Suggested short title

AN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME IN THE WRITING OF POETRY

Brian Powell

AN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME IN THE WRITING OF POETRY

by

Brian Powell

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Department of Education
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

AIM AND JUSTIFICATION

The aim of this study is to develop an instructional programme designed to assist teachers wishing to guide their students in the writing of poetry. The fact that at present no such programme exists provides a justification for the undertaking.

Much creative work attempted by students in recent years has been regarded as merely an amiable, aimless pursuit, affording the student entertainment, but little in the way of training or lasting benefit. This study seeks to demonstrate that such need not be the case. It will attempt to achieve a synthesis of old and new approaches and to combine the discipline derived from writing poetry with the enjoyment gained from doing so.

LIMITATIONS IN SCOPE AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

The study is limited to proposing an instructional programme for teachers and students and does not attempt to deal with any of the following:

(i) a philosophic defence of the values associated with the writing of poetry;

(ii) a literary-critical review of the characteristics of student verse;

(iii) a qualitative evaluation of work obtained from numerous teachers and students;

(iv) an analysis of the psychological factors prompting students to write.

As this study is not of a technical nature, all terms used are to be interpreted according to their commonly accepted meanings unless otherwise stipulated.

The term poetry is considered as a form of writing more concise than prose, characterized by concrete imagery and expression and not necessarily concerned with rhyme, meter or line length.

The term student applies to pupils of school level from about ten years of age upwards. It is assumed that a programme will be started as soon as the student reaches the maturity demanded by the introductory exercises and that it will continue thereafter. Hence few references will be made in the study to ages or grades; pace will be left largely to the judgement of the teacher.

The term Form applies to any device offering structure or pattern for poetic expression; the term Content applies to the material and subject-matter of any poem; the term Analysis applies to standards of a critical nature used in the evaluation of poetry.

A further term developed in the Content stage is the trigger, a device designed to provide the student with vivid subject-matter suggestions "live" in the classroom.

The term programme is used to describe a series of carefully designed guide-posts all pointing toward the same goal. It is recognized that the writing of poetry cannot, strictly speaking, be taught; the student must be directed in such a way as to experience it for himself.

THE METHOD AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The method employed consists of analysing present work in the field, developing principles which attempt to reconcile conflicts in theory and establishing a programme for guiding the poetry writing of students.

The chapters that follow will be devoted to a review of the literature, an outline of principles governing any practice, a development of the stages of a programme and a concluding summary and chart.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The aim of this section is to present a review of the theories accepted in the field and to discover the criteria which govern the effective teaching of the writing of poetry. To this end, two methods of analysis will be used: firstly, a "horizontal" method, whereby the work of authorities will be treated on the basis of commonly-accepted principles; secondly, a "vertical" method, whereby the contribution of each authority will be treated individually. It is hoped that the combination of these methods will not only provide a review of the present work on the subject, but that it will also help to establish a basis from which to develop a comprehensive programme.

A number of principles stand out in the literature and are advanced by the authorities whose names are cited hereafter. It is understood that those referred to as "authorities" would probably find this term grandiose; nonetheless, their contributions deserve appropriate recognition.

A "HORIZONTAL" ANALYSIS

Mearns,[1] Reeves,[2] Langdon[3] and others emphasize that the writing of poetry can be a valuable and enjoyable undertaking, one worthy of concentration and effort. They reason that unless the young writer approaches his task with optimism, his chances of success are reduced; he should have a desire to write, be captivated by the prospect of looking for subjects and want to improve his technique.

Others, like Hook,[4] emphasize the need for preparing the student by giving him writing guidelines before he starts; they argue that every beginner requires direction and that unless this is provided the novice may flounder. Graves[5] advises that students do some research on their topics and make notes before beginning. Applegate[6] and Druce[7] advocate preliminary discussion directed by the

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1. H. Mearns, Creative Power. New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1958, pp. 4 ff.

2. J. Reeves, Teaching Poetry. London: Heinemann, 1964, pp. 87 ff.

3. M. Langdon, Let the Children Write Poetry. London: Longmans, 1961, pp. 1 ff.

4. J. N. Hook, Writing Creatively. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1963, pp. 231 ff.

5. R. Graves, Poetic Unreason and Other Studies. London: Cecil Palmer, 1925, pp. 27 ff.

6. M. Applegate, Helping Children Write. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Co., 1961, pp. 12 ff.

7. R. Druce, The Eye of Innocence. Leicester: Brockhampton Press, 1965, pp. 23-29.

teacher on the particulars of any subject.

Another group of experts, among them Feeney,[1] Walter[2] and Druce[3] suggest giving the novice some guidance in the structure and design of poetry, an element which will be referred to hereafter as Form. They reason that unless the beginner is offered advice as to how to put down his ideas, he may simply produce a confused jumble of words with no coherent pattern or design.[4]

Certain instructors have underlined the value of providing the inexperienced writer with specific metrical patterns to copy as a guide for his early efforts. Feeney[5] suggests the tanka (a traditional Japanese poetic form with a fixed syllable count), while Waley,[6] primarily known as a translator, proposes the haiku (a Chinese form of three short lines), and Lucas[7] advocates the limerick. These writers reason

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1. J. Feeney, "Teaching Students to Write Poetry," English Journal, LIV, No. 5 (May, 1965), 398 ff.

2. N. W. Walter, Let Them Write Poetry. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962, pp. 23-24.

3. Druce, op. cit., pp. 44-50.

4. J. M. T. Hartman, Writing Poetry. Los Angeles: National Poetry Association, 1961, pp. 165 ff.

5. Feeney, op. cit., p. 401.

6. A. Waley, Chinese Poems. London: Unwin Books, 1961, p. 28.

7. F. S. Lucas, Teaching Poetry in the Elementary School. Vancouver: Copp Clark Co., 1965, p. 52.

that the earliest exposure most children have to poetry comes through some metrically regular form such as the nursery rhyme and hence their own first attempts at creation should follow similar patterns of rhythm.

Other experts such as Applegate[1], Baldwin[2] and Widdows[3] stress the value of offering beginners specific suggestions as to subject-matter, a factor that will be referred to hereafter as the Content element. Too often, they reason, is the novice simply told to write about anything that enters his mind and he soon runs short of original ideas.

Some writers such as Druce[4] and Walter[5] also refer to the necessity for a regular assessment of technique, a factor referred to hereafter as the Analysis element. They stress that without a conscious attempt to develop the skills involved, poetry writing ceases to

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1. Applegate, op. cit., pp. 10 ff.

2. M. Baldwin, Poetry Without Tears, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1959, pp. 52 ff.

3. J. Widdows, "The Experience of Poetry in School", Writing Poetry, ed. V.V.Brown, London: Oxford Press, 1953, pp. 134 ff.

4. Druce, op. cit., pp. 64-71.

5. Walter, op. cit., pp. 142-145.

be a discipline, and degenerates into random and repetitive activity, albeit entertaining or enjoyable.

Several educators such as Walsh[1] advocate the group writing of poetry, wherein each member of a class contributes a single line to the completed piece. Discussion takes place before and after each line is added and every child thus has a part in the group success, thereby developing his own confidence.

A number of experts, among them Druce[2] and Mearns[3], underline a principle that the effective writing of poetry demands precision and semantic discipline, and hence they stress the importance of revising and polishing everything that is produced. They assert that part of the value in the process of creation lies in discovering the precise word for every situation, and in discarding expressions that prove inappropriate.

A final small group, among them Langdon[4], Widdows[5] and Druce[6], emphasize the value of using the actual class periods as the centre of all writing activity. In this way, the students are provided with a certain charged

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1. W. Walsh, "The Value of Writing Poetry", Young Writers, Young Readers, ed. B. Ford, London: Hutchinson of London, 1960, p. 90.

2. Druce, op. cit., p. 68.

3. Mearns, op. cit., p. 246 ff.

4. Langdon, op. cit., p. 14 ff.

5. Widdows, op. cit., p. 137.

6. Druce, op. cit., pp. 33-37.

atmosphere within which to create, an element that will be referred to hereafter as the tension of the classroom situation. These experts advise that confronting the student with a specific time limit will induce a pressure enabling him to produce something, where an open-ended time extension would probably yield no result.

An attempt has been made in the preceding analysis to highlight the principles stated by accepted authorities on student poetry writing. The same order of points as above will now be adopted in examining these principles in a more critical light. The reasoning of some authorities will be used to point out apparent weaknesses or omissions in the work of others.

Although most experts in the field realize the value of inducing students to write poetry, few[1] propose any programme for achieving their ends, making little attempt to relate practice to accepted theory, or to inter-relate elements such as Form, Content and Analysis. Their work appears either largely random and experimental, as in the case of Applegate[2] and Lucas[3], or where some type of programme has been developed, it is abbreviated and inappropriate for more than a restricted number of periods, as in the case of Widdows[4] and Feeney[5].

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1. Hook, op. cit., pp. 231 ff.
2. Applegate, op. cit.
3. Lucas, op. cit.
4. Widdows, op. cit.
5. Feeney, op. cit.

Few instructors[1] present students with adequate preparation for writing, nor do they give sufficient explanation as to the aims, expectations or goals of their endeavours. They simply ask students to get something on paper, disregarding other aspects of preparation.

Many experts, among them Mearns[2], Reeves[3], McMaster[4] and the text Stop, Look and Write[5], fail to provide concrete Form suggestions for their students, or to give them any ideas as to how to structure their expression, On the opposite hand, others such as Baldwin[6], Widdows[7] and Walter[8] do suggest stages in the presentation of Form, but these seem either disjointed, or inappropriate in sequence of difficulty. Some educators such as Lucas[9] offer specific rhythmical patterns for the novice to copy; others such as Mearns[10] contend, however, that most

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1. Hartman, op. cit., pp. 21-36.
2. Mearns, op. cit.
3. Reeves, op. cit.
4. McMaster, Creative English. Vancouver: Copp Clark Co., 1956, pp. 160-163.
5. H. D. Leavitt and D. Sohn, Stop, Look and Write. New York: Bantam Pathfinder, 1964.
6. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 52 ff.
7. Widdows, op. cit., p. 134 ff.
8. Walter, op. cit., p. 112 ff.
9. Lucas, op. cit., p. 50.
10. Mearns, op. cit., p. 135.

beginners find the demands of metrical structure not only frustrating, but also artificial.

Many writers, among them Reeves[1] and Cooper[2], fail to provide concrete guidance in Content. Little suggestion is given as to material, and thus the student is left largely on his own in picking a subject. In this regard, the experience of Mearns[3] and Langdon[4] has shown that most young writers can provide their own topics for only so long before looking elsewhere (probably to the teacher) for imaginative suggestions. Other authorities such as Widdows[5] and the authors of the text Reflections[6] do make Content suggestions, but these are so strictly outlined and inflexible that they afford little freedom for individual development. Unless a student is given latitude to expand his ideas as he wants, much of the value of any creative attempt may be lost.

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1. Reeves, op. cit.

2. G. Cooper and M. Hourd, Coming into their Own. London: Heinemann, 1959, pp. 8 ff.

3. Mearns, op. cit.

4. Langdon, op. cit.

5. Widdows, op. cit., p. 135 ff.

6. S. Clements, J. Dixon and L. Strata, Reflections. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Little emphasis is given by most educators to stages of Analysis, such as critical judgement of work produced, and conscious evaluation of writing skills and techniques. Satisfaction seems to rest merely on getting something out,[1] perhaps a reasonable short-term goal, but one that should not satisfy the ambitious teacher or student in the long run.

Certain writers stress the value of group creative activity. Walsh[2] is an advocate of this procedure, which would appear, particularly for the student with an active imagination, to impose a restriction on the complete development of his own ideas.

Hourd and Cooper[3] stand against the revision or rewriting of any poetry produced in the white heat of inspiration. Most authorities, however, have found from experience that few students can produce satisfactory work without any alteration and that the polishing process affords discipline and lasting values for the young writer.

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1. Hook, op. cit., p. 233.
2. Walsh, op. cit., pp. 90 ff.
3. Cooper and Hourd, op. cit., pp. 130 ff.

A final group advocates doing all creative assignments outside class as homework rather than employing the actual periods for instruction, writing and assessment. Feeney[1] belongs to this group, because he objects to any time restriction imposed by the classroom session itself; by doing so, however, he fails to take into account the principle of tension developed in Chapter Three.

In summary, then, many authorities recognize the value of guiding students in the writing of poetry, but few have developed any comprehensive programme for doing so. They generally emphasize isolated principles and concepts, but do not try to inter-relate Form, Content and Analysis elements as this study does. An attempt will be made in the programme that follows to resolve any questions concerning classroom practice which persist as a source of dispute.

A "VERTICAL" ANALYSIS

In order to further document this review of the literature, a "vertical" method of analysis will now be used in outlining what each of the individual authorities referred to above has to say about various processes involved in the creation of poetry. Emphasis will be placed first

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1. Feeney, op. cit.

on the positive contributions made by each writer and then on an attempt to point out what appear to be the weaknesses in each individual approach.

Hughes Mearns, a pioneer in the field, presents a useful suggestion on the basic attitude required of the teacher. "We should receive each crude product of creative effort asking only if it is individual and sincerely meant."[1] He gives sound advice on Analysis. "We usually make no reference to principles of composition until the perfect illustration of their use appears in the work of the learner."[2] He also takes the following stand on formal metrical patterns: "Experience has made me suspicious of all rhymed verses done by children. Rhyming is not their language; at best it is an imitation of an adult form of writing."[3]

Mearns recognizes the need for a clear and simple method. His programme, however, appears to be somewhat incomplete and he makes little reference to Form stages as a guide to his students.

James Reeves appreciates the values to be gained from creative endeavours and cautions other teachers against an error which he admits to making: "We attempt to teach children to write by making them write in prose.

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1. Mearns, op. cit., p. 245.
2. Ibid, p. 248.
3. Ibid, p. 135.

We should teach them to write verse. My years of teaching poetry were wasted because I did not realize this simple but revolutionary truth soon enough."[1] He also makes a statement which might perhaps hold true for many other teachers: "I know of no tricks or "stunts" for the teaching of verse-composition: it will vary in usefulness from pupil to pupil as a piece of simple vocabulary work or word-manipulation, to an effort of artistic creation."[2]

Reeves speaks elsewhere[3] of giving virtual freedom of Form and subject matter to young writers. On this point, he might perhaps be criticized by other authorities for failing to provide sufficiently definite guidelines, or a coherent programme for his students to follow.

H. F. Seely makes valuable references to the advantages to be derived from getting children to write. He might be faulted, however, for providing only a few concrete suggestions for enabling them to do so. He quotes at length from poems produced by his students and then appears forced to admit: "None of these pupils had done any formal work in poetic techniques; I am sure

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1. Reeves, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Ibid, p. 87.
3. Ibid, pp. 68-69.

that not one of them knew then, or knows now, what figures of speech he employed."[1] Thus his students appear to receive little preparation before they begin and scant guidance as to Form and technique as they attempt to proceed with their writing.

In order to help the teacher provide some specific Content direction, Maureen Applegate proposes a number of useful devices such as a poem of best lines, favourite gripes, poems for special days, and the idea sheet. She recognizes another important factor in the process of creation by stating that inspiration must ultimately come, not from the adult, but from the child. In this respect, the quotation she cites from another teacher is revealing: "I thought of the best idea for a poem on the way to school this morning, but I had the worst time getting my first-graders manoeuvred into saying it."[2]

Applegate makes a claim which some other authorities might challenge: "Creativeness cannot be taught; it can only be released and guided. This does not demand creative teachers trained in creative writing; it calls for receptive and understanding teachers."[3] A more fully developed programme than Applegate outlines is probably required: "Understanding" by itself may not be enough help to the student.

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1. H. F. Seely, Enjoying Poetry in School. Richmond, Va.: Johnson Publishing Co., 1931, p. 235.

2. Applegate, op. cit., p. 16.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

"There is only one aim in teaching poetry in the classroom: that is, that the pupils should enjoy it."[1] So writes Michael Baldwin, who also states that "the best results are obtained in the teaching of poetry if it is treated as an Art rather than as an academic subject."[2] Baldwin does not present a coherent plan or progression, however, and the stages that he does suggest appear disjointed and might prove confusing to inexperienced writers. Baldwin proposes the following exercise for beginners:

"As an illustration I have never known this one to fail:

> What a wonderful bird the frog are,
> When he sit he stand almost,
> When he hop he fly almost,
> And he ain't got a tail hardly, neither;
> That's all I want to say about the frog."[3]

With no further preparation than this, Baldwin asks the children what they would like to write about, and elicits ideas "the more outrageous or humorous the suggestions the better."[4]

At an only slightly later stage, and despite the fact that he offers little guidance in Form, Baldwin issues lists of words and asks his students to use as many as possible in different poems. Such assignments as the two mentioned above appear demanding for the beginner.

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1. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 39.
2. Ibid., p. 47.
3. Ibid., p. 52.
4. Ibid., p. 53.

J. Feeney proposes a programme to be carried out over seven weekend assignments, with discussion during intervening class periods. He proceeds in three stages, moving from the Japanese tanka through blank verse, and concluding with stanzaic fixed form. "Here, then, is a method of teaching poetry through writing. It is hoped that the students' manner of writing a poem becomes their manner of reading a poem: first to approach a poem as a communication of experience and then to appreciate the imagery and economy of poetic language. This is the method's major value."[1]

Feeney does not develop his programme beyond these three stages, however, and is probably more concerned that his students study poetry than write it. Hence his motives are somewhat different from other experts: nonetheless, the fact that all writing is done outside school appears to be a limitation in his approach. When the creation of poetry is assigned as homework, the temptation to refer to other sources is always present, interest is not necessarily high, and the tension of the actual classroom situation is lacking. As David Gold expresses it: "Perfect peace of mind and freedom from pressure very often do not result in high productivity."[2]

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1. Feeney, op. cit., p. 398.

2. D. Gold, "Dimensions of Creativity", unpublished project, Montreal: May 1966, p. 8.

In her scheme for intensive writing, Margaret Langdon presents several imaginative, individual Form and Content suggestions such as a framework using a spider as the topic.[1] Her total programme appears, however, to lack both a background based on theory and sufficient consecutive stages of development to last for more than a few weeks in classroom use. She admits to a certain lack of Content direction in her statement: "Beyond telling the children to write what they felt and to use words which came into their minds, I left the expression to come as a result of the emotion rather than as a result of thought."[2]

J. Widdows proposes that the teacher guide the writing of his students by presenting a specific Content situation such as "Imagine that you are skating on a pond alone at midnight. Write how you would feel."[3] Widdows adopts this positive Content approach with his young writers, reasoning that "the subject presented should be brief and without garnishment, and should contain no more than one problem."[4] His approach appears limited, however, as he offers a single Content proposal only for each period.

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1. Langdon, op. cit., p. 8.
2. Ibid, p. 19.
3. Widdows, op. cit., p. 134.
4. Ibid, p. 135.

Linked in a consecutive programme with a variety of different stages and choices, Widdows' suggestions might prove more beneficial to the student.

E. Lucas is a supporter of creative work for the young. "One of the best ways of creating interest in poetry and an awareness of its worth is to have pupils attempt writing it."[1] In order to enable them to do so, he suggests giving beginners an introductory line that must be developed into a poem with lines of similar metre and rhyme. As has already been outlined, he is an advocate of rigid structure. Like Feeney, however, Lucas is using writing as a means to a different end; he presumably is not primarily concerned with achieving any intrinsically good poetry. Many authorities would claim Lucas supports the imitation of existing forms to the exclusion of other equally worthwhile values.

W. Walsh suggests that all members of a class should participate in the group composition of poetry. He also makes a statement which appears to be a sound contribution to the theory: "When the image is the principle of growth, and the rhythm arises from inner, rather than outer pressures, then the poem grows organically, and there is no fatal gap between theme and expression."[2] He has recognized, in theory at least,

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1. Lucas, op. cit., p. 50.
2. Walsh, op. cit., p. 89.

the need for an inter-relationship between Content and Form, but does not seem to have developed any such relationship in his own practice.

Nina Walter makes a number of useful Content suggestions; however, she errs, in the opinion of other experts, by trying to force children to respond to situations as adult poets would. She tends to impose her own standards of interpretation upon her students in the course of her Content introduction. Perhaps Miss Walter in this way fails to meet her young writers where they are in terms of interests and maturity, and hence fails to capture their understanding and enthusiasm.

Robert Druce emphasizes the importance of selecting the precise word for every situation, and defends the semantic discipline involved in doing so. Few would argue with his statement: "Only a way of teaching the uses of English that will re-establish words as individual, meaningful units of thought, that will re-discover for each child writer the power and ambiance of each word, will provide any degree of immunity to the pleading of the propagandist. And I feel that poetry can provide such an answer."[1] Some authorities would claim, however, that

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1. Druce, op. cit., p. 22.

Druce stresses semantic values to the exclusion of others and that he does little to provide his students with Content suggestions, or criteria for Analysis.

Marjorie Hourd and Gertrude Cooper contribute much to an understanding of the psychological considerations of how and why young people write what they do. The authors refer to their book Coming into their Own as a "descriptive and critical account of how young boys and girls sort out their impressions and gradually find ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings."[1] It might be claimed, however, that the whole approach of Hourd and Cooper lacks direction. They are convinced that a poem, once produced, should not be altered, and have obviously transmitted this feeling to their students. "It is a striking fact that out of one thousand two hundred and sixty contributions submitted by the group, revisions made by the children on their own initiative occurred in only fifteen."[2] They also provide little Form or Content guidance at any stage ("Here was another job they could perform without instruction from the adult")[3] and in so doing run the risk of eventual directionless creative activity on the part of their students. From an analysis of the poems produced, this appears to have been the result for many at least.

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1. Cooper and Hourd, op. cit., p. 1.
2. Ibid, p. 131.
3. Ibid, p. 7.

W. C. McMaster supplies some useful individual Content suggestions by providing exercises under such headings as appealing to the imagination, suggesting ideas and feelings, and pleasing the ear.[1] There are no apparent principles governing the sequence, however, and he offers little guidance on Form other than to state: "In poetry the units of expression flow together in a pattern that has a rhythm far more regular than the rhythm of prose."[2]

Two recently published texts, while not specifically on the writing of poetry, are nonetheless worthy of mention.

Reflections presents specific situations as Content suggestions,[3] much as Widdows does. These situations are generally followed by leading questions designed to help the writer to shape his ideas. Perhaps the weakness of the text is that it provides a restricted Form framework, and little freedom for Content development.

The authors of Stop, Look and Write employ a skilful use of pictures to increase the observational powers of the student.[4] They train the young writer to be sensitive to visual stimuli, but pay little attention

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1. McMaster, op. cit., p. 159-162.
2. Ibid, p. 163.
3. Clements, Dixon and Strata, op. cit., pp. 40 ff.
4. Leavitt and Sohn, op. cit., pp. 55 ff.

to the other senses, or to techniques of expression in general.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to establish from the literature the criteria which govern the writing of poetry by students. It is hoped that this material has provided a background for the more detailed development of principles to be undertaken in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING A PROGRAMME

This chapter is devoted to drawing together and reconciling principles observed both in the literature and in the pilot work conducted by the writer himself. It seeks to select concepts emerging from the literature, and to resolve conflicts existing between authorities, thereby providing the framework for a comprehensive programme.

As has already been shown in Chapter Two, numerous authors stress the values to be derived from writing poetry. Many have experimented with various elements of a method, but few have developed a series of stages that could be termed a programme.

Before any programme can be developed, a body of principles must be established as a background. A first group of criteria concerns the provision of Form, a term which in this study refers generally to shape and design rather than exclusively to metre and rhyme. A number of authors recognize the value of offering guidance with structure, but few actually do so. The writer has found that an initial obstacle

every student encounters comes in answering the question: "I have an idea, but how should I put it down? What shape should it take?"

Experience indicates that Form stages should progress from relative rigidity and tight structure, to relative freedom and lack of structure; in the early stages, most students will welcome definite guidelines as to Form, while later they should have acquired the background required to make their own choices. These considerations suggest the establishment of a principle of structure: definite guidance in Form stages should be offered to the student, progressing from relative rigidity to relative freedom.

A second group of principles concerns the provision of Content. Various instructors recognize the necessity of providing subject-matter suggestions: in practice, however, their suggestions are often too strictly outlined, as is the case with Widdows, and hence do not allow scope for individual development. Nonetheless, since most students benefit from them, a principle of Content might be established: suggestions for topics should be made, giving a selection and offering latitude for individual interpretation.

Furthermore, a number of authorities, and particularly those who support Activist concepts such

as Miel[1] and Torrance[2], propose that subjects be related to the interests and experiences of the student himself. They emphasize that Content may be based on first-hand experience and personal involvement. Boris Ford[3] advises that the student should feel a "sense of urgency" about his subject before he begins, thus avoiding artificiality or forced expression. These considerations suggest the establishment of a principle of personal involvement: the student should not be asked to write on topics about which he knows little.

Robert Druce encourages students to reflect their mood at the moment of writing, and to retain it throughout any piece; if they are depressed they should show this in their work, and not attempt to fabricate something gay. Druce states: "If expression is to be genuine, it must be left to flower, not pruned or uprooted or trimmed to fit a convenient flower pot of the teacher's own supplying."[4] This consideration suggests the establishment of a principle of unity of mood: as far as possible, the same feeling and tone should be retained throughout the writing of each piece.

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1. A. Miel, Creativity in Teaching. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1961.

2. E. P. Torrance, Guiding Creative Talent. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962.

3. B. Ford, op. cit., p. 2.

4. Druce, op. cit., p. 73.

Robert Graves advocates that the student do preparatory work on his subjects to provide background material for the actual writing. Being compelled to record impressions, the beginner is encouraged to use his powers of observation more acutely than he might otherwise do. Hence from Graves' experience a principle of readiness of Content might be established: whenever appropriate, preliminary work should be undertaken on location, and notes compiled as a preparation for the subject.

A third group of principles concerns the provision of Analysis. Recent trends in language teaching emphasize a learning by doing method, adopted to eliminate the mere memorizing of meaningless rules and to relate theory more directly to practice; the student first creates something and only later analyzes the structure of his work. In this respect many educators agree that a review of progress is necessary while any programme is under way. Such analysis is generally lacking in present practice, however, and the discussion of writing techniques and skills is usually neglected. These considerations suggest the establishment of a principle of Analysis: the student should undertake regular literary evaluation throughout any programme, and in a degree appropriate to the stage of his development.

Numerous theorists, among them Whitehead[1] with his concept of cycles, and those who advocate programmed learning[2], emphasize the importance to the student of knowing directly after he has performed any task what success he has attained. This concept suggests the establishment of a principle of immediate reinforcement after writing: the student should have an opportunity to observe the reaction of others to his work as soon as it has been written and should also attempt a prose assessment of each effort. An extension of this concept suggests a principle of recapitulation: the student should look back over his work after every four or five creative sessions, evaluating it in relation to the aims of the programme as a whole.

A conflict exists among authors concerning the wisdom of revising work once it has been produced. Some, such as Hourd and Cooper, are opposed to any alteration of original expression, feeling that re-writing damages the initial inspiration and might have psychological repercussions for the child. Among those who are concerned primarily with poetry, however, general agreement exists on the values to be derived from polishing and re-writing. Their experiences suggest the establishment of a principle of revision: the

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1. A. N. Whitehead, The Aims of Education. London: Williams and Co., 1946, pp. 10 ff.

2. Such writers as C. E. Skinner are referred to here.

student should be encouraged to re-work his original expression, preferably keeping some record of his successive alterations.

Another group of principles concerns the conduct of the creative sessions. Although a limitation is imposed by the length of the period, students who have written under this condition find the restriction of time an aid rather than a hindrance to their performance. Harold Loukes, Reader in Education at Oxford University, observes from his experience that the hive of productivity formed when all students work together under pressure results in success for most.[1] These considerations suggest the establishment of a principle of tension: the classroom session itself should be used for creative work, and the student encouraged to do his writing within it.

Educational psychologists stress that concentration is an element contributing to positive results. The student should be trained to realize that his imagination and memory are powerful instruments, and that four walls should not present a barrier to their active use; the more he can divorce himself from his actual surroundings, and the less he is aware of the presence of his classmates, the better. These considerations

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1. Statement made during a lecture at Oxford University attended by the writer in April, 1963.

suggest the establishment of a principle of concentration: distraction should be avoided during writing sessions, and silence maintained in the classroom.

A final group of principles concerns the attitude and judgment of the teacher who is conducting the programme. Experience has shown that encouragement generally provides the strongest incentive for the young writer; understanding should be displayed in approaching his problems and in suggesting solutions to them. An awareness should also exist of differing levels of ability and types of thought processes within every classroom.

Cronbach makes a useful distinction between convergent and divergent thinking[1] and suggests that the teacher should realize that he is dealing in every class with a large number of individual students, each one of them manifesting a different type of thinking process. As Cronbach has stated: "If we regard as reasonable the hypothesis that some instructional method can be found to capitalize on any intellectual ability, we will then need to classify pupils according to their best aptitudes and find a method for each type of pupil."[2] These considerations suggest the establishment of a principle of flexibility of approach: an attempt should

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1. L. J. Cronbach, Educational Psychology. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962, p.150 ff.

2. Ibid, p. 275.

be made to appeal to the various levels and types of creative ability within each classroom at different stages of a programme.

In applying any of the principles suggested in this chapter, the teacher should realize that it is dangerous, if not impossible, to establish hard-and-fast rules; the circumstances of each particular situation should determine the course of action to be adopted. This realization should suggest the acceptance of a principle of flexibility in the inter-relationship of the elements of any programme: the judgment of each individual teacher should be the determining factor in whatever procedures and sequence of stages are followed.

CHAPTER IV

A PROGRAMME: THE FORM SERIES

The next three chapters present the outline of a poetry-writing programme based on principles already established in the study.[1] A brief description will first be given of a typical classroom creative session, to be followed by the details of the Form, Content and Analysis series.

The programme is composed of a number of individual periods, each one a self-contained unit to be completed in the classroom itself within a normal forty- or forty-five-minute time limit. Every session should have specific aims, both immediate and contributing to the scope of the programme as a whole.

In accordance with the principle of readiness of content, the student might be required to do some note taking and observation of his subject at first-hand before coming to class. During the first five or ten minutes of the actual period, the teacher should discuss the topic, ask questions about form and content, suggest guidelines for possible writing approaches and generally help the student achieve a creative frame of mind.

After this brief introduction, the student should be given approximately twenty-five minutes to work on his poem.

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[1]The reader should refer throughout the next three chapters to the principles already established in Chapter III above.

In accordance with the principle of concentration, it is suggested that silence be maintained during the creative session. The young writer should realize that he must concentrate if he is to produce his best results, and hence the less he is aware of the presence of his classmates, the better. The discipline involved in working independent of surroundings should prove valuable to him in many respects.

In actual classroom practice, he should make a rough draft of his poem on the left-hand page of a special exercise book kept for the purpose. This left page serves as a draftingboard and record of successive alterations of his work. The right-hand page is reserved for the completed poem and the comments on its success or failure which he should be asked to make in accordance with the principle of immediate reinforcement after writing.

Following the twenty-five minutes devoted to composition, opportunity should be given for volunteers to read their work. These concluding ten minutes are vital as a reinforcement to the writer himself and as evidence to the rest of the class that the period has been successful. Students who have not quite completed their poems should be encouraged to re-work them at home, and return to the next session with a polished version. As has already been established in chapter three, most authorities agree that polishing and alteration are

required if each individual is to attain his potential and avoid loose expression. Precise writing is an art and a discipline, and should be recognized as such.

It is suggested that the programme be conducted on a one period per week basis and that in accordance with the principle of recapitulation, a period be devoted to a re-appraisal of work after every four or five regular writing sessions.

THE FORM SERIES

The aim of this series is to outline the consecutive Form stages through which any teacher using the programme should lead his students. In accordance with the principle of structure, it moves from rigid structure in the early steps when the student has had little writing experience, to virtual freedom in the later stages, when he should have sufficient background to select his own appropriate Form. For convenience sake, the introduction to the programme as a whole will be included at the start of this section. The various stages of the series will be presented in the following order: introduction, perception-expression exercises, Dylan Thomas "portraits", the form

poem, haikus, completed image variations, formal metrical patterns, "prime the pump" patterns, formless structure, universal framework, and finally free form and analysis.

I INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME

The presentation of this introductory section by the teacher should be brief and closely related to the literary interests of the beginner. It should dispel, wherever possible, any misconceptions about the nature of poetry and ideally, should generate enthusiasm and self confidence in the student. The teacher should ask several leading questions as a means of establishing basic understanding and principles. Some suggested questions and answers follow:

What is the aim of the programme?

It hopes to provide each student with the inspiration and technique required for the writing of poetry, and eventually to enable him to express his ideas clearly, fully and to his satisfaction.

What are the benefits to be derived from following the programme?

These should be numerous: to lead the student toward the appreciation of all poetry; to give him a further command of words and an exact use of language; to provide him with a more complete understanding of the problems and

techniques of the practising writer; to provide him with an outlet for the release of ideas and emotions. It is suggested that these and other valid answers to the question, be elicited, as far as possible, from the students themselves rather than merely presented by the teacher.

What special skills does the poet have?

(i) The poet has a lucid way of expressing things.

(ii) He has an accurate way of looking at things.

(iii) He has an acute way of experiencing things.

A discussion of these skills should provide the student with an awareness that will be of value in all his writing attempts.

What exactly <u>is</u> poetry?

Every teacher will respond to this question in a slightly different way. Some may approach an answer in reverse by stressing that poetry is <u>not</u> necessarily verse, nor need it be rhymed or metrical. It is certainly not wholly devoted to serious or noble themes or to subjects traditionally regarded as poetic; nor is it composed exclusively of words which the Oxford Dictionary identifies as (Poet).

What then <u>is</u> poetry? Definitions are numerous but the following might be considered as possible examples:

(i) "Poetry is the language of the imaginations and the passions." (William Hazlitt).

(ii) "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds." (Percy Shelley)

(iii) "Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits." (Carl Sandburg)

(iv) "Poetry is, among other things, a kind of hypnosis; it puts one part of us asleep in order that another part may become aware, more receptive, more active." (C. Day Lewis)

This final definition touches on an important concept. Poetry need not be primarily concerned with the logical faculties; it is therefore somewhat different <u>in kind</u> from other academic school subjects. The logical faculties are that 'part' which poetry 'puts to sleep' (This statement must not be taken literally, or out of context, however.) Nobody wears his thoughts and emotions on his sleeve. They lie to some degree hidden beneath the veneer everyone presents to the world. But, however well hidden, exist they must for no man is without dreams, longings, or fears regardless of how much he may try to disguise them. It is to these hidden depths, to the real self, that poetry speaks. Here, then, may exist the basis for another definition: poetry expresses sincere meaning in depth.

The teacher need not dwell on the problem of definition, but should emphasize to his students that poetry can be written about anything and everything. It is usually a product of the impact upon the writer of an image, emotion, or idea, and may involve description, narration, exposition or mood; hence its range of potential subjects is limitless.

This section on definition might be completed by the reading of several poems chosen for their diverse structure, vivid imagery, and appeal to the interest of the student. A captivating, fast-moving introduction is vital to the success of the programme, and hence in practice this section of discussion and orientation should occupy probably not more than two class periods at most.

II PERCEPTION - EXPRESSION TRANSITION EXERCISES

Under this heading are presented seven sub-stages with the following titles: power of observation; inventing a title; the art of comparison; sensory discrimination; choice of diction; figurative language; and developing the imagination. These seven preparatory stages concentrate first on sensory perception, then on word usage, and finally on developing the imagination. Among their aims are:

(i) to provide a background of the skills required by any student before he can attempt the writing of poetry.

(ii) to increase interest in the work by providing a lively series of original tests, each with a definite goal.

(iii) to use the prose background of the student as a stepping-stone to his creation of poetry.

The exercises are thus intended as a preparation for the young writer and should be covered at a pace appropriate to his level of ability.

Power of Observation: With little formal introduction, the teacher should display three or four large pictures to the class each featuring color, movement or some other distinctive characteristic. After giving a few moments for observation, he should cover up the pictures and ask a series of questions (requiring either oral or one-word written answers) as a test of what has actually been seen. The results should demonstrate that most students do not observe accurately without some specific prior training or preparation. In order to emphasize this point, the teacher should show the pictures again, focusing on the details which most failed to spot in the first instance.

This theme could be extended by asking each student the color of his own stockings, the licence number of his father's car, the nature of the pictures on the walls of his classroom, or any other seemingly obvious detail. The purpose of these exercises is to develop in each student an awareness of his deficiencies of observation and a corresponding readiness to observe.

Inventing a Title A number of unusual or thought-provoking pictures should be displayed and the student asked to concentrate on some specific element of each such as sense, action, feeling, or idea. The young writer attempts to capture the essence of the picture by giving it a title in the form of a single word, phrase, or complete sentence.

The appropriateness of various titles might be tested by class discussion of questions such as the following:

(i) Is the title clear and accurate?

(ii) Does it enable the viewer to see in a new light?

(iii) Has it added a new dimension of understanding for him?

By attempting to capture the spirit of a picture in words, the student is receiving training in a basic skill of the poet.

The Art of Comparison A number of pairs of pictures should be displayed and the student required to pick out similarities and contrasts in them by using such criteria of judgment as form, color, motion, or spatial relationships. In order to encourage conciseness, written responses should not exceed a single sentence in length.

Sensory Discrimination As all exercises have so far concentrated exclusively on visual perception, those suggested in this section are designed to appeal to the

other senses. The student is asked to close his eyes while a number of sensory stimuli are presented, either to the whole class at once, as in the case of sound and smell, or to individuals one at a time, as with touch and taste. He is then asked to:

(i) Identify the stimulus in a single word.

(ii) Describe it as accurately as he can in a single sentence without mentioning it directly or giving obvious clues as to its identity.

If every student in a class has been exposed to a different stimulus, individual answers should be read out and guesses made as to what each has tried to describe. If, on the other hand, the same stimulus has been used for everyone, a group verdict should be rendered as to the most effective description. The teacher might arrange his stimuli according to senses, using some of the following suggestions:

(i) Sound: rain, bird cries (or other recorded sounds), sharpening a pencil, tearing paper.

(ii) Smell: perfume, coffee, pepper, sawdust, newly-baked bread.

(iii) Touch: velvet or silk, plasticine, sponge, soap.

(iv) Taste: liquorice, cheese, fruit-flavored gum drops (or other sensation feasible for classroom use).

The aim of these exercises is to make the student conscious of senses and elements previously unconsidered. In this way the teacher attempts to compel precise observation and expression.

Choice of Diction The following exercises are closely related to, and are designed as a specific extension of, those outlined above. They are intended to demonstrate that selecting the exact word for any given context is an art demanding precision and care. The teacher should emphasize in his introduction that a notable difference of detail between poetry and prose lies in the greater weight of meaning carried by the individual word in poetry. Several appropriate statements such as the following might aid in his illustration:

(i) "The difference between the right word and almost the right word is like the difference between lightning and lightning-bug". (Edgar Allen Poe)

(ii) "The business of words in prose is primarily to state; in poetry not only to state but also and sometimes primarily, to suggest." (Livingston Lowes)

(iii) "The meaning of a word is not a set cut-off thing like the move of knight or pawn on a chessboard. It comes up with roots, with associations." (Ezra Pound)

Other criteria in word selection should also be emphasized, such as originality, simplicity and restraint. The element of restraint is one that tends to be overlooked by those working with young writers and hence it should command special attention. Too often the beginner is misled into believing that exaggerations and superlatives are the marks of the best writing.

The exercises of this section are designed to promote originality, simplicity and restraint. The individual teacher, however, should modify any of the specific exercises suggested below as he sees fit.

(i) Make a list of words as follows:

a. Words that suggest pleasing smells.

b. Words that suggest harsh sounds.

c. Words that suggest sharp edges.

(ii) Make a list of 'sound' words arranged in order of intensity, dealing with:

a. Explosives (begin with 'pop').

b. Animal noises (begin with 'squeak').

c. Traffic (begin with 'hum').

(iii) Underline the word which expresses the meaning most precisely:

a. The old brick building had (vanished, gone, departed, withdrawn) before the wreckers in a cloud of broken brick and plaster.

b. The glow of their forges (shone, could be seen, was seen, blinked red) in the twilight.

(iv) Compose specific vivid phrases to replace the following general, colorless phrases:

a. An expensive automobile.

b. A dark night.

c. A terrifying sight with an alarming sound.

d. A sickening taste with an unpleasant smell.

(v) The following statement uses the verbs 'said' and 'left' in a very general sense. Compose a number of specific variations of this theme:

"No", he said, and left the room.

(Examples: No, he moaned and crept from the room.
No, he shrieked and dashed from the room.
No, he sobbed and stumbled from the room.
No, he lisped and sidled from the room.
No, he whispered and tiptoed from the room.)

Or: Create as many different synonyms as possible for such over-worked words as beautiful, nice, happy and good.

(vi) Describe as vividly as you can exactly what is asked for (have a specific situation in mind and use single words, or a sentence at most in your expression).

a. The sound of a typewriter.

b. The feel of a dog's nose.

c. The smell of an old attic.

d. The taste of vinegar.

e. The sensation in your stomach as you come down in an elevator.

These exercises should encourage the student to be more sensitive to the power of the exact word and to combinations of words yielding a true but multiplied impression. As the painter must choose and blend his colors with discrimination, so the young writer must exercise equal care in the selection of his words.

Figurative Language The teacher should give a brief definition of imagery, emphasizing that it consists primarily of creating resemblances and is characterized by the simile and metaphor. He should try to make clear that an image in poetry is a mental picture of an idea presented through sensory appeals and expression which helps the reader to evaluate the unknown in terms of the known. Since poetry communicates more by suggestion than by direct statement, images help the poet to make understandably concrete many ideas that might otherwise remain abstract.

After this brief introduction, the teacher should elicit some examples of similes and metaphors from the class and suggest some of his own for identification and evaluation:

Examples: (i) A cat wove itself in and out of the railings.

(ii) A few belated drifts of snow stretched like fingers of winter, keeping a last grip on the soil.

(iii) The velvet hum of bees ....

Criteria for evaluation such as appropriateness, conciseness and originality should be suggested. Using these elements as standards, the class might analyse some examples of inferior images such as: "The leaves were lipsticked with autumn." The student should realize that this metaphor is weak because of the cacophonous effect produced by the word "lipsticked", as well as the artificial connotation it suggests, quite out of harmony with nature.

The examples of this section should thus present the student with an introduction to imagery as a poetic device.

Developing the Imagination An attempt should be made in this final exercise to present the concept that the imagination of any writer (the image-forming power of his mind) is nourished by his sensory perception (the picture-taking power of his mind). It should be emphasized that any student may help to develop his imagination by increasing his powers of perception and by focusing on the specific rather than on the general.

In classroom practice, the student should divide his exercise book into two sections, one, headed sensory perception, devoted to straight description of selected subjects, and the other, headed imagination, concentrating on imagery derived from the previous section. He then completes these sections in the following manner:

SUBJECT	SENSORY PERCEPTION (description)	IMAGINATION (imagery)
Clouds	The white clouds are fluffy against the blue sky.	The clouds are white chrysanthamums in an azure vase.
Rainbow	The rainbow is arc-shaped and has various colors.	The rainbow is a technicolor magic bridge.
Jet Sound	The jet makes a thunderous noise.	The jet engine roars as if tormented by invisible spirits.

The following subjects, representing each of the senses, might serve as useful stimuli for this approach:

Sight: Snowflakes, cypress tree, candle flame, the colors of an oily puddle.

Sound: Fire alarm, organ music, steam engine, surf.

Feeling: Sandpaper, driving rapidly with the windshield open, cat's fur, fire.

Taste: Onion, maple syrup.

Smell: Sweet peas, eggs and bacon frying, seaweed.

III DYLAN THOMAS "PORTRAITS"

These concise couplet-type devices, based on models from the writing of Dylan Thomas, are introduced to promote an adventurous approach to the use of words, and hence are a logical sequel to the perception-expression exercises. They are designed to reduce stereotypes in the mind of the student as to how words should be employed and to suggest original uses. The "portraits" represent an attempt to capture the essence of any subject and are of two types: description and sound.

Description: Several examples should be given which offer no rigid total pattern but invariably begin in the same way:

"Did you ever see a _____?" Animals, objects or people should offer suitable subjects for portraits; however, the section of the Content series under general themes should be consulted here.[1]

Examples: A Dylan Thomas original:

"Did you ever see an otter? Silvery-sided,
fish-fanged, fierce-faced, whiskered, mottled."

Portraits attempted by students should follow this pattern and should contain hyphenated words, double-barreled expressions, nouns used as adjectives and any other distinctive features that the young writer may devise such as the following:

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1. Below, p. 78.

"Did you ever see a cat?
Highly-polished, slinkily-moving, piercing-
eyed, bewitched." (D.R.S., Lower Canada)

"Did you ever see a Polar Bear?
Ground-crushing, ivory-haired, thick-headed,
lumbering." (P.A.S., The Dragon School, Oxford)

"Did you ever see a snake?
Zig-zagging, fork-tongued, elastic-jawed."
(T.D.R., Bishop's College School)[1]

Sound: As an introduction to this device, a brief explanation should be given of onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance. Young writers should be taught that hearing and rhythm are closely allied and that sound devices are basic to the movement of poetry.

One or two examples of sound "portraits" should be given, always beginning with the same form: "Did you ever hear a _____?" Suitable topics for this approach might be the sounds of animals, nature, the elements, vehicles or machines, but again the section of general themes in the Content series should be used as a guide to possible material.

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1. Examples cited throughout the study were produced by students of the schools named within single creative sessions conducted by the writer.

IV THE FORM POEM

The form poem is a flexible device consisting of a series of individual words (they may be nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or any other part of speech), connected not grammatically but in association, and structurally separated by commas. Each stanza of a form poem assumes the following design:

_____, _____, _____, _____, (A)
_____, _____, _____, (B)
_____, _____, _____, _____, (A)
_____, _____, _____, (B)

Thus every stanza has four lines, the first and third of which contain four words, the second and fourth, three. The final words of each line have an A, B, A, B, rhyme scheme. No set meter or scansion is prescribed; however, any effective form poem usually has some basic rhythm.

This device has the advantage for the beginner of being free from grammatical restrictions (it enables every student to produce something), while at the same time giving him a specific design for his subject. The skillfully constructed form poem channels the reader's mind into associative leaps not so great as to be confusing, nor so small as to be meaningless. Each word used must be exact for its context, and should "hit the target" as forcefully as possible.

The form poem may be applied to a kaleidoscope of subjects; its range and flexibility will become more apparent as the student develops experience in its use. In type, it might be descriptive, narrative, expositional, or present a particular mood. Structurally, it might be alliterative, with all words in a line beginning with the same sound; it might represent some type of progression, be composed of lines that concentrate on a particular movement, or present an unusual ending or "punch" word.

In a typical introduction to a period of writing form poems, the teacher should sketch on the board the specific design of the device. At least three different introductions are practical, and it should be recognized that other variations are possible: a first consists of giving the pattern of the poem without further comment; a second, of giving the pattern together with some selected examples; as a third, in addition to offering the pattern and examples, the teacher presents an explanation of the techniques involved in construction.

The beginner presented with any one of these three introductions should achieve varying success in his early attempts, depending upon his level of ability. On one hand, the able writer will understand the device without more than a brief explanation, and hence the

first introduction should prove sufficient to enable him to achieve results. In fact, he will probably find extensive initial introduction and examples a limitation on the development of his own ideas. In this regard, the teacher should realize that if poems of powerful content and suggestion are read as introductory examples, the student will probably be strongly influenced in his choice of subject and mood by what he has just heard. For example, if the poem "Porta Vacat Culpa" cited later in this section[1] were read as part of an introduction, many students who might otherwise not have done so might be prompted to write on subjects associated with the depression of school or the classroom.

The weaker student, on the other hand, may require considerable background before he can write successfully and hence might prefer the second or third introductions proposed above. In accordance with the principle of flexibility of approach, the teacher must try to present an introduction appropriate to the ability of the class he is taking and make modifications for individuals wherever possible. If this procedure is followed, every student should be able to produce some satisfying results with this device.

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1. Below, p. 55.

Examples:

Porpoises at Night

Flickering, ghostly, splashing, deep,
Upwards, downwards, turning,
Shadows, sparkling, languid, creep,
Lurking, speeding, burning.

(R.L.G., Rugby)

This piece, written by a boy after watching porpoises in a floodlit tank, is included as an example of effects that can be achieved through a choice of words depicting movement. The slow pace of the first and third lines, representing the lethargic progress of the fish at some moments, is contrasted with the quicker pace of the second and fourth lines, representing moments of swift movement.

Steeplechase

Sleepless, taut, sweating, tense,
Call-over, start, sprint,
Muddle, spreading, tiring, fence,
Trip, fall, splint.

(W.L.P., Repton)

This narrative poem is included as an illustration of a "punch-word" conclusion. The young writer actually chose his ending first and then built his rhyme scheme around it, a possibility that might be suggested to students in any discussion of technique.

Porta Vacat Culpa[1]

Blackboard, maps, desks, master,
Inky, greyness, pen,
Coldness, glum, chattering, plaster,
Dingy, Latin, den.

Ticking, Physics, compass, splodge,
Beatings, essays, dust,
Chalk, inkpots, canes, dodge,
Form, spelling, MUST.

(R.L.McI., Repton)

This poem was written in an ageing and completely unheated classroom by a boy who had just received his half term marks and had placed last in the class. It serves as an illustration of the principle of unity of mood.

V HAIKUS

The haiku is the traditional seventeen syllable form of Japanese verse, a poem of atmosphere, mood and symbolism, included here because of the precision its

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1. Porta Vacat Culpa, the motto of Repton School, Derbyshire, states that the school is not responsible for the shortcomings of its students; "ticking" refers to the compulsory salute that every boy must give whenever he meets a member of the staff; "splodge" is slang for any untidy mess.

writing demands.[1] Composed of three short lines of five, seven and five syllables respectively, the haiku introduces the student to rhythm (as he must count the syllables while writing) and calls for economy of statement, the art of saying much in few words.

The authentic haiku should make some allusion to the season and to nature and should contain a single idea only, which the student should be encouraged to develop in prose first. Once composed, the effective haiku should reveal itself to the perceptive reader much as a flower opens to the penetration of morning sunlight.

A detailed example of the actual stages in the construction of a haiku might be appropriate here and could be used as an illustration from which to work:

February Sunset

Dying fire in West 5
Love persistent in cold of 7
Winter's white silence. 5

Any haiku should be grammatically correct as well as poetically genuine. Neither the thought nor the structure of this first draft is clear. A colon after "West" to take the place of the missing verb would help to clarify the meaning. Articles have been omitted before "West" and "cold" so that the syllable count

1. The National Council of Teachers of English reports: "Asked to write their own haiku, children find that the precise rules and free content pose delightful puzzles, with solutions limited only by the flexibility of their vocabulary and the fetters on their fancy". (Time, Sept. 2, 1966, p. 59).

would come out correctly. Ending the second line with a preposition also reveals a lack of technical precision. The first version might be improved with the following adjustments:

The Dying fire is	5
Love in the coldness of the	7
Winter's white silence.	5

The lines ending with "is" and "the" are now weak, however; it is generally recognized that cadences should not be broken by line endings. Properly cadenced, the verse might read:

The Dying fire	4
Is love in the coldness	6
Of the winter's white silence.	7

In this revision, the syllable count violates the rules of <u>haiku</u>. Further re-arrangement might produce the following:

Dying western fire	5
Is love defying coldness	7
In a white silence.	5

In this final version, cadences and line endings coincide, each line finishes with a strong word, and the syllable count is correct. The <u>haiku</u> is grammatically correct, poetically satisfactory, and has been strengthened by the omission of unnecessary words. By using this, or a similar example, the actual techniques involved in construction of this form may be demonstrated.

Examples: Each of the examples given below has a distinctive feature; M.R.S. realizes that the haiku lends itself to attempts at humour; L.H.W. uses the adjective "shark" effectively in relating his content to his title; J.R.G. has employed his powers of observation before writing his piece.

Justice

Oh! I ate them all
And oh! What a stomach ache
Green stolen apples.
(M.R.S.,Winchester)

On the Wharf

Before the sunrise,
For the fisherman waiting
The wind has shark teeth.
(L.H.W., Repton)

Twilight Shadows

Trees stand strangely still
At twilight, painted shadows
Of their daytime selves.
(J.R.G., Lower Canada)

Subjects most suitable for use with this approach should be sought in the Content series under general themes (particularly nature in different forms)[1] and under triggers.[2]

VI COMPLETED IMAGE VARIATIONS

The five variations outlined in this section all concentrate on helping the student to create poems

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1. Below, p. 79
2. Below, p. 95

composed of a number of images, each one completed within a single line. An advantage of the variations lies in that they provide a line framework of definite structure and discourage the beginner from attempting unattainable stylistic flights. In accordance with the principle of structure, the five stages offer increased freedom of subject matter as they progress.

Chinese introduction: In this first variation, the student should be given a model of Chinese poetry translated by Arthur Waley, Ezra Pound or any other specialist in the field.[1] A distinctive characteristic of this Chinese writing is that the poet completes images within one line much as an artist completes a figure with a single stroke of his brush.

The student should be given a model and asked to compose something similar himself. No restrictions of metre of rhyme are imposed; however the lines of any poem should be of approximately the same length and have some basic rhythm. The following piece by Tu Fu might be used as an illustration:

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1. Such books as The White Pony and the Penguin Book of Chinese Verse should prove valuable for this purpose.

Summer Night

Cool perfume of bamboo pervades my room;
Wild moonlight fills the whole courtyard;
Drop by drop falls the crystal dew;
One by one the moving stars appear.
The fleeting glow-worms sparkle in dark corners
The waterfowl on the river bank call to one another,
Everything in the world follows the path of war,
I sit on my bed meditating through the long night.[1]

It should be noted that each line of "Summer Night" is a statement of a complete image, and that except for the last two lines, this image appeals directly to one of the senses.

Example: The following first draft of a poem by a twelve year-old boy might be used to demonstrate the possible benefits of this approach:

The moonlight streams on the rippling water;
Shadows loom from behind tall trees
Where birds are singing their evening lullaby.
A low insistent chorus of gnats blankets the evening;
Once foiled, they swoop again upon the unsuspecting rowers.

The oar strikes the water;
The boat glides through a delicate embroidery of leaves.
A mother duck, her sleeping brood disturbed,
Quacks crossly from the further bank.
A water rat streakes hurriedly from our path
To hide in his dark dank hole.
(D.N.G., The Dragon School)

This is a piece of expression produced with genuine impetus and enjoyment on which the student can work with real profit. As it is first draft only, he should recognize a number of points before attempting his revision.

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1. R. Payne (ed.), The White Pony. New York: New American Library, 1960, p. 195.

The third line of the first verse contributes very little; "birds" is the only working word and the whole expression is trite and vague. The last line of the verse is contrived and untrue; any rower already besieged by gnats is far from unsuspecting! The other images in the first verse are powerful because of the strong use of the verbs "streams", "loom" and "blankets".

The first two lines of the second verse are telling because the image has really been seen and felt. The remainder of the verse is weakened because the words start to idle and so lapse into prosy verbosity. The moonlight, trees and gnats have been directly observed by the writer and hence effectively support the principle of personal involvement. Contrast these with the rather feeble expressions "sleeping brood" and the "birds' evening lullaby" which smack more of subconsciously remembered reading than of personal experience.

Precise "Skeleton": The student should here be asked to build a skeleton for his completed images by producing a specific topic for each line. Margaret Langdon[1] developed a five point skeleton for the subject "the spider" using the following criteria: the first impression that comes to mind about the spider; its body; its legs; its web; a concluding feeling. Such an approach gives every student specific points of focus for his

1. Langdon, op. cit., pp. 15 ff.

images and hence a definite design for his poem. In providing suggestions for topics, reference should be made to the general theme section of the Content series; people, animals, or objects such as buildings or machines may well prove useful here.

This student developed a skeleton (outlined on the left) and then produced the following portrait:

Snowblower

Sound	Distant whines reveal its presence;
Sight	Churning teeth slash at snow;
Taste	A gasping mouth spits frozen slush;
Touch	Chained paws grip the ice;
Smell	Its tail lingers in greasy smoke.

(D.A.S., Lower Canada)

Animating the Image: With the use of this variation the dimensions of mood and emotional response are added to the elements of sensory awareness already considered. The framework for a poem is provided by the answers to the following four questions:

(i) How would you address the subject if you were using a metaphor?

(ii) How are the two things similar?

(iii) What does the subject remind you of?

(iv) How do you react to it?

The piece below might be used as a model in class procedure to elucidate the movement of this device:

Desert Shadow

Headless horseman, you are riding a midnight steed;
You resemble an oasis on a heat-drenched sandscape;
You remind me of a sun-fed, distorted Ichabod Crane;
I want to cut you free from that clinging cactus forever.

(A.M.P., Bishop's College)

It should be noted that every line contains a completed image, and that each is formed by answering one of the questions above: four responses in the order suggested by the questions provide the structure of the poem.

After analysis of this example, the student is asked to follow a similar pattern in creating a poem of his own on such topics as city serenade, leaf patterns, jet airplane, the flicker of candlelight, or wind on the water.

Specific Emotional Aim: This section, while continuing to require that images be completed within the line, presents the student with a model and some particular Content goal to achieve. The teacher, in keeping with his role as a practising poet, might here analyse the aim and construction of one of his own poems, asking that his students follow a similar pattern themselves. The writer has found success in presenting the following piece as an illustration:

Midnight Fog on New College Garden

Now creeps the hooded Arctic fog
    Into cheerless refuges;
A beam, with phosphorescent fingers,
    Searches the dumb recesses of the wall;
Dank vapours chill the bone of the muffled traveller,
Yet his heart glows through the enveloping shroud.

(B.S.P., Oxford)

The poem, produced on a bleak December night, attempts to portray in its first three images, the external physical depression of the situation, and to contrast this in the final image with an inner personal contentment, the contrast revolving about the word "glows". These points should be made clear to the student as a preparation to his own attempt for a similar effect.

Free Range: In this final variation, free choice of subject matter should be accorded the young writer who should, by this stage, be sufficiently familiar with the completed image approach to be permitted to experiment. Less imaginative students may still seek ideas by referring particularly to the section on general themes in the Content series; it is hoped that a wide range of topics will be attempted at this point and that some poems such as the following will contain reasonably mature thought:

Search

I thirst for meaning in a sea of platitudes;
I look for truth among a host of lies;
I yearn for depths of love, and there are none;
I search for God, but He is gone.
Alone, I live a death of love.
But, No! I was not made in tragic mould;
So I will smile, and talk about the weather.

(J.R.B., Uppingham)

VII FORMAL METRICAL PATTERNS

The student might be introduced at this stage to the standard metrical patterns of poetry. They have purposely been witheld so as to avoid establishing inflexible rhythmical stereotypes in the mind of the beginner, who should by now be able to appreciate the value of metrical patterns in their proper perspective. A brief explanation should be given of the rules of scansion, meter, and rhyme, with emphasis placed on commonly used devices such as the iambic foot and the tetrameter and pentameter. Considerations of Content should remain secondary here; the primary concern of the student when attempting the proposed models should be for a precise imitation of meter and rhyme.

Rhymed Couplets: These should be used as a simple introduction to poetic rhythm, and may assume any metrical variation desired. In classroom procedure, a number of examples should be scanned on the board and explained in detail. The student should then be

asked to develop his topics in couplet form, following various specified rhyme schemes and metrical patterns. Less able students may wish to amplify their ideas in prose beforehand. The subject chosen should be interesting and imaginative if possible, but above all it must be expressed with technical accuracy before progress to the next stage occurs.

Structured Quatrain: It is suggested that this four-line form be attempted with some simple, workable pattern such as the iambic tetrameter. A lively model should be given as an example, and the student asked to produce a quatrain of his own with similar scansion. Several pauses during the actual creative session when various lines are read out and verified should help the less able writer to achieve precision. A number of variations of meter and rhyme scheme should be attempted here so as to give every student as wide an experience as possible.

Ballad: At this stage an introduction might be given to the ballad. The major emphasis remains on precision of metre, but attention should also be devoted to subject matter, in this case preferably of action, excitement, or adventure. Models of traditional ballads that avoid complex scansion should be used as examples; the metre

and rhythm to be attempted are left to the judgement of the teacher. A warning should be given against excessive length and trite expression, however, as young writers tend to get carried away by the narrative unless they are guided.

Parody: While continuing to make accuracy of scansion the major aim, the teacher might here introduce the idea of the parody, cautioning students that they must exercise restraint if they are to achieve effective results. As an example of this approach, the students might be asked to produce light-hearted parodies of the Elizabethan lyrics "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (Marlowe) and "The Nymph's Reply" (Raleigh).[1] They should be encouraged to create pleas in their own terms, and later to write appropriate replies. The following efforts, while containing some rather affected slang, gave enjoyment to their authors:

The Teen to His Queen

Come fly with me and be my girl,
And on the dance floor we will twirl
To swingin' hits by Rolling Stones
Which I will buy with Daddy's loans.

We won't get home before the dawn
Although the party's on our lawn;
The reason is we've had a lot
Of ninety proof that Daddy's brought.

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[1]The parody by Cecil Day Lewis might be used as an illustration here. (Selected Poems. London: The Hogarth Press, 1940, p. 63.)

And if you want, I'll get some cash
And take us south to have a bash;
But if we find we're getting low
Just give a yell for Daddy's dough.

The way it's going things are great
It looks as though I'll be your mate;
Dad says that I'm to marry you
Because he's heard I'm Daddy too!

(I.A.S., Lower Canada)

The reply written by another student in the same class to the above plea:

The Brush to the Lush

I hate to say, but Daddy-o,
I think you know where you can go;
That night long bash with booze galore
It just don't hit me right no more.

And man, if Dad gives all the loot,
The trip, the discs and me to boot
I just don't dig a lazy slob
No matter how I make you throb.

Besides, that dance, it gives me aches
And pains and usually it takes
About a week for them to heal
So why don't you start being real!

And so, wee lad, just take the hint,
Forget about our twilight sprint!
You poor, sweet guy, don't flip your lid,
The latest one is not your kid.

(J.D.J., Lower Canada)

Further Forms: As the student reads and experiences more poetry, he should be encouraged to attempt imitations of the sonnet, Spenserian stanza and other more advanced forms. Various appropriate examples from literature should be presented as models with detailed

explanations provided on possible methods of structure and technique; the selection of examples used is left to the judgment of the teacher. This section is designed to offer scope particularly to the able student who should be given freedom to work independently.

VIII "PRIME THE PUMP" PATTERNS

As the student has already been exposed to a wide range of design types, he should now be able to develop his own approach to Form; such freedom given at an earlier stage might simply have produced confusion and directionless creative activity.

"Prime the Pump" patterns are first line statements intended to provide subject-matter suggestion, but little Form guidance. Metaphorically speaking, they have the advantage of leading the horse gently towards the desired trough without forcing him to drink in a particular way or at a particular speed.

The student must guard against exaggeration and insincerity, however, and realize the difficulties that tend to arise: the presentation of images which have not really been seen and the lapse into wordy statement through a failure to condense.

Any of the following suggestions might prove useful with this approach:

Like strings of wax the rain fell, unending .....
The autumn sky, a web of darkness, stretched toward the dusk ...
Dogs, snarling, yipping, pearl tongued ....
Siberia's sleet freezes me not .....
Give me a cello, man, without delay .....

A further variation, which might be of particular help to the less able writer as it drives him straight into an image, is the introduction "there it lay" ... The following piece, from a boy who had previously shown little talent, serves to illustrate the value of this variation:

The Old Shoe

There it lay: a single shoe
Deserted in the greasy gutter.
Contorted awkwardly, it had long lost its original form,
And was stiffly moulded in peculiar shape.
The dusty leather bore evidence of age,
Wrinkled, like an old man's brow.
Hanging droopily over the side was a frayed black lace:
An ant crawled about inside.

(A.L.G., Lower Canada)

IX "FORMLESS" STRUCTURE

In this stage, the teacher should grant further freedom of structure and encourage continued experimentation with Form. In order to acquaint his students with a wide variety of design possibilities, he should ask them to explore the work of e.e. Cummings, and other

contemporary writers for illustrations of original structure, bringing examples to class for discussion and analysis. He should try to ensure that a full range of Form variations is introduced, including those that may appear avant-garde by his own standards. Two categories of creation might be considered here: shape and technique.

Shape: The student should be asked to create poems with different experimental designs and patterns such as those found, for example, in current optic poetry. A warning should be issued, however, against purely artificial and contrived effects; some justification should exist for the intentional "shaping" of any creation. The following poem by a young writer who used the shape of a mushroom cloud might be cited as an illustration of this approach:

The Bomb

I
was drinking
tea when they dropped them
and suddenly
I saw
your
face
and loved you
Before the world turned upside down.

(S.C.B., Stowe)

Technique: (i) The creation below, produced by a student who had just studied Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," might serve as a useful model and discussion piece. Members of a class might be asked to evaluate it, and later write something of a similar experimental nature themselves.

Variation on Kubla Khan

Kubla Khan's pad bri...ngs Out SusPense
and Mystery alonG With SEEmingly
MODERN Living his Supply of every THING DOES
not Leave MUCH to be de SIRED the SacRED riveR ALPH
seeMs to be flowing Towards clouD 7 along eTERNITY rOAD
as He Flips back the Pages of his AnCestral Voices for
TELLING WAR the cOOL Abys Sinian maid strings Along on

r
e
m
i
c
l
u

Her d i was swinging just as aNother KID took
a FIT and d ALL the Milk of Paradise.

r
u
n
k

(P.K.A., Lower Canada)

The author gives a justification for the existence of every word in his creation. In his hand-written original he presents "modern living" in letters of diminishing size because of his pessimism for the present generation; he is optimistic toward "eternity road". "Dulcimer" is written on an upward slant to simulate the action of the player of the instrument, while "drunk" appears on a downward slant because wine flows in this direction. Punctuation is omitted throughout so that the movement of the piece may progress unimpeded by technical restrictions. A class discussion on this, or any other similarly imaginative creation,

should challenge the students, and might lead to the production of some unusual results.

Technique: (ii) The young writer should also be invited at this stage to experiment with various auditory effects such as variations on the Dylan Thomas couplets already attempted,[1] or unusual alliterative and onomatopoetic devices. He might also be asked to attempt the creation of a poem like Robert Southey's "Cataract of Lodore" which clearly echoes the sound of its subject:

"The cataract strong
Then plunges along
Striking and raging
As if a war waging
Its caverns and rocks among;
Rising and leaping
Sinking and creeping
Swelling and sweeping
Showering and springing
Flying and flinging ....
A sight to delight in;
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound".

Such an example might be used to demonstrate that the sound of a word has much to do with its interpretation and that the sound of words in combinations may produce results such as the following by a thirteen year-old, who has employed onomatopoeia extensively:

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1. Above, p. 49.

Barber-Shop Symphony

zzzzzz - zzz - z, click, snip-snip.
Luigi - he is my barber -
Shifts position and tilts my head.
Then zzzzzz - zzz - z, click, snip-snip.
Over there stands the soft-drink machine,
So popular in summer -
Now abandoned and still.
Somewhere, a radio is playing
Softly, choked by the
zzzzzz - zzz - z, click, snip-snip.
The murmurs, mumbles of other customers,
The restless rustling of magazine pages -
Luigi and the other barbers are always
Moving, shuffling feet,
From sink to chair to sink
To cash register.
Clickety-click, ding
And I leave the
zzzzzz - zzz - z, click, snip-snip
Of the barber shop.

(D.R.C., Lower Canada).

Technique: (iii) An adventurous approach toward Form might also be fostered at this stage by confronting the student with puzzling or almost absurd topics such as spelkwobbling, frippery, snarleygob, or callibonkers. This suggestion supports the principle of flexibility of approach.

Situations such as the following one outlined by Michael Baldwin might also prove useful in evoking original work: "Write about the Myrtle fish; it lives at the North Pole, looks like a rhododendron leaf and eats icicles."[1]

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1. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 57

X UNIVERSAL FRAMEWORK

At this stage of progress, Form emerges largely as a result of Content stimulation. The universal framework offers the student a number of leading questions which he may answer in any manner and sequence he chooses, thereby establishing the shape and material of his poem. The following questions are proposed for his guidance:

Introduction:
What is the point of interest of your subject?
Have you established it (in time, space, mood . . .)?
Why are you writing on it?
Do you want to address it, describe it, comment on it?

Sensory Experience:
What are its distinctive sensory qualities?
What images does it evoke?
What is unusual about it?

Mood:
Is there any distinctive action, behaviour or sensation involved?
What situation or feeling could it be likened to?
What does it make you think of?

Emotional Response:
What sentiment does it evoke?
How do you react to it?

Conclusion:
What new awareness have you received (or given)?
Why have you said what you have said?
What total impression do you want to leave?

In the following piece, which is illustrative of the possible results of this device, the writer has based his design on answers to questions provided in the framework; it should be noted that he has used the rhetorical question extensively.

Destruction

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town;
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a side wall fell.
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed!
Just unskilled labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do!"
And I asked myself as I went on my way,
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care,
Measuring life by a rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town
Content with the labor of tearing down?

(I.R.R., Lower Canada)

XI FREE FORM AND ANALYSIS

In this final stage, it is suggested that the teacher offer complete freedom of structure to his students who should by now have a background of experience varied enough to enable them to choose their own poetic form with authority. They are not merely being cast adrift rudderless on the sea of structure.

This stage of free Form and analysis of the choice of Form need not represent the final development of the series, however. Further progress for each student is achieved through more extensive reading of outside poetry, as well as through continued writing practice and experiment. Ideally, expression and inspiration will eventually come to most students largely unaided by the teacher and as a product of previous training through the various steps of the Form series.

CHAPTER V

A PROGRAMME: THE CONTENT SERIES

This series seeks to present a number of subject-matter suggestions under five different categories, each one intended as a guide to the student in the selection of topics. Most young writers can provide subject ideas for a short time; however, many may find that after a number of periods they begin to repeat themes or are having difficulty conceiving original material. It is here that the Content series may be helpful in suggesting an answer to the question "What shall I write about in this period?"

In accordance with the principle of flexibility of approach, recommendations for topics should not be regarded as unalterable, but should be modified by the teacher to serve the particular stage of development of his students.

In classroom practice, Content proposals should be made after the introduction of whatever Form device is being used. An attempt will be made throughout this series to link subject-matter suggestions to the Form stages already outlined.

The following five categoires constitute the Content series: general themes, sensory-awareness stimuli, a spectrum of the arts, specific experiences, and perception-reaction triggers.

I GENERAL THEMES

This initial category serves as a source guide for the entire Content series. Central to its design is the principle of personal involvement whereby topics are drawn wherever possible from the lives, interests and experiences of the students themselves. Only too frequently do teachers try to impose adult interests and standards on young writers, thereby perhaps begetting a lack of enthusiasm and response. Any of the following themes might provide interest if used in conjunction with any stage in the Form series:

Activities:

Work	(i)	School - academic interests; subjects; places.
	(ii)	Church, social group.
	(iii)	Vacation jobs; voluntary activity.
Play	(i)	Sports - experiences, descriptions, goals.
	(ii)	Hobbies - aims, pleasures.
	(iii)	Recreation activity - leisure hours, thought.
Special occasions	(i)	Travel - trips, visits.
	(ii)	Holidays, celebrations, parties.
	(iii)	Experiences - actual, imaginary.

Surroundings:

Immediate	(i)	Home - room, garden, neighbourhood.
	(ii)	School - classroom, facilities, features.

Geographical	(i)	Town or city--life, sights.
	(ii)	Nation or world--patriotism, internationalism.
Natural	(i)	Physical features--sky, sea, mountains, sun stars.
	(ii)	Country--farms, fields, crops, life.
	(iii)	Flora--trees, plants, flowers.
	(iv)	Fauna--animals, birds, fish, pets.
	(v)	Elements--weather, seasons, day, night.

Reflections:

Issues of our time	(i)	Space--the bomb, planets, jets.
	(ii)	Human welfare--poverty, prejudice, war, protest.
	(iii)	Communication--advertising, T.V., paper, literature; morality, delinquency.
Personal concerns	(i)	Relationships with others--family, friends.
	(ii)	Values--behaviour, philosophy.
	(iii)	Hopes--aims, dreams, future.
	(iv)	Fears--security, conformity, identity.

From among the general topics outlined above, any number of more specific themes might be developed. As an illustration, two particular possibilities are suggested:

(i) Fauna: (from the section above on Surroundings, natural, iv). An attempt should be made to propose a

novel subject and link it with an original approach. Fauna such as the moth, fly, cobra, jaguar, or tortoise might provide fresh inspiration for the student who should be asked to concentrate his expression on minute details and movements after the manner of Walter de la Mare.[1]

(ii) The City: (from the section above on Surroundings, geographical, i). Attention might be directed to such themes involving the city as change, mystery, movement, or industrial elegance. Variety could be achieved by concentrating on buildings (old, new, skyscrapers, memorial), activities (men and machines at work; traffic circulation, and noise), or other centers of interest (sites, occupations, colours and movements).

II SENSORY--AWARENESS STIMULI

The stimuli proposed in this category are intended to appeal to each of the five senses. For ease of reference, they are grouped according to single senses, and may be used in conjunction with all stages of the Form series; they should prove particularly helpful with the perception-expression section, however.

Sight: (i) Scale: The element of scale is introduced as a means of helping the student to see various subjects in

1. W. De La Mare, Bells and Grass. New York: The Viking Press Inc., 1942.

more vivid perspective. He is asked to concentrate on some object and to imagine either that he is very small and the object is very large, or vice-versa. Suitable subjects here might be a piece of colored stone, a burning candle, a clump of turf or a caterpillar. This approach might be used in conjunction with the Haikus stage of the Form cycle.

(ii) Order out of chaos: A number of unrelated objects are arranged on a tray such as a magnifying glass, a paper clip, an orange, a knife, and a used train ticket. The student is asked to associate two or more of the objects in forming a poem. In this way, he is introduced to the concept that all creation involves artistic choice and that making associations under varied conditions exercises the imagination and develops flexibility of expression. This approach might be used in conjunction with the Form poem, or later still with the universal framework.

(iii) The moment of awareness: The student is presented with a photograph depicting a dramatic situation and asked to express its significance in some concise Form such as the haiku, or a completed image variation. The daily papers should provide a ready source of actual visual illustration; the news photographer has an eye professionally trained to capture the moment.

(iv) Response to an object: This approach is designed to increase the awareness of the student toward any subject presented to him. He is asked to scrutinize an object such as a bowl of fruit, a Ubangi native doll, or a model of a sailing ship with the intention of producing a specific reaction to it. This approach might be linked to the specific questions proposed in the completed image stage of the Form series.

Sound: (i) Response to a single sound effect: The student is here presented with an actual auditory stimulus and told to listen intently with his eyes closed, before attempting to write something evoked by the effect itself. He is asked to make some use in the structure of his poem of such devices as onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance. Any of the following sounds, whether presented live or on record, should elicit a response: splintering glass, footsteps, gunfire, racing cars at full throttle, a teletype machine, chalk scratching on the board, or the distant whistle of a train. This approach might be particularly helpful in conjunction with the "formless" structure section of the Form series.

(ii) Order out of chaos: The young writer is asked to associate combinations of auditory stimuli much as he was asked to inter-relate visual ones in the "response to an

object" section. Again emphasis is placed on exercising artistic choice and developing some pattern between seemingly unrelated effects. In practice, sounds should be presented on tape and serially, repeated a number of times over. This approach might be related tc the perception-expression exercises or to the universal framework section of the Form series. The following combinations are suggested:

a) Bells - sleigh, school, cow, church, fire, wedding.

b) Fog horn, ship's whistle, ambulance, air-raid warning...

Feeling: (i) Texture: The teacher might blindfold his students and give them some object to feel, asking that they describe the texture of the object without making direct reference to it, but by alluding to its characteristics or distinctive qualities only. It is suggested that a form of four lines at most such as a haiku, completed image variation, or a quatrain be used with this approach. Any of the following objects might prove successful: modelling clay, a pine cone, the bark of a tree, a bar of soap, a piece of sharp metal, or any other object with distinctive textural quality. If the teacher is able to divide his class into several groups and present each one with a different object, a type of quiz could be held between groups as to what object each had been feeling.

(ii) Physical or muscular exertion: The student should be asked to recall some strenuous physical activity and to describe the exact sensations he experienced at the time. Recollection might be facilitated by presenting some loosely framed leading questions as a guide. Such situations as the following should prove suitable for this approach; swimming underwater, riding a bicycle at high speed downhill, or climbing a tree.

As a variation of the above suggestion the student might be asked to submit himself at some time before his next classroom writing session to some physical experience such as running uphill, standing in the cold, or jumping on a trampoline. He should record his actual sensations of the moment as the basis for his later expression.

Smell: In this section, the student, again blindfolded, might be presented with various smells, and without having any visual clues be asked to produce some concise poetic response to what his nose has told him. Care should be taken to select a smell which will pervade the whole classroom with some strength. Any of the following suggested stimuli should prove practical: bottled kitchen seasonings, shoe polish, rotten apples, or coffee.

Taste: The same principles apply to this last sense as to the others already suggested. If offering actual taste sensations such as leeks, bacon, or peppermint, proves difficult in practice, then the memory of the student will have to be called into play. These last two sections might be used in conjunction with the experiments under formless structure, or with the universal framework of the Form series.

III A SPECTRUM OF THE ARTS

Sources of subject material will be proposed in this category from a spectrum of five different art forms: literature, painting, sculpture, music, and drama. These Content suggestions should be appropriate for use in conjunction particularly with the later, more experiemental sections of the Form series. It is recommended that when he introduces these stimuli, the teacher try to establish an order of presentation, moving in each medium from the traditional to the contemporary, from the concrete to the more abstract.[1] In this way the student will gain some familiarity with each medium before being encouraged to experiment with its more unusual elements.

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1. This suggestion is consistent with the principle of structure presented in Chapter III above.

Literature: Various prose passages of narration, description, exposition or mood might be read in providing suggestions for subject material: poetry could also supply the introduction to a writing session. However, it must be realized that whatever the selection, it will probably exert a strong influence on the character of the work produced, and hence should be made with specific aims in mind. For example, if the teacher wants his students to write on the theme of the sea, he might first read a prose piece from Conrad,[1] following this with a poem by Masefield.[2] After doing so he should point out specific words and emphasize various effects and how they are achieved; this background is intended to put the young writer in the proper frame of mind for the theme of the sea.

Painting: The teacher might exhibit some distinctive piece of art, and after introductory questions of the type found in the completed image and universal framework sections of the Form series, ask the student to respond to it in some poetic form. In accordance with the principle of structure, the young writer should be introduced to traditional landscapes and designs first,

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1. Suitable selections might be found in The Nigger of the Narcissus.

2. A poem such as "Cargoes" would be appropriate.

as these will probably offer him a more concrete suggestion and pattern for his expression and reduce the temptation to ramble. In classroom practice, other unusual items such as a dollar bill, a road map, or a piece of old newspaper might be presented in addition to whatever pieces of art are used.

Following the principle of flexibility of approach, it is suggested that more than one picture or design be offered per period so that every student is given a chance of seeing a subject that interests him. This whole visual approach might be helpful, particularly in conjunction with the formless structure and universal framework sections of the Form series.

Sculpture: The stimuli proposed here should serve as an extension of the exercises on texture already outlined under the sensory-awareness category, and hence might be attempted with the late stages of the Form series. Subjects could be chosen appealing to the eye, as in the case of any "pop" or "optic" creations, or to the actual sense of touch, as with examples of Eskimo or Habitant carving. As a specific instance, in association with the "shape" category of the formless structure section in the Form series, an unusual piece of pop sculpture might be presented featuring fluorescent colours, flashing lights and a grotesque shape. The student should be asked to study the piece and then create some

appropriate poetic response to it. As the stimuli used here will probably be distinctive in some respect, relative freedom of Form should be granted in responding to them.

Music: A number of authorities have used musical stimuli with success, generally finding them a touchstone of inspiration. As W. G. Mason states: "The use of music has long been recognized as evocative of imaginative writing by children. Quite often their reaction reveals surprising sensibility and close correspondence to the spirit of the work."[1]

Experience has shown that students produce their best work when the extracts presented are short (probably of less than a minute in length) and have a single theme so as to avoid evoking mixed or confusing images. Selections might be introduced in a sequence moving from classical sounds through contemporary music to electronic effects and should be accompanied by leading questions to help the student derive maximum benefit from his listening. While experimentation will soon reveal the most successful selections, the following might prove of value as a start: Wagner's Tannhauser Overture to suggest excitement and movement; Saint Saëns' Organ Symphony for

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1. W. G. Mason, For Teachers of English. Oxford: Basil Blackwell and Mott Ltd., 1964, p. 31.

memories of spring; parts of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony for storm and strife; or electronic or space sounds to evoke futuristic suggestions.

In classroom practice, the exerpt being used for the creative session should be re-played a number of times while the writing is actually in progress. At the end of the period some of the poems might be read to the accompaniment of the same music and concurrently with it; as W. G. Mason has observed above, effective expression will often fit the background surprisingly well and give the student a real sense of accomplishment.

The following poem was produced by a thirteen year-old while listening to the haunting slow movement of Borodin's Second Symphony and reveals a grasp of the tone of the music and an enjoyment in interpreting it:

Twilight on the Marsh

Deep colours on a silent canvas,
Rich reflection in the twilight marsh,
Majestic motion through an amber dusk,
She floats - the stately swan.

(M.R.S., Winchester)

Musical stimuli could be used in conjunction with any stage of the Form series, but especially with the perception-expression exercises and the metrical patterns. They should prove of particular value to less

able writers, who must be warned, however, against directionless expression and exaggeration. Work produced to a musical background may tend to wander aimlessly unless the writer exercises a conscious discipline over his expression.

Drama: This stage seeks to provide movement stimuli and an opportunity for linking acting interests to expression. A small group of students should present a play, skit, pantomime or other short dramatic piece, after which all members of the class are asked to write a poetic response to what they have just seen. This approach might be attempted with the experimental sections of the Form series. As an illustration of its possible results, the following poem was composed by a fourteen year-old after he had watched a play on prejudice presented by his classmates:

Tolerance

Filthy Wog, Bloody Jew
Do they really mean it?
How can people say these things
If they do not feel it?

Criticism, prejudice,
Is there nothing more?
Where has all the love gone?
Or was it never there?

Why is life so shallow?
Bitterness and hate;
Where will it all lead to?
Isn't it too late?

(A.M.R., Repton)

IV SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES

Suggestions in this category are provided to enable the student to write with more ease, clarity and impact by exposing him directly to some actual situations from which to derive inspiration. Three sources are proposed as the basis for experiences: research into particular subjects, imagined situation outlines and outside visits to places of interest.

Research into particular subjects: The student should be instructed to go to a specific location and there investigate a subject at first hand, recording in detail his sensory perceptions and reactions. Subjects and situations such as the following should prove suitable for this approach and might be used particularly in conjunction with the completed image variations of the Form series: the sky at night as seen from a quiet neighbourhood park; autumn colors in the woods as observed on a weekend walk; the crowd at a football game as watched from a seat in the stands; or a blizzard as experienced on the way home from school.

In classroom practice, the student should be asked to analyse his findings on these topics before writing, hence supporting the principle of readiness of content. For example, in considering the sky at night, some of the following questions might be raised

in preliminary discussion: Precisely what color is the sky at night? Does the moon cast shadows? What exact words can be used to describe the light shed by the moon? (A statement such as "The moon glows" should be discouraged as inaccurate because the verb "glow" has a connotation of warmth which should be recognized as inappropriate in describing the moon and the chill of the night.)

After such an introductory discussion, the student should find that he has developed something meaningful to say on his topic; he has assembled his material carefully and hence is not forced to invent details.

As an extension of the above approach, and in conjunction with the later stages of the Form series, the young writer might be asked to concentrate more on the emotional response to his subject than on sensory perceptions. Experiences such as the following might prove suitable: the dentist's office, the first day of school, by candlelight up the creaking stairs, or the last fifty yards.

Imagined situation outline: In this section content suggestions are provided through a number of precisely detailed imagined situations. Two particular categories of stimuli might be employed: those appealing

principally to sensory description and those appealing to emotional reaction. Under the first category, any of the following skeleton situations might prove helpful:

(i) Event: You are swimming underwater looking at rocks, seaweed and various shells; suddenly a large colorful fish swims by...

(ii) Situation: Railway station; late at night; no moon or movement; train stops and one muffled passenger gets off.

(iii) Character: Weather beaten old tramp with a pack on his back; ill-assorted shabby clothes, pipe and beard; he sits thinking by the roadside.

(iv) Scene: View from a cliff top; lighthouse on headland projecting out to sea; water growing choppy; wind rising, clouds moving rapidly.

Under the second category, any of these situations might evoke emotional reactions:

(i) You are lying alone in your tent on a dark night trying to fall asleep; an owl hoots; you feel afraid.

(ii) A sultry day in summer with a heavy bank of clouds approaching; you look out to sea as small boats make for shelter; one is far behind the others, you are uneasy.

(iii) Bitterly cold, sunny winter day with deep snow; you have just arrived after a trip through the woods to spend Christmas at a friend's house; you are excited.

It is not suggested that these be the only examples attempted with this approach. In fact, the student should be encouraged to create similar skeleton situations of his own, which might be used in conjunction with the completed image variations, the formal metrical patterns, or any other closely structured section of the Form series.

Outside visits to places of interest: In an attempt to present his students with realistic subjects, the teacher might occasionally take them to some point of interest where they can write on the spot in direct contact with "live" stimuli. Any of these locations might prove suitable for this approach: a busy construction site; an impressive church; a park, field or some other setting in nature; an airport, station or subway; a newspaper printing-press; the harbour, or the engine room of a ship; a museum or historical site; a zoo.

Before undertaking any visit, however, the teacher should provide some preparation by suggesting what to look for on location and discussing ways in which to derive the most benefit from each experience.

As this particular exercise demands considerable maturity, it should be attempted only in conjunction with the later stages of the Form series, particularly the universal framework.

V PERCEPTION-REACTION TRIGGERS

The subject-matter suggestions proposed in this category consist of triggers, devices which are mentioned briefly in the definition section of the introductory chapter. The term trigger refers to any stimulus presented live in the classroom as an evocative suggestion or content inspiration.

Any trigger is considered of rigid design if it introduces a combination of stimuli all pointing strongly towards an obvious interpretation, such as pictures of a South Sea island coupled with recorded Hawaiian guitar music and the scent of perfume: it is of less rigid design if it presents a single high-intensity suggestion without obvious interpretation, such as an unanswered knocking on the door, or the ticking of a clock.

The trigger should evoke responses by bringing "live" stimuli right into the classroom. In accordance with the principle of structure, any series of triggers should move from rigid initial design, which provides

the beginner with specific content suggestions, toward less rigid design as his skill increases. Ultimately, the most effective trigger for the able student will provide intensity of suggestion while remaining unobtrusive in design.

The triggers proposed in this section fall into two categories: those which induce a type of "shock" reaction appealing to the immediate experience of the student; and those which appeal more to his imagination than to his experience.

Immediate "shock" reaction: The following skeleton examples, which must be introduced "live" as described, are presented in a planned sequence of design such as is outlined above; the earlier examples offer combinations of sensory appeals and considerable activity, while the later ones give fewer actual effects, but a no less intense suggestion.

(i) Tragedy: Picture on blackboard of scene of destruction; recorded train wreck sounds; siren, reading of accident statistics.

(ii) Happiness: Picture on board of smiling young child; cake on desk with lighted candles; singing of Happy Birthday...

(iii) Surprise: Student hidden under a pile of blankets at front of class; suddenly he leaps out and

runs from the class . . . or janitor with pail and mop climbs the fire escape, enters the class by the emergency window and walks through, whistling.

(iv) Mystery: Gun lying on desk and sign, reading "Firearms, do not touch," or Urgent unanswered rapping at door; or Rocket-firing count-down.

(v) Tension: Dark room; spotlight on noose hanging from the blackboard; recorded clock ticking loudly in the background.

The members of any class should be encouraged to design their own original triggers for use in actual writing sessions; they usually respond favourably to this challenge, often producing most imaginative proposals. For example, suggestion (v) above on the noose and the clock was devised by a young student. It has since been used to "trigger" many pieces including the following one by a fourteen-year-old of average ability who had never produced anything unusual until stimulated by this approach:

Auschwitz

The ruthless, incessant sound of a death
   march resounds, heartless.
How many have preceded this one?
How terrible is the rope of death.
This is no ordinary execution.
The SS have made you pull the death wagon.
It has a rickety wheel.
You must lead a fellow man to death.
This is no ordinary execution;
Your brother is going to die.

It is a long march through Auschwitz
The eyes of prisoners bulge with hate
of the Nazi,
As they see the head of the condemned
hung low over his chest.
They wish they did not have to watch.
The rope swings overhead.
They will not let you speak to say
goodbye to your own brother.
How can you exchange love and farewell
in a last glance?
It is so heartless.
Your brother swings, limp.
Don't break up! You can't! You mustn't!
It is a <u>normal</u> day at Auschwitz.

(W.W.D., Lower Canada College)

<u>Imaginative Themes</u>: The triggers proposed here follow the same principles as those outlined above, but are intended to appeal more to the imagination than to direct experience:

(i) Awareness of nature: The theme of the sea is suggested; pictures of sailing ships in storms on the board; selected readings from Conrad, Masefield, Beethoven's Sixth playing in background.

(ii) Pity: Picture of crutches, bandages, sound of crying: <u>or</u> child with bowl begging, Oxfam signs.

(iii) Sympathy: Picture of negroes being mistreated; signs "Nigger get out"; singing of "We shall overcome."

(iv) Contemplation: Still-life assortment; sea shells, sand, pebbles, seaweed.

(v) Mystery: Symbolic arrangement on desk; burned out fireworks, bones and pieces of skeleton.

The perception-reaction triggers proposed in this category are designed to offer evocative, high intensity stimuli as an aid to the student. They should be used in conjunction with later stages of the Form series such as the formless structure or the universal framework; triggers of rigid design might also be attempted with the section on metrical patterns.

In summary then, five different categories of subject-matter suggestions have been presented in the Content series, each category designed to provide the young writer with guidance in the selection of his topics. Consideration will now be given to the final major component of the programme, the Analysis series.

CHAPTER VI

A PROGRAMME: THE ANALYSIS SERIES

The aim of this chapter is to introduce a series of exercises and suggestions designed as the criteria by which the student may examine his own or any other poetry. Authorities have to date generally failed to stress the element of Analysis, placing emphasis more on getting something out than on evaluating results produced. Experience shows, however, that most students want to improve their work, and hence must be provided with guidance in the refining of their expression and techniques.

In practice, it is suggested that this guidance be given in the form of exercises and specific assignments to be undertaken for the most part during actual class periods. In accordance with the principle of flexibility in the inter-relationship of elements, the exact timing for the correlation of Analysis stages with those of Form is left to the judgement of the teacher; nonetheless recommendations are made throughout this series for his assistance. The stages of the series will now be presented under two main categories; evaluative and structural.

EVALUATIVE

I "SKELETON" CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

This section seeks to provide the fundamental criteria by which the student may judge his own or any other poetry. He is offered three simple evaluative questions intended to give him a framework for analysis without confusing him with complicated detail. He is asked to reply to three questions, giving a "yes" or "no" answer with whatever qualification he can add; more elaborate justifications for his answers will come as he develops familiarity with the approach:

Content: Has the writer really said anything?

Technique: Has the writer expressed himself effectively?

Impact: Has the writer got his point forcefully across to you?

It is suggested that this section be introduced after the perception-expression exercises of the Form series, and before the Dylan Thomas portraits.

II COMPLETED FRAMEWORK

By adding a further group of questions to the three basic ones outlined above, this section affords the student a more complete framework for any analysis he may undertake. He should study the questions and then reply

in one of two ways: either with a qualified "yes" or "no" answer, or by assigning a mark to the poem on a five-point scale, with five representing maximum attainment. In both cases he gives as explicit a justification of his judgement as possible, using the framework as a guide to his comments. It is suggested that this exercise be introduced initially between the form poems and the haikus of the Form series, and that it be used regularly thereafter.

Content: Has the writer really said anything?

Originality: Has he combined thoughts, or feelings in a new way?
Has he shown insight or imagination?

Sincerity: Has he given an honest interpretation of an experience, situation, feeling, or idea?
Is there significance for the writer in what he is trying to say?

Technique: Has the writer expressed himself effectively?

Diction: Are his expressions and choice of words original, appropriate, and accurate?

Imagery: Does he use figurative language which is evocative, and precise?

Structure: Form.--Is his vehicle effective and appropriate?

Rhythm.--Is the sound movement fitting?

Unity.--Does he maintain a single pattern, point of view, and mood throughout?

Impact: Has the writer got his point forcefully across to you?

Communication: Has he expressed his ideas simply and comprehensibly?

Response: Has he evoked the desired feeling, reaction, or involvement from the reader?

Has he presented a genuine vision, awareness, or experience to the reader?

This framework should be used by the student as a basis for his analysis throughout the programme, and thereby serve as an aid to his writing progress. He should not attempt to evade the evaluation of his poetry, for as Robert Druce has said: "It need not be more difficult to award a poem a value, than any other, perhaps more traditional form of writing. Like any piece of prose, poetry can be teased out into matter and manner; the whole conception of the poem, the degree to which it has been successful, its unity, its tensions, rhythms and

figurative language are as capable of analysis as they are in prose; its sincerity, its development, the quality of its thoughts, its internal consistency: these are all there to be observed."[1]

III CRITICISM OF INFERIOR PRODUCTIONS

Examples of inferior writing of many types should be presented and the student asked to criticize them constructively. Such an approach serves as a type of lesson in reverse: the student concentrates on technique by analysing how not to write. He should focus attention on basic elements of style and common errors of expression. Some of the examples presented might perhaps be used as tests with the student asked to provide a rating on the five point scale, and to support his judgement with clearly stated reasons. It is suggested that this approach be introduced at some stage early in the Form series, possibly after the section on Form poems, and that it be used at intervals thereafter. Sources of journalese, hackneyed phrases, cliché-ridden forms, and magniloquence are plentiful; their selection is left to the teacher.

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[1] R. Druce, The Eye of Innocence. Leicester: Brockhampton Press, 1965, p. 75.

IV COMPARISON OF PAIRS OF POEMS

As a sequel to the previous section, a comparison might be attempted of a pair of poems, either "unseen" as a test, or through answers to questions such as those in the evaluative framework. The student should be aware of the statement of Sir Herbert Read who said that "what matters most in a poem is the freshness of the vision expressed in effective form through clear images and the depth of feeling evident in the choice of words and rhythm of the lines."[1]

In following the principle of flexibility of approach, it is suggested that pairs of poems used as examples differ sufficiently so as to present a marked contrast for even the weakest student. C. Day Lewis offers an illustration of this exercise when he quotes from the following two poems, A and B, each dealing with the theme of death.[2]

A

As I was going down Treak Street
For half a pound of treacle,
Who should I meet but friend Mickey Thumps?
He said to me "Will thou come to our wake?"
I thought a bit, and I thought a bit,
I said I didn't mind; so I went.

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[1]Sir H. Read, "Award Winning Entries," Children as Writers. London: Daily Mirror Press, 1964, p. 4.

[2]C. Day Lewis, Poetry For You. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959, pp. 99-101.

As I was sitting on our doorstep
Who should come by but Mickey Thump's brother?
He said to me "Will thou come to our house?
Mickey is ill."
I thought a bit, and I thought a bit,
I said I didn't mind; so I went.

(Mickey dies) . . .

And it were a funeral.
Some stamped on his grave:
Some spat on his grave:
But I scraped my eyes out for my old friend
Mickey Thumps.

B

Man proposes, God in his time disposes,
And so I wandered up to where you lay,
A little rose among the little roses,
And more dead than they.

It seemed your childish feet were tired of straying,
You did not greet me from your flower-strewn bed,
Yet still I knew that you were only playing,
Playing at being dead.

The student should be able to recognize that despite its lack of rhythm and superficial polish, poem A expresses a genuine feeling and emotional sincerity which is in sharp contrast to the false sentimentality and artificial nature of poem B. The training involved in making such distinctions should help the young writer to improve his own technique.

This section might be introduced into the programme after the formal metrical patterns stage of the Form series and used at frequent intervals thereafter.

V ANALYSIS BY THE STUDENT OF HIS OWN POEMS

In accordance with the principle of Analysis, the student should be trained to recognize the necessity for an assessment of technique at every stage of the Form series. Without this analysis many of the values to be obtained from writing may never be realized and progress may thus be slowed.

In actual practice, a number of principles established in Chapter Three should here be implemented to help the student to analyse his own poetry:

He should revise and polish his work during the creative session itself (and later at home if he has not had quite enough time to finish at school), using the left-hand page of his exercise book as a draftingboard and record of successive revisions of his poem, and the right-hand page for his completed version.

In accordance with the principle of reinforcement, he should be given the opportunity of reading aloud his work as it progresses during the creative period so that his classmates may comment on it. He may thus benefit from their suggestions (as they will profit from making them) and be able to make alterations, if he so desires, before completing his final draft.

The student should likewise be asked to write a brief prose analysis after he has completed each poem,

mentioning such points as how he chose his subject, what effects he attempted, what measure of success he felt he achieved, and what he learned from his effort. This exercise should make him more conscious of his material and expression, and hence help him to develop his technique. Written prose comments such as those below which followed poetic attempts, serve to illustrate the value of this approach for the student:

"My experience has shown me that a useful method for determining the hyphenated words in these Dylan Thomas pieces is to make simple descriptive sentences about the subject, and then draw my words from them. e.g., A rhinocerous has flanks as hard as steel. Thus my required word--steel-flanked."

(L.A.M., Charterhouse)

"This poem I think was a poor effort for never did I really feel or believe what I was writing. I chose to write on the climber, yet only twice did I actually describe him; the rest is a fabrication of my imagination, as I have never really done any climbing. Some may like the opening couplet but, personally, I feel it is contrived and doesn't ring true."

(J.R.D., Lower Canada)

As an extension of the polishing process, and in accordance with the principle of recapitulation, the

student should be given a period after every four or five creative sessions to re-assess earlier poems which have been allowed to grow cold; evaluation is often more successful following a lapse of time.

The wider the experience in analysis possessed by the student, the more valid should be his critical judgements. He should thus occasionally be given the opportunity of discussing poetry written either by his own teacher or by some outside authority.

A principle of importance applying to this entire section concerns the constructive atmosphere in the class.[1] Precautions should be taken to ensure that each student's own self-analysis is careful and genuine, and that his attitude toward the work of others is tolerant and helpful. The teacher, through his own actions and attitude must be chiefly responsible for establishing the proper tone. It is suggested that analysis by the student of his own poems should be carried out in conjunction with all stages of the Form series.

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[1]This is closely related to the principle of tension developed in Chapter III.

STRUCTURAL

This section concentrates on some of the practical difficulties the student may face in his writing. An attempt is made to show how the poet tackles some of his problems, and exercises are suggested for the guidance of the young writer.

As an introduction, the student should understand such components of method as preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification, four stages of a continuum established by G. Wallas[1] in an attempt to detail the steps involved in the process of creation. An awareness of these stages should give the student a clearer conception of the elements involved in his own creative attempts.[2] He should, as far as possible, understand his objectives before beginning, and be prepared to face any difficulties that may arise.

VI THE CRAFTSMANSHIP OF THE POET

This section seeks to outline some of the approaches which practising poets have taken to different aspects of their work, and to relate these to the writing

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[1]G. Wallas, The Art of Thought. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1921, p. 25 ff.

[2]Two others who have also developed stages for the creative process are J. Dewey, How We Think, Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1910; and C. Patrick, Creative Thought in Artists, New York: Arch. Psychol., No. 178, 1935.

concerns of the student himself. The full range of illustrations for presentation in class should be determined by the particular stage of progress of the student, and hence no complete pattern of points to cover will be established here: rather, a number of statements by authorities are presented as a guide to the young writer.[1]

C. Day Lewis offers a useful analogy relating to creative technique:

> The actual process of writing poetry is rather like the process by which a diamond brooch is made. The poet digs into himself as a miner digs into a hillside to find the precious stones--the themes and images of his poems . . . When the diamonds have been mined, they must be selected, graded and cut before they can be used for an ornament. This process is equivalent to the work a poet has to do to make a finished poem out of the raw material his imagination yields him. And just as the quality and size of the diamonds available to him affect the design of the brooch which the jeweller makes, so the nature and quality of our poetic material help to create the pattern of our poem.[2]

This analogy might help the student to appreciate that observation and sensory awareness are vital to successful poetry writing.

Steven Spender in his essay "The Making of a Poem"[3]

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[1] A useful reference for this purpose is M.Cowley (ed.), Writers at Work. New York: The Viking Press, 1957.

[2] C. Day Lewis, op. cit., p. 39.

[3] S. Spender, The Making of A Poem. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955, pp. 50-52.

stresses the revising and polishing of original expression. Of particular value is his description of how he achieved a particular two-line effect in one of his poems:

> In the next twenty versions of the poem I felt my way towards the clarification of the seen picture, the music and inner feeling. In the first version there was the phrase in the second and third lines:
>
> (i) . . . The waves:
> Like wires burn with the sun's copper glow.
>
> This phrase fuses the image of the sea with the idea of music, and is therefore a key phrase, because the theme of the poem is the fusion of the land with the sea. Here then are several versions of these one and a quarter lines in the order in which they were written:
>
> (ii) The waves are wires,
> Burning as with the secret song of fires.
>
> (iii) The day burns in the trembling wires,
> With a vast music golden in the eyes
>
> (iv) The day glows on its trembling wires,
> Singing a golden music in the eyes
>
> (v) Afternoon gilds its tingling wires,
> To a visual silent music of the eyes.
>
> In the final version, these two lines appear in the following stanza:
>
> There are some days the happy ocean lies
> Like an unfingered harp, below the land;
> Afternoon gilds all the silent wires
> Into a burning music of the eyes.

This background should give the student an awareness of the hard work, patience and technical skill required to achieve precise expression. In practice, mimeographed copies of this or any other example might be distributed to members of the class and used as the framework for discussion and analysis.

This section should be extended at the discretion of the teacher to include any aspect of the poet's craft which might prove helpful to the student in his own writing. In accordance with the concept of learning through doing, analysis should be conducted at all stages of the Form series; any study of the craftsmanship of the poet might prove particularly helpful, however, at later stages of the series, and in conjunction with the formal study of poetry in the rest of the English course.

VII SPECIAL OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS

This section is included as a recommendation that term papers, research projects, and other creative assignments serve as valuable supplements to regular classroom work if they are designed with care, and introduced at appropriate intervals, preferably at the conclusion of individual Form stages as a recapitulation of work covered. It is suggested that during the course of the programme a restricted number of challenging projects be given, rather than many insignificant homework-type tasks which probably will not inspire as much careful work on the part of the student.

Specific assignment topics should be developed for use at a number of stages throughout the Form series.

For instance, at some advanced stage the student might be given a project requiring that he compose a poem on any subject and in any Form of his choice, and provide an explanation of why he selected his particular topic and how he tried to develop it.

The two examples cited below from the work of fourteen-year-olds serve to illustrate the possible results of such a project. They both reveal a conscious attention to detail which would probably not have been observed were it not for the assignment.

Overbreed

Through a stifling haze of depression
Are seen the multitudes of turbid, grey, stick-
like people
Living in a landscape of their own creation;
A world covered in splotches of white, yellow,
brown and black,
Cemented together by brick and stone, steel and
concrete,
Choking out the simplest roots of spirit.

(R.A.D., Lower Canada)

The student analysed his work in part as follows:

> I first looked for a topic on which to write; this subject was influenced by my emotions at the time. If I had written the poem at intervals, the mood of the poem would probably have changed at each interval, and the essential spirit I was trying to convey to the reader would thus have been lost. I believe that in any poem a vital essential is to express spirit, individual spirit; this spirit is the goal of what is created . . .
>
> Just before writing this poem, I had arrived home after taking a ride on a particularly dirty bus through a depressing part of the city. The

> day was overcast and sombre. I certainly have no liking for metropolitan buses as I must use them every school day in the year. They seem drab, stifling vehicles. It seemed to me that the architects who built the homes in this area had tried to make each one as conformist as the next. The same red-bricked rows gave the district an atmosphere of vagueness; there was nothing distinctive about them, and this is something I recoil from. The setting was altogether too machine-like for me. It had the 1984 feeling. I then linked my mood with a topic I had read about a few days earlier in an article by Sir Julian Huxley on man's greatest problem--overbreeding. The fusion of these two elements--mood and topic--provided the inspiration for my poem."

Another fourteen-year-old of less than average writing ability produced the following piece, introduced by the brief but perceptive statement: "Since this is a simple poem, it conveys one meaning. If it were made complex, it might lose everything. Although complex poems leave out no details, they often obscure the heart of the inspiration, and without this heart, there is nothing."

Autumn

Autumn colors flashing bright
On a sky of shining white
Brilliant scarlet, yellow, jade,
Bursting colors, heaven-made.

Geese are flying in a wedge
Southward from the arctic edge;
Nobles in a barren sky,
Honking omens as they fly.

(R.L.G., Lower Canada)

The images here are clear and vivid, particularly for a boy who showed little initial writing aptitude. His first draft contained the spellings "baron" for barren and "omnes" for omens, which suggest, if nothing else, that the poem is entirely his own work.

Any assignment given in this section should be designed with a specific aim in view, and hence should serve as a useful supplement to the regular classroom sessions.

In summary then, the Analysis exercises and devices proposed in this chapter are intended as a guide to the student in assessing his progress and evaluating his technique. They should be used at regular intervals in conjunction with all stages of the Form series, and thus represent a vital element in the poetry writing programme as a whole.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CHART

I SUMMARY

Because of the nature of this study, conclusions in the commonly accepted sense will not be offered. However, ten questions are now advanced in areas that may still provide problems, and some answers attempted.

(i) How should the proper classroom atmosphere for creative work be developed?

A number of factors should produce this atmosphere: the positive attitude and approach of the teacher himself toward the work being undertaken; his encouragement of the efforts of his students, and an appreciation of the worth of their attempts; the preparation of the students by means of background material, illustration, and discussion.

(ii) Does self-analysis work?

Yes, if the student is given the knowledge required to undertake evaluation. He should be provided with a framework of criteria for his analysis, however, and steps appropriate to his rate of progress. He must also be convinced that his self-analysis is intended for constructive and not destructive purposes, and that it will yield positive results.

(iii) What steps should be taken if a student is unable to produce anything in one of the writing sessions?

If the teacher has planned his period well and understands his students, this situation should seldom arise even with weaker writers. If it does occur, however, the teacher should re-assure the student, and try to restore his confidence, perhaps by suggesting that he attempt something at home before the next session. In any case, no effort should be made to demand a result on the spot: if a student feels that he is under pressure to produce, he will probably find his task inordinately difficult.

(iv) How can every student be given the opportunity to read his work to his classmates?

This involves a problem of timing and rotation for the teacher. Some students may be self-assured and anxious to read almost every period; however, others may be shy and never volunteer at all. In providing for this latter group, the teacher should have perused their books beforehand, and should therefore ask them to read specific poems they have written. In accordance with the principle of reinforcement, however, opportunity should be given to every student to read his work in class as often as possible.

(v) Is it desirable that work be graded by the teacher?

The poetry writing programme must not be considered as one in which obtaining marks is the most important factor, supplanting other values to be derived from it. Nonetheless, it is suggested that the student be given some grade as an incentive to his efforts. Because of the difficulty of precise evaluation, it is recommended that the teacher err, if anything, on the side of leniency when assigning marks.

(vi) Where should the line be drawn between too much guidance in Form and Content and too little?

This decision calls for sound judgement by the teacher based on a knowledge of the programme and a familiarity with the needs of his students: the setting of hard and fast rules should be avoided. The basic aim should be to provide each student with sufficient guidelines and suggestions to enable him to proceed with confidence: these guidelines should not be so inflexible, however, as to rob him of all freedom of structure and expression.

(vii) What should be done about dealing with various levels of ability within the class?

The teacher must first recognize that these different levels exist, and be prepared to adapt the

elements of his programme to appeal to each level during some of the sessions at least. He might warn his students therefore that every period is not intended to suit all of them alike. A stimulus which proves ideal for one student may not be equally successful for another; nonetheless, all must be given a chance.

(viii) How much time should be spent on each stage of the programme?

The single classroom period constitutes the basic time unit of the programme, and planning should be carried out with this in mind. As a rule, the teacher should proceed at a pace in keeping with the rate of progress and interests of his students. If a particular phase is generating real excitement, it should be extended for further periods. The programme should sustain itself if the teacher provides sufficient choices, and remains sensitive to the attitudes of the class. Variety and a sense of accomplishment are important to the student, and these should be provided in as great a measure as possible.

(ix) In what exact sequence of stages should the programme be carried out?

It is recommended that the stages of the Form series be carried out in consecutive order as the basic framework for progress through the programme: Content

and Analysis stages should be related to those of Form. The chart provided below proposes an inter-relationship of all the stages outlined in the programme. In accordance with the principle of flexibility in the inter-relationship of elements, however, the suggested sequence should not be regarded as unalterable and is open to variations based on the judgement of the teacher.

(x) Is there any means of ensuring that the programme will work?

This question should be of prime concern to every teacher. The answer to it lies basically in a number of steps which he should take in preparing himself to conduct the programme: he should develop a knowledge of the background information and theory in the field; he should study the details of the programme, and be aware of the various approaches at his disposal; he should become a practising poet himself in order to appreciate the difficulties involved in creation; he should prepare the material for every class thoroughly and be ready for potential problems; he should try to develop a rapport with his students so that mutual confidence is established. Any teacher who prepares himself in the manner outlined above should be able to face his poetry writing classes with the expectation of success and have assurance that the programme will indeed work.

II A CHART OF THE PROGRAMME

Now that an attempt has been made to answer questions which might still have arisen, a chart is provided proposing an inter-relationship of all the stages of the programme and using the same numerals and terms as have already been adopted. A brief preliminary explanation is offered of a number of the details given below. The eleven stages of the Form series are presented consecutively down the left-hand side of the chart. As these represent the basic framework of the programme, the teacher should adhere, closely, to their suggested sequence of presentation: he should work his way through them in order, and spend as much time on each as he feels his students require.

The five Content categories should be used in conjunction with the Form series wherever subject-matter suggestions are needed. They are outlined in Chapter Five as: I General Themes; II Sensory-Awareness Stimuli; III A Spectrum of the Arts; IV Specific Experiences; and V Perception-Reaction Triggers. Numerals given on the Chart under this series correspond with its five divisions, refer to specific recommendations made in Chapter Five and are provided as a cross-reference. For example, opposite Haikus in Form stage V is found "I, II Sight, Feeling, V Shock;" these indicate that while any one of the five Content categories may be

used in giving subject-matter suggestions for Haikus, categories I, II (under sight and feeling) and V (under shock reaction) should prove particularly helpful to the student, and contain specific recommendations for his guidance. Reference is made in the chart (under Perception--Expression exercises, Prime the Pump Patterns, and the Universal Framework) to the fact that Content material is provided for these three stages under their Form series outlines: these entries have been marked with an asterisk (*).

The elements of the Analysis series are intended for use throughout the entire programme; consequently, they have been placed on the chart only where they are presented for the first time, and not for every suggested occasion thereafter. It is recommended that the concept of learning through doing govern the timing of their introduction and that no Analysis stage be attempted until the student has had sufficient writing experience to be able to benefit from undertaking it.

The chart giving an inter-relationship of the series and stages of the programme is now presented in Table 1.

TABLE I

A CHART OF THE PROGRAMME

Presenting a suggested inter-relationship of series and stages

As outlined in Chapter IV Form Series	As outlined in Chapter V Content Series	As outlined in Chapter VI Analysis Series
I Introduction		
II Perception-Expression Exercises	II Sound III Music (Content suggestions in Form stage)*	
		I Skeleton criteria of Analysis
III Dylan Thomas Portraits: Description Sound	I II Sound	
		V Analysis by student of his own poem

(table continued)

TABLE I (continued)

As outlined in Chapter IV Form Series	As outlined in Chapter V Content Series	As outlined in Chapter VI Analysis Series
IV Form Poem	II Sight IV Research, imagined situation	
		II Completed Framework III Criticism of Inferior Production
V Haikus	I II Sight, Feeling V Shock	
		VI Craftsmanship of the Poet
VI Completed Image Variations:		
Chinese Introduction	III Literature IV Research	
		VII Special Outside Assignments
Precise Skeleton	I II Sight, III Literature, painting	
Animating the Image	IV Imagined situation V Shock, Imagined situation	
Specific Emotional Aim	III Literature	
Free range	I	

(table continued)

TABLE I (continued)

As outlined in Chapter IV Form Series		As outlined in Chapter V Content Series		As outlined in Chapter VI Analysis Series
VII	Formal Metrical Patterns	I		
	Rhymed Couplets	III	Music	
	Structured Quatrain	II	Feeling	
		III	Music	
		IV	Imagined Situation	
	Ballad	III	Literature	
	Parody	III	Literature	
	Further Forms	III	Literature	
				IV Criticism of Pairs of Poems
VIII	Prime the Pump Patterns	V	Shock, Imagined situation (Content suggestions in Form stage)*	
IX	Formless Structure			
	Shape	II	Sound, Smell, Taste	
	Technique	III	Painting, sculpture, drama	
		IV	Visits	
		V	Shock, imagined situation	

(table continued)

TABLE I (continued)

As outlined in Chapter IV Form Series		As outlined in Chapter V Content Series	As outlined in Chapter VI Analysis Series
X	Universal Framework	II Sight, Sound, Feeling Smell, Taste III Painting, Sculpture, Drama IV Visits V (Content Framework in Form stage)*	
XI	Free Form and Analysis	II Feeling III Sculpture, Drama IV Visits V	

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