A comparison of achievement in evaluative, interpretive and comprehensive poetry skills of two groups of freshman college students, with and without training in the area

Annette L. Nolls

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A COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT IN EVALUATIVE, INTERPRETIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE POETRY SKILLS OF TWO GROUPS OF FRESHMAN COLLEGE STUDENTS, WITH AND WITHOUT TRAINING IN THE AREA

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
AUGUST 1964
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A. L. N.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale.—Man has always been more successful at appreciating poetry than at defining it. This is a well-known statement that provokes much thought when viewed in terms of certain segments of our society today and their attitudes toward poetry. On one hand, there is little doubt that poetry is enjoyed and appreciated, for people in all ages and in all countries read, write, recite and listen to poetry because they like it, because they find enjoyment in it. It appeals to the educated, the intelligent, the sensitive, and in its simpler forms, to the uneducated and to children. It is as universal as it is ancient, for the most primitive people have used it, and the most civilized have cultivated it. But on the other hand, poetry is not just a form of amusement; rather, it is regarded as something central to each man's existence, something having unique value to the fully realized life, something which he is better off for having and which he is spiritually impoverished without.¹ Not everyone understands the reason for this in that one must have a provisional understanding of what poetry is before one can fully realize its importance to existence and can appreciate its full value.

The problem lies not in the difficulty of constructing definitions of poetry, for many people have defined poetry in as many different ways. A simple definition is that poetry is a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language. Understanding poetry is more complex than defining it. It is said that the minds and hearts of greatest depth delight in poetry; the shallowest and emptiest are those most addicted to novel-reading. The sort of persons who are perpetually engaged in hunting for excitement from without are invariably those who do not possess the intellectual powers or the depth of sensibility to allow them to find ample excitement from within. In accord with this observation publishers have, as a matter of fact, noted a decrease in poetry-reading in the general population and a marked increase in novel-reading. It becomes all too convenient then to equate novel-reading with "shallowness" and to assign some such qualities to the general reading public. But perhaps many of these "shallow and empty" minds have been misjudged and through no fault of their own. There is an art to the enjoyment of poetry and it is one that must be learned. Emotions must be sensitized, imaginations developed, and attitudes toward life spiritualized and ennobled. Verse, approached in this manner, presents many difficulties to that portion of our population which has not had the benefit of such orientation.

We look mainly to the schools to develop this capacity to love and enjoy poetry, for where poetry is handled with tact and understanding by teachers who love it and are able to communicate their love of it, students do not develop the traditional indifference to this form of art.
Instead, they retain an unashamed pleasure in it which grows with them and which they are to take away with them into adult life.

The reading habits of most high school students veer away from the reading of poetry in an appreciative vein, because the skills required for the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of human emotion are undeveloped in much of our society today. These skills are undeveloped because poetry has been mistaught and mishandled in the classroom owing to the ineffectiveness of methods many teachers use in communicating with students.

Strong lists several reasons why the teaching of poetry in schools has produced little or no effect on students. Chief of the reasons have been:

(1) The teacher has disliked it.
(2) The teacher has been embarrassed by it.
(3) The teacher has been suspicious of all forms of emotion.
(4) The teacher has been indifferent to poetry.
(5) The teacher has loved it uncomprehendingly and for irrelevant reasons.
(6) The teacher has genuinely loved it, but has been unable to communicate his love to others.
(7) The teacher has been unable to read and interpret it.

Having considered these facts, the writer developed an interest in determining the degree of understanding with which a group of college students would analyze and interpret poetry on the basis of what they had

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been taught and in determining the techniques of instruction that would best bring about improvement in certain poetry skills. Before attempting a study of this type, a survey of the scores made by beginning freshmen on the poetry section of the Iowa Silent Reading Test for the years 1961-63 at Morris Brown College was conducted. These scores indicated a significant deficiency in comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills. The writer then generalized that students do not understand poetry better because they are unable to analyze it to any great extent. Of course, some writers insist that analysis tends to destroy for the reader the "emotional" and "musical" effects of a poem; but the reader needs some knowledge of form, meter, imagery, and other poetical devices, and he needs a knowledge of the way that all of these may be adapted as a means to the ends of understanding poetry. A reader who understands how the poet achieves his purpose can more readily and precisely share the thought and feeling which make up the total impact of a poem.

The rationale has suggested that there are methods of instruction which may bring about the desired communication between student and poem. It was the writer's purpose, in conducting this experiment, to determine these methods and in doing so to afford some insight into the problem to those who may be interested in it.

Statement of the problem.--This study was a comparison of achievement in comprehensive, interpretive, evaluative and appreciative poetry skills made by two groups of Morris Brown College freshmen, one with and the other without special training in the area, during the second semester of the academic year, 1963-64.
Purpose of the study.--The general purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of certain techniques of teaching poetry when they were used with an experimental group. Specifically the purposes of this research were to determine:

1. Students' general and specialized abilities in the area of poetry.
2. Significant differences which existed in general poetry achievement of groups with and without training, respectively.
3. Significant differences which existed between the groups in the following special areas:
   a. Poetry comprehension
   b. Interpretation of poetry
   c. Poetic evaluation
   d. Appreciation of poetry
4. The extent to which significant implications for the teaching of poetry might be derived from the findings of this study.

Procedure.--The steps used in conducting this study were as follows:

1. Permission was secured from the reading teacher of Morris Brown College to use two freshman reading classes as control and experimental groups. Most of the students under study read on various tested levels below that of the thirteenth grade level required by the college.
2. The related literature pertinent to this study was selected and presented in the thesis copy.
3. Intelligence Quotients of the freshman students under study were secured from offices of the Morris Brown Reading Center.
4. As evenly as possible, students were assigned to classes on the bases of the scores made on the Otis Quick-Scoring Test of Mental Ability: Form EM of Gamma and the Iowa Silent Reading Test: Form Am.

5. Tests were administered to determine the initial status of the two groups in general and special poetry skills. The poetry section of Form Am of the Iowa Silent Reading Test and an informal test were used to measure comprehension and interpretation. An informal questionnaire was used to ascertain interest and appreciation; an informal test was used to measure evaluative skills.

6. Special training was given the experimental group to develop and improve the skills listed above. Students engaged in the following activities besides those of normal classroom participation: looking at films, listening to records, making tape recordings, writing and reading poetry, interpreting poems written in a foreign language, and distinguishing the tones of various television commercials.

7. The experimental group met Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for six weeks at the Morris Brown College Reading Clinic. The control group followed the same class schedule as the experimental group but received no instruction in poetry.

8. The poetry section of Form Dm of the Iowa Silent Reading Test and an informal test were used to measure achievement in comprehension and interpretation of subjects in the experimental and control groups after the termination of the poetry unit. An informal test and questionnaire were devised and used to measure achievement in evaluation and appreciation.

9. The test data were assembled, analyzed, interpreted, and presented in the final thesis copy.

Subjects.—Thirty-six freshman students of the 1963-64 school year at Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, served as subjects for
this study. In each group, control and experimental, there were eighteen students placed according to the criteria mentioned above.

There were sixteen female students in the control group and two male students. The mean age for this group was 18. The median age was 18 with 11 or 61 per cent of the number falling at this age level. The ages for all students in this group ranged from seventeen to nineteen.

There were fourteen female students in the experimental group and four male students. The mean age for the experimental group was 21; the median age was 18, with 14 students or 77 per cent of the number falling at this age level. The ages for all the students in this group ranged from eighteen to twenty-nine.

Of the control group eighteen or 100 per cent were residents of southern states, namely, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. Urban centers of populations exceeding 100,000 were represented by nine students and nine came from populations of less than 100,000.

Of the experimental group, seventeen or 94 per cent were residents of two southern states, namely, Georgia and Florida. One student came from the mid-west section—Ohio. Urban centers of populations exceeding 100,000 were represented by eleven students, and seven came from populations of less than 100,000.

The Iowa Silent Reading Test was given to all students at the beginning of the second semester, January 11, 1964. The tabulated results showed the mean reading grade for the control group to be 10.7. The grade levels ranged from 8.5 to 13+. The mean intelligence quotient of the control group tabulated from results of the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test was 97. The scores ranged from 82 to 107.
The mean reading grade for the experimental group was 11.5. The grade levels ranged from 7.4 to 13+. The mean intelligence quotient was 98, and the scores ranged from 82 to 114.

Locale of the study.--This study was conducted on the campus of Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia. Morris Brown College is a small private institution, chartered in 1885 under the patronage of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is a four-year liberal arts institution, has a cooperative relationship with the Atlanta University Center complex of institutions, and is a member of the Southern Associations of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Association of American Colleges. Over 80 per cent of the students of the college are drawn from the state of Georgia, although the total enrollment lists students who come from approximately twenty states.

Limitations of the study.--This study was most seriously limited by the restricted six weeks time-arrangement which allowed for a total of only eighteen hours of classroom instruction. The methods of approach chosen by the writer could not be as thoroughly and effectively employed as desired within that period of time. For example, during the course of study the writer was aware of the need for biographical and historical background in the interpretation of some poems. However, as the unit was not chronologically organized and as time would not permit an adequate investigation of literature's contributing factors, the writer could only briefly supply details considered most influential to the works that were treated.
It should also be considered that approximately 75 per cent of the subjects in the two groups were remedial readers, as determined by the Iowa Silent Reading Test, and not representative of college freshmen on the thirteenth grade reading level. As a result, achievement in poetry skills was limited by the inherent abilities and capacities of the subjects in this study.

Instruments.—The instruments used in this study are described below:

1. Iowa Silent Reading Test Advanced Test: Form Am. This test was used as part of the criteria for equating the groups. The Iowa is designed to measure the proficiency of students in high school and junior college in doing silent reading of the work-study type. It measures three broad general areas of silent reading abilities: (1) rate of reading at a controlled level of comprehension, (2) comprehension of words, poetry, sentences, paragraphs and longer articles, and (3) ability to use skills required in locating information. The norms for Grade 13 are based upon results from some 3,600 entering college freshmen, largely at the State University of Iowa. The reliability coefficient for Grade 13 is .949, which is highly satisfying. The selection of the test items was carefully planned to produce a valid test.

2. The Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test: Form EM of Gamma. This test furnishes a short and easily scored
indicator of scholastic aptitude. The Gamma test yields a single score which summarizes the 80 items, including word meaning, verbal analogies, scrambled sentences, interpretation of proverbs, logical reasoning, number series, arithmetic reasoning, and design analogies. For Form EM of Gamma split-half reliabilities of .92, .91, and .92 are reported for grades 10, 11, and 12. These data seem to indicate a satisfactory level of reliability. The size of the S. E. of measurement is 3.0. The norms are not necessarily representative of any particular section of the country but rather as representative of the country as a whole.¹

Survey of related literature.—The survey of related literature pertinent to this study is organized under the following divisions:

(1) Discussion of various techniques and approaches in teaching poetry and (2) Research related to the present study.

Writers are not in total agreement as to the most effective methods of teaching poetry to high school and college students. On one point, however, there is unanimous approval—no one approach will effectively stimulate the thinking of students along lines that will lead to a true understanding and appreciation of poetry. Hook² has listed the following

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as six basic approaches to the teaching of a literary selection:

(1) the **historical**, which stresses the biography of the writer and the literary and historical events of the age in which he lived.

(2) the *sociopsychological*, which helps students to increase their knowledge of people, to add to their understanding of the age in which the literature was written, and to apply this knowledge and understanding to current living.

(3) the *emotive*, which emphasizes beauty and fun in studying poetry.

(4) the *didactic*, which involves a relentless search for "morals."

(5) the *paraphrastic*, a repetition in another's words of what an author has said.

(6) the *analytical*, an examining of the ideas, the imagery, the mechanics, and the tone of a piece of writing in order to discover what each contributes to the total impression.

From these approaches, Hook advises the selection of two or more in the teaching of literature, for every literary selection cannot be treated in terms of six approaches, and the constant use of any one of the six is objectionable on at least two counts: loss of interest and failure to show the versatile attractiveness of literature. The choice of approach should be made in light of the objectives of the study, the characteristics of the literature, and the knowledge, ability, and interests of the class. Most of Hook's methods have been recognized by other writers and are still in effect today, but not without some measure of disagreement as to the extent to which any one method may be employed.
Montgomery\(^1\) feels that paraphrase should be used when the vocabulary, structure, manner, or idea is too difficult for the inexperienced reader to comprehend. The paraphrase should be made without changing basic sentence structure, though it uses a word order that moves modifiers to words modified, removes the possible confusion of inversion, and in general adjusts syntax to the more common patterns of the English sentence structure. However, Montgomery cautions, one should not make the mistake of assuming that the paraphrase is equivalent to the original, for if the original is "the best words in the best order," the paraphrase will always be something less than the original text. But if one keeps as closely to the original as possible, he will be able to see more precisely what is being said, how it is being said, and how well it is being said.

As for a study of the biographical and historical background, White\(^2\) is opposed to such an approach. She sees no need to call attention to these factors in a college course of study. The method may be understandable in view of some high school treatments of literary movements without sufficient acquaintance with the particular works involved, but a college freshman is expected to have acquired the background necessary for forming relationships. The writer observes, however, that most literature courses in the college curriculum are organized as survey courses and


historical, biographical, and chronological aspects play a major part in introducing and framing the literature of each period. Further, due to the brevity of many high school courses in poetry, students are not sufficiently exposed to a continuous or chronological study of literature so as to gain an adequate familiarity with the background the characteristics of various historical movements.

Taylor, for similar reasons, sees a need for background in the reader if the poet is to successfully communicate his ideas. Ignorance of literary figures, literary works, figures in mythology and history makes reading poetry very difficult indeed. But literature organized in a reasonable and intelligible way, chronologically, can offer the student background for efficient reading and writing and can at the same time impart certain values in literature now lost. In the historical survey, the student will gain many valuable insights into human life, into the adjustment of man to society and to his fellow man individually, and into the relations of man to God.

Friedman approves of the historical approach as long as it is not applied so exclusively so that it tends to divert attention from the poem itself by confronting the student with a great deal of history and a small amount of poetry.


Friedman\(^1\) also advises using the inspirational method for bringing the student to a closer acquaintance with, understanding of, and affection for poetry, "inspirational" being synonymous with "aesthetic." Here the student's interest is aroused through the medium of the instructor's tone and manner, the teacher himself providing the context, as it were. Obviously, this technique calls for a great deal of poetic sensibility in the teacher and the ability to communicate his appreciation of it to his students. Teachers must exercise care in seeking to inspire their students in this way, especially in their use of terms which might easily take on a vagueness that becomes confusing to the student.

For decades, writers and teachers have debated the question of the technique of poetry: to teach or not to teach? There have been sound arguments from both sides but no unanimous agreement has yet been reached. There are those who say it should be taught, and those who say it should not be taught, but most will agree to its being taught if not in isolation from the poem itself. Two well-known authorities on the teaching of poetry, Brooks and Warren,\(^2\) consent that the analytical method of teaching poetry has been greatly misused, usually by virtue of its being taught in isolation from the poem itself. They regard the studying of certain technical aspects of poetry in isolation from other

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 218.

aspects and from the total intention as a meaningless procedure that often results in the vaguest sort of misunderstanding. These authors see little significance in having students count or classify the figures of speech in a poem or define and distinguish between metrical forms or engage in other like activities. Instead, emphasis should be placed on examining the ideas, the imagery, the mechanics, and the tone of a piece of writing in order to discover what each contributes to the total impression. Then the student can see the selection as a whole by understanding the function of each part. Students, by this method, can also discover that literature does not ordinarily just happen but results from careful planning, selection and rejection of details, and painstaking workmanship.

White,\(^1\) also, advocates examining the functioning of each part for its contribution to the whole work. Her method is to begin with the language of the composition, with the words and the syntax in their most concrete aspects. From this one moves on to the figurative aspects of language, to the study of imagery and metaphor and symbolism. Beyond that one presses on to a study of what may be called the structure of the work of art, and then still beyond to those subtler matters of tone and temper. It is imperative that this process of analysis, of tearing apart, always be followed by a careful putting together so that what has been viewed in terms of its working elements may be viewed once more as a whole, may in fact be experienced in its organic fullness. For only then, she feels, can the undertaking in communication, which made the writer compose the piece in the first place, be accomplished.

\(^1\)White, op. cit., p. 453.
Early\(^1\) approves of students being taught the technique of poetry (versification, prosody, stanza forms, figures of speech and thought, tonal effects), for when they learn to see relationships between meaning and technique they experience a richer delight than in an unconscious enjoyment of the tonal effect. Her theory is that at the highest stage of literary appreciation, the reader responds with delight, knows why, chooses discriminately, and relies on his own judgment. His reading then has range and power and, in this sense, is an extension of the creative process which produced the work of literature.

Sauer’s theory\(^2\) is similar to Early’s, for his technique requires an examination of every aspect of the art of poetry as being essential to understanding. He advises teaching the five common meters, the differences in verse patterns, the words used for standard line lengths, the stanza patterns, tonal effects, and assorted poetic terms. Each line of poetry should be analyzed in order to get meaning, and historical facts are to be looked up if necessary. Matters of diction, figures of speech, versification, stanza forms, rhyme scheme, and stanza arrangement should be discussed, but not in isolation from one another or from meaning. All these forms, he says, are necessary to meaning and appropriate to what the poet is saying.

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Friedrich\textsuperscript{1} goes along with Sauer's method as far as leading the student to see the appropriateness, if any, in the form for what the poet is seeking to communicate, but he terms the memorizing of literary terms and their definitions and the ability to spot and identify, for example, alliteration or figures of speech of onomatopoeia, a deadening way of studying poetry. He feels it more important that the student be able to relate his increased knowledge of versification to the specific purpose or effect of a particular poem under discussion. A student gains little or no insight into a poem by stating, for example, that it was written in iambic pentameter, or that it rhymes abab and has fourteen lines. These things are merely incidental and make poetry a chore to the student instead of a pleasure.

Eastman's concern is to make students realize that a second meaning lies beneath the obvious one which the words convey by stressing the imaginative quality of a selection. There is no advantage in distinguishing between image and symbol, for instance, when discussing figurative language with students. In his words, "figures of speech—'metonymy,' 'synecdoche,' and other long-tailed monsters—are what bar the entrance of a simple human into the realms of poetry."\textsuperscript{2} He feels it best to confine oneself to the term "figurative language" than to lead students into a scientific classification of the various types.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Gerhard Friedrich, "A Teaching Approach to Poetry," \textit{English Journal}, XXXXIX (February, 1960), 75.
\end{itemize}
The value of figures of speech in poetry cannot be learned by merely cataloguing them. They are used for the purpose of increasing the suggestive power of a passage, making it more vivid, increasing its emotional appeal, or adding clearness, force or beauty; unless they fulfill that purpose they have no value to the student or to the poem.

The object of any method of teaching poetry is to provoke understanding and enjoyment. This can be done only if one understands both poetry's obvious and implied meaning, feels its music of word and line, appreciates its pictures, and recreates in one's own mind the mood and thought of the poet. Pooley,¹ in this accord, has devised a method of analysis which requires the development of understanding and appreciation of the separate elements that make up a poem.

He sees a necessity to arouse consciousness of, and response to, rhythm in all poetry. A teacher of poetry should concentrate on rhythm; show how it is produced; by every means possible encourage physical response to rhythmic patterns. With slow, patient, and thorough training in rhythm a student will come to look for and appreciate the rhythmic character of any poem he encounters. To accomplish this development, students must hear poetry well read for rhythmic values, and must themselves read over and over again the poems used to arouse rhythmic response.

The second element is response to sounds. Poetry is spoken language; it needs to be heard. Yet too much poetry is assigned as silent reading and is discussed without oral interpretation. A valuable intro-

duction to the enjoyment of poetry is the introduction to the sounds and tones of poetry. This is the emotional coloring, or the emotional meaning, of the work, and is an extremely important part of the full meaning.

The third element of analysis is called seeing the picture. It is a skill essential to reading poetry, for through its use words are translated into visual images. This is one of the most important elements in the enjoyment of poetry, for the student who does not see does not understand; and he who does not understand cannot enjoy.

A fourth element is the power to translate images and symbols into meaning. In its simplest form this skill is the recognition and appreciation of the figures of speech, especially simile and metaphor. The power to translate these comparisons to concrete detail of a descriptive nature is what many students lack. More mature is the skill of recognizing and interpreting symbols, yet it is a skill which can make an appeal to the intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities of a student.

Final is the power to find the universal in the particular. While there is a wealth of beautiful poetry which does not express a universality, one of the principal powers of poetry is to make the specific represent the abstract, the particular the universal. Students can be taught to find and interpret these transmissions of universal truths, and to gain satisfaction in so doing.

Various other approaches have produced satisfactory results in the study of poetry. On the theory that students need to relate themselves and their environment to poetic experiences, they are introduced to poems
whose content in terms of experience is familiar to them. Karp suggests that the teacher, first of all, recognize the individualities of the members of a class. He must see them as people with different backgrounds of experience, and various levels of intelligence and emotional maturity. Then to accomplish the end of preparing students for the poetic experience engendered by the poems, works must be selected with subject matter that lies within the pale of the lives of the students being taught. Direct or vicarious, the experience must potentially be the reader's. Any attempt by the teacher to prepare or motivate a reader is useless. Poetry can stimulate feeling, but is no substitute for experience. The groundwork for a vicarious experience, therefore, must be provided as far as possible. Occasionally, teachers make efforts to provide poetic experiences for their students. Paintings and poems that compliment each other have been brought into classrooms and compared. Films on the reading of poetry and poetic films have been used. Popular records have been analyzed and played in class and afterwards compared to Elizabethan sonnets and ballads. Poetry has been recorded by students with the accompaniment of harps, violins, bagpipes, and so on. The songs of Burns,

1Mark Karp, "Is Poetry for the Gifted Only?" English Journal, XXXV (May, 1946), 256-58.
3Harrison, op. cit., p. 254.
Elizabethan songs and the ballads have all been set to music and sung. These methods are still popular today, for the combination of the arts of poetry and music do much toward evoking and awakening the emotions of students to the richness of literature.

Rohr feels that the "experience" technique is valuable because poetry dealing with familiar scenes and people has appeal, reality, and a definite relationship to students' lives; and poetry that has this appeal motivates one to memorize verse that has a special message to that person. As Karp has said, "most so-called poems are not entirely poetry." The poetry lies, very often, in a few lines; therefore, lines should be selected because they have something to say and they say something to have. The tradition which requires wholesale memorization and recitation of poems is a questionable practice, since it invites both monotonous efficiency and exaggerated elocution. If memory work is to be done, students should be free to choose the passages which have most appeal to them. Forcing students to memorize long poems in which they have no interest is a practice that has long interfered with true literary appreciation.

Finally, poetry should be read aloud. The two-fold duty of words in poetry—that is, the achievement of harmony in sense and sound, together

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3Karp, op. cit., p. 258.

4Friedrich, op. cit., p. 76.
with the numerous contrivances which the poet employs to achieve this harmony—presupposes the reading of poetry aloud. In fact the efficient reading of poetry, creative reading, is achieved only through oral expression. Furthermore, this procedure makes it possible for the teacher to see that students read always by thought or sentence units instead of by line. Reading poetry by line produces some unusual results and is chiefly responsible for sing-song reading. It manifests itself in the reader’s dropping his voice at the end of each line and frequently causes readers to overlook punctuation marks within the line. Some may fear that reading by thought instead of by line endangers rhythm, meter, and rhyme, but this is not the case if the reading is sincere and natural. The element of rhythm deserves particular mention because it is generally confused with meter and also because it has significant bearing upon the point in question.

Fowler defines meter as measurement and rhythm as flow. A sentence or a passage is rhythmical if, when said aloud, it falls naturally into groups of words each well fitted by its length and intonation for its place in the whole and its relation to its neighbors. A knowledge of metrics is not necessary to rhythmical reading as many people think. Poetry will be less monotonous if students are taught to read with expression and meaning with regard to tone rather than to meter.

Expression is impossible without tone, the attitude of the speaker toward his materials and his audience. Trained readers have acquired an

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ear for these effects even when they have read silently, but students beginning the study of poetry must learn through actual listening. They must be made sensitive to the combinations of sounds that reinforce meaning and imagery or enhance the melody. They must learn to distinguish tone, shifts in tone, and ironies that result when the tone of the speaker is in contrast or conflict with the attitude of the poet. Professor Fairchild describes the process exactly: Good reading makes clear the finer shades of meaning and connection, gives pleasure to the ear through music of the verse, and stirs the fitting emotion through the harmony of tone and meaning.

Many teachers of literature have been content with using just any method, whether it meets the needs of their students or not, as long as it has been recommended by authorities in the field. More thoughtful teachers, by experimenting with special groups, have tried to determine which techniques would prove more beneficial to their particular students. They are then guided by their own scientific implications and judgments and can fulfill their purposes with confidence in the expected outcome.

One teacher, Rose Manicoff, was interested in knowing if she could develop a sense of appreciation in her students by "saturating"

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them with poetry instead of exposing them to an intensive or analytic study of literature. By the term "saturation" the author meant extensive reading of poetry by the teacher without comment, reading to students for appreciation and enjoyment, rather than for study. At no time were students asked or encouraged to write or read poetry.

Students were matched by intelligence scores, interest questionnaires, and divided into two groups. To measure changes in the students' interest in and appreciation of poetry, two "before and after" questionnaires and appreciation tests were constructed and administered to the experimental and control groups. The control classes were given the regular literature course; the experimental class was "saturated" with a good deal of simple poetry, read extensively by the teacher and later by the students, without any attempt at analysis, comprehension, or memorization.

The conclusions were as follows:

(1) Many "saturated-with-poetry" students showed an increased liking for poetry.

(2) "Nonsaturated" students showed negligible changes in liking poetry.

(3) Many "saturated-with-poetry" students gave evidences of an increased desire to read poetry themselves and to have others read it to them. Many read poetry during their leisure time. "Nonsaturated" students showed no such evidences.

(4) The majority of the "saturated-with-poetry" students showed a beginning and an increase of creative writing. "Nonsaturated" students, with but two exceptions, showed no evidences of creative writing.

(5) Many "saturated-with-poetry" students developed a sense of poetry appreciation. There was a very marked difference in appreciation growth among the experimental students as compared with the control group.
Alverson became concerned when she observed that her students had not learned to express their imaginative interpretations of physical and sensory experiences. The emphasis of the lives of her class, through insecurity, had become fixed on possessions and money as a goal of life representing the ultimate happiness. Their senses were dulled to external stimuli; the entire world of sensory appeals limited to their immediate surroundings seemed ordinary and without significance.

To determine the initial status of the class, each student was asked to write a paragraph defining poetry and analyzing his own feeling for it. None of the forty-one students liked it. Twenty found poetry lacking in plot and moving too slowly for interest. Sixteen stated that they had been forced to memorize long poems in earlier grades, poems that they didn't understand and which they had recited under pressure. Six found subject matter uninteresting. The majority preferred verse with a definite rhyme and rhythm and expressed a dislike for free verse.

After a period of study during which the class engaged in a great deal of oral and silent reading (much of which was narrative poetry dealing with subjects familiar to the students and expressing a variety of emotions and ideas with which they could identify themselves), a questionnaire on personal sense-experiences was administered. The fifteen questions concerned sights, sounds, and smells that students had experienced and the relationship between these and other experiences. After the questionnaire had been discussed, the students were given a list of about

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twenty objects about which they wrote in brief phrases, giving their own sense-impressions and indicating the meaning that the experience had for them.

Some examples are:

- **shadow**: a bodyguard, a silent partner, a sleuth, a mocking mimic making one first tall and then fat
- **chimney tops**: gravestones marking lives, not deaths
- **fog**: a mist of sadness fallen o'er the land
- **candlelight**: a little chapel - it never burns with the same intensity, but dim and then bright, like life.

Alverson concluded that an average group of students with seemingly no sensitivity to significant beauty can possess a poetic impulse and express it in reaction to sense-experiences, and:

(1) as students enjoy such experiences their own lives will be enriched
(2) there is joy in things for their own sake
(3) this joy is sometimes lost in seeking some practical aim in life.

Woesner\(^1\) studied two groups of students to find out whether appreciation of poetry can be increased by the writing of imitations of selected poems. The experimental group, which did the work in imitation, was compared with a control group, which followed conventional methods of study. The results indicate that imitation used as a means of teaching appreciation of poetry is not superior to the conventional methods.

From the findings in this experiment Woesner drew these conclusions:

(1) Since both groups made gains regardless of the method, it seems reasonable to conclude that appreciation of poetry can be cultivated.

(2) Imitation as a means of increasing the appreciation of poetry should be used with discrimination.

(3) The conventional methods ordinarily used will produce good results.

(4) Apparently certain students do not respond to training in appreciation.

Reilly\(^1\) undertook an experimental study to discover whether or not a silent reading method or an oral method produces greater gain in the appreciation of poetry as measured by the Abbot-Trabue "Exercises in Judging Poetry" and the Logasa-Wright "Tests for the Appreciation of Literature." The one-group method of experimentation was used. The subjects of the first experiment were twenty-three girls of the eleventh grade; those of the second numbered twenty-eight. During this experiment the methods were rotated in order to discover if the time order in the presentation had any effect on the results. Every effort was made to keep all factors except the experimental factor as nearly constant as possible. The data indicate that the differences between the average scores of the two methods are too small to justify the conclusion that

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either the Oral Method or the Silent Reading Method as used in this experiment is decidedly superior. The slight positive growth found for either method may have been due to chance.

Reilly recommends that neither method be used exclusively, but that a combination of the two will produce the best results and that the "Oral" be used first for rhythm and musical effects followed by the "Silent" for supplementary and free reading.

Mott\(^1\) conducted an experiment with three English literature classes of average aptitude to prove that the average student of poetry needs linguistic assistance before he can attain any relevant degree of insight or appreciation. He scrutinized a literature text for poetic inversions which were classified in the following categories:

- Irregularly placed Nominative Modifier
- Irregularly placed Verbal Modifier
- Subject-Complement-Verb
- Complement-Subject-Verb
- Complement-Verb-Subject
- Verb-Subject-Complement

As a pretest, students were instructed to interpret a number of poetic lines in prose sentences or sentence fragments, being careful to write subject, verb, and complement in that order. The pretest revealed three principal types of error: the failure to transpose an inversion

susceptible to more than one interpretation; the omission of ideas present in the original; and obvious misinterpretation.

After the classifications were introduced, sentences were analyzed for verbs and verbals, subjects, complements and all modifying units. After a period of this kind of study, gratifying gains were shown to be made in all classes. Mott then concluded that:

(1) the main inversion problems for the students occurred not so much from the irregular placement of modifiers as from the basic element inversion of subject, verb, and complement when other words intervened, whether irregularly placed or not.

(2) such exercises as those mentioned here can prove effective in illuminating the intricacies of inversions for the average student of poetry.

(3) the most significant evaluation will be apparent in increased interest and appreciation.

Summary of related literature.—It is difficult to determine exactly which approaches will lead to best results in the teaching of poetry in particular classroom situations. Most authorities themselves are not in complete agreement as to which should be discarded and which utilized, but their discussions and experimental studies do provide valuable information for the teacher of literature who wishes to be cognizant of those methods which authors deem useful.

It seems reasonable to conclude that poetry should be taught as poetry. To achieve this end, one would hardly find it necessary to rely upon any one specific approach to fulfill the teacher's purpose. Sometimes one method may be used exclusively and produce good results; other
times, a multiple approach is more effective. In the process of studying poetry as poetry, it has not been permanently established whether or not the more technical aspects of poetry should be stressed. Some authors feel that students must have a knowledge of all the mechanics that have ever been used by poets before genuine appreciation can be achieved. The reader must understand the function of each part to see what each contributes to the total impression. Others assert that this type of analytical study is only necessary when the meaning of a poem is directly related to poetic devices. Otherwise the student will feel the effect the poet is trying to achieve if they are made aware of the imaginative quality of a selection by observing its vividness, appeal, force or beauty. A scientific classification of the various types would not be necessary then if such an approach is taken.

Vicarious experiences, to substitute for direct experiences, must be provided as far as possible if students are to be properly motivated. Teachers highly recommend combining other arts with that of poetry to evoke and awaken the emotions of students to the riches of literature.

Finally, to achieve harmony in sense and sound, poetry must be read aloud. Sounds reinforce meaning and imagery and bring out the effects of the numerous contrivances which the poet employs to achieve this harmony. Many listening experiences can be and have been provided for the student who is lacking in ability to project the tone and/or rhythm appropriate to a particular poem. Teachers would do well to take advantage of those that have resulted in greater appreciation and understanding.
Throughout the chapters which follow, this writer was influenced by the eclecticism noted in general methods used in the teaching of poetry and by the prevailing idea that the training should not destroy the inherent appreciative and aesthetic values therein.
CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DESCRIPTION
OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Introductory statement.—The major aim of this chapter is to fulfill the purposes of this experimental approach to certain poetry skills of college freshmen. Presented herein are a comparative analysis of the test data and a description of the instructional activities of the experimental and control groups. The parallel group technique of the experimental method of research was used. This design involved finding pairs of students whose reading and intelligence scores were about the same. On the assumption that sums of equals are equals, the two groups were equated, thus eliminating most of the variables except the factor under investigation. A diagramatic representation of the design is shown in Figure 1.

The following steps were taken in securing data for this research: (1) administering the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Form Am; (2) administering the Otis Quick-Scoring Test of Mental Ability: Form EM of Gamma; (3) analyzing the results in order to equate the groups; (4) administering the Poetry Section of the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Form Am; (5) administering an informal questionnaire; (6) measuring the interest levels of both groups; (7) administering an informal Evaluation Test; (8) analyzing the results; (9) administering an informal Com-
prehensive and Interpretive Poetry Test; (10) analyzing the results; (11) planning and giving instruction in poetry activities; (12) administering an informal questionnaire; (13) measuring the interest levels of the groups; (14) administering an informal Evaluation Test; (15) analyzing the results; (16) administering an informal Comprehensive and Interpretive Poetry Test; (17) analyzing the results; (18) administering the Poetry Section of the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Form Dm.

Experimental Group
Initial Poetry Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular Classroom Activities and Special Activities in Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Final Poetry Tests

Control Group
Initial Poetry Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular Classroom Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Final Poetry Tests

Fig. 1.—Design of study, the parallel group technique of the experimental method.

The results of the tests were analyzed in terms of the following statistical measures: percentages, percentiles, mean, median, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, standard error of the difference between the means, and the "t" ratio. The use of these statistics made
possible the equating of the groups, the determining of the general distributions of the initial and final poetry comprehension, evaluation and appreciation levels of the experimental and control groups, and the determining of whether or not mean differences between the groups were statistically significant. In making these comparisons, the writer operated at the .02 level of confidence with 30 degrees of freedom. Appendix A contains the formulas used in this study.

Method of equating the groups.—The Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Form Am and the Otis Quick-Scoring Test of Mental Ability: Form EM of Gamma were used to equate the groups. Scores from the tests were averaged until two groups, as nearly equal as possible in both areas, were determined. The results of the scores made on the tests were assembled and presented in Tables 1 and 2. The analysis and interpretation of test data follow.

Analysis and interpretation of the reading levels of the experimental and control groups.—Tables 1, 2, and 3 and Figure 2 present data basic to the analysis and interpretation of the performances of the experimental and control groups on the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Form Am. The findings gave evidence that both groups were fairly homogeneous in reading ability. The scores made by the experimental group ranged from 147 to 176, and the scores made by the control group ranged from 154 to 177, with specific ranges of 29 and 23, respectively. Also similar in dispersion were the standard deviations of 7.34 and 7.21, respectively. The comparable measures of central tendency showed the median of the experimental group to be 169.0 and the mean to be 166.10;
TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES
MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE IOWA SILENT READING
ADVANCED TEST: FORM Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>174 - 176</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>171 - 173</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.77</td>
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<td>168 - 170</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 - 149</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total          18          100.00

Range of Scores 29
Median          169.00
Mean            166.15
S. D.           7.34
S. E. of Mean   2.44
TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE IOWA SILENT READING ADVANCED TEST: FORM Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>174 - 175</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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</table>

| Range of Scores | 22       |
| Median          | 164.50   |
| Mean            | 165.10   |
| S. D.           | 7.21     |
| S. E. of Mean   | 2.90     |
### TABLE 3

**STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE IOWA SILENT READING ADVANCED TEST: FORM Am**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>165.10</td>
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<td>Differences between Means</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.11*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the .02 level of confidence.*

The median for the control group was 164.50, and the mean, 165.10; the standard error of the mean for the experimental group was 2.44 and for the control group, 2.90. By using these results it was concluded that the reading levels for both groups were highly similar and normally distributed. In the experimental group 61 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 33 per cent of the cases fell below the mean class interval; and 6 per cent fell within this interval. In the control group 50 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 44 per cent fell below the mean class interval; and 6 per cent fell within this interval. The similarity of the measures of central tendency and the symmetry of the frequency polygons illustrated a normal trend in the distributions of both groups and close homogeneity in reading ability.
Fig. 2.--Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Iowa Silent Reading Test, Advanced Form Am.
Further evidence of the similarity between the groups is presented in Table 3. This table shows that the difference between the two means was 1.00; the standard errors of the mean were 2.44 for the experimental group and 2.90 for the control group; the standard error of the difference between means was .89; the "t" was 1.11. With 30 degrees of freedom, this score was found to be below the "t" of 2.46 required at the 2 per cent level of confidence. Therefore, it was concluded there was no significant difference between the mean reading levels of the experimental and control groups of this study.

Analysis and interpretation of the intelligence levels of the experimental and control groups.—The performances on the Otis Quick-Scoring Test of Mental Ability: Form EM of Gamma by the experimental and control groups are described and compared in Tables 4, 5, and 6 and in Figure 3. The findings indicated that the groups were highly similar in measures of central tendency. The scores made by the experimental groups ranged from 82 to 114, and the scores of the control group ranged from 82 to 107, with specific ranges of 32 and 25, respectively. The measures of central tendency were extremely close in value. The mean of the experimental group was 97.99 and the median, 97.30; the mean of the control group was 96.72 and the median, 96.70. The standard error of the mean for the experimental group was 2.90 and for the control group, 3.31; the standard deviations were 8.46 and 9.16, respectively. In the experimental group 39 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 34 per cent of the cases fell below the mean class interval; and 27 per cent of the cases fell within the mean class interval. In the control group, 39 per
### TABLE 4

**DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE OTIS QUICK-SCORING TEST OF MENTAL ABILITY: FORM EM OF GAMMA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114 - 116</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111 - 113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108 - 110</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105 - 107</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 - 104</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 - 101</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96 - 98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 - 95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 - 86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 - 83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Scores</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>97.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>97.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>8.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE OTIS QUICK-SCORING TEST OF MENTAL ABILITY: FORM EM OF GAMMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>106 - 107</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104 - 105</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>102 - 103</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98 - 99</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96 - 97</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 - 95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92 - 93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 - 89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 - 87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 - 85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82 - 83</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores: 25
Median: 97.70
Mean: 96.72
S. D.: 9.16
S. E. of Mean: 3.31
cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 33 per cent of the cases fell below the mean class interval; and 28 per cent fell within the mean class interval. When the findings for the experimental and control groups were used as indices of possible normality of distribution, it was concluded that intelligence quotients for both groups were normally distributed. The frequency polygon also indicated a normal distribution.

**TABLE 6**

**STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE OTIS QUICK-SCORING TEST OF MENTAL ABILITY: FORM EM OF GAMMA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>97.99</td>
<td>96.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference Between Means</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td>1.03*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the .02 level of confidence.

Table 6 shows that the statistical comparison of the groups gave indications of some similarity. The difference between the two means was 1.27; the standard errors were 2.90 for the experimental group and 3.31 for the control group; the standard error of the difference between the means was 2.91. These statistics yielded a "t" of 1.03. With 30 degrees of
Fig. 3.--Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Otis Quick-Scoring Test of Mental Ability: Gamma Form EM.
freedom at the .02 level of confidence, this result was found to be below the "t" of 2.46 required for a significant difference. It was therefore concluded that there was no significant difference between the intelligence levels of the experimental and control groups.

**Analysis and interpretation of the initial general poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.**—The performances on the Iowa Silent Reading Test: Poetry Test: Form Am by the experimental and control groups are described and compared in Tables 7, 8, and 9 and Figure 4. The findings indicated that the groups were highly similar in measures of central tendency. The scores made by the experimental group ranged from 115 to 184, and the scores of the control group ranged from 119 to 184, with specific ranges of 69 and 65, respectively. The measures of central tendency were extremely close in value. The mean of the experimental group was 162 and the median, 160.0; the mean of the control group was 165 and the median, 162.50. The standard error of the mean for the experimental group was 1.64 and for the control group, 1.29; the standard deviations were 6.74 and 5.33, respectively. In the experimental group, 44 per cent of the cases fell above the mean and 56 per cent of the cases fell below the mean. In the control group, 61 per cent of the cases fell above the mean and 39 per cent of the cases fell below the mean. When the findings for the experimental and control groups were used as indices of possible normality of distribution, it was concluded that scores for both groups were normally distributed. The frequency polygon also indicated a normal distribution.
TABLE 7
DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM
SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE IOWA
SILENT READING TEST: POETRY SECTION, ADVANCED
TEST: FORM Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores  69
Median  160.0
Mean  162
S. D.  6.74
S. E. of Mean  1.64
### TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM
SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE IOWA
SILENT READING TEST: POETRY SECTION,
ADVANCED TEST: FORM Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Range of Scores: 65
- Median: 162.5
- Mean: 165
- S. D.: 5.33
- S. E. of Mean: 1.29
Table 9 shows that the statistical comparison of the groups gave indications of close similarity. The difference between the two means was 3.0; the standard errors were 1.64 for the experimental group and 1.29 for the control group, and the standard error of the difference between the means was 8.59. These statistics yielded a "t" of 0.35. With 30 degrees of freedom at the .02 level of confidence, this result was found to be below the "t" of 2.46 required for significant difference. It was therefore concluded that there was no significant difference between the general poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.
Fig. 4.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Iowa Silent Reading Test; Poetry Section, Advanced Test: Form Am.
Analysis and interpretation of the initial comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.—The analysis and interpretation of the performances on the initial informal test for comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills by the experimental and control groups were based on the data presented in Tables 10, 11, and 12 and in Figure 5. These statistical results indicated that, initially, both groups were highly similar in comprehensive and interpretive ability. The scores of the experimental group ranged from 27 to 65 and those of the control group ranged from 27 to 60, with specific ranges of 38 and 33, respectively. The measures of central tendency were also close in value. The median of the experimental group was 47.50 and the mean, 48.16; the median of the control group was 47.50 and the mean, 44.55. For the experimental group the standard error of the mean was 2.43 and for the control group, 2.48. In the experimental group 44 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 50 per cent of the cases fell below the mean class interval; and 6 per cent of the cases fell within the mean class interval. In the control group 50 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 44 per cent of the cases fell below the mean class interval; and 6 per cent of the cases fell within the mean class interval.

The statistical comparison of the groups is presented in Table 12. As is shown there, the difference between the two means was 3.61; the standard errors were 2.43 for the experimental group and 2.48 for the control group; the standard error of the difference between means was 3.47.
TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM
SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE
INITIAL INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE
AND INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65 - 67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 - 64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 - 59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 - 56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 - 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 - 44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 - 41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 - 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 32</td>
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<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 - 29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores 38
Median 47.50
Mean 42.16
S. D. 10.02
S. E. of Mean 2.43
TABLE 11

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE INITIAL INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 - 62</td>
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<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 - 59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
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<td>54 - 56</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 - 50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>42 - 44</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 - 41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 - 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 - 32</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 - 29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 18 100.00

Range of Scores 33
Median 47.50
Mean 44.55
S. D. 10.23
S. E. of Mean 2.48
TABLE 12
STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE
BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE INITIAL
INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND
INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>48.16</td>
<td>44.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference Between Means</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the .02 level of confidence.

These statistics yielded a "t" of 1.04. This score was found to be below
the "t" of 2.46 which is required at the .02 level of confidence with 30
degrees of freedom. Therefore, it was concluded that there was no sig-
nificant difference between the interpretive and comprehensive levels of
ability in the experimental and control groups. Since this test was
fundamentally a measure of comprehensive and interpretive ability, it was
assumed that at the beginning of the experiment, the experimental and con-
trol groups were equal in their ability to interpret and comprehend
poetry.

Analysis and interpretation of the initial evaluative poetry
skills of the experimental and control groups.—The analysis and interpre-
Fig. 5.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Informal Test for Comprehensive and Interpretive Poetry Skills.
tation of the performances on the informal test for checking evaluative
poetry skills by the experimental and control groups were based on the
data presented in Tables 13, 14, and 15 and in Figure 6. These findings
indicated that both groups were strikingly similar in the statistical
measures reported and in measures of central tendency. In the range of
scores the experimental group extended from 20 to 72 and the control
group from 22 to 72, with specific ranges of 52 and 50, respectively.
For the experimental group the median was 47.0 and the mean, 47.44. For
the control group the median was 47.0 and the mean, 49.55. The standard
error of the mean for the experimental group was 2.31 and for the control
group, 3.89; the standard deviations were 26.0 and 16.04, respectively.
When the findings for the experimental group were used as indices of
possible normality of distribution, it was concluded that evaluative
ability was normally distributed for this group but somewhat skewed. In
the experimental group 56 per cent of the cases fell above the mean and
44 per cent of the cases fell below the mean. The frequency polygon
for the experimental group revealed a skewed distribution. When the
findings for the control group were used as indices of possible normality
of distribution, it was concluded that evaluative ability for the control
group was also normally distributed but somewhat skewed. The frequency
polygon also indicated a skewed distribution. In the control group 39
per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval and 64 per cent
of the cases fell below the mean class interval. Thus, the two groups
registered a very close degree of homogeneity in evaluative ability.
### Table 13

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE INITIAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
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<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>35 - 39</td>
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<td>30 - 34</td>
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<td>25 - 29</td>
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<td>20 - 24</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Range of Scores**: 52
- **Median**: 47.00
- **Mean**: 47.44
- **S. D.**: 9.50
- **S. E. of Mean**: 2.31
TABLE 14

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE INITIAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
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<td>45 - 49</td>
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<td>40 - 44</td>
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<td>27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
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<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Range of Scores 50
- Median 47.0
- Mean 49.55
- S. D. 15.04
- S. E. of Mean 3.89
### TABLE 15

**STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE INITIAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>Difference Between Means</td>
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<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
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<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at the .02 level of confidence.

Description of the planned poetry activities of the experimental group. -- The experimental group had planned instruction in poetry on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for six weeks at the Morris Brown College Reading Clinic. The class met eighteen days for fifty minutes each day. The unit was designed to improve skills in the comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and appreciation of poetry. Specifically the purposes were divided into the two following groups:

**Teacher's Purposes**

1. To determine which types of poems would most appeal to the sensibilities of the students.
2. To present these poems in a manner that would engender interest in and understanding of numerous facets of the literature.
3. To develop whatever literary creativity there might be in the students.
Experimental Group  
(N = 18)

Control Group  
(N = 18)

Fig. 6.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Initial Informal Test for Evaluative Poetry Skills.
4. To give students some standard that would help them evaluate poems for their merits and/or shortcomings.
5. To teach students to read poetry for various effects.
6. To teach students to make universal applications.

Students' Purposes

1. To develop an interest in and appreciation for poetry.
2. To learn to interpret and comprehend poetry.
3. To learn to judge poetry critically.
4. To develop poetry creatively.
5. To learn to read poetry orally and silently.
6. To learn to make universal applications.

The unit was designed to carry out these listed purposes in as effective a manner as possible. The titles of the poems used in the study are given, but accompanying questions and exercises may be found in the Appendix. A specific description of the poetic experiences follows:

Monday, February 24, 1964, to February 28, 1964

Purposes:

To introduce students to the nature of the unit

To find out which types of poetry students were most interested in studying

To measure students' ability to interpret and comprehend poetry

To measure students' ability to distinguish between fine literature and that which is obviously inferior

Procedure:

Students were introduced to the poetry unit that was to follow by a brief discussion of the importance of poetry in their lives. They all agreed that there was much to be obtained from some poems but said that they had not particularly enjoyed poetry previously because of their having been forced to study types
in which they had had little or no interest. It was explained that the last section of the questionnaire they were given would allow them to choose the specific and general classifications of poetry that they felt would make the unit more interesting. The Poetry Section of the Iowa Silent Reading Test Advanced Test:

Form Am and an informal test were used to measure the general and specific interpretive and comprehensive skills of the students. The informal test on evaluative skills was administered for the purpose of arousing critical judgments that would form a basis for an evaluation of the material that was to be studied. The students were to read each of the ten poems and determine the degree of excellence measured in terms of word choice, sincerity, emotional content, imagery, and total impression.

Monday, March 2, 1964, to Friday, March 6, 1964

Purposes:

To become acquainted with some of the characteristics and fundamentals of poetry

To learn that not all of these characteristics or techniques need be studied in detail or in isolation from meaning

To see how figures of speech are of small consequence in themselves unless they fulfill a purpose

To become acquainted with the elements of lyric poetry

To learn a simple form for writing one's own poems
Procedures: To acquaint students with some of the elements of poetry, mimeographed sheets entitled "Getting Acquainted With Poetry" were issued to the group with the expectation that they would learn something of the various forms of figurative language. Obviously, from the ensuing discussion, the majority of the students had had only minor experiences with such aspects of poetry. It appeared that during their high school courses in poetry they had been taught to define and pick out figurative language in the poems they studied without regard to what that particular figure of speech contributed to the poem's meaning. The material on "Getting Acquainted With Poetry" consisted of definitions and illustrations of "simile," "personification," "hyperbole," "irony," "onomatopoeia," and so on, but was to serve only in the capacity of giving students more insight into the technique of poetry. These poetical devices were not to be treated in isolation from context or meaning, but would be recognized as distinguishing characteristics of poetry that poets often use as fundamental to purpose and meaning. Students were instructed not to be concerned with defining and cataloguing these poetical features, for learning them in detail and apart from meaning would only diminish the beauty of the poem.
The class was introduced to various examples of figures of speech contained in quotations in order to aid them in determining the difference in literal and figurative speech. Quotations were used because they allowed short samples of figurative language to be identified with every consideration for meaning. The samples also were to show how emotional intensity could be added to otherwise merely informative statements and convey attitudes along with information. It was also pointed out that figures of speech bring additional imagery into verse, operate as a means of concentration, and provide a way of saying much in brief compass. Students were to identify each of the selected quotations as literal or figurative, explain the comparison, and explain the appropriateness of the comparison. Along these lines, a special poetic form, the Japanese haiku, was introduced.

Haiku is an unusual form of poetry, brief and simple in prosody, but as thought provoking as the best of contemporary poetry. The visual image is usually set up in the first two lines of these three-line poems, then in the third line a jump from the particular image to a universal concept is made. Since a good haiku uses a season as a symbolic backdrop, the students were made aware of the interrelation of man and nature which is
so fundamental to lyric poetry. And what is more important, the students learned how to write haiku at the same time they were learning to read it. It gave the students a simple frame for the writing of their own poems. The class experienced difficulty in their attempts to compose haiku poems, but were quite successful in seeing relationships in particular images and universal concepts. During the oral readings of the haiku poems, students evidenced a deficiency in reading for rhythm, tone and expression. All read line by line with either exaggerated expression or with no expression at all. To remedy this problem, instruction was geared to determining the tone of the poem by a study of its content.

It did not appear necessary to engage in a study of the more technical aspects of the sounds of poetry for this end. Consciousness of and response to sound and rhythm can very effectively be aroused with little or no exposure to such elements as alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, and so on. Students were made aware of the sounds of poetry through the poet’s choice of words, the emotional content, or figures of speech. Therefore, the group was encouraged to find imaginative pleasure by appreciating the effects produced by poetical devices than by an interpretation of the causes of the effects.
Students were to confine themselves to the term "figurative language" and to try to see values in the imaginative quality of poetry rather than to become involved in a scientific classification of the various types of devices.

Monday, March 9, 1964 to Friday, March 13, 1964

**Purposes:**

- To learn to read poetry for mood, tone, rhythm, expression, and meaning
- To learn to evaluate the oral reading of others
- To be more discriminating in the memorization of passages and poems
- To learn to judge a poem on its own merits

**Procedures:**

A Coronet Instruction Film, "Literature Appreciation: How to Read Poetry," was shown to the class. The purpose of the film was to impress upon students the importance of knowing something about the poet's life as an aid in interpreting and appreciating some of his poetry. Accordingly, in instances where it was necessary to uncovering total meaning, brief historical and biographical factors were supplied to the class by the writer.

The class was reminded that there are numerous contrivances which the poet employs to achieve harmony in sense and sound. This idea presupposes the reading of poetry aloud. The first poem to be read aloud in class was Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven." This poem was chosen
because rhythm and sound were special devices used by the poet to produce his desired effects. With no previous training in the technical aspects of poetry, students were instructed to read for rhythm, tone and meaning. This reading introduced the matter of tone and the reaction or mood poetry excites. Four different poems of different moods and tones were read aloud by students and analyzed as to the quality of the poet's voice and its contribution to the interpretation of the poem.

After a substantial understanding of sound patterns was reached, the class was given groups of lines in which there were omissions. They were to select the best line of those suggested, from the standpoint of tone, that would be most appropriate to the tone of the given lines.

One aim of the unit was to increase the students' ability to perceive the interrelated qualities that animate a poem, for, on the basis of these perceptions they would be expected to form their own judgments. The poems for this exercise were selected primarily on the basis of their usefulness in developing the students' perception and appreciation of poetry. All names of poets were omitted. Students were asked to evaluate each poem on its own merits as determined by their poetic acumen.
Students found this exercise particularly difficult and challenging, mainly because they had always felt that any poem in print was unquestionably of superior quality.

Outside of class students watched five television commercials, distinguished a characteristic tone of each, and discussed the techniques employed to produce the tone. Then they selected short poems in a foreign language and translated them poetically into English. From this experience, they wrote brief accounts of the difficulties they discovered as relating to tone and rhythm. Next they listed five words that sounded unpleasant to them and five words that sounded pleasant. Each one was used in a context that tended to reverse the normal sound effect that the word produced.

Students were asked to bring their favorite poems to class for oral reading. After each reading the class called attention to the following effects:

(1) variety in tempo, volume and pitch
(2) use of the pause and accent for emphasis
(3) voice quality for mood
(4) timbre and nails in the voice where suitable to strengthen emotion
(5) interesting voice patterns

It was explained to the class that they were not expected to memorize poems or lines of poetry that had no specific
meaning for them. It was hoped, however, that during
the course of the unit they would remember those lines
which "have something to say and say something to have."

Monday, March 16, 1964, to Friday, March 20, 1964

Purposes: To continue an integrated study of tone and rhythm
To learn how the poet uses images, symbols and figurative language to give clearness, force and beauty to a picture
To be critical judges of poetry

Procedures: Students continued their oral reading of poetry with regard to tone, expression and rhythm. The tape recorder proved useful in motivating students' interest and in giving them the opportunity to listen to themselves. They used mimeographed poems to read over the recorder and then listened to a record album ("Singers in the Dusk") of the same poems recorded by Charles Lampkin. The students then compared their "album" with the record album. Lampkin's album consisted of the following poems:

"Nocturne at Bethesda," Arna Bontemps
"The Glory of the Day Was in Her Face," James Weldon Johnson
"The Negro Speaks of Rivers," Langston Hughes
"Mother to Son," Langston Hughes
"Ballad of the Man Who's Gone," Langston Hughes
"Benediction," Donald J. Hayes

The class expressed such genuine interest in Negro poetry that they unanimously requested that the next meeting be
devoted entirely to reading and discussing poetry of that type. Some of the Negro poems that were selected for the next session had been written by poets who were either natives of Atlanta or who had been educated in the city's colleges. This fact, it was hoped, would kindle greater appreciation and interest in the way a poet handles his environment and experiences. Students showed remarkable ability in judging the tone or mood of the poet's voice in these poems and in understanding sense images. They were then asked to begin composing their own poems by first writing paragraphs describing a scene which filled them with some kind of emotion. During the next week they were to scan and rearrange the lines into poetic verse.

The class was introduced to the poet's manner of arousing the reader's senses through his use of sensory details in scenes, suggestions, objects or actions. The chapter on imagery in "Sound and Sense" was read and discussed. The point emphasized was that poetry appeals to one's senses through the representation to the imagination of sense experiences. Various poems containing experiences that compelled the reader to use his senses were discussed in class. Students were asked to tell how the experiences in the poem were sensitive and whether or not the details provided them with an emotional attitude.
to the situation. The poems that were selected were:

"Meeting at Night," Robert Browning
"To Autumn," John Keats
"Calvary Crossing a Ford," Walt Whitman
"August," Elinor Wylie
"Winter," William Shakespeare
"The Echoing Green," William Blake
"Tarantella," Hilaire Belloc
"Wisdom," John Pryor

Students were asked to bring to class poems which they felt made obvious appeal to the senses and to determine how the series of details made the scene or picture meaningful.

The students were given mimeographed sheets containing poems from which they were to make their own judgments. They were particularly interested in poem number four, an unusual form of writing that engendered a great deal of enthusiasm. They pointed out and commented upon the unusual devices in the poem and discussed the merits and demerits of these devices. It was concluded that although this type of writing is experimental, it could possibly make contributions that would add to the resources available to the poet of the future.

Monday, March 23, 1964, to Friday, March 27, 1964

To integrate rhythm, tone, imagery, symbolism and figurative language into a means of interpreting poetry

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1See Appendix C.
To learn to make universal applications to figurative interpretations

To judge poetry critically

The following poems were read in class:

"She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," William Wordsworth
"Nothing Gold Can Stay," Robert Frost
"To A Skylark," William Wordsworth

The class was then asked to write down the pictures they saw in each poem and the effects they produced. These poems were chosen because it was felt that universal applications could easily be made to their meanings, and because they were dramatic examples of some of the many functions of imagery—the power to present concrete objects, to suggest emotional attitudes, and to provide the groundwork for understanding the significance of human experiences.

These poems were discussed and evaluated from critical points of view. Students indicated a growing confidence in their ability to criticize the poems under discussion and to offer their own approval or disapproval of the poet's work.

Monday, March 30, 1964, to Friday, April 3, 1964

To translate comparisons to concrete details of a descriptive nature

To recognize and distinguish between literal and figurative symbols and images
Procedures:

To integrate rhythm and tone with figurative language whenever possible

To develop the creative process by thinking and writing poetically

Students were given a mimeographed sheet describing criteria for judging the interpretations of poems. Using these criteria the following poems were analyzed for correct interpretations:

"Where Ships of Purple Gently Toss," Emily Dickinson
"An Army Corps on the March," Walt Whitman
"The Night-March," Herman Melville
"The Sick Rose," William Blake

The Dickinson poem was presented to the class for interpretation. Almost universally they read the poem as being descriptive of a scene in a garden or meadow. The poem, which is actually a description of a sunset, was then proved to be so because that particular interpretation followed the criteria most exactly. The Melville and Whitman poems were interpreted and compared for their obvious likenesses. Not until the criteria were applied to point up the actual differences in content did the class finally conclude that Whitman's poem was about an army while Melville's was about the stars.

The last poem was interpreted for its literal meaning and then for the various interpretations that could be made without going outside of the basic criteria. At least five different possible interpretations were offered by the class as being acceptable.
The poems composed by the students were not read to the class until they had been revised as many times as was necessary. It was feared that the discussion that follows the too early reading of a genuine creative effort would result in verbal substitution and manipulation of form, instead of accurate and sensitive observation and analysis of the referent. This procedure would inevitably destroy or block off the creative process. The students had been given a guide sheet to keep them aware of the standards their poems should meet. Individuals were given assistance in student-teacher sessions, but they were not supplied with vocabulary, even by most subtle indirection. Neither were they "instructed," but were questioned and given replies to their questions. They were highly praised for the good they had done and encouraged to build upon it.

Monday, April 6, 1964, to Friday, April 10, 1964

**Purposes:**
- To feel response to rhythm and sound
- To see the picture the poet seeks to present
- To translate images and symbols into meaning
- To find the universal in the particular
- To continue work in composing poetry

**Procedures:**
"The Tiger," by William Blake, was analyzed in class for its tone and imagery. After the class had clarified the most outstanding image, the tiger, they proceeded to
discuss how thought and image merged in the metaphoric carrier. John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" was used to show how a general truth is proposed and developed through the use of the "twin compasses" symbol. Tennyson's "Bugle Song" was analyzed for its particularly vivid details. The class explained those expressions which were figurative rather than literal. "Bugle Song" was especially good for pointing out our rhythmic and tonal effects.

Monday, April 13, 1964, to Friday, April 17, 1964

**Purposes:**
To translate comparisons to concrete details of a descriptive nature

To recognize and distinguish between literal and figurative symbols and images

To make universal applications

**Procedures:**
Students were asked to read Emily Dickinson's poem "The Chariot" and to discuss it in terms of comparisons, literal and figurative images, rhythm, tone and universal applications. They first interpreted the poem literally, as a carriage passing a school, and so on. Then they delved beneath the surface to explore a second meaning, that of the experience of death. It was pointed out that the correspondences between the surface story and the implied story were more methodically developed and that in that poem, the poet attemp-
ted to draw an analogy between nature and human life, or between the divine and the human.

Students were reminded to be cognizant of the ambiguity that is sometimes inherent in figures of similarity when translating them into concrete details. The objects compared would be alike in some respects, unlike in others. In the case of the metaphor, the likeness would only be analogy or by proportion, and these proportions are not easily determined. Recognizing these facts, the students analyzed Walt Whitman’s "A Noiseless Patient Spider" and compared the activity of a spider and the activity of his soul. These activities were found to be parallel, but not identical. To what extent they were parallel could only be suggested, but the suggestion was one that gave students insight into the mysterious connections between all things in the universe. Students recalled that "The Tiger" was a similar poem in that the total meaning of the poem could not be reduced to one unambiguous meaning. The class had discovered many additional meanings of the poem, but regarded the presence of these meanings as witness to an encounter with reality, a mystery truly inexhaustible. Other poems were used for the purpose of showing that figurative expressions are a way of expressing by in-
direction that which the poet cannot or does not wish to say directly. The following poems were analyzed in class in terms of the analogy between figurative and literal expressions and the possibility of universal applications:

"Kinship with the Stars," George Meredith
An excerpt from "Ode: Intimations of Immortality,"
William Wordsworth
"The Silken Tent," Robert Frost

Afterwards the class made finishing touches to the poems that they had been in the process of writing. These were mimeographed and distributed to the class. At the final meeting, students engaged in a spirited appraisal and evaluation of the poems composed by their classmates.

Monday, April 20, 1964, to Friday, April 24, 1964

Purposes:
To measure students' ability to interpret and comprehend poetry
To measure students' ability to distinguish between fine literature and that which is obviously inferior
To measure students' appreciation of poetry

Procedures:
The Poetry Section of the Iowa Silent Reading Test Advanced Test: Form Dm and an informal test were used to measure the general and specific interpretive and comprehensive skills of the students. An informal test on evaluative skills was administered to determine whether or not critical judgments had been aroused for the purpose of evaluating poetry. An informal questionnaire was given to measure levels of interest and appreciation for poetry.
Analysis and interpretation of the final general poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.—The analysis and interpretation of performances on the Iowa Silent Reading Test; Poetry Section, Advanced Test: Form Dm by the experimental and control groups were based on the data presented in Tables 16, 17, and 18 and Figure 7. These findings gave evidence that the two groups were significantly different in all the statistical measures employed. In the range of scores, the experimental group extended from 141 to 210 and the control group from 125 to 206, with specific ranges of 69 and 81, respectively. As for measures of central tendency, the median of the experimental group was 172.50 and the mean, 167.10; the median of the control group was 154.50 and the mean, 151.00. The standard error of the mean for the experimental group was 2.31 and for the control group, 3.89; the standard deviations were 18.11 and 21.10, respectively. In the experimental group 56 per cent of the cases fell above the mean and 44 per cent of the cases fell below the mean. In the control group 35 per cent of the cases fell above the mean and 67 per cent of the cases fell below the mean. For the control group the frequency polygon shows a skewed distribution in the positive direction, an indication that the scores made by the control group were lower than those made by the experimental group.

Analysis and interpretation of the final comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills by the experimental and control groups.—The analysis and interpretation of the performances on the final informal test for comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills by the experimental and con-
### TABLE 16

**DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE IOWA SILENT READING TEST: POETRY SECTION, ADVANCED TEST: FORM Dm**

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
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<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>187</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>177</td>
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<td>163</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Mean Percentile 24.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Range of Scores**: 69
- **Median**: 172.5
- **Mean**: 167.1
- **S. D.**: 16.11
- **S. E. of Mean**: 4.40
## TABLE 17

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE IOWA SILENT READING TEST; POETRY SECTION, ADVANCED TEST, FORM Dm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>146</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean Percentile 13.4

Range of Scores 81  
Median 154.5  
Mean 151.0  
S. D. 21.10  
S. E. of Mean 5.12
TABLE 18

STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE POETRY SECTION OF THE IOWA SILENT READING ADVANCED TEST; FORM Dm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>167.10</td>
<td>151.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference Between Means</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
<td>27.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td>3.58*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .02 level of confidence.

trol groups were based on data presented in Tables 19, 20, and 21 and in Figure 8. These findings gave evidence that the two groups were widely different in all the statistical measures employed. In the range of scores the experimental group extended from 49 to 80 and the control group from 31 to 62, with specific ranges of 31 for both groups. As for measures of central tendency, the median of the experimental group was 68.50 and the mean, 66.67; the median of the control group was 45.0 and the mean, 46.17. The standard of error of the mean for the experimental group was 1.66 and for the control group, 1.39; the standard deviations were 6.82 and 7.79, respectively. In the experimental group 62 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 33 per cent of the cases fell below this interval; and 5 per cent of the cases fell within the mean class interval.
Fig. 7.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Iowa Silent Reading Test; Poetry Section, Advanced Test: Form Dm.
TABLE 19
DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SAVES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE FINAL INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<td>61 - 63</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>58 - 60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 - 54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 - 51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores 31
Median 68.50
Mean 66.67
S. D. 6.22
S. E. of Mean 1.66
TABLE 20

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM
SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE FINAL
INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND
INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 - 62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 - 59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 - 56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 - 50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 - 44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 - 41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 - 35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores: 31
Median: 43.0
Mean: 46.17
S. D.: 7.79
S. E. of Mean: 1.89
The frequency polygon shows a skewed distribution for the control group in the positive direction, an indication that the scores made by the control group were lower than those made by the experimental group.

**TABLE 21**

**STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE FINAL INFORMAL TEST FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND INTERPRETIVE POETRY SKILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>46.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference Between Means</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .02 level of confidence.

The data presented in Table 21 gave further evidence of heterogeneity. The difference between the two means was 20.50; the standard errors were 1.66 for the experimental group and 1.89 for the control group; the standard error of the difference between the means was 2.52. A "t" score of 8.13 was derived from these statistics. With 30 degrees of freedom at the .02 level of confidence, this score was found to be above the "t" of 2.46 required at that level. It was concluded then that there was a significant difference between the comprehensive and interpretive poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.
Fig. 8.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Informal Test for Comprehensive and Interpretive Poetry Skills.
Analysis and interpretation of the final evaluative poetry skills of the experimental and control groups.—The analysis and interpretation of the performances on the informal test for evaluative poetry skills for the experimental and control groups were based on the data presented in Tables 22, 23, and 24 and Figure 9. These findings gave evidence that there was heterogeneity in the statistical measures employed. In the range of scores the experimental group extended from 33 to 83 and the control group from 25 to 70, with specific ranges of 50 and 45, respectively. As for measures of central tendency, the median of the experimental group was 66.10 and the mean, 65.00; the median of the control group was 37.50 and the mean, 41.50. The standard error of the mean for the experimental group was 3.68 and for the control group, 2.67, with standard deviations of 15.17 and 10.99, respectively. In the experimental group 66 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 33 per cent of the cases fell below this interval; and 11 per cent of the cases fell within the mean class interval. The frequency polygon revealed negatively skewed distributions for the experimental group, illustrating that higher scores were made by the experimental group. In the control group 33 per cent of the cases fell above the mean class interval; 39 per cent of the cases fell below this interval; and 28 per cent fell within the mean class interval. The frequency polygon for this group shows a skewed distribution in the positive direction, but the trend did not represent an extreme shift, and, therefore the group could be described as generally adhering to the normal curve of distribution.
TABLE 22

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE FINAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of Scores: 50
Median: 66.10
Mean: 63.0
S. D.: 15.17
S. E. of Mean: 3.68
TABLE 23

DISTRIBUTION AND BASIC STATISTICAL MEASURES DERIVED FROM SCORES MADE BY THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE FINAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range of Scores</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>41.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>10.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 24

STATISTICAL MEASURES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES MADE BY THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE FINAL INFORMAL TEST FOR EVALUATIVE POETRY SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>41.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference Between Means</td>
<td>21.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Mean</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. E. of Difference of Means</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot;</td>
<td>4.73*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .02 level of confidence.

The data presented in Table 24 gave further evidence of heterogeneity. The difference between the two means was 21.50; the standard errors were 3.68 for the experimental group and 2.67 for the control group; the standard error of the difference between the means was 4.55. A "t" score of 4.73 was derived from these statistics. With 30 degrees of freedom at the .02 level of confidence, this score was found to be significant at the "t" of 2.46 required at that level. It was concluded that the evaluative skills of the experimental group were significantly different from those of the control group.
Fig. 9.—Two overlapping frequency polygons showing distribution of scores made by the experimental and control groups on the Final Informal Test for Evaluative Poetry Skills.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introductory statement.—This chapter presents the essence of the rationale which undergirds this study of poetry comprehension, its basic design and methodology, a summary of literature related to it, a recapitulation of the major findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study.

Summary of the rationale.—Poetry has a very important meaning in man's existence, but its full value is not always appreciated. It is not just a form of amusement or enjoyment, but is something which man is better off for having and which he is spiritually impoverished without.

Understanding poetry requires intellectual powers and a deep sensibility in order to find excitement from within. The general reading public, in its search for external excitement, appears to have found its greatest delight in novel-reading. Perhaps this veering away from poetry can be attributed to the fact that many portions of the population have not had the opportunity to learn the art of poetry. We hold the schools responsible for developing the capacity to love and enjoy poetry, yet research shows that the reading habits of most high school students veer away from the reading of poetry for appreciation. Consequently, the skills required for the understanding of human emotions are undeveloped in much of our
society today. This is so possibly because of the ineffectiveness of methods many teachers use in communicating with students in the literature classroom. Chief of the reasons have been:

1. the teachers have disliked it
2. the teachers have been embarrassed by it
3. the teachers have been suspicious of all forms of emotion
4. the teachers have been indifferent to poetry
5. the teachers have loved it uncomprehendingly and for irrelevant reasons
6. the teachers have genuinely loved it, but have been unable to communicate their love to others
7. the teachers have been unable to read and interpret it

Having considered these facts, the writer developed an interest in determining the degree of understanding with which a group of college students would analyze and interpret poetry on the basis of what they had been taught and in determining the techniques of instruction that would best bring about improvement in certain poetry skills. This study was based on determining the efficacy of these methods.

**Basic design and methodology.**—The parallel group technique of the experimental method of research was used in this study. This method involved finding pairs of students whose reading and intelligence scores were approximately the same and measuring the improvement of one group as compared to the other after a period of instruction to the former. The overall purpose of the experiment was to determine the effectiveness of certain techniques of teaching poetry when they were used with an experimental group. More specific purposes were to find:

1. Students' general and specialized abilities in the area of poetry
2. Significant differences which existed in general poetry achievement of groups with and without training, respectively.

3. Significant differences which existed between the groups in the following special areas:
   a. Poetry comprehension
   b. Interpretation of poetry
   c. Poetic evaluation
   d. Appreciation of poetry

4. The extent to which significant implications for the teaching of poetry might be derived from the findings of this study.

Materials and instruments used in the study were: (1) The Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test: Forms Am and Dm; (2) The Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test: Form EM of Gamma; and (3) six devised tests: two questionnaires, two comprehensive tests, and two evaluation tests.

The time element presented one limitation of the study in that poems of longer length could not be read and discussed in class. And many of the important biographical and historical factors had to be supplied very briefly to the class by the writer, because a more thorough examination of the period could not be undertaken.

Subjects for the study were limited to thirty-six college freshmen who attended Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, during the academic year 1963-1964. The majority of these students were reading on various levels below that of the thirteenth grade level required by the college and were not representative of the average college freshman class.

The operational steps followed in the study are outlined below:
1. Permission was secured from the reading teacher of Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, to use two freshman reading classes as control and experimental groups.

2. The related literature pertinent to the study was selected and presented in the thesis copy.

3. Intelligence quotients of the freshman students under study were secured from offices of the Morris Brown Reading Clinic.

4. As evenly as possible, students were assigned to classes on the bases of the scores made on the intelligence and reading tests.

5. Tests were administered to determine the initial status of the two groups in general and special poetry skills. The poetry section of Form Am of the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test was used to measure comprehension and interpretation. An informal questionnaire was used to ascertain interest and appreciation; an informal test was used to measure skills of evaluation.

6. Special training was given the experimental group to develop and improve the skills listed above. Students engaged in the following activities besides those of normal classroom participation: looking at films, listening to records, making tape recordings, writing and reading poetry, interpreting and rewriting poems written in a foreign language, and distinguishing the tones of various television commercials.

7. The experimental group met Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for six weeks at the Morris Brown College Reading Clinic. The control group followed the same class schedule as the experimental group but received no instruction in poetry.

8. The poetry section of Form Dm of the Iowa Silent Reading Advanced Test and an informal test were used to measure achievement in comprehension and interpretation made by subjects in the experimental and control groups after the termination of the poetry unit. An informal test and questionnaire were devised and used to measure achievement in evaluation and appreciation.

9. The test data were assembled, analyzed, interpreted, and presented in the final thesis copy.
Summary of the related literature.--The related literature for this investigation was reviewed in terms of (1) discussions of various techniques and approaches in teaching poetry and (2) research related to the present study.

Authorities have agreed on only one point as to the most effective methods of teaching poetry to high school and college students—no one approach will effectively stimulate the thinking of students along lines that will lead to a true understanding and appreciation of poetry. As to which combination of methods is best, there is still no answer, but the various approaches have been narrowed down to six basic ones: (1) historical, (2) sociopsychological, (3) emotive, (4) didactic, (5) paraphrastic, and (6) analytical. Many writers have either criticized or approved of the extent to which these approaches may be handled; others have devised methods of their own.

The statements below, many of them contradictory in nature, present the main ideas or the trends of thought as derived from the literature pertaining to the problem of this research.

1. Paraphrase should be used when the vocabulary, structure, manner, or idea is too difficult for the inexperienced reader to comprehend. One should not, however, make the mistake of assuming that the paraphrase is equivalent to the original. Paraphrase is always something less than the original text.

2. There is no need to call attention to biographical and historical background in a college course of study, for college students are expected to have acquired the background necessary for forming relationships.

3. The historical approach can be used as long as it is not applied so exclusively that it tends to divert attention from the poem itself by confronting the student with a great deal of history and small amount of poetry.
4. The historical approach must be used, because literature organized in a reasonable and intelligible way, chronologically, can offer the student background for efficient reading and writing and can at the same time impart certain values in literature now lost.

5. The inspirational method can be used for bringing the student to a closer acquaintance with, understanding of, and affection for poetry—the student's interest being aroused through the medium of the instructor's tone and manner, the teacher himself providing the context.

6. The studying of certain technical aspects of poetry in isolation from other aspects and from the total intention is a meaningless procedure that often results in much misunderstanding.

7. The technical aspects of poetry should be taught so that students can learn to see relationships between meaning and technique. In other words, the language of the composition, words and syntax, figurative aspects of language, imagery, metaphor and symbolism should be examined in detail for its contribution to the work.

8. The memorizing of literary terms and their definitions and the ability to spot and identify figurative aspects of language lend nothing to a true understanding of poetry.

9. A knowledge of metrics is not necessary to rhythmical reading; poetry will be less monotonous if students are taught to read with expression and meaning with regard to tone rather than to meter.

10. Every aspect of the art of poetry is essential to understanding and requires an examination. Meter, verse patterns, stanza patterns, tonal effects, and so on, are necessary to meaning and appropriate to what the poet is saying.

The summary of research related to the problem of this research is to be found in the abstracted statements below.

1. Skills can be improved through extensive reading of poetry by the teacher without comment, and reading to students for appreciation and enjoyment rather than for study.

2. Oral and silent reading dealing with subjects familiar to students and expressing a variety of emotions and ideas with which they can identify themselves can help
students develop and express sensitivity to significant beauty.

3. Appreciation of poetry can be increased by writing imitations of selected poems.

4. Poetry should be read both orally (for rhythm and musical effects) and silently (for supplementary reading).

5. Students understand poetry better if they analyze its sentences for verbs and verbals, subjects, complements and all modifying units.

Summary of the findings. — The findings of this research are presented in accordance with the purposes of the study.

1. In the interest of further analysis of the thirty-six subjects involved in the study, the following findings were pertinent:

a. The mean intelligence quotient of the total group was 97.5 with scores ranging from 82 to 114.

b. The mean reading score for the total group was 165 which was equivalent to the 10.8 grade level as reported for college freshmen on the Iowa test. The scores ranged from 147 to 177 with percentile equivalents of 3 to 42 and grade levels of 7.4 to 13.4.

c. The mean score for the total group on the poetry section of the Iowa test was 164 which was equivalent to the 28 percentile. The scores ranged from 115 to 184 with percentile equivalents of 0 to 60.

d. The mean score on the comprehensive and interpretive poetry test was 46 with scores ranging from 27 to 65.

e. The mean score on the evaluation test was 48 with scores ranging from 20 to 72.

f. The questionnaire measuring appreciation and interest indicated that 62 per cent of the students were appreciative of good poetry and that 47 per cent were interested in studying it.

2. Upon division of the subjects into experimental and control groups, the separate groups could be described as follows:
a. The mean intelligence quotient of the experimental group was 98 with scores ranging from 82 to 114.

b. The mean intelligence quotient of the control group was 97 with scores ranging from 82 to 107.

c. The mean reading score for the experimental group was 166 which was equivalent to the 10.9 grade level. The scores ranged from 147 to 176 with percentile equivalents of 3 to 39 and grade levels of 7.4 to 134.

d. The mean score for the control group was 165 which was equivalent to the 10.7 grade level. The scores ranged from 154 to 177 with percentile equivalents of 7 to 42 and grade levels of 8.5 to 134.

e. The mean score for the experimental group on the poetry section of the Iowa test was 162 with scores ranging from 115 to 184 and percentile equivalents of 0 to 60.

f. The mean score for the control group on the poetry section of the Iowa test was 165 with scores ranging from 119 to 184 and percentile equivalents of 0 to 60.

g. The mean score on the comprehensive and interpretive test for the experimental group was 48, with scores ranging from 27 to 65.

h. The mean score on the comprehensive and interpretive test for the control group was 44, with scores ranging from 27 to 60.

i. The mean score on the evaluation test for the experimental group was 47, with scores ranging from 21 to 64.

j. The mean score on the evaluation test for the control group was 49, with scores ranging from 20 to 72.

k. The questionnaire measuring appreciation and interest indicated that 60 per cent of the subjects in the experimental group were appreciative of good poetry and 45 per cent were interested in studying it.

l. The questionnaire measuring appreciation and interest indicated that 65 per cent of the subjects in the
control group were appreciative of good poetry and 50 per cent were interested in studying it.

3. The significant differences which existed between the groups after a period of special training engaged in by the experimental group are as follows:

a. The mean score for the experimental group on the poetry section of the Iowa test was 167 with scores ranging from 141 to 210 and percentile equivalents of 6 to 98.

b. The mean score for the control group on the poetry section of the Iowa test was 151 with scores ranging from 125 to 206 and percentile equivalents of 1 to 95.

c. The mean score on the comprehensive and interpretive poetry test for the experimental group was 67 with scores ranging from 49 to 80.

d. The mean score on the comprehensive and interpretive poetry test for the control group was 46 with scores ranging from 37 to 62.

e. The mean score on the evaluation test for the experimental group was 63 with scores ranging from 33 to 83.

f. The mean score on the evaluation test for the control group was 41 with scores ranging from 25 to 70.

g. The questionnaire measuring appreciation and interest indicated that 80 per cent of the subjects in the experimental group were appreciative of good poetry and that 75 per cent were interested in further study.

h. The questionnaire measuring appreciation and interest indicated that 60 per cent of the subjects in the control group were appreciative of good poetry and that 50 per cent were interested in studying it.

Conclusions.—The analysis and interpretation of the data of the research and findings warranted the following conclusions:

1. From the results of the initial tests and prior to any special training, the average abilities of both groups were approximately at the same levels of intelligence and reading skills.
2. The test data indicated that after six weeks of training in poetry comprehension, interpretation and evaluation, the control group showed improvement in some areas and none in others, but the group that received training showed a significant measure of improvement in all areas. It might be concluded, then, that systematic training tended to develop skills necessary to understanding poetry.

3. The combined methods and techniques of teaching poetry used in the experimental design revealed that they were moderately to highly effective in bringing about improvement in the areas receiving attention.

4. Students are able to develop ability in writing and thinking creatively if they are given guidance and practice in same.

5. Students will develop interest in the more abstract and difficult forms of writing and in a greater number of poets and categories of poetry if they are exposed to them more extensively.

Implications.—The interpretations of the findings and conclusions made justifiable the following implications:

1. Comprehensive, interpretive and evaluative poetry skills can be improved to a greater degree through further planned poetry experiences of a unit of this type.

2. Students with seemingly no poetic impulse can learn to express their imaginative interpretations of physical and sensory experiences if the teacher is able to stimulate their internal senses.

3. Appreciation of poetry can be cultivated. Students who profess to have a general aversion to poetry can find enjoyment in it when certain methods and techniques of teaching are employed.

4. Students can gain more insight into poetry when it deals with familiar scenes and people and when it has a definite relationship to their lives.

5. Students' appreciation of poetry is relative to the level and amount of literature to which they have been exposed. Interest will remain limited to simple and elementary forms of poetry unless works of greater depth and challenge are shown to be within easy grasp and understanding.
Recommendations.—In the interest of further application and study, the writer considered the following recommendations justifiable:

1. A more intensive and extensive study should be organized for handling poetry in the secondary schools, for here, students are expected to develop their imaginations, emotions and their attitudes toward life in a sensitive and spiritualized manner.

2. The "experience" method of teaching poetry should be more effectively utilized, for the minds of most high school and college students are geared toward experiences relating to their immediate surroundings and environment. Vicarious experiences, to substitute for direct experiences, should be provided as far as possible as a means of motivating students and awakening them to the riches of literature.

3. Students should be encouraged to write poetry for their own enjoyment and as a means of expressing their imaginative interpretations of physical and sensory experiences. They should be taught to find beauty in the ordinary and significance in that which appears unimportant.

4. Teachers should not be content with following only the procedures as suggested by the literature textbook. Their own initiative should be employed to determine those techniques that would meet more effectively the needs of their students. It is recommended that a variety of methods be experimented with and that the teacher exercise his judgment as to which ones prove most beneficial to his particular students.

5. It is also recommended that any and all newly-developed techniques which have successfully produced good results in the teaching of poetry be presented in educational journals or magazines so as to acquaint other teachers of literature with more creative methods of instruction.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Periodicals


FORMULAS USED IN THIS STUDY

\[ M = \left( \frac{\sum f x}{N} \right) i + X_0 \]

\[ SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f x'^2}{N} - \left( \frac{\sum f x}{N} \right)^2} \]

\[ \sigma_m = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N-1}} \]

\[ \sigma_{dm} = \sqrt{\sigma_{M_1}^2 + \sigma_{M_2}^2} \]

\[ "t" = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sigma \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}} \]
Poetry Test

Interpretation and Comprehension

Ozymandias

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor will those passions read
Which yet survive (stamped on these lifeless things),
The hand that mocked them and the heard that red;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

1. What is the theme of the poem?

2. Of what is Ozymandias a symbol?

3. Who is the speaker?

4. To whom is he speaking?

5. What is the setting in time and in place?

6. To whom does the hand (8) belong? The heart (8)?

It is Not Growing Like a Tree

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of Light
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

1. Paraphrase the poem
2. In what respects does the poem say more, and say it more memorably than the paraphrase?

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears -
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1. What is the story implied by this poem?

2. Do lines 3-4 give the explanation for line 1; that is, is the speaker saying that his loved one seemed so thoroughly immortal that he simply was asleep to the possibility that she could ever die?

If so, what has waked him up out of his sleep?

3. The loved one is now asleep and completely inert. How is her present inertness emphasized in the 2nd stanza?

4. Actually, the speaker, as a living man, is being whirled around by that same earth. Yet does this last figure succeed in emphasizing her deadness? Try to indicate why.

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear;
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

1. To what degree is Death personified?

2. What is the effect of this personification?

3. What is implied by the poet's not knowing what is said in Death's "strange language"?

4. Define as precisely as possible the poet's attitude toward the possibility of some kind of future life.
To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

1. What do the rosebuds symbolize (stanza 1)?
2. What does the course of a day symbolize (stanza 2)?
3. Does the poet fix the meaning of the rosebud symbol in the last stanza, or merely name one of its specific meanings?
4. How does the title help us interpret the meaning of the symbol?
5. Why did the poet use virgins instead of maidens?
6. Why is such haste necessary in gathering the rosebuds?
7. True, the blossoms die quickly, but they are replaced by others. Who really is dying?
8. What are the "worse and worst" times (ll)?
Loveliest of Trees

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

1. Very briefly, this poem presents a philosophy of life. In a sentence, what is it?

2. How old is the speaker? Why does he assume that his life will be seventy years in length?

3. What is surprising about the words only (8) and little (10)?
Student Questionnaire

Note: This questionnaire serves as a measure for determining your interest in and appreciation of poetry. It is important that you read each item set forth below and make an honest response.

1. Do you like good poetry? Yes ___ No ___
2. Do you sometimes read poetry for enjoyment? Often___ Sometimes___ Never ___
3. Do you feel the effect that the poet is trying to achieve?
   Always ____ Usually ____ Seldom ____ Never ____
4. Have you ever memorized passages from your favorite poem? Yes ___ No ___
5. List the names of poets with whom you are familiar.
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
6. Who is your favorite poet? __________________________________
7. What is the name of your favorite poem? _______________________
8. Have you written a poem in recent years? Yes ___ No ___
9. Would you like to write poetry? Yes ___ No ___
10. Do you like to read poems aloud to yourself? Yes ___ No ___
     To others? Yes ___ No ___
11. Do you like to have others read poems aloud to you? Yes ___ No ___
12. Do you know how to read poetry in rhythm? Yes ___ No ___
13. Would you like to learn to understand poetry better? Yes ___ No ___
14. Do you find enjoyment in the symbols and images in some of the poems you read? Yes ___ No ___
15. Has any particular scene or event ever brought to your mind a line or passage from a poem? Yes ___ No ___
Directions: Place a check beside the kinds of poetry you like best.

___ 1. Poems of Wanderlust
___ 2. Poems of the Sea
___ 3. Poems of Rhythm
___ 4. Bird Poems
___ 5. Poems of Industry
___ 6. Travel Poems
___ 7. Nature Poems
___ 8. Poems of Beauty
___ 9. Poems of Society
___ 10. Poetry of the Common Place
___ 11. Poems of Heroism
___ 12. Love Poems
___ 13. Religious Poetry
___ 14. Poems of Death

General Types

___ 1. Lyric Poetry
___ 2. Narrative Poems
___ 3. Monologue
___ 4. Dialogue
___ 5. Ballads
___ 6. Descriptive Poems
___ 7. Odes
Note: It is the aim of this test to arouse critical judgments which may form a basis for an evaluation of what we read. To this end are presented examples of varying degrees of excellence measured in terms of word choice, sincerity, emotional content, imagery, and total impression.

Directions

Read each selection carefully and record ( ) your impression as to its merit in the blanks provided at the bottom of the page following the poem. Check more than one answer whenever necessary for complete evaluation of the poem.

If in your opinion the poem is poorly written and you have some notion concerning what might be done to improve it, indicate such notion in the blanks provided. DO NOT GUESS!!

Practice Sample:

The glass and mirror doors in twisted ways
Opaque and clear, reflect, reveal glass faces,
Touched or reached, fat smiling splitting bases
For needle splinters, smooth, except to touch
Splintered surfaces laid over ground glass glaze
Suffaced in splintered glass.

Evaluation:

The poem is: good ___ fair ___ poor ___ very bad ___
Words are: well chosen ___ worn out ___ meaningless ___
The imagery is: vivid ___ lifeless ___ confused ___
The content of the poem is: sincere ___ gushy ___ ridiculous ___
imaginatively alive ___ empty ___
fresh ___ dull ___

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

emotional content ___ figures of speech ___
use of adjectives ___
I.

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling lake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem is:</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>very bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words are:</td>
<td>well chosen</td>
<td>worn out</td>
<td>meaningless</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The imagery is:</td>
<td>vivid</td>
<td>lifeless</td>
<td>confused</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content of the poem is:</td>
<td>sincere</td>
<td>gushy</td>
<td>ridiculous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>imaginatively alive</td>
<td>empty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fresh</td>
<td>dull</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

| emotional content | figures of speech |
| use of adjectives | other |

II.

The shimmering glow in my love's eyes
Can't be but that men find
In the long-lost caverns, wild and drear
The treasure of the Philistine.

And purest, softest golden locks
As fair as those fair suns
The heav'ns bespangling with radiant light
From whither yon fire burns.

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem is:</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>very bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Words are:
well chosen ___ worn out ___ meaningless ___

The imagery is:
vivid ___ lifeless ___ confused ___

The content of the poem is:
sincere ___ gushy ___ ridiculous ___
imaginatively alive ___ empty ___
fresh ___ dull ___

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:
emotional content ___ figures of speech ___
use of adjectives ___ other ___

III.
A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher:
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly:
A winning wave (deserving note)
In the tempestuous petticoat:
A careless show-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me, than when art
Is too precise in every part.

Evaluation:
The poem is:
good ___ fair ___ poor ___ very bad ___

Words are:
well chosen ___ worn out ___ meaningless ___

The imagery is:
vivid ___ lifeless ___ confused ___

The content of the poem is:
sincere ___ gushy ___ ridiculous ___
imaginatively alive ___ empty ___
fresh ___ dull ___
I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

emotional content  figures of speech

use of adjectives  other

---

IV.

I made you many and many a song
Yet never one told all you are -
It was as though a net of words
Were flung to catch a star;
It was as though I curved my hand
And dipped sea-water eagerly,
Only to find it lost the blue
Dark splendor of the sea.

Evaluation:

The poem is:

Words are:

The imagery is:

The content of the poem is:

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

emotional content  figures of speech

use of adjectives  other

---

V.

Scaling trees half peeled reflected in
Crinkling ripples of their own brown leaves
All the small unfolded leaves covering the
branches have dried and are scaling off
like dead scab,
Half shed trees reflected in crinkling ripples
of their own brown leaves.
Looking at the stream, it becomes misshapen
The corded fingers hold one slimy eye,
The stream from these slant fingers
With ridged corded muscles rippling under taunt skin,
Crippled fingers of water draw across the sharp Pebbled bottom ridges of bone and muscle
Pull the surface of skin taunt and slack.

Evaluation:
The poem is: good __ fair __ poor __ very bad __
Words are: well chosen __ worn out __ meaningless __
The imagery is: vivid __ lifeless __ confused __
The content of the poem is: sincere __ gushy __ ridiculous __
imaginatively alive __ empty __
fresh __ dull __

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:
emotional content __ figures of speech __
use of adjectives __ other __

VI.

His soul stretched tight across the skies
And many a skeleton shook his head
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn
A phantom salutation of the dead.

On this night of all nights in the year
Some men would quell the thing with prayer
And all the sons of revage crowd the war
With throngs promiscuous strew the level lair.

But when to mischief mortals bend their will
And Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eye,
And insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Then shall time turn back to descend the stair.
VII.

Death is here, and death is there,
Death is busy everywhere,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death - and we are death.

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

First our pleasures die - and then
Our hopes, and then our fears - and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust - and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish;
Such is our rude mortal lot -
Love itself would, did they not.

Evaluation:
The poem is: good ___ fair ___ poor ___ very bad ___
Words are: well chosen ___ worn out ___ meaningless ___
The imagery is: vivid ___ lifeless ___ confused ___
The content of the poem is: sincere ___ gushy ___ ridiculous ___ imaginatively alive ___ empty ___ fresh ___ dull ___
I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:
emotional content ___ figures of speech ___ use of adjectives ___ other ___

VIII.
The rushing, tumbling tide
That rules the storm-tossed sea
And buries with its turgid wave
Time's rustling spreading tree.

With green leaves turning gold and brown
Swift with the undried sea
And dark and deep and falling doom
How it enchanted me.

Could one but know the unsaid grief
Of cloud-soft hands restraining me
For my life is like the rolling gulf
And death is like the sea.

Evaluation:
The poem is: good ___ fair ___ poor ___ very bad ___
Words are: well chosen ___ worn out ___ meaningless ___
The imagery is: vivid ___ lifeless ___ confused ___
The content of the poem is: sincere ___ gushy ___ ridiculous ___ imaginatively alive ___ empty ___ fresh ___ dull ___
I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:
emotional content ___ figures of speech ___ use of adjectives ___ other ___
IX.

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed in the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Then the two hearts beating each to each!

Evaluation:

The poem is: __________ good __________ fair __________ poor __________ very bad __________

Words are: __________ well chosen __________ worn out __________ meaningless __________

The imagery is: __________ vivid __________ lifeless __________ confused __________

The content of the poem is: __________ sincere __________ gushy __________ ridiculous __________

imaginatively alive __________ empty __________

fresh __________ dull __________

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

emotional content __________ figures of speech __________

use of adjectives __________ other __________

X.

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm.

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.
Evaluation:

The poem is: good __ fair __ poor __ very bad __
Words are: well chosen __ worn out __ meaningless __
The imagery is: vivid __ lifeless __ confused __
The content of the poem is: sincere __ gushy __ ridiculous __ imaginatively alive __ empty __ fresh __ dull __

I believe the selection could be improved in the matter of:

emotional content __ figures of speech __
use of adjectives __ other __
Student Questionnaire

Note: You have just completed a six weeks study of English and American poetry. This questionnaire will serve as a measure for determining your appreciation of poetry. It is important that you read each item set forth below and then make an honest response.

1. To what extent do you think assistance in studying poetry has helped you to enjoy it?
   
   Very much __  Much __  Little __  Very Little __  None __

2. Do you feel that you will read poetry for enjoyment in your spare time?
   
   Yes __  No __  Sometimes __

3. Have you enjoyed memorizing passages from your favorite poems?
   
   Yes __  No __

4. List the names of poets with whom you are now familiar.
   
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Would you consider any one of these a favorite? Yes __  No __
   
   If so, name your favorite poet ________________________________

6. Why do you like his/her poems best?
   
   ____________________________________________________________

7. What is the name of your favorite poem?
   
   ________________________________

8. Were you satisfied with the poem you wrote? Yes __  No __

9. Will you continue to write poetry? Yes __  No __

10. Do you like to read poetry aloud to yourself? Yes __  No __
    
    To others? Yes __  No __

11. Do you like for others to read aloud to you? Yes __  No __

12. Has your reading in rhythm made poetry more meaningful? Yes __  No __
13. Do you think that your understanding of poetry has increased?
   Very Much ___ Much ___ Little ___ Very Little ___ Not Any ___

14. Do you find enjoyment in the symbols and images in some of the poems you read? Yes ___ No ___

15. Has any particular scene or event recently brought to your mind a line or passage from a poem? Yes ___ No ___

   Give any suggestions you may have which might benefit students enrolled in a poetry course.

   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
Poetry Test

Interpretation and Comprehension

The Man He Killed

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

I shot him dead because —
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

He thought he'd 'list, perhaps
Off-hand-like — just as I —
Was out of work — had sold his traps —
No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

—Thomas Hardy

1. What is the central idea of the poem?

2. Who is the speaker?

3. Discuss the tone of the poem.

4. Can this poem be interpreted literally, or does it have a symbolical meaning?

5. What is the central purpose of the poem?
Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
    We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
    Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
    And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
    Good-morning, and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich - yes, richer than a king,
    And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
    To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
    And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
    Went home and put a bullet through his head.

--Edwin Arlington Robinson

1. What is the proper emotional response to the situation presented in this poem?

2. How does the contrast in the last stanza contribute to the emotional effect of the poem?

3. Point out some similarities between this poem and "The Man He Killed" on page 1.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruind' choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the gloaming of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie;
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

--William Shakespeare

1. Paraphrase the poem.

2. Point out and explain any symbols.

3. Why are the comparisons between the speaker's state and these symbols effective?

The Grave of Love

I dug, beneath the cypress shade,
What well might seem an elfin's grave;
And every pledge in earth I laid,
That erst thy false affection gave.

I pressed them down the sod beneath;
I placed one mossy stone above;
And twined the rose's fading wreath
Around the sepulchre of love.
Frail as thy love, the flowers were dead, 
Ere yet the evening sun was set: 
But years shall see the cypress spread, 
Immutable as my regret.

—Thomas L. Peacock

1. What is the story implied by this poem?

2. How would you describe the speaker’s response to the situation?

3. What symbols does he use and what do they mean?

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, 
And sorry I could not travel both 
And be one traveler, long as I stood 
And looked down one as far as I could 
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair, 
And having perhaps the better claim, 
Because it was grassy and wanted wear; 
Though as for that the passing there 
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay 
In leaves no step had trodden black. 
Oh, I kept the first for another day! 
Yet knowing how way leads on to way, 
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh 
Somewhere ages and ages hence: 
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I — 
I took the one less traveled by, 
And that has made all the difference.

—Robert Frost

1. Interpret this poem both literally and symbolically.

2. Which interpretation is better? Why?
I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

—William Wordsworth

1. Why would one say that the experiences in this poem are sensitive?

2. What sensory details are particularly vivid?

3. What does the poet mean by "inward eye"?

4. What does the last stanza mean?
My Life Closed Twice

My life closed twice before its close;
   It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
   A third event to me.
So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
   As these that twice befell,
Parting is all we know of heaven,
   And all we need of hell.

--Emily Dickinson

1. Make at least two interpretations of this poem without going outside of the basic criteria.

2. What do lines 2-6 mean?

3. Describe the poet's voice.
Figures of Speech

"Figures of speech are of small consequence in themselves. Their value in poetry cannot be learned by merely cataloguing them. It is not enough to recognize a figure of speech when you see it. Figures of speech are used for a purpose; unless they fulfill that purpose they have no value. If they do not increase the suggestive power of a passage by throwing an unexpected light on its significance, by making it more vivid, by increasing its emotional appeal, or by adding clearness, force, or beauty, the poem is better off without them."

--Ralph Boas, An Introduction to the Study of Literature

"Figures of speech - 'metonymy,' 'synecdoche,' and other long-tailed monsters - are what bar the entrance of a simple human into the realm of poetry."

--Max Eastman, The Appreciation of Poetry

Possible significance:

1. Figurative language affords us imaginative pleasure.

2. Figures of speech are a way of bringing additional imagery into verse.

3. Figures of speech are a way of adding emotional intensity to otherwise merely informative statements and of conveying attitudes along with information.

4. Figures of speech are a means of concentration, a way of saying much in brief compass.

Identify each of the following quotations as literal or figurative. If figurative, explain what is being compared to what, and explain the appropriateness of the comparison.
1. O tenderly the haughty day
   Fills his blue urn with fire. - Emerson

2. It is with words as with sunbeams - the more they are condensed,
   the deeper they burn. - Robert Southey

3. Joy and Temperance and Repose
   Slam the door on the doctor's nose. - Anonymous

4. The pen is mightier than the sword. - Edward Bulwer-Lytton

5. Is this the face that launched a thousand ships? - Marlowe

6. Now half (of the departing guests) to the setting sun are gone,
   And half to the rising day. - Tennyson

7. I do not know whether my present poems are better than the
   earlier ones. But this is certain: they are much sadder and
   sweeter, like pain dipped in honey. - Heinrich Heine

8. Dorothy's eyes, with their long brown lashes, looked very
   much like her mother's. - Laetitia Johnson

9. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die. - Isaiah 22:13

10. The green lizard and the golden snake,
    Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake. - Shelley

11. Sky loured, and muttering and thunder, some sad drops
    Wept at completing of the mortal sin. - Milton

12. Autumn is a harvester "sitting careless on a granary floor." - Keats

13. Death stands above me, whispering low . . .
    - Walter Savage Landor

    The steed bit his master;
    How came this to pass?
    He heard the good pastor
    Cry, "All flesh is grass."
Haiku

(Japanese poetry)

Scattered petals lie
On rice-seedling waters:
bright is the starlit sky.

On a withered branch
a crow has settled -
autumn nightfall.

The tower high I climb.
There, on that fir-top
Sits a butterfly!

A morning glory!
And so-today! may seem
my own life-story.

Banked fires; night grows late -
thens comes a sound of rapping
at the gate.

Autumn, end of day;
"Shall I light a lamp now?"
someone comes to say.

The morning-glory
has twined 'round my well-rope,
Friend, give me a drink!

The harvest moon:
and no dark place to empty
the ash-tray-sпитtoon.
Part of our reaction to sounds and rhythms (combinations of sounds) requires no thought but occurs as the sounds are heard. Just a few bars of music may make us gay, wistful, or sad. In poetry we can call this immediate reaction the mood or TONE that the poetry excites.

Characterize the tone of this poem:

Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be good night.

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, thought, understood -
Then it will be - good night.

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never say good-night.

a. Discuss the validity of the idea that a light tone implies that the writing is of slight consequence.

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among;
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

a. Are the tones of the two stanzas identical, similar, or different? Characterize.

He stood, and heard the steeple
Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town
One, two, three, four, to market-place and people
It tossed them down.
Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour,
He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;
And then the clock collected in the tower
Its strength, and struck.

a. At a hanging in England the trap was sprung precisely at o'clock in the morning. Although the time is not mentioned in the poem, how has the writer related the sound effects of the poem to the precise time of the hanging?

b. Sometimes a sound pattern will convey to the reader an emotion similar to that indicated by the literal meaning of the words. This is called EMPATHY - a conscious sharing of another's inner experience. Why would you consider the last line of this poem a good or weak example of empathy?

c. Is the tone of the poem tragic? If not, how would you characterize it?

d. From the standpoint of sound, how effective a poem would you consider this to be?

Glory be to God for dappled things -
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He father-forth whose beauty is past change;
Praise him.

a. Each of us has a way of saying something. The rhythm of our speech, the tone, the sound pattern, and the manner and frequency of our pauses help to make up what could be called our voice. Even when excited, the man who normally drawls will probably retain some of the quality of his normal voice. The poet, too, has a voice, though this refers exclusively to his writing, not to the way he speaks privately. The reader should try to discover the POET'S VOICE by reading each poem aloud as many times as necessary to make audible the qualities of the particular poet. Then the total meaning of the poem will become increasingly clear.

b. How would you describe the poet's voice in the above poem? You might want to refer to a combination of words such as fast, slow, full, thin, rich, melodic, exuberant, serious, tragic.
In the following groups of lines there are omissions. Select the best line of those suggested from the standpoint of tone.

a. . . .
That every poet is a fool,
But you yourself may serve to show it,
That every fool is not a poet.

   (1) Do not resort to ridicule
   (2) Sir, I admit your general rule,
   (3) Sir Madman! Zut! It is no rule
   (4) The dunce is speaking from his stool

b. And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?

   (1) On England's pleasant pastures seen?

   (2) And was the holy Lamb of God
   (3) And were the Tiger and the Lamb
   (4) Or was the pitch of filth and slime
   (5) Then was the age of Golden Clime

c. If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,

   (1) From my lyre within the sky.

   (2) And finer notes would laughingly swell
   (3) While a bolder note than this might swell
   (4) While a lilting, loftier note might swell
   (5) While a more angelic note would swell

d. Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,

   (1) Brightening the Courts of Liza and of James!
   (2) Exalting th' thrones of Liza and of James!
   (3) That so did move Elizabeth and James!
   (4) That so did take Eliza, and our James!
Read and evaluate each poem on its own merits. Various types of questions and exercises appear, but you are invited to challenge any doctrinaire statement. Do not be misled by the directions of any phrasing toward the affirmative or the negative. Form your own judgments!

#1.
He who ascends to mountain tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the Sun of Glory glow,
And far beneath the Earth and Ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head.
And thus reward the toils which to these summits led.

a. Name some things that mountain tops could symbolize.
b. Why would you or would you not consider clouds and snow to be symbols rather than metaphors?
c. Point out the advantages or disadvantages of having all the images in the stanza relate to one scene.
d. Compare the use of Sun of Glory with Earth and Ocean as to their qualities as symbols.
e. Why did the gentleman not wear a hat if he knew that he was going mountain climbing?

#2.
Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and leal
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place,
O, to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

0'er fell and fountain sheen,
0'er moor and mountain green,
0'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!
Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place,
O, to abide in the desert with thee!

a. Discuss the wisdom of the writer's choice of a bird as the major symbol for his meaning.
b. Cuckoos, ostriches, owls, and robins are but some of the many types of birds. Conjecture as to which birdlike qualities the poet had in mind when he used his symbol.
c. What factors might enter into the reader's accepting some and excluding other qualities within the range of a particular symbol?
d. In the field of science, it is frequently held that the accepted theory should be the one that requires the fewest assumptions and satisfies the largest number of conditions. Discuss the possible truth in the idea that the best symbol would be the one that presents the reader with the largest number of appropriate qualities and the fewest inappropriate qualities.
e. How relevant is it to state that neither the poet nor his readers really know whether or not birds are happy?

#3. My girl, thou gazest much
   Upon the golden skies;
   Would I were heaven! I would behold
   Thee then with all mine eyes.

a. Conventionally, what would be symbolized by golden? Criticize the poet's use of golden.
b. Golden skies, at first glance, would seem to suggest daytime; all mine eyes seem to be stars at night. Yet, the eyes and the girl should be looking at each other at the same time. Interpret the pictures created by the poem in a way that would make good sense, if possible.
c. Compare this quatrains with:
   My girl, thou gazest much
   Upon my heavenly signs;
   Would I were Argus! I would behold
   Thee then with all mine eyes.

#4. "next to of course god america i
   love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh
   say can you see by the dawn's early my
   country itis of centuries come and go
   and are no more what of if we should worry
   in every language even deaf and dumb
   thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry
   by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
why talk of beauty what could be more beautiful
than these heroic happy dead
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
they did not stop to think they died instead
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

a. You know the rules. All references to Divinity, the beginning of
every line of poetry, America, and I should be capitalized. What
connotations are added because of the failure to use capitals according
to the rules? How does this constant use of small letters affect the
response to the capitalized words in the last line?
b. In a freshman composition course, the writer of the above poem would
be accused of having a run-on sentence. What extra meaning(s) is (are)
given to the poem because of the run-on sentence?
c. A major reason for avoiding run-ons is that they tend to confuse the
reader. What has the writer done to try to make his meaning clear
despite the absence of normal sentence structure?
d. Account for the word rapidly in the last line.
e. Conjecture as to what would happen if many poets saturated their poems
with a technique similar to that of this poem.
1. Be accurate and painstaking in observing and reporting. The poet must be as scientific in this part of the process as is a physicist.

2. Remember that the metaphor must be the fundamental carrier of meaning and that it be logical and faithfully accurate.

3. Your intended communication must be clear. Any poem may be interpreted in more than one way. But you must know what you mean to communicate and your accomplishment must be satisfactory to yourself.

4. The first function of a poem is to record experience; the sharing process and problems of form are complementary.

5. Keep the form of the poem flexible and fluid; therefore, until observation is complete, the metaphor is accurate and appropriate, and communication is clear.

6. Always remember: the image comes first, the thought, after. In a first or second draft, the thought may be merely indicated and may be clarified only as the image becomes clear. Both will then merge in the metaphoric carrier.

7. Figures of speech are never successful when they are merely ornamental, ingenious, or self-conscious. They must appear to be the normal way of expressing the perception and thought that is the life of poetry.
Criteria for Judging Interpretations of a Poem

1. A correct interpretation, if the poem is a successful one, must be able to account satisfactorily for any detail of the poem. If it is contradicted by any detail it is wrong. Of several interpretations, the best is that which most fully explains the details of the poem without itself being contradicted by any detail.

2. If more than one interpretation satisfactorily accounts for all the details of the poem, the best is that which is most economical, i.e., which relies on the fewest assumptions not grounded in the poem itself.

Using the above criteria interpret the following poems:

Where ships of purple gently toss
On seas of daffodil,
Fantastic sailors mingle,
And then - the wharf is still.

- Emily Dickinson

An Army Corps on the March

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a whip, and now an irregular volley.
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun 0 the dust-cover'd men,
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
With artillery interspersed 0 wheels rumble,
the horses sweet,
As the army corps advances.
The Night-March

With banners furled, and clarions mute,
An army passes in the night;
And beaming spears and helms salute
The dark with bright.

In silence deep the legions stream,
With open ranks, in order true;
Over boundless plains they stream and gleam —
No chief in view!

Afar, in twinkling distance lost,
(So legends tell) he lonely wends
And back through all that shining host
His mandate sends.

What is the difference between the two poems "Night-March" and "Army Corps"?

The Sick Rose

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimsom joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

Fitting the criteria to this poem, how many interpretations can you satisfactorily account for?