

**PROJECTS IN ACTION ENGLISH:  
SOCIALIZED  
RECITATIONS IN COMPOSITION  
AND GRAMMAR**

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Projects in action English: socialized recitations in composition and grammar by Fannie O. Johansen

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# PROJECTS IN ACTION ENGLISH

SOCIALIZED RECITATIONS IN  
COMPOSITION AND GRAMMAR

BY

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STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH CLASSES  
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## FOREWORD

### COMPOSITION AS A TRAINING IN THOUGHT

English composition deals directly with the expression of thought which the student has, or which the teacher may help him to have.

Therefore it is the duty of the teacher to guide and direct the students through:

I. The period of oral preparation, which means, to discover what the students *think* that is worth saying.

II. The period of written composition, which is merely giving them an opportunity to say what they *think* is worth saying.

III. The period of correction, which helps them to say what they have to say correctly and effectively.

The language growth that counts comes from *within* and it is of great consequence that pupils be trained to *think* and speak effectively.

In order to train thought, in this way, for live composition work, students must deal with subject matter in which they have a vital interest, and about *which* they really have something to say.

Just here, let us consider the two *rich* fields of subject matter for the training of thought.

#### *I. The Direct Source*

Here, the students may use *their* fund of experience; their creative imagination; hosts of incidents and stories

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and their activity in society—however small this may be.

## II. *The Indirect Source*

This source sums up a knowledge that the pupil has or can obtain from class teaching or from general or specific reading.

The primary object of composition, whether it be oral or written, should be the expression of ideas which come from originality, spontaneity, freedom, and individuality.

Immediate expression of ideas, according to Dewey, is fatal to thinking. It is only when ideas are turned over and over, the reasons for retaining them at all selected, their value determined—that there is any *real* thinking.

The problem, then, is to direct the students' oral and written speech used for practical and social ends, so that gradually it shall become a "conscious tool of conveying knowledge and assisting thought."

The Rochester Course of Study gives a splendid illustration of the relation of psychology to composition when it reads in a climax paragraph as follows: "Fingers and tongues must be trained through much positive and persistent practice to respond quickly and accurately to the call of the mind." In the field of composition and language it is knowledge reduced to practice that counts.

According to McMurry the field of thought is never a level plain. It may rather be likened to a mountain range wherein the important ideas stand out as distinct mountain peaks. It is so in composition. The topic sentences are mountain peaks; the associated details and ideas are compared to the general mass of ranges grouped about the distinctive peaks.

When composition is used to train thought, it affords a more general preparation for later living and when a student has been trained to articulate thought, that is, when he knows definitely what he wishes to say and when he has been able to choose words that will compel the hearer to think of this alone,—“then he has formed habits of scrutinizing more carefully the grounds for his own belief and of watching more carefully the ordering of his ideas.”

FANNIE O. JOHANSEN.