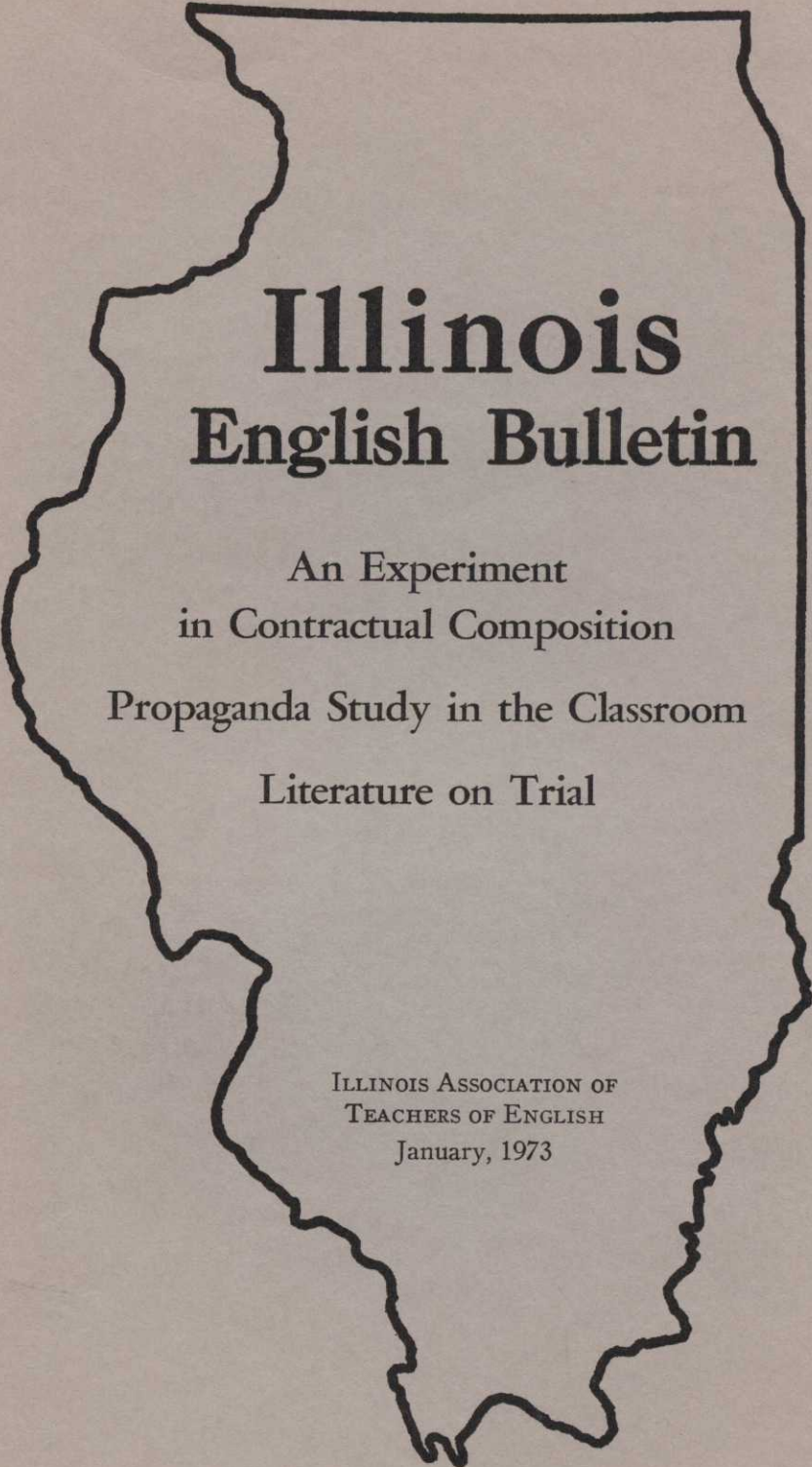
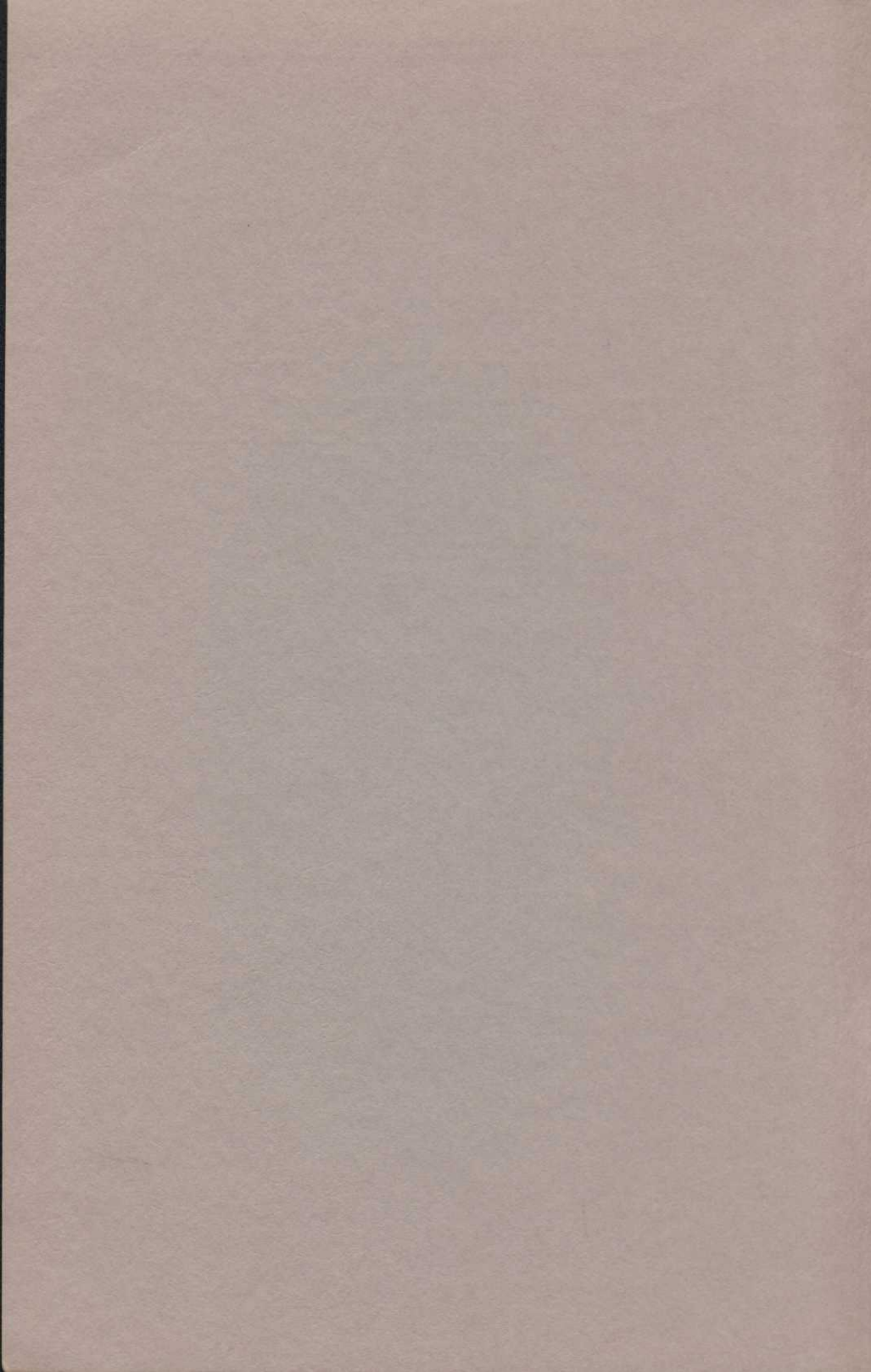




Illinois English Bulletin

An Experiment
in Contractual Composition
Propaganda Study in the Classroom
Literature on Trial

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF
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An Experiment in Contractual Composition

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RATIONALE

Many articles appearing in professional journals condemn the writing and using of behavioral objectives. Contending that the objection to using behavioral objectives in teaching composition is one of semantics, we feel that many people in the field are over-reacting and are too defensive about a trend they have not thoroughly investigated. It can be argued that many composition teachers who are screaming, "Down with behavioral objectives and up with humanism," are not as humane with their students as they claim. Rap sessions on everything from Vietnam to the sexual revolution for freshman composition students in lieu of teaching skills of organization, specification, and selectivity are not very humane to a student who will be writing papers and taking tests for the next four to seven years in college. This may be a rather prescriptive approach to teaching composition, but most English instructors are knowledgeable in the areas of writing skills while being pseudoknowledgeable in the fields of politics, sociology, and psychology.

If allowing students to write as many themes as they wish and then to determine their own grades is your thing, the program

inspired by our division chairman, Bill McNett, and put together by a committee of ten at Illinois Central College will probably be of little interest. Using behavioral objectives, or if you prefer, skill objectives as its basis, the committee worked a semester and the summer session of 1971 preparing this course for 360 English 110 transfer students. The underlying assumption of the committee was that if a student was told what was specifically expected of him in each of the required nine papers and then had five learning options and a guarantee of not failing, his performance would increase while his anxiety would decrease. Let us take a more detailed look at the design of the Contractual English 110 course, which is now in its second year of operation at Illinois Central College.

THE CONTRACT

The initial act of the prospective contractual student is the signing of a contract that when completed will result in the student's being awarded a passing grade. The essence of the contract is contained in the following seven statements taken from an actual contract:

1. I, _____, having read the *Contractual Composition Handbook*, hereby agree to complete nine writing assignments to the satisfaction of an English instructor appointed by the chairman of the Communications Division.
2. I will meet with my grading instructor during the two-week orientation sessions and then will follow the schedule which has been mapped out by me and my grading instructor during these sessions. I agree to the conditions of this schedule, and I understand that this schedule is a part of my contract.
3. Upon such satisfactory completion, I shall be awarded three semester hours of credit and a final grade of A, B, or C.
4. The nine prescribed writings must be completed by the conclusion of the second full semester from the above date.
5. All work completed shall be my own, having read and understood the plagiarism statement developed by the Communications Division.
6. I understand that I may officially withdraw from the course only by following the policies already established by the college.
7. I understand that I shall receive an F for the course only by breaking the terms of this contract.

The contract is then signed by the student, the student's adviser, the chairman of the Communications Division, and finally by the

student's appointed grading instructor. Upon satisfactory completion of the contract, the student receives a letter grade no lower than a C. Removing the threat of failure is accomplished by having the student revise papers as many times as necessary before moving to the next paper.

THE OBJECTIVES

Helping students recognize what is expected of them in each assignment is the purpose of the specific objectives for each rhetorical paper. (The objectives and assignments for the process paper are included at the end of the article. See Appendix.) The nine sets of objectives, placed in a rhetorical sequence from process to problem-solution, include style and mechanical skills that are graduated in degree of difficulty. These objectives, given to the student with each assignment, are numbered for the student's and instructor's convenience. The lectures, audiovisual tapes and slide tapes, and comments by the instructors in conferences all make specific references to the objectives for each rhetorical type by number. The objectives are derived from the teaching experiences, the instructor's resources, and the two required texts, *The Strategies of Rhetoric* by Tibbetts and *Assignments in Exposition* by Rorabacher. The objectives for each assignment in their present form have received committee approval after, in most cases, many revisions. The two authors of the objectives have read Mager and Bloom, and the objectives stem from what they have taught in composition classes for the past twenty-two combined years of experience.

Listed in the objectives are skills we have always taught and have expected of our composition students. In addition to giving the students in the experimental course more specific direction than they have received in past writing assignments, the objectives are being reproduced voluntarily by other members of our staff for their students' use in traditional classes. By dividing the objectives into three skill areas — rhetorical skills, style skills, and mechanical skills, all relevant for each rhetorical type, any student can use the objectives as a checklist similar to those which many composition teachers hand their students. While giving an instructor direction for lectures, the objectives do not lock-step a person into a one, two, three order in a class session. Freedom to innovate, to use models, and to develop inductive approaches still remains open to an instructor. The objectives have been re-

vised after the first year of use; another revision is forthcoming after this coming spring.

When students register for contractual composition, four sections are listed on the course offerings (English 110 EX, FX, GX, and HX), with an instructor assigned to each section, and students are allowed to register for any section. As a student registers, however, he is requested to call the division office for instructions for an appointment for a mapping session. The grading instructor in the experimental program becomes a learner's guide or mentor in addition to being a composition grader. Thus, instead of being registered for a particular class section, each student is assigned to an instructor whose primary function is to evaluate each of the nine writing assignments. He consults with the student after each grading and discusses with the student the mechanical errors and writing deficiencies in the paper, perhaps recommending the writing clinic or a particular tape or lecture; if the grade is unacceptable, a revision or rewrite is necessary. The student, however, may even choose to rewrite an acceptable (B or C) paper. When the composition is acceptable to both the instructor and the student, the student goes on to the next writing assignment. As a result, the grading instructor provides a tutorial mode of learning, a form of security for the contractual student which may not be available in a traditional composition class.

LEARNING OPTIONS

Although educators are aware that individuals learn not only at different rates but in different ways, little has been done in traditional programs to adapt teaching methods and media to individual differences. For the student in contractual composition, there is a variety of learning options: classroom lectures, audio-visual presentations, texts, and a learning laboratory. A student can use any of these options or he may choose any one or any combination of them which seems advantageous to him. This personalization — the student's mapping out his own individualized course — is perhaps the greatest advantage of the contractual program.

To use the option of traditional class lectures, a student must follow a specific predetermined schedule. Three traditional classroom instructors permit contractual students to attend their lectures, and these instructors have agreed to suggested due dates for the nine papers. A contractual student has the option of attending one or all of the lectures on a rhetorical type. A few of our students find they are more comfortable in a lecture class with

assigned due dates than they are in other learning options. Trial and error may be the only way a student discovers the options with which he works best.

As an alternative to the classroom lectures, the audiovisual presentations for each of the nine assignments consist primarily of tape-slide materials or simply audio tapes augmented by reading materials. These tapes provide detailed information necessary to accomplish the rhetorical and mechanical objectives of each assignment. All the necessary machinery and the audiovisual presentations are easily accessible in a centrally located audiovisual department on campus. In addition, the audio tapes are available for checkout so that the student can use them at home if he chooses. In the future, as cassette videotapes become available, it is proposed to add another dimension to the contractual composition program through the videotape concept.

A third option is the use of the textbooks, *Assignments in Exposition* by Rorabacher and *The Strategies of Rhetoric* by Tibbetts, which most students use only as a supplement to the other options. Although it appears to be the least bothersome of the options, using the textbooks exclusively is perhaps the most difficult, for it requires the student to be unusually fastidious in his learning and extremely cautious and perceptive in his reading. Nevertheless, some students have found the texts fully adequate for accomplishing the writing assignments.

Another important option which students find attractive as an alternative to other options is the Learning Laboratory. Having expensive instructors spend valuable time on skills which are considered prerequisite to English 110, our transfer course, rather than on more specialized skills is an extravagance. Thus, the Learning Laboratory is a desirable alternative which benefits the student and his grading instructor as well. Staffed by professional aides, the Learning Laboratory is useful for any composition problems. If counsel is needed in developing a specific composition before the assignment is handed in, or if help is needed with mechanical errors and proofreading, or even if advice is needed to revise or rewrite an unacceptable paper, the Learning Laboratory is a good place, and so far a very popular option, to get help on writing deficiencies.

CONCLUSION

The contractual composition program is an important alternative to the present traditional classroom situation, but the course is offered only as an option with voluntary enrollment. No as-

sumption has been made that it should be the only program available to English 110 composition students, for some students might feel extremely threatened by anything other than the traditional class. In fact, some of the students currently enrolled in the experimental class have found the independence, which is certainly a desirable aspect in the learning experience, to be unmanageable and procrastination to be their greatest problem. Revisions in the design of the program, such as the individual mapping sessions, have greatly overcome this shortcoming. Nevertheless, for the student who selects the experimental course there are many attractive advantages: optional class attendance, personalizing progress in writing skills, individualized instruction, a wide range of learning options, and a recognition of student maturity and responsibility. The program allows the student considerable freedom and flexibility, yet leaves room for both the instructor and the student himself to shape that freedom into a personal and fulfilling learning situation.

APPENDIX

Rhetorical Type #1 — Process

Basic Objectives: Specifically, you will be able to:

1. Choose a subject with which you have familiarity and knowledge
2. Select a limited subject which can be developed into a 500 word composition
3. Choose one of the methods of organization from below that is appropriate for the paper
 - a. Organize a process in a step-by-step order
 - b. Organize a process in a chronological order
 - c. Organize a process in a spacial order
 - d. Organize a process from least important to most important
4. Develop a process that is of a natural or artificial, abstract or physical class
5. Write an outline that clearly lists the steps of the process
6. Select one of the following points of view which is compatible with your paper: narrative or objective
7. Demonstrate effective use of transition words between and within the paragraph by giving each paragraph of the process a variety of transitions; underline three transitional words
8. Write the purpose of the process or the end point in the beginning or ending, or have the purpose clearly implied

9. Indicate an audience and maintain a consistent attitude throughout the paper; write the specific audience under the title
10. Write a thesis statement that is a single declarative sentence that lists the general steps with each step leading to the topic sentence of each paragraph and place this thesis directly below the audience
11. Define special terms to give clarity if relevant to the subject
12. Include negative directions or constructive advice to clarify a point if necessary
13. Demonstrate sentence variety by using introductory verbal, adverbial, adjective, and prepositional phrases and clauses; write "part." above three participle phrases in your paper
14. Correctly punctuate the introductory clauses and phrases and transitional words with the comma
15. Write paragraphs of 100 to 125 words in length
16. Let the topic sentence control the unity and organization of the paragraph, not the chronological order of the process.

Rhetorical Type #1 — Process Assignment

Text References: *The Strategies of Rhetoric*, pp. 177-182
Assignments in Exposition, pp. 95-125

Check with your grading instructor for times and places this rhetorical type is presented by composition instructors. There will be enough presentations at varied times that a student should be able to attend any or all lectures of this type at his convenience.

There are also audiovisual presentations of this rhetorical type that a student may use as an additional aid to the text and lecture or in place of one or both. These may be checked out at the audiovisual center.

The paper should be approximately 500 words in length with paragraphs of 100 to 125 words.

Specific Assignment:

A number of suitable titles appear on page 125 of *Assignments in Exposition*. In addition there are probably hundreds of things you know how to do. The list below is more to suggest topics than to limit the range of things you can write on. Whether you pick one of these topics or use one of your own, be sure you are writing from your own knowledge and that you remember the needs of your audience as you write. It's usually a good idea to avoid

giving directions on something most people already know how to do. For instance, you wouldn't want to tell girls how to hem a skirt, or boys how to change a tire.

How to

entertain a three-year-old
win a student election
stand up on water skis
prevent frostbite
find an apartment
break a lease
raise bail
judge a beauty contest
win a beauty contest
prune rosebushes
pick a lock
cut toenails
replace a broken window
cure a cold
cover a chair seat
lose weight
cure snoring
choose a wig
give a haircut at home
dress out a deer

spot and avoid a speed trap
fill out an accident report
turn a somersault
get a date
refuse a date
perform a card trick
leave the house without being heard
form a car pool
raise Cain
placate a policeman
remove candle wax from a tablecloth
impress your boyfriend's mother
skindive safely
sell tickets for a benefit
recruit a baseball team
fix a leaky faucet
keep a beard looking trim
decorate a Christmas tree
blow an egg
kill time

How to make

a mobile
invisible ink
ice sculpture
earrings from seashells
a silkscreen print
a decorated candle

a checkerboard
homemade soup
a bonfire without matches
a mess
an enemy

How to build

a board fence
a treehouse
a swing
an entrance for a cat
a tie rack
a bird feeder
a sauna bath
a better rat trap

a burglar alarm
a secret compartment
a soapbox racer
a kite
a photographic darkroom
a simple telescope
a reputation as a wit

More how-to writing topics:

How to make masks, pottery, enameled copper jewelry, merry
How to use a soil test kit, a Geiger counter, a sewing machine, a tear gas
mask
How to stop smoking, oversleeping, insulting your friends
How to play a game, a harmonica, dead
How to tune a guitar, a piano, a sitar, a hopped-up V-8
How to organize a tutoring service, a cake sale, a demonstration, your time

For additional topics see "A Thousand Topics for Composition: Revised" (*Illinois English Bulletin*, January, 1971).

A warning: The process paper has a built-in low reader interest level. It is up to you to avoid subjects that lack interest. Any subject can be made interesting by matching audience and diction.

Propaganda Study in the Classroom

BY RONALD RAYBIN

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The study of propaganda in my eleventh-twelfth grade mass media classes probably attracts the interest of more students than any other aspect of the course. Most students already accept propaganda study as a practical, current concern, so they are alert from the very beginning when I offer them a working definition to be operational for our class study:

Propaganda consists of information and/or opinion intended to influence people's ideas or actions. The propagandist wishes to "put something across," good or bad. He rarely wants you to think or examine real evidence. He usually just wants you to unquestioningly accept what he says. Our study will limit itself to propaganda communicated on a large public scale, particularly via the mass media.

Occasionally a student responds with an exception to this definition. If the definition's qualifiers "rarely" and "usually" can't handle the objection, and the limiting last sentence doesn't appease, I allow the definition to be modified, within reason. Propaganda means too many things to too many people to insist upon a firm commitment to any one definition. The purpose of the study is not merely to apprise students about the nature of propaganda by defining terms, but to promote their awareness as a defense against being victimized by propaganda. The ultimate goal is a reasoned skepticism.

After discussion and possible modification of the definition, I make clear that, although we will be studying only seven common propaganda devices, there are many more, most of them unlabeled. The class will be invited to discuss these other approaches (from propaganda they have brought to class) after they are familiar with the following propaganda devices:

1. the name calling device
2. the glittering generalities device

3. the association device
4. the testimonial device
5. the plain folks device
6. the bandwagon device
7. the card stacking device

I have taught the above seven devices using two basic approaches. With slower classes I've defined a device, shown and explained my examples, and then discussed student examples to determine if any illustrated the device under consideration. (For a week or two prior to the study I have each student, regardless of the approach used, assemble a half dozen advertisements from magazines and newspapers, two brief summaries of radio or TV commercials, and two letters-to-the-editor or editorials. Additional materials such as pamphlets, speeches, bulletins, etc., are also invited.)

The second teaching method is slower and more involved but probably more interesting for average and bright students. I present illustrations of a device after naming but not defining it, then discuss the students' examples to determine if there are any that represent the named device. Next the students each compose a definition of the propaganda technique, then share their ideas in discussion to arrive at a class definition, which is written on the board. If the definition is sound, I have them copy it. But because I am more permissive about approach than results, I am willing to modify the definition if clarity and completeness will obviously benefit.

After the seven devices are taught, there are no differences in my approaches to subsequent propaganda work.

A list of seven devices (with definitions to be offered immediately or held in reserve, depending upon the teaching method chosen) and a few teaching suggestions follow.

1. The *name calling device* has us draw a conclusion, without an examination of evidence, by applying bad names to the people or things the propagandist wants us to disapprove of or reject.

On the board write a sentence such as: "The three thousand students were a frenzied mob of filthy, foul-mouthed, misfits." Then ask:

- A. What do you know about the students?
- B. What words encourage your disapproval of them?
- C. How do you know they were "frenzied," "a mob," "filthy," "foul-mouthed," and "misfits"?

- D. Why are you willing or not willing to take the speaker's word that the students were "frenzied," "filthy," etc.?

After the discussion, offer additional illustrations of name calling from editorials, letters-to-the-editor, and political promotions. Name calling is not too common in commercial advertising, although I do have an advertisement attacking "the ugly cigarette" and recommending a brand with flowers printed on the filter. If any of the student examples are particularly apt, request that it be donated to your collection. (Many of my best examples have come from students.)

2. The *glittering generalities device* has us draw a conclusion, without an examination of evidence, by applying good names to the people or things the propagandist wants us to approve of or accept.

On the board modify the sentence illustrating name calling to read: "The three thousand students were an orderly gathering of clean-cut, courteous, humanitarians." Now ask:

- A. What do you know now about the students?
- B. What words encourage your approval of them?
- C. How do you know they were "orderly," "clean-cut," "courteous," and "humanitarians"?
- D. Why are you willing or not willing to take the speaker's word that the students were "orderly," "clean-cut," etc.?

Advertising overwhelms us with words that strike an automatic note of acceptance, so student examples will abound with illustrations of glittering generalities. Be sure to consider brand names that are themselves glittering generalities. Cheer, Joy, Clear, and Pledge are, for instance, more emotionally attractive as product names than Sorrow, Gloom, Murk, and Welsh. We really *do* like glittering generalities.

Also make available for discussion dittoes of some letters-to-the-editor and editorial matter which include glittering generalities.

3. With the *association device* the propagandist associates the authority or prestige of something we respect or admire with whatever it is he wants us to accept (without examining the evidence). Symbols and pictures are constantly used to transfer the good feelings we have about them to what the propagandist desires to sell.

Before offering examples from advertisements and political campaign literature ask:

- A. Why would a large company interested in making a profit spend money to advertise its antipollution efforts rather than the quality of its products?
- B. Why might a speaker flank the podium with American flags and place large pictures of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington behind him?
- C. Why might a politician, in attacking an opponent, compare the opponent's emotional speaking style to Adolph Hitler's?
- D. Why do so many cigarette companies feature lovely outdoor scenery in their advertisements?
- E. Why might a nonathletic student wear a varsity letterman's jacket when he's away from the school area?

Because association is more subtle than the more language-oriented name calling and glittering generalities devices, present more examples of this device in action than the first two. Show pretty girls posing in irrelevant, if attractive, profusion next to products ranging from automobiles to dog food. Share advertisements with names and pictures of famous Americans being associated with such things as insurance companies, magazine subscriptions, and food. (I have an advertisement for ham which includes eight American flags, models of Revolutionary War soldiers and sailors, and a picture of George Washington. The company's pigs must die saluting. I have ads with rugged, masculine athletes being associated with possibly feminine toiletries and grooming products; handsome, successful-looking people being associated with hard liquor; and various, negatively drawn political cartoons to demonstrate that the association device can be used to attack as well as support. You might wish to modify the definition to include this latter use.) Also bring up automobile names such as Spitfire, Impala, Cougar, Comet, etc., both for discussion of the associations and to draw a distinction between a glittering generality, a word or phrase which of itself causes positive feelings, and associative words, which alone are usually denotative and require a context to arouse positive feelings.

After these preliminaries, students rarely have trouble sharing and explaining associations from their small collections.

4. The *testimonial device* involves a direct quotation from someone the intended audience admires. The propagandist wants us to accept something, without our examining the evidence, because we trust the person making the endorsement.

To introduce this device you might cite Mr. Jones, who is running for a local political office. On various television commercials

sponsored by supporters of Mr. Jones we find the following speaking in his favor and recommending that we vote for him: a well known movie actor, the mayor of the city, a prominent minister, and the president of an influential businessman's organization. Ask:

- A. Why do you think Mr. Jones has these people support him on TV instead of, say, four friends of his who are unknown to the public?
- B. To whom might each of the four endorsers appeal?
- C. What do you think of the qualifications of the endorsers to adequately judge a political candidate?
- D. What do the actual qualifications of the candidate have to do with the endorsements?

Then move on to the numerous testimonials from magazines, newspapers, and TV commercials of sundry celebrities testifying in support of a product, person, or program. It requires little more than the question, "Why are these people endorsing these things?" for students to determine that the major motivation is usually economic.

Some students will offer examples of ordinary housewives, barbers, and mechanics testifying for something or other. Tell them that those examples are a special subcategory of the testimonial device which will be reviewed after the following propaganda trick is discussed.

5. With the *plain folks device* the propagandist tries to convince us that he and his ideas are good because either he or the people supporting him are people like ourselves (just "plain folks"). "I'm just one of you," he seems to be saying, expecting that to be proof of his proposition.

Open discussion of this device with a few questions aimed at revealing the emotional effectiveness of the plain folks technique:

- A. With whom might you feel more comfortable, someone like yourself and the everyday people you know, or an outsider, unlike the people in your group? Why?
- B. Whom would you be more likely to support politically, someone who seems like you and shares your concerns, or someone who seems a stranger with feelings quite different from yours, your friends, and your neighbors? Why?
- C. Why might people who want our support try to appear to be as we are?

A political campaign year is a good time to gather newspaper

examples of politicians wearing Indian war bonnets, saying "by golly" instead of "indeed," and eating spaghetti with Italians, bagels with Jews, and humble pie with anyone in neighborhood supermarkets as they appear to be "plain folks" just like their voting constituency.

Advertisements are replete with plain folks helping large corporations market their wares, so most classes should have a fair amount of examples. But after showing a few of your own illustrations and before asking for students' return to the propaganda device you had postponed discussing, the one I termed a special subcategory of testimonial. I discovered that separately labeling this subcategory as the *plain folks testimonial device* precluded arguments about whether ordinary, unknown people lending their support with direct statement fits in the plain folks or testimonial categories. (If a student inquires which category, plain folks or testimonial, is plain folks testimonial a subcategory of, I reply, "both.")

6. The *bandwagon device* occurs when the propagandist suggests that we should do something because the rest of the group we identify with is doing it. Bandwagon takes advantage of people's desire to follow the crowd.

Here are some introductory questions:

- A. Suppose a man had many tasteful, narrow neckties. What might encourage him to stop wearing them and purchase a number of very wide ties?
- B. Candidates for political office frequently tell us that the people are with them and that they are going to win. What appeal might such statements have to voters?
- C. Do you think most people like to do what most other people are doing? Why? Can you think of any personal example in terms of fashion, language, or any other aspect of your life?

Then share a few advertisements showing attractive groups of people using a product and asking the audience to join them. If examples from the class and their prior discussion seem insufficient, bring up the nature of the bandwagon effect in terms of political nominating conventions, stock market speculation, and various fads.

7. The *card stacking device* involves the use of slanting and lack of balance to help the propagandist put across his point. The technique often uses distortions, exaggerations, incomplete evidence, misinterpretations, inadequate statistics, and outright lies.

The device can mix honesty with dishonesty. The propagandist stacks the deck so that you receive only the cards he wishes you to receive.

Use such questions as the following as an introduction:

- A. Why would a used car salesman tell you that the car you're considering buying is in terrific condition and was owned by only one careful driver, but fail to inform you that the speedometer was set back 60,000 miles?
- B. Why would an advertiser state that four out of five doctors recommend his product but fail to mention that only five doctors were asked in the first place?
- C. Why would a clothing store point out how marvelously stylish and colorful its new fashions are but keep silent about the cheap material used and the fact that several other stores sell the same fashions at half the price?
- D. Why might a newspaper print only negative information about unions and ignore all the good aspects?
- E. Why would a politician brag about the promises he kept and ignore those he broke?

The August 1971 issue of *Consumer Reports* has some telling examples of card stacking. The short article about Excedrin and what its clinical testing really shows is worth reading in its entirety to a class. In addition, portions of the articles "A Close Look at Hamburger" and "Tires," along with the columns "Truth in Advertising: Supermarket Specials" and "World Field Research," demonstrate the ubiquity of this propaganda device.

Some of my examples include startlingly slanted political material as well as advertisements with percentages and figures but no information about how these mathematical calculations were obtained. I also share a photostat of page thirty-three of the December 22, 1941, issue of *Time* which features an unbelievably distorted thing titled "How to Tell Your Friends from the Japs." This last example is a bit much even when the emotional context of World War II is established.

Card stacking is probably the most difficult device to detect, because determining its existence frequently requires inside information (or being victimized). But there are numerous instances of possible card stacking which can be approached with a wholesome skepticism if not outright accusation. The examples from your students will probably require noting what hasn't been said even more than what has been.

Before moving on to the next step in the study, make clear that propaganda is propaganda because of the devices employed, not the purposes of the propagandist. Whether his ends are helping people or using them, it is the nature of his argument which establishes him as a propagandist.

At this point students are usually concerned about the many illustrations of propaganda they possess which are not powered by any of the above devices. Here is an opportunity to consider various propaganda appeals. I divide my classes into heterogeneous groups of four or five students, appoint a chairman for each group, and ask the groups to categorize their unlabeled propaganda in terms of appeals—i.e., an appeal to our desire for health, wealth, or status; an appeal to our sense of humor, so that we'll think well of the product; an appeal to our fears or insecurities; an appeal to our vanity or sexuality; and so forth. Next follows a panel discussion of the group chairmen; they compare their groups' findings while a secretary records appeals a majority of this panel agrees upon as valid. Some questionable interpretations of appeals do show up, but so do many sound ones.

Next the students are ready to reinforce their propaganda learnings by applying them. Each student is assigned to write a 200 to 300 word piece of propaganda using at least five of the propaganda devices, labeling in the margin, and any of the propaganda appeals that strike their fancy. The students choose a topic from the following unusual list. I make sure there are four or five students per topic.

1. A promotion for bad breath.
2. A promotion for a product that *gives* you body odor.
3. A promotion for ceding Wisconsin to Paraguay.
4. A promotion for unsafe cars.
5. A promotion for men's lipstick.
6. A promotion to encourage positive feelings toward radioactive fallout.
7. A promotion for water pollution.
8. A promotion for untested medicines.

When individual efforts are completed, the students meet in groups according to topic. These meetings take a period or more; their purpose is for students to share and discuss each propaganda promotion and to cull the best ideas for one presentation to represent the entire group. Each group then chooses a student to read the combined group effort aloud. (A group secretary will be needed to make a neat copy.)

My classes generally offer six presentations, and I conduct a class vote for the best one, with a run-off between the top two. The members of the winning group receive glory and an extra-credit grade.

Keep a file of the better presentations for use as models with future classes. Here's a sample of a promotion for men's lipstick worked out, appropriately enough, by a group of girls:

Hey champ!

Is your chick bored with your dry drab lips and your nothing breath? Is she constantly turning you off? Well, we've got the solution for those who dare. It'll improve your love life *and* your overall appearance no matter what shape you're in.

Now there is BRUTE 22!!!

The first Lip Glaze for Men!

It's been clinically tested* and proven. BRUTE 22 protects chapped lips and prevents bad breath more effectively than any other leading product.

George McCord, professional stuntman for Hollywood studios, says, "Sure, I use BRUTE 22. On the job it helps keep a guy's lips from gettin' chapped and rough. No scrapin' the ladies for me. I especially go for the Apache Orange. It's wild and bold."

Even George's brother Bob, an ordinary, mild-mannered English teacher uses BRUTE 22 and is with it.

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(Picture of George McCord in cowboy suit and brother Bob surrounded by beautiful, adoring women.)

*Independent Test Laboratory

For the remainder of the year invite students to share interesting propaganda with the class. As well, you might keep an ever-changing propaganda bulletin board.

But don't necessarily stop with propaganda. You can use it to launch into further language study, logical fallacies, and composition work. I've found that the relevance of propaganda study carries over to related areas and makes for more motivated students.

Literature on Trial

By JAMES VAN DELINDER

NILES NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, SKOKIE

On September 28, 1970, trial was held "in" and for the county of Carterville. In a moment, the results of that trial.

District Attorney Martin Schwartz had doggedly sought the conviction of Paul Dixon on a charge of murder two. A small parade of witnesses had revealed Paul Dixon was gullible, slow of wit, and under strong compulsion to avenge his friend, the town doctor.

At 10:10 a.m. on the third and final day of the trial, Paul Dixon was found guilty. At 11:30 that same morning, Paul was found not guilty, and at 1:05 this afternoon, he was found not guilty again.

In actual fact, these *three* trials did not take place in Carterville, Kentucky, at all. They took place in Niles North High School, Skokie, Illinois. Paul Dixon, his doctor friend, and his town of Carterville exist only in a short story by Ring Lardner.

Drama class, do you suppose? The fall play, maybe? No, a class called "Literature on Trial," and it meets at 9:30, 10:45, and 12:30 on green and yellow days of a modular schedule. The course is just one of thirty-eight one-semester, non-graded elective courses in Niles North's "Excellence Through Choice" English.

With the guidance of a three-man teaching team, students meeting in large groups of fifty to sixty and small groups of ten to fifteen select a story, play, or novel that presents a moral problem, a student to play the character charged with guilt, and court officers who then select a jury according to usual courtroom procedure. Other students serve on the staffs of the prosecutor and defense attorney, publish a newspaper styled to the setting of the story, or serve as public observers of the trial.

The trial analogy involves students in literary readings, but more particularly in analyzing moral questions and making judgments about them. The trials also require political activity, argumentation, and composition in various forms. Elections, contests, and the adversarial nature of the trial exercise the aggressiveness of some young people, balanced by the roles of judge, clerk, and bailiff which call on their sense of order. The carefully prepared prosecution/defense or plaintiff/respondent debates inspire informal arguments among students in and out of class while the

jury struggles with the issues under the responsibility of rendering a verdict. These motives and events give a degree of reality to the moral problem that traditional classroom activities, abstract and teacher-dependent, cannot achieve. Students are deeply concerned about moral dilemmas — when they can work them out for themselves.

Jim Van Delinder, originator of "Literature on Trial," still illustrates its value with an earlier experience that led to the present course. At the end of a lethargic unit on folklore last year in a basic level American literature course for a class of some sixty-five discouraged juniors, Jim suggested to the teaching team that Billy the Kid be tried for his crimes as a way of ending the unit on a higher plane of interest. The result was exciting: the "greasers" in the class organized to elect the judge, an angry young man who presided in a purple choir robe with ready gavel. Somehow a severely handicapped student in a wheelchair was elected bailiff. A volatile girl of limited reading ability became a determined prosecutor. Jurors were called, questioned, and accepted or excused according to custom. Tired students stayed awake. Chronic truants attended class. Visiting students appeared despite administrative strictures. Even the principal showed up to observe the trial!

With the abolition of ability grouping in English and the installation of one-semester elective courses this year, Van Delinder and team partners McGuinness and Staerk are refining the trial learning concept in their course. They have several recommendations for teachers who would try their idea:

- Remember that the trial is an analogy, simply a useful setup. Don't let legal technicalities inhibit student initiative or dampen enthusiasm.
- Let the trial operate to its own conclusion. Teachers' values are not only irrelevant but dangerous to the process in which students confront each other on the issues.
- Encourage invention. The literary work is a source, not the limit of information and ideas for the trial.
- Keep opportunities for participation open to all. Disqualifying any student deprives the group of a potentially valuable contribution.
- Relax! The most serious human events demand the most generous sense of humor.

On October 6, 1970, a trial will be held "in" and for the *State*

of *California* vs. *George Melton* for the premeditated murder of Lennie Small. The indictments have been served to the three defense teams, the juries have been selected, and the witnesses are preparing themselves for their roles. If there are no further motions before this court, let the prosecution begin.

