *Emotionality* is not identical to *di 6*. It is quite possible to approach a subject in a way which is both personal and emotionless, or even in an impersonal and emotional way (e.g., reacting to a funeral in an emotional way prescribed by tradition).

The two-continua scale (see *dis 3* and *5*) relevant to this dimension is:

all of the teacher's objectives are emotional in nature	50/50	none of the teacher's objectives are emotional in nature
---	-------	--



- 4.34 *Di 8. Fictionality and Non-Fictionality* The texts students are required to receive ('understand') or produce may be of a non-fictional or a fictional nature, or may lie somewhere in between.

By fictional texts are meant all texts whose author did not intend to refer to reality in the normal way. Roughly, this is how fiction is defined by, for instance, the Dutch author Frank Maatje. Defined in this way the term fiction covers not only literary texts and 'trash' (German: *Kitsch*), but also certain types of advertizing, propaganda, and phatic communion (talking with each other for purely social, not informative reasons), which gives the concept a wider range than Maatje apparently intends. Non-fiction then refers to texts in which the 'producer' refers to reality in what we are accustomed to call 'a normal way'.

Many types of texts lie somewhere between the fictional and the non-fictional areas.

It should be noted that the first element of this sub-category, non-fictional, should not be thought of as identical with the notion impersonal, falling under the sub-category personalness. Likewise, fictional and personal do not go together automatically. The two pairs personal/impersonal and non-fictional/fictional are freely combinable. Some examples:

non-fictional/personal: a letter in which one explains one's stand on a family problem;

fictional/personal: lyric poetry (by definition);

non-fictional/impersonal: a textbook on mathematics, grammar, etc.;

fictional/impersonal: certain specimens of highly descriptive novels.

The (two-continua) scale representing the classifications within this dimension is:

all teacher's objectives are
fictional in nature

50/50

all teacher's objectives are
factual in nature



Drama (e.g. reading drama, creative drama) will be considered to fall under a sub-dimension of fiction.

- 4.35 *Di 9. Creativeness*. The two extreme values of the (continuous) scale representing the classifications relevant to this dimension, are 'elaborating' and 'creative'.

Rodgers (pp. 42-44) gives a clear and concise survey of the most important literature on the subject⁷. She also mentions the following definition of creativity, given by Torrance, which seems practical: creativity refers to 'the process of sensing gaps or disturbing elements; forming ideas or hypotheses concerning them; testing these hypotheses; and communicating the results, possibly modifying and retesting the hypotheses.'

creativity test

As is evident from this definition, creativity can manifest itself not only in the artistic but also in the rational area. In both cases something new is produced, something not to be arrived at solely by following a standard procedure; in the latter case we have not creativity but 'elaboration'. It is important that the latter not be considered a dirty word: granted that it is counterbalanced by some creativity, elaboration is a very important human activity (see Chapter 14).

*!!
creativity
very
creative
activity*

The scale:

all of the teacher's
objectives are
creative in nature

50/50

all of the teacher's
objectives are
elaborational
in nature



- 4.36 *Di 10. Criticalness*. The values within this dimension range from 'critical' to 'accepting'.

There is a clear connection between this dimension and di 9, Creativity (a critical approach may be seen as a particular way of detecting gaps). Hence, it is difficult to decide whether to mention it separately. Since criticalness plays such a large role in the thoughts of many MTT-

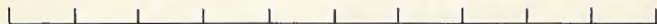
specialists (see e.g. Fowler, p. 50: 'The central obligation of the teacher of English today is the teaching of critical thinking'), I have chosen to take it as a separate dimension.

The scale:

criticalness forms an
essential part of all of the
teacher's objectives

50/50

accepting.
criticalness does not form
an essential part of any
of the teacher's objectives

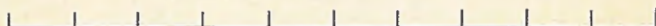


- 4.37 *Di 11.* Correctness. The term correctness is used here in a restricted sense. In a broad sense, it would also refer to social correctness (e.g. using 'decent' words), but in this book it will refer solely to 'lingual correctness'. A text is considered to be correct if it says what the producer of the text wanted to say. Hence, in this book an emotional reaction like 'You dirty swine' is considered correct, whereas the reaction 'I think this is missing behaviour' (instead of misbehaviour) is considered incorrect.

A text can be incorrect because it contains one or more wrong words (in the example above) or a wrong grammatical construction. Orthographic errors also lead to incorrectness; e.g., if the utterance 'I think this is misbehaviour' were spelled as 'I think this is missbehaviour', the message, take *à la lettre*, would not be the one intended. Even if an orthographic error leads to a word which does not exist, strictly speaking, we still have lingual incorrectness: in that case the message contains an element which does not mean anything – which we may assume was not the attention of the producer. For example, 'I tink this is misbehaviour'. The first error may be caused by lingual ignorance (e.g., one does not know that 'misbehaviour' should be spelled with one *s*), but also by attitudes, moods, working conditions (e.g. slovenliness, haste). For further information, see Chapter 12.

On the scale representing the values within this dimension, it is well to indicate the following points:

the teacher accepts everything as long as no comprehension difficulties arise	the teacher accepts everything that is at least correct in some dialect or group jargon	the teacher accepts only what he thinks is Standard Language
---	---	--



4.4 Dimensions sub IV, Miscellaneous

- 4.41 *Di 12* Complexity The phenomena falling under this heading range from simple to complex.

The scale:

all of the teacher's objectives
are of a complex nature

50/50

none of the teacher's
objectives are of a
complex nature



For a definition of the term complex we may use the *Taxonomy*, Part I. The hierarchy in this book being based on the distinction simple/complex, we may define complex objectives as ~~objectives having a high position in the hierarchy of *Taxonomy* I.~~

The *Taxonomy* distinguishes six layers of complexity, ranging from simple to complex:

- 1 knowledge (see also Ch. 1, § 6),
- 2 comprehension,
- 3 application,
- 4 analysis,
- 5 synthesis,
- 6 evaluation.

↑ simple
↓ analysis
↓ complex

The designers of the *Taxonomy* do not tell us where they want objectives to start being more complex than simple. I suggest that we fix that position at category 4, analysis.

It should be noted that all six categories apply to all possible levels of abstraction. For example, synthesizing may be done by 10-year-old children trying to summarize what they have read in several books, as well as by 45-year-old organization experts. It is important to state this explicitly, because the terms analysis, synthesis, and evaluation can all too easily become associated with 'academic level' (see also § 4.31 on disciplinarity).

- Di 13* Age of the text. A trivial category, which nevertheless must be included in our list because this notion sometimes gives rise to serious disputes between MT teachers ('Teaching sixteenth century literature is nonsense' *versus* 'Teaching sixteenth-century literature can be inspiring'). Such disputes will be discussed – serenely – in Chapter 13. This category only applies to reading; as far as I know, students are

kan ook hieren (borden van
by Elcherlyc) of: touelvoorte

normally never requested to write (or speak!) texts in, say, sixteenth-century language.

The scale is:

teacher reads only historical texts with his class	50/50	teacher reads only modern texts with his class
--	-------	--



4.5 The dimension Functionality (V)

As in the case of Main Dimension II, dimension and main dimension coincide here. Thus we arrive at:

di 14. Functionality. This dimension refers to the extent to which the objectives the teacher wants to achieve with his students reflect their needs in normal life. In addition to the two examples given in § 3, a great number of examples of normal *versus* scholastic functionality will be given in Chapters 3–5, where the possibilities and impossibilities within this dimension will be discussed.

The scale:

all objectives the teacher aims at are of a normal functional nature	50/50	none of the objectives the teacher aims at are of a normal functional nature
--	-------	--



5 Remarks

5.1 The dualistic nature of listening and reading

When dealing with the phenomenon of reading or listening to a text (book, poem, advertisement, etc.), one has to take into account two different things:

a the way the producer (author, speaker) of the text has approached his subject;

b the way the reader or listener approaches the text.

The two approaches need not be congruent:

the approach sub a, e.g. by the author of a text-book, may be highly disciplinary (*di* 5), whereas the approach sub b, e.g. by a young student,

may be quite undisciplinatory (his teacher may have asked him just 'to get a rough idea of what section so-and-so is about'). Or, to give another example, the author may have approached his subject very critically (*di* 10), whereas a student, reading his book, may do this entirely uncritically.

In some cases this kind of incongruence is less probable, e.g. in the case of *di* 8 fictionality and non-fictionality: it is not normal practice to read a fictional text in a non-fictional way, and *vice versa*. In the wording of the original formulation: it is not normal to approach a text which shows a fictional approach (sub a) in a non-fictional way (sub b) (and *vice versa*).

Still, this would in many cases be a very exciting thing to do. In my view, for instance, reading a normal conversation about the weather as if it were a drama, or a policeman's report as if it were an epic poem, is extremely rewarding. Some 'instant poets' actually let their readers do this exercise by simply taking a short, non-fictional text and informing them by some typographical means that this is a poem.

In short, this indication of a possible incongruence between two kinds of approaches (we could call them infra- and extra-textual approaches) can generate some attractive, albeit a bit subversive, ideas.

To take full account of this possibility would, however, unduly complicate the system we have developed thus far. With regard to the application of the system in general, it will be assumed that the two kinds of approach are roughly congruent.

5.2 Not all values within the various classifications are freely combinable

There are some values which cannot be freely combined with other values. For instance, the value 'highly disciplinatory approach' cannot, at least in my view, be combined with 'highly personal approach'. But since what we are going to do in Chapters 3-17 is a reconnaissance and not an exhaustive description, this need not cause us any concern.

6 Some examples of how the 14 classifications apply to concrete objectives of mother-tongue teaching, or: looking into a kaleidoscope

In Chapter 1, § 5.1 it has been explained that all classifications apply to every MTT objective. In that section this point could only be superficially illustrated, because we did not have a complete list of dimensions and classifications yet.

Now that we have some idea of these dimensions, complete examples can be given. In the first place, these examples illustrate the still rather abstract descriptions of the several dimensions and of the choices possible within these dimensions. They also illustrate the principle that every single teaching sequence implies implicit or explicit choices within a large number of dimensions.

In fact, the picture that forces itself on us is that of a kaleidoscope, that clever toy which, according to the dictionary, consists of a small tube containing bits of coloured glass inflected by mirrors to form symmetrical patterns as the tube is rotated. The bits of glass can be equated with the dimensions, and the many positions they can take when rotated can be equated with the many choices within these dimensions.

To demonstrate our kaleidoscope, I have chosen examples from three different realms of mother-tongue teaching – fiction, applied grammar, and writing. All objectives mentioned in these examples are realistic in the sense that they can be realized under normal teaching conditions.

6.1 Fiction: the 'Doctor's Novel'

The lesson sequence described and classified here was actually carried out in 1970 with a group of 15-year-old Dutch grammar-school students.⁸

6.11 *Characterization of the objectives*

The following is not a complete description of all the sub-objectives the project aimed at, just a characterization. By reading through the classifications presented below, the reader will gradually get an idea of these components.

The objective contained approximately the following components:

- 1 to understand the characteristic features of the average doctor's novel⁹ (as sold in cheap editions in supermarkets);

- 2 to understand how they represent life;
- 3 to establish how, quite personally, you feel about them;
- 4 to be able to explain these feelings to others;
- 5 to be aware of other students' reactions.

6.12 What the kaleidoscope shows; application of the 14 classifications.

Main Dimension I	Dimension	Position ¹⁰ with regard to classification
Direction and technical aspects of text	di 1. Direction	50/50; that some of the abilities aimed at were of a receptive nature is evident; that other abilities aimed at were of a productive nature can be inferred from <i>a</i> the word 'explain' in the characterization of the objectives (see above); <i>b</i> the fact that, to show that they understood the principle on which the doctor's novel operates, the students were asked to write a mini doctor's novel (in which all characteristics were to be compressed into about 300 words).
	di 2. Oral/written	50/50
	di 3. Interactionality	The great majority of the sub-objectives forming the total objective were interactional; the score on the scale in Chapter 2, § 4.13 would be approximately 75/25 (i.e., 75 % of the sub-objectives were of an interactional nature). Interactionality was insured by using the group-work method and the plenary-discussion method alternatingly at most points in the lesson sequence.
Main Dimension II Subject	di 4. Subject	All six categories were represented in the objective: symbolics, empirics (e.g., pertaining to the reality of a hospital, in contrast to the way it is depicted in the story), esthetics, synnoetics (personal feelings about the stories, see § 6.11, objs. 3-5), ethics (e.g., pertaining to the question of whether the promotion of cheap books contributes to mental

werkwormen

**Main
Dimension III
Approach**

di 5.
Disciplinarity

health; this, in fact, is a sociopolitical issue¹¹), synoptics (to a moderate extent; some of the heterogeneous data that came to light during the lesson sequence were combined into a more or less coherent whole).

Approximately 50/50; for some aspects (viz. literary) disciplinarity was comparatively high: the characteristic features of the 'doctor's novel' were tracked down rather systematically and formulated more or less explicitly; for other aspects (psychology, professional attitude of doctors, nurses, etc.), disciplinarity was zero.

di 6.
Personalness

low

Personalness was aimed at exclusively during one particular phase of the project, devoted to objective nr. 3 (see § 6.11). However, all phases and sub-objectives of the project considered; personalness did not receive very much attention.

di 7.
Emotionality

Very low.

di 8.
Fictionality and
non-fictionality

50/50; the reading material was fictional; the explaining, etc., required of the students was, of course, expected to be done in non-fictional language.

di 9.
Creativeness

low

The project hardly aimed at contributing to the students' creativity; most of the objective's components were presented 'ready made' to the students; in other words: the students were well instructed and well guided, and were left only a few problems to solve on their own.

di 10.
Criticalness

The degree of criticalness aimed at was rather high.

	di 11.	50/50; in other words, some incorrectness in formulations by students was accepted, but not all errors; e.g., loose, mumbling language was accepted, but not wrong pronunciation of words.
	Correctness	
Main	di 12.	The degree of complexity aimed at was <u>rather low</u> . The project <u>hardly rose above the level of comprehension</u> (see p. 49)
Dimension IV	Complexity	
Miscellaneous		
	di 13.	The novels read were all rather recent; the language used during the discussion was, of course, 1970 language.
	Age of text	
Main	di 14.	As explained in Chapter 3, an objective can be considered normally functional if both, or the second, of the following conditions are fulfilled:
Dimension V	Functionality	
Functionality		
		1 students can use what they learn directly in normal life; 2 students are interested intrinsically in what they learn. The project satisfied both conditions completely (see especially p. 72 ff.).

6.13 Rotating the kaleidoscope a bit

Although it is not essential for the purpose of this chapter (which is simply to give the reader an idea of the many dimensions and classifications applying to MTT objectives), I shall make some remarks about possible shifts of position with regard to certain dimensions. While reading through the list just given, some readers undoubtedly found that at some point they would have modelled the teaching objectives differently. The following are some of the dimensions where the shifting of one position would considerably change the picture shown by the kaleidoscope (describing these shifts and their consequences means in fact, broaching the subject of options).

Di 3. Interactionality. If the group leading the project had wished to put less interactionality into its objectives, it could have used a method characterized by plenary instruction and individual work instead of a combined group-work and plenary-discussion method.

Di 5. Disciplinarity. If the objective had been changed to 75/25 (75% disciplinary), it would have come close to the standards set by, for instance, Ulshöfer, for this

kind of work. If the objective were shifted rather far in the other direction (non-disciplinarity), it would probably fit Whitehead's style.

Di 6. Personalness. More personalness could be introduced into the objective (with spectacular consequences for teaching methods and above all the teaching atmosphere). This means that advance planning would be restricted (see Rogers).

Di 7. Emotionality. The Dutch are not very good at handling emotion in public. Some British MTT specialists (e.g. Holbrook; cf. Chapter 16, § 5) would certainly have raised the percentage of emotion considerably.

Di 9. Creativeness. The grammar-school students we had in the project were accustomed to being told what to do and what to learn. Therefore, even if the project group had wanted to, it could not have emphasized creativity. With students who had already acquired creative abilities and attitudes with respect to school work, it could have leaned a bit more in that direction. But the project group would probably not have accepted a 100% creative teaching objective: its members had certain things in mind that they wanted the students to learn in no other form than the one decided on beforehand.

Di 10. Criticalness. Dutch grammar-school students like to be critical. There is a possibility that lowering the proportion of criticalness in the project would have lowered it in their estimation.

Di 11. Correctness. It would of course have been possible for the project group to give more attention to correct language, but only at the cost of motivation and spontaneity.

Di 14. Functionality. The project group could have chosen a completely scholastic objective, for instance by:

- not assigning a doctor's novel but an eighteenth-century novel;
- not, or only vaguely, explaining why this activity had to be undertaken;
- evaluating the results of the lesson sequence solely by giving a test.

It should be noted that measures like these can make an objective scholastic if they are applied in combination. In this example the substitution would not have led inevitably to 'scholasticism' if the students had been motivated by the teacher to undertake the reading of an eighteenth-century novel (see Chapter 13, § 2.3).

6.2 Grammar: the Dangling Modifier

The following example is taken from a report titled *What about Grammar?* (*Ess. Teach. Engl.* pp. 37–39).

In the preceding example I first described the positions of the teaching-learning activities with regard to the various classifications, and then made some remarks about possible variations.

In this example, with regard to most of the positions, I shall only indicate the possible variations. It is not possible to determine all of the actual positions of the teaching-learning activities the authors of the report have in mind, because they are only characterized, not described.

6.21 *Characterization of the objective*

Diagnosis in grammatical terms of the nature of errors like: 'This morning I found an fountain pen coming up the stairs to class' and 'Watching the side of the road, his car went out of control'.

6.22 *The kaleidoscope*

	Dimension	Position with regard to classification
Main Dimension I Direction and technical aspects of text	di 1. Direction	50/50; from the formulation in § 6.21 it follows that the objective is partially productive in nature.
	di 2. Oral/Written	Position depends on whether students are required to produce written 'diagnoses' – which is not an easy thing to do – or just oral ones.
	di 3. Interactionality	May vary from zero to 100%.
Main Dimension II Subject	di 4. Subject	Symbolics.
Main Dimension III Approach	di 5. Disciplinarity	For a practical objective like the one we are dealing with here, disciplinarity could probably best be moderate. In other words: there should be some disciplinarity, but not too much. We thus have a (hypothetical) imperative here (the whole problem concerning the effect of teaching applied grammar will be discussed in Chapter 10, § 3).
	di 6. Personalness	Most teachers probably will not associate the subject with personalness. In certain teaching styles, however, 100% personalness could be possible (in that

**Main
Dimension IV
Miscellaneous**

di 7.
Emotionality

di 8.
Fictionality and
Non-fictionality

di 9.
Creativeness

di 10.
Criticalness

di 11.
Correctness

di 12.
Complexity

style students would be encouraged to tell how they felt about writing being thus made subject to 'mathematical' rules, etc.).

0%.

Entirely, or almost entirely, non-fictional (text reading, discussions, diagnoses).

Can vary from 0-100%. In the zero case the students learn the principle of the dangling modifier by instruction, at the other extreme they 'invent their own principles'.

Analogous to Creativeness (in § 4.36 it has already been explained that criticalness can be seen as a special form of creativeness).

If a high degree of criticalness were aimed at, all formulations put forward by students and teacher would have to be rigorously scrutinized for flaws.

Here, we probably have another imperative (see *di* 5): 100%. In this particular teaching-learning situation not only the ultimate sentences to be produced (instead of 'Watching the side of the road ...' something like 'Because he was watching ...') must be (lingually) correct, but also the discussions and diagnoses. Only in this way can the various components of the teaching-learning sequence be made to reinforce, instead of work against, each other.

Here, a third imperative probably, applies (see Chapter 10, p. 155 ff.); the problem dealt with is complex to a certain extent, but if the principles developed are actually to work, they should not be too complex.

	<i>di</i> 13. Age of text	All texts studied or produced are in contemporary language.
Main Dimension V Functionality	<i>di</i> 14. Functionality	The only option is normal functionality. In Chapter 3 it will be explained that normal functionality is a <i>general</i> imperative. To satisfy the condition of normal functionality, the objective should be completely relevant to the students. In a case like this example it is not very difficult to satisfy this condition: most students will probably be interested in learning how to avoid writing errors for which they could be ridiculed.

6.3 Writing assignment: Write a Police Warning

The following is an assignment described by Whitehead (p. 165). The teacher has placed a bottle of coloured pills on his desk and has informed the class that it contains some highly dangerous poison which disappeared from a doctor's car while it was parked in the High Street. He tells his students: 'Describe what you see in front of you as accurately as you can, in the form of a police warning to be read out over the wireless'.

6.31 *The kaleidoscope*

Main Dimension I Direction and technical aspects of text	Dimension <i>dis</i> 1, 2, 3 Direction, Oral/ written/Inter- actionality	Position with regard to classification See preceding examples.
Main Dimension II Subject	<i>di</i> 4. Subject	Whitehead advocates an MTT strategy according to which language activity, not 'talking <i>about</i> language', is practised. Hence, if things go as he wants them to, the subject talked and written about will probably lie completely within the realm of empirics (how the police work, what the public should be told in such cases, etc.). Other teachers will, how-

**Main
Dimension III
Approach**

di 5.
Disciplinarity

ever, regularly pay explicit attention to the language aspect during the project (i.e., the subject symbolics).

We may assume that Whitehead perceives the objective as 0 % disciplinary. Moderate disciplinarity is, however, feasible (systematic and explicit exploration, e.g. by groups of children, of how the police system works, etc.). It should be kept in mind that disciplinarity is a relative concept (see p. 45). A high degree of disciplinarity would be feasible if disciplinarity for its own sake were the main component of the objective. But in the case we have here, it is not likely that disciplinarity could be given such a high-ranking position: the subject about which the students are asked to write will of course absorb much of their attention.

di 6.
Personalness

Possibilities analogous to preceding examples.

di 7.
Emotionality

I think we must consider 50/50 an imperative in this case. If, as a teacher, you were to play it cool all the time, you would leave out the essence of what you ask children to write about (Danger! Poison!) If you let emotions dominate, your students may produce not a police warning but a hysterical message which, if actually transmitted, would lead to tremendous chaos.

di 8.
Fictionality and
Non-fictionality

Non-fictional.

di 9.
Creativeness

See the preceding example. All degrees of creativeness can be aimed at. If you aim at a low degree of creativeness, you will be inclined to present a recipe; in the opposite case, you will let the students find their own way.

di 10.
Criticalness

Analogous to *di* 9.

di 11.
Correctness

If, as a teacher, you aim at enthusiasm, you had probably better forget about correctness; if you aim only at students-not-finding-the-work-too-boring, you may keep your correctness eye open.

Main
Dimension IV
Miscellaneous

di 12.
Complexity

Analogous to the preceding example.

di 13.
Age of text

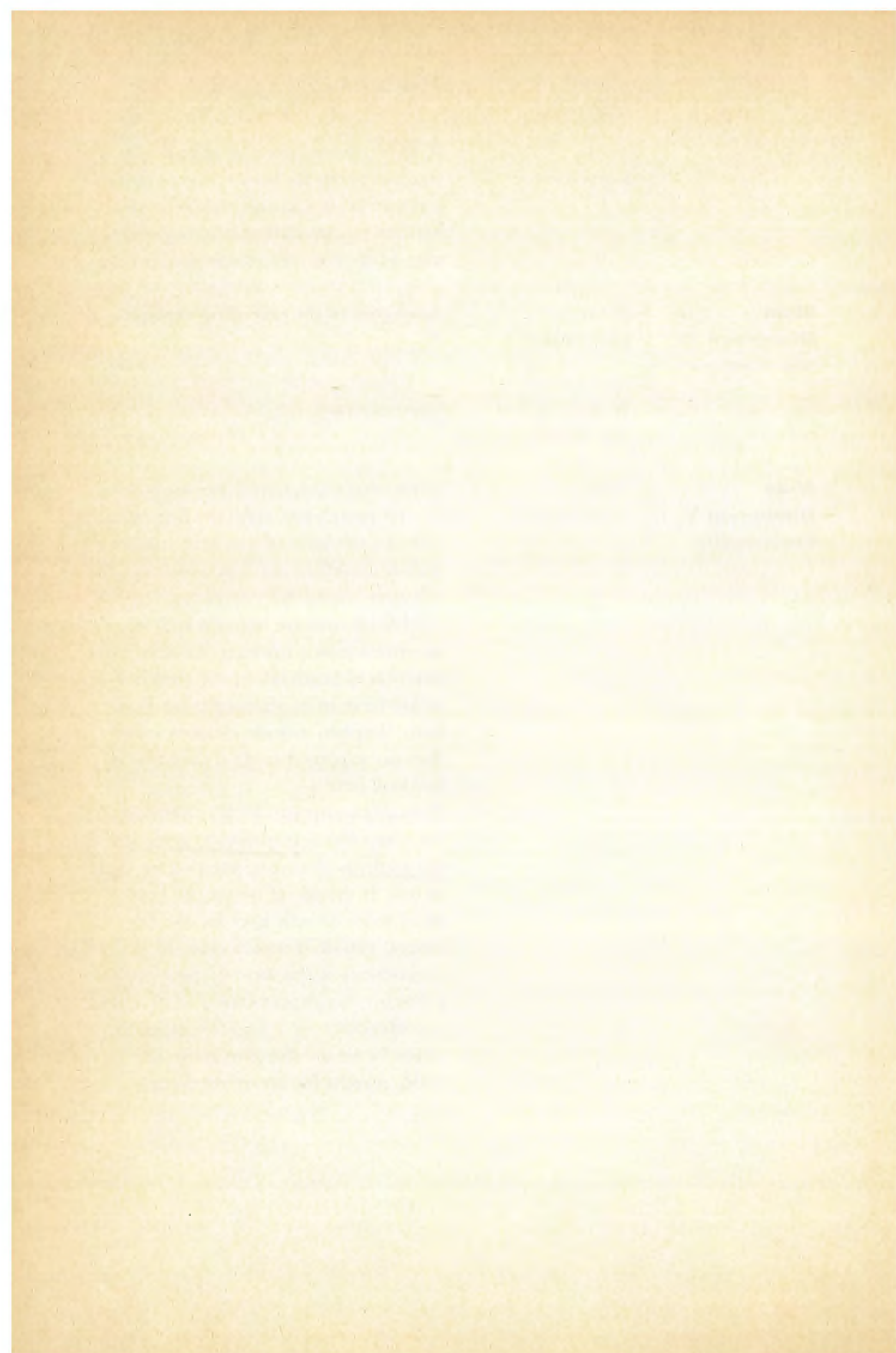
Contemporary.

Main
Dimension V
Functionality

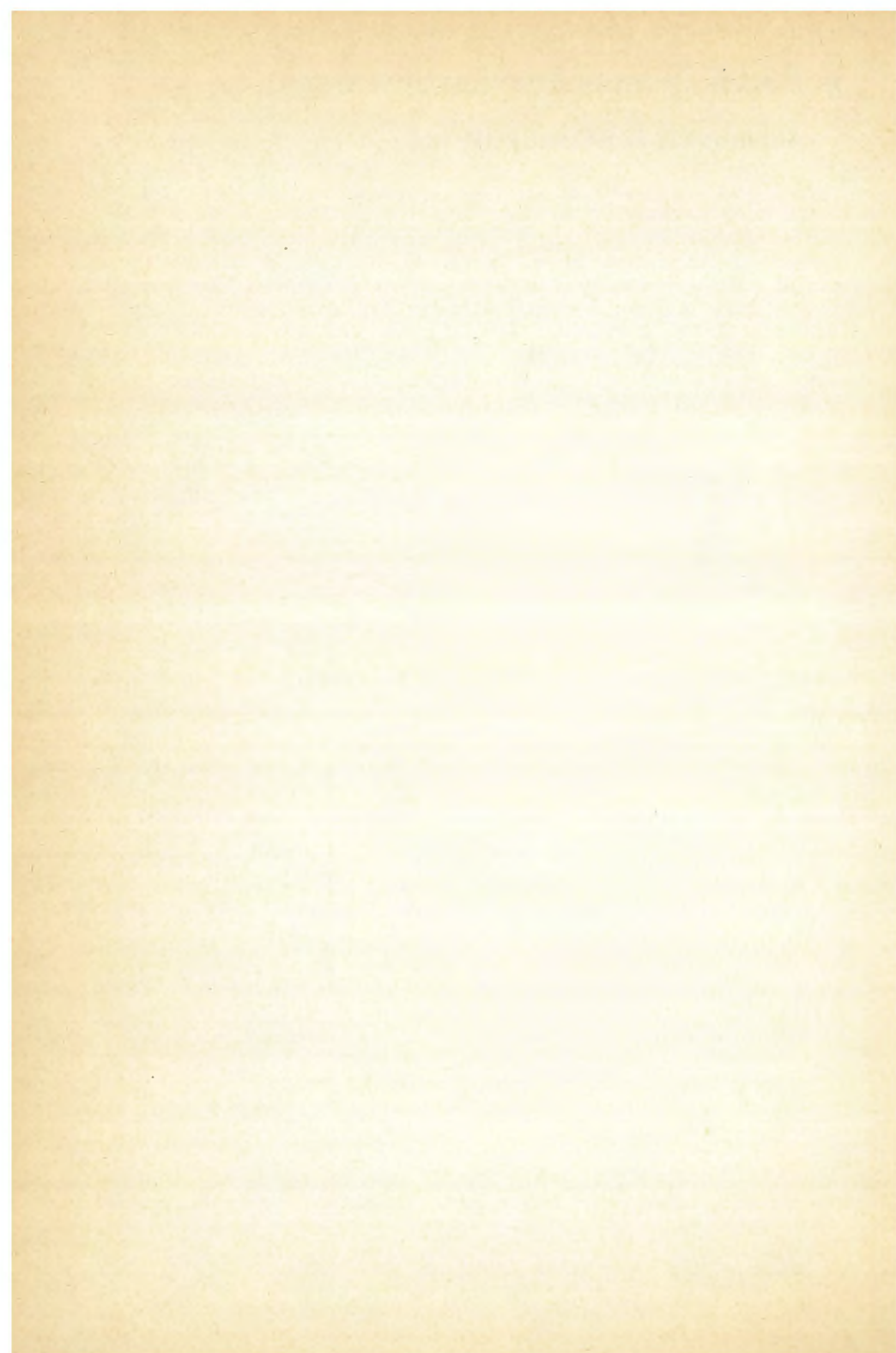
di 14.
Functionality

Whitehead's assignment cannot be considered completely normally functional (NF) on the basis of practical value (this is one of the ways in which an objective can be NF; see p. 55). In normal life you are not as a rule asked to write a police warning. To satisfy the criterion of practicality, the objective would have to be changed a bit (e.g., into: 'Explain to little children what they are supposed to do if they find a bottle of pills').

The assignment can be NF, however, in the sense that it intrinsically interests the students (it can be exciting for them to do). It should, of course, be kept in mind that this only goes for the first time(s) you do it with a class. If assignments of this kind become routine, a teacher can expect classes to develop a neutral or even a negative attitude – unless he or she can give good, i.e., valid, reasons for accepting them.



◀ Part B Normal functionality *versus*
scholastic functionality



Outline of the theory

1 Definitions

An objective will be called normally functional if it shows 100 % correlation with something that people need, or appreciate, in their normal life. It will be called scholastic if there is 0 % such correlation. In this definition the values 100 and 0 represent two ends of a continuous scale. In other words: we may expect to find objectives which are 'more or less' normally functional, normally-functional 'to a high degree', etc. If we wish to we can express the various degrees numerically in per cent: 0 %, 25 %, 50 %, 75 %, 100 % normal functionality.

An objective may derive its normal-functionality from two factors,

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a practical importance, and b intrinsic interest. |
|--|

Together, these two factors constitute the broad phenomenon of intrinsic motivation.

Much has been written about intrinsic motivation. This has resulted, for one thing, in a great many subtle distinctions. These will not be taken into account here.

Let us first look at factor *a*: what the student learns is of practical use to him. In the MTT lesson this can be the case, for instance, when students learn (and by good teaching and teacher-student interaction appreciate what they learn):

- the meaning of certain words occurring daily in newspaper headlines;
- what you must know to understand the-novel-everybody-is-talking-about, and why you might take the trouble to read it;
- what remedial techniques are available if, during a discussion, everybody just goes on expressing his own opinions¹²;
- what reasonable stands you can take with regard to advertising;
- what, as a reader, you may demand of a written or spoken exposition (e.g. speech, article) if you are to allow yourself to believe it (in other words: how critical may I be?);
- how you can manage to put something non-fictional on paper with which you can identify yourself to some extent, which is reasonably true

and coherent, and which can be expected to have some appreciable effect on the reader; and

– how you can get an inkling of how others see you, by having them analyze a piece of creative writing you have produced.¹³

It is of course not only MTT objectives that can be normally functional in the way meant here: normal-functionality is a property that objectives in mother-tongue based (MTB) subjects can have as well. For example:

– you have learned how you can understand a particular political event much better by tracing its origins, for instance, by reading a number of one-, two-, and three-month-old newspapers in a library (history);

– you have learned something about hygiene or birth control (biology);

– you have learned that formalizing certain practical problems improves your grasp of those problems (mathematics¹⁴).

As already mentioned, there is a second factor which can bring about normal-functionality in an objective, namely that it simply interests students intrinsically, i.e., by its own merits, not because you get high marks in it (or low marks and desperately try to improve your position). To appreciate something because you find it interesting, not because 'you can do something with it', is a normal thing in human life. If we left out this possibility, almost no television program, for instance, could ever be considered to have normal functions.

Some examples of MTT objectives which can be considered normally functional for the second reason (if, as has just been said in connection with the first group of examples, adequate teaching takes place):

– learning how you can use very simple mathematical techniques to determine the relationships between a certain group of words, e.g. words expressing uncertainty, such as maybe, perhaps, probably, apparently¹⁵ (see Chapter 10, p. 151);

– finding out how many opportunities of creating short, efficient words your language has missed (why does English not use *ab*, *af*, *ag*, etc., as words?)

The same possibility—i.e., for an objective to be normally functional simply because it interests students intrinsically—also exists of course in MTB subjects:

- what did prehistoric people put their food in? (history);
- what complex of factors made Napoleon invade Russia? (without application of the findings to our times¹⁶) (history);
- what are the origins of life? (biology).

This limited number of examples clearly bears no relation to the enormous range of possibilities.

As contrast, some examples of scholastic or 'more or less scholastic' objectives can be given. These objectives do not satisfy either the criterion of practical use or that of intrinsic interest. We can obtain our examples by simply transforming (to some readers it would seem more proper to say distorting) some of the examples we have just mentioned for normal functionality.

– you determine the literary features of the novel-everybody-talks-about and relate them to novels written twenty years earlier; you do not see why this should be interesting, nor does the information help you very much with respect to the question of whether to read the book;

– you are trained in writing essays by being offered all kinds of themes (1) which do not really interest you and (2) which apparently do not interest the teacher either, because he only 'corrects' them; (3) the teacher does not seem to be interested in you as an individual, because he is not interested in why you have written certain things, etc.

This does not necessarily mean that essay writing must always be considered just scholastically functional. As will be shown in Chapter 6 (p. 118), a certain, albeit modest, value can be attached to essay writing, not because it is of great practical value but because it can be intrinsically interesting. However, it can only have this value if the deplorable working conditions just mentioned (the themes do not interest you; the teacher is interested in neither the theme nor you, and is only concerned with correctness, composition, etc.) are reversed.

– you learn to ^{analyse} parse in the traditional way; some untraditional cases in which 'parsing'—or rather 'linguistic analysis'—can be normally functional, will be described in Chapter 10.

2 Is scholastic functionality a legitimate option?

Before answering this question I would like to note that the opinions expressed below are by no means original. They have already been formulated, partially or wholly in all kinds of phrasing, by a number of educationalists in different countries. The only disturbing fact, it seems to

me, is that their conclusions seem to have had so little influence on teaching practice.

→ !
1. motivation
2. motivation
I think that we must depart from the assumption that scholastic functionality is not a legitimate option. In other words, we must accept the premise that choosing normally functional objectives is an imperative. There are two reasons why we should do so: firstly, this is the only basis on which you can hope that your students will not come to dislike learning in general; and secondly, doing things which are of intrinsic value to you is a fundamental right of every human being.

Of course, for millions of adults, the latter phrase is a series of empty words: they are treated as machines and, consequently, are motivated only extrinsically ('you have to work to get money'). There is, however, no reason to follow this deplorable example.

→ But as we all know, this is what happens in many schools. The reason why scholasticism maintains itself so successfully in our school system lies in the fact that, like any other social system, it tends to set its own norms, and on the whole is not inclined to face seriously the vital question of what, after all, school is for.

Some critics, the most widely known of them being Illich, have lost hope that the school system will ever get rid of this narrow-mindedness, and therefore suggest that the system be abolished completely. Others, for different reasons – one of these being that you simply cannot 'de-school' just as you cannot 'de-factory', 'de-office', or 'de-family' (Gintis, p. 32) – prefer to keep fighting to make the school as relevant as possible or, as the pessimists among them prefer to formulate it, as much less irrelevant as possible.

As to my own position, I strongly sympathize with those who, mainly out of realism, see it as their responsibility to 'stay within the system' and to try to make the best of it. In my view, the principle of normal functionality is one of the things which could help to improve the quality of what happens in the classroom. Moreover, it is worthwhile to propagate it, because the principle is self-evident and can be so simply worded that it can appeal to even very practical-minded teachers who are not inclined to think deeply about the value orientations that make them do what they do. In short, the normal-functionality principle (which of course is not the only leading principle to be obeyed in striving for a more relevant school) stands a chance of being reasonably successful.

When advocating it, one should, I think, keep in mind that its imperative character is mitigated by two factors. The first of these factors

1) is that the realization that something is of practical value, or coming to appreciate something for its intrinsic interest, does not usually occur automatically. In most cases something is needed that will convince the student. For example, the six 15-year-old students who, during an interview, said that they saw a number of valid objectives with respect to the teaching of fiction (see p. 72), actually arrived at the point at which they 'saw' these objectives after a lengthy, non-directed discussion which helped them to become conscious of their interests. In this case, then, the 'something' needed for convincing students of the value of an objective was a non-directed (or rather lightly directed) discussion. In other cases it will be good and valid information given by the teacher that does the job. Now, this 'something' cannot be expected to work always. The teacher, like every normal person, will certainly have a great number of blind spots that at times prevent him from seeing what motivates his students; and students (who will not be treated in this book as the sacred cows they seem to be in a number of works on education) will also have their prejudices and silly moods.

2) The second mitigating factor is that the degree of intrinsic motivatedness one can inculcate in one's students, is limited. As a teacher, one can rarely hope to reach such a degree of motivatedness that students, of their free will and not manipulated by a cunning teacher, will do the thing you have proposed instead of something like going for a swim, lying in the sun, or sitting in a coffee house. In other words, what you must propose to them is always a kind of work, effort, limitation of freedom, that is not entirely pleasant to them. That they go along with you in accomplishing the task you have set before them may therefore not be ascribed completely, in normal cases, to their being intrinsically motivated, but partly to the fact that they have to go to school (which represents an element of extrinsic motivation).

This applies to all educational principles: as a rule, they are mitigated by conditions of practical life. This is no reason to reject them. In my opinion, it is highly important to accept *in principle* the assumption put forward at the beginning of this section and formulated in the following way: it is an imperative to choose objectives which are as normally functional as possible.

relative due

3 Application of the principle

In § 1 the definition and some examples of the concepts normal and scholastic functionality have been given. These examples were intended to give a rough idea of what was meant. What should follow is an

elaboration of these concepts. As a matter of fact, we will have to elaborate only one of them, normal functionality, the other having proved not to be a legitimate option.

On the basis of the discussion of presentation (p. 29), I shall elaborate the question of normal functionality and its consequences for teaching practice mainly with regard to two dimensions (direction of texts and (non-)fictionality). To take full account of all dimensions would lead to unbearable confusion. In other words, we are going to play with a considerably reduced kaleidoscope.

At the beginning of this chapter I said that an act of learning can be normally functional, because: a. you learn something practical, or b. you learn something interesting. Actually, it makes a great difference whether you learn something practical or something 'just' interesting, and this difference manifests itself in all aspects of teaching (subject, teaching style, etc.). Therefore, the two are kept completely separate in the following. The first (practical purposes) will be discussed in two chapters (in Ch. 4, dealing with reading and listening, and Ch. 5, with writing and speaking), the second (the intellectual viewpoint) in one (Ch. 6). Those who want the whole of the kaleidoscope elaborated are cordially invited to add Chapters 7-16 to the three mentioned above and to shake the contents vigorously. Examples of what this can yield have been provided at the end of Chapter 2.

duur : H4 en 5 : 1^{ste} manier van NF
H6 : 2^{de} manier van NF.

Learning to read and listen for practical purposes (in a normally functional way)

In this chapter a rationale will be developed for the choice of the adequate teaching-learning strategy for the teaching of reading and listening for practical purposes, and for localizing several MTT manuals with respect to this ideal strategy. To develop this rationale, I will deal successively in both § 1.1 and § 2.1 with the objectives such a strategy should choose, the methods or programmes that can lead to these objectives, and the evaluation procedures which fit these objectives and methods.

To some readers, many of the practical results of the reasoning in this chapter will not be new. However, the general aim of this book is not only to produce practical conclusions about MTT but also to develop a rationale, an instrument enabling us to 'place', more or less objectively, the stands taken by different authors (and colleagues) with respect to the teaching of the mother tongue. As already said, to the best of my knowledge such a rationale has not yet been provided by the professional literature.

In two other sections (1.2 and 2.2) the rationale will be applied to the various strategies advocated in several MTT manuals. The analysis will show there are considerable differences between them as to practicality.

1 Reading fiction

The term fiction, of course, covers not only fictional prose and poetry, but also drama and films. I have restricted myself to the first two.

1.1 Some characteristics of the ideal teaching-learning strategy¹⁷

1.11 Objectives

A few years ago, a small group of university students with whom I did a project on the teaching of fiction to 15-year-old students, got the idea of asking their future clients what they wanted us to teach them with respect to fiction. This was obviously not a very brilliant or original idea, and it will certainly have entered the minds of many such teams. Yet no trace of it is to be found in MTT manuals, most of which make the

impression of having been written by authors who 'understand the needs and interests of young people' without feeling obliged to make certain of this by actually consulting them.

According to the plan of this project group, a rather extended conversation took place between six 15-year-old students from a Dutch *atheneum* (which is comparable to a Secondary Modern School, A-stream, in Great Britain). The atmosphere was relaxed, but at the same time highly 'motivated'. The conversation can be summarized as follows.

The essential question was: 'What do you want us to do in teaching fiction?' No suggestions were given by us. We behaved like attentive listeners, reacting more actively only when necessary to keep the conversation going. I will not try to describe the session in detail. The reader will understand that the first hour had a highly hesitant character, and that it took a rather long time before opinions began to take shape. The final result was that our informants unanimously said they were primarily interested in just one question, which was actually two questions: 'What is there to read, and why should I read a particular book?'

Fiction lessons, they said, would immediately become interesting if they answered these two questions. The reason for this was quite simple: they knew very little about what had appeared in the field of fiction in their country and also were very uncertain about what point there was in reading it. They found themselves in very much the same situation as someone who has never been outside his country, and though he realizes that he could make all kinds of trips abroad, lacks sufficient information to know what kind of experiences he could have. Such a person would ask the same questions: 'What?' and 'Why?'

Restated in abstract language – to make it more understandable to the educationalist – the students said they wanted orientation about the various kinds of books and poems available in libraries and bookshops, and about the psychological, ethical, or intellectual value that such reading could have.

The first part of this wish is understandable enough: it is quite reasonable to want to have some idea of the characteristics of the literary jungle around you; as a 15-year-old, you have at best 'intercepted' non-coherent, lapidary information (television, newspaper, classroom) from time to time.

The second part of the demand (Why should I read a particular book?) is only surprising to those who are accustomed to look at books from the point of view of someone who has had training in literary criticism (e.g., in a Teacher Training College). Such a person will take it for granted

that reading literature is valuable, good for you. In the literary courses in universities I know of, the question is never seriously raised!

In educational matters this does not seem to be a very fertile viewpoint. That the question of what literature is good for is a real problem for young persons (and probably for many adults also), is apparent from statements like 'Okay, I read that book because the teacher said it was good, but so many things in it made me sick . . . Do I have to read that?'; or 'I started this book a few months ago, but I don't seem to understand it. I think I should try it again in a year or so. Or shouldn't I? Yes, after all, why should I?'

These are questions posed by people who read a book in the ordinary way, i.e. to please themselves; they do not read it with the perverted approach of the trained literary analyst. Of course, this 'pleasing' comprises a wide variety of emotional and intellectual experiences: having a pleasant feeling, becoming fascinated, getting shocked but not in a way which tears you apart, etc. And it is quite reasonable for young people to ask what all these emotions are good for, and why certain emotions in particular should be experienced (e.g., feeling that life is absurd and makes no sense; being informed about the tragedies connected with war, love, hatred, impotence, homosexuality, inferiority complexes).

From the interview session, therefore, we extracted two objectives for teaching fiction, viz.:

- 1 *Orientation about what to read (the WHAT? objective).*
- 2 *Orientation about why certain books could be read (the WHY? objective).*

These two simple findings seem to me to be so completely in accordance with what common sense tells us, that I think we can accept them as being generally valid.

The students we talked with said nothing about the use of learning *how* to read novels and poems. For instance, they did not say that it could be practical for them to learn something about the function of symbols, composition, etc. in novels, or about the bizarre technical aspects of some kinds of poems. However, during the project we developed, which was set up as a first step toward giving content to the two objectives (it was aimed at finding out what, in general, is the extra-value of a high-level novel as compared with a 'doctor's novel', see the example on pp. 52-56), we had to include information about some of these more technical aspects. I think we can assume that had the students thought of this third objective before the sequence started (i.e., during the interview session), they would have included it in their list of desiderata (accord-

ing to a questionnaire given to them after the sequence, they rated the course 100 %¹⁸).

Evidently, they would have limited the number of literary technical aspects and the depth in which they should be treated such that no more would be dealt with (in greater depth) than is interesting or necessary for normal reading.

We can thus add as a third objective of teaching fiction for practical, normally functional purposes:

3 *Acquiring the ability to read books and poems you want to read (the HOW? objective).*

Taken in its full meaning – as I think it should be – the presence of the second objective in the total set of objectives and the word orientation in the first objective, together imply that the whole strategy of teaching fiction should be based on the assumption that students could read fiction (for reasons to be determined by themselves), not that they should read fiction (because it is supposed to be good for them). The latter assumption is to be found implicitly or explicitly in several MTT manuals.

Whitehead, for one, claims early in his book that children need literature, and Fowler expresses more or less the same view (see Part 2 of her book). In my view, however, what is good for you from a psychological point of view cannot be decided in an objective and uniform way. The argument Whitehead puts forward, viz. that reading fiction can ‘insinuate stable forms of organisation into the feeling-aspects of our lives’ (p. 15) is not valid. In the first place, psychic stability is something even trained psychiatrists cannot define operationally. And in the second place, Whitehead unjustly neglects the possibility that reading literature, e.g. modern novels, may have a bad effect (whatever that is) on some people.

In short, trying to *make* fiction readers, is, I think, a form of illegitimate indoctrination, a form of mild intolerance. If we granted teachers that right, other teachers could as justly try to *make* sportsmen, atomic specialists, and wine-drinkers. Students have a right to say, after an introductory course in fiction reading, that they prefer other experiences and want to fill their free hours by, for instance, more direct activities like building radios or making love.

In my experience, many MTT teachers have based their teaching of fiction on the ‘should’ belief to such an extent that they see no other valid reason to go on teaching fiction. This is not a logical conclusion. One of the two essential aims of teaching in general is to provide orientation about the world. Now, fiction is something that exists and as a

phenomenon is rather spectacular; therefore, it is not only tolerable but even necessary that students get a chance to become acquainted with it, the provision of orientation about the world being one of the main general aims of education. However, as I have just said, students in their turn have a right to find the orientation unrewarding if they discover that they do not enjoy reading fiction. But to find that out, they must have experienced what reading fiction is.

1.12 Method

It is not difficult to imagine the general outlines of a programme leading to the three objectives. It is clear *a priori* that reading a text-book about what there is to read, why certain books could be read, and what you must be capable of to do so normally, will not be a very efficient method. The only effective method is one in which the accent lies on *doing* – which in this case means: actually reading books (or parts of books) and poems.

This 'activity' programme can take place in the classroom and in the school library – where the teacher or the librarian can help students (if they ask for help) with selecting books to read, and can give information about the 'whys' and 'hows' (objectives 2 and 3). I will confine myself to classroom lessons, because the teacher-student conversations taking place in the library:

a will normally be of a rather individual nature, which makes generalizing statements less feasible;

b usually cannot take much time, because of the great number of 'clients'; consequently, the conversations tend to be somewhat superficial.

The teaching of fiction for practical purposes in the classroom should consist of the reading, in a certain way, of a selection of books and poems. About the selection of material, nothing very spectacular can be said. It should of course optimally cover the total range of possible books and poems students might want to read.

The 'certain way' is less easy to determine, however. Because we shall want to develop a rationale, we cannot proceed more or less intuitively, as is often done when the question of how to teach fiction is discussed, but must try to work rather methodically and verifiably.

To begin our search for the 'certain way' of reading, it is clear that in the formulation of all three objectives, the words read and reading refer to 'normal' reading, i.e., reading as one does in normal life, not to the kind of reading practised by, for instance, a literary critic. Students will want to know WHAT books they can read in a normal way (objective 1),

WHY they might want to read them in a normal way (objective 2), and what they should be capable of in order to read a book in a normal way (objective 3, the HOW objective). For the practice of teaching fiction this means that if one wants it to lead to the three objectives just mentioned, all reading of fiction should be done in as normal a manner as possible.

Or, to put it a bit more officially: if teaching fiction is to lead to anything valuable from a practical point of view, the atmosphere in which books and poems should be read and discussed in the classroom should resemble a normal reading atmosphere as much as possible.

This principle hardly needs any elaboration. It is based on the assumption that a maximum effect is obtained by a maximal correspondence between the nature of the objective and the nature of the teaching-learning method.

However, as we will soon see, many of the teaching methods advocated in the manuals do not satisfy this condition. Consequently, these methods cannot be considered to serve practical purposes. We may assume that, unfortunately, this conclusion also applies to a considerable part of the daily practice of the teaching of fiction.

Let us try to work out the consequences of the principles just mentioned as carefully as possible. The first thing to do is to establish the characteristics of 'normal reading'. The most efficient way of dealing with this question seems to be to find out how normal reading differs from the reading style in which the university student is as a rule trained.

The first way in which 'normal reading' of fiction differs from 'academic reading' (as I shall call it) is that the latter is an activity going from the reader to the text, whereas the former goes from the text to the reader. The academic reader observes, 'tries to get a grip on', reflects, analyzes; the normal reader lets the text come to him, enter him.

The academic reader is a person who – to use a rather crude and exaggerated example – if suddenly accosted by a heavily bleeding man who stumbled forward and panted 'A doctor! Quick! I'm bleeding to death!' would remark: 'How interesting! Ellipses! No coherent syntactic constructions. But, I think, artistically effective, because the style expresses desperation, a feeling for the essentials', and would make some notes while the suffering and now perplexed man succumbs. The normal reader is like someone who, in the same situation, would have reacted by giving first-aid because he had let the message affect him.

Transposed to the classroom situation, reading academically means that

the teacher remains frigid in an encounter with fictional texts, which are usually full of (abstract and concrete) life, thoughts, ideals, and emotions. As a result, the students either become frigid, too, about what they are reading or, refusing to feel that way about a fictional text, come to dislike the teacher. In both cases there is no contribution to normal fiction-reading.

I will work this out by means of an example, but before doing that we must assess a second difference between normal and academic reading: the latter usually deals with only a limited range of elements contained in the text, viz. roughly those for which the Literary Faculty feels competent. This means in practice that, after a university study, an academically-reading teacher is shy about letting normal life-experience play a role in discussions on the meaning of parts of a book or of a poem, because such experiences cannot be taken into account objectively (at least not by the discipline he has been trained in). Moreover, he is highly reserved about the conclusions for their personal lives that students, individually or collectively, want to draw from what they are reading. The normal reader, of course, goes about it in the opposite way. While reading, he is constantly – implicitly or sometimes even explicitly – mixing his own, complicated, subjective experience with the information coming to him from the text, and, if the text has an effect on him, may conclude that he now sees certain things in another light, feels that the writer has expressed feelings he thought he did not have but apparently has, etc. Young people frequently draw such conclusions related to actual living. I am not sure whether this kind of effect diminishes when one grows older. 2

To sum up: normal reading differs from academic reading in two ways: it is characterized by a movement from the text to the reader, and the scope of the things taken into account is much wider.

We have found (p. 76) that to bring about something valuable from a practical point of view, classroom reading of books and poems should take place in as normal an atmosphere as possible. Now we must ask ourselves, how does what we have found for normal reading work out for teaching practice?

The best way to answer this question is to design, by way of example, a lesson or lesson sequence around a concrete text. To be appropriate as an example, the text to be chosen should satisfy no fewer than three conditions: it should be short, it should be complete, and it should not contain too many complexities and subtleties.

The first two conditions suggest a short poem. The third condition would

seem to be satisfied best if I made – I do not dare say created – the poem myself. ‘Real’ short poems usually contain too many hidden subtleties (and as an additional advantage, I was saved having to ask the author’s permission to reprint the poem!). It took me about 8 minutes to write the poem. I must confess that I am not completely sure it is not a masterpiece.

Let us assume that in the country we live in short, simple, but ‘biting’ poems about family life have become the rage; and that in accordance with objective 1 (orientation about what there is to read), it has been decided that the class will read a collection of poems¹⁹ by Stephan Berink, entitled *Sex, Violence, and the Hendersons*. The first poem in this collection runs as follows:

Mr. Henderson stood up, sat down
looked at his wife,
furiously.
Stood up, sat down,
took an egg
and threw it.

It died.

Now, with the purpose we have in mind, how are we going to read this collection? What I shall concentrate on are those aspects which matter for the special subject we are discussing here, which is teaching fiction. I will omit the general aspects of teaching. For example, I will take for granted that the students will have a chance to say what they think and feel; in other words, that the lesson will not consist mainly of a teacher’s monologue.

To find out what process – approximately – should take place during the lesson sequence, we must first realize that, as a consequence of objective 2, we must decide why poems of this kind might be read. Teacher-student interaction may lead to something quite different from what one has planned, but as a teacher one must start the lesson with at least one answer to this question.

My answer to the question: ‘Why would one read these poems?’ would be about as follows:

You can read these poems for amusement. They compel you to do a kind of puzzle: on the surface they seem primitive, but this surface covers all kinds of things for you to detect.

Because these things are highly emotional and philosophical but their notation is very concise, you can call the poems elegant; and the

amusement you derive from reading them might be called elegant amusement. The poems have a touch of the tragic, but the tragedy is always mixed with crude comedy. These emotions are not meant to hit you heavily (in the way that some novels make a considerable impact on you); they are meant to touch you lightly. You might say that these poems permit you to lift yourself a bit above reality, which is loaded with responsibility; but you do not go high up: you stay in touch with reality, because that is what the poems are about.

This is roughly what I would want to explain to my students (of course, other interpretations are possible). As follows from the principle we formulated on p. 74, the students have a right to say, after (or during) the lesson sequence, that they do not care for this kind of elegant amusement. What I want as a teacher is not to indoctrinate but to inform them. Of course, this informing will have to take place via poems in *Sex, Violence and the Hendersons* themselves, perhaps starting with the first one. This can be done in the following way.

What we shall want the class to find out is what is 'living' underneath the primitive surface. A description of this 'underlying life' will be given. But first we must make sure that the class is capable of one thing (cf. the HOW? – objective), viz. of isolating the text. All compressed works of art have to be isolated from the stimuli by which they are surrounded if they are to function; this applies not only to poems but also to pictures (hang a brilliant picture among a number of other pictures and objects, and it will lose much of its radiance). To be able to accept what I am about to say, the reader should also try to isolate the poem about the Hendersons from the mass of printed messages surrounding it.

Isolation of the poem can be brought about in several ways. One is to ask the class to imagine that one is alone with this poem somewhere outside (if the teacher wants to play it in the grand style, he can ask the students to imagine that they are on a desert island, and that this is the only reading matter they have).

When the poem is thus isolated, we turn to what lies under the words. If we were to describe it 'academically' – which can be useful for a teacher (see below) – the interpretation could be roughly as follows:

1 An egg dies because Mr. and Mrs. Henderson have a row. Meaning: a simple, innocent thing is annihilated by a crude conflict with which it has nothing to do, caught between two brute forces.

In short, the poem represents a virtual tragedy.

2 The crudeness, the brute feeling, and the fury are brought out in several ways

a The name Mr. Henderson. This name, combined with the stupid mechanism of standing up, sitting down, conveys the impression of infantile, silly, bourgeois people.

b The poem is absolutely naked: there is no colour in it (no property-conveying words); there is only one word that conveys atmosphere, 'furiously'.

These elements, together with the sharp consonants (*st, s, f, f, st, s, t, th*) give the impression of naked fury.

3 The atmosphere around the victim (smallness, helplessness) is created by making use of an extremely simple syntactical construction and a soft initial consonant (*d*).

4 The emotional atmosphere is ambivalent: the story is burlesque (imagine yolk dripping from Mrs. Henderson's face), but the 'message' is not (see point 1).

It should be repeated that this analysis is meant only for the teacher (and the reader of this book); the suspicion that a traditional, subject-centered fiction lesson concentrating on literary analysis is in the making, is groundless. The essential thing is what the teacher is going to do with this rough 'academic' material. In other words: how is the poem to be read and discussed with the class? Or by the class, if the teacher prefers to let students do the reading and discussing themselves in small groups; in that case, the teacher's task is simply to guide (cf. p. 92). In the following, a strategy will be elaborated for the first case, i.e., the situation of teacher-student interaction; the main aspects of this strategy apply to group-work methods.

We have formulated a principle which, together with the three objectives for teaching fiction from a practical point of view (WHAT? WHY? HOW?) forms the basis for our argument. This principle runs as follows:

The reading of books and poems should take place in an atmosphere which is as much as possible in accordance with normal reading conditions.

The words 'as much as possible' have been added intentionally. The three objectives – which, I repeat, were stated by highly practical students, consumers so to speak – all point to something which precedes the normal reading. In other words: all of the students thought they could do normal reading themselves in their own rooms (or beds: isolation!), but wanted to be informed about certain things beforehand.

It was these things that they wanted fiction lessons to deal with. This means that they wanted essentially the same thing from fiction lessons as from other lessons: they wanted to acquire certain bits of information. However – and this is where the as-much-as-possible comes in – the information they wanted was information whose exclusive function was being of some use to their normal reading. This has a consequence: if the students are to feel that there is such a connection between the information they get and their normal reading, the atmosphere in which this information is provided to them must be as much as possible in accordance with a normal reading atmosphere.

In practice this means that we should apply what we have learned about the two main characteristics of normal reading, as compared with academic reading, to our lesson strategy: the direction should be text → reader and the scope of elements should be wide.

I think that the first of these conditions is the most essential. It implies that the teacher should:

- not ask the students to study the poem;
- not teach them some rigid model for literary analysis and then say 'Now apply this instrument to the text'; *feel analysis model*
- not give the students instructions like: 'Now, what do you see in the text?';
- not speak with an intonation appropriate to clear, rational analysis.

Any one of these is guaranteed to induce the wrong direction, i.e., from the reader to the text. The students would then be looking at the text – as biologists look at plants and insects and chemists at test tubes – instead of experiencing it. This would place them in an abnormal reading situation. *20 novel het!*

The only way to steer things in the right, 'normal', direction is to

- deal with the elements just mentioned (symbolism, naked structure, sharp consonants) in a casual way;
- avoid taking too much time for precise analysis, and be content with loose formulations by the students; if the teacher aims for precise formulation, the students' attention will shift from the text to the formulation, which means that the flow text → reader will be interrupted.
- avoid taking too much time for the analysis as a whole; the direction will be from the text to the reader as long as there is some tension, something new in the text; if the analysis takes too much time, the tension disappears: the lesson becomes dead. (I would estimate that dealing with the above poem could very well take no more than 5 to 10 minutes; then we could go on to another poem or text.)

- speak in a tone of voice such that one does not impose oneself on the poem but instead effaces oneself as much as possible;
- give students complete freedom to tell how they see or feel things (wide-scope principle, p. 77).

In general, it seems advisable to obey to the following rule of thumb, concerning the nature and the order of points to be discussed: Let these be determined by the normal reader, not by the discipline!

According to the discipline of literary analysis, there should be a certain order in which certain aspects should be studied; for instance, you start with the sound level, then proceed to the lexical level, etc. There are as many such orders and implementations as there are schools of literary analysis.

Now, there is nothing against a modest amount of system. It may even contribute to the quality of the students' learning (p. 88). But it should not be used as the platform from which the discussion is to start, because this would mean requiring the reader to start thinking in a distorted and far from normal way.

A normal reader wanting to ask questions about or make remarks on, for example, a poem, will not as a rule begin with questions that fit into some disciplinary scheme, not to mention the possibility of their being in accordance with disciplinary order. From this it follows that if one wants to keep the lesson constantly directed toward the practical purposes one has in mind, the students, not the discipline, should be given precedence. In answering questions or comments, or reacting to them, the teacher can gradually convey the information about the poem he thinks important.

In a class this questioning and comment can be organized very simply by asking a number of students, say seven, to put forward just one reaction, viz. the reaction which to them, personally, seems the most significant one.

In the case of 'Mr. Henderson stood up ...', such reactions could be:

- 1 'Silly! That's all I can say about it. There is nothing in it. I'm sorry.'
- 2 'A bit sentimental. But I like sentimentality.'
- 3 'Is this poetry, or just a little story?'
- 4 'All this talking about poems. Can't we just read them, and leave it at that?'
- 5 'Are all these poems about dying and hitting each other?'
- 6 'I think it's funny, but not very.'
- 7 'I like it. I used to write things like that myself.'

The information elicited by the analysis of the poem (pp. 79–80) can be tied in with these questions. For instance, the information regarding the ‘message’ and ‘the elegance’ of the poem can be conveyed while reacting to the first remark (‘Silly!’). In this way, both the nature and the order of the information conveyed are most like the development of the normal reader’s (not the disciplinarian’s) thinking. It should be noted that by obeying this rule of thumb:

a questions and comments that cannot be prophesied by disciplinary analysis will also be evoked (e.g., numbers 4 and 7); and

b some students will mix descriptive and evaluative aspects in their reactions; in the disciplinarian’s eye, this is an ominous vice; it should, however, be accepted as being absolutely normal for a person reading for normal, non-disciplinary purposes.

To sum up: we have reached two objectively tenable conclusions about normal functional teaching of fiction for practical purposes:

1 It should aim at three objectives, WHAT? WHY? HOW?

2 The teaching method should consist of experiential activities and discussion activities, both conflicting as little as possible with a normal reading atmosphere (the latter condition implying a text → reader flow of attention and wide scope).

One particular genre, poetry, has served us as an example of how this rationale can be developed. It applies to prose (novels, short stories, etc.) and drama in exactly the same way, but I do not think this needs illustration.

Let us, finally, try to find out what the consequences of these conclusions are for evaluation.

1.13 *Evaluation*

The evaluation of educational results has many facets. I shall deal only with those having importance for the special subject we are dealing with, teaching the reading of fiction.

Question 1: Should achievement tests be used?

Answer: I think the answer should be positive: the kind of teaching described is supposed to make it possible for students to acquire a certain amount of information; and it is completely plausible to try to find out by some means whether this has really happened. This testing does not have to mean some kind of written paper; it can be done in the form of a conversation or observing a students’ contribution during a discussion.

Question 2: Should these achievement tests be what we call objective tests?

Answer: Mainly in the negative. As a matter of principle, a test must optimally correlate with the teaching objective(s). Now, objective 1 (Orientation about what there is to read) can be more or less objectively measured, but objectives 2 (Why?) and 3 (Knowledge and Ability) cannot. Objective 2 is of a highly personal nature, whereas many adequate responses must be expected when one tries to ascertain whether objective 3 has been attained.

Question 3: Can these achievement tests serve for selective or just for diagnostic purposes?

Answer: Just for diagnosis. The achievement tests dealing with information (see Question 1) cannot legitimately be used for selective purposes, because acquisition of this information is not a social imperative or a general imperative for tertiary education (the demands of some special branch of tertiary education, such as educational training in the field of language, are left out of consideration here). In other words: no selective tests should be given in the field of fiction.

For teachers working in schools or even in countries in which, unfortunately, selection and selective tests are the foundation of education, it may be difficult to fully respect this principle. In some schools or countries a subject does not 'count' if marks for assignments within that subject do not influence a student's record, which makes it extremely difficult for a teacher to aim at intrinsic motivation, the whole school machinery running mainly on extrinsic stimuli. It would be unfair, and even a bit hypocritical, to demand of a teacher in this kind of situation that he or she completely obey the principle of assessing achievements solely for diagnostic purposes, even if examination procedures left room for that. There is, for one thing, the question of practice: what is accomplished if, by being too 'honest', one succeeds only in losing the interest of those students who would have read fiction of a certain quality had just a slight amount of extrinsic motivation been present? Clearly, such argumentation brings with it the risk of maintaining an illegitimate – or morally unhygienic – situation or, worse still, that 'practical' educational psychologists will make things easy for themselves by claiming that extrinsic motivation is after all the best thing to rely on. Therefore, this argumentation cannot be considered the sole reasonable solution to the problem. In my view, it should be accompanied by well-planned resolute actions by teachers' organizations to roll back, in school systems in which that is necessary, the influence of final examinations –

which after punishment are the main source of extrinsic motivation. These teachers' organizations could find an abundance of inspiring ideas and material in Brian Jackson's *English versus Examinations*. Of course, this would not provide a solution for the MT teacher working in a mainly extrinsically motivating school and whose teachers' organization is not interested in opposing this attitude. In that case there is no easy answer.

Question 4: Are (diagnostic) achievement tests the only form of evaluation one can think of for the teaching of fiction?

Answer: No. Questionnaires, simple reaction sheets, or evaluative compositions written in the classroom, all of which provide information about how students have appreciated certain lesson sequences and about their wishes with respect to forthcoming lessons, are equally important means. This holds for teaching in general (though many teachers, in my view unjustly, shudder at the mere thought of them) but applies especially to the teaching of reading fiction, because in this field tastes vary so wildly.

1.2 How some manuals see it

Not all of the manuals to be discussed here can be considered 'modern' – which means being maximally in accordance with current trends. For the purpose I have in mind, this is not important. What matters here are permanent principles. We need not spend much time on the ever-changing elaboration of these principles. Since all of the manuals to be discussed here give evidence of at least good craftsmanship and most of them of good 'educationship', we may trust that these principles will emerge from our comparative study.

As a matter of fact, during the three years it took to write this book a new manual or 'method' appeared on the horizon every few months, which is hardly surprising if one realizes on what an enormous scale mother-tongue teaching is done all over the world.

Thus far, all of these new methods, some of them dazzling, fit perfectly into the scheme of principles which emerged from the comparison of a limited number of manuals.

Perhaps we are in the same fortunate situation as exists for languages: comparison of two or three is sufficient to reveal the vital principles underlying the functioning of all of them.

How do the strategies advocated in the various manuals and leading articles on MTT relate to what we have found here? To answer this question I have made a selection such that the total scope of the stands is optimally covered. For reasons which are quite obvious, I must limit

the following discussion, and this compels me to refrain from great depth of analysis. The reader is asked to consider the various judgments I put forward as mere impressions.

Before I try to present the various positions, let me call to mind the rationale developed so far in this section. The question to be answered is: What kind of teaching meets practical needs and interests? The answer given to this question had two parts:

① The objective of library guidance and classroom teaching should be to help the student gain orientation on three points:

- what to read,
- why to read it, and
- what one must know and be capable of if one is to understand what one is reading to a reasonable degree.

② As far as classroom teaching is concerned, this orientation should be the result of lessons in which a normal reading atmosphere prevails as much as possible.

Now we can proceed. The various strategies suggested in the manuals can be divided into two main categories:

A text-experiencing strategies

B text-studying strategies

The difference between these two types is marked by the concept 'experiencing' *versus* 'studying'.

In the following inventarization Moffett's book will not be mentioned because it does not pay much attention to the reading of fiction, the emphasis being put on producing fiction.

Text-experiencing strategies

① I want to deal with three variants of this category. The first variant is the one described by Frank Whitehead. Within this variant, lessons have the following characteristics:

- 1 Texts (prose, poetry) are chosen which the teacher hopes will interest the students.
- 2 The texts are not interpreted exhaustively, but just to the degree necessary for a reasonable understanding of the essence; the questions put by the teacher are of a very 'light', unemphatic kind ('Why this word?', Whitehead, p. 104); no attention is paid to any element of literary theory.

3 Non-intellectual activities like reading aloud (by students, a group of students, the teacher) play a part.

4 It is considered that the sole function of lessons devoted to prose texts is to support the normal reading by students (for which they can make use of the library; Whitehead considers the teacher's activities in the school library more important than his work in the classroom). Whitehead does not say explicitly that the lessons devoted to poetry should have exactly the same function, but he wants them at least to stimulate students not to neglect completely the possibility of reading poetry themselves. With regard to poems, the problem is of course that there is not much poetry that students aged between 12 and 15 years care to read on their own. In other words, there is not much voluntary reading of poetry by students that could be supported and stimulated by classroom lessons.

We could, however, create a complete parallelism between teaching prose and poetry by replacing reading poems on their own by listening to (the better) pop songs. I think that we may assume that in many respects pop songs – the trivial ones excepted – represent the poetry of the second half of the twentieth century. If we accept this substitution,²⁰ pop songs could be dealt with in the classroom in the same way as Whitehead advises us to deal with poems – and these lessons could quite realistically be seen as supportive for students' independent explorations in the field of pop poetry.

All of these four characteristics are in accordance with the prerequisite that in fiction lessons for practical purposes a text → reader direction should prevail (although Whitehead apparently does not feel that the initiative in asking questions should rest with the students; see p. 82 above). The second characteristic is especially significant in this respect. As has already been noted, teachers trained to use the reader → text direction fall readily into the trap of 'tackling' the text with a good many sharp, solid questions (Whitehead's formulations suggest, from time to time, that this approach is not completely extinct in his thinking; on page 79 – with regard to prose – he speaks about 'attacking' two final paragraphs; on page 119 a poem is 'tackled').

However, as we shall see when we compare his approach with another variant of the text-experiencing style (the one described by Holbrook), Whitehead's strategy does not appreciably satisfy the other prerequisite of normal reading, the wide scope. ↩

One more element of the strategy I have developed in the preceding pages is lacking in Whitehead's, viz. that the reading and the teacher-student and/or student-student discussions should produce information on ✓

the questions of importance to the students: What is there to read? Why should I read particular texts? What do I have to know or to be capable of in order to read what I want to? Whitehead's strategy aims at letting the students (by means of various experiences) find their way in fiction themselves, more or less intuitively. In this strategy nothing is made explicit.

What the students who served us as informants (see p. 72) told us, however – at least it could not be interpreted otherwise – was that they wanted clear, verifiable information (i.e., not loosely, intuitively formulated by 'just' an enthusiastic teacher) which would give them power over the complex world of fiction around them. We might put it that they wanted *keys* enabling them to enter various houses and rooms which otherwise would remain inaccessible to them.

In my view, then, the lessons we are dealing with in this chapter should provide these '*keys*', i.e., more or less explicit instruments permitting you to enter, and walk around in, the house of Fiction. In Whitehead's view, apparently, such instruments are not necessary. So we have an issue. To my way of thinking, providing the keys is imperative. However, I shall not press this point too hard by trying to prove that the other side is wrong. The answer to the question 'keys or no keys?' depends on how difficult and complicated one judges the world of fiction to be for students. In my appraisal it is a very complicated one. For one thing, a number of general phenomena (human moods, attitudes, motives) which are unknown or not well known to students in secondary schools, play an essential role in this world. And in addition, the authors of recent novels and collections of poems about which students want information are themselves almost without exception unique, not-easy-to-understand personalities. As a result, every MT teacher who has tried to prepare a really valid lesson sequence on some modern author has undoubtedly found that this took him hours and hours of study and empathic thinking.

The keys principle has one important consequence. A teacher who wants certain kinds of 'key' information to emerge from the lesson activities, must introduce some amount of disciplinary thinking into the discussions. If this is not done, and the whole conversation develops on an intuitive basis, the result – if any – will be so weak or 'soft' that it cannot serve as a key or even as a basis for critical questioning. To satisfy these requirements, the results should be verbalized with precision and to some degree systematically (not completely systematically; cf. p. 81).

For instance, a teacher or a student who claims that the poems in *Sex, Violence, and the Hendersons* are elegant but cannot say anything more

exact, should not expect this finding to have much effect on others. The characterization elegant, for instance, becomes transparent if one sees:

a that all of the poems in *Sex, Violence, and the Hendersons* contain non-trivial messages;

b that, on the other hand, a minimum amount of verbalization is used to express these messages; in the poem on Mr. Henderson and the ballistic egg, for instance, the verbalization consist only of:

1 (a simple symbol) egg: small, fragile, contrasted with two silly bourgeois people having a vulgar row;

2 (sound) sharp initial consonants in the first six lines *vs.* soft initial consonant in the last line; (choice of words) no property-conveying words except one: 'furiously', which thus dominates the atmosphere; repetition of 'stood up, sat down', suggesting stupid mechanicalness; (syntactic construction) very simple last line *vs.* more complex – though still simple – construction in the first six lines.

Moreover, the cogency of these findings will be enhanced if a cool observer can see not only that they are in accordance with facts, but also that the data have been collected according to some kind of system, for instance, total meaning, total structure, sound level, word level, syntactic level, various aspects.

By now, I fear, some readers will again have the impression that after all I am advocating an academic approach. I must therefore, I think, repeat that the disciplinary system should be used in an unemphatic way and, which is equally important, should not form the basic framework: no *very* precise definitions if nobody wants them, no assignments in the style of 'Now analyse the following six poems according to this-and-that-method' (in Chapter 6 it will be shown that such a heavy disciplinary approach might be interesting for some intellectual purposes; here, however, we are dealing with the practical point of view). The disciplinary system should be made use of only to the extent of adding some rigour to the result of lesson activities.

In other words: what we have here is the question of balance – a question so important that Wheeler devotes a special section (p. 94ff.) to it. From my own experience I know that it can be done, and that no conflict need arise between the use of the system and the need for keeping the flow of interest going from text to reader. In the project on the 'doctor's novel' (p. 52 ff.) which was rated high by 'practical' 15-year-old students, a lightweight 'derivation' from the analytical model of the literary theoretician Roman Ingarden was used, and it helped a lot.

This is my position with regard to Whitehead's preference for intuitive instead of slightly more explicit learning. I cannot help feeling that, impelled by a kind of disgust for 'academic thinking', he has moved a bit too far in the other direction by rejecting explicitness too strongly.

- 2 The second variant of the text-experiencing strategies is the one described by David Holbrook in his *The exploring word* (Chapters 11–13). This approach resembles the one presented by Whitehead in many respects, but there are two important differences.
- a) First, Holbrook perceives the teaching-learning situation around fiction as 'a meeting of teacher and student in the word'. This means, among other things, that the teacher may – or even should – be very personal in his approach. We might therefore say that it is not solely the text that the students become acquainted with but also the personality of their teacher.
- b) Second, the scope of impressions Holbrook wants students to get from experiencing a poem – the flow of attention in Holbrook's style is definitely text → reader (listener) – is much wider than Whitehead suggests it should be.

The differences between the views of the two authors can best be demonstrated by concisely rendering the approach Whitehead suggests for dealing with a particular poem (see below) and by stating next what aspects of the poem are not touched on by that approach but which, in all probability, would be dealt with in some way by Holbrook's.

The poem – estimated by Whitehead to be appropriate for students of 12–13 years – is the following, by Siegfried Sassoon.

Morning Express

Along the wind-swept platform, pinched and white,
The travellers stand in pools of wintry light,
Offering themselves to morn's long, slanting arrows.
The train's due; porters trundle laden barrows.
The train steams in, volleying resplendent clouds
Of sun-blown vapour. Hither and about,
Scared people hurry, storming the doors in crowds.
The officials seem to waken with a shout,
Resolved to hoist and plunder; some to the vans
Leap; others rumble the milk in gleaming cans.

Boys, indolent-eyed, form baskets leaning back,
Question each face; a man with a hammer steals
Stooping from coach to coach; with clang and clack,
Touches and tests, and listens to the wheels.

Guard sounds a warning whistle, points to the clock
 With brandished flag, and on his folded flock
 Clasps the last door: the monster grunts: 'Enough!'
 Tightening his load of links with pant and puff.
 Under the arch, then forth into blue day,
 Glide the processional windows on their way,
 And glimpse the stately folk who sit at ease
 To view the world like kings taking the seas
 In prosperous weather: drifting banners tell
 Their progress to the counties; with them goes
 The clamour of their journeying; while those
 Who sped them stand to wave a last farewell.

Holbrook:
 meer emotion
 meel geich

According to Whitehead, students can gradually come to understand this poem by means of questions like: 'Where are the travellers standing? What shows us that it is a cold morning? Why "pools" of wintry light? What are "morn's long slanting arrows"? Why "trundle"? Etc. It is significant that no suggestion is given for arriving at the emotional layer of this poem. The poem – judged by Whitehead as not very brilliant – is full of emotional material: power, aggressivity, speed, beauty, jealousy. Holbrook would certainly expect the teacher to bring in these emotions, lest the essence of the poem escape the students – granted, of course, that Holbrook would rate it high enough to be 'taken'. To achieve this, he suggests the following procedure.

To avoid not only having to ask students elaborate questions but also long, difficult discussions, the teacher should largely rely on good reading aloud, conducted by himself. This reading should be based on a careful, not-purely-intellectual scrutiny of what, as a teacher, one feels oneself about the poem. This reading aloud should be followed by a few questions. I think we may speculate that in the case of 'Morning Express' Holbrook's questions would be of roughly the following kind:

'The first strophe will probably give you all kinds of feelings. Do some things give you a pleasant feeling? An unpleasant feeling? Or are these not the proper words to describe your feelings?'

(Same question for the first half on the second strophe.)

'How do you react to people who ride past you sitting in a departing train? To Sassoon they are kings. To you?' Etc.

A choice with regard to each of the differences between Whitehead's and Holbrook's approaches should, I think, be considered optional.

With regard to scope: in my view, we have to acknowledge the fact that people do not deal with emotions in the same way; there are, for instance,

introverts and extraverts. In any case, choosing the type of approach Holbrook advocates entails some important consequences for the psychological competence of the teacher – a competence usually not to be derived solely from one's training but also from having led and continuing to lead a more or less interesting life . . .

With regard to the role the teacher thinks he should play, three stands can be defended:

- 1 teaching fiction should be an interaction between text and students;
- 2 teaching fiction should be a teacher-student interaction via a medium (i.e., a fictional text); and
- 3 teaching fiction should be a student-student interaction, accompanied by the teacher, via a text (in this case, a group-work method would be appropriate). To judge by the description given by Lubbers, this method is preferred by a group of Swedish teachers, editors of a working-book on poetry (Arne Fredholm, Gunnar Hansson, Lennart Skaaret, Dikt 1.2.3. *Läsning*; Dikt 1.2.3. *Anteckningar*. Svenska Utbildningsförlaget Liber AB. Bohusläningens AB, Uddevalla 1971).

Finally, with regard to the central role of reading aloud by the teacher: if the teacher is good at expressing all kinds of ideas and emotions (and to be good, for one thing, he should not 'boom away' with the same intonation on every occasion; to have followed a course in expression will be compulsory in most cases), his reading:

- a* is certainly a means of creating a text → 'receiver' flow, not *vice versa*;
- b* brings about the isolation of the text, which, as noted above, is necessary if a text is to function;
- c* transmits much of the interpretation in an intuitive way which has the disadvantage of not producing 'keys'.

3) As a third variant of the text-experiencing approach we may consider the one propagated by the British author F. D. Flower (see also Stratta, p. 100). The suggestions made in his interesting and in many respects very original book (*Language and Education*) all point to lessons in which a text → reader flow of attention prevails, a wide scope of elements (ideal, emotions, etc.) are accounted for, and concrete keys are produced to help students in their search through the house of fiction.

As a matter of principle, F. D. Flower requires that the reading of fiction should preferably form part of a project planned around a particular theme, in which all kinds of media are made use of. For instance, the reading of *Black Boy*, by Richard Wright, can form part of a week's project on the theme 'The Racial Problem', for which use can be made of (Flower, p. 302): 1 Newspaper clippings, 2 *Blackboy*, 3 *Lady Sings the*

Blues (autobiography, Billy Holliday), and 4 *The Billy Holliday Story* (records).

Moreover, such a project should serve not only as a means for students to learn something about fiction and the subject of racial problems, but also as an opportunity for practising writing, speaking, and discussing.

This integrated approach, as suggested by Flower, obviously has many advantages. Still, I do not think that as far as reading fiction is concerned, it should be the only approach. In my opinion, fiction should be taught for its own sake on several occasions during the year. The reason for this is that by focussing on a theme, Flower's project method deviates from the normal reading situation, and thus infringes the principle of normal functionality. It is simply not so, that when one reads a novel like Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, one suddenly hurries to the library to get David Irving's (horrifying) study on the destruction of Dresden and looks in one's newspaper to see whether a movie on the subject of area bombing is being shown anywhere. Hence, this method, if used exclusively, would, I think, run the risk of more or less alienating students from normal reading.

The approach which I personally see as the most adequate, can briefly be indicated as:

Flower's, minus the imperative set-up in the form of a project, or Whitehead's, with the addition of some 'key production' and a wider scope of experiences.

B Text-studying approaches

The element 'studying' in the designation of this category conveys a good deal about this type of approach. I would like to discuss two variants.

The first variant is described in one of the most extensive manuals on MTT available, the one by the German author Robert Ulshöfer. The approach he describes is characterized by the following aspects:

- 1 it aims at letting students grasp the full scope – intellectual, emotional, ethical – of literary texts; in this respect, Ulshöfer's philosophy is similar to that of Holbrook;
- 2 the amount of disciplinarity is extremely high; in this respect Ulshöfer aims far beyond what I think is feasible for practical purposes.

The first point, scope (broad or narrow; deep or superficial), has been sufficiently discussed already. With regard to the second point, disciplinarity, the following can be noted.

The approach described by Ulshöfer satisfies the two requirements of disciplinarity completely. In the first place, it is explicit. At an early age (about 10 years) students already learn to observe literary phenomena of all kinds (rhyme, metre, sentence structure, etc.) so they can 'see through' the mechanism of a literary text. To improve this insight even further, students are frequently asked to produce oral or written texts with the help of the particular mechanism discovered while studying a text. In the second place, it is systematic – the degree of course increasing as the students become older.

A good example of Ulshöfers approach is given by the lesson scheme (Vol. 2, pp. 154–157) for Eichendorff's *Die Lerche* (The Lark). Another demonstration of the Ulshöferian approach can be found on pages 142–143, where it is applied to the more modern poem about the Hendersons and the egg.

Strictly speaking, the objective of this type of lesson is, according to Ulshöfer (p. 154), to make (15-year-old) students conscious of the way a poem should be contemplated (German: *betrachtet*) to be experienced: the objective is not 'just' to experience the poem. But, as the rest of his book makes clear, Ulshöfer does not envisage a special method for the latter kind of objective. We could probably say that 'just experiencing' does not really exist in Ulshöfer's conception of dealing with fiction.

*Die Lerche*²¹

Ich hörte in Träumen
 Ein Rauschen gehn,
 Und sah die Wipfel sich säumen
 Von allen Höhn –
 Ist's ein Brand, ist's die Sonne?
 Ich weiss es nicht,
 Doch ein Schauer voll Wonne
 Durch die Seele bricht.
 Schon blitzt's aus der Tiefe und schlagen
 Die Glocken, und schlängelnder Ströme Lauf
 Rauscht glänzend her,
 Und die glühenden Berge ragen
 Wie Inseln aus weitem dämmerndem Meer.
 Noch kann ich nichts sagen,
 Beglänzt die Brust,
 Nur mit den Flügeln schlagen
 Vor grosser, sel'ger Lust!

Lesson scheme

General purpose: the students should become conscious of the method by which poems can be approached (they should acquire '*ein Bewusstsein für die Methode der Betrachtung*'). Students are asked to do close reading in relation to four groups of questions:

- 1 Which words carry atmosphere, thought, and symbols? What are the metaphors, and what the essential concepts (literally: 'the fruitful concepts')? The motives, metaphors, and leading thoughts are investigated.
- 2 What is characteristic in the rhythmic movement? The metre, the form of the strophes, and the relation of the metre to rhythm are explored.
- 3 What is characteristic in the syntactic form? Under this heading, the sentence structure and its relation to the metre and to the form of the strophes are investigated.
- 4 What is the central point ('*der Quellpunkt*') of the poem? Students should try to find the point from which they can survey the whole as a unity.

Each of these four points is worked out in detail. Point 3, for instance, is elaborated as follows:

'Affirmative sentences alternate with interrogative ones and exclamations. As a whole, the poem is a dialogue of the I with himself. The first sentence consists of two components forming a symmetrical structure; it takes up the first four verses, is a kind of strophe. The next four verses again form a syntactic group with question and answer. The next five lines represent the third syntactic unit. At the end of the poem we again find a sentence, distributed over four lines. In the whole we recognize a 4-strophe structure. This means that here too (as already seen sub 2) we find a strong variation within one basic pattern. Content, metre, sentence structure, and general structure are in agreement in this respect.'

If we look at this lesson scheme from the point of view of the two criteria for normal reading, we get the following result.

1 *Text* → *reader flow of attention*. We may be certain that this procedure makes the flow go the wrong way, viz. text ← reader. This is due to two factors with a cumulative effect:

- a the students are asked to 'investigate', 'explore' the poem;
- b although a certain amount of disciplinarity is necessary to provide students with keys of a certain solidity (p. 88 above), the amount of

disciplinarity Ulshöfer envisages is so high that it frustrates the experiencing of the text. This high degree of disciplinarity manifests itself, for instance, in the comparatively large number of technical terms mentioned in the lesson plan.

If we leave out the terms used in points 1-4 (these may very well be intended as information for the teacher) we get the following list (some of these items can be found in the quotation from Ulshöfer's description):

symbol (*twice*)
 carrier of atmosphere
 carrier of thought
 rhythm (*four times*)
 metrical scheme
 dactyl
 five trimeters
 two tetrameters
 free verse
 upbeat
 affirmative sentence
 interrogative sentence
 exclamation
 dialogue
 bipartite symmetrical structure
 strophe
 syntactic group (unit) (*twice*)
 four-strophe structure
 basic pattern
 past tense
 present tense

2 Wide scope of experience. As has already been noted, Ulshöfer wants the students to understand the full scope of literary texts. His description of the lesson procedure shows that he wants to get at the emotions, phantasies, and feelings the poem conveys. In this respect he is comparable to Holbrook rather than to Whitehead. Leaving aside the question of whether German students born in 1960 would appreciate the emotion in this poem (I have said already that I am interested not in modernity but in permanent principles), the following passage from his description makes Ulshöfer's intentions completely clear:

'In this poem still another movement is reflected, the one of the sun
 The ascent of the lark corresponds with the rising of the sun and the poet's inner ecstasy. The landscape is now depicted in full colour; an overwhelming

picture originates: light, bells, glowing mountains, rustling streams – valleys – misty sea – emerging islands: a landscape which cannot be painted and cannot be imagined by ordinary human beings, originates before our eyes – a cosmic landscape of light and sound, a joyful symphony of life’.

In this respect it is also significant that Ulshöfer repeatedly declares that MT teaching should be related as completely as possible to the reality of life (German: *Lebensbezug*).

So much for this rendition of the type of approach to fiction envisaged by Ulshöfer. If to the two criteria for normal-reading atmosphere:

1 Text → reader flow of attention, and 2 wide scope of experience, we add the third criterion found while discussing Whitehead’s strategy:

3 production of ‘keys’, we see that Ulshöfer’s method satisfies conditions 2 and 3 but not condition 1. The constant study Ulshöfer requires of students completely frustrates the possibilities of a text → reader flow of attention. Furthermore, it is hardly likely that many ‘normal readers’ read fiction in the studious way Ulshöfer prescribes (the author himself considers reading activities as ‘working’, and hopes that students will get to like this kind of ‘work’).

As a teacher, I experienced the effect of this method in a highly concrete way a few years ago. I had read with a class a novel by a rather popular author concerning the complicated and spectacular relations between artists and semi-artists in Amsterdam,²² and in doing so had followed Ulshöfer’s procedure after adapting it to Dutch classroom atmosphere. An interesting and rather sparkling lesson sequence developed (those who think the Ulshöfer approach must necessarily be boring, are quite mistaken;²³ as will be explained in Chapter 10, disciplinarity can be quite stimulating, even exhilarating; see also pp. 142–143. However, at the end of the sequence, one student asked in a very friendly way: ‘Now I have one question: is this how we’re supposed to read novels?’ !!

The fact that Ulshöfer’s approach does not satisfy condition 1 – even accomplishes exactly the opposite – must lead us to conclude that it is not an appropriate method for teaching fiction for practical purposes. This is not meant to imply that Ulshöfer’s approach is to be completely condemned. As we shall see (Chapter 6), it can be a very adequate approach for intellectual purposes. Of course, it is quite possible that within certain school or classroom populations, such ‘intellectual students’ do not exist (or no longer exist). In that case a strategy *à la* Ulshöfer has no purpose. And it should also be added that, in any case, such a strategy should only comprise part of the fiction curriculum, the other

part being constituted by some sort of practical-purpose-oriented strategy as characterized earlier in this chapter: intellectuality not based on broad practical (or normal) orientation is unreal and alienating.

Still, to deny the intellectual strategy just characterized the right to be a legitimate option for some purposes in some situations in secondary education would, in my view, be an act of unjustified over-simplification.

There is a second variant of the text-studying approach in which neither condition 2 nor condition 1 is satisfied. In other words: the variant in which texts are approached in a purely literary-technical way. Such an approach is advocated, among others (a worldwide inventarization might very well reveal that it is still the prevailing method), by the German author Hermann Helmers. By (literary-)technical is meant that all teaching of fiction – and of the mother tongue in general – should focus on lingual structures, and that the relation to reality (intellectual, emotional reality) is considered of secondary, or even tertiary, importance.

The difference between the views of Helmers and Ulshöfer can be demonstrated by citing a great many passages, but I shall confine myself to presenting two which concern the philosophies underlying their views. Both passages need no further explanation.

Helmers (p. 295): 'The goal (*Lernziel*) of literary education is the independent understanding of literature. . . . Understanding means: mentally unlocking on the basis of the recognition of structures. As a consequence, the discipline with regard to these structures should receive primary attention'.

Ulshöfer (*Mitt.* I, pp. 26–27): 'The creative meeting of I and World, of Subject and Object, is the moment at which language and literature are born . . . It is the function of language and literature to make visible and produce the 'implemented' connection with reality. From this it follows that the teaching of German should start from three principles:

1 the orientation must be paedagogical, i.e., correspond with reality as far as this is possible in school;²⁴

2 the students should, by occupying themselves with language and literature, become aware of the contrast and the relationship between ideal and life, word and object, sense and existence, truth and reality;

3 literature should be interpreted as a reflection or 'counter-reflection' (*Gegenbild*) of reality; production of texts should be stimulated by the experiencing of something connected with the reality of life.'

I think we may say that the approach described by the American author

Mary Columbro Rodgers is essentially of the same type as that of Helmers. This can be assumed on the basis not of what the author says but rather what she does not say. Almost all of her statements concerning literature lessons refer to literary-technical matters.

It is evident that this second variant of the text-studying approach is even less appropriate for teaching fiction for practical purposes than the first one. In Chapter 6 we shall look at it again from the intellectual point of view.

It may be illuminating, finally, to bring the views of four authors together in a matrix representing three distinctive aspects:

	Whitehead	ten Brinke	Ulshöfer	Helmers
text → reader	+	+	—	—
scope of experience	narrow	wide	wide	narrow
keys	none	some, lightly disciplinary	many, strongly disciplinary	many, strongly disciplinary

This matrix shows among other things how complicated the interrelationships between the views of various authors can be. It is interesting to note that extreme contrasts (not a common feature at all) exist between
a Whitehead and Ulshöfer, and
b ten Brinke and Helmers.

1.3 Summary of characteristics

The contours of the ideal teaching-learning strategy for reading fiction (for practical purposes) brought out by our explorations, are:

Objectives

- 1 What?
- 2 Why?
- 3 How?

Method

- 1 Normal reading atmosphere: text → reader flow of attention, wide scope of experience.
- 2 Effective help for attaining objectives by provision of 'keys'.

Evaluation

- 1 Diagnostic, non-objective achievement tests are possible.
- 2 Other evaluative instruments, e.g. reaction sheets, are applicable.

2 Reading non-fiction

2.1 Outline of the ideal teaching-learning strategy

The question 'How to teach non-fiction reading for practical purposes?' can be answered in approximately the same way as has been done for teaching fiction.

As to the objectives, we can choose objectives similar to those listed in the preceding section. Teaching should provide concrete answers ('keys') to three questions:

- 1 What is there to read, or listen to, and/or to look at (TV programs; see below) (the WHAT? objective). *what to read*
- 2 What is the use of reading particular books or articles, listening to, or viewing, certain programs, etc.? (the WHY? objective). *why to read*
- 3 What should I know and be capable of if I want to do what is mentioned under 1 and 2? (the HOW? objective). *how to read.*

In the following, I shall try to give a brief survey of the ways in which MTT can contribute to the attainment of parts of these objectives. The word contribute is used intentionally, because, the broad objectives formulated sub 1, 2, and 3, evidently cannot be attained in the MTT lesson alone; other mother-tongue-based subjects such as history, physics, and biology, will have to contribute substantially. After this survey, the question of the adequate approach will be dealt with. Finally, some remarks will be made about the position of various MTT manuals.

2.11 Objectives

Objective 1. Orientation about what to read, listen to, and view.

As already said, this orientation can of course, be provided by MTT only to a modest extent. A great part of the orientation about the kinds and sources of information brought forth by human culture will have to come from other subjects. However, MTT can contribute in some interesting respects; for example, it can focus attention on genres like the essay, or essay-like information such as propaganda.

By the terms essay and essay-like information I mean all information not provided in a purely rational or 'scientific' style. Besides the literary essay, this category comprises many types playing an important part in the information reaching us daily and weekly from newspapers (e.g., columnists) and radio and TV programs. Many of these types deserve some careful attention in the MTT lesson. One cannot hold that orientation with regard to this field comes automatically. I fully agree with Mary Columbro Rodgers when she states the modern school cannot ignore the reality of mass-media communication (p. 74).

Objective 2. Orientation about why one might read, etc., something.

This means that after having gained some experience with a text or program of the type just mentioned, the student is given a chance to think a bit about questions like:

'What does it mean to be a well-informed person?'

'What does it cost to be well-informed? Do I have to read three newspapers a day and two weekly magazines; and do I have to watch most of the informative TV programs?'

'Do I really want to be informed by such texts or programs, or would I rather be entertained?'

'Do I like, or dislike, particular kinds of propaganda?'

Objective 3. Orientation about how non-fictional texts or programs should be read, listened to, or viewed adequately.

Here, we find two kinds of problems. In the first place it should be noted that the 'clean' (rational, 'scientific') texts do not present any difficulties if they are simply structured, but do if they have a complicated structure.

In those school systems in which the other subjects (physics, history, etc.) do not help students in tackling complicated non-fictional texts, it is the duty of MTT to do something about it (see Chapter 17, §3). Probably since the very beginning of written culture, techniques and strategies have been developed which can be of use. One of the more recent techniques is SQ3R (see p. 159).

A second kind of problem is offered by the essay and the essay-like text or program and by biased information. These raise the problem of how to provide readers, listeners, and TV viewers with means and attitudes that will enable them not to be beguiled. It is important that citizens be 'mass-communication resistant' in the sense that they are able to establish for themselves what should be considered truth and what pseudo-truth.²⁵ This ability is also an indispensable asset in the seemingly

innocent realm of non-fictional books. Because for some MT teachers mass communication probably is a more far-fetched subject than non-fictional books, I will illustrate this by means of a passage from the latter category, viz. the introductory chapter of a book on the war in North Africa.²⁶ The first paragraph of this chapter will suffice to show how the whole text could be dealt with:

When Richard O'Connor took the field in a year of disastrous defeat his spectacular victories exhilarated his countrymen and astonished the enemy. Yet they have won fame not for himself but for others. The campaign which cost Mussolini an army of two hundred thousand men and an imperial province within half a year of his declaration of war is remembered as 'Wavell's offensive'. Even in that guise its lustre is now dimmed by the later victories of the war, although none of them displayed an equal genius. O'Connor deserves better remembrance.

By its epic style, this text portrays war as splendid and chivalrous. In that sense it can be said to beguile the reader. The characteristic features of the epic style are present so abundantly in this little fragment that one wonders how the author managed to get them all in. These features can be grouped into two categories:

a contrast:

disastrous defeat	<i>vs.</i> spectacular victories
exhilarated	<i>vs.</i> astonished
his countrymen	<i>vs.</i> the enemy
Yet . . . not for him	<i>vs.</i> but for others
'Wavell's offensive'	<i>vs.</i> (the name it should have been given) O'Connor's offensive
lustre	<i>vs.</i> dimmed
its lustre	<i>vs.</i> later victories of the war

b hyperbole:

disastrous
spectacular
astonished
fame
lustre
genius

It seems to me to be very important that by means of a careful study of some texts of this kind, students are enabled to see through them and thus can become a match for the impressive manipulatory forces at work in

society. (See also p. 150, nr. 7, for another example of a lesson sequence serving this same purpose.)

So much for this survey of possible contributions that MTT can make to the attainment of parts of the three objectives. We can now turn to the question of how texts (or programs) can best be approached in the classroom.

2.12 Method and evaluation

Two aspects excepted, the answer can be analogous to the one given in §1. To create a reading atmosphere that is as normal as possible – a condition *sine qua non* for making any contribution to normal reading at all:

- 1 a text → reader flow of attention should prevail;
- 2 the scope should not be exclusively lingual (in other words, not only the meaning and structure of a text should be focussed on but also its practical consequences, its reliability, the impact it makes or does not make on you; the *voller Lebensbezug* should be present). Furthermore, to make clear gains with respect to the three objectives, it is necessary that:
- 3 concrete, not too vaguely worded, verifiable, 'criticism proof' information ('keys') should result from the lesson activities; in the same way as has been described in the preceding section, this means that a moderate amount of disciplinarity should be made use of (see the concise description of the way the 'beguiling text' on the desert war can be dealt with); that the amount of disciplinarity should be kept moderate, is a consequence of condition 1.

These three conditions have exactly the same consequences for the set-up and the atmosphere of lessons as they have for teaching the reading of fiction, except for two aspects.

Exception 1: as a consequence of condition 2, the problem of professional competence may arise. Condition 2 requires of the teacher that he choose texts not simply because they show interesting lingual (or socio-lingual or psycholingual) features, but also because their content makes them interesting to students.

It also obliges him not to evade discussions about the content of the texts. As can be immediately seen from the example about General O'Connor, this precept compels the teacher either to inform himself about the subject-area of the content (in this case: the desert war and war in general), or consult a colleague in the field of the social sciences. We shall come back to this problem.

Exception 2: Since the ability to deal adequately with non-fictional texts is both a social imperative and also a general imperative of tertiary education, testing in this field cannot be confined to diagnostic tests. Hence, the use of selective tests in this field may be considered. Obviously, these selective tests should not completely dominate the teaching-learning atmosphere.

In view of the requirement that teaching/learning objectives and tests should be in line as much as possible, these tests should have a wide scope (see p. 103, point 2). Many reading tests do not satisfy this essential condition.

2.2 How some manuals see it

The position taken by the various manuals with regard to the desirability of this approach, is essentially the same as has been described in §1.2: there are a. text-experiencing approaches, and b. text-studying approaches. As to category a.: in the manuals I have made use of I did not find the first, 'narrow scope' variant (Whitehead does not deal with reading non-fiction in his book), but the 'wide-scope' variant is present, for instance, in Elisabeth Fowler's work (see her Chapter 13 on Non-fiction). And, then, of course, there is also the 'wide-scope + keys' variant propagated by F. D. Flower and the present author (the views of the former have already been indicated on p. 92).

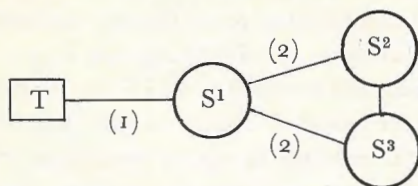
As to category b.: the 'wide-scope' variant in this category is represented, for one, by Ulshöfer, and the 'narrow-scope' approach focussing on the technicalities of communication by Helmers and Mary Columbro Rodgers. Both variants are, in my view, inadequate for teaching the reading of non-fiction for practical purposes, the latter (conflicting as it does with the first and the second conditions mentioned on p. 160) even more so than the former (conflicting only with the first condition). However, especially with regard to Ulshöfer's approach, we should wait until we have looked at things from the 'intellectual' point of view before making a more definite evaluation.

A recent specimen of the 'narrow-scope'²⁷ variant of the text-studying approach is the British manual and text-book combination *Exploring language* and *Language in use* by Peter Doughty, John Pearce, and Geoffrey Thornton. According to this approach, students explore, via a great many different assignments representing a large variety of language situations, a number of lingual and sociolingual data and principles.

This method can be evaluated in essentially the same way as Ulshöfer's: what students learn specifically by this method, does not adequately contribute to the three practical purposes relating to reading non-fiction.

According to the Doughty-Pearce-Thornton approach, all kinds of verbal behaviour are studied, or 'explored'. If we substitute text for verbal behaviour we can say that this implies that texts are read (or: received) in a non-normal way; as has been explained repeatedly, studying is a non-normal way of reading.

However, the Doughty-Pearce-Thornton approach envisages considerable student-student interaction (reporting, discussing, etc.). This interaction, of course, takes place in a normal way. For instance, during a discussion a student just listens to his partner; he does not 'study' what his partner says. We can visualize this as follows:



T = text

S = student

(1) = non-normal reception (studying)

(2) = normal reception (and production)

Now, only that which takes place on the level of (1) can be considered to comprise what students learn *specifically* by this method. What takes place on the level of (2) can occur as well in any kind of lesson, physics, biology, history, etc. – and, as a matter of fact, actually takes place in the lessons of all MTB teachers who have come to accept a more sophisticated conception of what learning really is. The words 'exploring language' in the title of the book containing the rationale of their method shows that level (1) stands central in the conception of the three authors.

If we compare the approaches described by Ulshöfer and Doughty-Pearce-Thornton in terms of the three vital aspects $t \rightarrow r$, scope of experience, and provision of 'keys', we get the following diagram:

	Ulshöfer	Doughty-Pearce-Thornton
text $\rightarrow$ reader	—	—
scope of experience	wide	narrow ²⁷
keys	many, strongly disciplinary	very many, lightly disciplinary

This diagram shows that the Doughty-Pearce-Thornton approach scores low on all three conditions for an adequate contribution to practical purposes. As to the low degree of disciplinarity: in itself this is an advantage, but it is countered by the fact that Doughty-Pearce-Thornton present an enormous number of 'keys', so many that they cannot be of much use to persons engaged in verbal interaction. One might say that whereas Ulshöfer's keys are too heavy, Doughty-Pearce-Thornton's are too numerous.

It should be noted that these remarks are not meant to be critical but simply descriptive. It is not imperative to concentrate on the development of the practical capacity to read non-fictional texts. On the contrary, this is purely a question of choice. Moreover, the choice depends largely upon whether we allot a large or a restricted territory to MTT. In the first case (large territory) the teaching of the practical ability to read (and write, speak, or listen to) non-fiction will certainly be one of the primary tasks of MTT. In the second case (restricted), however, the teaching of this ability will not be a task of MTT exclusively but be shared by all MTB subjects (including MTT). Consequently, it will not have a central position in MTT. I shall come back to this point in Chapter 17.

In addition, it should be clear that, like Ulshöfer's, the Doughty-Pearce-Thornton method contains much intrinsically interesting material and thus satisfies the second condition of normal functionality (see p. 65, point b). It makes possible brilliant lessons – that is, from what I call an intellectual, not a practical, point of view. Therefore, we should certainly have another look at this approach in Chapter 6.

In his foreword to *Language in use*, M. A. K. Halliday states that he sees the method as 'the opening up of an important area of human potential'. This may be true for the British scene. It does not apply, however, to the international arena. As we have seen, for instance on the Continent in Germany, teaching of the mother tongue had long ago moved in the direction of *Language in use*. As a matter of fact, *Language in use* incorporates findings of the newly developed sociolinguistics, whereas the data and viewpoints Ulshöfer had to rely on can be considered partially outdated – though still valuable. But this, of course, is only a trivial difference compared to the essential similarity of these methods. (Moreover, at about the time the manuscript of this book was completed, a revised edition of Ulshöfer's manual appeared in which the new developments in sociolinguistics are taken into account.)

Learning to write and speak for practical purposes (in a normally functional way)

1 The production of fiction

For the sake of completeness we cannot omit this category, but we can be brief. The production of fiction is not an activity that normally serves practical purposes, and should therefore be discussed not here but in Chapter 6.

However, the demarcation line between practical and intellectual is not a very clear one, and we should not expect the production of fiction to be always entirely impractical. Especially those approaches in which the accent lies on exploring one's own personality (see Chapter 16) instead of on the development of artistic qualities, can contribute to a practical purpose: getting to understand oneself a bit better which is certainly of considerable practical use. However, this aspect, as far as I could find, does not prevail in the teaching of the production of fiction, and it therefore seemed best to place it in the 'intellectual' category.

2 The production of non-fiction (writing, speaking)

2.1 Outline of the ideal strategy

The rationale developed in Chapter 4 can be transposed to this new area of teaching-learning activities. This yields the following teaching principles:

Principle 1. The objectives should be activities that students, either as citizens or as learners and members of the school society, need to have at their command. All of these activities are characterized by two things: *a* they are informative (not diverting), and *b* the writing or speaking occurs in response to concrete stimuli and has practical consequences.

This type of non-fictional texts includes letters, notes, reports, requests, communiqués, summaries, informative talks. Neither the essay nor the speech belongs to this category: normally, these do not satisfy condition *b* (they can, however, satisfy condition *a*, although many essays and speeches of course have a more or less diverting function). As Flower (p. 158) puts it: 'Essay writing represents the exact opposite of the

purposive writing arising out of a contextual approach'. This does not mean that it should be forbidden to ask students to write essays and hold speeches, but solely that such assignments cannot be justified by saying that they serve a practical purpose.

The classification just mentioned (report writing, note writing, etc.) is not the only classification to be kept in mind in connection with the teaching of speaking and writing for practical purposes. Two other classifications are important, viz. those based on the concepts purpose and recipient. For instance, it makes a great deal of difference whether the recipient is represented by:

- a group of persons knowing much less about a particular subject than you do,
- a group of colleagues who want you to inform them about something, or
- a group of powerful people whom you want to convince about something they have definitely decided against.

The categories report, note, informative talk, etc. can be combined with the categories of purpose and recipient into a matrix. The teacher can then choose from this matrix the activities and situations he thinks his students should have some training in (he can also make this decision together with his students). In my view, one does not need a perfect sociolinguistic handbook to produce a reasonably complete matrix: common sense and one's own experience with language activities and problems should be sufficient.

Principle 2. The teaching-learning situation should resemble normal speaking and writing situations as much as possible. This principle overlaps principle 1 slightly, as far as condition *b* is concerned. It has the following rather far-reaching consequences:

- a* The assignments should always lead students to write or speak about subjects having some importance either for them or for the group to which they belong (class, small working group), or both.
- b* The subject to be written or spoken about should have its roots in some concrete question which has arisen during the lesson or a topic the class is dealing with at that moment (this is essentially the approach advocated by Flower), and what has been written or said by students should have practical consequences.
- c* Especially when speaking is being practised the student should be allowed to act in a normal setting. That is, if he wants to sit behind a desk, he should be allowed to; if he wants to stand or move around, this

too should be accepted. Such freedom is characteristic of normal speaking situations. Teachers who do not allow their students this kind of 'normality' are actually approaching the realm of the scholastic (p. 67).

d Condition *b* should be completely reflected in the evaluation method: this means that if the teacher wants to mark (or evaluate products in some other way, e.g., by comments) his marking (and/or commenting) should refer not only to mechanics, logic, and compositional techniques, but also to what the text (written or spoken) has contributed to the information reservoir of the group.

Principle 3. Writing notes, reports, summaries, and the like, or holding informative talks, involves all kinds of difficulties. Some of these difficulties are of a general nature, others apply to some special variant of speaking and writing. To enable students to cope with these difficulties, one of the products of the writing and speaking exercises (and the teacher's comments) should be concrete and manageable principles, guidelines, strategies, recipes (if these do not seem detestable). In Chapter 4 these principles etc. were called keys.

By way of example, I shall mention a few of the keys which can be of practical use in the field we are in now.

- Before starting to write a factual letter, try to find out what the person you are writing to thinks about the subject of your letter.
- If you make a general statement, always provide an example. If you cannot find a good example, there may be something wrong with your statement.
- If you adduce false, 'cunning', 'manipulative' arguments in order to convince, you must expect (and accept) the same from your critics.
- If you talk to an audience, do not use a special 'speaking' tone.
- It helps people who are reading what you have written or listening to a talk you are giving, if you inform them at the beginning what points you are going to cover. If the text is long, remind your readers or listeners of this plan, and indicate in a few sentences 'how far we are'.
- Sometimes you must define a term. There are several ways to do this. The most academic one is to give the official definition. A very practical one may be just to provide some examples. Your choice of definition depends on the purpose you have in mind.

From the second principle (normal situation) two things follow. In the first place, one of the practical consequences of writing and speaking by students could be action. This is stipulated especially by authors on MTT who take the so-called emancipatory political stand (cf. p. 14).

One of the best-known representants of this movement is the Brazilian paedagogue Paulo Freire.

For this book I have chosen the West-German authors Armin Gutt and Ruth Salfner as representatives, mainly because Freire concentrates on Third World problems and Gutt and Salfner deal with classroom learning in normal schools in industrialized countries. Strangely enough, in their remarkably clear and at the same time thorough little book they do not once mention Freire.

According to Gutt and Salfner (p. 24), emancipatory mother-tongue education has two inseparable functions:

- 1 it should improve the ability to represent social situations adequately;
- 2 it should lead to solidarity and at the same time show the possibility of and the necessity for changing social reality.²⁸

From point 2 it follows that children who have learned to represent social situations, should be asked to try to act upon their findings, i.e., by trying to change a situation they have analyzed and described. This in turn implies that topics to be chosen *sub* 1 should refer to situations lying within the range of influence of the students. Gutt and Salfner provide well-elaborated examples of such analyzing → describing → action combinations: e.g., the students study and discuss the lack of space to play in their neighbourhood and the structural factors underlying this deficiency. Others formulate new school regulations and try them out (see also the description of the ideas of Lethen and Schneider regarding this matter in Chapter 11).

2) A second consequence of the second principle is that the information, comments, and discussions that help to indicate keys, should not take too large a share of the learning activities in the field of speaking and writing. It is the writing and speaking, the puzzling – sometimes wrestling – to get what you want to say onto paper, the listening to the others' comments and your own reactions to what they say, which should form the major part of these learning activities.

In describing the main consequences of these three principles I have given most of my attention to what should be done rather than to what should not be done. Yet it seems useful, in order to delineate still more sharply what the normally functional teaching of writing and speaking means in practice, to indicate briefly what should not be done.

In the course of the elaboration of the first principle it has already been explained that asking students to write essays or to make speeches cannot

be justified by claiming that this appreciably serves practical purposes. Some procedures which conflict with the second principle are the following:

1 Offering students about, say, ten different themes to choose from, irrespective of whether these are interesting or not. These themes will not have arisen from practical questions posed in the course of classroom discussions of a particular topic and the writings (or talks) will not have practical consequences. From a practical point of view this means that as a teacher one does not take the pragmatic value of these theme subjects very seriously.

midterm
end-
exam

This 'Choose one of n themes' method is not completely extinct in, for instance, final examinations given in The Netherlands. And because examinations have an enormously retrogressive effect on teaching practice, this means that tens of thousands of students in The Netherlands still from time to time choose a theme from a menu put before them by a more or a less inventive teacher.

The most horrible, almost absurdistic, example I have ever encountered was one I came across in a Belgian text-book²⁹ which invited 13-year-old students to choose from about six assignments, one of which was 'Describe something funny which happened in class recently', and another 'Describe the sufferings of the Belgian Jews due to pogroms during the Second World War'. A teacher who could seriously suggest the latter as a subject for a theme and see fit to list it together with the former, must be considered either a lunatic or a criminal.

2 Another objectionable procedure is to assign a theme a week, or even once every three weeks. It is evident that nobody in his right mind could expect students to write seriously about a new subject every week (or even every three weeks).³⁰

3 A third objectionable procedure is for the teacher to mark (or comment on) a paper or a talk solely on the basis of correctness, composition, and logic, rather than informative value; and, moreover, just 'evaluates' and does not react. This kind of restricted, 'frigid' evaluation is not in conformity with a normal writing (or speaking) situation: in such situations the recipients are personally interested in the content of what is presented to them, and do not just evaluate it; they also react.

It is more difficult to go into the contents of the written or spoken products of students seriously, and to react to them, if procedures 1 and 2 are followed, because of the amount of time that demands from the teacher. If one were to follow these procedures in teaching, one would have to study a great many subjects at the same time, which none of us would

have time to do even if we wanted to. Hence, there may even be a close connection between the application of these two procedures and treating texts and talks by students in a restricted and frigid way.

Of course, a teacher may follow sound procedures – e.g., asking students to write and speak on concrete questions related to a topic the class has been discussing (Flower's procedure) – and still not have much time to go into the written or spoken products thoroughly. This is another way of saying that the facts of life may be stronger than principles. It should be noted, however, that when this is the case students can be asked to join in commenting on their classmate's work (this is a sensible invitation anyhow).

To wind up these remarks about evaluating and marking within a normally functional framework it may be said that in the field of producing non-fiction, just as for reading non-fiction, selective tests can be considered legitimate if they do not usurp most of the teacher's and students' attention and have a wide 'scope'.

There are still two aspects of the problem concerning the consequences of normally functional teaching of the production of non-fiction left for us to consider.

- 1) The first aspect, that of the teacher's competence, became apparent when we explored the field of teaching the reading of non-fiction. When a teacher goes thoroughly into the content of students' writing and speaking and reacts to it, he does not face competence problems as long as he restricts the subject area to linguistics (including sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics) and questions of literary theory, literary history, or other literary subject matter. It is unlikely, however, that any class or any MTT teacher would appreciate this restriction of the subject matter. But if he transgresses the borders of this professional domain the MTT teacher is forced to recognize the limits of his competence. One of the obvious solutions to this problem is cooperation with a colleague.
- 2) The second aspect we must take into account is the fact that part of the ability to write and speak well consists of what are called the mechanics of speaking and writing, viz. the orthographic, syntactic, lexical, and logical factors. Hence, some of the keys a student needs for speaking and writing adequately, may be said to be of a technical nature.

When asked to write or talk in accordance with the NF (normal functionality) principle – i.e., on a topic with which the class has been dealing – a number of students may be expected to show deficiencies in one or more of the four technical fields just mentioned. This may even apply to the majority of a class.

In such cases two courses are open to the teacher: he can go on inviting his students to write or speak in response to complete assignments (as we may call them) or change his tactics and insert a series of partial exercises intended to remedy the deficiencies. If he chooses the latter solution, he can offer exercises designed, for instance, to cope with orthographic deficiencies. He can also train his students in certain aspects of sentence construction or work on parts of the vocabulary with which the students seem unfamiliar. Or he can offer exercises in the field of logical sentence-building, e.g. by means of playing with words and word groups like 'unless', 'nevertheless', 'to the contrary', etc. To the best of my knowledge, experiments have not shown either of the two tactics (continuing with complete assignments and hoping that things will improve gradually, or inserting partial exercises until a deficiency has been remedied) to be superior to the other.

The question which arises here is whether choosing the second solution – which implies creating abnormal writing situations – means that one deviates from the NF principle. The answer to this question must be in the negative. The NF principle does not say that the teaching approach should be completely identical to a normal writing or speaking situation, but that it should be in maximal accordance with such a situation (p. 76).

The teacher who chooses to insert partial exercises would seriously infringe the NF principle only if he did these exercises with his students as an end in themselves instead of subordinating them to the ultimate goal of enabling students to speak or write adequately in connection with complete assignments. This subordination of course means that the teacher stops the partial exercises when the students seem to have made sufficient progress to be able to resume complete assignments.

Another interesting question, namely, whether it is advisable to make use of 'discipline' (e.g., the discipline of grammar, or logic) when doing partial exercises with students, will be taken up in Chapter 10.

2.2 How some manuals see it

In Chapter 4 (§ 1.2 and § 2.2) brief reference was made to the various trends in MT teaching in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, and how these trends are related to the principles to be derived from the key principle of normal functionality. It has now become clear that the principles indicated for the teaching of reading (fiction or non-fiction) can be transferred to the realm of speaking and writing without much difficulty, and with a very restricted number of additional stipulations.

Hence, the various trends in the teaching of non-fiction production can be expected to be very similar to those occurring in the 'receptive' field. This is indeed the situation, and, to avoid undue repetition, I shall characterize this situation very briefly.

As in the receptive field, where we found text-experiencing and text-studying approaches, we find in the productive field approaches in which comparatively few and/or light keys emerge from the teaching-learning activities (at least neither more nor heavier keys than are needed for practical purposes), and approaches in which the resulting keys are either many (Doughty-Pearce-Thornton) or heavy (Ulshöfer) – in my view more and heavier than the practical situation ever allows one to use. In a practical writing or speaking situation a writer or speaker must satisfy so many completely different conditions, most of which have to be met in an entirely intuitive way, that a keyring carrying many or heavy keys cannot be considered expedient.

On the other hand, within the first category of approaches – few keys and light keys – we find types of approach which, in my view, produce too few and/or unsufficiently heavy keys. For instance, Whitehead has apparently set all his hopes on the 'natural' development of abilities in his students by just 'letting them do it'. In view of the fact that experience and some experimental evidence tells us that the quality of practical activities is increased if a limited number of sound and relevant principles are brought to bear on them (see Chapter 10, §3), this seems to me to be aiming too low.

We could, then, distinguish between three approaches, the first two of which in my view, are not very adequate:

- few/light keys
- many/heavy keys
- an 'in between' category.

But other distinctions run right across this classification. The most important of these, in my opinion, is whether the content of students' speaking and writing is taken seriously as to both its informative value and its practical implications.

Where this is not the case, the only aspects taken seriously are the use of words and syntax and the logical, compositional, and other communicational aspects. This distinction corresponds with the wide scope-narrow scope distinction made in Chapter 4 (§1.2 and §2.2).

Roughly speaking, the approaches of Doughty-Pearce-Thornton, Helmers, and Rodgers seem to belong to the narrow-scope variety, those of Flower, Fowler, Ulshöfer, and Whitehead to the wide-scope variety.

2.3 A note on discussion

In Chapter 1, §5.1 I set myself the following rule of presentation to avoid undue complexity in this book: principles will be developed for just a few dimensions; for other dimensions the exploration will be limited.

One of the latter dimensions is *di* 3, Interactionality. Combination of this dimension with the category non-fiction (*di* 8), the whole of *di* 1 (direction), and the category oral (*di* 2), yields the phenomenon discussion. If the whole of *di* 2 were taken into account, we would find a second phenomenon: written interaction (e.g., an exchange of notes). Only the first phenomenon has been discussed by MTT experts lately, but there is no reason why the second phenomenon should not fall within our scope – and within that of MT teachers. Those MT teachers who do their work as members of a team will probably have experienced that when it comes to planning, teams rely more and more on all kinds of ‘interactional’ papers. For instance, some kind of sketchy preliminary plan is put on paper, and the team members are asked to produce what are usually called working papers to acquaint the group with each others’ ideas ahead of time.

There is even still a third phenomenon playing an important part in team interaction, viz. the ‘cross-category’ interaction: oral reaction to working papers and written reaction to oral information.

The following remarks are confined to the phenomenon discussion, to which all principles for teaching according to the NF principle apply. In the first place, a normal discussion situation should prevail as much as possible. This means that, for instance, students should never be invited to have a discussion just for the sake of learning how to discuss, and then be casually told to choose some subject for that purpose. In a normal situation, any group of adults meeting together would reject such an invitation. Normal procedure should be that students learn to discuss by discussing topics that fit into the normal lesson plan.

In the second place, these activities should yield relevant and usable keys. Some of these keys will refer to abilities, others to attitudes. The most important of them will be mentioned in Chapter 15, where the practical consequences of ‘teaching interaction’ will be dealt with. For the reasons explained in the preceding sections, the focus should be not on the keys but on the activity.

Intellectual learning and the principle of normal functionality

1 'Practical' versus 'intellectual'

For many young and some older teachers, 'intellectual' is a dirty or silly word. If it carries the connotations 'alienated from the practical problems of the world', 'eggheadish', 'arrogant', they may be right. But the word can be used in a more relevant way, at least in my view: to be an intellectual originally meant that one likes to understand things and values and to have a wide variety of experiences. This human predilection is not something reserved for eggheads; it is a quality normal people can have, irrespective of the social class to which they belong.

The value, as part of the school curriculum, of understanding things and having new experiences simply because one finds them interesting or fascinating (or just funny), should not be underestimated. We are not on earth just to survive!

On the other hand, the choice in respect of how much relative importance should be attached to the practical and the intellectual points of view, is optional. A choice lying somewhere on one of the two sides of the scale

practical intellectual



is determined to a great extent by the cultural ideals one has with regard to society or to the sector of society to which the students belong.

Flower's ideals, for instance, reflect a much more practical attitude than Whitehead's (not to mention Ulshöfer's). This could be causally related to the fact that the former writes in relation to vocational education, the latter to general education.

At first sight, the option regarding one's choice of position on the Practical – Intellectual Scale seems to be the most important one in education. This is, however, deceptive: the kind of intellectuality chosen is at least as important. For instance, the way the word intellectual is used in this book makes it also cover understanding one's own person-ality. Now, the consequences of adding this aim to the more traditional intellectual aims of the school curriculum (understanding society, understanding some aspects of the historical development of one's country)

probably has more consequences for teaching practice than changing the curriculum from intellectual to practical (cf. Chapter 16).

The choice with respect to either practical/intellectual or kind of intellectuality, is entirely optional. In the following, the most important possibilities for teaching the mother tongue from an intellectual point of view will be briefly enumerated and characterized. This list is intended to illustrate the richness, relevance, and often cheerfulness of the intellectual domain of MTT – which, however, can only be entered successfully by a teacher armed with very good materials. The enumeration will be followed by indications about how the various possibilities can be translated into actual teaching programmes. These possibilities can be roughly divided into two groups: studies and games. The list of subjects developed by Phenix (see p. 43) can be used as a basis for more or less systematic exploration.

voorwaarde!

2 Possible intellectual objectives of mother-tongue teaching

There is never much life in a list, but on some occasions – for instance when one needs a quick survey – it can be a practical asset. For that reason, the present list is given a place near the beginning of this chapter. Illustrations can be found in §3 and in Chapter 10.

The list contains many terms that seem much too abstract to be suitable for the classroom ('linguistics', 'empirics', 'synnoetics', etc.) but this is misleading, because they all refer to simple, concrete, human things. For example, when you must decide whether you will refer to someone as an auto mechanic or as a grease monkey (see p. 149) you are practising psycho- or sociolinguistics; and if you design an advertisement in which you warn the public against yourself, you are operating in the field of synnoetics. If we see through them, such abstract terms are of great practical value, because, after all, they have a broad and rather well-defined meaning.

2.1 Studying

1) Subjects in the field of symbolics:

1 All subjects with which linguistics deals and which interest students, e.g. the basic elements of every language (p. 148, nr. 4); the intricacy of grammatical rules; the efficiency of language.

2 All subjects with which psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics deal and which interest students. In fact, this category represents a group of subjects belonging to both of two realms, symbolics and empirics, at the same time. The number of possibilities within this category is very great.

A few of them are:

Language and context (p. 149)

Language and social status (p. 150)

Choose your favourite newspaper (p. 150)

Verbal manipulation (150)

Do lingual rules influence thinking (the so-called Whorfian thesis)?

2) Subjects in the field of empirics:

All subjects belonging to the so-called Humanities, and which

a do not belong to esthetics, ethics, synoptics;

b are not dealt with by other subjects.

Usually, the stimulus to deal with these subjects originates from the reading of a book, a collection of poems or essays. Normally, the teacher cannot be considered 'officially' competent for dealing with the subject; hence, as a rule, it will be treated in a non-disciplinary way (for the notion disciplinary, see Chapter 10). Some examples:

Is there such a thing like 'happiness'?

What is curiosity good for?

What is wisdom?

Themes like these and others to be mentioned below represent some of the exceptional cases where the writing of 'essays' can be quite functional.

3) Subjects in the field of esthetics:

All subjects with which literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history deal and which interest students. In fact, these three disciplines are forms of psycho- and sociolinguistics, but because the latter acquired an official status in academic circles much later than the former, they are still kept separated in many universities (to the advantage of neither).

Some examples of such subjects:

What is a poem?

What is the function of fairy tales?

What mental image have I myself formed of the personality of author X?

Do novelists use 'tricks'?

4) Subjects in the field of synnoetics:

Everything representing some kind of exploration, or – to use a rather heavy word: contemplation – of your own personality and that of others. (For a more detailed discussion, see Ch. 16).

Some examples:

What feelings and ideas do I discover originating in myself when I concentrate on a particular photograph?

Do I recognize what is expressed in chapter Y of novel Z as something which could happen to myself?

Or, do I recognize passage R in poem S as something I have experienced at some time in my life? (See Chapter 16, p. 211, 3.)

5) Subjects in the field of ethics:

The remarks on the realm of empirics apply here too.

6) Subjects in the field of synoptics:

1 All activities directed to becoming acquainted with scientific methods. By 'scientific method' I understand all ways of working in an orderly way, with verification of the results. Hence, scientific methods can be learned by students aged, say, 13 years (for example, see Chapter 10, §2, nrs. 2 and 11).

The subjects of choice can be those mentioned under symbolics and esthetics.

2 All activities directed at the formulation of some kind of theory. As in the case of sub-category 1, this theory may refer to all subjects mentioned in connection with symbolics and esthetics. Of course, it is hard to tell exactly when something is a theory and when it is not. It would perhaps be better not to distinguish this sub-category of synoptics but let the other categories include it.

2.2 Playing

1 Many of the activities mentioned under *Studying* can be conducted in such a way that one would tend to call them not studying but playing. An example of playful study³¹ is described on p. 153, viz. the influence of poetical forms (sonnet, limerick) on the content of poems. This study grew into a project in which the students tried to design a poem factory that could deliver poems on request and would use highly efficient (and hence low-cost) production methods. Doughty-Peirce-Thornton describe

a great many of projects of this game-like nature in L.I.U., which can even be considered a source book for this kind of project.

2 Besides these playful studies, there are the more authentic types of playing (or at least types more ostensibly recognizable as such). As far as MTT is concerned, these 'real' games can take place within the realms of empirics, esthetics, and synnoetics (borderlines are often very difficult to draw here).

Within the realm of empirics lie such activities as:

Holding an improvised speech.

Convincing us you should be our next president.

Trying to be absolutely fair in a discussion, and observing the unexpected results.

Console your teacher; see p. 187, example 2.³²

Describing yourself scientifically.

Within the realms of esthetics and/or synnoetics lie what are usually called creative writing and creative drama.

3 The rather far-reaching consequences of the principle of normal functionality

Each of the possibilities just listed can be turned into intrinsically interesting lessons (or rather: lesson sequences), if the following six principles are observed. The second and the third principles in particular imply, at least in my view, that many things have to be done if one is to achieve lessons which really are intrinsically interesting – not only in the eyes of the teacher. As every reader who has ever reflected on what really interests him will admit, such lessons can never be bought cheap. Principles 2 and 3 apply mainly to the categories studying and studious games. For authentic playing, see principle 4.

Principle 1

It should be kept in mind that a lesson cannot be considered i.i. (= intrinsically interesting), if the second i is brought about solely by the teacher's teaching technique, such as

- introducing the material adequately at the beginning of the lesson,
- engaging the learner,

– organizing activities such that a pleasant working rhythm is generated (plenary discussion → group work → individual study, etc.).

By an i.i. lesson is understood a lesson whose content is found interesting by students.

Teachers trained in a teacher training college with a strong orientation toward educational psychology and a weak orientation as to content, may often be inclined to aim primarily at giving technically adequate lessons. There is, of course, nothing against technical aptitude, but it should be kept in mind that it is not sufficient for creating intrinsically interesting lessons.

Principle 2

The devising and carrying out of i.i. lessons demands much time, attention, and ingenuity from the teacher. Only in exceptional cases can he do the job all by himself. Normally,

- 1 either the MTT department in a school (or a part of that department) should carry out the design and implementation;
- 2 if this is impossible, a very good text-book or a curriculum-development team (centre) should provide the teacher with materials and directions (both leaving room for the teacher's own input; a lesson can only become i.i. if the teacher emanates some kind of enthusiasm, curiosity, 'madness' – which can only be reached if he can identify himself to a certain extent with what he is presenting).

Another consequence of this principle is that to insure the most effective use of time, effort, and creativity, comparatively long lesson sequences (consisting of 10 to 15 periods) should be planned.

Principle 3

A group of teachers or the MTT department of a curriculum-development centre should depart from the axiom that an i.i. programme is always the product of two groups of factors:

- a the possibilities of the discipline(s) in question;
- b the student's interests and attitudes.

The latter interests (b) may differ from country to country and even from school to school. Although the following remarks are therefore not conclusive, they are in the main in accordance with the conclusions of those authors on MTT who implicitly or explicitly take the i.i. problem seriously.

Contents, as far as I can see, can be i.i. for two reasons:

I relevance

II game-like character

If a content can be considered i.i. for one or both of these reasons, this possibility can be turned into reality by obeying the rule that students must be presented with material that allows them to see things (conclusions, systems, paradoxes, mysteries) with their own eyes.

Just which factors make a content relevant (I) to students, depends to some extent on their age. As far as my experience goes, students of 16 years or older find a subject in the field of humanities relevant for essentially the same reasons as adults do, i.e., because it provides insights into a broad system of phenomena; and/or it penetrates into the psychological and instinctive machinery of man.

The game principle and the see-for-yourself principle, in my view need no further illustration.

The same generalizations, I think, apply to the interests of younger students (e.g. about 13 years old). Reason II, game-like character, may apply more often for this age group than it does for older students. Also, a third reason may play a part here, namely, fascination with the exotic (see p. 123).

In MTT manuals, the condition that 'your lessons should be interesting', is usually treated rather lightly. Recommendations in this direction are often phrased in a way implying that it is easy to teach interesting lessons. To show that being interesting is not easy, I shall first try to put the reader in the position of a student whose teacher wants to interest him. To create a more or less realistic situation, I have chosen a subject about which most readers can be assumed not to know very much.

This subject is: Finance and Money. If I were to give a non-compulsory, not-directly-applicable course for adults on this subject (assuming competency on my part) I would have to do a great deal to get you to attend it. Unless you had personal reasons for taking the course, I could only hope to accomplish it by arousing intrinsic interest.

To make my course so interesting that many of you would want to attend it, I could, I think, let myself be inspired by the principles just formulated. I could mobilize the first factor for relevance ('broad insights') by taking care that the Finance Course drew on many adequate materials (see-for-yourself principle!) to make the participants acquainted with the ways in which money influences international politics and with the various manifestations of money (for instance, concrete and abstract money).

Another, or additional, way would be to enable the participants (again, by way of good materials) to make substantial discoveries about the psychological machinery of, for instance, misers, beggars, or, for the sake of contrast, very rich people. In that case, I would be making use of the second factor for relevance.

I think we may say, then, that it is possible to satisfy the – often unconscious – wishes of the potential participants of this imaginary course on Finance and Money: material can be found and provided. We should also admit, however, that this will require much time and inventiveness from the person(s) leading the course, for several reasons:

a making generalizations based on material available to all participants (which means: being constantly subject to the criticism of others) is one of the most difficult things to do (but at the same time one of the most exciting);

b the psychological angle will probably lie beyond the competence of the leaders of the course. Hence, they would do well to observe the same advice as the MT teacher (cf. principle 2) (p. 121), namely, rely on team work or profit from the services of a curriculum-planning centre.

This little example has provided us with some kind of elaborated rationale for developing intrinsically interesting MT lessons. Let us now apply it to actual MT teaching. Two themes can serve us as examples: 'The structure of language' and 'How poetry functions'.

If a group of teachers or curriculum designers wished to aim at relevance in dealing with the first of these two subjects, they could let the students determine what the basic elements are that every language possesses and must possess to function (phonemes, morphemes, words, syntax, intonational patterns) by studying material (see-for-yourself principle) from various languages. The students would discover that the enormous variety of lingual phenomena can be explained by a very limited number of key concepts (this is the 'broad-insights' angle). I have done this with 13-year-old students, using Dutch, English, Latin, and modern Egyptian material. The inclusion of Egyptian had the added value of satisfying the desire for the exotic – I hope Egyptian readers will enjoy the idea that Dutch students are fascinated by Egyptian sounds and even more by Egyptian script ('Write Your Name In Arabian Letters!').

It is also possible to choose another road to relevance, viz. via human psychology and instincts. If one does so, it is worthwhile to consider providing material related to questions like the following: Does the formal structure of the language we speak influence our way of thinking

(Whorfian thesis)? What messages can 'body language' convey? Is it more effective than verbal language?

Such a course would not necessarily have to lead to conclusive answers; its main goal would be to let the class study and discuss some basic and interesting problems during a certain period.

The theme we are talking about here, i.e., the structure of language, also offers a great many opportunities for what has been called studious games. For instance, the following game around the phenomenon of redundancy could be interesting: try to pronounce short sentences omitting as many phonemes as possible but remaining comprehensible, and try to find out which phonemes are most expendable. Another example: games arising from the phenomenon of gesticulation ('Say "eh, yes", etc. in ten ways, each transmitting a different message').

Application of the principles of i.i. to the second topic chosen as an example, i.e. the way poetry functions, could lead to programmes such as the following.

The 'broad-insights' angle could lead to a lesson sequence during which, on the basis of a great number of completely different types of poems (e.g., sonnet, limerick, instant poetry, pop song), the phenomenon poetry would be defined as concretely as possible.³³

Concentration on 'psychology' could lead to a course dealing with the ways in which poetry can influence man's emotions and even his free will. During this course the function of poetry in the form of ritual formulas, slogans, and war songs could be considered.

Studious games can also be devised. For instance, the students are asked to give a personal answer to the question: Is a verse form a constraint or a stimulus? and to do this after writing a poem with a simple pre-scribed form.

The international literature on MTT offers examples of the approaches (too) briefly described here. Two manuals (extensively discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) are of special interest in this respect, viz. those of Ulshöfer and Doughty-Peirce-Thornton, because each represents one of the two pathways leading to intrinsic interest. In Ulshöfer's work relevance is stressed, in the work of Doughty, Pearce, and Thornton 'playing studiously' prevails.

It is characteristic for Ulshöfer's approach that every subject is invariably dealt with in depth, i.e., the important underlying philosophies and essential determinative factors are laid bare and defined, as exactly as possible. Many topics are so well elaborated in Ulshöfer's book that beginning teachers can safely rely on his descriptions of lesson sequences.

His approach fully satisfies the students' desires for solidity and relevance, as I have found out myself by trying some of his lesson designs in various classes. It is quite possible that some of Ulshöfer's views are considered dated by younger teachers in West Germany, but this does not alter the fact that, as a strategy, his approach represents a marvelous example of a 'studious' mother-tongue curriculum aiming at relevance.

The more recent Doughty-Peirce-Thornton approach, which, like Ulshöfer's, aims at intrinsic interest and provides teachers with a great many carefully planned lesson sequences often based on highly original ideas (L.I.U.), forms a contrast with Ulshöfer's approach in various respects. Whereas the keynotes of the latter's approach are solid work and penetration to the deep layers of the Essence, those of Doughty-Peirce-Thornton are exploration, being surprised, finding something new every time (not too far below the surface). This is why their strategy was classified here under the heading of *Studious Games*. It is quite possible that the Doughty-Peirce-Thornton approach is more suitable for younger students and Ulshöfer's for older students, but I do not want to exclude the possibility that the contrast is due to an essential difference between the Teutonic and the Anglo-Saxon mind.

We see, thus, that manuals which do not completely satisfy the conditions pertaining to MTT from a practical point of view, do satisfy those of teaching for intellectual purposes. It has already been stated that the choice between p.p. (practical purposes) and i.p. (intellectual purposes) is, within certain limits, optional. Hence, the Ulshöfer and the Doughty-Pearce-Thornton approaches may be considered to represent one of the legitimate options open to a MT teacher. }

Some of the other manuals show hardly a trace of any attempt to create intrinsic interest in the student. Such manuals can be considered discipline-centered: the programme is the result not of two factors (see p. 121) but of only one (the discipline's possibilities). In my view, Helmers' book is an example of such manuals. The discipline-centered type of strategy is still far from extinct, and this holds for my own country too. It is true that the discipline has changed its appearance in some classrooms. In the field of the teaching of fiction, for instance, some teachers now do close reading, structural analysis, and the like, instead of literary history. But modernizing the discipline without caring as much for relevance is unfortunately no more than a pseudo-step toward a normally functional curriculum.

Principle 4

For a teacher to do authentic games – creative writing, creative drama – requires a different kind of preparation. Normally, this preparation will consist of having been on a special course (or a number of courses).

Principle 5

good tip
A non-directed conversation with a small group of students (representing a rough sample of a class) scheduled before a programme is set going, will provide indispensable information about characteristic features the the programme should have. Such conversations – which can easily take a whole afternoon – will not only provide information for the lesson sequence the teacher has in mind, but may also be expected to produce vital data for other programmes in the near future.

Of course, feedback by students during lessons provides another kind of indispensable information.

Principle 6

The question of how to evaluate results can be answered in the same way as for teaching the reading of fiction from a practical point of view (see p. 83 ff.). In the first place, all achievement tests should be of a diagnostic, not a selective, nature, because the acquisition of a number of capacities, attitudes, and bodies of knowledge that are 'just' interesting, cannot be considered a social imperative. In the second place, it is advisable to evaluate not only a student's achievements, but also his interest (on the basis of conversations, reaction sheets, or – if available – more detailed questionnaires).

Sacrosanct purposes

In Chapter 3, §2, it was put as a matter of principle that every student has a right to work under the guidance of teachers who try to motivate him intrinsically – however difficult this may be for the teacher within the working conditions of a particular school or type of school. It was assumed that a student could become intrinsically motivated in two respects:

for practical purposes (p.p.):

you can do something with what you learn.

for intellectual purposes (i.p.):

you are intrinsically interested in what you do or learn.

The theory summarized in these two statements may be seen as an elaboration of the general principle of normal functionality. But there is one exception to this principle. In every society there are things which that society thinks everybody *should* learn, even if they are of no appreciable practical value and do not intrinsically interest students. These things lie within the borders of what will be called in this book the realm of sacrosanctity. For example, in a society in which religion plays an important part, schools – or at least some of them – are expected to deal with a number of topics within the realm of religion, irrespective of whether the students are deeply interested in them or not. For MTT this may mean that certain books belonging to the religious literature, and which are definitely not greatly appreciated by students, are nevertheless thoroughly dealt with. In such cases we cannot speak of intrinsic motivation, except of course when students have absorbed religious ideas and emotions so deeply in the course of their upbringing that they have a genuine interest in the subject matter their teacher puts before them (but in such cases we find ourselves within the scope of normal functionality again).

In my view, sacrosanct purposes must be accepted as legitimate purposes if they are of a religious nature. I do not think this needs further defence. Things become a bit confusing, however, when we turn our attention to the many purposes which could be called semi-sacrosanct. In the countries which are more or less covered by this study, the following six semi-

sacrosanct tendencies are discernable in the field of MTT. Along general lines, these trends have the following import:

- 1 Some literary works are great works; whether they bore you or not, they should be read. A variant of this attitude is: Literature is something divine, noble, sacred. In The Netherlands this attitude still exists, although it is gradually losing ground. Apparently, it has not died out in England either: Flower (p. 147) finds it necessary to explain that using literary (or, in a wider sense, fictional) texts as conveyors of information, cannot be put on a par with prostituting them to unworthy use. It should not be difficult to find out what the situation in other countries is with regard to this point.
- 2 There is such a thing as Beauty; it is difficult to describe, but it is there; as a consequence, there are poems and novels which are beautiful, what ever sceptics may say.
- 3 To write an essay based on rules of logic and composition is more valuable than writing a clear, informative report.
- 4 It is not necessary to stipulate that the subject of linguistics be taught in a form such that it either serves some demonstrable practical purpose or is of appreciable intrinsic interest to the students. Linguistics – and consequently, also grammar, the restricted form of linguistics – is such a valuable discipline that it should be taught to students even if these two conditions are not or cannot be satisfied.

It is possible that this perfume of semi-sacrosanctity also lingers around literary criticism. I have a feeling, however, that, at least in The Netherlands, the latter should be assigned a lower position in the hierarchy of the sacred than linguistics – but I am not sure about this. If it were true, it might be explained by the comparatively high status given to grammar in the medieval European universities – but this is just speculation.

- 5 You should learn a great many proverbs and still more expressions which you will never, or at least hardly ever, make any use of.
- 6 Some men and women are Great Men and Women; whether their accomplishments, thoughts, and emotions interest you or not, you must know about them.

It should be clear that not every teaching-learning activity concerning a great work of art, the composition of an essay, or reading about the life of a great man, necessarily falls within the realm of semi-sacrosanctity. Conversations with groups of students often reveal that they are genuinely

interested in reading some 'Great Works' if they can be sure that their opinions will be listened to and their questions be answered. In my experience students do not, as some MT teachers believe, reject all seriousness. The six semi-sacrosanct purposes are mentioned simply to remind us that some people want students to read 'Great Works', write monumental essays, etc., for no other reason than that they irrationally believe that it is 'good for them' to do so.

In many cases, this irrational belief will be wrapped in rationalizations employed by irrational believers because they feel that in a debate you are supposed to produce rational arguments (Magee, p. 176: 'A rationalization is a pseudoreason that has only the form of a reason').

Let us take linguistics as an example. I have explained how linguistics (including grammar) can be taught in such a way that it either serves a practical purpose or has a chance to interest students intrinsically.³⁴ The criteria for such teaching can be summarized as follows:

1 Linguistics taught for practical purposes should provide keys that are useful for good writing, good speaking, etc. To be usable as keys, the linguistic knowledge and ability to be acquired by the student should be, among other things, simple and concise (complicated or overabundant keys are not practical assets in the complicated situation in which the user of language invariably finds himself).

2 Linguistics taught for reasons of intrinsic interest should either:

a lead to discoveries giving a broader outlook on certain aspects of the human world or penetrating down to the level of human motives and instincts, or

b take the form of a game.

Now, there are many MT teachers – and the present author was for part of his career one of them – whose teaching of linguistics does not satisfy any of these conditions. One of the ways to accomplish this is to teach linguistics, for instance grammar, by working through a text-book that provides a succession of informative sections and exercises and aims (like the traditional linguistics text-book) at acquainting the students with some linguistic nomenclature and procedures. The 'old-fashioned' variant of these procedures is parsing, the 'modern' variant is making diagrams. A teacher who found himself having to defend this way of teaching grammar, could produce an impressive series of rationalizations (R). I shall mention a few of them:

R 1: It teaches students logical thinking.

R 2: It concerns language, which is one of the most vital human phenomena.

R 3: It helps students to speak and write correctly.

These arguments are rationalizations, not because they are primarily invalid, but because none of these principles, or points of departures, has been applied seriously in the teacher's actual teaching. If that had been done, the consequences would have been considerable. If, for instance, you really want students to learn to think logically by studying grammar (R 1), you must first carefully ascertain, together with your students, and, consequently, in a way suitable to their age, what logic is. Next, you must apply the principles learned during this first phase, to language analysis. These two things are not as a rule done by the type of teacher we have in mind here. What is more: learning in the field of logical thinking can be brought about by analysis of a very limited number of linguistic concepts, for instance, just the concepts sentence, word, and two or three pertaining to sentence structure (e.g., subject, predicate, object). But in the traditional text-book the student is led through one field of nomenclature and procedure after another.

As to the principle connected with R 2: there are a number of ways by which the vitalness of language can be attractively demonstrated – some examples have been provided on pages 117–118 – but the kind of strategy we are dealing with here does not show any resemblance to any of these.

With regard to R 3 it has already been noted that to serve this aim, a course in linguistics must produce just a few simple keys – and this condition too is not satisfied by the kind of course we are discussing here. I would like to make one additional remark here. I hope I have made clear by now that I am not against teaching grammar. There are educational objectives related to grammar and teaching strategies involving these objectives that are entirely valid. In this respect I do not agree with those (among them Whitehead) who wholly or almost wholly condemn the teaching of linguistics (including grammar). What I am objecting to is the teaching of grammar either for the wrong objectives or for valid objectives to which only lip-service is paid and which are not reflected in the teaching methods and materials actually used.

In the other semi-sacrosanct fields mentioned (Great Works, Beauty, the logically and rhetorically brilliant Essay, Proverbs and Expressions, and Great Men and Women) the situation is essentially the same as has been depicted for linguistics. Legitimate opportunities for teaching exist in all

fields, but these opportunities are ignored by teachers who revere semi-sacrosanctity.

The reading of a 'Great Work' can be intrinsically interesting to students if their teacher accepts and does his best to react to such questions and doubts as: What does this book have to say to us today? Isn't this book hopelessly naive? I am bored by this poetic drama, but perhaps you can explain why you are not? (see also p. 179). But, of course, (semi-)sanctification of such great works forbids curious or 'aggressive' reactions. The same holds for the phenomenon Beauty. Evidently, this phenomenon really exists; otherwise, it would be impossible to explain why so many people believe in it and understand each other when someone says that something is beautiful. But to create intrinsic interest, for instance in a 'great work', it is imperative not to oblige students to take what the teacher says for granted but to permit, or rather invite, the asking of what may sometimes be rather 'penetrating' or even downright crude questions.

With regard to the proverbs and expressions, intrinsic interest is not created by simply having students learn them, e.g. by assigning exercises of the type 'Name proverbs in which the following words occur: cat, dog, loaf, ... etc.'. Such interest can be roused, however, by posing certain problems. One might ask, for instance, whether the truths and virtues proverbs express are actually valid (Once a thief, always a thief; There is no smoke without fire, etc.).

Let us now turn to the question of whether observance of the principle of semi-sacrosanctity is educationally legitimate. For teaching practice, a positive answer would mean that MT teachers should be 'officially' allowed to teach 'great works', 'logical-and-rhetorical-essay-writing', 'beauty', and grammar in the way just described, etc., solely on the basis of the belief that they are teaching something valuable.

This is a very difficult matter to decide. Arguments against it include:

- 1 People should base themselves as little as possible on pure belief; for a proper functioning of society, it is essential to rely on reason.
- 2 Students do not really learn what they do not want to learn.

The arguments for it include:

- 3 If irrational value-orientations are acceptable when they are of a religious nature, why not accept them when they apply to the non-religious cultural realm?
- 4 Irrational convictions should be suppressed as little as possible, be-

cause this can lead to aggressiveness; here, this consideration is the more urgent in direct proportion to the harmlessness of the convictions in question.

After long deliberation I found that my answer to this awkward question should be in the positive. In other words, in this book the rationale of semi-sacrosanctity with regard to cultural matters will be considered legitimate.³⁵ In the reaching of this decision the pragmatic argument listed under point 4 preponderated. I do not expect unanimous support for this answer from my readers.

This decision does not automatically lead to unlimited freedom for irrational believers in 'high cultural values'. As a rule, MT teachers have to subordinate their opinions to those prevailing in their department at least to a certain degree. An important gain to be derived from the foregoing exposition is that when disputes arise from statements like 'We should read Keats, Schiller, Molière, Vondel (Netherlands), because these ARE great artists', it can be seen that the whole issue is a question of taste and not of objective reasoning. Hence, a simple vote (yes or no) can solve the problem. In matters which can be approached objectively, voting is of course just about the last means a department should resort to in order to reach a decision, but in matters of taste it is an adequate procedure.

I have found no manuals, at least no recent ones, in which a plea is made for the kind of extrinsic motivation described in this chapter, either for that belonging to the religious or for that belonging to the semi-sacrosanct atmosphere. If, for instance, in the manuals I have consulted a plea is made for reading classics, this is not done by putting our Great Cultural Heritage in the foreground or evoking the ghost of the Continuing Process of Cultural Degeneration but, instead, by producing rather sober and substantiated points of departure lying within, or at least close to, the realm of intrinsic interest.

Of course, it remains possible that in some cases these arguments are just rationalizations of emotions of a semi-sacrosanct nature. But it is very difficult to establish whether a statement is genuinely rational or just pseudo-rational if one cannot check it against the actual behaviour of the person who expresses it.

Mixing practical and intellectual points of view

When a teacher is working with a class on a subject that is worth-while from an intellectual point of view (a number of suggestions have been given in Chapter 6) he might consider including exercises on some practical point. For instance, if the subject the class is dealing with (e.g., elements shared by all languages) lends itself in a completely natural way to short written reports from students, orderly discussions in small groups followed by reporting in the whole group, summaries, minutes, or the reading of fragments of popular scientific papers, it could easily occur to the teacher that it would be efficient to combine teaching these practical things together with the subject he originally had in mind.

Such mixing of the intellectual and the practical, in my view, is all right – and to some extent advisable – as long as the secondary purpose is not allowed to predominate. Shifting of the focus from the subject one is concentrating on to the technique of reporting, summarizing, reading, etc., is very irritating, and, probably, demotivating to students. As a teacher, one need only imagine that, lured into the course on Finance and Money (p. 122), one was asked to prepare some written questions (which is all right), but that the papers handed in by the group were discussed and criticized by the leader on the basis of sentence structure instead of content. Something which could be quite normal if reporting, summarizing, etc., were the primary goal, becomes demotivating when the goal lies elsewhere. vb.

The only thing a teacher can do in this respect is to maintain a certain awareness in the class that what one has learned in other MTT lessons (e.g., systematic collection of data from a text; discussion) is also relevant in another context. This can be done by purely suggestive advice and reminders with regard to the technique students could use in the work they are about to do and by reacting mildly when students appear to have forgotten what one thought they had already learned. One can even resort to light marking of papers (see, however, also p. 111, point 3).

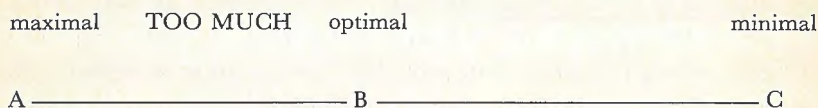
What has just been said can also be formulated differently. During MT lessons directed toward some intellectual purpose, one could deal with technique – or more generally practical keys – more or less implicitly. If we lean in the direction of more implicitness, we closely approach what is called natural language learning, i.e., learning by taking part in

'real' talking, writing, reading, and listening activities, without being made aware of techniques and procedures. If we choose the opposite direction, we will get 'real' language activities mixed with certain awareness of technique and procedure. But this degree of consciousness should not be increased too much by the teacher, because doing so will certainly demotivate the students, who will feel distracted from the subject they are concentrating on.

Explicit attention can only be given to practical keys during lessons whose practical purpose is to let students acquire such abilities as reporting, summarizing, comprehension of complicated non-fictional texts, participating in a discussion, and the like.

The situation surrounding explicit and implicit attention to practical keys – a very important topic for every MT teacher – can be visualized by means of the following continuous scale:

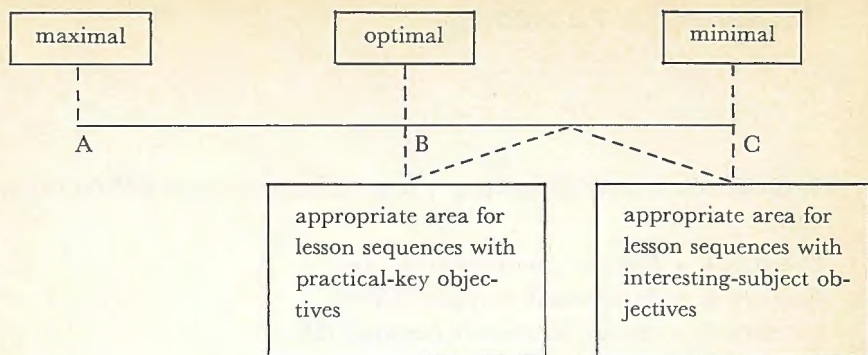
Degrees of explicit attention paid to productive and receptive 'keys'



(The position of B in the middle of the scale means only that B lies somewhere between A and C)

In Chapters 4 and 5 it has been explained with regard to 'technique' (reporting, comprehensive reading, discussing, etc.) that on the one hand the student should acquire 'keys', but that on the other hand the amount of attention paid to these keys should not be so great that an abnormal language situation originates. The other aspects of a normal language situation (e.g., the subject, the reader's or the author's reactions) should receive just as much attention. Therefore, maximal and optimal are not identical here. Hence, the lefthand part of the scale has been designated as a 'too much' area.

The legitimate choices of an MT teacher, then, lie between points B and C. What has just been said about the mixing of intellectual purposes (i.p.) and practical purposes (p.p) can now be formulated as follows. When the teacher has a practical purpose in mind (e.g., reporting, summarizing, comprehension) he should choose a position closer to B than to C; if he has an intellectual purpose in mind (e.g., problems like elements shared by all languages) he should choose one closer to C than to B. Thus, we arrive at



At the beginning of this chapter we saw what can happen if the teacher has informed the class that an intellectual subject will be dealt with but in the course of the lesson sequence moves too far to the left on the scale, i.e. past the point where the subject no longer forms the focus. It can now be added that in the opposite case (objective: technique; teacher 'drifts away' to the right) analogous reactions can be expected from the students (at least, if they think there is any point in expressing their opinions).

So far, only one – albeit very important – case of mixing of p.p. and i.p. has been considered, namely, the mixing of attention to technique and attention to an intrinsically interesting subject. Other combinations are also possible. For instance, an MT teacher who is pursuing the practical objective of acquainting his class with two or three important new pop-song albums to give them an idea of which new groups deserve special attention, may at some moment during the lesson sequence be struck by the idea that it would be interesting to ask what in fact a pop song is. If he were to go deeply into this matter (which, in itself, could be quite interesting) he would have changed the focus from p.p to i.p. Hence, he could expect the same kind of irritation to occur in the class as would occur if grammar and content were mixed. Given a chance to express an opinion, students would say things like 'I'm sorry, but I don't see where we are going', or 'Please, let's go on with the album' – remarks which can be very painful to a teacher who, in his enthusiasm for a problem which interested him at that particular moment, forgot the rule about not changing the focus too drastically. //

*no goal greening
help!*

Motives for choosing

It could be said that Chapters 4-7 provide maps of three different countries:

Country A – Practical purposes (Chs. 4-5)

Country B – Intellectual purposes (Ch. 6)

Country C – (Semi-)Sacrosanct purposes (Ch. 7).

The reader can now imagine himself standing at a point where these three countries meet and deciding where to go. Guides have been prepared for making successful trips into countries A and B. No such guide has been prepared for country C, mainly because it seems obvious how the traveler in sacrosanct territory should proceed. In non-metaphoric language: Chapters 4-6 contain at least two little manuals for MTT, one of them with a practical, the other with an intellectual orientation.

According to the choices they make, we can expect to find several types of teachers. In the first place there will be teachers who only want to travel in country A. They can be designated as A ($B = C = o$). In the second place, there will be those who favour B without neglecting A completely, which gives $B > A$ ($C = o$). Thirdly, we can expect teachers of the type $A = B = C$, i.e., teachers to whom sacrosanct purposes represent an educational reality, but who also have an eye for A and B. Fourthly, fifthly, etc. we can expect all kinds of other combinations of A, B, and C.

It is tempting to depict the people responding to these three 'equations' as a novelist would: 'A($B = C = o$) is a woman to whom only doing and practical thinking matter; she . . .'. This would, perhaps, make for good reading, but it would give an objectionably distorted picture of the situation. In fact, no easy generalizations can be made concerning the motives underlying the choice between these possibilities.

There are, of course, more or less clearly identifiable factors and motives which play a role. In the first place, certain institutions are important. Some university institutes in which future MT teachers are trained, emanate an atmosphere of sacrosanctity tracable to the mediaeval European university, in which the Humanities had an almost sacred status. Secondly, there are institutions like the press (especially the newspapers intended for 'the better public') and the theatre, which likewise favour the survival of tradition. There are also forces with the opposite effect.

Industry and business, for instance, frequently demand a kind of MT teaching which aims at 'hard', practical abilities.

Next, there are instinctive reactions. Some will favour a sacrosanct approach to literature, because they fear risking the loss of beliefs that have given meaning to their education and their intellectual life. Others will abuse sacrosanctity because they feel that it deprives them of their freedom to do and think what they want.

Sociologists and psychotherapists will be able to inform us more precisely about these factors. What matters here is that although it would be useful to have some idea of the general factors underlying curricular preferences, complete information would not help one very much to understand and cooperate with one's colleagues in the school one works in – and this, as explained in the Introduction, is one of the purposes of this book. Even if one had such a complete survey at one's disposal, the various factors would be manifested in so many variants, combined in so many ways, and mixed with such an abundance of personal traits, as to be of little use during a discussion of why you chose this approach and I chose a different one.

Nevertheless, even though no easy generalizations can be made there is a way to gradually discern each other's motives when we discuss these questions. This way could be called the sensitive conversation, i.e., a conversation in which quiet questioning and sometimes counselling by one's partners in a conversation, makes it possible to be explicit about one's motives. Two of the most important conditions for such conversations are:

- 1 the atmosphere must be protective; in other words, no participant feels threatened by any other participant; and
- 2 the group is not in a hurry to reach conclusions.

As far as my own experience goes, many people find it very difficult to participate in such conversations (which, although there is some similarity, should not be identified with sensitivity sessions, T-group sessions, and the like). The main source of these difficulties is that many people are not accustomed to (and are sometimes afraid of) the atmosphere of openness about oneself which is imperative in this situation. This difficulty can be solved reasonably well if one or two of the participants know from personal experience how problems can be approached to get valuable results, what atmosphere should be created, what pleasant and less pleasant things can occur (emotional explosions, unexplainable shyness, communication shortcircuits) and how to handle them.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then proceeds to discuss the various factors that have shaped the development of the United States, including the role of the government, the influence of the economy, and the impact of the culture. The author concludes by stating that the study of the history of the United States is a task of great importance, and that it is one that should be undertaken by all who are interested in the future of the country.

The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the development of the United States. It is argued that the government has played a central role in the shaping of the country, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The author then discusses the various ways in which the government has influenced the development of the country, including through its policies, its laws, and its actions. The author concludes by stating that the government is a powerful force in the development of the United States, and that it is one that should be carefully monitored and controlled.

The third part of the paper discusses the influence of the economy on the development of the United States. It is argued that the economy has played a central role in the shaping of the country, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The author then discusses the various ways in which the economy has influenced the development of the country, including through its policies, its laws, and its actions. The author concludes by stating that the economy is a powerful force in the development of the United States, and that it is one that should be carefully monitored and controlled.

< Part C. The other dimensions

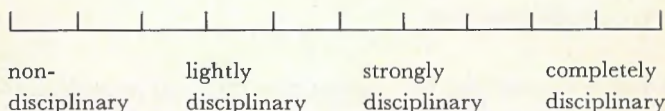
In Chapter 2 we established a list of 14 dimensions applying to the aims of mother-tongue teaching. One of these, *Functionality*, has been dealt with in Part B, so there are now 13 left. Yet, Part C will deal only with 8 dimensions (one to a chapter, with the exception of Ch. 16). The explanation is simple. Five dimensions, viz. 1, *Direction*; 2, *Oral/Written*; 8, *Fictionality and Non-fictionality*; 10, *Criticalness*; and 12, *Complexity*, concern issues which are not worth a lengthy discussion. For instance, *di* 1, *Direction*, contains the activities (a) production and (b) reception of a text. It is evident that one cannot seriously raise an issue as to whether production (speaking and writing) should be fostered more than reception (listening and reading), or *vice versa*. It is clear from the outset that both of these language activities should be given more or less equal attention.

The order in which the issues connected with the remaining eight dimensions will be dealt with here in part C differs from the order in which they were presented in Chapter 2. This is due to the fact that the order in Chapter 2 was a logical one, whereas I thought that a more psychological one would now be preferable, namely, one in which old issues are treated first, more recent ones later on. This consideration almost completely explains the order which finally materialized.

Disciplinarity

1 The principle

In Chapter 2, disciplinarity is defined as explicitness and methodicalness. Since both notions, explicit and methodical, are relative, we shall make use of a continuous scale Disciplinary/Non-Disciplinary with four areas: non-disciplinary, lightly disciplinary, strongly disciplinary, and completely disciplinary:



The four distinctions respecting disciplinarity can be found in many forms in teaching practice. I shall mention some examples from different areas of MTT.

Lexicology. One may know what 'a cone-shaped head' is in a completely disciplinary way:

'a head resembling a solid figure with a circular base and tapering to a point'

well-defined terminology; methodical presentation

or in a non-disciplinary way:

'a head like those Martians stepping out of their flying saucer; I remember having shown you that cartoon. It's shaped something like a drop of water'

inexact terminology; hardly any method of presentation

Grammar. A student may be aware of the fact that the sentence: 'This morning I found a fountain pen coming up the stairs to class' (*What about Grammar?*, Ess. Teach. Engl. p. 37) is incorrect in a completely or strongly disciplinary way: he is able to formulate and to apply theory pertaining to the dangling modifier in grammatical terms, or in a non-disciplinary way: he knows that you should be careful not to put something like 'coming up the stairs', in the wrong place.

The Disciplinary/Non-Disciplinary scale also applies to complex activities, such as discussing, reading, and writing. Participants in a discussion (e.g., 15-year-old students) may or may not be aware of the existence of particular procedures. To write an expository text, a student may or may not make use of explicit knowledge about the logic of argumentation and composition. In the field of creative writing he may or may not make use of explicit devices like Sewall's Grand List of Slogans:

Individualize by Specific Detail
 Vivify by Range Of Appeal
 Clarify by Point of View
 Use the Indirect Method
 Characterize by Speech and Gesture
 Use Words for Connotation
 Unify by a Single Expression

When reading a factual text the student may proceed according to a method like Robinson's SQ3R or he may do his reading in a much more intuitive and unsystematic way. When reading a fictional text, e.g., 'Mr. Henderson stood up, sat down . . .' (see p. 78) – he may or may not apply methods and principles of textual analysis. If such methods and principles were applied by a (well-trained) 17- to 18-year-old student, the result might be something like this:

'On the tonal level I found some interesting things. The 6-line part (sextet?) contains many sharp initial consonants: *stood up, sat down, took, threw*, whereas the last line has a soft initial consonant (*died*). This accentuates the ferocity of the quarrel scene.

Typography: the white space between the 6th and the 7th lines represents what we do not see: the egg sailing through the air, hitting Mrs. Henderson's head, and crashing.

I also looked at the poem from the point of view of grammar. I think the absence of adjectives is very significant. The poem presents only things, no feelings.

As to style, what struck me is the repetition of "stood up, sat down". This repetition has the function of indicating how stupidly grown-up people can react when they are angry.

The technique is free verse. I cannot say what function this has in the poem.

The symbolic meaning might be that aggression can kill innocent victims. As to the genre, I'd like to say two things: 1 it is an epic poem, and 2 it is a funny tragedy ("a sick joke"): a sick joke, according to what you

told us last month, is a story in which something cruel happens but which makes you laugh at the same time. All in all, this poem impresses me as a sick joke told in a very special way (it contains all kinds of "hidden things").'

A non-disciplinary reaction to the poem could produce the following result:

'Great story! Very tragic, that egg. But also tragic for poor Henderson: that guy wants his wife to die but instead the Great Dying takes place somewhere else. And I like the picture of Henderson going up and down quite mechanically, looking angry; it's like old comic movies. To me, it's hard as a stone but very funny. I rather like it.'

Many MT-teachers take strong stands with regard to the choice of approach. Some of them, for instance, would be rather pleased by the first student's skilful analysis of 'Mr. Henderson . . .', others would be horrified by the mere thought of ever trying 'to teach them that kind of thing'. The latter would prefer to encourage spontaneous reactions like the short one above. The same kind of controversy exists with regard to the other areas already mentioned, especially grammar.

In many cases these strong stands – irrespective of whether they favour a non-disciplinary or a completely disciplinary approach – are not justified. As will be shown in §2 and §3, there is a great degree of legitimate freedom with respect to the choice of a position on the Disciplinarity/Non-Disciplinarity scale.

Briefly, the situation is as follows. If MT is taught for intellectual purposes, there is complete freedom. This does not mean that it makes no difference what position one chooses. Choices in either direction have their advantages and disadvantages. For instance, a completely disciplinary approach gives a better grasp of things, but, on the other hand, limits the number of things one can take into account very strictly. (In other words, Discipline enables you to deal with a very few things very thoroughly.) If MT is taught for practical purposes, the options vary from non- to lightly disciplinary. In simple wording: strongly disciplinary or completely disciplinary approaches produce keys that are too heavy for practical use.

Hence, we may approach the problem of 'How much disciplinarity?' more or less serenely. To make sure of this stimulating atmosphere it seems useful to remove three emotional blocks, each of them representing a bias against disciplinarity:

1 Discipline is for academics

- 2 Discipline is dull
- 3 Discipline is cold

With regard to the first opinion it should again be noted that disciplinarity is a relative, not an absolute, concept, and may therefore be applied to the mental processes of learned 40 year olds as well as to a naive 4 year old. Both can operate in a disciplinary way, i.e., know explicitly what they are doing (4-year-old girl: 'I am making a bridge') and proceed methodically ('I am making the water, and then I make the bridge').

About the second opinion it can be remarked that discipline is characterized by sets of rules and that rules can be applied in a boring, routine, repetitive way, or can be used in a creative, even playful, way to detect things. In other words, there are dull 'disciplinarians' just as there are dull writers and dull chess players.

The third statement, that discipline is cold, is in the main true, but says nothing more than that discipline should not be used for every purpose, for instance for transmitting emotions adequately.

In the following we shall deal first with disciplinarity for intellectual purposes (§2) and then with disciplinarity for practical purposes (§3). Disciplinarity for semi-sacrosanct purposes will not be discussed any further; we know in advance from Chapter 7 what the result of such a discussion would be: in the semi-sacrosanct atmosphere, every irrational choice the teacher makes is right. If he wants to keep his students busy with transformative-generative grammar for three years solely because 'science is always good for you', 'modern linguistics is one of the most important disciplines', etc. he may legitimately have his way (as long as he does not contend that there are rational arguments in favour of his stand). The opposite opinion would be legitimate to the same extent: if he takes care to stay within the borders of semi-sacrosanct territory, a teacher may legitimately Ban All Grammar, on the ground of such 'arguments' as that grammar makes lifeless things which should live and puts into a corset what should be allowed freedom to move, etc.³⁶) In the domain of the semi-sacrosanct, imagining things can legitimately take the place of thinking. In Chapter 7 I have (reluctantly) admitted that in a tolerant democracy there is no alternative to accepting that this dodging of reason is legitimate.

2 Discipline or Non-discipline for intellectual purposes

The principles on which teaching for intellectual purposes (i.p.) should be based have been defined at length in Chapter 6. In short, they amount to the following:

- 1 The crucial condition is intrinsic motivation.
- 2 Generally speaking, intrinsic motivation can originate from:
 - a relevance of the subject;
 - b game-like character of the subject.
- 3 In its turn, relevance (2a) can be generated in two ways:
 - a the lesson sequence gives students insight into a wide range of phenomena;
 - b the content of the sequence is closely related to human motives and instincts.

In Chapter 6 these principles were applied to two topics: 'What elements are shared by all languages?' and 'What is poetry?'. This application led to several rough elaborations of the two topics. The first of two elaborations of the second topic was: A program in the course of which, by means of a large number of completely different types of poem (e.g., sonnets, limericks, instant poems, pop songs), the phenomenon poetry is defined inductively.

This plan can be worked out further in either a non- (or lightly) or a completely (or strongly) disciplinary way. In the first case, the assignment could be as follows:

Collect a number of texts you for some reason consider poetry. Then answer the question: What is poetry? If you wish you may respond in a poetic or mysterious way (like the Dutch poet Remco Campert, who wrote, 'Voltaire had smallpox, but cured himself by drinking, among other things, 120 litres of lemonade: that is poetry'). After having read your answer aloud, find the classmate with whom you disagree least and try to combine your answers into one.

What a disciplinary approach can look like is not hard to imagine. We would probably get a course consisting of at least these phases:

- a collecting texts usually called poems;
- b deciding from what angles these texts will be explored;
- c exploring (possibly according to a group-work method);
- d reporting, discussing;
- e (if possible) drawing conclusions.

With regard to the first topic used as an example in Chapter 6, viz. 'What elements are shared by all languages?', it can be remarked that here the least disciplinary approach possible is probably a lightly disciplinary one. As far as I can see, in this field a non-disciplinary approach would yield unattractive results. Non-disciplinarity is only attractive in fields lending themselves to fanciful reactions, like the field of poetry.

The rationale of a choice lying on either side of the Disciplinary/Non-Disciplinary scale is as follows. Choosing a position on the Disciplinary side of the scale is justified if the group wants to know things with certainty. In that case it is essential that things be made explicit and be discussed methodically (method is essential for ensuring that no fundamental aspects will be neglected). A choice in favour of Disciplinary can also be based on the wish to get acquainted with scientific method in a particular field, e.g., fiction or sociolinguistics.

The opposite option, viz. choosing a position on the Non-Disciplinary side of the scale, is justified if the group wants to become acquainted with a large number or a wide range of things and does not care for solid, reliable knowledge but is content with (or even fascinated by) intuitively-knowing, having-the-feeling-that-this-could-be-true, acknowledging-that-one-could-put-it-that-way, the feeling that I-do-not-know-what-this-all-amounts-to-but-it-is-awfully-interesting.

All of these kinds of choice are all right from an educational point of view. Hence, generally speaking, every choice on the Disciplinary/Non-Disciplinary scale is legitimate. As a matter of fact, the first kind of objective (acquiring a solid, reliable kind of knowledge) may be liked by some MT teachers (and classes) and despised – or even feared – by others. To the first group, getting a firm grip on things may mean feeling secure, to the second group discipline and death may lie somewhere on the same level (this is just a possibility: no general psychoanalysis will be undertaken here). Whatever their motives, both groups should take care to keep on respecting each other's choices.

To wind up this section, I think it will be useful to give some examples of how the Disciplinary scale applies to lesson projects with intellectual purposes. When I examined the fourteen examples listed below (I have made the list so long because I wanted to illustrate the intellectual domain a bit more extensively than has been possible thus far) I found that, at least in my judgment, the whole scale applied to some of them and only part of it to others. In the list the results of my estimates can be found under the heading *Advised position on scale*. The examples in the domain of linguistics and sociolinguistics are taken from publications by

Ulshöfer, Postman-Weingartner, Fowler, ten Brinke, and Doughty-Pearce-Thornton.

Grammar

Nr. 1 (Postman-Weingartner, p. 74 ff.)

Title:	What is an adjective?
Advised position on scale:	Completely or strongly disciplinary
Purpose:	Development of some understanding of the problems one faces in defining grammatical terms
Method:	Induction, starting from a set of five sentences

Nr. 2 a project comprising about ten lessons (ten Brinke 1970)

Title:	Mobility
Advised position on scale:	Strongly disciplinary
Description:	Words in a sentence can change position; in some sentences there are more possibilities for change than in others: in <i>John is ill</i> out of six possible combinations: <i>a</i> John is ill <i>b</i> John ill is <i>c</i> is John ill <i>d</i> is ill John <i>e</i> ill is John <i>f</i> ill John is four (a, c, e, f) are feasible (according to a specially designed formula, the extent of mobility in this sentence is equal to $\frac{4-1}{6-1} = 0.6$), whereas in <i>The man kissed me</i>, only four out of 24 possible combinations are feasible. For reaching the decision as to which combinations yield correct sentences and which do not, all kinds of special conditions have to be agreed on (which will not be described here). The extent of mobility in <i>The man kissed me</i>, according to the above equation is $\frac{4-1}{24-1} = 0.13$. With a class of 13-year-old grammar school students a method (including the formula just mentioned)

was designed to explore mobility in all types of sentences containing three or five words. A provisional 'law' was formulated.

Purpose:

Development of

- 1 the courage to move in an atmosphere of uncertainty
- 2 the insight that mathematics can be applied to language in certain ways; a feeling for scientific method in young students

Method:

Slightly chaotic induction

Nr. 3

Assignment:

Distinguish several grammatical rules you apparently make use of, but do not consciously know. Next, try to formulate these rules. Try to determine whether your findings change your ideas about man as a free creature.

Example of an 'unknown rule':

the rule controlling the succession of adjectives in a clause, e.g., *The three beautiful red Swedish cars*, as opposed to the wrong construction *the three Swedish red beautiful cars*.

Advised position
on scale:

Completely / strongly disciplinary

Nr. 4

Title:

What elements are shared by all languages?

Advised position
on scale:

Completely/strongly/lightly disciplinary

Description:

The basic features of the elements phonemes, morphemes, words, syntax were established by way of an inductive comparison of the native language (in this case Dutch) with English, Latin, and modern Egyptian. This course, done with 13-year-old students, took about twenty periods. The class rated it very interesting.

A similar project was done by Patricia Sommerlad Emmons with 10- to 14-year-old students. The material she used was taken from Russian and Kiowa, an Amerindian language. Her short article (1962)

gives an excellent impression of how the course – which was evaluated as a success by the students – was set up.

Usage

Nr. 5 (Postman-Weingartner)

- Assignment: How would you answer the question, 'What does your father do for a living? if this question was put to you by a particular person in a particular situation? (This situation is carefully described.)
- Options:
 He's a grease monkey.
 He's an auto mechanic.
 He's in business for himself.
 He's an automotive engineer.
- Advised position on scale: Strongly/lightly/non-disciplinary (Postman-Weingartner have strongly or lightly disciplinary in mind)
- Note: Projects 6-9 can have practical implications. For instance, nr. 7 can lead to the ability to 'see through' manipulative texts, in the same way as the lesson described in Chapter 4 (p. 102). They are listed here instead of in § 3 because students (learn to) tackle a problem by means of a more or less explicit procedure. The latter is something a normal reader in a normal reading situation will not be inclined to do.

Nr. 6 (Doughty-Pearce-Thornton)

- Title: Technical terms
- Estimated position on scale: Lightly disciplinary
- Description: Central question: In what way do we draw on language to develop particular varieties of it to meet the special demands of a particular field of enquiry?
- The nature of technical language and the reasons why it is necessary are examined. The aim is to build up an awareness of how much a part of our lives such technical language is, as well as a tolerance for 'the other man's jargon'.

A collection of objects both familiar and unfamiliar, will be needed, such as a piece of fishing tackle; a piston ring; a golf club; a nasal spray; a rattail file; a circulation pump for an aquarium; a pattypan.

Nr. 7 (ten Brinke in: *Scholing in aktie*; this project could also be listed under Semantics)

Assignment: Establish in a systematic way the number of manipulative words in a political pamphlet (pay special attention to two categories: 1. dynamic words, 2. lofty words).

Advised position
on scale: Strongly/lightly disciplinary

Nr. 8 (project, Marita Matthijsen, *op.cit.*; in the strict sense of the word, this example does not quite fall under the heading usage)

Assignment: Indicate your favourite newspaper.
Criteria: readability (Flesch), political character.

Advised position
on scale: Lightly disciplinary

Nr. 9 (project, Oskamp, *op.cit.*)

Assignment: Which members of the class speak 'vulgarly' and which do not? What is 'vulgar'? What makes people speak 'vulgarly'? What is their subjective reaction to their way of speaking?

Advised position
on scale: Lightly/Non-disciplinary

Note: Findings can be discussed with groups outside schools, e.g., factory workers.

Nr. 10 (Fowler, p. 210)

Assignment: Students are asked to write dictionary-style definitions of five common words or to meet in groups to write definitions. The various results are compared.

Advised position
on scale: Strongly/completely disciplinary

Nr. 11 (ten Brinke, 1970)

Assignment: Establish the relative positions of adverbs expressing certainty or uncertainty (perhaps, naturally, etc.) on an 11-point certainty-uncertainty scale.

Purpose: As for nr. 2.

Advised position
on scale: Strongly/completely disciplinary

Lexicography and dialect geography

Nr. 12 (Postman-Weingartner)

Description: In an 11th-grade class (U.S.) reading *Huckleberry Finn*, somebody asked: 'Did people really talk that way?' This question led to an impressive research project, in which all kinds of scientific methods for field work were put into practice.

Advised position
on scale: Strongly/completely disciplinary

In the field of fiction, the material provided by publications is not very abundant. However, the twelve examples just given contain a sufficient number of features that can be transposed to the domain of literary theory.

I will confine myself to two examples, taken from my own teaching practice.

Nr. 13

Title: Defining what a poem is.

Assignment: Take a rather boring text, e.g. the following one (from a 'Directions for use' booklet): 'c. Set speed selector 2 to the desired speed and depress key 3 at the end marked !'

Give this sentence a poetic treatment. (Students may do whatever they like; for possible surprising results, see p. 152).

Now, what do we have? Poems? If so, what is a poem? If not: what is a poem?

The result of such a treatment by a student could be

SO IT GOES

c Set the speed
selector 2
to the
DESIRED
speed

and
DEPRESS
key 3 at the
END
marked .



or:

A TRIP TOWARD MYSTERY

Set the
Speed
Selector 2

to the desired
Speed

depress
Key 3
at the end marked



to be read in a mysterious
voice, over a burning
candle
selector . . . selector

AND

key . . . key . . . key

Advised position
on scale:

Lightly disciplinary

Nr. 14

Title:	The relationship between metre and rhyme schemes on the one hand and the content of a poem on the other hand.
Description:	To arrive at a conclusion, two forms, e.g., the sonnet and the limerick, can be studied. Students can be asked to produce a sonnet, and, by means of group discussion, to reach a tentative conclusion, for instance 'A sonnet is always "elegant"'. Next, a limerick can be produced and studied, etc. With regard to the limerick, the class which conducted this minor project concluded that you cannot produce anything serious in the form of a limerick, because of the prescribed model of the first line: 'There was an X (person) in Y (place)'. In this respect the amphibrachus, which is the obligatory metre for a limerick, was found to be a nuisance because of its very jocularity. The class concluded from a sonnet/limerick comparison that authors of sonnets have much more freedom than authors of limericks.
Advised position on scale:	Strongly/lightly disciplinary.

3 Discipline or Non-Discipline for practical purposes

Various kinds of practical purposes the MT teacher can aim at are mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5. Within the realm of fiction (Ch. 4, §1.1):

- 1 learning what there is to read;
- 2 learning why you might read a particular work;
- 3 acquiring the capacity or capacities needed for actually understanding that work. *how*

Within the realm of non-fiction:

- 4-6 analogous to 1-2-3 (Ch. 4, §2.1);
- 7 learning the functions of several types of productive non-fictional activities (reporting, making minutes, giving oral information, participating in a discussion, etc. (Ch. 5, §2);
- 8 learning to perform these activities.

All things to be learned under the heading of each of the objectives just listed were designated as keys (p. 88). According to the principle of normal functionality, during the lessons (or lesson sequences) devoted to one or more of the objectives, the learning of keys should not be the sole purpose of the teaching. The same amount of attention should be paid to the value of the content of texts to be received or produced, to the students' reactions to texts, and to their motives for writing or saying (or not writing or saying) something. Only in this way is a normal verbal situation created.

Now, the central question to be answered in this section is: to what extent should these keys be disciplinary or non-disciplinary, in order to be maximally effective? To answer this question, we must distinguish between two kinds of keys:

a Keys pertaining to aspects of verbal activities that function at a low level of consciousness.

b Keys pertaining to aspects of verbal activities that function at a high level of consciousness.

Of course, since low and high are not absolute concepts, some aspects will hardly be classifiable under one of these two headings. Hence, the following should be understood as a rough sketch.

Keys functioning at a low level of consciousness are, for instance,

- the capacity to reproduce the phonetic sounds and the intonation accepted in the group one belongs to or wants to belong to,
- knowledge of the meanings of words,
- knowledge of the meanings of syntactic constructions.

When they are in action, speakers, listeners, writers, and readers are not conscious of what they are doing on the phonetic-sound and intonation levels, or of the meanings of the words or syntactic constructions they speak or hear. If they were to try, for instance, to consciously realize the meaning of every word and construction they produced or received, their whole flow of thinking—and, therefore their verbal flow—would come to a complete standstill. Moreover, the meaning of syntactic constructions and of some words (e.g. modal verbs), is so vague that it is difficult to come up with a definition off hand. This is why some linguists doubt whether the meaning of such signs or sign aspects should be considered to be 'known' by the persons using them. In Chapter 1 I have introduced the term implicit knowledge to indicate that kind of knowing.

Keys functioning at a high level of consciousness are, for instance:

- (for fiction) knowledge of what books modern author X has written, what is characteristic of them, how the author can be interpreted (or misinterpreted);
 - (for non-fiction) knowledge about the function and the good and bad sides of propaganda;
 - all kinds of verbal strategies and tactics which can be used for the production or reception of non-fictional texts, e.g.:
- sets of questions to ask oneself when writing a letter about a problem the outcome of which really matters;
- a procedure for composing a good report;
- a method to generate and collect ideas and approaches (for instance, brainstorming);
- a procedure to gather data;
- procedures for examining a text critically;
- procedures to be used by discussion leaders;
- rules for readability;
- procedures for systematically exploring and understanding an expository text.

The degree of consciousness with which such keys are actually used by individuals-in-action will vary from situation to situation and from individual to individual. What is important is that, generally speaking, they function at a higher level of consciousness than the keys pertaining to, for example, the meaning of words and syntactic constructions (see p. 154).

The central question of this section, i.e., the extent to which keys should be disciplinary or non-disciplinary to be maximally effective, will be answered by making educated guesses based on some experiments and seemingly sound assumptions. With regard to both kinds of key, my guesses differ slightly. In the case of low-level keys my hypothesis is that lightly disciplinary keys are superior, but that there might be competition from non-disciplinary ones. Strongly or completely disciplinary keys seem to me to be entirely ineffective. In the case of high-level keys, I still think lightly disciplinary keys are superior but that here not only non-disciplinary but also strongly or even completely disciplinary keys might be competitors.

I will deal with these two points successively, commencing with the low-level keys. At the beginning of this section, I mentioned three important types of low-level keys pertaining to

1 phonetic and intonational,

2 lexical, and

3 grammatical (syntactic) adequacy. Of these three, the last has been comparatively heavily researched. Hence, in the following I will concentrate on this research, particularly on the very thorough study by Bateman and Zidonis (1966). In the course of their experiment, transformational-generative (T-G) grammar was taught to 15- to 16-year-old students; the kernel grammar was dealt with formally, the transformational rules informally. Plenty of time was included for exercises. Comparison of compositions produced by these students and by students in a control group showed that 'A knowledge of generative grammar enables students to increase significantly the proportion of well-formed sentences they write' (Bateman and Zidonis, p. 39; only one of the conclusions is cited here).

The Bateman-Zidonis experiment has two prominent features. In the first place, the program being tested had a low degree of disciplinarity: only the kernel grammar, which forms a small part of the whole of T-G grammar, was treated formally; the transformational rules were treated informally. It is important to keep this feature in mind. In my opinion, many scholars in the field of linguistics overrate – often from sheer enthusiasm – the relevance of their trade to education, and could be led by wishful thinking to interpret the results of this experiment much too optimistically (perhaps encouraged by the description Mary Columbro Rodgers gives of the experiment; p. 116). This misinterpretation could lead to the conclusion that the Bateman-Zidonis experiment proves that strongly or completely disciplinary teaching of (T-G) grammar can improve productive syntactic ability. Besides the fact that this is not true, it is not very likely that it could ever be proved. This follows directly from something said above, namely that the proper functioning of lingual processes lying at a low level of consciousness can only be obstructed by a high level of consciousness (the latter being an essential property of disciplinary thinking).

In the second place, the Bateman-Zidonis program was the first to succeed after a long series of unsuccessful experiments on the function of teaching grammar to improve syntactic ability had all produced negative results. (One of the most reliable of the latter, the experiment designed by R. J. Harris – see Braddock *et al.*, p. 83 – had even led the experimenter to infer 'that the study of English grammatical terminology had a negligible or even a relatively harmful effect upon the correctness of children's writing in the early part of . . . five Secondary Schools'.) The success of the Bateman and Zidonis's programme can be explained by

assuming that T-G grammar pertains to more essential, more vital aspects of the process of forming syntactic constructions than more traditional types of grammar do.

Another experiment, one done by Mellon, points in the same direction.

We may therefore say that as for as grammatical (syntactic) ability is concerned, research has provided some evidence that discipline may have a positive effect if two conditions are satisfied:

a the approach is only disciplinary to a very limited degree;

b the approach pertains to central elements of the particular ability one wants to improve.

I have had no opportunity to find out whether experiments, if any, in the phonetic and lexical fields have yielded similar results. In my view, however, there is a good chance that an analogous hypothesis would be borne out by the experimental results.

An important question which cannot be answered on the basis of the Bateman-Zidonis experiment is whether the same result could have been reached with a completely non-disciplinary approach. A potentially successful non-disciplinary approach is one giving students an abundance of opportunities to practice complex syntactic constructions in natural writing situations and plenty of feedback from their teacher and classmates. Unfortunately, the control group in the Bateman-Zidonis experiment was apparently not taught in this way but instead did the regular curriculum of their school, in which the emphasis was put on (traditional) grammar.

We must therefore conclude that the Bateman-Zidonis experiment provides support for the assumption that (if certain conditions are satisfied) a disciplinary approach can be successful in improving syntactical ability, but that this assumption cannot imply that such an approach would necessarily be more successful than a non-disciplinary approach. Hence, we can say that, with respect to degree of disciplinarity, a teacher may choose from a number of options, all lying between non-disciplinary and lightly disciplinary. In this analysis, which tries to give an overall picture of the relevant problematics, I shall not try to quantify this degree more precisely.

It should be noted that if the teacher chooses the option of light disciplinarity, he is compelled to put aside temporarily the principle that keys should not receive too much attention (cf. p. 134). During certain lessons, or a series of lessons, attention would go solely to the keys. In my opinion, to avoid deviating too much from the principle just mentioned, it is advisable to let students practice writing in a normally functional way

as soon as some aspect of syntax has been dealt with. They can then be asked to apply in their writing as much as possible of what they have learned in the way of syntax.

One may, of course, disagree with the above-mentioned investigators on the question of how important syntactic ability is in relation to writing ability as a whole. One could argue, for example, that much of the time and energy required by the Bateman-Zidonis programme, could better be used for improving other aspects of students' writing ability, e.g. the ability to argue logically, to write imaginatively, and to take the reader's point of view into account. This point will not be discussed any further here (I shall return to it at the end of Chapter 12). What matters in this part of our exposition is the question of whether discipline can contribute to the attainment of practical objectives, irrespective of whether they are worth-while.

Before we go on to the high-level keys, one short remark should be made about the teaching of explicit grammar for practical purposes. In the preceding discussion we have dealt only with the teaching of grammar to improve mother-tongue ability. The possibility that the teaching of grammar could contribute to foreign-language learning has not been considered. On this point, as far as I can see, we can say that the objective of this kind of teaching of grammar can be to provide students with a concise, simple, but well-functioning set of grammatical terms which will actually be of some use if the foreign-language teacher does not follow a completely 'direct' method (the latter implying that grammatical rules are only made explicit sporadically).

Teaching methods and subject matter concerning the teaching of grammar for this purpose will, in my view, differ slightly from the teaching directed at improving mother-tongue ability (e.g., the Bateman-Zidonis programme)³⁷. The principle that the approach should be only lightly disciplinary to function efficiently also seems to apply here, however.

As has already been said, the conclusion with regard to high-level keys differs slightly from the one just reached. Three groups of such keys have been mentioned, with examples (p. 155):

- 1 keys consisting of knowledge in the field of fiction;
- 2 keys consisting of knowledge in the field of non-fiction;
- 3 keys consisting of verbal strategies and tactics.

The degree to which these keys are disciplinary (explicit, methodical) may vary from non-disciplinary to completely disciplinary. The question is: which degree is the most efficient?

Research provides some evidence that a lightly disciplinary approach is

efficient to a certain extent, but that must be left as a surmise. Because this book must try to cover the total area of MTT, it has been impossible for me to collect all of the available research data in this field. The odds are that a great many relevant data exist, because there are many different types of high-level keys besides the examples just given.

A good example of such research is provided by Robinson's study on the SQ₃R method for comprehensive reading. Here, as in the Bateman-Zidonis experiment, the degree of disciplinaryity is low. SQ₃R requires students trying to assimilate the content of an expository text to proceed via the following steps:

- Survey
- Question
- Read (to answer the questions)
- Recite
- Review

Application of this simple method to texts inevitably entails many special little problems for which the designer of the method could have prescribed special supplementary techniques. He has not done so; the method '... should not be difficult to learn' (Robinson, p. 31).

Experiments show this (lightly disciplinary) approach to be superior to letting students do their reading in their own way (Robinson, pp. 33-34). However, studying in your own way is not necessarily the same as studying according to a non-disciplinary version of SQ₃R. Whether the lightly disciplinary version is superior to a non-disciplinary one, can therefore not be ascertained.

With regard to the presence of strongly and even completely disciplinary keys in the hypothesis concerning efficacy (cf. p. 155) it may be said that there are reasons to disregard the possibility that such keys could be very effective (i.e., more effective than lightly or non-disciplinary ones).

In the first place, the verbal situations for which these keys are as a rule needed, are so complex that if the participants tried to make every factor explicit, they would soon be too dizzy to continue. The thing to do in these situations is to operate more or less intuitively. If principles must play a role here, they should be internalized principles. It may be doubted whether strongly or completely disciplinary principles actually can be internalized as such.

In the second place, students easily become bored if their teacher tries to deal with things much more thoroughly than they feel is necessary for the practical purposes they have in mind. Still, it would be quite interesting to see whether the suppositions were corroborated by experiments.

These considerations can be summed up as follows:

1 The choice of *lightly disciplinary* versions of both low-level and high-level keys seems to form a safe option. This implies the feasibility of lightweight versions of the following:

- surveys of what there is to read and why this could be done in the fictional as well as the non-fictional field; these apply to practical objectives 1, 2, 4, and 5 (p. 153);
- analysis of fictional texts, applying to practical objective 3 (p. 153);
- lingual and communicational tactics and strategies (keys); these apply to practical objectives 6 and 7; by lingual keys, things like rules for sentence building are meant, by communicational keys things like procedures for reporting or discussing (see also the examples on p. p. 155).

2 The comparative efficacy of non-disciplinary versions of low-level keys and of non-disciplinary or strongly/completely disciplinary versions of high-level keys, is still uncertain.

3 Both conclusions are surmises. I have only had a chance to analyze some important studies, not the whole (international) field of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic experimentation.

'Dangerous subjects'

1 The problem

One of the questions which arises sooner or later at some stage of implementing the curriculum, is whether we are to include controversial books (texts) and/or controversial subjects. For instance, are we to deal with the characteristics of the work of a controversial author and/or permit students to write about controversial themes, i.e. themes potentially painful and antagonistic to others? This is the central question in this chapter – which, logically, is related to Main Dimension II, Subject (see p. 44, § 4.22).

All controversial subjects lie within the realm of ethics and religion. Roughly, we can distinguish between *A* and *B* subjects:

A subjects which cannot be discussed on the basis of reason, and

B subjects which can, and should, be discussed on the basis of reason.

It is important to make this basic distinction, because the answers to the questions we are going to ask ourselves depend on what category we are dealing with.

In the Western world, *A* subjects as a rule have something to do with sex, religion, authority, working ethos. An *A* subject of special importance in the field of MTT concerns literary standards (e.g., How should 'trash' be evaluated?). The *B* subjects all pertain to aspects of social or political ideology.

There are certainly citizens and politicians who see political ideology partly as a kind of religion. In my view, this is not a legitimate option. For the sake of social hygiene, political ideology should be considered susceptible to reason. Readers who find this view too subjective for a book that tries to look at things from an objective point of view are advised to read the excellent exposition by Wheeler about the way a real democracy should function (Wheeler, pp. 85-86).

The issues to be associated with categories *A* and *B* will be discussed in §2 and §3 of this chapter, respectively.

The various manuals on mother-tongue teaching used as information sources throughout this book are completely silent about these problems. The only plausible explanation of this silence is, it seems to me, that in the national systems under which the authors live these problems are

not manifest. This means, however, that in these countries mother-tongue teaching generally does not satisfy some of the essential conditions formulated above, the two most important being that the interest of students should form an essential factor in the determination of what is ultimately going to be taught, and that in all reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities with practical purposes, not only 'technique' but also content should play an important part.

Every MT teacher who takes these principles seriously – and does not confine himself to imagining what his students want but really asks them – will inevitably find himself sooner or later facing at least some of the problems to be discussed in this chapter. For instance, some students, when asked to design a drama, may come up with a controversial one, as happened a few years ago when a group of 16-year-old Dutch high-school students on their own initiative produced a play in which certain Roman-Catholic attitudes, in their eyes hypocritical and provincial, were severely ridiculed. The teacher who had helped (not influenced) them was very nearly kicked out of the (Roman Catholic) school (ten Brinke 1969/70). Another class might ask their teacher to do Mr. Y's novel with them, to see whether it should be called pornography or was really the first novel to give an adequate idea of homosexuality.

These are by no means extreme examples, at least not for the situation in many Dutch schools today. Teachers working in countries where less is tolerated will run into trouble in situations which in The Netherlands would be considered minor nuisances.

In short, the problems associated with The Controversial Subject should form an important aspect of any study on MTT in which certain basic principles for good teaching are seriously adhered to.

2 The freedom to have, or not to have, a taboo

All sensitive subjects falling under the category which cannot be discussed mainly on the basis of reason (A subjects, e.g. sex, religion) have something to do with the phenomenon of taboo. Taboo is unreasonable. It belongs to the world of the sacrosanct, already touched on in Chapter 7.

The examples I have just given of problems which may arise if, as an MT teacher, one seriously obeys some vital principles of MTT, will have given the reader an impression of the kind of situation we are going to discuss. Let us suppose that a teacher reads with his class (of students aged about 15-16 years) a rather 'realistic' novel by a rather well-known

modern author – whose work is already being read by some of the students outside school. This could lead to trouble. What form can we expect this trouble to take? Or, more precisely: what kind of issues may be raised?

In my view, all issues which can legitimately be raised when such trouble occurs can be seen as variants of one main issue: Can this subject be openly discussed or not? The answer to this question can be yes or no, or something in between: again, we have a scale, the yes/no scale of controversial A subjects.

People may say yes or no for two entirely different reasons, the first reason (nr. 1) pertaining to the role of the school, the second (nr. 2) to the freedom to discuss all subjects.

Reason nr. 1: People may be against or for open discussion because they think. 'Such subjects should not be dealt with in school; they belong to the family sphere'; or 'Such subjects should be dealt with in school, because the school should be a platform for exchanging ideas on important topics'. On this basis the issue is of a completely rational nature. This is important to note, because it means that the issue can be discussed more or less serenely (for a hot issue like the one we are discussing here, this certainly is an attractive feature).

Reason nr. 2: People may be against or for open discussion because 'You do not discuss such a thing at all', or 'It is good for such things to be openly discussed'. In other words: 'Look away from it' *versus* 'Look at it, it exists'. Here we find ourselves in the world or taboo, of sacrosanctity and semi-sacrosanctity.

Is there an imperative answer to both of these issues, or do we just have options? The answer must be the latter -- just options.

With regard to the first sub-issue (the role of the school in society) it seems self-evident that we can legitimately choose any position we wish on the yes/no scale.

That there also is legitimate freedom of choice with regard to the second sub-issue (You do not talk about that) may surprise or even irritate many readers, especially those who think that the eradication of taboos is a demonstrable duty of all education. This latter attitude can be explained by the manifestation, at least during recent centuries, of a constant tendency toward intellectual liberalism, a tendency toward the elimination of taboos. But this does not supply objective proof of being right; having the Time Spirit on one's side is not an objective criterion. Accordingly, in my view, 'progressives' should consider themselves to be just as subjective as 'conservatives'.

Because progressive people often have such a comfortably high opinion of their own objectivity, they can produce arguments which sound absolutely valid. They are also much better at ridiculing the other party which, as a rule, can only resort to rancor, indignation, suspicious defense, and other ineffective reactions.

A 'valid' argument produced by a 'progressive' could be: 'I think we should be realistic. Things like abortion and homosexuality exist. What is the good of adopting an ostrich policy?' Superficially, this seems to represent sound educational reasoning. But it is not sound to the believer in the taboo: to him or her, these things do actually exist, but paying deliberate attention to them may have a bad moral influence. And there is no rational way to talk him or her out of this view. On the other hand, his 'progressive' opponent cannot be made to change his view by rational means either.

Thus, if a problem – or even a scandal – arises there is no way out except to grant each party the right to have, or not to have, a taboo. This seems to be the only legitimate and sensible solution. And it may help to reduce conflicts – which, unfortunately, always end by affecting the life and career of several people – to a minimum of vehemence. One should not make the mistake of thinking that this is the easiest way out: to acknowledge the relative value of one's views on subjects to which taboos are attached – i.e., to stop thinking that One Is Right – is for many people a very difficult thing to do.

3 The imperative of free interchange of ideas on social and political ideologies

The main point to be discussed in this section is completely different from the one in the preceding section. In terms of the two fundamental concepts of this book, it can be formulated as follows: It is imperative that options concerning social and political ideologies can be freely discussed in school.

I shall start with a concrete example I have taken from the Lethen-Schneider case, which occurred in Berlin a few years ago and will be discussed at the end of this section. In order not to complicate the example too much, I have made the situation we are going to discuss a bit more ideal than it probably was in reality, but this transformation does no harm to the adequate development of the principles we should be led by in such situations.

Let us suppose that a 17-year-old student conducts a study with the following theme (and reports on it):

‘According to our constitution, all people should have equal chances with respect to education. There is a contradiction between the law and reality. What are the causes of this contradiction and what could we do about them?’

(This kind of ‘engaged assignment’ is typical for emancipatory education; see also p. 110, for examples given by Gutt and Salfner.)

Let us further suppose:

- 1 that the student concludes, after analyzing all kinds of data and arguments, that the sole answer to the problem is Revolution;
- 2 that he has had assistance from some other teacher, e.g., a social studies teacher;
- 3 that the two teachers (MT teacher and colleague) have not indoctrinated him in the direction mentioned sub 1;
- 4 that both of them discuss the paper with the student in a more or less scientific way (i.e., rationally and tolerantly);
- 5 that a conflict arises, e.g., because certain parents or even members of the school board, claim that Mr. Z (the teacher) favours communism (which in West-European countries is not considered the right thing to do).

What issues can be raised here? The main, all-embracing issue, is again: Is this a subject to be discussed openly?

With regard to this main issue, two sub-issues can be raised, viz. the first of the two sub-issues mentioned in §2 – pertaining to the function of the school – and a new one, pertaining to the role of MTT within the school curriculum as a whole. In other words: people may say yes or no (or something in between) to the main question, because

- a they think, or do not think, politics should be discussed in school, and/or
- b because they think, or do not think, politics is part of MTT’s domain.

The second sub-issue mentioned in §2, viz. the one pertaining to the taboo character of the problem, cannot be legitimately brought to bear on the problem we are discussing now. As has already been explained, for the sake of social hygiene politics and taboo should be kept apart.

Now, what views can legitimately be taken with regard to sub-issues a and b? In my opinion, to say ‘no’ to politics in school (issue a) is untenable. To have some grasp of politics is a vital element of good citizenship. All democracies that want to resemble a real democracy as

much as possible, must encourage the younger generation to acquire some orientation in this field while in school, lest their countries become disguised autocracies (in which a relatively small group of experts – not to mention other categories of the human species – can have things their own way almost completely). And since the best way to learn something about politics is to produce (and read, etc.) well-founded ideas in this field, it seems incorrect, even rather irresponsible, to repudiate the teacher who has introduced politics into a school.

With regard to the second issue (b), there is in my view only one legitimate answer, namely that politics is one of the realms students may write, read, etc. about in the MT lessons, provided they are assisted by information coming from not only their MT teacher but also from teachers of other subjects (see p. 103). If students could only read, write, etc. about things the MT teacher had been specially trained in, they would be restricted in their subject matter to language and literature – which is not a very appetizing prospect.

Our conclusion, then, must be that in this case – assuming that certain conditions have been fulfilled – a teacher proceeding in the way described should be backed instead of repudiated.

Conditions 2, 3, and 4 can be satisfied without much effort on everyone's part – which means that letting students be politically active in school is not an illegitimate or unrealistic business. It is important to note, however, that these conditions are imperative. It is important to include politics in the school curriculum; but it should not be forgotten that to many people politics is a rather tender subject. Therefore, to avoid providing grounds for banning politics from school, well thought out precautions must be taken not to give the impression that one is, for instance, indoctrinating students. We shall see that such precautions were not taken in the Lethen-Schneider case. I shall give a concise description of it, because it represents a concrete example of actual teaching practice and one that has been substantially documented.

Two German MT teachers, Lethen and Schneider, had the following experience. They were teaching in a Berlin school attended by students who are already employed or who have had vocational training but now want to prepare for the *Arbitur* (final general examination). The headmaster of the school was displeased with the essay themes assigned by Lethen and Schneider as well as with the students' pieces. Two *ad hoc* inspectors, after having studied the subject list and the essays, concluded that Lethen and Schneider practiced one-sided ideological indoctrination, compelled students 'to think in a certain way', and did not prepare them adequately for the final examination.

In their detailed report, the two teachers describe and then analyze the inspectors' reactions. Both their analysis and interpretation seem to me to be fairly consistent. The controversy between the teachers and the inspectors boils down to two essential points (apart from some minor aspects):

1 Almost all of the themes selected by the two teachers had a political character. One example has already been given. Two other examples:

Characterize the doctor in Büchner's *Woyzeck*. Do we have here a caricature of a still existing type of scientist? (The inspectors wanted the last sentence changed to: '... a still conceivable type of scientist (... *der heute noch denkbar wäre*') ; Lethen and Schneider characterize this as shifting students from the domain of reality to that of thought ('*das Denkbare*').

for an interpretative essay (*Interpretationsaufsatz*):

Compulsory housing policy *versus* free housing market: elaborate these concepts.

The inspectors did not agree with this predominance of political issues. Lethen and Schneider, although without saying so explicitly, apparently did not see anything wrong with it.

2 The students are trained to think according to a special method (*einer bestimmten Denkmethode*). According to this method, students, when writing, reading, etc. texts should

a take seriously into account whether what they write, read, etc., corresponds with facts;

b realize that literature can contain factual information;

c realize that, if possible, writing, reading, etc., about important social matters should lead to action, at least to descriptions of what concrete actions could result from one's reasoning.

The inspectors' views are summarized by Lethen and Schneider, in a rather ironic style, in the form of advice to students who want to make certain of getting their diploma easily:

a Concentrate on the text, especially the concepts, and do not look at reality; always use yourself as the sole source of inspiration³⁸ (you should enjoy writing about themes which surprise you because you do not know anything about them);

b Do not put literature and reality on the same footing (what I think the authors mean is: *Never* put literature etc.); in other words, do not

think that theatre pieces like Berthold Brecht's could provide deep-going and valuable information about society;

c In your essays do not put forward solutions that could give you and your teacher any occasion for concrete action. Therefore, complicated solutions are better than simple ones.

With regard to this controversy the following comments can be made. First of all, the question of whether the two teachers indoctrinate (the inspectors' first criticism). Unfortunately, the one-sided character of all of the essay themes suggests something of that kind. It is of course possible that the students all agreed they should write exclusively on political subjects, but Lethen and Schneider do not mention this. It should be added that Lethen and Schneider apparently did not satisfy the condition that one should draw on the assistance of other teachers to deal adequately with subjects one is officially not competent in. This omission may have helped to create the impression that students were indoctrinated instead of informed, that they were given 'opinions' instead of 'expert information'.

In any case, I do not think that these two flaws are very important – although, as I have explained, such flaws should always be avoided. It is far more important to look critically at the inspectors' conclusion that Lethen and Schneider trained students in a certain way of thinking. This way of thinking is in flagrant contradiction with verbalism (defined during the last decade by, e.g., Marcuse), which can be considered alienated. The verbalist does not realize, even does not want to realize (because it disturbs his comfort), that an exposition should be closely related to and originate from facts. The inspectors want the students to keep at a safe distance from these facts, i.e., stay within the layer of concepts, as Lethen and Schneider put it. This would keep them within a well-established tradition of rhetorics, the famous family to which the essay also belongs. In my view, we may consider this verbalistic tradition one of the most harmful ways of thinking a student could ever learn. This conclusion also applies to the inspectors' third conclusion, namely that Lethen and Schneider did not prepare their students adequately for the final examinations. As the ironic advice by the two authors shows, they consider these examinations to be invalid (i.e., verbalistic). In which, I think, they are right. Final examinations during which candidates are required to write on topics they have been enabled to study seriously for a certain period (say, a year), are the sole valid way to test non-fictional writing ability (see also p. 109, principle 2d).

Lethen and Schneider's description of their case must therefore lead us to the conclusion that if their description is correct:

- 1 their conception of the content and quality of non-fictional writing is perfectly right;
- 2 two unfortunate flaws in their approach and organization weakened their case unnecessarily.

4 A control case

The Dutch author H. Bonset has described a case in which both A and B subjects play a part. This case permits us to check the principles developed in the preceding sections of this chapter, as well as the main principle of part B of this book, the normal-functionality principle. In other words, this case enables us to let principles developed in different parts of the book converge.

In 1969, a Dutch MT teacher named Jan de Jong set his students the following essay themes:

- 1 Subject and society
- 2 Pope and pill
- 3 Underground
- 4 Sex and love
- 5 Newspapers in The Netherlands
- 6 Revolution and establishment
- 7 Revolution and evolution
- 8 Why should you keep your trap shut?
- 9 Oceanography
- 10 The loser
- 11 Is there any point to living?
- 12 The illusion
- 13 Why should life be made longer?
- 14 Modern fascism
- 15 Relations in the classroom
- 16 Human aggressivity

This list caused some trouble. A member of the parents' committee attempted to have the teacher fired. On the basis of what has been written in earlier parts of this book, the following comments can be made. In the first place, this case is a clear example of the pick-a-title-from-the-following-list style of presenting themes for non-fictional writing – a style which runs completely counter to the principle of normal func-

tionality (see Chapter 5, p. 111). In normally functional writing situations one writes about something which has become of great interest to oneself or the group. Translated into the school situation, this means that one could write either about a theme one considered important oneself (such a subject cannot ordinarily be pre-fabricated by the teacher) or about one (or, at most, two) subjects which have played a central role in the activity of the class for some weeks.

The pick-a-subject . . . style leads as a rule to texts (essays) which as far as their informational value is concerned can be expected to be depressingly bad. It is easy to imagine what cliché-ridden twaddle was written about Subject and society / Pope and Pill / Sex and love / Newspapers in The Netherlands / Revolution and establishment / Revolution and evolution / Modern fascism / Human aggressivity. (Oceanography had probably been dealt with in the geography lessons.)

This conclusion relates to what has been said in Chapter 5. The following remarks apply to this chapter.

The list contains at least two taboo themes: (2) Pope and pill, (4) Sex and love. As a consequence of our conclusion in §2, any parent could legitimately have claimed such themes should not be assigned again. The list also includes seven themes strongly related to social or political ideology, viz. (1.) Subject and society, (3.) Underground, (5.) Newspapers in The Netherlands, (6.) Revolution and establishment, (7.) Revolution and evolution, (8.) Why should you keep your trap shut? (14.) Modern fascism. As explained in §3, it is important for students in secondary schools to have plenty of opportunity to study and write about such themes. Accordingly, a 'no politics in school' claim made by parents should be rejected. However, the teacher should provide several guarantees, among them that these topics will be dealt with decently, i.e., in a way based on verifiable facts and careful thinking. This requires close cooperation between the MT teacher and colleagues teaching other subjects. Bonset does not mention whether such safeguards against amateurism were actually provided in the case under discussion.

Radical teachers, at least in The Netherlands, are inclined to condemn as reactionary and old-fashioned any protests raised against mother-tongue teachers who proceed as Jan de Jong did. As has become clear, his case was not as strong as it may have seemed during the turbulent period in which it occurred (1969).

Lingual correctness

1 The principle

People may consider something (lingually) incorrect if:

- a* a sound or a sound pattern is vulgar;
- b* a word or phrase is not acceptable for social reasons ('vulgar', 'modern cliché', etc.) or for purely semantic reasons (a word or phrase does not have the meaning its 'producer' thinks it has);
- c* the spelling or punctuation is wrong.

2 Teachers' attitudes toward correctness: imperative or optional?

The different attitudes teachers may show with regard to lingual correctness can be roughly indicated on a scale, the Attitudes-Toward-Correctness Scale.

The lowest possible position on this scale is taken by MT teachers who do not care about correctness as long as what their students say or write is sufficiently understandable. This latter condition is obligatory: choosing a lower position – which means accepting even partly incomprehensible language (the deficiency being due to faulty usage) – cannot be considered legitimate.

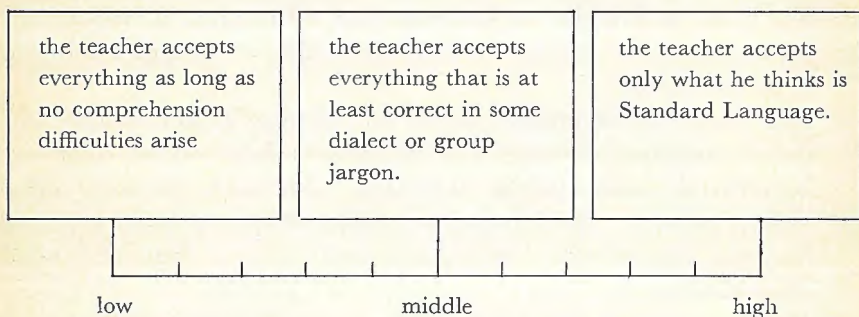
Of course, in most cases the borderline between comprehensible and incomprehensible is indistinct and arbitrary. What matters here is that there is a difference, whatever the difficulties that may arise when one tries to establish it precisely. On the other hand, these difficulties should not be underestimated, especially in applying the scale to teaching practice. Those who want to use it for that purpose will find it necessary to develop a list of additional stipulations (some of them concerning the situation in which the speaking or writing takes place, because this situation has a strong influence on comprehensibility).

The middle position on the scale is taken by teachers who accept deviations from standard language provided they are appropriate in some dialect (geographical or social) or group jargon. As to the latter category: teachers taking the middle position on the scale will accept, for instance, 'loose, journalistic language', 'vulgar language', 'youngster's jargon', etc.

When they are not sure whether a lingual form is acceptable in a particular group, they give the student the benefit of the doubt; moreover, they realize that language is constantly subject to change. Teachers of English in England belonging to this category will probably be only mildly interested in the (remarkably clear and informative) book by Mittins *et al.*, describing 'how correct' 55 English constructions are found by English teachers, e.g., 'his family *are*', '*pretty* reliable', '*Who* was he looking for?'. They would certainly not draw a conclusion like: Because x % of the English teachers consider this form incorrect I am going to consider it faulty.

The highest position on the scale is taken by teachers who only accept language they consider to be 'standard' (Standard Dutch, Standard French, Standard English, etc.). Dialects, group jargon, and the possibility that new variants might have been born during the last five years are as a rule not accepted by this category.

Summing up, we arrive at the following rough Attitudes-Towards-Correctness Scale:



Let us now turn to the question of the legitimacy of these positions. Are they all optional, or are any of them illegitimate? It is important to examine this question, because, just as for Disciplinary and Dangerous Subjects, teachers can also have strong, vigorous convictions about Lingual Correctness, involving the risk of intolerance.

The result of my analysis is that all choices on the scale are legitimate.

Two kinds of underlying motive can play a role here: general cultural motives and political motives (Gutt and Salfner would probably hold that these two realms are inextricably interrelated). The first kind pertains to the emotional value one attaches to correctness: to some it consciously or unconsciously forms a virtue in itself, to others it does not. According to my experience, many persons who score high on the scale have feelings with regard to correctness that come very close to being (semi-)sacrosanct

emotions (often intermingled with another emotion of a sacrosanct nature, namely nationalism). During discussions, such feelings do not always manifest themselves directly; they may, on the contrary, take the form of rationalizations like: 'Correct language promotes communication' – which can be countered by the argument that 'by not pressing the student into a mold, we give him a much better chance to express himself'. In Chapter 11 I have tried to convince the reader that adhering to or rejecting a taboo is purely a matter of choice as long as the taboo does not lie within the realm of social ideology. If this principle is accepted, it follows that whatever generally cultural motive pertaining to lingual correctness prevails, should be accepted as such (Stratta, p. 102, apparently, does not agree: in his opinion, '... the old immutable laws of correctness are no longer tenable...' and thus a high score on the Attitudes-Towards-Correctness Scale would not be acceptable to him). Readers trained to take a liberal view of lingual correctness (a stand advocated as early as the Forties by R. A. Hall in his famous *Leave your language alone!*) will certainly be disappointed to the extent that this implies toleration of 'rigid' stands concerning lingual correctness. I think it should be realized, however, that language, and especially appreciation of language, is not the linguist's private domain. It is – to put it a bit dramatically – owned by the people and they, accordingly, have the right to have their own ideas about its 'properness'.

If we base ourselves on political considerations, there can be no further question of tolerating irrational thinking (cf. p. 165). This does not, however, prevent the genesis and co-existence of opposite views.

Adherents of emancipatory mother-tongue education – as representatives of this movement I have chosen Gutt and Salfner – will as a matter of principle not score high on the scale if Standard Language is put on a par with 'middle-class standard language', or, to borrow the terminology introduced by Basil Bernstein, if 'standard' and 'elaborated' are considered identical. Gutt and Salfner defend the restricted code as being at least as efficient or perhaps even more efficient than the elaborated code, that is, from the point of view of representing reality.

Compensatory and conservative educational thinking – in the present book the latter is considered a legitimate option! – will tend to consider the elaborated code as the standard. The former type of educational philosophy distinguishes itself from the latter by being willing to sacrifice much time and effort, and consequently a great deal of money, to bring lower-class children to the middle-class level.

This short characterization of the ideas underlying issues concerning

lingual correctness is inevitably very incomplete and imprecise. I have given only a rough sketch of some of the most spectacular features. But I hope it will help spread the idea that, like other issues discussed in this book, the question of lingual correctness is not simply a technical matter, and that this will, among other things, create doubt about objective tests used to 'measure' the lingual level of students. Whether the designers of these tests like it or not, their products have deep cultural and socio-political implications.

Two more things should be noted here. First, the choice made on the Attitudes-Toward-Correctness Scale influences scores on other scales discussed in this book. One of the most important of these influences concerns the feasibility of disciplinary approaches intended to improve students' lingual correctness in writing, for instance the feasibility of the Bateman-Zidonis approach described above. Such disciplinary approaches are extremely time-consuming and therefore seem to be considered only when a high degree of lingual correctness is aimed at. In other words: mother-tongue teachers who score low on the Attitudes-Toward-Correctness scale cannot be expected to be interested in these approaches.

Secondly, for teachers who value lingual correctness highly, the Normal Functionality principle remains in force. Consequently, if they want their teaching of speaking and writing to continue to be educationally legitimate, they should not give the highest priority of all to lingual correctness. They should also take great care that their students are able to write and speak about things which are meaningful to them and when they evaluate their students' written or spoken texts, should go seriously into the question of what made them write or say what they have (all this has been extensively elaborated in Chapter 5). A teacher who takes this line and at the same time pays much attention to lingual correctness, is a completely acceptable teacher. It seems to me that it is not superfluous to say this, because – at least in my experience – many 'progressives' consider *all* teachers who stress lingual correctness in their teaching and evaluation, to be old-fashioned, narrow-minded schoolmasters. Which, as I have tried to explain, is an unacceptable simplification.

The 'Cultural Heritage' motif

1 The principle

What it means to concern oneself with old texts need not be illustrated. But two things should be noted.

In the first place, most old texts considered by MT teachers for use in school – if they take a positive stand with regard to the issue 'Old texts, yes or no?' – are literary in character. Therefore, the exposition in this chapter will be confined to (old) literary texts.

In the second place, in some teaching strategies, it is not the texts themselves but literary-historical information that forms the focus of the lesson. Thus, the texts function only as illustrations of the theory. The exposition in this chapter will deal with both strategies, i.e.:

a strategies in which the focus is on the texts and the historical information is introduced solely to make the texts more accessible; and

b strategies in which the focus is on literary history, the texts serving to illustrate that history.

The question of how old a text should be to be called old, cannot be answered objectively. A few years ago, some of my students decided after careful deliberation to consider a text five to seven years old as old.

To them, a novel written ten years ago was an old book. I have chosen arbitrarily to add a few years to the age mentioned by these students.

In this chapter, a text published at least 30 years ago will be considered old. All other texts will be considered modern.

2 Attitudes on the issue of old texts, and their consequences for teaching methods

Teaching practice varies widely with respect to old texts. On the one hand, in some countries there are teachers who, according to a short report in the (French) *Cahiers Pédagogiques*, devote almost all of their literature lessons to mediaeval and seventeenth and eighteenth century literature (a very small part being given to the nineteenth century). On the other hand, there are teachers, for instance in The Netherlands, to whom only modern literature matters. One of the latter was quoted a few

years ago in a student magazine as saying (rather bluntly): 'I would not think of risking my popularity with the class by reading those old fogies'.

Who is right? We can look at this issue from a practical, an intellectual, and a (semi-)sacrosanct point of view. I will start with the practical angle and then deal with the (semi-)sacrosanct aspect. This change in sequence (elsewhere I have put the sacrosanct point of view last) seemed useful because of the emotions which invariably attend entering of the sacrosanct domain. It seemed better to settle this point first and end this section more or less serenely.

The conclusions are:

if practical purposes are pursued	practical information leading to the choice of old texts should be given to those students who want it
if (semi-)sacrosanct purposes are pursued	complete freedom of preference
if intellectual purposes are pursued	old literature offers attractive possibilities if some essential educational principles are applied (among them the principle of relevance).

2.1 The practical point of view

In Chapter 4 I pointed out that fiction can be taught for the following practical purposes:

- A* to provide orientation about what there is to read;
- B* to provide orientation about why a book can be read;
- C* to provide information about what knowledge and abilities one should have to enable one to read a certain type of book.

This formula is suitable for old literature. For teaching practice, however, there is one important difference between modern and old fiction: we may expect that many more students will be interested in reading modern than old fiction. As a result, I think that the provision of the practical information sub *A*, *B*, and *C* should be seen as optional: orientation should be offered only to those students who show they are interested

in reading old fiction on their own (these will presumably be students who have already read a lot of modern fiction). Only when the majority of the class shows this inclination (spontaneously or after some proselytizing by their teacher) should a regular course be given.

As a matter of fact, if a student says that reading old fiction does not make sense to him, he cannot be pronounced 'wrong' on the grounds of any objective criterion. The only way he can be found 'wrong' is under the assumption that by neglecting old literature, he severs any possible line between himself and his 'cultural heritage', and by stating that it is a pity or even a cultural crime for anyone to do that. But this statement cannot be substantiated objectively: it can only be based on (semi-)sacrosanct considerations. It is this domain that we are going to enter now.

2.2 The (semi-)sacrosanct point of view

The sacrosanct perfumes clinging to old literature can come from no less than three sources:

- 1 the high esteem in which literature is held;
- 2 a high esteem for the past;
- 3 a great respect for the university system (old literature is something which in the main only universities deal with).

As has been explained repeatedly, every teacher has a right to depart from the sacrosanct conception of literature, and he may try his luck in convincing his students that his views are right and justified. If one accepts this principle, all kinds of things that modern educationalists in the field of mother-tongue teaching customarily frown at suddenly become acceptable. For instance, the strategy attacked in the *Cahiers Pédagogiques* then represents a legitimate option from the sacrosanct point of view. Likewise, providing large quantities of historical information about well-known ('Great') authors from the past and letting students memorize it, becomes entirely legitimate: if something *is* sacred, one must stand firm as a teacher.

However, those who for some reason or other loathe one or more of the three value orientations just mentioned have the same right, within the the domain of sacrosanctity, to reject these views completely.

The 'sacrosancts' on both sides are inclined to take strong, often authoritarian stands, which makes it difficult for the tolerants to tolerate them. Such stands could be verbalized as, for instance,

Pro

'You do not have to tell me what is beautiful. I know perfectly well what is beautiful, and I have a right to inform my students in this respect. After all, I have thought – and felt – about these things longer than they have. And I am sure that in their hearts they dislike this so-called modern stuff as much as I do.'

Contra

'Let us stop compelling them to read that so-called classical stuff. It keeps alive mythology made up by those in power to keep the powerless from seeing reality.'

During such discussions it may be helpful if someone reminds the combatants that the arguments on which they base themselves are acceptable but at the same time arbitrary.

It is obvious that MT teachers who are to whatever degree 'religiously' committed to old literature, do not have it easy in classrooms in industrialized countries. My experience in The Netherlands is that young people are not very much impressed by sacrosanct attitudes towards historical literature, and I do not think this will be different in, for instance, England or West-Germany. Consequently, an MT teacher has to be *very* interesting if he wants to convince his students it is all worth-while. Whether things are easier for him if he follows an a-strategy (focus on texts) instead of a b- strategy (focus on literary history) is hard to tell. At first sight, one might think the former would be more successful, but personally I am not sure about this.

2.3 The intellectual point of view

The meaning I give the term intellectual has been described at the beginning of Chapter 6. It refers simply to understanding and experiencing for its own sake, and should be taken without any 'mandarinistic' connotation. It is important to keep this in mind, because we have just visited the sacrosanct domain in which such connotations are normal.

In Chapter 3 I have said that students have a right to be offered things to understand or experience which are intrinsically interesting to them. We may add that it does not help to deny students this right, because, if we refuse it, any learning that occurs will not be of a very high quality. It has also been assumed (see Chapter 6) that intrinsic interest can be generated by the relevance or by the game-like character of an activity (some factors contributing to relevance have also been briefly discussed).

The next question is, can we find intrinsically interesting (i.i.) subjects in the field of old literature? I think we should at least assume that there are such subjects. In fact, there is no essential difference between old literature and history. And if we believe that it is possible for a history teacher (if he realizes what is expected of him and is able to meet these expectations) to find topics which are intrinsically interesting – and I think we should assume that this is possible – we must also believe that an MT teacher can find i.i. subjects (including texts) in old literature.

What topics (texts) should we include? It is very difficult to provide general criteria here – which makes it highly important to let the students participate in the decision-making. In my view, the following may be said to represent a more or less general rule: a text (novel, play, poem) should never just be read and commented on; reading and commenting should be done to answer one or more intriguing questions. For instance:

a A given poet was glorified in the eighteenth century; most of us (= the students) now find him dull and pretentious. What conceptions of life and what attitudes would one have to have to feel compelled to rate this poet that high?

b The seventeenth-century play 'X' by Y has been skimmed through (by students); result: some of us feel that the play has something fascinating but that it is not possible to be really fascinated by it, because we cannot understand its essential meaning(s) and do not know how it should be played. Let us try to determine its essential meaning(s), and find out how it would have to be played to meet the expectations of a modern audience (this could be tried out by performing a fragment).

c The novel 'Z' is considered typically Romantic by literary critics. Let us find out for ourselves what features led these critics to qualify the novel in that way. Next, let us compare our result with that of official literary criticism.

d There is a collection of popular songs written by rather renowned seventeenth-century poets. Try to determine to what categories these songs belong according to standards belonging to our times, e.g. high-brow, middle-brow, low-brow pop, or any classification relevant to some nation's pop scene. (Very recently, a Dutch teacher³⁹ developed a highly successful lesson sequence on the basis of this idea after the traditional approach to seventeenth-century poetry failed dismally. Scores on reaction sheets showed that this variant of the Intriguing Question approach had improved motivation to a quite spectacular extent.)

In many cases the character of the lessons devoted to a particular literary work will be 'studious reading and discussion'. In some cases more playful approaches can be devised (cf. pp. 119-120). For instance, a few years ago I did a lesson of the type described in example a with a class of 18-year-old students. After some poems by the Dutch poet Hendrik Tollens – seen by most critics as representative of early nineteenth-century bourgeois thinking – were found 'awful and comical', we tried, by means of a mild form of sociodrama, to transform ourselves into early nineteenth-century bourgeois people. The girls found that they gradually became interested in learning French, embroidering, playing the piano, and listening to calm, authoritative men; their male classmates experienced a growing feeling inside themselves of solemn responsibility for all the affairs to be dealt with in life, and felt that women, being weak but at the same time high-souled creatures, should be protected. When we felt that the time-machine had done its work and had actually landed us in the first part of the nineteenth century, we reread Tollens's poems. They now appeared to be marvelously inspiring. At that moment some of us had the feeling that we were completely cut off from the modern world around us. Of course, this feeling only lasted very briefly.

I have given this example of a game-like approach, because some MT teachers may want an alternative to 'studying' all the time. Another possibility is to ask students to create something themselves in the style of and based on the ideas underlying a literary work they have read. Since this is a comparatively difficult type of assignment, the model one chooses should not be too complicated.

mem. To sum up, intrinsic-interest-directed reading of old literary works is entirely feasible if this reading is orientated toward the answering of one or more intriguing questions, and if students have a say in the selection of the material. Lesson sequences will often have the character of 'studious reading and discussion', but in some cases game-like approaches (sociodrama, creative writing) can be used.

The following remarks can be added with reference to teaching methods, etc.

1 The strategy for the (i.i.) reading of old literary works should amount simply to: read some complete works (a play, a novel, a collection of poems, one long poem). To really understand what a person living in an earlier period has tried to convey in a book or play, it is necessary to stay with him for a relatively long time, until the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle slowly begin to show a recognizable shape – of course, some pieces will always be found to be missing. The recognizable shape will be

composed of features relating to personality and time-bound culture (i.e., philosophical, social, political, religious, and sometimes geographical aspects).

It is possible that a class, or part of it, will then want to go even deeper and get an over-all idea about the background of the work they have read. For instance, students may want to know whether a particular conception of life they have found to be basic to this work can also be found in other historical periods. Or they may want to know more about contemporary authors in order to get an idea of the relative position of 'their' author.

As follows from the basic principle of reasonable teaching repeatedly explained in this book, such wishes should be fulfilled if it is technically possible to do so. Our doing so will gradually generate some kind of veritable literary history. I think that to make certain the lessons stay intrinsically interesting, this 'originating of literary history' should always be the result of, not the reason for, reading complete works (in terms of §1 of this chapter, this means that an approach should be based on strategy a, and that only some aspects of b should be added).

As advice, all this boils down to recommending what is called in Germany the exemplary method: broad outlines of vast areas of knowledge grow out of intensive study of a very limited number of specimens (German authors demand two kinds of courage from teachers using the 'exemplary' strategy: the courage to be thorough (*Mut zur Gründlichkeit*) and the courage to leave gaps (*Mut zur Lücke*).⁴⁰ It should be added that it is perfectly possible that classes (or the majority of a class) will want to confine themselves to intensive reading and be far from eager to move into the areas belonging to the background of a work they have read. Clearly, 'doing literary history' (by means of the exemplary method) is optional, not imperative (likewise, the total amount of time devoted to reading historical works is a matter of free choice).

According to the strategy described here, the main focus should always be formed by a complete work. The main focus should *not* be 1. a theme, 2. a genre, or 3. a period.

If preference is given to, for example, the theme strategy, fragments with themes like the following would be read:

'Women through the ages'
'Humour through the ages'
'Politics and the artist'

Within such a strategy, only fragments of texts (or isolated poems) can be read (simply because there is not time enough to read a number of

complete works – say six). This means that the texts can only be understood superficially, and that the students can never obtain a feeling of ‘what really made that author tick’. In other words, no sense of involvement can develop. Such conditions are, in my view, deadly for truly intrinsic interest (see also p. 183). The same holds for the genre-based (2) and the period-based (3) teaching strategies (if – as usually is the case – they are confined to the reading of fragments and isolated poems).

2 Final-examination programmes may very well make it impossible to adopt an approach according to the principles just described, or at least impose severe limitations.

3 Like all relevant, i.i.-directed teaching, this style requires the teacher to spend an appreciable amount of time on preparation, the more so:

a If he has not been trained properly for directing activities like those described in the preceding pages (many university courses do not aim at enabling students to penetrate to the essentials of a literary work, but are directed instead at giving students an understanding of all kind of details which are for some reason or other of interest to philologically oriented people; if courses of that type predominated in his training, the teacher had better try to forget what was taught him);

b If he has to do all of the exploration and analysis himself without the help of either an intelligently annotated school edition of a particular work or by suggestions provided by a curriculum centre. (Nevertheless, I think that under normal conditions a well-motivated MT teacher could find ways to follow the strategy outlined here to some extent).

4 During all lessons the accent should be on understanding and/or experiencing, not on ‘enjoying’, ‘finding it beautiful’, etc. Of course, if such feelings arise spontaneously – which is quite possible, since the wall between understanding and enjoying is often only a paper one – there is no reason to suppress them! But the teacher should not aim at inducing those feelings (or secretly hoping they will arise) unless he wants to be severely frustrated.

5 I realize that the examples given, with the possible exception of the seventeenth-century popular songs (example d, p. 179), are rather élitist. This is due to the fact that they are drawn from my own teaching practice – I taught what is now called the ‘higher streams’. It goes without saying that to be workable in non-élite schools, the examples would have to be modified considerably. As far as I can see, this should be possible provided sufficient materials are available.

3 The manuals

Of the MT manuals on the 'set list', only three pay serious attention to old literature, viz. Helmers, Fowler, and Ulshöfer. Without attempting to give a complete characterization of the views brought forward in these manuals, I shall comment on them briefly.

Helmers advocates a strategy which completely reflects the way in which literary historians think: the organization and the content of the lessons is clearly recognizable to anyone who has studied literary history. The educational aspects, or rather problems, which took us some time to deal with adequately in the preceding section of this chapter, are hardly touched on. It has already been concluded that Helmers' ideas about MTT are typically subject (or discipline) centered.

In Mary Elizabeth Fowler's book the educational aspects play an important part. I am afraid I do not quite agree with what she says about the reading of historical texts (pp. 226–229). In the first place, she simply states that at some points in the course of their education, students need to learn literary history; she makes no attempt to substantiate this rather strong statement. In the second place, when she has to face the problem that teaching literary history in the usual way amounts to a flood of empty names and facts, she advocates a 'flexible thematic strategy', i.e., a strategy according to which literary texts are grouped around highly heterogeneous themes, together comprising all of the angles from which literary historians look at their material. As I have explained earlier, this approach means that the texts themselves can only be superficially understood – which, I think, prevents the generating of an appreciable amount of real intrinsic interest. This approach has the advantages and disadvantages of the guided tour of a foreign country: we visit a market and see how people bargain there, we have an exotic meal, we visit a museum and admire what the ancestors of this foreign culture have wrought, we make a trip to the wild part of the country to feel the impact of the landscape, etc. Such tours are smooth and varied, and may make some people temporarily happy – and they are indeed more attractive than being buried by an avalanche of empty names and 'facts' – but they are unlikely to affect you deeply.

Of the three strategies to be discussed here, the one advocated by Ulshöfer comes very close to what, for the purpose of creating intrinsic interest, I see as the ideal method. There are some differences with respect to mine. In the first place, the proportion of 'classical' literature in the curriculum Ulshöfer envisages, seems to me to be too high for students in the 1970s (Ulshöfer does not mention the possibility of

consulting students about what they think should be read). In the second place, his lesson plans do not seem to leave any room for the unexpected. In terms of the next chapter this means that, at least in my view, he neglects creativity almost completely in favour of what I call elaboration. However, these differences may be entirely due to the fact that Ulshöfer's book was written much earlier than this one. What matters is that in all his expositions and lesson plans Ulshöfer resolutely aims for relevance and adopts a (more or less) exemplary method – which, in my view, is the only possible road to take in this field.

Creation or elaboration?

1 The principle

Torrance (1960) defines creative thinking as 'the process of sensing gaps or disturbing elements; forming ideas or hypotheses concerning them; testing these hypotheses; and communicating the results, possibly modifying and retesting the hypotheses.' In 1962 he added:

- 1 this definition implies the creation of something new;
- 2 it involves adventurous thinking, getting away from the main track;
- 3 it represents a successful step into the unknown;
- 4 it includes such things as invention, discovery, curiosity, imagination, experimentation, exploration;
- 5 creative ideas ultimately become evident in such things as scientific theories, inventions, improved products, novels, poems, designs, paintings, and the like.

The 'gap or disturbing element' definition given by Torrance seems to be a very adequate one, and will be accepted here. Within the context of mother-tongue teaching a gap means an idea or technical possibility that has not yet been seen or been used by the group to which the student belongs.

Creation is a relevant human activity and has a relevant counterpart: elaboration. In the case of elaboration, one knows the basic solutions to basic problems. Of course, in teaching practice the difference between creating and elaborating is not a sharp one. For instance, when elaborating a certain principle, the 'elaborator' may meet all kinds of difficulties, little 'gaps or disturbing elements' that demand from him little acts of creativity.

The fact that the word 'little' was used twice in the last sentence suggests there are degrees of creativity. I think this is in accordance with reality: there are, for instance, major and minor inventions. I shall not attempt here to develop an operationalized definition of the concept degree of creativity. Let it suffice for now that the more the product of a student's efforts: *a* deviates from what could be expected conventionally, and *b* is a relevant solution, the more that product can be considered a creative product.

Needless to say, it is by no means easy to establish a serviceable measure for 'deviating from what could be conventionally expected' (1) and

'relevance' (2), but it is very important to incorporate something like 'relevance' into the vague measure of creativeness just mentioned. If we did not do so, it would be too easy to be creative: any spectacular divergence, e.g. doing or writing something unexpected, would be sufficient. Torrance's definition also implies this 'relevance': for what other reason should one's results be tested? In anticipation of what will be said later in this chapter concerning practical consequences for teaching methods, it may be mentioned here that much of what is presented as creative work by students is in fact pseudocreative. This occurs when the assignment does not imply that the student is expected to work hard (or experiment repeatedly) in producing what he considers the best and the 'newest' thing he can. But I do not mean to say that such pseudocreative assignments are worthless, only that they should not be associated with creativity but rather with fun, pleasure, playing as an end in itself (which are by no means despicable educational activities).

In addition to this it should be remarked that, as usually applied, 'creative writing' does not or does not entirely cover what is meant by Torrance and others. Usually, the stress is on personalness, not on novelty or originality. For instance, a Committee on the Teaching of Creative Writing (of the American National Council for the Teaching of English) defines its object as follows (*Ess. Teach. Engl.* p. 80):

'Creative writing we define as an act of composition in which the student creates a controlled dramatic voice and an imagined world, without sacrificing the sense of logic and reality.⁴¹ The creation of this world is a process of making concrete *the personal experience of the student* in the literary form — prose or verse' (italics mine).

In this definition the notions new and original, etc., are not completely absent: 'composition', for instance, usually implies the performance of at least some mental acts that cannot be done in an entirely elaborational, reproductive way, i.e., by simply applying a learned complex of principles. What matters, however, is that the accent is put not on these notions but on the personal aspect. This can also be clearly seen from the way the Committee illustrates its definition.

There is nothing illegitimate in using the term creative writing in this way, but the fact that educationalists define it in many different ways inevitably leads to confusion. It would not be a bad idea, therefore, to attempt to reach international agreement on this point.

From what has been said on p. 185 it follows that one and the same assignment can lead to creative or non-creative products, depending on the criteria applied by the teacher. Some examples of potentially creative assignments will be useful.

Example 1

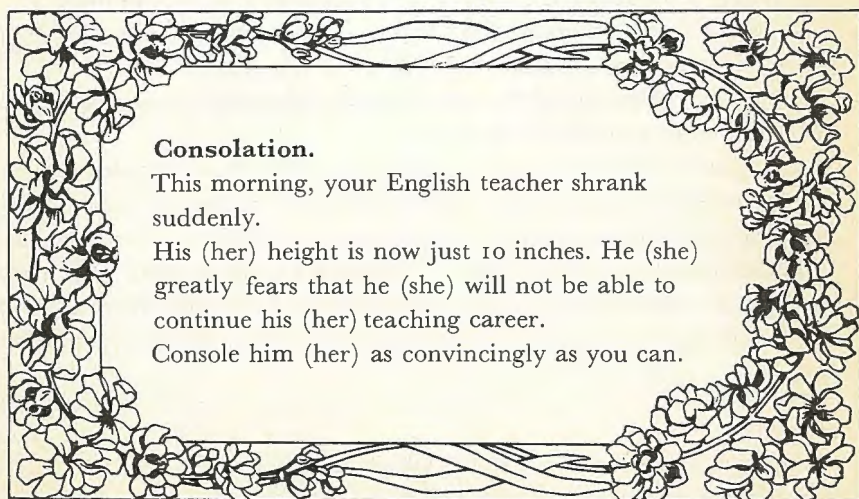
(This assignment was actually given to the highest class of a grammar school in 1968). In a collection printed in loose-leaf form the Dutch poet J. Bernlef published a number of poems and invited his readers to arrange them in the way they preferred. I had these poems mimeographed, and asked the students to do with them 'whatever they thought would be interesting or make sense'.

One non-creative result (which is not the same as bad) was an arrangement of the poems according to themes. Another – which I think was very creative – was a toothpaste box in which one student had carefully put the poems after having rolled them up and burned them; he had taken care not to let the papers lose their tubular shape. This solution appeared to me to be brilliant ('brilliant' = unexpected + relevant; see p. 185) for three reasons:

- a the idea that 'doing something with poems which makes sense' could be interpreted as burning them, struck me as quite original and relevant;
- b the contrast between the fact that the poems were actually there and the fact that they could no longer be read was maximal because the rolled-up sheets had kept their shape;
- c the toothpaste box added a touch of vulgarity, which gave a maximal contrast with the divine nature some people attribute to poetry.

Example 2

(An assignment in a text-book to which the present author contributed;⁴² age group: 12 years).



It would be a non-creative solution to think up something in, say, five minutes and put it on paper. A creative solution would be produced by combining data derived from, e.g.:

- 1 an intuitive analysis of the teacher's character, especially of his weak points;
- 2 scanning from several angles for possible ways to console:
 - angle nr. 1 (technological): attachment of a minilift to the blackboard; increasing the teacher's stature by means of some kind of overhead projector, etc.;
 - angle nr. 2 (functional): we can sit in a circle on the floor, keeping very, very quiet;
 - angle nr. 3 (psychological): explain that intellectual and physical stature are not necessarily the same, etc.;
- 3 trying to imagine what one would have liked to hear if it had happened to oneself.

Example 3

The 'Doctor's Novel' project described on p. 52 ff. As has been explained there, this project scored low on the Creativity Scale. When asked to analyse a 'doctor's novel' all by themselves, the students simply drew on what they had been taught. The analysis could have become creative if the students had been required to develop their own analytical system.

Example 4

Making notes on an oral exposition by a fellow-student.

Un-creative (elaborational): making notes according to the familiar, adequate system and presenting them in the conventional way (fortunately, most people making notes do so in this way!).

Creative: e.g., thinking up the idea that two classmates should make notes on observed or presumed feelings in:

a the speaker and *b* the class (*a*: 'My God, I've forgot the point'; 'Let me try to dodge that question, it's too difficult'; 'Elizabeth seems to like me', etc.; *b* 'Some of us seem to have heard it all before'; 'Teacher has his usual pseudo-interested smile'; 'Elizabeth and Peter seem to be very interested'; these feelings could then be incorporated into the minutes by means of suggestive words and eye-catching colours, special typography, etc.

Example 5

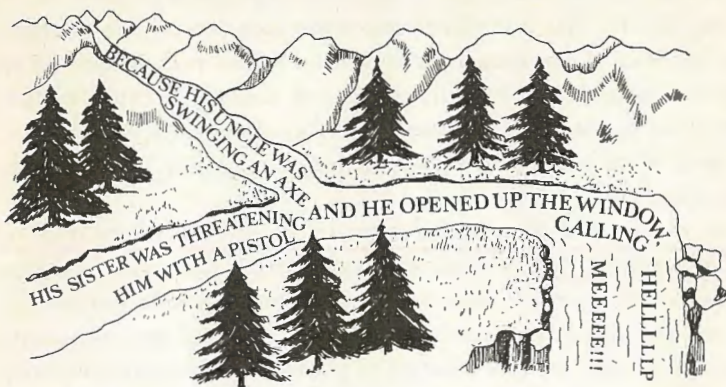
Making a syntactic scheme of the following sentence:

Because his uncle was swinging an axe and his sister was threatening him

with a pistol, he opened up the window, calling: Helllllllp meeeeee!!!

Un-creative solution: one of the conventional syntactic descriptions.

Creative:



The range covered by these examples makes it clear that any assignment within MTT can be executed in a creative (or in an elaborational) way.

2 Creativity: imperative or optional?

In preceding chapters, the issue ‘imperative or optional?’ has been looked at from three angles, the practical, the intellectual, and the sacrosanct.

If we look at creativity from the last of these angles, we can quickly establish that not only are such phenomena as Great Literature, Discipline, and Lingual Correctness held in awe by some, but that this also applies to creativity – or rather Creativity. Indeed, creativity is as sacrosanct to some educators as Great Literature is to others.

Wherever we have met (semi-)sacrosanctity, we have accepted it as a legitimate point of departure (except in the case of social ideology – see Chapter 11, §3). Furthermore, we have granted those who choose it as point of departure the right to decide, more or less authoritatively, the extent to which they want to translate their principles into practical teaching measures: within the realm of sacrosanctity, rational arguments have no power. I propose to adopt this view with regard to creativity as well.

If we look at the issue from the practical and the intellectual points of view, reason can be called upon to help us. Because considering things from either the practical or the intellectual point of view does not yield

essentially different results here, the whole rationale can be developed at one go.

During recent decades, especially in the United States, creativity has gradually become a highly-esteemed educational objective, and not only within the realm of sacrosanctity. It has been repeatedly pointed out by educational experts that traditional education overstressed reproduction skills (or, in terms of this chapter, elaboration skills) in children and that creativity was largely, and unjustly, neglected. Exactly because traditional education went to extremes in favouring elaboration, some of its opponents went to extremes in the other direction: to them, creativity became the all-in-all.

Should the latter stand be accepted as an imperative? I do not think we are justified in doing that. I think we should accept the view that there are situations which require creative thinking, others which require elaboration, and still others which require both types of mental activity. That creativity is not the sole solution to problems, has been brilliantly demonstrated by Kuhn. Referring to the way in which science normally advances, he explains that in this field the usual road toward progress leads via groups of scientists stubbornly elaborating (in the terminology of American research on creativity: working convergently from) certain principles which have been accepted as valid. Only after a long period of such tenacious converging work, do cracks appear in a theory. When these cracks become conspicuous, creative thinkers try to construct a new theory. When this new theory has been accepted, a new army of elaborators is needed. Kuhn points out that it is better if the latter group is not inclined to think creatively (or divergently): to acquire the energy and motivation to go on elaborating, they should almost completely close their minds to the possibility that there could be other approaches to the problem.

The principle that the situation determines whether 'creating' or 'elaborating' is called for, can be substantiated by many other examples. One may think, for instance, of being in the unfortunate situation of needing an operation: most patients would probably prefer an elaborating to a creative surgeon. Or, to move into the less dramatic field in which the MT teacher 'operates': if students are asked to lead a discussion on a controversial subject in which they have much at stake, or they are required to report on a certain important aspect of a project the group is working on, there is, as far as I see, no other reasonable attitude they can possibly adopt except an elaborating or converging one: they will have to stick to a number of principles governing the leading of a discussion or the making of a report.

In my view, then, the conclusions with regard to the issue we are dealing with in this section, should be the following:

Conclusion 1: It is imperative that the development of both creative and elaborational abilities and attitudes should be given a place in the MTT curriculum.

Conclusion 2: The ability or attitude to be required of the student depends on the situation.

To these conclusions, a third and a fourth can be added:

Conclusion 3: Whether, as a teacher, one rates creating higher than elaborating, or the reverse, is optional; it depends on one's outlook on life.

Conclusion 4: There are situations in which it is hard to say what choice should be made; in such a situation the choice is optional. An example of the latter kind of situation is provided by the assignment to write a story incorporating a personal experience disguised to some degree. I think it would be hard to say which would be best: to choose without much ado an affective personal experience and transform this into a story in the simplest way possible, or to proceed in a highly divergent, original manner. Here, I think the best procedure is to explain these possibilities to the students and advise them to do whatever they think is most appropriate. They can also be asked to experiment a bit in the future, i.e., to choose a divergent approach if their 'instinct' tells them they should converge, and *vice versa*.

3 Some implications of creativity for teaching practice

Since elaboration has from the very beginning formed the *pièce de résistance* of our school system, it does not seem necessary to add any further information about its implications for teaching practice.

Creativity has been the subject of a considerable amount of practice-oriented literature, especially in the United States. A highly informative article was provided by Torrance in *A Source Book for Creative Thinking*. He formulates twenty principles of 'teaching creativity' that the teacher should take into account, viz.:

- 1 Value creative thinking.
- 2 Make children more sensitive to environmental stimuli.
- 3 Encourage manipulation of objects and ideas.
- 4 Teach how to test systematically each idea.

- 5 Develop tolerance of new ideas.
- 6 Beware of forcing a set pattern (the present author thinks the words 'if the situation does not necessitate it' should be added here; cf. p. 190).
- 7 Develop a creative classroom atmosphere.
- 8 Teach the child to value his creative thinking.
- 9 Teach skills for avoiding peer sanctions.
- 10 Give information about the creative process.
- 11 Dispel the sense of awe of masterpieces.
- 12 Encourage and evaluate self-initiated learning.
- 13 Create 'thorns in the flesh'.
- 14 Create necessities for creative thinking.
- 15 Provide for active and quiet periods.
- 16 Make available resources for working out ideas.
- 17 Encourage the habit of working out the full implication of ideas.
- 18 Develop constructive criticism – not just criticism.
- 19 Encourage acquisition of knowledge in a variety of fields.
- 20 Develop adventurous-spirited teachers. (What the author means here is: try to be, or become, an adventurous-spirited teacher StB.)

To these twenty points I would like to add two of my own:

- 21 Do not exaggerate the value of creativity and the necessity for being creative.
- 22 Realize that the encouragement of creative thinking is incompatible with the acceptance of objective tests. Objective tests require standard norms, whereas creative thinking by definition means exceeding norms.

The last rule should also warn us that in a school system strongly controlled by objective achievement tests, creativity can only play a peripheral role, the role of 'something we can do from time to time, because it is nice to do, but which is of course not the real thing'.

I do not think it is entirely impossible to evaluate products of creative thinking, but what we can be sure of is that this cannot be done in any objective way. In view of the complexity of the process leading to a creative product, the most reasonable solution seems to be an evaluation in which the student himself takes part.

4 The manuals

Creativity as an educational aim does not occur in the German manuals I have consulted (Helmerts, Ulshöfer). In these books the password is

elaboration. It may be added that in Dutch educational thinking creativity has just risen above the horizon (to add a touch of absurdity, I may add that this coincided with the beginning of a period of maniacal reverence for objective achievement tests; remember rule 22 above).

The three English manuals, those by Flower, Whitehead, and Doughty-Pearce-Thornton, show traces of the idea that originality might be a worth-while objective. Creativity as an objective is not explicitly discussed, however.

The tendency to creativity is more evident in the American manuals than in those just mentioned – although it is still not conspicuously strong. Rodgers devotes some sections of her book to the subject, but the weight of these few sections does not counterbalance the strongly elaboration-oriented character of most of the teaching principles she describes in the rest of her book. Moffett does not broach the problems associated with creativity explicitly. The lesson plans he describes – e.g., under *Writing up* (Chapter 9, *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum*) – gave me the impression that on an Elaboration-Creation Scale he would probably score somewhere in the middle. I must add, however, that this is just speculation.

In general, then, the situation as reflected by the manuals, at least the European ones, is not in accordance with imperative nr. 1 formulated on p. 191.

5 Creativity in relation to some other dimensions

1 To: *Disciplinarity*

Creativity is associated by some with intuitiveness, uncontrollability, artisticity, and the like. In this sense it is incompatible with disciplinarity. In the conception adopted in this book, however, the phenomena creativity and disciplinarity are not incompatible: one can produce something original in a disciplinary way – if one wants to.

2 To: *Cooperation*

This will be discussed in the next chapter.

3 To: *Personalness*

This relationship has already been discussed in §1 of this chapter. Creativity as defined in this book bears no special relation to personalness: one can be creative in either a personal or an impersonal way. In other, and in my view less logical, conceptions of 'creative', however, such a relationship does exist.

Cooperation and individual achievement as educational aims

Interactionality (introduced as a dimension in Chapter 2, §4.13) covers an area in which several educational aims lie. One of these aims – and in my view, the most relevant – is learning to cooperate. This aim has always been recognized as important by at least some authors on education, but it has come to be discussed by a great many of them only recently. Together with its opposite: learning to achieve individually (i.e., the aim with which schools have always been familiar), it forms the object of the interesting question: Is it imperative for students to learn to cooperate as much as to achieve individually?

It is clear that this question, besides being interesting, is important for mother-tongue teachers, because cooperation in particular has many implications for language activity (brainstorming, discussing, taking notes, summarizing, comparing different views, etc.).

We will find (§2 below), as we have for other such issues, that the answer to this question should be in the negative: depending on one's value orientation, several different views are legitimate.

1 The principle

Cooperation and group work can be thought of as largely identical concepts. Kaye and Rogers (p. 30) define group work as:

‘... a method of teaching in which activities or tasks are carried out by small groups of pupils, such groups being self-selected and self-directed’.

An implied element in this definition is that the members of the group share responsibility for the quality of the end-product and for group atmosphere. In the terminology of some group-work specialists, the group the definition refers to is a ‘horizontal’ one.

The description of group work given by the Dutch author L. J. van den Bosch includes some aspects not made explicit by Kaye and Rogers in either their definition or in their illustrations of group work. Van den Bosch's characterization runs as follows:

- 1 The members of the group see each other as belonging to the group.
- 2 A notion of a common goal exists among the members of the group (the understatement ‘a notion of’ is, in the present author's opinion, very realistic).

- 3 The accent lies on the mutual interaction between the group members, who (often unconsciously) feel that they communicate better with each other than with non-members.
- 4 The members give each other feedback, e.g. each one has at least some vague idea of whether his behaviour, or elements of that behaviour, are approved or disapproved of by the other group members.
- 5 Members feel themselves more or less obliged to react to the behaviour of others in the group.
- 6 Each group member has some notion of group norms.
- 7 Leadership roles exist, and there are implicit or explicit rules for leadership.
- 8 A status system develops.
- 9 The group members perform a common task for which they assume responsibility. (The most important element; see also the Kaye-Rogers definition.)

This characterization contains some elements which, in my view, are essential for 'psycho-hygienically'⁴³ acceptable group work, i.e., group work in which it is not solely the end-product which counts but also the quality of interpersonal relationships (cf. elements 3 and 4 on van den Bosch's list). It may be assumed that good interpersonal relationships contribute to the quality of the end-product, but this should not be the sole justification for fostering these relationships. In a human society, 'interpersonal happiness' should also be seen as an end in itself. The conception of cooperation applied in this chapter is based on the characterization given by van den Bosch.

In teaching practice, aims concerning cooperation can be put on a scale. On one side of that scale we have a kind of cooperation which maximally satisfies the nine conditions just mentioned, on the other side we have individual work. In between, there are all kinds of semi-cooperation, e.g. group work whose ultimate objective is individual achievement. In this context, group-work activities can be concluded with a test given to the students individually, not as a group; in that case, suddenly, cooperation becomes criminal. Such semi-cooperation, which is very common in schools experimenting with group work (it is hard to drop the tradition that only individual achievements count), could be called individual-oriented group work.

Another variant of semi-cooperation takes the form of discussion whose ultimate aim is not to reach a common conclusion but simply to profit, individually, from each other's views.

It may be noted that 'individual profit' should not be considered a dirty

term. The sole purpose of this section is to define what cooperation is and what it is not (or only partially). The question of the respective educational value of cooperation and individual work will be discussed in the next section.

In §3 something will be said about the nature of the topics and problems that can be dealt with suitably according to a group-work method and about the practical implications of choosing this method.

2 Learning to cooperate, imperative or optional?

To determine what answer should be given to this question, we must know what value cooperation has, as compared with working individually, in normal life. Although, as far as I know, this issue is not raised in the books on group work, I think that it cannot be avoided if one wants an educated answer. The only ones who will certainly not agree are those to whom group work – and, in general, The Group – have become sacrosanct phenomena. But this is hardly comforting.

What, then, is the value of cooperation in normal life?⁴⁴ Let me first approach the question from the negative side and state that in normal life there are a number of circumstances in which cooperation is far from appropriate, for instance when the end-product of some activity should give evidence of originality (cf. Chapter 14) or be of a highly personal character; one such end-product is a novel.⁴⁵ There are also circumstances in which fighting is preferable to cooperating.

This negative statement has cleared the way for the positive statement that in numerous cases cooperation is more valuable than individual enterprise. I find it difficult to describe exactly when cooperation is the obvious choice. But I think it can be assumed that cooperation is the most appropriate whenever one wants the end-product to be not maximally original and/or personal but maximally justified.

Considerable research has been done on the problem of the efficiency of group work. I have not been able to study the reports myself, but according to van Kreveld the results thus far are disparate. My own experience as a member of many project groups all point in one direction: every time I have asked myself – at some moment while working in a (horizontal) task-oriented group and having occasion to trace back the creative process that had slowly taken form in it – whether, all by myself, I could have reached as relevant a result, the answer was absolutely negative. The mere thought seemed ridiculous. On one such occasion I had the opportunity to check my opinion with that of other members of the group, and they gave exactly the same answer.

One obvious condition should be added, however: cooperation is the obvious way to reach a maximally justified end-product only when the members of the group dispose of certain group-work abilities and attitudes. Put more simply: cooperation leads to marvelous results if the group knows what it takes to cooperate; it can lead to deplorable results if the group does not know this. In the latter case, individual enterprise will certainly yield a better outcome.

The abilities and attitudes on which cooperation depends are not easily acquired. This is often realized, for instance, by staff members working with university students in horizontal projects. Reports of such projects say that the first few months (or even half year) are the most difficult, because a number of participants are not even acquainted with or have not internalized the essentials of group work, e.g. assuming responsibility, holding to agreements, saying what you really mean (and taking the risks that entails), being objective about your personal opinions, not being afraid of some degree of uncertainty or absence of authority, being 'frustration resistant' to a certain extent. In my view, there are still, at least in The Netherlands, many inexperienced people who underestimate what is required for functioning adequately in a horizontal system.

This essential condition for group work has important implications, in the first place for the decision one must make in daily life about whether to do something alone or with a group, and in the second place for the answer to the basic issue of this section: cooperation in relation to the school curriculum. With regard to the latter point, two things can be said:

1 Not everything in school should be done by means of group work (see also Kaye and Rogers, p. 10). This can be inferred from the first (negative) part of the exposition in this section. There, the nature of the end-product formed the criterion. Another criterion, personal happiness, may be added: working individually is also justified when students want to do something alone simply because they prefer to. 1) 2)

2 The question of the extent to which cooperation should form part of the total set of objectives in the school curriculum can be answered in different ways, all of them representing legitimate options. Those answering 'hardly', sometimes defend this restriction by stating that, in their opinion, individual freedom is more important than collective enterprise. This of course introduces an argument of an obviously political nature. Others claim that although they personally favour more 'togetherness' in human enterprises, in their opinion most human beings are fundamentally incapable of sacrificing their individual interests and urges to this ideal.

The German author Gerhard Szczesny – in his book *Das sogenannte Gute. Vom Unvermögen der Ideologen* (The so-called Good. About the inadequacy of ideologists) – is such a sceptic.

Still others, who consider cooperation one of the vital keys to the problems of mankind and who trust human nature more than, for instance, Szczesny (who, by the way, does not see man as entirely unfit) will certainly want to provide generously in the school curriculum for cooperative activities by which students could acquire cooperative abilities and attitudes. Wheeler, for instance, says (p. 87): 'The values of the free society may be taught about, but they will not be truly internalized unless people become committed to them emotionally as well as intellectually. For this reason children must be habituated to the methods which lead to these values.' Similar views have been expressed by such authors as Heinrich Heise and Gutt and Salfner, who occupy a special position with their view that cooperation is a means to achieve solidarity between lower-class and middle-class children.

Taken together, the arguments form a complicated sociological, psychological, and political network. I have tried to show, by mentioning some elements of this network, that a choice which in itself is optional is deeply influenced by one's value orientations.

To take such a neutral stand on this issue would involve the risk, at least in The Netherlands, of being accused of unjustifiable scepticism. Most educators in The Netherlands – as in many other industrialized countries – feel that education can only contribute to the solution of some of the world's serious problems by fostering cooperation in the classroom.

They argue for its dominance in the school curriculum at the cost of individual achievement – which has monopolized school life far too long and still terrorizes it via its main weapon, examinations.

It should, however, be kept in mind that my book is not about one-and-one-only views but about a number of divergent legitimate ones. Consequently, until it is proved that it is not legitimate to assign just a modest value to the objective 'learning to cooperate', this evaluation should be included here. This will contribute not only to tolerance but also to the prevention of 'maniacal' overestimation of cooperation. Like every other instrument the human species has at its disposal, cooperation should not be considered a cure-all. Moreover, as explained at the beginning of this section, it is very difficult to say in just which concrete situations cooperation is more useful than individual work.

3 Two neglected aspects of 'teaching' cooperation.

There is a large body of professional literature on both individual and group work. I do not think I can contribute anything worth-while to the literature on individual work, but I would like to discuss two points concerning group work which, to the best of my knowledge, the international literature has not taken sufficiently into account. Furthermore, because learning to cooperate is a comparatively new phenomenon in the classroom, some elaboration seems useful.

In the first place, the literature on group work is mainly confined to what I will call light cooperative activities by students. By light cooperation I mean that little pressure is put on the participants, either by the task or by the stakes involving personal interests. From the point of view of the aim we have in mind, this diminishes the relevance of this literature somewhat: as we all know, people do not need to learn to cooperate in easy circumstances: they need to learn cooperation when the going is heavy. In the second place, the problems raised by marks are insufficiently dealt with. In a school system which is still characterized by the rewarding of individual achievements, this question cannot be dodged. I will deal briefly with both of these problems here. It is quite possible, however, that what I am going to say has long been explained, wholly or partially, by someone unknown to me. I have consulted only some more or less well-known publications on the topic of group work.

In the first place, then, let us look at the question of light versus heavy cooperation. As I have just mentioned, almost everything to be said about the organization of 'light cooperation' is well known. Many elucidating discussions of this subject have been published (among them the marvelously honest and concise little book by Kaye and Rogers⁴⁶). I think it is unnecessary to summarize the conclusions of all these authors, but one thing I would like to call to mind is the principle of normal functionality. The many consequences of applying this basic principle to group work are obvious and need not be repeated. It will suffice to point out that the principles regarding teaching and evaluation developed and formulated in part B can easily be translated into terms of group-work organization.

The book by Kaye and Rogers is characteristic of publications on group work in that almost no problems are raised. The only serious problems the authors mention (p. 9) are problems '... caused, for the most part, by the enthusiasm of the children in what they are doing, and by the need to ensure that they all have a chance to participate'. For the rest, their book is all euphoria.

The source of this pleasant feeling lies in the fact that the tasks given to the students are not confining. This freedom can be limited by complexity of the task, the condition that the end-product satisfy certain not-easily-fulfilled criteria regarding quality, or the fact that personal interests of participants are at stake. If such limitations are imposed, cooperation becomes difficult or 'heavy'. In the university project groups in which I have participated as a faculty member – groups whose work always has to satisfy rather stringent standards of quality – the euphoria is often as low as tension and frustration are high. Such groups need to learn about many 'keys' (see part B) with respect to two points:

1 Technique and procedure

- a Brainstorming and subsequent evaluation and ordering of elements.
- b Discussing in a cooperative way.
- c The necessity to take sufficient time for planning and developing a procedure.
- d The necessity to evaluate regularly (not only on the 'product' level but also on the personal one.⁴⁷)

A contribution is made on this point by Wheeler, who does not take cooperation by students lightly. In a section of his *Curriculum Process* devoted to the question of the proper functioning of a democracy, he explains (p. 87) how important it is that a group make use of scientific methods, including critical thinking (which '... involves the suspension of judgment until all the evidence has been considered and requires effective reading, listening and discussion skills'), and methods for participation, communication, and decision-making ('Voting is a matter of majority decision, but majorities may quite well be wrong, so that voting, for example, must always be followed up to see that the rights of the minority are not destroyed, or that the majority has not made a decision inimical to the society').

2 Group-work ethics

In the project groups I have worked with the following deficiencies became dismally familiar:

- a Lack of motivation. If you have been raised, at home or at school, on the principle that Everybody Should Take Care Of His Own Affairs, it will be difficult to accept and to assume responsibility for a supra-individual goal. And if you have always accepted being told what to do by parents or teachers, you will be unlikely to accept group agreements as being just as imperative and 'binding' as parents' or teachers' instructions.

This can amount to a lack of motivation manifesting itself in hundreds of ways: half-hearted performance of tasks (e.g., always having an excuse for not having done something), dullness, etc.

b Frustration, caused by uncertainty.

c Anxiety about revealing personal feelings or deficiencies in public; this anxiety can be due to several factors, e.g. fear of 'leaving yourself open' or of holding up the group.

d Inability to be objective about yourself (e.g., complaints like 'Things go so slowly, I can't stand it', without realizing that this slow progress could be a positive indication (quality of the work) and without doing one's best to produce an alternative).

e Inability to disagree in a reasonable way.

f Lack of sensitivity: one must be able to perceive to a certain extent the feelings another person conveys between the lines.

g Inability to relate what is said (by another person or yourself) to reality.

h Inability to stick to the point.

Accordingly, it seems to me that in such groups a very intensive kind of learning must take place, mainly via the input in the form of discussion techniques and procedures (which can gradually be internalized by the students) and by frequent, intensive evaluation (in a protective atmosphere, so that no one will feel himself threatened by penetrating remarks concerning his behaviour; cf. Carl Rogers).

I do not think that the deficiencies listed above are confined to cooperation by adults. I recently watched some 10- to 12-year-old children discussing the question of what should be done with classmates who were careless in tidying up their classroom. In this classroom, which operated on the principle of common responsibility and had worked out a system of rotation for cleaning up, exactly the same kind of problems turned up as in the university groups: one girl complained that some of the others did not take agreements seriously, another said that some of the participants in the discussion did not seem to be able to listen, and so on. In short: heavy cooperation!

The conclusion regarding the first problem we have dealt with in this section must, in my opinion, be that a certain part of the available lesson time in secondary schools should be reserved for project work directed at learning about what has been called here heavy cooperation. It can be said, further, that the choice of whether much or little time should be reserved for such projects is optional.

About heavy-cooperation projects the following can be said:

- 1 They should aim not only at teaching to cooperate but also at accomplishing some relevant or interesting task (in accordance with the principle of normal functionality).
 - 2 When working on such projects, students should realize that learning about heavy cooperation is one of the two main objectives, so that they will be able to endure, and even appreciate, the inevitable difficulties and frustrations.
 - 3 'Heavy' projects should not be given a higher status than the more customary 'light-weight' projects, described by, for instance, Kaye and Rogers. Not everything in school has to be difficult, and there is much to be said for having 'heavy projects' alternate with 'light' ones in which interaction and production can be more naive and less problematic.
 - 4 Like the light projects, the heavy ones should not put too much strain on the students' concentration span; in other words, projects should not drag on for months.
 - 5 The teacher should, when monitoring (informing, advising, etc.) a group, follow his own style and not rely too much on 'recipes' (cf. Kaye and Rogers, p. 10).
 - 6 If, as a teacher, one wants to find out what difficulties will be encountered by students in 'heavy' cooperative groups and how they can gradually learn to overcome them, the best way is to take part oneself in a few intensive horizontal task-oriented group-work sessions, to experience as vividly as possible what processes occur within oneself and the other participants.
 - 7 Teachers envisaging this kind of project work should, I think, realize that the philosophy underlying group work may, by its implication of horizontality, rouse strong feelings among colleagues who tend to be more 'vertical' (autocratic) or 'product-centered'. If the latter attitudes prevail in a school, a 'heavy' project should not be undertaken unless the project leader can be reasonably sure that his colleagues, after having been informed in detail about the plan, will take at least a neutral stand with regard to it (and are therefore willing 'to wait and see what happens').
- It should be noted that this short list shows one essential gap: it does not tell how 'heavy' projects can be guided by the teacher if the class has 30 students. The project groups I have guided had 18 members maximally. As is well known in group theory, even this number is too high. Furthermore, during my teaching career in secondary schools I confined

myself to 'light' group work. The only thing I can say at this moment is that, in my view, it must somehow be possible to organize learning in the field of 'heavy' cooperation under these conditions. Since, however, I know of no publications that provide conclusive information on this problem and the (modest) experiments in this field in which I am participating have not yet produced reliable results, I am unable to say anything more convincing.

Let us now turn to the second problem, i.e. marks for individuals participating in group work. We can look upon this question from four angles – ethically, psychologically, technically, and pragmatically – and arrive at a conclusion by fusing the rather divergent data yielded by this four-dimensional treatment into a compromise.

1 The ethical point of view. If we accept that, in school, students' individual capacities are marked – and to avoid transgressing certain boundaries of reality, I think we could best accept this – there can be nothing against marking for one very important capacity, viz. the capacity to cooperate relevantly in a group.

2 The psychological point of view. Since 'mucking in together' is one of the essential features of group work (see Kaye and Rogers, p. 3), the psychological climate in a group whose members have worked together successfully and have come to understand each other comparatively deeply may be said to offer strong emotional resistance to the idea that suddenly, at the end of the project, individual capacities and merits should be appraised.

3 The technical point of view. Appraisal of the cooperative capacities of students by observing their behaviour in a group at work, is time- and labour-consuming, at least when certain minimum condition of validity and reliability are satisfied. As explained in Chapter 5, even the evaluation of students' written work is rather difficult. For group work the situation is still more complex. I do not believe in relying on 'some clearly identifiable characteristic form of operant behaviour', such as 'How many times did a student take the initiative?' In my view, such ways of 'measuring' represent pseudo-exact procedures.

4 The pragmatic point of view. An objective is considered important in a school – or in a national school system – if the work is marked and the marks 'count'. This hard Law of the Jungle cannot be ignored. If we do so, group work – especially 'heavy' group work – can only be given a peripheral position in the curriculum.

Opmerking: geen zelfevaluatie!

These four points yield the following conclusions:

a Students' achievements in group work should be marked (points 1 and 4).

b Only two marks should be used, $\oplus$ and $\ominus$. Preferably, the minus mark should be given during the project and be reserved for anyone who, in the opinion of the group and the teacher, is ostentatiously not doing his best. In such cases, the possibility of removing the student from the group and letting him try again in another one can be considered. The psychological climate (point 2) does not counterindicate this kind of measure; on the contrary, participants in a group project usually feel genuinely irritated by someone who is passive, uninterested, and/or lazy. In my experience, unfair 'ostracism' need not be feared; of course, 'warnings' should be given at the proper time.

All participants who have continued to contribute reasonably can be given the positive mark (+) at the end of the project.

Refinement of the system by using, say, 'four or five marks, is incompatible with the great technical difficulty of assessing a student's cooperative capacities precisely (point 3).

4 The manuals

Since individual work has, needless to say, always played an important role in the mother-tongue curriculum, it is frequently mentioned in all manuals, however widely they differ in the kind and number of aspects and practical implications they describe. For instance, the uniqueness of every student as a person and the many implications this has for the teacher's behaviour, are dealt with extensively by Moffett but ignored by other manuals. We will come back to this point in the next chapter.

With regard to group interaction, this topic is explicitly considered by only a few of the manuals I have consulted: Ulshöfer, Doughty-Pearce-Thornton, Moffett. In all three of these manuals the emphasis is on the lingual aspect (discussion), not on the social aspect, i.e. cooperation.

Consequently, the issue of cooperation as an educational objective is not raised. In my opinion, however, we can see the problems associated with discussion and cooperation much better if we take the latter concept as a point of departure and view the former as a means to that end. It is quite understandable that mother-tongue teachers are inclined to focus on the lingual aspect, but from the point of view of relevance the other approach is much more productive. In Chapter 17 it will be explained that the indications mother-tongue teacher, teacher of English (in England), and the like are, by their emphasis on the language aspect, not very fortunate terms.

Should we stimulate personal expression?

1 The principle

In this chapter I shall discuss the value of stimulating personal expression by students.

Like learning to cooperate, learning to be personal is a comparatively new phenomenon in educational thinking – although it has of course always been cultivated, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, by at least a number of teachers and educational specialists. The normal usage in the classroom, for both teacher and students, has been (more or less) impersonal expression. The parenthetical addition of ‘more or less’ is necessary, because in teaching practice there is no black-and-white antithesis in this respect: school was formerly more or less impersonal, in the same way as, during the last decade, the behaviour of some teachers – and, consequently, of some students – has gradually become rather more personal.

By personal expression is meant giving evidence, by your classroom behaviour and your work, of the personal side of your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Although there are causal relationships between them, for practical reasons a separation should be made between personal expression and personal decision-making. The latter forms part of the problem of decision-making (briefly touched on in Chapter 1, §7).

It should also be kept in mind that personal expression and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. In other words, one can decide in favour of learning to cooperate and learning to be personal, as educational aims, at one and the same time. To see this, it is only necessary to realize that both personal and impersonal cooperation are perfectly feasible, and, as a matter of fact, both exist in practical life (although the latter of course predominates).

Expressing oneself personally may mean that one talks (or writes) about oneself, or that one talks about something in the external world in a personal way. Logically, this means that the phenomenon personal expression is related to both of the main dimensions Subject and Approach. In the first case, i.e., talking or writing about oneself, the subject is ‘me’; in the second case the way one talks about something is personal. In Chapter 2 it can be seen that the main dimension Subject indeed contains a sub-category referring to knowledge about one’s own personality (syn-

noetics, cf. §4.21) and that the main dimension *Approach* contains a similar sub-category (personal approach, §4.32).

So much for these more or less technical points. We shall now consider the question of the value of personal as against impersonal expression in education, from the practical and then from the intellectual point of view. The sacrosanct point of view will be left out of consideration because, as we have already seen several times, acceptance of this point of view makes a certainty of what is a discussible issue for others.

2 Personal *versus* impersonal expression from the practical point of view

In this book the word practical means of some use in one's daily life. Consequently, the issue we have here can be formulated as follows: Is it important, for his further life and for the society he belongs to, that a student acquire some kind of consciousness of his own identity during his years in school?

Those teachers who say yes will take care to let students express themselves on such things as family problems, personal problems concerning motivation, and personal reactions to teaching or group procedures. Besides these opportunities (which lie within the scope of teachers of all subjects), mother-tongue teachers in particular will encourage the students to explain or try to explain their deeper motives for having written (or not written) something (cf. p. 108, principle 2a) and to react in their own way to a novel, a poem, a drama. They would also see it as their duty to react to most of their students' remarks and would ask for feedback from other students when that seemed appropriate.

Teachers who feel more at ease at the opposite side of the Personal/Impersonal Scale can be expected to encourage this kind of expression only in exceptional cases, for instance when personal problems cause so much observable trouble they cannot be ignored. Just as for all other dimensions, there are of course many positions between the two extremes. As a matter of fact, the process of eliciting of these kinds of personal expression from students and being able to handle them, does not come automatically. Carl R. Rogers – who is probably the most important pioneer in this field of teaching and learning – says that in his view the teacher's reactions should give evidence of what he calls:

- 1 realness,
- 2 non-possessively caring for the learner, and
- 3 empathy (*Freedom to learn*, pp. 106-112).

The realness principle requires that a teacher act like 'a real person, being what he is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or façade . . .'. According to the 'non-possessive caring' principle, the teacher should understand, trust, and accept the student as a separate person. And 'empathy' means sensitive understanding instead of evaluative understanding.

These three qualities of adequate reaction formulated by Rogers can hardly be described concisely. For readers who want to put these principles into practice, the book they have been taken from is indispensable. According to Rogers, becoming able to react in the way he describes does not require a long, highly specialized training in counseling. On the other hand, most teachers will profit considerably from a certain amount of training in this field to get an idea of (and especially the feel of) the essentials of the Rogerian approach. For the rest, training should come from one's own cautious experiments.

If a group of students react to a classmate's personal statements, these reactions should in principle have the same three Rogerian characteristics. Whether young secondary-school students can learn to react in this way is a question I cannot answer on the basis of the material I have at my disposal. Judging from what I have seen happening in university groups and from informal talks with 12- and 13-year-old students, I am not pessimistic – at least, if the teacher sets the right example.

With respect to the question of whether this personal climate should prevail, or should supplement an impersonal (= objective) climate, or even whether impersonalness should dominate completely, teachers' views can be expected to differ widely. Some of these views, especially anti-personal attitudes, may be ascribed to the circumstance that personalness represents a comparatively new trend in educational thinking. School, like all other social and industrial institutions, has been accustomed to impersonalness for many centuries. The prevailing rule was: Stick to the facts! The disorder engendered by the recognition – on the same footing as reason – of the uniqueness of every person with his personal views and biases, evidently frightens those who have dealt only with objective facts, discipline, and rational working methods. On the other hand, I think we should not go so far as to deny these adherents of impersonalness in education the right to maintain this view, even those who would not be willing to experiment. The question of whether acting as a complete person – which implies considerable self-knowledge – is a good thing for one's personal life and for the society one functions in, is a deep ideological issue on which opinions can be so

far apart as to be almost unbridgeable. An issue of this kind cannot be solved by the author of a manual. Manual writers – and certainly this one – can only confine themselves to stating that both a ‘yes’ and a ‘no’ are completely tenable, and are consequently to be accepted as two opposite but at the same time legitimate views.

The underlying ideological networks leading to a positive or a negative response (or even to an intermediate one) are so intricate, and the discussion is still in such a transitory stage, that I will not attempt to describe them. In passing it seems interesting, however, to mention the fact that the value orientations associated with them can be primarily political in nature. If Ulshöfer’s characterization of the ideas prevailing in hard, revolutionary thinking in Western Germany is correct, personal expression for intellectual purposes cannot be expected to be held in great respect in these circles. The key concepts in this thinking, according to Ulshöfer (1972, p. 15) are: critical and rational, critical aloofness, making-conscious, elucidation, emancipation, progressive action, change, revolutionary, politicizing, historically and socially determined, *ideologiefrei* (= no manipulation), critical in social respects, democratic, democratic reformation, content (*vs.* formalism), motivation. On the whole, this does not seem to be a pattern into which personal expression for practical purposes would easily fit.

3 Personal ‘versus’ impersonal expression from the intellectual point of view

To repeat once again, in this book things which are legitimately taught from an intellectual point of view are things that have no direct practical value for students but nevertheless interest them or give them pleasure. In accordance with this definition, dealing with personal expression from an intellectual point of view means discussing students’ self-expression solely because they find it interesting, funny, fascinating, etc., not because it contributes to their exploration of their own identity (which would take us into the area of practical purposes). In many cases it will be difficult to keep the two points of view apart. Also, we can expect to find cases in which for a given student an i.p. assignment turns p.p. (probably unobservably), because while writing it he or she suddenly became aware of something very significant.

The MT lesson offers a great many opportunities for this kind of self-expression. First, however, let us consider the question of the pros and cons of this kind of activity. We can be short about this, because the

situation proves to be roughly the same as we found it to be with regard practical purposes. This situation can be summarized as follows:

- 1 pros and cons are both legitimate;
- 2 both views have deep ideological roots;
- 3 anti-views will be influenced by the unfamiliarity with personalness in the classroom and the uncertainty about how to handle it.

As to the practical consequences of a positive or negative choice regarding personal expression in the MT lesson, only those having to do with the former need further elaboration. Impersonal expression, both oral and written and whether or not in the form of assignments, has always been such a familiar phenomenon in the classroom that it would be hard to find a teacher who needed advice about opportunities in this field or how to handle them.

I shall therefore confine myself to the practical implications of personal expression (from the intellectual point of view). Normally, this expression will take the form of writing. I shall first give some examples of possible assignments (or invitations, as Torrance calls them), and then deal briefly with what should or could happen before and after them.

Examples of assignments

So many kinds of assignments can be made for personal writing that it is difficult to describe them according to a consistent system. I think we can best distinguish between direct approaches and indirect approaches. A direct approach asks the student to write about something which has excited, shocked, amused (etc.) him or her. In an indirect approach, some occasion or procedure is offered to the student to evoke a personal reaction.

A number of direct approaches are extensively described by Moffett, viz. 1. journals and diaries (Ch. 25), 2. autobiography and memoir (Ch. 26), and 3. reflection (Ch. 28).

As an example of the first category, the following assignment can be mentioned (Moffett, *S-c L.A.C.* pp. 371-372; age: 15-16 years):

Keep a diary for about five weeks, making about five entries per week.

Allow ten to fifteen minutes to write each entry; write down whatever seems important to you on that day. This will not be handed in but you will need it for a future assignment.

After some time, the second part of the assignment can be presented: Write an account of the material covered by the diary. Feature both what seems of most importance to you and what you think will be of most interest to

others. You are free to cut out and add material to reorganize it. Don't use the dates; select and summarize so that you blend things into a continuous, whole piece.

Moffett says that his students found several appropriate strategies: 'snapshot technique', 'categories-of-experience organization', 'thematic abstraction'.

For indirect approaches, some assignments presenting an 'occasion' are the following:

1⁴⁸

A controversy in the family (a)

HERE

(a pop concert)

I would like

to go

But

my father and my mother

(said) 1 and 2

but then, suddenly, I really exploded, and said 3.



47 Een familiekwestie (a)

WOU IK



wei graag naar toe....

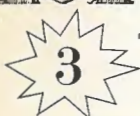
MAAR ...

mijn vader en mijn moeder....



2

1



maar toen kwam ik opeens goed los, en zei....

Opdracht Schrijf de drie teksten (of die van de volgende bladzij).
Maak ze niet te kort.

73

Een familiekwestie (b)

niet

ik wou er beslist niet naar toe
maar....
mijn vader en mijn moeder



2

3

waarop ik hen enige ogenblikken
strak aankeek en de volgende
korte redevoering afstak....

74

A controversy in the family (b)

(a variant of (a); this time, the parents are 'extremely modern': they want their child to go, but etc.)

Assignment: write the three texts for (a) or (b).

Do not make them too short.

2

An assignment in which meanings of words form the 'occasion'. During the last few weeks, some (still rather superficial) discussions have taken place about such things as solemnity and loftiness. For example, someone remarked that loftiness was something she associated with a concerto by Beethoven, and therefore it made her sick.

Describe an experience of your own related to solemnity or loftiness. It may be a negative, a positive, or a neutral experience (or all three at the same time).

3⁴⁹ (The 'occasion' is provided by a poem).

'Have you ever remembered a moment in which you were suddenly reminded of the fact that your parents loved you? What was the experience that made you realize this? (Edna St. Vincent Millay: *The Harp Weaver*, Coffin: *The secret Heart*..., Benét: *Nancy Hanks*).

An assignment offering a 'procedure' is the following:

4⁵⁰

In the middle of a sheet of paper write a word you like for some (known, half-known, or unknown) reason, e.g. chestnut.

Now, on the upper half of the paper write down (if you wish you may use coloured felt pens) all your factual associations with this word and on the other half all of your emotional associations.

What you have produced are things closely related to yourself. Study them for a while, and try to determine which of them seem significant enough to be elaborated further. Things noted on the upper and lower parts of your paper may be combined.

The teacher's reactions

To create a safe working climate – which is essential in this field (see §2) – students should have the right to choose whether their texts are read (or heard) by all of their classmates or only by the teacher and/or a trusted friend. In the latter case we should, I think, realize that whatever the teacher's reaction may be, it will probably seem completely off the mark to the author. This unfortunate probability is due to the fact that any personality is a complicated and at the same time unique phenomenon, and it is very unlikely that two such complicated 'systems' will understand each other immediately. Hence, if we want to react relevantly to a personal text we should not think in terms of an immediate reaction but rather of a long, sensitive conversation in which the gap between two people can be gradually bridged.

Now, such a long conversation does not normally fit into a teacher's working schedule. Therefore, I think relevant reactions followed by a conversation should be reserved for exceptional cases, for instance when one feels there is something behind the text a student has written, something which seriously threatens or frightens him. A case of this kind is mentioned by Holbrook (pp. 49-50), in whose book many other important remarks regarding writing by students can be found. For example, a girl has handed in a text about a crude and horrible family quarrel; the text makes Holbrook feel that 'as a human being . . . he ought to keep life-lines out . . .'. If a teacher decides to have the kind of conversation meant here – which, by the way, means he has moved from the intellectual into the practical domain – he should of course realize that there are certain limits to his competence. In other words, he should not act the amateur psychiatrist.

In all other cases of personal texts read solely by the teacher (and, possibly, a friend), the teacher should invent ways of reacting not 'in depth' (which would inevitably have to lead to a conversation) but nevertheless showing that the text has been read seriously. I have used the word invent deliberately; it is hard to prophesy what means will be best for a given student and a given teacher. Here are some suggestions – just to give an idea of what I mean:

a subjectively characterize the atmosphere by three adjectives;

b subjectively summarize the text in one sentence;

c write under the text the signature of a person who in your opinion should have written this text.

The students should realize that such reactions do not pretend to bridge the 'mutual comprehensibility' gap to any extent. On the contrary, in many cases they will widen it.

If students agree that their texts be made 'public', two procedures are available. The first is to let these texts circulate in the class or in small groups (Moffett, *S-c-L.A.C.*, p. 397). The second is to ask the students to read them aloud. In the latter case they should be asked to try to do this as they would have done if the text has been written by another student (many students need this kind of reminder, because they feel that trying to read your own text as well as you can implies that you think it very good). I do not think it appropriate to ask for reactions: these would be even cruder than remarks made after having read a text in private (see above). In my experience, a good procedure is to ask a number of students to read their texts one after another with only a few seconds between readings. If such a session is taped, students can judge for themselves a few years later whether and how they have changed.

More information about how to react to personal writing can be found in Moffett, *S-c L.A.C.*, p. 372 ('The matter of privacy') and pp. 396-397 ('The threat of autobiography'). The trend of Moffett's remarks seems to me to coincide in the main with what I have said here. Some interesting minor differences, e.g. the case of the teacher who did look at diaries (see above p. 209, first part of the assignment) and was apparently justified in doing so, reminds us that, as always in the field of educational practice, there are exceptions to every rule.

Marks

Marking seems the least appropriate thing to do with respect to personal writing.

Explanation by the teacher

Exactly because there can be no question of providing extrinsic motivation by marks, the teacher should make every effort to achieve as much intrinsic motivation as possible in his students. One of the very important ways to do this has just been described. Another important means is to explain to students that during a normal day no one spends much time contemplating his own personality, and that it will consequently take them some time to write something really personal. In other words, students should be asked not to scribble something very quickly, but to take their time and reach more relevant sources in themselves.

Liberty

The principles of intrinsic motivation and normal functionality (Chapter 3) mean that in the field of personal writing a student should always have the right to work on an assignment that is consonant with his personal situation at a particular moment. If, for instance, his cat has died that morning or he is depressed by a series of bad marks, dealing with the family-controversy assignment may not interest him personally. Therefore, students should be always allowed to diverge from the assignment, no matter how far. On the other hand, it seems wise to ask students to explain why they have chosen to deviate from an assignment, and also to say why what they have done satisfied them more.

All this implies that offering assignments in the field of personal writing should never become routine, in the sense that 'On Tuesday the 12th of March we will do assignment nr. 10'. On the contrary, students should always be presented with a set of assignments to choose from and even then should still have the right to deviate. I realize that this conclusion may be frustrating for teachers who like to organize their work quickly and efficiently, and would therefore prefer to have at hand a collection of, say, Fifty Attractive Assignments In The Field Of Personal Writing to offer their classes one by one. However, in my view, handling personal writing in this way would defeat and ridicule its very aim.

4 The manuals

In general, it can be said that the Anglo-Saxon authors pay more attention to the aspect of personalness than do their German and Dutch colleagues. This difference in attitude manifests itself on the practical (§2 above) as well as on the intellectual level. A psycho-cultural difference may very well be involved here. For example, van der Griend, re-

porting on his experiences with Dutch and American teachers, says that the former tended to consider a larger part of their personality 'private domain' than the latter.

The English and American authors of manuals to be mentioned in this connection, are Whitehead (examples of personal writing assignments on p. 169, Mary Elizabeth Fowler (assignment: pp. 281-282; see also p. 211 above), and Mary Columbro Rodgers (theoretical remarks; e.g. on pp. 57, 143 ff. ('Developing a personal style')). But by far the largest contribution to personal writing is made by Moffett (Ch. 22, monologue; Ch. 25, journals and diaries; Ch. 26, autobiography; Ch. 28, reflection). New developments have occurred in other countries too. From Lubbers's descriptions, Sweden should also be mentioned in this respect (for a modest Dutch contribution, see pp. 210-211 above).

There are considerable differences in the degree of personalness in assignments. The kind of assignment mentioned by Mary Elizabeth Fowler, for instance, is of a highly personal nature, whereas Rodgers' 'Developing a personal style' represents about the lowest degree. The wide range of degrees of personalness is indicated best by the assignments described in Moffett's book.

5 A note on emotions

The problems associated with the dimension *Emotionality* (Chapter 2, §4.33) are roughly similar to those for *Personalness*, although this dimension is seldom explicitly dealt with by authors of manuals. I shall therefore confine myself to a few remarks – rather unsystematically, I am afraid.

For some educators it is axiomatic that schoolteachers – including those concerned with the mother tongue – should also take a share of the responsibility for the students' development on the emotional level. For the others a school is mainly an institution for developing thinking, not feeling. In my view, these are opposite options, both entirely legitimate. The number of educators who hold to the 'restricted' view (School = *Ratio*) is so large that I need not mention any names. However, the number of their opponents (School = *Life*) should not be underestimated and it will be useful to mention a few of them, chosen more or less randomly, to give at least some indication of the kind of educational thinking meant here:

Heinrich Heise in *Die entscholastisierte Schule* (= *The de-schooled school*). The

ideas of this German author should not be confused with those of Ivan Illich in his *Deschooling society*, which are completely different.

Mosse Jørgensen in *En demokratisk skole (A democratic school)*.

Herbert R. Kohl in *The open classroom*. Both Mosse Jørgensen and Kohl think that students and teachers should cooperate on the same footing in a natural way, that is, including all kinds of emotion; it should, however, be added that this represents just one aspect of their views.

David Holbrook in *The exploring word*.

A teacher's choice of position on a scale representing the options regarding emotionality in school can be based on all kinds of considerations: one's own background, one's conception of what a school should be, and so on. There can also be political implications: according to Ulshöfer, radical West-German educators distrust emotionality (which they classify together with irrationality and romanticism) in education. They see it as the opposite of the critical and rational attitude they favour (Ulshöfer 1972, p. 12).

Emotionality – or its opposite, rationality – can be manifested in different aspects of the teaching-learning situation. The most important of these aspects are the following:

1 The emotional atmosphere in which students interact with each other and their teacher in the classroom. (Are discussion and other kinds of interaction kept on the rational level, or are vivid and spontaneous emotions allowed to play a part?)

2 Acting and other kinds of artistic expression. (In some MTT strategies these things barely play a part, in others they form a vital ingredient of the curriculum.)

3 Media other than voice and body:

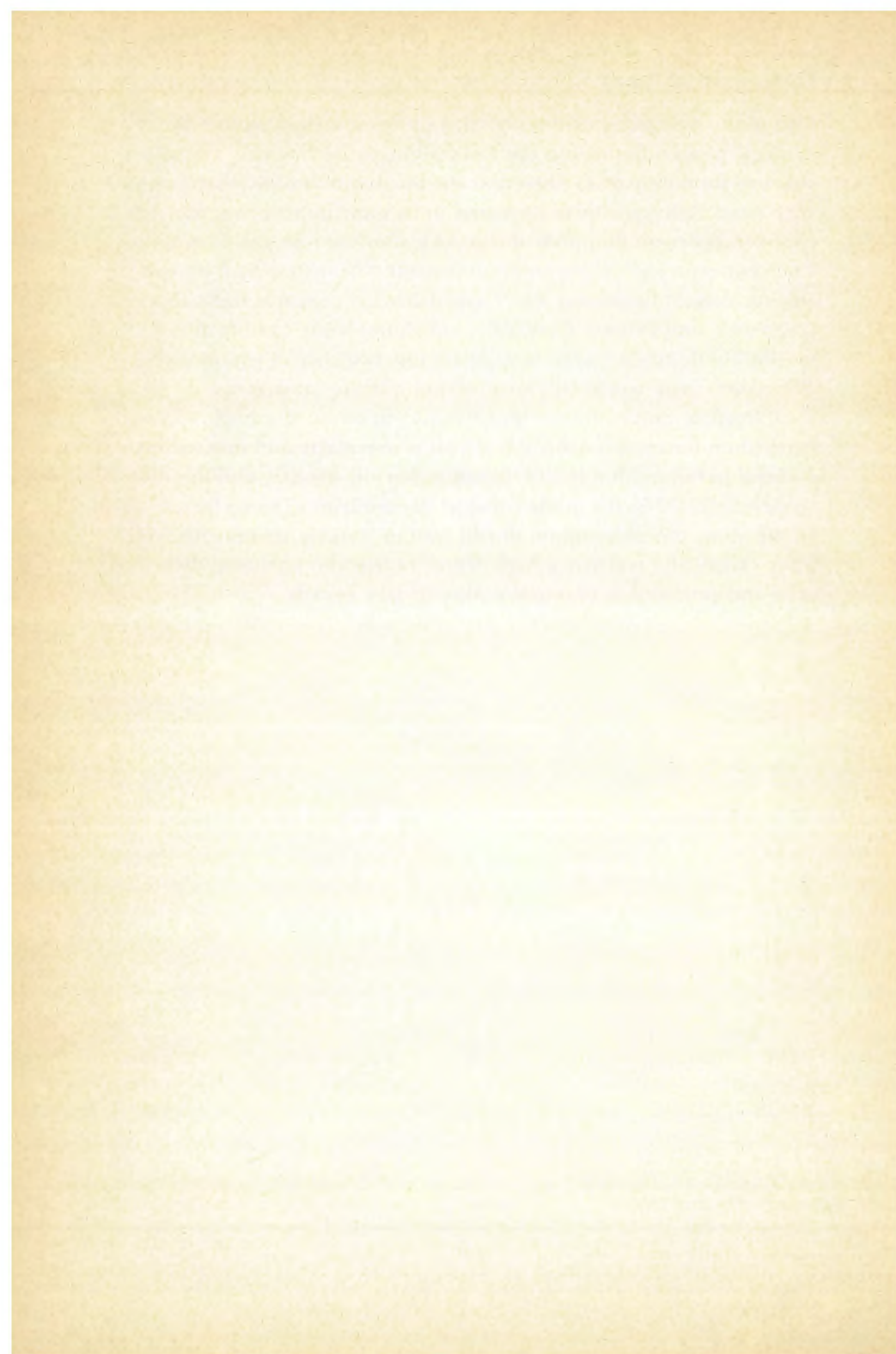
a pictures, records, etc.; students can be asked to react to combinations of poems and photographs; see Lubbers for the approach described by the Swedish authors Fredholm, Hansson, and Skaaret) or combinations of poems and records, etc.;

b decoration and furnishing of the classroom; the predominating dull, rational style could be replaced by one of several more natural, imaginative styles (in my view, if a change is to be made, students should fully participate in the decision-making).

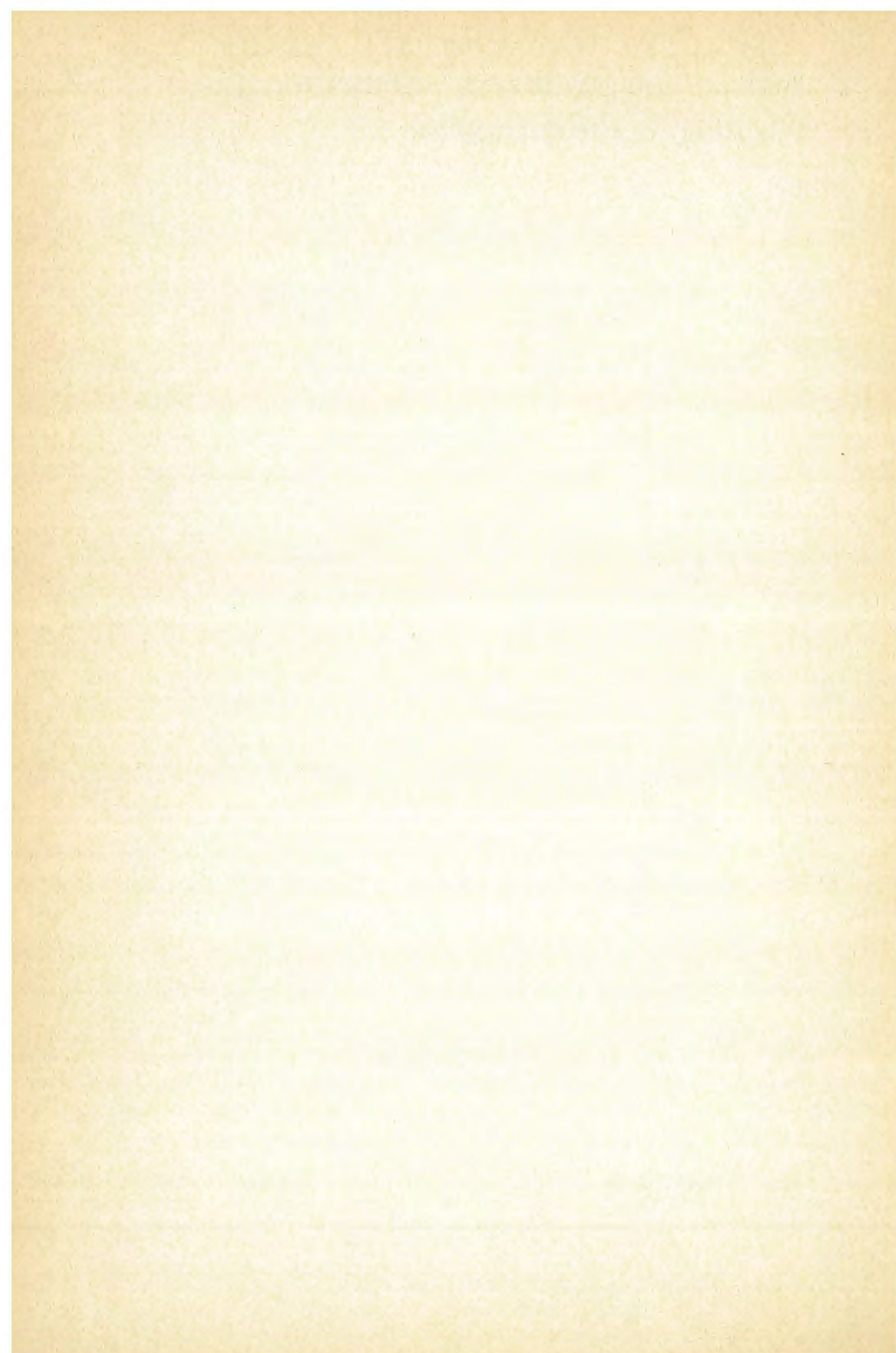
It should be noted that emotions can also be dealt with silently, i.e., while reading or writing fictional texts.

Epilogue to part C

One of the main aims of this book is to present a clear picture of the strategic possibilities within the mother-tongue curriculum. The seven chapters forming part C show that the number of legitimate strategies is very large. Although there appeared to be some imperatives, they left considerable room for optional choices within the relevant dimension. The choices in each of the seven dimensions (*Disciplinarity*, *Dangerous Subjects*, *Lingual Correctness*, *The 'Cultural Heritage'*, *Creation|Elaboration*, *Cooperation*, and *Personal Expression*), are almost freely combinable. Even if, to simplify things, we were to stipulate just two choices within each dimension, there would still be 2^7 or 128 ultimate strategies. Such freedom makes it clear that thinking in terms of a single national curriculum for mother-tongue teaching is unrealistic and inescapably doomed to failure. But it also demands careful, sensible, and sensitive cooperation within the mother-tongue departments of secondary schools. In my view, this cooperation should lead to working agreements which leave classes and teachers a high degree of freedom to choose their own aims and procedures, of course within certain bounds.



◀ 'Part D The position of 'mother-tongue
teaching' in the curriculum



The content and nomenclature of 'mother-tongue teaching' seen against the background of the school curriculum as a whole

1 Point of departure: the subject curriculum

In this last chapter, we shall deal with the question: What is the position of Mother-Tongue Teaching as subject in a subject curriculum? This type of curriculum is organized on the principle that there are separate subjects to be dealt with separately: physics, mathematics, history, languages, and so on. This is still the prevailing system in curriculum organization all over the world, as Wheeler points out (Ch. 9).

The findings of the Chapter on which we are now embarking cannot be automatically extrapolated to a different type of secondary school curriculum, for instance, one organized on the 'core' principle, in which '...there is some unification of subject matter by correlation around themes drawn from functions of living, or contemporary problems, or the problems and needs of students' (Taba, cited by Wheeler, p. 233). In such curricula subjects are integrated in various ways. On the other hand, the information required by 'core' students will have to come from teachers trained in a particular subject, since training in a 'core' or 'theme' is hardly possible. Therefore, it may be assumed that for a school system characterized by 'no-subject' curricula at least the majority of our findings will also apply to the subject of MTT in teacher training and to the 'territories' of the MT specialists in such a school.

2 The road to an answer

The conceptual framework of this book was developed in Chapter 2, where the objectives that MTT might try to reach were listed in terms of verbal behaviour required from students. This primarily represents a logical attempt to find a single common denominator for all MTT and MTB objectives.

The objectives were grouped by making use of the concept aspect or dimension. All dimensions mentioned by at least one expert in connection with MTT were listed, and within these dimensions rough categories were distinguished. Then, in Chapters 3-16, choices available to MTT teachers with regard to these dimensions were explored, at least those on which serious disagreement (leading to 'issues') can be expected.

The list of dimensions can also be used for determining the position of MTT within the secondary school curriculum as a whole. For this purpose, we can take the dimensions of objectives one by one, and ask ourselves what role MTT can play with respect to that dimension and what part can be played by other (MTB) subjects. As we shall see, this procedure will indeed lead us to a conclusive answer to the basic question posed in this chapter.

This procedure is a comparatively long but not a very complicated one. One of its advantages is that it enables the reader to check, step by step, how the ultimate answer (which differs considerably from the traditional picture) has gradually taken shape. Moreover, there is no quicker way. We could, of course try to take the concept language as a starting-point: after all, the MT teacher is universally considered a language teacher (as the name of the trade indicates in all countries). Next, we could ask ourselves whether it is true that only language teachers teach language. This would, however, prove to be a dead-end road, mainly for two reasons:

- 1 Every MT teacher who works on the basis of sound principles is more than a language teacher. For instance, when he teaches literature (or fiction, to use a more modest designation) according to the NF principle, he has to deal not just with lingual but also with non-lingual factors like hate, love, happiness, desire, suspense, loneliness, frustration, insecurity, pain, family hatred. In this respect, he is in essentially the same position as his colleague who teaches physics and has to deal with electrons, wavelength, gravitation, centrifugal force, and so on.
- 2 Since all teachers must teach students such things as the meaning of terms, they all teach language too; and as we shall see, many of them even teach many more things belonging to the lingual field.

The designation teacher of English, Russian, etc., is not a very fortunate one. We shall discuss this point below, in §5.3.

We can now put to work the long but promising procedure just sketched. A few dimensions, dealt with successively, would suffice to reveal the theoretical shape of the territory of MTT. Nevertheless, it will be useful to work through the whole list of dimensions, in order to exploit its theoretical possibilities to the full.

In voyaging through the dimensions we shall soon discover that we are not travelling in a well-ordered, conveniently arranged landscape, but are floating through a multi-dimensional space containing many objects drifting around at different levels and in different directions.

I suggest that we accept this situation cheerfully, because it represents reality, and try simply to achieve some control over this intricate world by using the same rational instrument that served us in the preceding parts of this book. The reader should expect to land from time to time in intricate situations demanding patience and concentration. As far as I can see, however, none of these situations will prove to be unsolvable. If necessary, the summary at the end of the book can be consulted for information with regard to the application of the main points of this chapter to one's own teaching practice.

3 The territory of mother-tongue teaching, bit by bit.

3.1 Four bits, a principle, and a dart-board

Dis 1 + 2 (Direction + Oral/Written)

The combination of these two dimensions yields the familiar classification: speaking, writing, listening, reading.

The question we must answer is: What is the task of MTT and the other MTB subjects with respect to these four aspects of verbal ability?

It is important to keep in mind that what we are discussing here are speaking, writing, listening, and reading as such. *What* is spoken, written, heard, or read, and *how* this is done, does not concern us here. (These items lie in other dimensions of the system, namely in such Main Dimensions as *Subject* and *Approach*, which will be dealt with later on).

Let us return to our question: Does MTT have a special task with regard to speaking, writing, etc., as such? The answer is that it would have such a special task if the other subjects neglected one or more aspects. It can be assumed that this is indeed the case for speaking and writing in some schools. In these schools students are expected mainly to 'receive' (read and listen), and to produce very little (i.e., only when asked, which does not happen very often). In such situations MT teachers may very well consider the encouragement of speaking and writing to be their special task, in order to compensate for this disproportion.

However, the type of school I have constantly had in mind while writing this book is a social system characterized by strong student participation. In such a school, all colleagues in MTB subjects can be expected to encourage speaking and writing as well as listening and reading. Hence, in such schools MTT and the MTB subjects may be considered to have a common task with regard to speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

Di 3 (Interactionality)

It has been explained in Chapter 15 that a high degree of interactionality, especially in the form of cooperation, can be considered for incorporation into the school curriculum. But it can hardly be said that at this moment all or most MTB subjects provide for this interaction. MTT could therefore fill this gap if MT teachers, on the grounds of their training and professional interests, proved to have a greater affinity to 'cooperation' than teachers in other subjects.

I think there is such an affinity, at any rate if the term cooperation is understood in the sense applied in Chapter 15: as a way to produce something by means of rather sensitive and frequent interaction among the members of a group. It is this notion of sensitive interaction which, in my view, should qualify the MT teacher's professional capacities: if an MT teacher has been properly trained in the field of literature, he has learned to interact sensitively with an author or a poet – otherwise it is difficult to see how a book or poem could be analyzed properly.

Of course, this is not a crushing argument, but I nevertheless think that from a pragmatic point of view some value should be attached to it. It can be added that, although his arguments are slightly different from mine, Stratta too sees a link between interaction and an MT teacher's concern for literature.⁵¹ In my view, then, MTT may legitimately consider itself to be one of the subjects suitable to fill the sensitive-interaction gap – if such gap exists in a particular school. If not, sensitive interaction can be considered a task common to all subjects.

The term I shall use for a 'gap-filling' task is complementary task. Thus, helping students learn to cooperate sensitively will be called a complementary task of MTT.

To resume:

- 1 a task can be complementary for MTT if: a) MTB subjects can be expected to (continue to) neglect it in many schools, and b) MT teachers can be shown, for some reason or another, to have an affinity to that task.
- 2 A complementary task can become a shared task in those schools in which a number of MTB subjects recognize it as theirs as well.

Di 4 (Subject)

i.e., what the verbal behaviour required from the students is about; or, in more normal language: what is spoken, written, read, or heard).

Category a, Symbolics

This category comprises ordinary language, mathematics, and various types of non-discursive symbolic forms (see Chapter 2, p. 44).

The element which, in this short enumeration, should interest us is ordinary language. The question we must ask ourselves is: Does dealing with ordinary language form a common task of MTT and MTB subjects or a complementary task of MTT, or (and here a third designation is introduced) a specific task of MTT? To give an informed answer to this question, we must distinguish between teaching for practical, intellectual, and semi-sacrosanct purposes.

Analysis of the question from the first point of view yields a highly complicated result. In presenting it, I am well aware of the fact that at several points readers may estimate the situation differently. I do not think, however, that these differences regarding details will greatly influence the evaluation of the over-all result. What I arrive at is this:

a Given that we are talking about good schools with good teachers (one of the points of departure in this book), part of the explicit attention given to ordinary language is a common task. This applies, for instance, to the proper use of general scientific terms (definition, argument, illustration, proof, elaboration, theory, etc.).

b Another part of this explicit attention forms a complementary task of MTT. This applies to such things as 'keys' for sentence building, readability, reporting, holding informative talks. In some schools, MTB subjects do pay explicit attention to these things, in other schools they do not. Some examples: a history, physics, or biology teacher can let students working in small groups exercise careful listening, clear formulation, asking informative questions and distinguishing these from critical ones, distinguishing main points from secondary ones; or he may inform students about how to take notes efficiently during an informative talk, or about possible structures of reports. Clearly, many of these things should be placed somewhere in the periphery of the category *Symbolics*, because they belong to what could be called the realm of applied communicative knowledge, which could equally well be considered to belong to the category *Empirics*.

c A third part of the explicit attention given to ordinary language can be considered a specific task of MTT; this applies to

- 1 certain parts of the lexical system, in particular:
 - emotional and impressionistic words, frequently found in stories and

poems (whimsical, capricious, solitary, chaste, and hundreds of others), and

– words appearing frequently in newspapers and TV programs but which are not, or not yet, dealt with by other subjects (e.g., political, legal, or general economic terms);

2 keys for reading fiction (e.g. all kinds of verbal forms such as metaphor, symbol, structural aspects of novels and poems, and their function) and for reading, listening to, or viewing essayistic prose, mass-media information, and manipulative texts.

If we look at things from an intellectual or semi-sacrosanct point of view, the situation is very simple: dealing with ordinary language for either of these purposes can be considered a specific task of MTT. Hence, both activities fall within the specific (not the complementary or common) area of MTT.

To confine ourselves to the teaching of language for intellectual purposes: numerous topics falling within this scope have been mentioned and briefly described in Chapter 6, §3 and Chapter 10, §2. When these topics are dealt with in a more or less disciplinary way, the teaching-learning activities can be called ‘linguistics’, ‘psycholinguistics’, or ‘sociolinguistics’.

We are now in a position to deal effectively with an opinion frequently expressed by MT teachers and also found in some MTT manuals, for instance Helmerts’ (p. 20). Their tenor is: for the other (= MTB) subjects, the mother tongue is just a medium.

We can say, that

a if a statement of this type intentionally implies that MTB subjects do not pay special attention to the practical functioning of the mother tongue, it certainly goes too far: we have just concluded that in at least a number of schools or types of schools teachers of MTB subjects do pay explicit attention to this aspect;

b if the statement means that other subjects do not *study* language – ‘studying’ referring here to intellectual or semi-sacrosanct purposes – it is correct: the study of language is one of the ‘specialties’ of MTT.

It seems relevant to split this statement into two components in this way, one of them incorrect, the other correct. If a division is not made, such statements will inevitably have a confusing and frustrating effect on discussions of the position of MTT in the school curriculum.

Category b, *Empirics*

As a consequence of the principle of normal functionality, the content of fictional and non-fictional texts should be given serious attention. The MT teacher will therefore often have occasion to deal with subject matter that is psychological, sociological, or political in nature (to mention the most important possibilities). Because he cannot be considered an expert in these fields, his activities will usually have a non-disciplinary or lightly disciplinary character.

In some schools other subjects deal with these things too. For instance, a history teacher can include politics and sociology in his lessons, a biology teacher can deal with the principle and manifestations of aggression. My guess is, however, that there still are (good) schools in which none of this occurs. Hence, I think these topics should be given a place in the complementary area of MTT.

In the Unesco reader on mother-tongue teaching (*Mother tongue practice in the schools*), John O. Regan (p. 17 ff.) explains his opinion that MT teachers tend to over-interpret their role in this respect. In his view, one of their misconceptions is that the content of a fictional text should be given as much attention as the author's lingual effects. Regan says: 'For example, in the study of a story by thirteen year old pupils in North America less attention may be given to the use of the mother tongue's alternatives by the writer than the psychological, sociological and philosophical undercurrents of the content. When this occurs the content of other subjects is in fact being usurped to the detriment of the teaching of the mother tongue'.

From the rationale developed in Part B it follows that there is no question of over-interpretation of the MT teacher's role in this case. On the contrary, the undercurrents mentioned by Regan form an important part of the subject matter of any novel read with a class (in certain cases it may even get most of the attention, as in the case he mentions). Regan's view can probably be explained by his emphasis on the concept language (or mother tongue) in the official designation of the MT teacher's professional activities. This point has already been dealt with on p. 222 (see also §5.3. below).

Some readers will perhaps raise the objection that when dealing with, for instance, a particular psychological aspect while analyzing a story with his class, an MT teacher does not actually see this aspect as an objective. His objective is to arrive at an interpretation of the story. Now, it has already been explained in Chapter 1 (§1) that it is more relevant to take the actual results a teacher attains into account than his original

objectives. Hence, if one of the results of exposure to a story is that a class becomes aware of psychological aspects of life, teaching about this aspect should be considered part of the teacher's task at that moment.

Category c, *Esthetics*.

The following activities form part of the teachers' specific task:

- 1 providing practical information about relevant books, etc. (see Chapter 4);
- 2 teaching literary theory and history for intellectual or semi-sacrosanct purposes.

Foreign-language teaching can hardly contribute to knowledge in these fields, because of the language barrier. One sometimes hears the suggestion that a foreign-language teacher could overcome this problem by reading books by foreign authors in translation. In that case, however, he can no longer be considered a veritable foreign-language teacher, and should rather be seen as an additional mother-tongue teacher.

Category d, *Synnoetics*

Talking about oneself (or about others) for practical purposes (see Chapter 16, §2) can be considered a common task of all subjects. Talking and especially writing about oneself or others for intellectual purposes (see Chapter 16, §3) forms part of the specific area of MTT.

Category e, *Ethics*

Here, a decision is difficult to make. We could see this realm as belonging to the common area of all subjects, but we could also treat it analogously to category b, *Empirics*, and place it in the complementary area. In the schematic rendition of the position of MTT in the school (p. 231) I have chosen the first possibility.

Certain aspects of ethics, for instance those regarding manipulation, can even be considered to belong to the specific task of MTT (see p. 102).

Category f, *Synoptics*

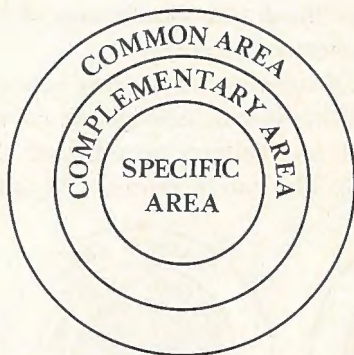
This realm can be considered to form part of the common area in the curriculum.

So much for our first four dimensions. It is time to ask how far have we come. In the first place, we have introduced two principles,

- 1 the gap-filling principle, and
- 2 the (more or less implicit) principle that all solutions should be pragmatic rather than formalistic in nature.

In the second place, we now have some idea of the over-all organization of the territory of MTT. This territory comprises a specific area, a complementary area, and a common area. The last of these areas is shared completely with other subjects.

We can represent this over-all structure in the form of a dart-board:



In the preceding part of this section, four of the 14 dimensions have already been assigned to a sector of the dart-board. Their positions can be found in the completed dart-board on page 231.

231

Di 1 (Productive/Receptive) and

di 2 (Oral/Written) have been placed in the common area.

Di 3 (high, or sensitive, *Interaction*) forms part of the complementary area.

Di 4 (Subject) has been completely atomized. The atoms can be found in all three areas:

in the specific area:

- 4a part of ordinary language p.p.;
- 4a ordinary language i.p./s.p.;
- 4c literary information, theory, history;
- 4d synnoetics i.p.;

in the complementary
area:

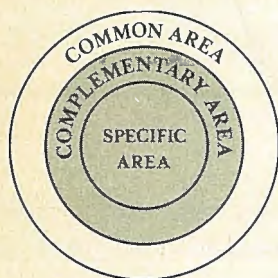
- 4a part of ordinary language p.p.;
- 4b non-disciplinary psychology, sociology,
politics;

in the common area:

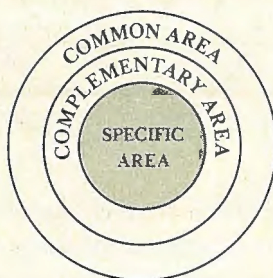
- 4a part of ordinary language p.p.;
- 4d synnoetics p.p.;
- 4e ethics;
- 4f synoptics.

If, in a particular school, the MTB subjects completely neglect the complementary area, the latter may be considered to form part of the specific area of MTT. To prevent terminological confusion, I will say that in that particular school the *de facto* specific area of MTT comprises the special and the complementary areas.

In other schools MTB subjects may be very active in the complementary area. In that case *de facto* specific and specific coincide. Thus, the *de facto* specific area of MTT may be large or restricted, depending upon what the MTB subjects do. This can be represented as follows:



maximum size of
de facto specific
area of MTT

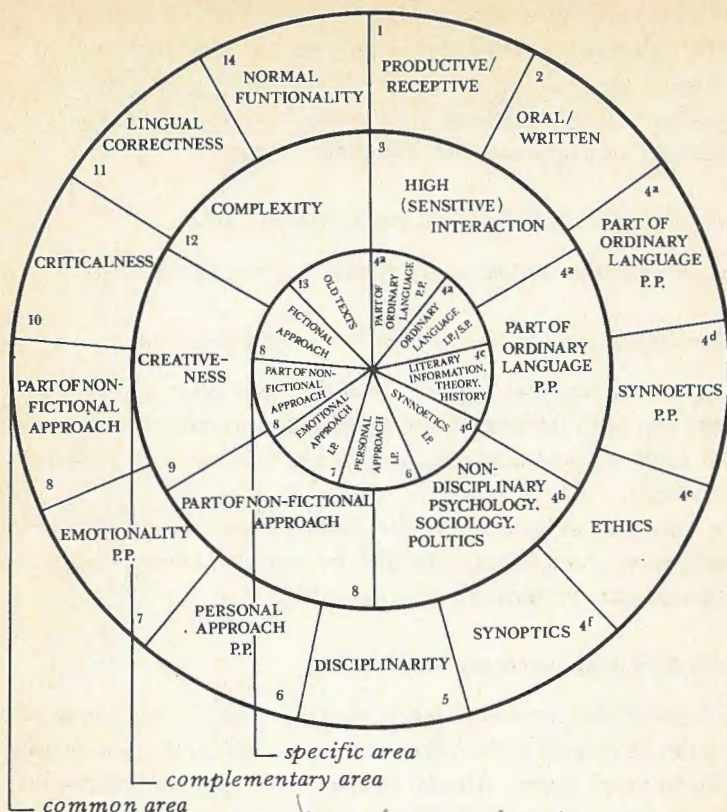


minimum size of
de facto specific
area of MTT

It should be noted that in a given school the *de facto* specific area of MTT may even shrink or extend at various times.

3.2 Full elaboration of the dart-board

Taking account of all dimensions gives the following result:



See opposite page for maximum and minimum size of MTT area

Explanation, continued

nrs. 1, 2, 3, 4: explanation already given.

di 5. Disciplinarity (common area)

The teaching of disciplinary thinking as such is not a special task of MTT; it can be done in all subjects.

di 6. Personal Approach (i.p.: specific area; p.p.: common area).

As can be seen, these items take exactly the same position as synnoetics (*di* 4d). The difference between synnoetics and personal approach is mainly a logical one: talking about oneself belongs to synnoetics, talking personally about a subject belongs to personal approach (see also p. 205). In practice, they can be treated on the same footing.

di 7. *Emotionality* (i.p.: specific area; p.p.: common area).

Analogous to personal approach and synnoetics (see also p. 215).

di 8. *Fictionality and Non-Fictionality* (special + common area).

As can be seen, the fictional approach has the same position as literary information, etc. (4c), whereas the non-fictional approach has the same positions as ordinary language p.p. (4a) (it has likewise been split up into three parts).

Again, the reason for this double registration is a logical one. The reader may as well forget about it, and identify the two phenomena *Subject* and *Approach* (if necessary rereading pages 225–226).

di 9. *Creativeness* (complementary area)

The traditional school showed a strong tendency to convergence or elaboration, to the detriment of divergence or creativity. This one-sidedness still prevails in many (good) schools. Because divergent thinking offers comparatively few problems in MTT, and the realm of fiction offers good opportunities for divergent thinking, creativeness has been given a place in the complementary area.

di 10. *Criticalness* (common area)

Analogous to Disciplinarity.

di 11. *Lingual Correctness* (common area)

In Chapter 12 the several possible interpretations of lingual correctness were indicated, ranging from not very strict to very strict; or from:

a the teacher accepts everything as long as no comprehension difficulties arise, via

b the teacher accepts everything that is acceptable in at least some dialect, or group jargon, to

c the teacher accepts only what he thinks is Standard Language.

However the concept lingual correctness is interpreted, it can be dealt

with in all MTB subjects (as well as, of course, MTT). MTB teachers do not need much special training for this, even in the case of interpretation c. For these reasons, *Lingual Correctness* has been given a place in the common area.

di 12. Complexity (complementary area)

In Chapter 2, §4.41, the notion complex has been related to analyzing, synthetizing, and evaluating, mental activities having a high position in the Taxonomy. Analysis will often or usually pertain to written material; synthesis or evaluation will normally take the form of a report. As the examples given in the Taxonomy show, all MTB subjects can, in principle, contribute to the students' capacities within these categories. We cannot, however, be reasonably certain that teachers in these subjects in every (good) school see their task in this light, and do not preferentially concentrate on the lower categories in the Taxonomy, viz. knowledge, comprehension, and application. There is even some evidence – but I do not consider it conclusive – that MT teachers normally give their students more opportunities to exercise the higher categories of the Taxonomy than teachers in MTB subjects.

This evidence is of two kinds. In the first place, assignments aimed at improving students' capacities for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation should always be based on open questions, i.e., questions for which a number of answers would be accepted by the teacher. When Barnes compared a number of mathematics, science, history, English, and religious-education lessons, he found that the proportion of open questions was low 'in all lessons except English' (Barnes-Britton-Rosen, p. 23). A second suggestion is provided by the examples the Taxonomy gives for the categories we are discussing. Of a total of 44 examples of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (not including the operationalized examples, having the form of tests), 31 apply to all subjects, 5 to an MTB subject, and 8 to MTT.

As I have already said, these are just indications, to be interpreted cautiously. I will not go into this problem any further, although it is an interesting one and deserves much more attention than it receives here. I am not trying to prove that MTB subjects as a rule contribute less to their students' capacities for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. I shall only state that we cannot be sure that in every good school the teachers in MTB subjects are very active in these fields. This statement – which I think can be made without too much risk – is sufficient to conclude that Complexity should be given a place within the complementary area of MTT.

di 13, Age of Text (specific area)

In contrast with the training of teachers of other subjects, the study of 'old texts' in the mother tongue as a rule forms part of the MT teacher's training. Therefore, the category old texts has been given a place within the special area of MTT.

di 14, (Normal) Functionality (common area)

As can be inferred from Chapter 3, normal functionality is, in my view, an aspect to be dealt with by all subjects.

4 Application of the scheme to a particular school

What we have now is a theoretical scheme. If we want to apply it to the situation in a particular school, the following must be taken into account:

- a* the point of departure for elaborating the scheme has been: a good school;
- b* the majority of teachers of MTB subjects may prefer extreme choices as to certain options;
- c* the MTT department may have such extreme preferences.

With respect to point *a*, the fact that the scheme has been elaborated 'for good schools only' has the consequence that changes must be expected if the scheme is applied to schools showing deficiencies in this respect. An example: although these items have been placed in the common area, synnoetics (*di 4d*) p.p. and personal approach (*di 6*) p.p. may not be dealt with by teachers of most of the teachers in MTB subjects. This would mean that the latter do not pay sufficient attention to the many personal opinions, approaches, peculiarities, and emotions, which strongly influence successful and 'untraumatic' learning (see Chapter 16, §2). Of course, such assessment should be based on the teachers' actual performance. If challenged as a beginning teacher I would have maintained through thick and thin that I 'saw' my students as individual persons, whereas, as I now realize, my teaching style did not reveal a trace of it. The many practical consequences of a real intention to recognize students' unique personalities has been extensively described by Carl R. Rogers. It is interesting to note that Barnes, Britton, and Rosen (pp. 26-27) point out symptoms of complete absence of attention on the teacher's part to personal contributions by even very young secondary school students (verbal expression of personal experiences, anecdotal contributions to discussion, etc.).

If teachers of MTB subjects in a particular school do not deal sufficiently with these dimensions, the MT department may very well decide that it will in that case accept the dimensions as additional components of their *de facto* specific task (on the ground that MTT already has a special affinity to the dimension *Personalness*: personal i.p. forms part of the specific area and these new p.p. components therefore form only a natural extension). Similar examples could be given for the dimensions *Emotionality*, *Criticalness*, and *Normal Functionality*.

With respect to point *b*, if the majority of MTB teachers take an extreme position with regard to a particular set of options, the MTT department may decide to compensate for the effects of this choice by leaning toward the opposite side of the scale. For instance, if the MTB teachers put an extremely high value on disciplinarity, the MTT department may feel compelled to drop disciplinarity completely as far as mother-tongue teaching is concerned. This mechanism could even form a factor in the reasoning of authors on MTT who, like Whitehead, favour a strongly intuitive instead of a disciplinary approach. It is not improbable that these authors estimate the other subjects as extremely 'discipline-prone', which is but one step away from deciding that at least some subjects, among them MTT, could try to counterbalance this by simply becoming non-disciplinary.

However, the opposite is also possible even within the realm of disciplinarity. This can be illustrated by the following case (described to me by my colleague Joop van Dormolen; see also ten Brinke, 1969-1970, 1). Students in the third year of a grammar school were given the following mathematics assignment:

Prove that the form $3x^2 + 12x$ has a smallest value, determine that smallest value, and determine for which value of x this smallest value is obtained.

One of the correct solutions of this problem is the following, rather long one (for the benefit of those with weak memories):

$$\begin{aligned} 3x^2 + 12x &= 3(x^2 + 4x) = 3(x^2 + 4x + 4 - 4) = \\ &= 3\{(x + 2)^2 - 4\} = 3(x + 2)^2 - 12. \end{aligned}$$

This last form has a smallest value, since $(x + 2)^2$ cannot be smaller than 0. Hence, $3(x + 2)^2$ cannot be smaller than 0.

Because a number is subtracted that does not vary, there is a smallest value, namely 0 minus this number.

The smallest value is $0 - 12 = -12$. This value is obtained if $x = -2$.

One student produced the following solution:

' $3x^2 + 12x = 3(x + 2)^2 + 4$ has a smallest value 4 which is obtained if $x = -2$.

Explanation:

$(x + 2)^2$ must become zero $\rightarrow x = -2$ if this is zero you multiply this by 3 $\rightarrow$ still zero, then you add 4 and you get the smallest value that this can assume: 4.'

When Joop van Dormolen – who heads the Mathematics Section of the Department of Education of the University of Utrecht – discussed this case with some future teachers, they agreed that the student had made an error in calculation: $3x^2 + 12x$ is not equal to $3(x + 2)^2 + 4$. But they did not agree on the way in which the student had formulated his answer. They argued that what the student meant was perfectly clear (and that what he meant was correct). Van Dormolen said that he considered the explanation hardly acceptable; he especially criticized the statement that $(x + 2)^2$ must become zero (why should that be necessary?), and the use of arrows after zero and 3. The future teachers reacted by saying that this was not, after all, a mother-tongue lesson!

Our interpretation of this controversy must be that:

- a the future teachers did not care for a high degree of disciplinarity (in terms of 'scoring', they scored low on the Disciplinary/Non-Disciplinary Scale (see page 141); one of the characteristic features of disciplinarity is explicitness; what the student explicitly said is, indeed, hardly acceptable (the 'must' in the explanation is close to nonsense);
- b van Dormolen clearly cared about disciplinarity, which in this case means being adequately explicit.

What we should conclude is that if in a particular school the majority of of MTB teachers rated explicitness as low as this group of future teachers, the MTT department would be completely excused if it came to consider disciplinarity as part of their *de facto* specific task, and accordingly would decide to teach their students ways of being explicit correctly. With respect to point c (extreme preferences of the MTT department), all kinds of legitimate options have been described in Chapters 3-16, especially in Chs. 10-16.

Extreme choices by an MTT department will influence the actual implementation of the specific and the complementary area considerably. For instance, if an MTT department decides to give minimum attention to the following dimensions:

- 4a. *Ordinary language* i.p./s.p. (linguistics, including psycho- and socio-linguistics), 4d. *Synnoetics* i.p., 6. *Personal approach* i.p., 7. *Emotionality* i.p., and 13. *Old texts*, the character of the content of their actual curriculum

will be 'unrecognizably' different from that chosen by an MTT department with the opposite preferences.

A combination of factors b and c is also possible. In the mathematical case just described, there was something else on which van Dormolen and the future teachers agreed, namely that it was irrelevant that the student had made some lingual errors:

- no comma between '4' and 'which';
- no full stop between '—2' and 'if' (If)
- unclear use of 'this' (especially in 'multiply this' and 'this can assume')
- no capital after 'zero'.

According to the frame of reference used here, this means that the mathematicians tended to score low on the Correctness Scale (they only cared about comprehensibility).

If in a particular school the MTT department scores high on the Correctness Scale and their MTB colleagues low, the combined action of the two factors preference (c) and inclination to compensate (b), may result in a maniacal demand for a high degree of lingual correctness in student writing (and speaking) by the MT teachers in that school.

5 The identity of 'mother-tongue teaching'

What we have accomplished in §3 is a piecemeal inventory of the components of MTT. We have not yet composed a coherent whole, an 'image'. I shall now try to do something of this kind. First, I shall explain why the territory of MTT is not a chaos (or, at least, is only a mild one). Finally, I will try to answer the ticklish question of what we should call the activity which thus far has evidently been wrongly designated as mother-tongue teaching.

5.1 Chaos?

At first sight, the composition of the territory of MTT makes the impression of being completely heterogeneous. And not only if we look at the specific + complementary areas where heterogeneity is of course at its maximum. Even if we confine ourselves to the specific area, we cannot help feeling that it contains many disparate elements.

This first impression is not accurate, however. In reality, there is no chaos. The presence in the specific and the complementary areas of all elements except Complexity (di 12) can be explained by relating them to just two concepts, fiction (literature) and language.

The first concept, fiction, is related to not only *dis* 4c and 8, but also to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 4d <i>synnoetics</i> i.p. | these phenomena bear a strong |
| 6 <i>personal approach</i> i.p. | relation to the phenomenon |
| 7 <i>emotionality</i> | fiction |
| 13 <i>old texts</i> | the majority of the old texts |
| | an MT teacher could consider |
| | reading with his students are |
| | fictional texts |
| 3 high (sensitive) | sensitive interaction is one of |
| interaction | the characteristic features of |
| | adequate interpretation of |
| | fictional texts (see p. 224) |
| 4b non-disciplinary | see p. 227 |
| psychology, sociology, politics | |
| 9 <i>creativity</i> | the core of the definition of |
| | creativity accepted in this book |
| | (see Ch. 14) is divergent thinking. |
| | Obviously, fiction offers more op- |
| | portunities for this kind of thinking |
| | than non-fiction. It is interesting to |
| | note that the comparatively |
| | numerous open questions Barnes |
| | mentions for MTT lessons are |
| | mainly related to fiction. |

The second concept, language, is related to *di* 4a and 8 (non-fictional approach). We should of course realize that we have stuffed into these sub-dimensions a lot of material which, strictly speaking, belongs to the periphery of the concept language (viz. all kinds of communicational matter). We may therefore only say that language is related to *di* 4a and 8 (*Non-fictional approach*) in the same way as fiction 'covers' another, rather heterogeneous group of phenomena (see the list above).

Only *di* 12, *Complexity*, cannot be reasonably associated with either fiction or language. I think we could best consider it a dangling dimension.

The bipartite synthesis just conducted indicates that MTT is essentially a twin-subject. We will return to this point later. For the question we are discussing here, as to whether the territory of MTT is chaotic, the conclusion that there are two 'ordering principles', fiction and language, means that we would not be justified in answering 'yes'. But we could, if we wished, see it as 'a bit fanciful'.

5.2 The look of 'mother-tongue teaching'

If we want to find out how MTT, composed as described, looks to the teacher, the best way is to compare it with MTB subjects. I shall try to do this successively for MTT in a restricted situation (i.e., in a school where it shares the complementary area with other subjects) and for MTT in an extended situation (i.e., when the MTB subjects are not active in the complementary area) (see diagram, p. 230).

Let us first ask ourselves what the image of MTT will be in a restricted situation. In this situation, the only area it can call its own is the specific area. To find out how the total activity within the specific area (see scheme on p. 229) looks to the teacher, it is not sufficient to reduce it to the two concepts fiction and language which we found in the preceding chapters to be the two ordering principles. If you want to find out how something looks, you start by asking not about the underlying principles but rather about the impression it makes on you.

Now, the image presented by the special area of MTT is largely determined, as far as I can see, by the following three components, which can serve us as catchwords:

- 1 fiction,
- 2 (psycho-/socio-) linguistics,
- 3 person.

The inclusion of 1 and 3 as constituent features of this image needs no discussion. With regard to 2, two remarks should be made. The designation should be read as: linguistics + psycho- and sociolinguistics. It pertains to teaching-learning activities that take language and language processes as a subject for intellectual purposes, not for activities aimed at the practical purpose of improving language or communicational ability.⁵² To see this clearly, we must keep in mind that we are talking here about MTT in a restricted situation, i.e. about the activities of a mother-tongue department in a school in which the MTB subjects are sufficiently active in the complementary area. This means that the MTB subjects are active with regard to, for example, the following three dimensions in the complementary area (see dart-board):

- 4a ordinary language p.p.,
- 3 high (sensitive) interaction,
- 12 complexity.

Together, these three elements indeed constitute what has just been called 'language, or communicational ability', for instance:

- learning new words (new concepts),
- learning to discuss intelligently and sensitively,
- learning to read complex texts adequately and to report adequately on complex subject matter.

If the MTB subjects in a particular school are sufficiently active with regard to (non-fictional) language ability, the latter does not form part of the specific, or *de facto* specific task of MTT. Teachers of MTB subjects undoubtedly have opportunities to teach the things just mentioned (learning new words, etc.). And it should also be noted that in several countries there are strong tendencies toward, for instance, group work (which implies the improvement of interactional language ability). It is also worth mentioning that in The Netherlands the assignments for final examinations in MTB subjects (e.g., in physics) have changed considerably. At one time, physics assignments consisted of comparatively simple problems to be tackled with procedures in which the student had been thoroughly trained (in other words, these assignments belonged to a low category in the Taxonomy). Today, students are required to use a rather complex text and give well-formulated answers to problems related to that text. Finally, it may be remarked that in The Netherlands many aspirant teachers in all subjects, not just the mother tongue, are trained in interactional and complex language ability.

So much for the image of MTT in a restricted situation. Comprising only three elements, it can be considered a simple one. The image of MTT in an extended situation – i.e., MTT in a school in which the complementary area too forms part of the MTT department's domain – cannot be captured by just three words. To the catch-words we already have, i.e.,

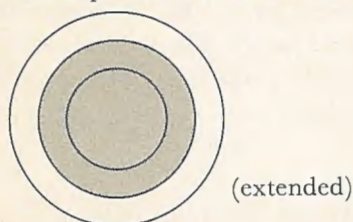
- 1 fiction,
 - 2 '(psycho-/socio-) linguistics, and
 - 3 person,
- we must now add:
- 4 language ability (which should be made to include interaction and complexity; see above),
 - 5 non-disciplinary psychology, etc., and
 - 6 creativity.

Thus, in an extended situation MTT resembles Doing All Kinds Of Arbitrary and Sometimes Exciting Things more than it does Teaching A Real Subject.

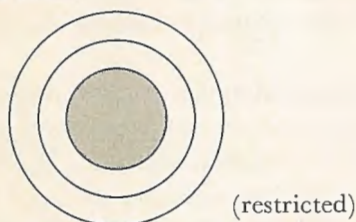
This is precisely the image MTT has in the minds of many solid MTB teachers. The MT teacher should not be ashamed of this. In the first

place, as shown in §5.1, there is some inner order – almost all elements can be accounted for on the basis of just two concepts, fiction and language, and it is not a matter of primary concern whether this inner order is apparent to outsiders. In the second place, this ‘surface’ heterogeneity is due to the fact that MTB subjects often do not use the many opportunities for a richer way of teaching, thus virtually compelling MT teachers to try to fill the gap. It should of course be realized that in many cases MTB subjects are forced to limit their scope by strong external factors, for instance final examinations.

If the MTT department in a school finds itself in this situation:



in which it considers the vast area of specific + complementary to be its *de facto* specific territory, even the thought that this situation should be reduced to:



may not make it very happy. This is quite understandable.

The most painful difference involved in this change in situation is probably that teaching (non-fictional) language or communication ability becomes a common instead of a specific task. The teaching of language ability in the field of non-fiction is rightly considered one of the important practical contributions a teacher can make to a student's education. To have the official right to teach it is therefore almost a privilege, something which many MTT departments would be unwilling to give up. Still, I think they should be willing to do so, provided that the teachers in other departments fill the gap sufficiently and competently (which is no sine-cure and cannot be accomplished by a few changes in approach and teaching style). The reason why the actual participation of MTB subjects in the teaching of non-fictional language ability should generally be welcomed is that it permits students to learn to read, listen, speak, and

write with respect to a broad range of subjects and – even more important – different styles of thinking and frames of reference.

MTT departments faced with a ‘loss’ of this kind can console themselves by realizing that in the restricted situation MTT has not become a purely intellectual subject (intellectual being taken in the special sense used in this book; see Chapter 6). There are many practical aspects to *di* 4a, the MTT part of ordinary language p.p (see pp. 225–226), and especially to *di* 4c, literary information, etc. This latter dimension refers, among other things, to the important (practical) task of giving students orientational information about what they could read or see (stage plays, films),⁵³ why they might do so, and what capacities they need to comprehend what they read or see. The ins and outs of these teaching activities – which, it should be repeated, are as practical in nature as teaching non-fictional ability – are the main subject of Chapter 4.

It follows from what has just been said about the teaching of non-fictional language ability, that if a curriculum description indicates the teaching of non-fictional language ability as a specific task of MTT, the designers of this curriculum must have had the extended situation in mind, i.e., a situation in which MTB subjects ignore the complementary area.

This applies, for instance, to the curriculum for mother-tongue teaching in The Netherlands produced by a governmental committee, according to which the main objective of mother-tongue teaching is the improvement of language ability. It also applies to some manuals, e.g. those by Helmers and Whitehead. The former states (p. 19): ‘Finally, we can see mother-tongue education . . . as an observable ability of man (language competence) to satisfy the conditions of communication set by society in the oral and written use of language’. Whitehead, following I. A. Gordon, writes (p. 12) that it is the purpose of English teaching to develop abilities ‘. . . not as separate isolable entities but rather as different aspects of a single unitary skill – the ability, one might say, to use one’s native tongue effectively in all its modes, in listening and speaking as well as in reading and writing, in its everyday utilitarian functions as well as for the more subtle imaginative and emotional purposes which make up the province of literature’. This last statement too is a very wide one: although the last part of it, in referring to imagination, emotion, and literature relates to what rightly can be considered more or less an MTT specialty, the first part relates to activities which could equally well be dealt with by MTB subjects.

The statement that those who formulate such aims for MTT have an extended situation in mind, is not meant to imply that they are justified in doing so. It is quite possible that some kind of subject-blindness causes them to overlook what the MTB subjects could do and what actually happens in MTB lessons. As a matter of fact, we can be almost certain that this is really the case, because in the curricular descriptions and manuals in question there is no word to be found about what happens with respect to the teaching of language ability in other lessons besides MTT. This seems to me to be an unfair underestimation of what many MTB teachers accomplish.

Let us try now to answer one final question, already touched on in Chapter 2 (p. 40). To what extent is MTT unique, as compared with other subjects?

The answer depends on several factors. In its restricted form, I would not say that MTT has a unique status: elements like (psycho-/socio-) linguistics and fiction are essentially of the same nature as the investigation of historical events and the study of matter. Only the personal aspect has a more or less special character.

In its extended form, however, MTT may be called very unique: it seems to deal with almost everything that is valuable in life, leaving only small fragments for the other subjects to take care of. In its extended form MTT is a kind of all-comprising subject – a subject with, in a manner of speaking, a supranatural status.

It is almost a pity to think that any attempt would ever be made to shed this half-divine position . . .

5.3 What shall we call it?

What's in a name? Something is. If we go on speaking about mother-tongue teaching – or, as is done in practice, calling a mother-tongue teacher in England an English teacher, and his confrère in Sweden a Swedish teacher – we must expect all kinds of misunderstanding to persist. For instance, the fact that the notion language forms the core of the official designation of MTT and is absent in the designations of such subjects as physics, history, and mathematics, increases the probability that MT teachers and curriculum designers will remain blind to the potential and actual contributions of MTB subjects with respect to language. Also, it can lead to a completely distorted picture of how literature (fiction) should be taught – an example of such distortion has been given on page 227.

These dangers are by no means negligible. The question of what an MT teacher should and could see as his task is a confusing one. This has recently been confirmed by Taylor's investigation. Such confusion can easily entice one to fall back on things one knows with certainty. One of these certainties is the official name of the trade. 'The official designation of our subject is the mother tongue (or: 'English', 'Swedish', etc.). So let's stick to that.'

In short, the problem of what MTT should be officially called – the three-letter combination has thus far been used only as a symbol, not as a designation – is an important one. The question remains, what name? I do not think it is very difficult to find an acceptable designation. After all, we do not need a perfect one – just one that does not confuse us. For that purpose, in my view, the designations:

Fiction and Linguistics for MTT with a restricted territory, and *Fiction, Language, and Linguistics*⁵⁴ for MTT with an extended territory, are very appropriate, the more so because indications of this type are not unfamiliar in many countries. If necessary, abbreviations can be used (FL and FLL, respectively).

These two indications do not cover all of the important elements of either the restricted or the extended territory (e.g. personal approach). The elements which are not covered, however, belong to what could be called the associative corona surrounding Fiction and Linguistics as well as Fiction, Language and Linguistics. Other subjects also have such associative elements, e.g. mathematics (logic) and history (politics).

Of all manuals known to me, only the one published by Mary Elizabeth Fowler reflects, by its title, the consideration that mother tongue and language are unfit to form the core of the designation of the MTT territory. Her solution is a tripartite one which differs slightly from the (second) one suggested by me: Language, Composition, and Literature. In this connection mention should also be made of the sub-title of Helmer's book, which contains the two elements mother tongue and literature.

Summary of aspects essential for the reading and application of 'the complete mother-tongue curriculum'

1 Purposes

Parts B-C

This book tries to give a survey of all of the relevant approaches possible within what is called mother-tongue teaching (MTT).

Part D

It also attempts to describe the various positions MTT can take in the secondary-school curriculum as a whole, including the relationships with other subjects – the so-called mother-tongue based (MTB) subjects, i.e., subjects using the mother tongue as a means of communication.

Excellent handbooks on MTT have appeared in several countries. As far as I have been able to consult them, each of them advocates its own particular strategy. This book attempts in Parts B and C to present a complete set of alternative strategies for teachers (and preferably also for students) to choose from. One could say that it is an attempt to combine several handbooks into one.

The input of books and articles derives mainly from four countries: America, England, Western Germany, and The Netherlands. No reliable apparatus is yet available for international communication about the problems of mother-tongue teaching, and the development of the logical machinery of the book took considerable time and effort. This prevented me from making the book still more international. It is to be hoped that during the coming decade we will see the internationalization of the problematics of MTT – which has long been hampered by the view that one's mother tongue and the teaching of it are matters of national, not international, concern. It seems almost certain that continuing internationalization will add some important alternatives to the ones indicated and described in this book.

2 The logical machinery

MTT shows a bewildering number of aspects, many of which differ in nature, for example functionality of objectives, personalness of expression, and attention to old literature. The inventarization of all of the relevant

aspects yielded a list of aspects (or dimensions, as they are officially called). This list, which can be found in Chapter 2 (§4), serves both of the purposes mentioned at the beginning of this summary.

2.1 Parts B and C

The logical machinery to use for dealing with the alternative strategies consists of:

- 1 a list of *dimensions* with regard to which serious controversies can arise:
 - (di 14) *Normal vs. Scholastical Functionality*
 - (di 5) *Disciplinarity*
 - (di 4) ‘*Dangerous Subjects*’
 - (di 11) *Lingual Correctness*
 - (di 13) *Old Literature*
 - (di 9) *Creativity*
 - (di 3) *Cooperative Interaction*
 - (di 4) *Synnoetic Subjects*, and (di 6) *Personal Approach, Personal Expression*;
- 2 *scales* within each of these dimensions (most of them very simple), e.g. much/moderate/no attention paid to ...;
- 3 *legitimate positions* that teachers may choose on these scales;
- 4 *rationales* underlying these choices, partly consisting of
- 5 the *purposes* one has in mind, three kinds being distinguished;
 - practical purposes
 - intellectual purposes (‘intellectual’ to be taken without its academic connotations; in this book it means simply ‘inclined to want to understand things’)
 - sacrosanct purposes (= purposes to be defended solely on the grounds of belief, not of rational arguments).

Example

di 13. Old Literature

If one has solely practical purposes(5) in mind, the only legitimate position (3) on the scale (2) ‘much . . . no attention paid to old literature’, is no attention or almost no attention.

If one has intellectual and/or sacrosanct purposes (5) in mind, all positions (3) lying between some and much attention are legitimate, depending on one’s rationale (4) regarding the importance one attaches to history.

NB: The respective rationales underlying the various choices are, as a rule, of a highly complex nature (see p. 26). Consequently, they have only been indicated sketchily.

2.2 Part D

The logical machinery for dealing with the question of the different positions of MTT in the secondary-school curriculum consists of

- 6 The whole list of dimensions (Chapter 2, §4);
- 7 A principle called the fill-the-gap principle. This can be formulated as: MTT should deal with those aspects (dimensions) which are not attended to by the other subjects.
- 8 Another principle, namely that the size and the nature of the territory of MTT depends, among other things, on how the other subjects see their task with regard to some of the dimensions in the list.
- 9 These principles lead to the delimiting of three areas:
 - The specific area of MTT, comprising the dimensions normally not dealt with by other subjects (e.g. linguistics, personal expression for intellectual purposes).
 - The complementary area of MTT, comprising the dimensions that may or may not be dealt with by other subjects. In the latter case the MTT department may consider this area to be a *de facto* specific area; e.g. certain forms of interaction such as speaking in public and group discussion, activities aimed at developing creativity.
 - The common area, comprising those dimensions that are as a rule dealt with equally by the other subjects, e.g. disciplinarity, criticalness.
- 10 A third principle stating that every MTT department has legitimate alternatives as to which elements their specific or *de facto* specific area will be stressed (e.g. a particular MTT department may decide to give high priority to personal expression by students, to the detriment of (psycho-/socio-)linguistics, or *vice versa*; here, the elements (1–5) of the logical machinery for dealing with alternatives can be applied again).

Footnotes

- 1 In this book the word *lingual* is used as the adjectival form for language. The word *linguistic* refers to linguistics.
- 2 A combination of LO = longitudinal, i.e. from infant school to tertiary education, and LA = latitudinal, i.e., different types of school covering the same age group as well as subjects other than MTT (MTB subjects).
- 3 For the benefit of the uninitiated reader it may be mentioned that there are passenger cars which can travel on water, and (many) others which had better not try to.
- 4 Letters can be addressed to: Wolters-Noordhoff-Longman, Postbox 58, Groningen, The Netherlands.
- 5 The list does not pretend to be complete.
- 6 MTB = mother-tongue-based (see p. 19).
- 7 The Dutch reader will find sufficient information in the book by Bevers.
- 8 The project group consisted of a team of university students (Wam van den Akker, Marjolein van Anken, Karla Beijersbergen, Rien Broeren) and myself.
- 9 This inclusion of 'trash' in the curriculum is supported by a number of MTT specialists (e.g. Helmers, Ulshöfer, Whitehead).
- 10 All figures in this description are very rough approximations.
- 11 The group did not take 'action' (cf. p. 110). Such action could have consisted of telling housewives about the drug-like character of these books, which could deflect their attention from their real life situation. Something of this nature was suggested, but for several reasons the idea was dropped. Personally, I find ideas of this kind a bit too fanatic and unrealistic.
- 12 This objective probably falls outside the scope of MT teachers in countries in which the dimension *Interactionality* does not (yet) play a role in MTT.
- 13 This objective will probably be thought valuable only by MT teachers who recognize the dimension *Personalness* as relevant for MTT (see footnote 12).
- 14 The Dutch reader can be referred to Kees van Baalen's use of applied mathematics, described in *Scholing in actie*.
- 15 The Dutch reader may be referred to ten Brinke (1970).
- 16 In the latter case the objective could be normally functional because of its practical value.
- 17 A summary of all characteristic features is given in § 1.3.
- 18 Part of this extremely high score must of course be attributed to the so-called Hawthorne or novelty effect.
- 19 Those who find it difficult to imagine that they would actually read this mini poem with their class may substitute a (likewise mini-)poem by William Carlos Williams (mentioned by Martz in an essay on the teaching of poetry; *Ess. Teach. Engl.*, p. 224 ff.) which describes another interpersonal conflict involving food:

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

And which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold.

20 The replacement of poems and collections of poems by pop songs and pop-song albums does not cause serious problems as to teaching method. Of course, tastes may vary considerably. To mention some of the articles on pop songs in the English lesson published in the British journal *The Use of English*: Reeves claims that the Beatles have been adopted uncritically by highbrows, as Mickey Mouse was in the Thirties, whereas Holbrook (1969) casts some pessimistic light on the morality of the songs.

21 Literal translation:

The lark

I heard in dreams
a rustling going,
and saw the treetops becoming surrounded
by all heights –
Is it a fire, is it the sun?
I do not know,
But a shudder full of bliss
breaks through the soul.
Already it lightens from the depth and
the bells toll, and the course of twisting rivers
rustles sparkling by,
and the glowing mountains rise
like islands from the vast dawning sea.
I cannot say anything yet,
my breast glows in the light,
(I can) only flap my wings
out of great bliss!

22 For the benefit of the Dutch reader: Remco Campert, *Het leven is vurrukkulluk*.

23 Ulshöfer's style, which to both British and Dutch tastes is a bit too 'lofty', may easily mislead the reader in this respect. See also the quotation on p. 98.

24 I had great difficulty in rendering this passage in English ('... *es muss ein pädagogischer Bezug als in der Schule mögliche Lebensbezug geschaffen werden*').

25 That teaching about manipulation is not pure theory or too difficult, as some

apparently hold, has been explained by Engelhardt; he even sketches possible approaches to this subject suitable for elementary school students. For manipulation and the mass media, the Dutch reader may be referred to van Ruiten.

26 Corelli Barnett, *The desert generals* (1960).

27 This is at least my impression. The descriptions of lesson schemes as a rule do not transgress the borderline of language. However, although not mentioned explicitly, it is possible that to the authors this transgression is normal practice.

28 Here, too, translation was difficult. In German, the second function is formulated as follows: '*Sprachschulung muss als solidarisiertes Moment die Möglichkeit und Notwendigkeit der Änderung gesellschaftlicher Praxis aufzeigen*'.

29 The name of this text-book has escaped me.

30 In a report by Heys, this procedure is seen from a different angle.

31 In The Netherlands the qualification *ludiek* ('ludical'; Lat. *Ludus*, play) would be appropriate.

32 Dutch readers will find a number of other ideas for writing of this kind in ten Brinke and Drop, *Wegwijs in het taalverkeer*.

33 The Dutch (instant) poet Rogier Proper has a very simple answer to this question: A poem is every arrangement of words the author in question calls a poem (*Citroen, Citroen*, p. 62).

34 Ways in which linguistics and grammar can be taught that satisfy either of these conditions are described in Chapters 6 and 10.

35 The relation of teaching for (semi-)sacrosanct purposes to the concepts normal functionality and scholastic functionality (see Chapter 3) can be designated as follows. All MT teaching which does not aim at normally functional objectives should be considered scholastically functional, except in the case of (semi-)sacrosanct purposes (of the type described in Chapter 7). This can be expressed in the form of a diagram:

Functionality

legitimate →	normally functional	scholastically functional	← not legitimate
		not normally functional, but aiming at (semi-)sacro- sanct purposes	← legitimate

36 A few years ago during a conference I met a specimen of this group. While giving a lecture I told a group of teachers in a take-it-or-leave-it way that, at least in my opinion, students could profit in several ways from having learned grammar. Suddenly a woman jumped up, launched into a vicious attack, and ended by saying that she could no longer bear my presence. At that point she actually left the room.

37 One of the differences is the following. Teaching grammar to improve

language ability should include concepts and rules applying to constructions a student has not mastered yet. Unfamiliar constructions in his native language are much more complicated than those belonging to some foreign language: in the latter, grammatical constructions he could already handle correctly at the age of four in his own language, may be difficult for him. Consequently, the grammatical concepts and rules to be taught in foreign-language teaching usually form a much simpler system than those taught for improving mother-tongue ability.

38 'Du sollst immer nur aus dem Eigenen schöpfen und schöpfen!'

39 Gerda Ern , Thorbecke Lyceum, Utrecht. See: Ern  & ten Brinke, 1974.

40 German readers will find excellent and concise information about *die exemplarische Methode* in *Exemplarisches Lehren – exemplarisches Lernen*; the Dutch reader may be referred to van 't Hoff Stolk.

41 In my view, this addition represents another subjective interpretation of the concept creative writing.

42 ten Brinke and Drop, *Wegwijs in het taalverkeer*, Part I.

43 The term has been borrowed from a Dutch expert on counseling, N. Beets.

44 Important contributions to the rationale developed here were made by Tineke Cerutti and Marieke Middelhoff.

45 Novels written (or rather, produced) by a group exist, but there are not many of them.

46 A good Dutch book on the subject is T. Humalda's.

47 The Dutch reader can find a modest 'light weight' form of such evaluation in Koos Hennephof's article.

48 ten Brinke & Drop, *Wegwijs in het taalverkeer*, Part I.

49 From Fowler, pp. 281-282.

50 This kind of assignment has been developed by Torrance. My colleague Paul Dijkstra called my attention to it.

51 Stratta, p. 98: 'One major concern of the teaching of English, judging from current text books, would seem to be the exploration of human issues, especially those dealing with interpersonal relationships. It would I think, be true to say that teachers of English have in some sense always been interested to explore human relationships, in that one of their main interests is the reading of literature during the process of which one is engaged, to a large extent, in looking closely at people interacting with one another, or at individuals reflecting upon their own experience, the experience of others, or the human condition in general. Consequently human relationships were explored in English lessons in the past mainly when they were evoked through literature'.

52 To prevent terminological confusion: language, or communicational ability, is not identical to verbal ability. The latter is a broader concept, encompassing the former (see p. 36).

53 To feel competent to deal with films, MT teachers as a rule need special training.

54 Dutch equivalents could be: *Fictie en Taalkunde* and *Fictie, Taalgebruik en Taalkunde*, respectively.

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Index

- advertisements 50, 65, 117
- age of text (dimension); old texts 49, 55, 59, 61, 175-184, 217 (cultural heritage), 234, 236, 238, 245
- Akker, Wam van den note 8
- Anken, Marjolein van note 8
- autocratic 202; see also democratic

- Baalen, Kees van, note 14
- Barnes, Douglas 233, 234, 238
- Bateman, Donald R. 156-159, 174
- Beets, N. note 43
- Bernstein, Basil 173
- Beyers, J. A. A. M. note 10
- Beyersbergen, Karla note 8
- biology (as a subject) 66-67, 100, 225, 227. See also: MTB subjects.
- Bloom, Benjamin S. See: Taxonomy.
- Bonset, H. 169-170
- Bosch, L. J. van den 194-195
- Brinke, J. S. ten 99, 147, 150, 151, 162, 235, note 15, note 32, note 48
- Britton, James See: Barnes, Douglas.
- Broeren, Rien note 8

- Cerutti, Tineke note 44
- close reading 125
- common task of MTT. See: task of MTT.
- compensatory education 14, 173
- complementary task of MTT. See: task of MTT.
- complexity (dimension) 49, 55, 58, 61, 140, 233, 237, 238
- conservative education 14, 173
- Constandse, Dana 16
- cooperation (teaching of) See: interactionality (dimension)
- correctness (lingual) 20, 25, 48, 55, 56, 58, 61, 67, 156-158, 171-174, 189, 217, 232-233, 237, 245
- creative drama 120, 126, 162
- creative writing 66, 107, 120, 126, 142, 186, 209-213, note 41
- creativity (creativeness, dimension) 15, 23, 28, 39, 47, 54, 56, 58, 60, 184, 185-193, 217, 232, 246
- criticalness (dimension) 47, 51, 54, 56, 58, 61, 140, 208, 232

- democratic (decision-making in the classroom) 33-34
- Dijkstra, Paul note 50
- dimension (term) 22
- direction of a text (dimension) 23, 24, 29, 40, 41, 53, 57, 59, 70, 115, 140, 223, 229, 231
- disciplinarity (dimension) 15, 23, 29, 44-45, 50-51, 54, 55, 57, 60, 82-83, 88-90, 93-96, 103, 106, 113, 141-160, 189, 193, 217, 226, 231, 235, 236, 238, 245
- discussion 115, 133, 134, 142, 153, 194, 200, 240 See also: interactionality.
- Dixon, John 33
- Dormolen, Joop van 235-236
- Doughty, Peter 12, 104-106, 114, 124-125, 147, 193, 204
- Drop, W. note 32, note 48.

- elaboration. See: creativity.
- emancipatory education 14, 27, 109-110, 165, 173
- emotionality (dimension) 46, 54, 56, 58, 60, 73, 77, 93, 96, 215-216, 232, 236, 238

- empirics 44, 53, 117, 118, 120, 225,
 227-228, 231
 Engelhardt, Rudolf note 25
 Ern , Gerda note 39
 essay writing 21, 27-28, 65, 67, 107-108,
 110-112, 118, 128, 130, 166-169
 esthetics 44, 53, 118, 120, 228, 231
 ethics 44, 53, 93, 119, 228, 230, 231
 evaluation 30, 83-85, 100, 111-112, 126,
 200, 203-204, 212-213 See also: test
 (paper); examinations.
 examinations 84-85, 111, 167-168, 182,
 240

 fiction (teaching of 52-56, 65, 67, 69,
 71-100, 118, 124, 128, 130-131,
 142-143, 145, 151-153, 155, 158, 160,
 162-163, 175-184, 187, 188, 189,
 206, 226, 227, 228, 229, 242, 243
 See also: literary history (teaching of);
 literary theory (teaching of).
 (non-)fictionality (dimension); incl.
 (non)fictional approach 23, 29, 46-47,
 51, 54, 58, 60, 70, 115, 140, 232
 first language teaching (term) 19
 Flower, F. D. 12, 92-93, 104, 107, 108,
 114, 193
 foreign-language teaching 158
 Fowler, Mary Elizabeth 11, 12, 23, 48,
 74, 104, 112, 114, 116, 147, 150, 183,
 215, 244, note 49
 Frankena, William K. 26
 Freire, Paulo 110
 functionality (normal, scholastic) 21,
 27, 41, 50, 55, 56, 61, 63-70, 106, 109,
 110-113, 115, 140, 154, 169-170,
 227, 234, 246, note 16, note 35

 group work 80, 92; see also: interaction-
 nality
 Gutt, Armin 110, 165, 172, 173, 198

 Hall Jr., R. A. 173
 Halliday, M. A. K. 106
 Harris, R. J. 156
 Heise, Heinrich 198, 215
 Helmers, Hermann 11, 12, 23, 24, 98,
 99, 104, 114, 125, 183, 192-193, 226,
 242, note 9
 Hennephof, Koos note 47
 Heuvel, Truus van den note 16
 Heys Jr., Frank note 30
 history (as a subject) 9, 11, 66-67, 116,
 225, 227. See also: MTB-subjects.
 Hoff Stolk-Huisman, A. Z. van 't note
 40
 Holbrook, David 33, 56, 87, 90-93, 96,
 212, 216, note 20
 Humalda, T. note 46

 Illich, Ivan 68, 216
 Ingarden, Roman 88
 intellectual purpose (term) 116, 242
 intellectual purpose(s) 31, 70, 97-98,
 99, 104, 106, 107, 116-126, 127,
 133-135, 136-137, 144-153, 178-182,
 189-191, 208-214
 interactionality (dimension) 42, 53, 55,
 57, 59, 115, 193, 194-204, 205, 217
 (cooperation), 224, 229, 231, 238, 240,
 244, note 12
 interest (intrinsic) 65-67, 120-125, 127,
 135, 162, 178-182 See also: intrinsic
 motivation.

 Jackson, Brian 85
 J rgensen, Mosse 216

 Kaye, Barrington 194, 197, 199, 202, 203
 knowledge (term; implicit *vs.* explicit)
 31-33
 Kohl, Herbert R. 216

- Kreveld, D. van 196
- Kuhn, Thomas S. 190
- Lethen, Helmut 110, 164, 166-169
- lexicology (teaching of) 128 (proverbs, etc.), 131 (id.), 141, 151, 225-226, 240
- library work 75, 86
- lingual (term) 14, note 1
- lingual correctness. See: correctness.
- linguistic analysis (teaching of);
 linguistics, grammar 14, 15, 56-59, 67, 117-118, 123-124, 128, 129-130, 133, 134, 141, 147, 148, 156-157, 158, 188-189, 226, note 34, note 36, note 37
- literary history 125, 175-176, 178-181
- literary theory (teaching of) 73, 80, 82-83, 86, 88-90, 125, 229 See also: fiction (teaching of)
- literature (teaching of). See: fiction (teaching of); literary history/theory (teaching of).
- Lubbers, G. J. 92, 215, 216
- Maatje, Frank C. 46
- Magee, John B. 26, 129
- manipulation (propaganda) 100-103, 150, 228, note 25
- Marcuse, Herbert 168
- mass media communication 101-103
- mathematics (as a subject) 11, 66, 148, 235-236, 237 See also: MTB-subjects
- Matthijsen, Maria 150
- Mellon, John C. 157
- Middelhoff, Marieke note 44
- Mittins, W. H. 172
- Moffett, James 10, 12, 193, 204, 209, 213, 215
- mother tongue (term) 19, 204, 222, 227, 243-244
- motivation 65, 84-85, 127, 132, 133, 145, 208, 214
- MTB subjects 11, 40, 66, 100, 103, 105-106, 112, 223, 224, 227, 232, 233, 234-237, 239-243, 245, 247
- non-fiction (teaching of reading of) 100-106, 134, 142, 153, 155, 158, 160, 241-242; see also advertisement, SQ3R.
- normal functionality. See: functionality.
- old texts. See age of text (dimension)
- oral/written (dimension) 42, 53, 57, 59, 115, 140, 223, 229, 231
- orthography 48, 171
- Oskamp, Anton 150
- Parreren, C. F. van 38
- Pearce, John. See: Doughty, Peter
- personal approach (dimension) 39, 45, 51, 54, 56, 57, 60, 193, 205-215, 231-232, 234-235, 236, 238, 246 See also: synnoetics; personal expression.
- personal expression 107, 205-216, 217, note 13; see also: personal approach; synnoetics.
- Phenix, Philip H. 43, 117
- physics (as a subject) 11, 100, 225, 240 See also: MTB-subjects.
- political ideology 14, 27, 54, 161, 164-169, 172-174, 181, 197-198, 207-208
- pop song 87, 135, note 20
- Postman, Neil 147, 149, 151
- practical purpose(s) 31, 65-67, 70, 71-115, 116-117, 125, 127, 133-135, 136-137, 144, 153-160, 162, 176-177, 189-191, 206-208
- propaganda. See: manipulation.
- psycholinguistics. See: linguistic analysis
- reading (teaching of reading non-fiction). See: non-fiction (teaching of reading of).
- Reeves, J. note 20
- Regan, John O. 227
- Robinson, Francis P. 142, 159
- Rodgers, Mary Columbro 12, 23, 30-31, 47, 99, 101, 104, 114, 193, 215
- Rogers, Carl R. 56, 201, 206-207, 234

Rogers, Irving. See: Kaye, Barrington.
Rosen, Harold See: Barnes, Douglas
Ruiten, G. A. van note 25

Sacrosanct purpose(s) (semi-sacrosanct
purpose(s)) 127-132, 136-137, 144,
177-178, 189, 208, note 35

Salfner, Ruth. See: Gutt, Armin.

Schneider, Peter. See: Lethen, Helmut.

Sewall, Richard B. 142

sociolinguistics. See: linguistic analysis.

Sommerlad Emmons, Patricia 148

speaking (teaching of) 107-114, 174,

223, 225, 241-242

specific task of MTT. See: task of MTT
spelling. See: orthography

SQ3R 101, 142, 159

strategy (term) 30

Stratta, Leslie 1, 92, 224, note 51

symbolics 44, 53, 57, 225, 231

synnoetics 44, 53, 116, 117, 119, 120,

193, 205-215, 228, 229-230, 231,

234-235, 236, 238, 246, note 13

synoptics 44, 54, 119, 228, 230, 231, 232

Szczesny, Gerhard 198

Taba, H. 221

task of MTT (specific, complementary,
common) 10, 223ff.

Taxonomy (of educational objectives)

31-32, 37, 40, 49, 233, 240

Taylor, Philip H. 13, 244

test (test paper) 83-85, 104, 112, 126,

133, 192; See also evaluation,

examinations

Thornton, Geoffrey. See: Doughty,
Peter.

Torrance, E. Paul. 47, 185-186,

191-192, 209

trash 52, note 9

Ulshöfer, Robert. 12, 14, 15, 55, 93-99,

104-106, 114, 116, 124-125, 147,

183-184, 192-193, 204, 208, note 9,

note 23

Unesco Institute for Education 12

verbal behaviour (verbal ability) 21,

36-40, note 52

Weingartner, Charles. See: Postman,
Neil.

Wheeler, D. K. 20, 29, 89, 161, 198,

200, 221

Whitehead, Frank 11, 12, 14, 15, 56,

59-61, 74, 86-88, 90-91, 93, 96-97,

99, 104, 114, 116, 130, 193, 215, 235,

242, note 9

Wierda, Tineke 16

writing (teaching of) 107-114, 133-134,

142, 153, 155, 158, 160, 174, 188, 194,

223, 225, 241-242; see also: creative

writing; essay writing.

Zidonis, Frank. See: Bateman, Donald.

