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SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

MODERN LANGUAGES

IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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1. The Aims of Modern Language Study and the Need for Reform in Teaching Methods

The increasing insistence that schools must provide an education which is suited to the needs of the modern world has led to a fresh appraisal of the value of the various subjects in the curriculum, and the claims of modern languages, as of other subjects, have come under critical scrutiny. Although few of the critics would go so far as to question whether any useful purpose is served by the study of modern languages at school, there are many who feel that the results commonly achieved are not commensurate with the time and the energy expended. It therefore seems necessary, on the one hand, to re-state the aims of modern language study, and, on the other, to consider whether the methods at present in use in schools are fully effective in achieving these aims.

The study of any foreign language, ancient or modern, has generally been recognized as yielding advantages of two broad types, which may be described as linguistic and cultural. On the linguistic side, through such activities as phonetic training, vocabulary study, and the study of speech forms and of sentence structure, the pupil acquires a more sensitive ear and a clearer enunciation, he gains in appreciation of the meaning of words, and he learns to make increasingly discriminating and effective use of them to convey his thought not only in the foreign language but also in his own. At the same time, by gaining direct access to the literature in which are expressed the thoughts and feelings of another people, he acquires a cultural resource of permanent value and a deeper understanding of humanity.

To these advantages, common to all language study, there is added in the case of modern languages the distinctive contribution of making possible direct contact with a living people whose thought and behaviour are an active force in present-day civilization. This contribution derives a special importance from conditions in the modern world: technical developments, especially in communication and transport, with their political and social consequences, have made it more than ever necessary for the nations to understand one another's outlook and culture and to appreciate their respective contributions to the common stock of civilization. Much, it is true, can be done towards this end through such subjects as history, geography, and science, but the master key to the understanding of a foreign people is undoubtedly a knowledge of its language. There are thus strong grounds for the inclusion of modern languages in the school curriculum, provided that the nature of their distinctive contribution is clearly kept in mind and that it determines the aims and methods of instruction. In the present memorandum an attempt has accordingly been made to help towards a clearer conception of the purpose of modern language teaching and to offer suggestions that may lead to an improvement, where necessary, in existing practice.

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The extent to which modern language study is fulfilling its proper function in schools at the present time can be measured only in relation to its aims. These may be briefly summarized as follows:—

(i.) to give the pupil a practical knowledge of the language sufficient to enable him to make direct personal contact with the foreign people: that is, to develop as rapidly and as fully as possible his ability to understand and to use the spoken language;

(ii.) to give the pupil access to the literature of another country by teaching him to read the foreign language with facility, and so to add to his cultural and recreational resources;

(iii.) to give the pupil an interest in the civilization of the country whose language he is learning by teaching him something of its geography and history, its traditions and customs, its achievements in science and the arts;

(iv.) to provide a general linguistic training which will give the pupil a surer appreciation of the value of words and help him to use his own language more effectively.

In spite of the admirable work done in certain schools, it must be admitted that present achievement, as a whole, falls considerably short of those aims. Many pupils leave school with ill-developed ability to understand the foreign language when it is spoken, with inadequate skill in using it either in speech or in writing, and with little facility in reading it. Moreover, their knowledge of the culture of the nation whose language they have been studying is often negligible.

This disappointing result is largely due to a misconception of aim and to a failure to appreciate that living languages should not be taught in the same way as dead languages. The main value of modern language study has been wrongly held to reside in mental discipline and training in formal grammar. As a consequence, proficiency in translation, knowledge of grammar, and written work have been over-emphasized. Too little attention has been paid in most schools to the fundamental aural and oral training without which a good command of a modern language is impossible; practice in the comprehension and use of the spoken language has generally been scanty; the reading programme has been too restricted, because texts have been regarded primarily as matter for translation; and insufficient interest has been taken in the civilization of the country concerned. Moreover, examination papers in modern languages, both internal and external, have been modelled too closely on those normally set in classics.

If modern languages are to fulfil their proper function in education, this misconception of aim must be corrected, faulty methods of instruction must be replaced, and the traditional type of course must make way for one better designed, not only to meet the needs of the modern world, but also to develop to the full the educational, cultural, and recreational resources of the subject.

11. Planning the Modern Language Course

Some indication of the lines which modern language teaching should follow has already been given in the Memorandum M. 143, issued by the Department in 1939. That document dealt, however, mainly with three-year courses. The present memorandum develops the same principles more fully and offers suggestions for the conduct of a course suitable for senior, as well as for junior, secondary schools.

Some of the many activities of language learning, such as ear and speech training, are fundamental and must be practised from the outset; others, for example translation, require a certain accumulation of knowledge and maturity of mind, and are therefore suitable only for later stages. Instruction should proceed by easy steps, beginning with the fundamental activities and introducing the new activities gradually, according to a well-planned scheme. Thus the pupils will not be faced with too many difficulties at once and will enjoy the feeling of secure achievement which comes from orderly and perceptible progress.

Such a course would be most profitably arranged in a series of stages. Each stage, with the probable exception of the first two, would be marked by the introduction of *one* new activity. The following arrangement might, for example, be adopted:

Stage 1: Ear training and pronunciation.
Acquisition of vocabulary.
Oral practice.
Stage 2: Oral reading.
Textual study.
Written work.
Stage 3: Silent reading.
Stage 4: Written free composition.
Stage 5: Formal translation into English.
Stage 6: Translation into the foreign language.
Stage 7: Study of literature.

Grammar has not been mentioned as a characteristic feature of any stage; it is an integral part of language learning and must not be treated as a separate activity. Similarly, no reference has been made to the cultural background. At all stages the study of the civilization of the country should be interwoven with the other activities of the course.

Once an activity is introduced, it becomes a permanent feature of the course; at each successive stage the activities already begun must be continued and developed, with appropriate modifications to suit the age and interests of the pupils.

The transition from one stage to another is determined not by time, but by attainment. Before breaking fresh ground, the teacher must always ensure that the pupils have a firm grasp of the latest activity and have thoroughly consolidated the work of the preceding stages.

The duration of any stage will depend on a variety of circumstances, such as the age and ability of the pupils, the particular language studied, and the number of periods devoted to it. The following notes are applicable, in the main, to a language started in the first year of a secondary course. Modifications made necessary by a later start are dealt with in Chapter IV.

Stage I might thus vary in length from a few weeks to a few months, according to the capacity of the pupils, the individual teacher's approach, and the language studied; it would probably be longer in the case of French than in the case of German or of Spanish. Oral reading, textual study, and written work (stage 2) would follow early in the first year. Silent reading (stage 3) should not be undertaken before the pupils have acquired reasonable proficiency in oral reading; some classes will be able to reach this stage during their first year.

The activities of stages 1, 2, and 3 may, therefore, all be introduced in the first year. Nevertheless, these activities, if they are properly developed, offer sufficient material to form a complete and useful course of study lasting three years. Teachers dealing with pupils of limited ability, or with those who are to leave school at the statutory leaving age, should carefully consider the advisability of confining themselves to the first three stages. A restricted course of this nature would aim at enabling the pupils:—

(i.) to understand the simple, everyday language as spoken deliberately by an educated native of the country;

(ii.) to read at sight, and with a good grasp of the meaning, straightforward modern prose in the foreign language;

(iii.) to speak the language to the extent of expressing simple ideas intelligibly and with accurate pronunciation;

(iv.) to express such ideas simply but correctly in writing;

(v.) to understand something of the customs and culture of the country concerned.

The addition of stages 4 and 5 would probably satisfy the needs of a considerable number of the pupils who complete a full secondary course. For such pupils the aims already stated would naturally remain fundamental. The course would, however, become fuller and more mature in content; for example, the pupils would now be expected to compose simple, continuous accounts of incidents taken from their own experience or from their reading. Through translation into their own language, they would also acquire greater appreciation of the value of words and increased powers of expression. There can be no doubt that pupils who cover the work of these five stages will enjoy a course of real educational benefit and will acquire a cultural and recreational resource of lasting worth.

The abler pupils would, however, make more rapid progress. Many of them would probably reach stage 5 by the end of the third year and would be ready in the following year for the work of stage 6. Only in exceptional circumstances should formal translation into the

foreign language be undertaken earlier than the fourth year. This does not, however, exclude the use of retranslation exercises based on material studied in class.

The systematic study of the country's literature (stage 7) should be the final activity of a full secondary course and should not be attempted before the fifth or sixth year. This work need not be restricted, however, to pupils who have passed through stage 6. Stage 7 undoubtedly offers the most satisfactory conclusion to a school course in a modern language. Pupils, therefore, who have time to cover more than the work of the first five stages, but who for various reasons do not undertake stage 6, should be allowed to proceed directly to stage 7.

NOTES ON THE WORK OF THE STAGES

Stage 1

The activities of this stage are so closely interrelated as to be almost inseparable; here, however, they are listed and discussed separately in order to show more clearly what should be the teacher's specific aims at this stage.

It is advisable that the pupils should begin the study of a modern language without a text-book. Progress in pronunciation, especially in French, will be hindered rather than helped if the pupils are allowed to see the conventional spelling of the words which they are learning. Moreover, it is an excellent training to make the learner depend on the ear alone for the recognition of the first words and phrases which he meets; ability to acquire vocabulary by ear is a most valuable faculty in the language student. This stage makes heavy demands on the teacher, but it is of fundamental importance and must on no account be passed over hurriedly. The quality of the work done at the start of the course is likely to have a decisive influence on the results achieved in later years.

Ear Training and Pronunciation

From the outset, the foreign language should be used as much as possible as a means of communication between teacher and class, and the pupils should be trained to recognize and carry out classroom instructions given by the teacher in the foreign language. Definite and systematic practice will have to be given in order to train the ear to distinguish between certain difficult sounds such as the French nasals. Similarly, practice in pronouncing these sounds will be required. Pronunciation in chorus should precede pronunciation by individual pupils. In polysyllabic words, attention should be paid to characteristic stress, and the pupils should learn about syllabification. As soon as possible, breath groups should become the normal unit of pronunciation drill.

A knowledge of phonetics is of undoubted value to the teacher of modern languages, and phonetic symbols, by reason of their clarity and conciseness, can be a useful aid to instruction. The pupils should not, however, be taught more about phonetic theory than is strictly necessary to secure accurate pronunciation. Knowledge of the

symbols—if symbols are used—need not go beyond the recognition of those representing sounds for which there is no satisfactory orthographical rendering.

Vocabulary

Both ear training and pronunciation exercises can be a means of providing the learner with vocabulary. They should therefore be framed in such a way as to introduce useful, everyday words and phrases which will directly facilitate the development of aural comprehension and of conversational ability. Nouns and verbs associated with common objects and activities offer the most suitable vocabulary practice for the earliest stage. Pictures can be used to good effect in this connection.

Oral Practice

The aim of oral practice at this stage is to give the pupil command of the words and phrases which he is adding to his vocabulary. The material will consist of greetings, easy questions and answers, and simple statements describing actions which the teacher or the pupils are carrying out. All these words, phrases, questions and answers should be learnt by heart and rendered verbatim on every occasion when they are required. In such exercises, simplicity is of the utmost importance in order that the pupils may acquire confidence in using the language. Simple rhymes and songs should be learnt.

Stage 2

The new activities of this stage centre largely on the text-book, which should now be brought into regular use. As learning to read and learning to spell are related processes, oral reading and spelling can be very appropriately introduced at the same time. The text-book will also constitute a valuable new source of vocabulary and will furnish much of the material for the oral practice and the written exercises by means of which the language forms are mastered.

Oral Reading

Since much of the pupil's knowledge of the language will have to be acquired from books, he must learn as quickly as possible to pronounce correctly what he sees in print. Facility in oral reading should, moreover, be regarded as an essential preliminary to silent reading. The primary aim of instruction in oral reading is therefore to ensure that the pupils associate the correct sounds with the conventional printed symbols. At the same time, oral reading provides useful practice in pronunciation and intonation.

The pupils should begin by learning to identify the written form of the words and phrases which they already recognize by ear. Once they have become familiar with the sound values of the alphabet, the pupils should be given practice in reading new words and should be trained to work out the pronunciation syllable by syllable. As soon as possible, reading by breath groups should become the normal procedure, and then attention should be paid not only to accurate pronunciation but also to intonation and expression. Appropriate use should be made of chorus work.

Textual Study

Textual study begins with the first lesson in oral reading, and for a short time it will amount to little more than oral reading. As soon as possible, however, the teacher should proceed to the detailed study of short prose texts which, supplemented by suitable exercises, will become the principal means by which the pupils will extend their knowledge of the language. The treatment of textual study is discussed more fully in chapter III, but it may be relevant to mention two points here. Textual study must at this stage be a predominantly oral activity, and all exercises must be mastered orally before they are done in writing. Further, though the primary aim of textual study is to give the pupil mastery of language forms, the content of the texts should be as interesting as possible and appropriate to the age of the pupils.

Written Work

Many pupils tend to forget words which they have learnt orally; the act of writing helps to impress them on their memory. For this reason, spelling practice should now be introduced, and the pupils should learn to write the words which are to become part of their active vocabulary. The first exercises might be transcriptions of expressions which they have learnt to use in speech and of language exercises which have been practised orally. These might be followed by simple dictation and retranslation exercises, reproducing the material studied. In addition, pupils might be encouraged to write simple sentences of their own composition, using the limited vocabulary at their disposal.

Activities of Preceding Stage

Oral practice will now include systematic exercises, based on the texts studied and specially designed to give the pupils mastery of vocabulary, of idiom, and of the essential grammar of the language. Oral reading will provide many opportunities for consolidating pronunciation, but systematic sound drill will still be necessary. Ear training exercises should be continued, and the teacher should endeavour to increase the range of the pupils' aural comprehension. Up to this point it will have been considered a sufficient achievement if the pupils have succeeded in recognizing by ear a number of set commands, questions, and sentences describing actions. Now the teacher should vary the familiar examples by introducing different verb forms and new words which have been recently learnt. Similarly, as the pupils extend their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, they can gradually depart from the set forms in which they have hitherto been obliged to answer questions. In this way a beginning can be made with freer conversation, which may now be based on texts studied or memorized. All variations from the original in question or answer must, however, be very slight, and they should on no account be attempted until the relevant grammatical points have been thoroughly taught and practised.

Stage 3

Silent Reading

From the outset, silent reading should be an enjoyable activity. The texts used for the purpose should be specially selected for the interest of their content. The importance of clear print, attractive lay-out, and good illustrations should not be overlooked.

At this stage, the passages chosen should be short and complete. Comprehension may be tested by means of questions about the subject matter, asked and answered in English; in addition, however, the pupils may occasionally be expected to show their understanding of what they have read by other means, such as by making drawings or performing certain actions in accordance with instructions given in the text. Translation should be resorted to only when there is no other satisfactory means of testing comprehension or of elucidating meaning.

Activities of Preceding Stages

Textual study will include oral reading, careful interpretation of the meaning of the text, memorization of vocabulary and of important constructions, study of the new grammatical points exemplified by the text, systematic oral and written exercises on those points, and conversation. The texts studied and the scope of the exercises should be graded in order to ensure steady progress. In addition to giving the oral practice connected with textual study, the teacher should now encourage more ambitious conversational effort and should begin a more systematic development of oral free composition, which is to be regarded as one of the most important activities of this stage. The pupils might, for example, attempt a brief oral summary in the foreign language of a simple story which they have read, or they might fill in the details of an outline supplied by the teacher. They should also have continued practice in writing simple sentences of their own composition. It is important, however, that in such exercises the pupils should not be expected to overstep the limits of the vocabulary and of the sentence structure which have already been thoroughly practised; attempts to go beyond what has been taught are a frequent source of error. In oral reading, recitation, and conversation, increasing importance should be attached to fluency, intonation, and expression. Progress in aural comprehension must be maintained by regular practice. The pupils will now be capable of more sustained listening effort, and their vocabulary of common words should be sufficiently wide to enable them to follow intelligently a passage of continuous prose read aloud by the teacher. Passages containing plenty of incident and simple concrete detail afford the most suitable material for this purpose.

Stage 4

Written Free Composition

The oral practice of the preceding stages, the writing of simple original sentences, and particularly the development of oral free composition will already have given the pupils some power of expression in the foreign language. The writing of continuous free composition is but one step further.

At first only a few connected sentences should be expected. For most pupils the best starting point will probably be some subject already treated in *oral* free composition or some story which they have read, but the abler pupils may be encouraged to write briefly on any topic they choose. All pupils, however, should be taught to write simple letters in the foreign language.

The main obstacle to successful composition is lack of vocabulary, and the teacher must see that all pupils are in possession of the key words before they begin. Care must be taken, in correcting the pupils' compositions, not to discourage free expression by severely penalizing minor errors.

ACTIVITIES OF PRECEDING STAGES

Textual study will continue to be the principal means by which the pupils can extend their knowledge of vocabulary, idiom, and grammar. Oral practice will still be an important adjunct of textual study; but it must not be forgotten that oral proficiency is an end in itself, and the introduction of written free composition must not be allowed to prevent the fullest development of free oral expression. Pupils should have ample practice in summarizing orally stories which they have read or heard, and they should be encouraged to speak of their own experiences. The questions used in testing comprehension will now be asked and answered more frequently in the foreign language, and the pupils should be trained to use it in giving simple definitions and in explaining the meanings of words and expressions. A share of the time should be allotted to silent reading.

Stage 5

TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

There has been a tendency in the past to give undue prominence in modern language study to translation into English, and it is no accident that this activity has been placed comparatively late in the course recommended. Though the use of English may at times be necessary in order to explain the meanings of words and phrases occurring in textual study, silent reading, and aural comprehension, nevertheless translation into English as a specific exercise should not be attempted before the pupils have sufficient maturity of mind and command of language to make it profitable.

Full benefit cannot be obtained from translation into English unless it is treated as a serious and exacting exercise in which great importance is attached to accurate interpretation and effective English expression. Passages for translation should therefore be short; a small amount well done is much more valuable than a large amount done superficially. The translation of verse should not be attempted at this stage.

ACTIVITIES OF PRECEDING STAGES

For many pupils this may be the final stage of their course. Amongst such pupils will be found not only those whose ability is too limited to permit of more advanced study of the language, but also a number of able pupils who, for various reasons, may require to devote

their main attention to other subjects. The content of the course must be suitably differentiated to meet the needs of the various groups. It is important that the nature and scope of the work at this stage should be such as to sustain the interest of the abler pupils.

Reading will remain for many pupils the most important aspect of language study, and it is precisely in reading that the teacher can best provide for individual tastes and capacities. In selecting texts, he must therefore bear in mind the varying aptitudes and interests of his pupils, and he should allow them considerable freedom of choice in their reading. An effort should be made to include works of literary merit and to encourage the pupils to read books which are truly characteristic of the national genius. The standard of difficulty, both in language and in thought, must, however, be carefully considered.

It is still essential to extend as widely as possible the pupils' knowledge of vocabulary, idiom, and grammar, and the careful study of texts, supplemented by suitable exercises, must therefore be diligently continued. Another aspect of textual study—interpretation—should, however, assume an ever-increasing importance as the pupils' knowledge of the language grows. Translation into English frequently leaves unappreciated some of the most significant and effective features of a text. The aim of interpretation is to bring out the full character of a text, and to foster the habit of thoughtful and critical reading which so greatly enhances the pleasure to be derived from literature. At this stage, interpretation will concern itself principally with a detailed study of the meaning. Attention should, however, be drawn to beauty of language and effectiveness of expression; form and style can be discussed with the more mature pupils. In this way interpretation can be made an excellent preparation for literary study, and can be of great benefit to those pupils who wish to proceed later to stage 7.

A considerable degree of oral proficiency should have resulted from the work of the earlier stages. In order to maintain this proficiency, the pupils should be encouraged to use the foreign language as a means of expressing their thoughts, of relating their experiences, and of talking about current events. The use of English in the testing of comprehension can be gradually reduced, although it would be unwise to abandon it altogether.

In order to maintain a good standard of aural comprehension, reading aloud and narration to the class must remain regular features of the work and must be supplemented in as many ways as possible. When, for example, the teacher is commenting on texts read and explaining the meanings of words, phrases, and figures of speech, he should make increasing use of the foreign language. He should endeavour, in particular, to train his pupils to understand not merely one speaker, but to follow the voices of two or more speakers in conversation or discussion. Ability to do so is essential to the enjoyment of a play in the foreign language and is of great advantage to the traveller abroad. Gramophone records and school broadcasts afford excellent practice in listening to the interplay of different voices, and the foreign assistant can give valuable help in this connection.

Stage 6

Formal Translation into the Foreign Language

Translation into the foreign language has, up to this stage, been limited to a verbatim reproduction of material studied in class. The pupils should now begin the formal translation of passages of English. Pupils who have had ample oral practice and have thus acquired facility in expressing themselves freely in a foreign language will have little difficulty in dealing with translation into that language, provided they are not expected to attempt it too early. To begin with, simple passages which can be translated almost at sight should be used, but the grading should be steep, and passages of normal idiomatic English should be introduced as soon as possible.

Activities of Preceding Stages

Translation into the foreign language offers excellent opportunities for the application of grammatical knowledge and for the discriminating use of words; it is not, however, to be regarded as a means of extending vocabulary nor of breaking new ground in grammar. As in the preceding stages, these ends are best served by textual study.

The other activities—interpretation, silent reading, oral practice, aural comprehension, and free composition—should be developed along lines appropriate to the pupils' growing maturity of mind and command of the language. As much of the work as possible should be conducted in the foreign tongue.

At this stage also, the exercise of translation into English will become increasingly rewarding. The pupils should be encouraged to examine words critically, to endeavour to appreciate subtle differences of meaning, and so to improve their command of English. There should be considerable variety in the type of passage chosen for translation: description, narrative, conversation, and drama should all be represented. The translation of verse might be undertaken occasionally.

Stage 7

Study of Literature

By the time they have reached this stage, the pupils will already have become acquainted with some of the representative works of the language. They should now read more systematically with a view to studying in broad outline the development of the country's literature. The reading programme should include the works of outstanding authors, in so far as these are suitable for the pupils concerned, and should illustrate the main literary movements. It is important that the pupils should gain their knowledge of literature mainly by reading and discussing the authors' writings; literary text-books or dictated notes should be regarded as supplementary and used exclusively for reference.

Activities of Preceding Stages

Although reading will necessarily occupy a large share of the time at this stage, the activities of preceding stages must not be

neglected. Two of these activities in particular, interpretation and free composition, are capable of considerable development. Interpretation has an important contribution to make to literary study; pupils should now be trained not only to interpret the author's exact meaning but also to consider questions of form and style and to judge independently the aesthetic qualities of the text which they are studying. In free composition, the range of subjects should be greatly widened and should include topics of a more abstract nature, provided these come within the pupils' experience.

III. Suggestions for carrying out the Course

Maintenance of Interest

In all successful teaching, maintenance of interest is a vital factor. The personal qualities of the teacher certainly count for much in this connection, but they cannot in themselves be a sufficient guarantee of success, unless the methods used are suitable.

It is one of the first duties of the teacher to secure, in every branch of the work, the active participation of all pupils. Oral activity is of particular importance in modern language learning and has a fine tonic influence on a class. Chorus work, if used judiciously, can be a very effective means of keeping the collective interest of a class, especially in connection with grammatical drill and pronunciation exercises.

The subject matter of reading texts should be such as to make a direct appeal to the pupils' interests. Every effort should also be made to relate the work of the classroom to the life of the foreign people. Pictures and photographs of the country should be displayed, and the pupils should have the opportunity of reading newspapers and periodicals in the foreign language. As soon as possible, they should be encouraged to enter into correspondence with children of the country whose language they are learning. (The correspondence is most likely to flourish, at least in its early stages, if each correspondent writes in his own language). School broadcasts are stimulating and generally attractive to the pupils.

Interest is often maintained without difficulty in the early stages of modern language study but may begin to flag noticeably in the third or fourth year. In many cases this flagging of interest is observed in pupils whose grasp of the fundamentals is, for some reason or other, imperfect, and who suffer from a feeling of insecurity which becomes ever more acute as the complexity of the study increases. It is accordingly one of the teacher's principal tasks to impart and maintain that feeling of confidence which is essential to continued interest. The gradual introduction throughout the course of new forms of activity helps to give a sense of progress which does much to stimulate the pupils to further effort, but other conditions must also be satisfied. The pace of the work must be carefully

regulated to suit ability; the teacher must also be firm and must insist that his pupils apply themselves diligently to the mastery of those basic forms, occurring in all languages, which can be learnt only by dint of persevering effort; finally, revision of all work covered must be constant and thorough.

The Cultural Aspects

At all stages, the teacher should aim at the fullest possible development of the cultural, as well as of the linguistic aspects of modern language study. Only in this way will he ensure that the pupils derive the full educational benefit from their modern language course.

Even the daily routine of purely linguistic work may be given a cultural value. Many words and idioms of everyday speech have origins and associations which, when explained, cast an interesting light on the development of the language and on the life and traditions of the people. This field is, however, very limited, and a broader cultural approach is desirable.

The life and customs of the foreign country offer a wealth of interesting material, which the teacher should use generously in order to supplement the purely linguistic activities. In the course of the ordinary classroom instruction, he will doubtless find many incidental opportunities of drawing upon his own experiences abroad, thus relating language learning to real life. But the importance of this branch of language study necessitates more than incidental treatment. Careful planning at all stages and co-operation with other departments in the school are called for. The aim should be to give the pupils, in addition to a sound grasp of the language, some knowledge of the history, geography, and social conditions of the foreign country, together with an appreciation of the nation's outstanding contributions to civilization in literature, science, music, and art. In all schools there should be available a number of texts selected primarily for the purpose of giving information on such topics, and these can be used to supplement the teacher's own specially devised lessons. At later stages the study of the foreign literature, including the critical appreciation of its great works, becomes one of the most valuable features of the modern language course. At all stages, however, reading can be made to subserve cultural ends, provided the texts are chosen with due regard to both language and content. School broadcasts often throw an interesting light on the customs and traditions of foreign countries. Films, pictures, and maps also have their part to play.

Oral Work

Oral practice is the fundamental activity of language learning. Besides being the only means of developing ability to speak a foreign language, it is unrivalled as a means of mastering grammar and so provides the best preparation for ultimate proficiency in writing the language. Oral practice can serve a number of different purposes and can take a variety of forms, the most important of which are discussed below.

Speech Training

Systematic training in the pronunciation of the basic sounds of the language is an indispensable part of the work of the earliest stage. Frequent revision is also necessary at subsequent stages, and drill in sounds should be given whenever the pupils show signs of slackness in pronunciation. Oral reading is, to a certain extent, an extension of sound drill, since its primary object is to ensure that the reader associates the correct sounds with the conventional printed symbols. It is an exercise which is of particular importance in the early stages of language study, but it is valuable at all stages on account of the excellent practice which it affords in pronunciation and intonation. Oral reading should not be treated casually, but should always receive deliberate attention. Extensive rapid oral reading by individual pupils is rarely beneficial; it is generally better to concentrate the attention on a short text and to aim at securing a good reading of it by the whole class. The passages used for textual study will probably offer suitable material for this exercise. The recitation of passages learnt by heart is an essential supplement to oral reading in the cultivation of careful and effective speech. The acting of short plays and scenes, however, encourages a more natural manner of speech than the formal recitation of prose or verse, and offers a particularly good opportunity for training in expression and intonation. In dramatic work, the use of properties must be kept to a minimum in order that there may be no waste of class time, and attention should be concentrated more on good speaking than on clever acting. Songs also make a useful contribution to oral practice, provided that the teacher insists on clear and accurate pronunciation of the words.

Aural Comprehension

Ability to understand what is said in the foreign language is no less important than ability to make oneself understood. Training in aural comprehension must therefore have a generous share of class-room time. A start can be made at the earliest stage, for pupils quickly learn to recognize and to carry out instructions given in the foreign language. The teacher should also speak and read aloud in the foreign language as often as possible. Wherever the opportunity offers, advantage should be taken of school broadcasts, of foreign films, and, in the case of senior pupils, of lectures delivered by foreign speakers.

Vocabulary and Grammar through Oral Practice

Vocabulary and grammar cannot be mastered without copious exercises, and it is important that these should be predominantly oral. A large part of the oral work will therefore consist of systematic exercises specially devised to give the pupils practice in the use of vocabulary and in the important grammatical constructions of the language. These exercises will generally be connected with textual study.

CONVERSATION

Conversational exercises are intended to give practice in the use of vocabulary which has already been learnt, and to show the pupils that their studies are related to real life; they can be successful only when the pupils are thoroughly familiar with the vocabulary required. At the earliest stage, such exercises will consist almost entirely of questions and answers which are learnt by heart and repeated verbatim each time they are used; they will concern themselves mainly with common objects, pictures, and classroom activities. The next step will probably be easy conversation, still mainly of the question and answer type, based on passages studied in class or learnt by heart. It is important, at this stage, that the questions should be so framed that the correct answers require little, if any, deviation from the words of the text. Increasing knowledge of grammar and vocabulary will bring with it greater range and flexibility of expression and will gradually give the teacher more freedom in the choice and wording of questions. By the later stages, pupils should be able to take part in a simple discussion in the foreign language, but it is always essential to keep the subject matter within the compass of their vocabulary. Foreign assistants can play a useful part in developing conversational powers, especially those of the older pupils.

Memorization

Learning by heart is the root of language study. Every time we speak, we make use of words and phrases which are stored in our memory, and the more richly we store it, the more fluent and effective our speech will be. Learning by heart is therefore not to be considered a mere incidental activity; it must be given a regular and prominent place in language teaching.

Children are by nature imitative, and full advantage should be taken of their readiness to repeat and to memorize what they hear. Ability to memorize improves, however, with practice; it is therefore important that learning by heart should be a constant activity of the course.

The first step should always be a close study of the meaning of the text to be memorized. The oral reading of the passage should then be carefully practised. If this is done thoroughly, the final memorization will present little difficulty. On no account should the younger pupils be expected to learn at home passages which have not been thoroughly prepared in class; the spadework of memorization must be done in school.

In selecting material for memorization, the teacher must take into account the age and interests of the pupils. Nothing so quickly gives girls and boys a distaste for modern language study as being expected to recite passages which they feel to be childish or pointless; it is therefore highly important that they should not be asked to learn by heart passages which make no appeal to them. For practical purposes, prose and dialogue are generally more useful than verse; many people find, however, that verse is more easily learnt and less readily forgotten. In dealing with short dramatic passages, it is a

good practice to require the whole class to memorize suitable roles before parts are allotted to individual pupils; in this way, every pupil will be enabled to play some role, and all will benefit more fully. If the singing of foreign songs is to have its full value, the words must be learnt by heart, at least in the early stages.

Vocabulary

A distinction has to be made between passive and active vocabulary. The former consists of words which have to be *recognized* when seen or heard, the latter of words which are likely to be *used* in speech or in writing.

Passive Vocabulary

The assimilation of passive vocabulary does not require specially devised exercises; it is largely a subconscious process in which both reading and listening play important parts. The pupils should be encouraged to read as widely as possible, and a large selection of suitable books should be available. Since the opportunities for listening to the foreign language are necessarily limited in this country, it is of special importance that the teacher should let pupils hear the foreign language as much as possible by speaking and reading aloud, and by judicious use of the gramophone and wireless.

Active Vocabulary

The acquisition of active vocabulary requires conscious effort. Not only must the words be understood; they must be readily available for use. To achieve this end, practice is essential. One of the most fruitful methods of acquiring active vocabulary is the memorization of passages in the foreign language, since it has the advantage of storing the mind with complete phrases, sentences, and idioms, and not merely with isolated words. The use of this method is of particular importance in the early stages. Textual study—the intensive examination of a passage with consideration of etymological and grammatical relationships, word-building, and the grouping of words round a central topic—offers another valuable means of acquiring vocabulary. On account of the importance of visual appeal to many pupils, the use of the blackboard and other visual aids must not be neglected. Provided supervision is adequate, the pupils may also keep notebooks in which to enter those new words which are to be added to their *active* vocabulary. Whatever the method employed for the acquisition of new words and phrases, active vocabulary cannot be mastered unless it is brought into frequent use by means of oral and written exercises.

Grammar

Knowledge of grammar has both a practical and a social value. It is valued for practical purposes because faulty grammar may result in ambiguity or in obscurity of meaning, for social reasons because ungrammatical speech shocks the educated listener and proclaims the speaker's lack of culture. The language learner must therefore gain a sufficient understanding of grammar to enable him to avoid

the twin pitfalls of obscurity and solecism. Mastery of the grammar of a language does not, however, of itself, constitute mastery of the language. A good knowledge of grammar is quite compatible with faulty pronunciation, laborious reading, and poor aural comprehension, and it may be built up on a vocabulary which is limited in range and usefulness. On the other hand, a sound knowledge of a language is not possible without a good working knowledge of its grammar. The teacher's problem is so to incorporate grammar in the scheme of instruction that it can be properly assimilated without dominating the course. This can be achieved if the study of grammar is not regarded as a separate activity to which a definite amount of time must be allocated but is interwoven with the whole texture of the course.

Many modern language teachers spend too much time in theoretical explanations which make undue demands on the reasoning powers of the pupils. Memorization, imitation, and practice, which are suitable activities for children, should be made the basis of grammatical study. The pupils must be encouraged to speak and write in imitation of models which they have had an opportunity of learning by heart and repeating frequently. There are, however, occasions when practice must be supplemented by theoretical explanations and there is nothing to be gained by avoiding them. In a well-planned course these occasions will present themselves more frequently in the later stages.

Normally, then, the first step towards mastery of a new grammatical point should be the study of basic examples which can serve as models. The next step is practice by means of suitable exercises. A good exercise must provide opportunity for imitation and development of the original examples; it must be so devised that the pupil's attention can be concentrated on one important point without being distracted by irrelevant difficulties, and it must be economical of time. As far as possible the exercises should be in the foreign language. Exercises necessitating translation from English do not, as a rule, offer very effective means of *learning* grammar.

It is also important to achieve a satisfactory ratio between oral and written exercises. Oral proficiency is one of the primary aims of the course, and that alone gives a major importance to oral practice. But there are other reasons why oral exercises should predominate. The frequent repetition essential to the mastery of speech forms is more easily provided by oral than by written exercises. Oral work is also more exhilarating; it makes for more interesting and lively lessons, and it produces quicker thought and greater readiness of speech than written exercises. Finally, a pupil who has achieved oral mastery of a construction can learn with little difficulty to write it correctly, but it is by no means certain that the converse is true. Written exercises are useful mainly as a supplement to oral practice, their chief purpose being to consolidate. They can be of great value in giving precision and permanence to the knowledge already acquired through oral exercises.

It would be foolish to attempt to conduct a course without a

plan, but rigid adherence to a logical grammatical scheme can be a great hindrance to language learning. Forms which are merely irregular do not present any real difficulty to children and may readily be committed to memory. The analysis of these forms may, however, demand greater maturity of mind than a young child possesses. While, therefore, it is always a good plan to proceed from the easy to the difficult, that is by no means the same thing as proceeding from the regular to the irregular. Teachers should base their grammatical instruction on texts written in *normal idiomatic language*, accompanied by suitable exercises, and not on texts which have been pruned of all irregularities. The texts should be carefully graded in difficulty and should be made up as far as possible of words and constructions of frequent occurrence in everyday speech. In the later stages, when the pupils possess the necessary maturity of mind and background of knowledge, they will probably be quite ready to take an intelligent interest in codifying according to a logical scheme the grammar which they have learnt in their earlier years.

Reading

In modern language study, reading ranks second in importance only to oral work, yet the most effective use is not always made of reading material. Texts in the foreign language can be treated in a variety of ways according to their nature, the teacher's aims, and the needs of the class. Certain texts, because of the beauty of their language, are appropriate for oral reading or recitation; others may be particularly suitable for translation into English; some texts, however, because of the usefulness of their vocabulary and the clarity with which they illustrate important language usages, may repay intensive study; those, on the other hand, which offer few linguistic difficulties, and which hold the reader's attention by a thrilling plot or by interesting information, are more suitable for rapid reading with no other aims than enjoyment of their content and passive assimilation of vocabulary. In drawing up a reading scheme, the teacher must therefore be careful to make a selection of texts which will enable him to give due attention to all these important aspects of language study, and he must ensure that each text is used for the purpose for which it is best suited. Accordingly, there can be no single stereotyped form of reading lesson; the method employed should vary according to the object in view.

It is not proposed to deal here with oral reading, which is properly a branch of oral work, nor with translation into English, which is an exercise with special aims and technique of its own. Those topics are treated elsewhere in this chapter under the appropriate headings. Apart from such specialized uses, reading matter may usefully be regarded as fulfilling two main functions. The first of these is the extension of the pupils' knowledge of the foreign language; it involves the intensive study of texts and for that reason it is referred to throughout this memorandum as "textual study." The second function is mainly recreational; it involves the rapid, silent reading, for the enjoyment of their content, of texts varying in length from short narrative passages

to complete literary works; in referring to this type of reading, the term used in this memorandum is "silent reading." These two functions are not mutually exclusive. In the course of recreational reading, the pupils can hardly fail to extend their knowledge of the foreign language, while silent reading may play a part in textual study. As a rule, however, texts which are suitable for one purpose will be less suitable for the other; texts for recreational reading must, for example, be much simpler than those used for textual study. In practice, therefore, textual study and silent recreational reading will generally be separate activities.

Textual Study

The aim of textual study is partly linguistic, partly aesthetic. In the earlier stages of the course the linguistic aspect will be dominant: the pupils will study the texts principally with a view to increasing their knowledge of the language. Later, the aesthetic aspect will assume greater importance: more attention will be devoted to an author's style and thought, and the way will thus be prepared for literary appreciation. The exact procedure to be adopted in textual study, especially in its aesthetic aspect, is a matter for the individual teacher to decide. It will not be amiss, however, in this connection, if teachers familiarize themselves with the technique of that characteristically French educational activity, "Lecture Expliquée." In the study of a text from the purely linguistic point of view, certain basic conditions must be fulfilled if success is to be achieved. The pupils must acquire a thorough understanding of the text: they must learn the meaning of every word, idiom, and construction which it contains. This does not necessarily involve a careful translation into English of the complete passage. Some teachers may prefer to dispense altogether with the mother tongue and to use the foreign language for all explanations; this practice has much to recommend it. With beginners, however, English may provide the surest and most convenient medium for explaining meanings, but in the later stages increasing use should be made of the foreign language for this purpose. The pupils should also practise the oral reading of the text in order that they may be able to pronounce the important words and phrases and to use them readily in speech. By means of oral exercises, supplemented by written work, the pupils should be given practice in using the new vocabulary and in applying their knowledge of the new constructions. It is of the utmost importance that this practice should be copious and thorough; otherwise the knowledge gained will quickly fade from the memory.

Silent Reading

One of the principal aims of modern language teaching should be to cultivate the habit of silent reading. It is an activity from which the pupil will derive much interest and enjoyment both in class and at home, and which will provide him with a valuable cultural and recreational resource after he has left school.

Great care must be taken to select texts which are within the capacity of the pupils, and which they can read with ease and enjoy-

ment. The subject matter must also be considered carefully; much harm can be done by imposing upon the pupils texts which do not make an appeal to their interests. While the language of the texts must be simple, on account of the pupils' limited experience, the subject matter must be appropriate to their age and mental development. The teacher must, however, exercise caution in one respect: it is not sufficient that the books should be written in the foreign language; they should, to some extent at least, be typical of the national culture and outlook. The reading programme should not confine itself to fiction; biography and travel should be included, especially when they throw light on the country's great men and their achievements, and books giving information about the life of the foreign people should be represented. The introduction of the literary masterpieces of the language must be made with discrimination; nothing is to be gained, and much may be lost, by introducing them prematurely. The pupils will derive benefit and enjoyment from such works only when they know the language sufficiently well to read them with ease, and when they have the necessary maturity of mind to appreciate their greatness.

In the early stages, short complete passages should be used; as the pupils gain proficiency, they will be able to read without loss of interest longer stories divided into chapters and finally full-length literary works. The silent reading of poetry seems to be suitable only for advanced pupils.

N.B.—Silent reading texts are *not* to be translated; comprehension should be tested by means of questions on content. In the early stages these questions may often be asked and answered in English, but, as the course proceeds, increasing use should be made of the foreign language for this purpose.

Free Composition

A primary aim of modern language teaching is to enable pupils to express their own ideas (orally and in writing) in the foreign language they are studying. Free composition must, therefore, have an important place in any general modern language course.

Composition need not be a difficult or ambitious exercise. Indeed, in its most elementary form—the framing in the foreign language of a simple statement or of an answer to a question—it can be introduced almost from the outset. At first, such statements or answers may well consist of only a few words. Nevertheless it is important that pupils should learn from the beginning to take such words and phrases as they already know and arrange them in sequence to express some idea of their own. As the pupils' knowledge of the language increases, they will be able to show more originality in the composition of these sentences. They must be taught, by means of numerous exercises, to manipulate with facility and accuracy the vocabulary and grammar which they have acquired. It is thus obvious that free composition, particularly in the early stages, must be linked very closely with both textual study and oral practice.

A language does not, however, consist of isolated sentences, and pupils must therefore learn to compose simple continuous prose.

At first they should do this orally in close imitation of models built up and discussed in class. Only after considerable oral practice of this sort should they proceed to similar exercises in writing. The first exercises, particularly those in writing, should be short, consisting of only a few connected sentences. Pupils who wish to write at greater length should be allowed to do so only if they can maintain reasonable accuracy.

Restriction inevitably becomes irksome and most pupils will feel a natural desire to develop their own ideas more fully. This tendency is to be encouraged, but it must be directed along sound lines. The pupils should therefore now receive instruction in the various methods of composing and combining sentences, in the construction of individual paragraphs, and finally in the linking together of paragraphs to form a continuous whole.

The subjects set for free composition should, in the initial stages, be very simple—e.g. the description of a picture, the summary of an easy story, the completion of a narrative, straightforward accounts of everyday events. Later, pupils can be asked to relate incidents drawn from their own experience, from their reading, and from their imagination. Finally, the range of subjects should be widened to include those of a more abstract nature. The composition of letters should be introduced early and practised regularly throughout the course.

It is very important that, before they attempt to write on any given subject, pupils should have at their command, or should be able to find in what they have read and studied, all the words, phrases, and constructions they are likely to require. At least in the earlier stages, recourse should be had to dictionaries only for purposes of verification.

As the course proceeds and more ambitious subjects are set, much greater demands will of necessity be made on the pupils' powers of expression. If they are to learn to express themselves freely and well, extensive reading becomes essential: it alone can give the wealth of ideas, width of vocabulary, and sense of style which make for successful writing.

Translation

The value of translation, whether into English or into the foreign language, lies in the training it provides in accurate interpretation and effective expression. To be a beneficial task, it must provoke thought and must exercise the pupils' powers of discrimination in the use of words.

Translation is not a suitable exercise for young children or beginners. The translator may have to deal with aesthetic and emotional distinctions, and he cannot be expected to do so unless he has some maturity of mind and a fund of experience upon which to draw; he must also have, particularly in verbal matters, some standards of comparison and a sense of values; in addition, he requires an adequate knowledge of the two languages concerned. Since the pupils will be able to express themselves effectively in their own language earlier than in the foreign one, translation into English should be introduced first. Translation into the foreign language

should not be attempted until the pupils have a vocabulary of foreign words wide enough to offer them a field for selection, and until the grammar of the language has ceased to be a major obstacle. This form of translation should therefore be reserved for a late stage of modern language study; it is a necessary accomplishment for those who wish to make a complete study of a foreign language, but it is by no means indispensable for all.

In dealing with reading, it has become a common practice to test comprehension by means of cursory literal translation into English. It is not essential to the pupil's understanding of the text that he should express its meaning in English; moreover, when all that is read is translated, the amount of reading accomplished is quite inadequate, and the development of reading facility is retarded. Further, translation can be a profitable exercise only when it is deliberate; if it is done cursorily, its benefits are lost. Even when carefully done, translation into English is not always a fully effective means of ensuring comprehension, for it often fails to elucidate important points in the text. Finally, if pupils once contract the habit of giving a rapid English rendering of everything they read or hear in the foreign language, it will be difficult to persuade them, when the time comes, to regard translation into English as an exacting task which calls for the application of their full linguistic powers. For these reasons, no translation into English should be done until it can be appropriately undertaken as a serious exercise. No specified time can be recommended for its introduction; the appropriate moment will be determined by the age, capacity, and attainment of the pupils concerned. It seems, however, improbable that translation into English as a formal exercise can be profitably undertaken by the great majority of pupils earlier than the third year of the secondary school, and it must then be regarded primarily as an exercise in effective expression and not as a means of testing comprehension. At all stages comprehension should normally be tested by carefully framed questions on the content of the text read.

Just as translation into English is primarily an exercise in effective *English* expression, so translation into the foreign language is an exercise in effective expression *in the foreign language*. Such a task obviously requires a considerable knowledge of the foreign language, and can be undertaken successfully only by pupils at an advanced stage of language study. In most Scottish schools translation into the foreign language is introduced much too early. Moreover, it is used mainly to provide exercises in grammar, a purpose for which it is not well suited. A twofold mistake is thus made: the pupils are attempting to use a tool which they cannot handle, and it is, in any case, the wrong tool for the job. No one can be surprised that the results are disappointing. Exercises in grammar—as distinct from explanations given by the teacher—should not involve the use of English; the pupils' powers of expression in the foreign language are best developed by means of oral practice and simple conversational exercises.

There is no intention to suggest that teachers should feel them-

selves debarred from all use of English in giving the meanings of words. In general, the easiest and surest way to explain the meaning of a new word or expression is to give its English equivalent. There is also no reason why the pupils should not learn the foreign equivalents of common English words and expressions, such as greetings and the conventional questions and answers of everyday conversation. A large amount of useful vocabulary can be acquired in this way. Similarly, retranslation from English of phrases and grammatical forms which have already been thoroughly practised in the foreign language may prove a useful means of consolidation.

The careful translation of a short passage is of more value than the superficial translation of a long one. The first step should be a careful study of the text; all obscurities of meaning must be clarified, and the teacher must make sure that the whole has been perfectly understood. In translation into the foreign language, grammatical difficulties should be discussed at the outset in order that attention will not later be diverted from the main business of expression. Vocabulary should then be carefully considered. All this will be done in class, the pupils taking part in the discussion; they may then be expected to do the final translation by themselves. After some time, when the pupils have had considerable practice in assisted translation and are aware of the requirements of a good rendering, they should be left sometimes to work out their translations independently in writing; their versions will be submitted to the teacher for criticism and eventual discussion in class. When this point has been reached, it will be legitimate to include translation questions in the written examination papers.

Foreign Assistants

Many Scottish schools already enjoy the services of a foreign assistant, and it is to be hoped that this advantage will eventually be extended to all schools in which a modern language is taught. The attention of teachers is drawn to the conditions of employment of foreign assistants, as set out in the Department's circular 69A.

The foreign assistant can help the teacher in many ways, and care must be taken to use his services to the best advantage. The principal teacher must see that the foreign assistant's work is carefully planned and properly co-ordinated with the normal work of the department. The assistant, on his part, must be ready to co-operate with the permanent staff and to devote the necessary time and thought to the careful preparation of the lessons for which he is to be responsible.

The foreign assistant's principal function is to give the pupils practice in understanding and using the foreign language. He should, in the words of the circular, "be employed to conduct small conversational groups consisting of pupils who have acquired such proficiency and facility in the foreign language as will enable them to take an active share in the conversation." He can speak with intimate knowledge of the ways of life of his own people, and he should encourage the pupils to ask him questions, always of course in the foreign language, about his country. He in turn can ask questions

about Scotland and its customs, particularly about the pupils' own locality, the answers being given in the foreign language. Such conversations, having their basis in reality and experience, are much more likely to be successful than discussions on imaginary topics. The foreign assistant might also give the pupils some practice in oral reading, supplying the model himself. With senior pupils he might usefully undertake the interpretation of a text.

To the modern language staff, the foreign assistant can be a useful consultant on the current usage of his language and on matters concerning his country.

The Library

In every school library, there should be a section devoted to modern languages. If the school has no general library, the modern languages books should be housed in a room readily accessible to staff and pupils. Here should be found the larger dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other works of reference in English and in the foreign language for the use of the staff and the senior pupils, and also a comprehensive selection of the standard literary works of the language. In addition, every teacher should have in his classroom, as well as shorter reference works, a variety of readers suitable for the classes he is teaching. These readers should be provided in batches of about half a dozen in order that they can be issued to individual pupils for private reading; they must consist of books which appeal to the pupils' interests. One or two periodicals might also be provided.

Ancillary Aids

Most teachers have at their command various ancillary aids which serve to enliven the classwork and lend point to the study of a modern language. Such aids fall naturally into two classes, those which appeal to the ear and those which appeal to the eye.

Among the former the most important is at present the wireless receiving set. School broadcasts give an opportunity of training pupils to listen carefully and accustom them to hearing different voices. They frequently introduce a wider range of ideas than would otherwise come within the scope of the normal instruction and therefore provide one of the most fruitful methods of enlarging the pupils' passive vocabulary. Further, they have the added charm of actuality and are an important factor in the maintenance of interest. Although a certain amount of preparation for the broadcasts may be useful, such preparation should not be over-done; otherwise the freshness of interest and the practice in the immediate understanding of the spoken language will be lost. It is more important that they should be followed up and incorporated in the normal class-work.

The gramophone, likewise, can be of very considerable use. It has the great advantage that a record may be played as often as desired and at any suitable time. It may, therefore, readily serve as a model for pronunciation, particularly for the learning by heart of some poem or prose passage.

As mentioned earlier, pictures, photographs, and maps are of great value in stimulating interest. It is not, however, necessary that the teacher should provide all the material; the pupils should be encouraged to co-operate.

Both the film projector and the epidiascope help to make the presentation of the cultural and geographical background of the people more vivid. The epidiascope has the undoubted advantage that the teacher's and pupils' own illustrative material can be used in it.

It must, however, be clearly understood that none of these aids can replace the normal class lesson; their role is supplementary.

Tests and Examinations

Written tests and examinations have exercised such a detrimental effect on modern language teaching that some consideration of this subject seems to be called for.

Internal tests and examinations should be a proper reflection of the class work, and all test questions should be of the same type as the normal class exercises with which the pupils are familiar. The nature of the course recommended in this memorandum will therefore entail important changes in the form of examinations, and certain aspects of language study hitherto neglected by examiners, notably oral proficiency and aural comprehension, will assume an important place.

The precise form taken by each examination will be determined by the stage of advancement of the pupils. At stage 1 of the course, for example, tests must of necessity be exclusively oral and aural. At stage 2 there would be a test of oral reading and of aural comprehension, and a short dictation would not be out of place. The answers to the questions set in the aural comprehension test would be done in writing, and there might also be a few written manipulative exercises, of the kind worked in class, to test mastery of some of the basic constructions. An examination of the work of stage 3 would have to include, as well as some or all of the foregoing questions, a test of the comprehension of a text read silently by the pupils, the answers to the questions being written for the most part in English, although some very simple answers might be written in the foreign language. Continuous written free composition would make its first appearance at stage 4, and translation into English would not be represented until stage 5. Translation into the foreign language would not appear in any examination before stage 6.

The examiner must always endeavour to maintain a balance between the different aspects of language study in order that the examination may not be unduly weighted in favour of any particular skill. At all stages an adequate share of examination time must be devoted to testing aural comprehension. Careful observation of the pupils' oral work throughout the session should enable teachers to make an accurate assessment of oral proficiency, to which an appropriate allocation of marks must be made.

IV. Organization

It must be recognized that some of the pupils even in senior secondary schools do not possess sufficient ability to justify the inclusion of a modern language in their course. Certain pupils, also, who have the necessary linguistic ability may require to forego the study of modern languages in order to devote their time to other subjects which are of more value to them. It is therefore inadvisable to make the study of a modern language obligatory. Nevertheless, a considerable number of pupils, both in junior and in senior secondary schools, are able to study modern languages with profit. Although many of these pupils will admittedly not spend more than three years in a secondary department, a properly conducted course in a modern language can be of undoubted benefit to them.

Many pupils should study only one foreign language throughout their school course. Of those who attempt more than one, all but those of high ability should begin only one language at a time. No pupil who has begun the study of one language should be allowed to begin a second unless he has been reasonably successful in the first.

The first language will normally be started in the first year of the secondary department. An earlier beginning is not likely to be advantageous unless really skilled teaching can be provided, and unless the class is likely to remain intact as a unit, without any influx of beginners, when it proceeds to the secondary department. Circumstances will determine at what point languages subsequent to the first are to be started.

It should not be taken for granted that the first modern language is to be French, nor that French is necessarily the best choice for pupils studying a single language. German, Spanish, and Italian are spoken by peoples who have a rich cultural heritage and who have made distinguished contributions to modern civilization. The study of any of those languages, alone or in conjunction with others, is of undoubted educational value, and school authorities should make them available, wherever possible, to those who wish to learn them. The claims of Russian to a place in the curriculum are now also generally recognized, but owing to its peculiar difficulties it does not seem to be a good choice for a first language. Pupils who show distinct linguistic ability might, however, be given the opportunity of taking up the study of Russian at a later point in their school course.

A common course of the type outlined earlier in this memorandum should be provided for all pupils studying the same language. Pupils who are to leave school at the statutory school leaving age should be taught on the same lines as the others. It would be a mistake, however, to expect all pupils to work through the course at the same speed, and different sections should on no account be required, for examination or any other purposes, to reach specified stages by specified dates.

At whatever point in the secondary course a modern language is started, the methods of teaching should be fundamentally the same as

in the case of a language begun in the first year. The order in which the stages are introduced should also be the same.

As a rule, however, a language begun later than the first year will be a second language, and the pupils concerned will be those of proved linguistic ability. Some acceleration of the rate at which the stages are overtaken is therefore to be expected. Nevertheless, the importance of oral proficiency in all modern language study makes it essential that, even in a more rapid course, ample time should be allowed for the work of the first stage.

In the case of a language which is studied by older pupils for a special, limited purpose (e.g. where pupils wish to acquire a reading knowledge of German to help them in science or where some of those studying art desire an acquaintance with Italian), the length and nature of the course must be modified in accordance with the end in view.

Five teaching periods of forty minutes' duration per week may be regarded as a minimum allowance of time in the first three years. It is of great importance, particularly in the early stages, that pupils should have a daily lesson.

Classes should be as small as possible, because of the difficulty of conducting oral work successfully with a large number of pupils.

The instruction of the beginners' classes should, wherever practicable, be in the hands of teachers of proved ability.

The rooms chosen for the teaching of modern languages should be those which are well deafened, both to ensure freedom from external noise and to prevent the disturbance of neighbouring classes by oral and dramatic work and singing.

A gramophone and a wireless set are essential items of equipment for modern language teaching. Each room should also have its stock of maps and foreign pictures. A piano should be readily accessible, and if the school has a film projector, lantern, or epidiascope, these should be made available to the teacher of modern languages. There must be an ample stock of readers for class use and a comprehensive departmental library of books for reference and home reading.

Headmasters should not expect examinations in modern languages to be necessarily of the same duration and nature as in other subjects. An appropriate amount of time must be devoted to the testing of aural comprehension, and, if necessary, of oral proficiency. It is recommended that no written test of attainment should be required of pupils in modern languages before the last term of the first year; until then, progress marks should be awarded solely for oral proficiency and aural comprehension.

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