

MODERN LANGUAGES IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS  
OF VIRGINIA

T H E S I S

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By

Clarence Luck Charlton

Cambria, Virginia

Williamsburg, Virginia

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## P R E F A C E

This study was made for the purpose of determining the status of modern foreign languages in the high schools of Virginia. Special attention has been given to enrollment, the relative popularity of the different languages and the prevalent methods of teaching. I have deemed it essential to include a brief historical sketch of modern language teaching in the United States and in the public schools of Virginia. A theoretical discussion of recognized methods of teaching modern languages is also given in order to clarify the methods practiced by Virginia teachers.

The data bearing directly upon the Virginia schools were obtained by means of questionnaires and personal visits to several of the largest schools where the work was actually seen in progress.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to those teachers whose co-operation has made the preparation of this thesis possible.

Very hearty thanks are also due two of my esteemed teachers, Professor Arthur G. Williams and Professor Carlos E. Castañeda, for many suggestions that have been of great value.

CLARENCE L. CHARLTON.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tradition has been the stumbling block in the history of modern language teaching in the United States. For generations, Latin and Greek were considered as the only languages worthy of a place in the curricula of the schools and colleges. Indeed, it was a bold step taken by the advocates of modern languages when they voiced a claim for French and German in the secondary schools and colleges. Thus the growth of modern foreign languages as a recognized part of the curricula of the schools was very slow.

They were first taught unofficially and in a very desultory manner in the colleges and universities. They were taught on the tutorial plan to those students who desired to take French or German. This state of affairs existed for more than half a century before modern languages received official recognition as a part of the curricula offered by these institutions. "During this long period of time we find that here and there, first in one section of the country and then in another, unofficial instruction in one or more of the foreign languages was offered." <sup>1</sup> The earliest record of such

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1. Castaneda, C. E. "Modern Language Instruction in American Colleges, 1779-1800." Catholic Educational Review, January, 1925.

instruction is found at Harvard as early as 1720.<sup>2</sup> To the College of William and Mary goes the honor of founding the first chair of modern languages in America, 1779.<sup>3</sup> These schools were the exceptions. Prior to 1779 "there were three foreign languages being unofficially taught: French in four, German in two and Spanish in one."<sup>4</sup> (Referring to the institutions of higher learning.)

Even after many schools had established Modern Language departments and made French or German requisite for entrance, a variety of complaints brought about a reaction that resulted in the courses being discontinued. The country was still under the direct influence of classicism and any attempt to deviate therefrom met with opposition; the theory of mental discipline was strictly believed in and the value of the modern languages as mental trainers was seriously doubted. This condition was prevalent in the early part of the last century, but by 1830 these courses were being reinstated.

However, it was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the full significance of modern languages in education came to be recognized and the modern language teacher was advanced to the professional rank.

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2. Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, XVII, 217.

3. Paul L. Ford, "Writings of Thomas Jefferson," IV, 427-8

4. Castaneda, C. E. Catholic Educational Review, January, 1925.

As late as 1876, we find great concern in the manner expressed in the following resolution: "that the modern languages be elevated from the merely tutorial position, which they have so often occupied, to a rank and dignity in our higher institutions of learning ...."<sup>1</sup> Modern languages were gradually coming to be recognized as essential in the education of a college graduate; they began to be required not only for graduation but for entrance. Thus the way was paved for French, German and Spanish into the high schools either as requirements or as electives.

It is not generally known that the predominating influence in this country was French until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Therefore, for many years French and German were the predominating foreign languages in the high schools, French preceding German. The growth of French was rapid after the fifties of the last century while the teaching of German was not very general until after the seventies. In the year 1886-87, nine per cent of all the students in the secondary schools of the United States were studying French.<sup>2</sup> The same report shows that eleven per cent were studying German, although its growth was not very rapid until after the seventies.

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1. Prof. Jones, "The Position of Modern Languages in Higher Education." National Education Association, 1876.  
2. U. S. Bureau of Education, "Report of the Commissioner," 1886-87.

High Schools were established in California under the school law of 1851. It was required that Spanish be taught in these schools, chiefly because of the great number of Spanish people living in that state. Although Spanish was taught as early as 1851, the first impetus to the introduction of Spanish came after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Yet it did not make much headway until the removal of German from a great number of the schools during the World War.

To-day, modern languages are not only a recognized part of the curricula of the Senior High School but also of the Junior High and a great many elementary schools. Thus, the student may take from four to six years in a language before entering college.

The same slow process was experienced in the attempt to make modern languages a part of the curricula of the secondary schools of Virginia. We find a full state system of public schools established under the new State Constitution of 1870. This provided only for a system of elementary schools. The high school developed later as the demand for instruction in the higher branches increased.

Interest in modern languages asserted itself immediately with the establishment of the first high schools. Referring to the City High Schools in the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1872, the recommendation is made

"that modern languages may well be introduced to a greater or less extent in these schools."<sup>1</sup> In summing up the progress of education in Virginia for the decade, 1870-80, the report states that French and German are found in many of the public schools.<sup>2</sup> District high schools in which modern languages should be taught by a specialist were first recommended in 1885.<sup>3</sup> A City Superintendent wrote in the same year, "Language-teaching is made a prominent feature in the schools, (in his city) and in no department has greater progress been made .... The course of study embraces a full course in French and German."<sup>4</sup>

Instruction in French and German seems to have developed simultaneously. Their introduction into the schools was very slow in some parts of the state. For this reason, modern language teaching was not general over the state of Virginia before 1890 or '95.

The important place that modern languages now have in the school curriculum is fully recognized and much is being done to elevate the study to a higher level. A nation-wide survey of modern language teaching is being made at the present time under the auspices of the American Council of Education and the Carnegie Corporation. This movement seeks

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1. Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Virginia, 1872.  
2. Ibid, 1880.  
3. Ibid, 1885, part 2.  
4. Ibid, 1885, part 3.

to determine whether the immediate objectives - the power to read, understand, speak and write the foreign languages - are being realized. The findings of this survey will be incorporated in a report along with important proposals for improvement in the study of modern foreign languages in this country.

This tremendous enterprise has influenced the writer in making a survey of the status of modern languages in the high schools of Virginia. The purpose of this study of modern language teaching in Virginia high schools is to determine:

1. The present enrollment in modern foreign language classes.
2. The organization and content of courses.
3. The length of courses offered and the relative popularity of the different languages.
4. The present methods of teaching the languages.
5. The extent to which the pupils are actually speaking the languages.
6. The growing interest in modern languages.

## RECOGNIZED METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Ever since the introduction of modern languages into the school curriculum, the question of methods has been a source of debate and experiment among teachers. Experience has demonstrated that the teaching of modern languages must differ from that of teaching dead languages because the aim in view is different. Reforms in method have been the result when the end in view was not attained. Thus it is seen that the aim or object in teaching a language determines the method and any consideration of method without a clearly established aim is futile.

Before taking up the discussion of methods in the high schools of Virginia, it would be well to define and summarize the different methods now in use throughout the United States. It will help to keep in mind the standard definition of each method and to note the variations as practiced in Virginia schools.

The purpose of language instruction "should be to effect that thorough mental discipline which is imparted by a study of grammar, idiom, and syntax, and so to develop that ready and accurate facility of ear, tongue, and eye that, all combined, will make the present and future use of the language, and progress therein, both possible and certain." <sup>1</sup> How then

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1. Wilkins, L. A. "Spanish in the High School," p. 65.  
The meaning might be clearer if "linguistic training"

have teachers in the United States attempted to attain this goal?

The question of methods in teaching modern languages in the schools of the United States was given no serious consideration until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The work of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association and the National Educational Association in 1898<sup>1</sup> marks the beginning of a united effort to determine the progress being made in the teaching of modern languages. Another such survey was made again in 1912.<sup>2</sup> This time, special emphasis was given to methods.

It cannot be said that any specific method has ever prevailed to the exclusion of another. There was a time, however, when every teacher of languages used the same method, modified only by the individuality of the teacher. When modern foreign languages were first introduced into the schools, it was but natural that the teachers should teach the language in the same manner that they had been taught the ancient languages. When we consider that "a decade ago scant attention was given to pedagogics"<sup>3</sup> (of languages), we may be assured that the methods were mostly traditional or antiquated.

It would be a task beyond the scope of this paper to introduce here all the proposed methods, and try to show how

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were substituted for "mental discipline" since linguistic training is the purpose of language instruction.

1. Report of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America.

these have been applied in the teaching of modern languages in the schools of the United States. As this paper is concerned with the teaching of modern languages in the State of Virginia, I shall limit the discussion of methods to those around which the history of modern language teaching in the United States has centered. For our purpose it suffices to say that "the history of modern-language teaching in the United States has revolved about three methods: the grammar-translation method, the natural method, and the direct method."<sup>2</sup>

The grammar-translation method is self explanatory. Briefly stated, this method may be defined as a study of rules, exceptions and paradigms which are studied primarily for purely grammatical reasons. The pupil is allowed to read only after he has completed this preliminary course of memory work; and then his reading is done with one end in view, to emphasize the grammatical principles already studied. Written and oral composition are secondary matters. Very little of the foreign literature is read; and then it must be

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2. Handschin, C. H. "The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States."

3. Handschin, C. H. "Methods of Teaching Modern Languages," p. 2.

4. Handschin, C. H. "The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States," p. 94.

carefully analyzed, before translation. The result is that the student loses all interest in the literature and develops a dislike for it. Reading loses its appeal and is never a source of inspiration or literary development. Composition work is simply a tool used to drill the student in the use of the inflections and rules of syntax.

This method may be characterized as the most antiquated of methods used in teaching languages. It marks the transfer of methods from the teaching of Latin and Greek to the modern languages. Modern ideals of education have greatly freshened and humanized this method. And, although it is still in vogue to some extent in the United States, it has been more or less vitalized.

In spite of the traditional origin of the grammar method, it has certain undisputed merits. It affords a high type of mental gymnastics in training the memory and the reasoning powers. "It trains the mnemonic faculty; in the reaction against the hard, unattractive schooling of our fathers modern pedagogical fashion has gone so far that the power of conscious acquisition and retention is hardly exercised at all; children go to college or out into life with an embryonic memory;- secondly, the careful study of grammatical rules and their nice application in translation and composition form one of the best possible exercises in close reasoning."<sup>1</sup> These are

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1. National Education Association. "Report of the Committee on College Entrance Requirements", pp. 84-85.

educational values that can not be questioned. One of the chief aims of the school is to afford practice in clear and logical thinking.

The chief criticism of the method is that it is unscientific and neglects some of the most important objects of foreign language study. Interest is absolutely essential to the successful pursuit of any course of study, especially among elementary and high school students. The two chief objections to the method are, that it violates this pedagogical principle and that students are not brought sufficiently into contact with the life, the ideas and customs of countries whose language they are studying.

This method survives today in the United States under the name of the "reading method."<sup>1</sup> When the pure grammar method was discredited, stress shifted to translation and grammar became of secondary importance. This reform came when it was realized that the real value of the language lay in the masterpieces of the literature of the language being studied. This change marks a decided step forward in the teaching of languages. It has the advantage of training one to read quickly. However, it is claimed that this can

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<sup>1</sup>The term "reading method" is used to signify the grammar-translation method.

be done even more rapidly by the direct method, at the same time giving the student a good pronunciation, a Sprachgefühl and some ability to express himself in the foreign tongue. This claim is not questioned for beginners in the lower grades; but even the reformers differ on this point when the language is begun at a later age.

The Reading Method as it is practiced today is almost directly opposed to the Grammar Method. The study of the languages is begun with the reading of easy stories and ends with a systematic study of grammar. The aim is to acquire a good pronunciation, to develop a vocabulary, and to acquire a feeling for the language as soon as possible. To this end, the reading is done aloud, special emphasis being placed upon correct pronunciation and expression. Translation is reduced to a minimum and is called for only when the expression makes it clear that the reader does not understand what he is reading. The Reading method affords abundant opportunity for practice in understanding the spoken language. The conversation is based upon stories that have been read. Questions may be asked on the text, following the outline of the stories. Complete summaries at the end, in English, will show whether the student has understood what he has read. Composition work is based upon material already studied in class. This assures a minimum of mistakes and serves to impress the principles in the mind of the student. Grammar is taught inductively.

It is introduced only in response to questions by the students when it is necessary to make clear what is being read. These facts of grammar are kept in mind and drilled upon both in conversation and composition from day to day. Although grammar is an incidental part of the instruction, it is supposed to be learned in this concrete way.

This method attracts the attention of the learner and arouses his interest in the language. Having acquired a large vocabulary and having learned many formal principles of the language, it is natural that the systematic study of grammar is taken up with interest.

Miss Clarahan conducted an experiment in the High School of the University of Missouri to test the relative success of the Grammar and the Reading methods in teaching first year German. She states that "as far as the aims regarding grammar, pronunciation, and reading are concerned, the reading method, as used, has proved decidedly the better. Moreover, from what has been said it is evident that the reading method has been more successful in solving at least two of the problems raised: How learn grammar and yet not give this study undue emphasis? How acquire an easy reading knowledge and yet not be superficial?"

"It may be concluded, then, that from the study and comparison of the two methods, that the reading method, in that it has more nearly realized the aims of the first year's

work in German and more successfully solved the problems connected with this work, is the better adapted for high-school use."<sup>1</sup>

The value of the reading method is clearly understood when we consider that reading "is the objective of this instruction in the United States. One hundred percent of the pupils studying these languages need to learn to read them."<sup>2</sup>

The growing charge against the grammar and reading methods was that students might study the language for years and be unable to speak or understand it. This reaction resulted in what is known as the natural method.

It was claimed that one must learn a language as he does his mother tongue. The reformers claimed that language must first make its appeal through the auditory sense rather than the visual. The method is necessarily one of conversation to develop the ability to speak and think in the language being studied. Reading and composition are not entirely neglected, but they must come after the pupil has learned to speak. Grammar must be subordinate to the practice of the spoken language.

The instruction consists of monologues by the teacher

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1. Clarahan, M. "An Experimental Study of Methods of Teaching High School German," University of Missouri Bulletin, Educational Series, Vol. 1, No. 6.
  2. Handschin, C. H. "Methods of Teaching Modern Languages." P. 5 (Introduction)

followed by an exchange of questions and answers between the pupils and the teacher. Written work is limited to the reproduction of phrases learned orally. Explanation of grammatical laws come only by way of supplement. It is claimed that the pupil will gradually assimilate grammatical forms, phrases and sentences which he will be able to reproduce without the interference of the mother tongue.

The natural method may be considered as traditional in the United States. It was declared by the Committee of Twelve to be unscientific and unnatural in that the grown-up does not learn a language as he acquires his mother tongue. The pupil learns the language by substituting sounds, and in a brief period of time. The child requires from eight to ten years of ceaseless imitation to gain a fair command of his own tongue. The one redeeming feature of the method is that it excites the enthusiasm of the pupils, stimulates and holds their attention. Its influence has caused a widespread application of practical features to language instruction never known before. It has resulted in the more scientific natural method that we know today as the Direct Method.

In order to understand the Direct Method in its modern development, it is necessary to review its origin and progress in school work.

The method was invented by a Frenchman, Francois Gouin. It is sometimes known as the Gouin Method. He referred to his

method as the "scientific manipulation of the maternal process."<sup>1</sup> His idea was that a language must be learned in the same way that one acquires his native speech, by speaking it.

To do this, he proceeded by what is known as the Series Method. This was a complete linguistic system of his own, which should include the entire vocabulary of the language. His lessons were arranged in general series on such topics as "school." The individual lessons were taken up with the various series on the various activities of the school. He proceeded in this manner until he exhausted the whole vocabulary of the language. The lessons were arranged according to the age of the pupils. "For imparting the vocabulary of a 12 year old child, 1,200 lessons of from 18 to 30 sentences each were found sufficient, and these he taught in 300 recitation hours. For imparting the vocabulary of an adult educated person Gouin used from 3,000 to 4,000 lessons, which he taught in from 800 to 900 recitation hours. To this vocabulary of the "objective" language Gouin added from 1,000 to 2000 lessons on figurative language, while the language for abstract processes was intermingled with the ordinary lessons from day to day."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Francois Gouin, "Une Premiere lecon en Francais."

2. Handschin, C. H. "The Teaching of Modern Languages," p. 98.

A paragraph from one of Gouin's Series lessons will serve to make this procedure clearer:

"The child washes his face and hands; the child goes to the washstand; he takes up the water pitcher; he pours water into the basin; and he places the jug on the washstand; he takes up the soap; he dips the soap into the water; he rubs his hands with the soap; and he washes his hands thoroughly, etc."

At the beginning of the conversation, the teacher explained the phrases that were to be used in the series. All phrases introduced during the course of conversation were to be written out at the end of the recitation. The series was a logical development, involving all the movements involved in a certain process. These series were studied and practiced until the pupil could reproduce them both orally and in writing without a mistake. The idea was not to have the pupil memorize each series but to have him practice until the foreign expressions really became a part of his vocabulary. He developed a "feeling" for the language. This was all done without the intervention of the mother tongue.

Gouin realized that the acquisition of a vocabulary was a practical problem of psychology. The attempt to have the pupil think in the foreign tongue through the medium of English was ridiculous in his sight. It was contrary to nature and therefore unscientific. Gouin's supreme aim was to reproduce the maternal process in all its essential parts and to elevate a simple, natural process to the height of an art.

His plan was psychologically and pedagogically correct. It can not be disputed that vocabulary arranged in a natural series is much easier to retain than that introduced through a vain jugglery of unrelated words and sentences.

And certainly it stimulates the enthusiasm and interest of the student. Any method must solve these problems or else it is doomed to failure. Although the method was highly fanciful and idealistic, it had a rapid growth for several years. As late as 1899, it held a prominent place in foreign language instruction. Its superiority to the more antiquated methods is evident, in that "it trains the memory; it fascinates the student and holds his attention more closely than any other mode of teaching now in vogue; it gives the pupil, in a reasonably short time, a ready command over a large, well-arranged, and well-digested vocabulary; it affords, through some of its conversational groups, an insight into the life of a foreign country."<sup>1</sup>

But not system is without its defects. On the side of vocabulary, interest, and logical arrangement the Gouin method was supreme. The chief criticism to which it is subject is, that "it affords but little opportunity for the exercise of judgment; that it entirely neglects in first years

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1. National Educational Association. "Report of the Committee on College Entrance Requirements," pp. 87-88.

the cultivation of the esthetic sense, and assigns literary study to a stage which high school pupils will scarcely ever reach. Moreover, its treatment of pronunciation is decidedly unsatisfactory; but this defect can probably be remedied without disturbing the rest of the scheme." We may add another very practical objection, namely, the lack of time required for the endless repetition necessary to accomplish the purpose of this method.

It is seen that the Gouin method has established itself as the most natural of the methods in use at that time. The defects of the system started certain reactions which resulted in a more scientific natural method that we know as the Direct Method.

Just what is the Direct Method and how does it differ from the natural method as practiced by Gouin and others? The Direct method has been defined as "the oral method without the use of the vernacular."<sup>1</sup> How then does it differ from the natural method?

This may be made clear by a summary of the principles of the method:

1. Emphasis is placed upon pronunciation, constructions, words and intonation through phonetic drill.
2. Grammar is taught by principle rather than by rule.

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1. Handschin, C. H. "Methods of Teaching Modern Languages," p. 54.

3. Reading must form the center of instruction, but carefully planned conversation with each lesson.

4. Composition is based upon material already mastered by hearing it and speaking it.

5. Auditory, motor and visual processes are instrumental in developing a "feeling for the language."

6. Realia devices used with beginners.

The direct method presupposes that the aim in foreign language study is to acquire a speaking knowledge and an intimate acquaintance with the language. To this end, it proceeds without the use of the mother tongue. To acquire the command of a foreign language is to acquire new language habits. It is psychologically unsound that the speech habits of the foreign language can be developed through the medium of the vernacular. New habits are formed only where there is a complete breaking-away from the old habit. It is upon this principle that the modern direct method bases its claim. It propounds the fact that the acquisition of a language is not only a problem of psychology but one of physiology.

Like all other methods introduced into the United States from Europe, the original direct method has been modified to meet the needs as they exist in our schools. What, then, is the direct method as it is commonly applied in the United States: Although it is given the name "direct", it is more or less a compromise between the indirect and the pure direct method because "it teaches formal grammar in the mother tongue

and uses translation from and, in some cases, into the foreign language. And then we find all gradations between this and the pure direct method.<sup>1</sup>"

The general introduction of the direct method into our schools has been slow for good and sufficient reasons. In the first place, the number of well-prepared teachers capable of using the method is comparatively small. Secondly, the time given to language study will not allow it. This element is generally ignored by the advocates of the Direct Method. Although the direct inductive process of learning may be very effective, it is naturally a very slow one and scientific procedure has to give way to meeting requirements for graduation or college entrance.

In brief, we may say that the direct method as applied in the schools of the United States, is an eclectic method, making use of all that is valuable in the other methods in order to train the various senses involved in learning a language. It proceeds on the hypothesis that there is no one best method to teach a language. In the words of President G. Stanley Hall, "the ideal for the teacher to strive toward is to know all methods well enough to use the best elements of all of them by turns, but to resist extremists who insist that there is only one best way and who

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1. Handschin, C. H. "Methods of Teaching Modern Languages," p. 54.

would tie them down to an inexorable and exclusive method, although an enthusiast in any one does often accomplish marvels."

The well-prepared teacher will introduce new procedures gradually, and only to the extent that his ability, conditions of the school, and time permit. The successful teacher is one "who realizes that a language is a habit-forming and not a fact subject, who perceives that the appeal must be made to all the senses and faculties involved in learning a language, and who because he knows that varying conditions require appropriately varying treatment, studies national and local needs . . . . ., analyzes his own strong and weak points and those of his pupils, collectively and individually, and then evolves his own method, which he applies with enthusiasm, resourcefulness, and good judgment." <sup>1</sup> And we might add here one who realizes that the student with his other studies and school interests has but a limited, entirely too limited, time to devote to the study of languages.

The reforms through which language teaching has passed have greatly improved the instruction even in the remote rural districts. Certain lasting benefits have come about that add attraction and interest to the course:

1. It has established a better quality of readings.
2. A more practical choice of exercises.
3. Simple grammatical rules which serve as the means to an end.

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1. Wilkins, L. A. "Spanish in the High Schools," p. 72

As a practical consideration, it may be said that the question of methods resolves itself into one question. Is the aim of modern language teaching single or composite? The answer to this question will determine the method or combination of methods to be used in obtaining the best results.

That the leading teachers of modern language feel the need of such an answer is evidenced by the undertaking just begun under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation and through the American Council of Education in the "Modern Foreign Language Study," whose main object is to determine the aim or aims and the best methods for accomplishing this purpose.

MODERN LANGUAGES IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS  
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The importance of studying the living foreign languages is recognized as never before among the high schools of Virginia. The enormous registration in modern language classes shows that students and schools have learned that a better understanding of other races and the development of the spirit of international amity are possible only through the media of languages, not mentioning the commercial and cultural values of these languages. The modern language department is becoming one of the strongest and largest departments in the school curriculum. Growing interest is being shown throughout the State; many schools have plans for the enlargement of the department for next year. Some schools are planning to offer another language; other are going to extend the course in the languages now offered. The increasing demand for language courses is responsible for this program of enlargement.

The enrollment in modern language classes, as compared with the total enrollment in thirty high schools investigated shows that 37.3 per cent of all the students are studying either French, Spanish or German. The largest

enrollment is in Spanish; French ranks second with a registration of about two-thirds of that in Spanish. The number of student studying German is very small, due in part possibly to the fact that it was taken out of the schools during the recent war; and also to the fact that Spanish has taken its place in those schools that offer more than one foreign language.

The tremendous undertaking of the American Council of Education and the Carnegie Corporation to determine the status of modern language teaching in the United States has been an impetus in this investigation of modern languages in the high schools of Virginia. Any such study would naturally seek to find out the languages that are being taught, the enrollment in modern language classes, the number of years each is being taught, the methods of instruction, the organization of language clubs, the use of realia for creating interest, the relative interest in the different languages and the attitude of the teachers with regard to the importance of methods being used. In order to obtain such information, questionnaires were sent to forty-four of the leading accredited senior high schools in all parts of the state. Thirty of the questionnaires were returned. In addition, a great deal of the information was obtained through personal observation and visits to the

larger schools where the work was actually seen in progress. The following report based upon the information received, though imperfect and incomplete in many respects is an attempt to portray the status of modern languages in the high schools of Virginia in the year 1925. While this is not an exhaustive study, including all the secondary schools, the results may be taken as typical of the general trend throughout the state. All the largest schools and many of the smaller ones were investigated. The enrollment in each of these schools varies from 90 to 2784 students.

This report represents a study of 15,244 high school students, 4,576 of whom are taking modern languages. Of these, 2,514 are studying Spanish, 1,960 are studying French and 102 are studying German; making a total of 37.3 per cent of all high school students in modern language classes.

The following table gives the number of years each language is taught and the number of schools offering such courses, the languages offered by the different schools, the percentage of students studying modern languages, the number of schools that offer French and Spanish, the number that offer only French, the number that offer French, Spanish and German; and the number that offer only Spanish:

Language	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	Stu- dents	Per cent. in m.l. classes	Sp. & Fr.		Fr., Sp., Only	
						Only	&	Fr.	Sp.
Spanish	8	3	2	2514	37.3	12	16	1	1
French	20	4	3	1960					
German			1	102					
Total	28	7	6	4576					

A four years' course in German. John Marshall High School at Richmond.

High Schools that offer both French and Spanish: Alexandria, Bedford, Charlottesville, Danville, John Marshall, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Maury, Newport News, Petersburg, Portsmouth, and Roanoke.

Only French: Berryville, Cape Charles, Christiansburg, Farmville, Fredericksburg, Hopewell, Lexington, Marion, Pulaski, Salem, Shoemaker, South Boston, Victoria, Winchester, Williamsburg, Woodstock.

Only Spanish: Harrisonburg High School.

High Schools that have a two years' course in Spanish: Alexandria, Bedford, Charlottesville, Danville, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Martinsville, and Petersburg.

A three years' course in Spanish: High Schools at Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Roanoke.

A four years' course in Spanish: John Marshall High School at Richmond, Newport News High School.

A two years' course in French: Alexandria, Bedford, Berryville, Cape Charles, Charlottesville, Christiansburg, Danville, Farmville, Hopewell, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Portsmouth, Petersburg, Pulaski, Roanoke, Salem, Shoemaker, Victoria, Woodstock and Williamsburg.

A three years' course in French: Fredericksburg, Marion, South Boston, Winchester.

A four years' course in French: John Marshall, Maury and Newport News.

French is the most generally taught of all the foreign languages. It is offered in twenty-nine out of the thirty schools investigated. A fact much to be deplored is that

German has been restored in only one high school. The result is that there are but 102 students taking German out of an enrollment of 15,244 high school students. Although Spanish has been in the schools only eight years, its popularity is evident when we consider that 54.7 per cent of all modern language students are enrolled in Spanish classes, in spite of the fact that only twelve schools out of the thirty offer it. Only one school that offers both French and Spanish reports an equal number of students studying both languages.<sup>1</sup> The Spanish department is the largest in the other eleven schools that offer it.

The rapid growth of modern language study has naturally brought with it improved methods and devices for creating interest and making the languages really live and mean something to the student. One of these is the language club where training is received that can not be given in the classroom. The schools that have such clubs are doing wonderful work; but as a general thing, this activity seems to be very much neglected. Only eleven schools have language clubs.<sup>2</sup> Ten of these render their programs in the foreign language, excepting the business procedure. The work of the other club is entirely

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1. Lynchburg.

2. Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, John Marshall, Lynchburg, Newport News, Portsmouth, Maury, Petersburg, Roanoke, South Boston, and Woodstock.

in English. Each type of club has its advantages and disadvantages. Preference should be largely determined by the purpose of the club. If information about the country and the people is more desirable than actual practice in the use of the language, possibly it is best to do the work in English. Probably the most profitable type of club for high school students is one in which biographical and critical studies are rendered in English while declamations, readings, songs, etc., are given in the foreign language. Parliamentary terminology is of little practical importance to the student and rather tends to intimidate; therefore, the consensus of opinion is that it should not be attempted with students of the secondary schools.

Another device for aural training is the phonograph. The proper use of it may prove very beneficial to students in the matter of pronunciation. Its use in Virginia is very limited. Five teachers report that they use it occasionally,<sup>1</sup> principally for music at the club meetings. Two of these teachers have discarded its use entirely for purposes of aural training because the results obtained did not pay for the time used.<sup>2</sup> The acquisition of a good pronunciation requires endless practice and repetition, and for this reason it is sometimes slighted. The painful monotony of constantly

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1. Fredericksburg, John Marshall, Lynchburg, Newport News, Portsmouth.

2. Charlottesville and South Boston.

repeating the same thing is wracking to the best of teachers and their accent and pronunciation must vary under such circumstances. The phonograph is constant and will repeat as often as is necessary without change. Its use, in order to be of value, must be systematic and regular. This will require a great deal of time, making its use more adaptable to the Junior High School than to the Senior High School.

The prevailing method of teaching pronunciation is pure imitation, the phonetic basis of the production of sound being largely ignored. Fifteen schools report that they make "some" use of practical phonetics and phonetic transcription. The use of phonetic symbols is limited entirely to the teaching of French. Possibly the almost exact phonetic nature of the Spanish language accounts for the purely imitative manner in which it is taught. But the sounds of no foreign language are so similar to the English sounds that they can be acquired by imitation alone. Imitation does not correct the organic difficulty which must be overcome in order to develop a pronunciation free from a decided English accent. The pronunciation of a foreign language involves new habits of speech which are not found in the English tongue and no amount of imitation will produce the desired effect unless the habits of the vocal organs are corrected.

The methods of instruction practiced by Virginia teachers

show that they are not extremists, insisting that they have at last struck upon the right way of teaching modern languages. Sixteen schools report that they use a Modified Direct method.<sup>1</sup> By this, they mean a method that gives a secondary place to the conversational side of instruction. Five schools use the grammar-translation method;<sup>2</sup> two, the direct method;<sup>3</sup> one, the eclectic method;<sup>4</sup> one, the grammar method;<sup>5</sup> and four, the conversational method.<sup>6</sup> Their explanation of the conversational and eclectic methods justifies their being classed as Modified Direct Methods.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that a pure direct method has no place in the Senior High School. Several reasons are stated for their position on this question:

1. The direct method is not conducive to accuracy, since the pupils in a short course fail to get a sufficient mastery of grammar.

2. There is not sufficient time to practice it and meet the state requirements.

3. Many teachers have not had sufficient training to enable them to use it skilfully.

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1. Bedford, Berryville, Charlottesville, Danville, Farmville, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Marion, Maury, Newport News, Portsmouth, Petersburg, Roanoke, South Boston, Williamsburg, Winchester.

2. Christiansburg, Cape Charles, Martinsville, Salem, Woodstock.

3. Harrisonburg and Hopewell.

4. John Marshall

5. Victoria.

6. Alexandria, Martinsville, Pulaski, Woodstock.

Few schools failed to indicate method.

4. Structural terminology is of little practical importance and often the pupils fail to grasp the essential point.

5. How can students understand grammatical principles given in the foreign tongue when they can not understand them in the vernacular?

6. The age of the high school student is unfavorable.

This attitude is more evident when we consider the texts that are being used with beginning classes. Only three teachers are using a direct method grammar in French, Fougeray's Mastery of French.<sup>1</sup> All others are using Fraser and Squair's New Complete French Grammar. One school uses the Berlitz method in Spanish.<sup>2</sup> All others are using Hills and Ford's Spanish Grammar. The text in German is that prescribed by the state course of study, Carrington and Holz-wath's German Composition and Joynes and Wesselhoeft's German Lesson Grammar. Two schools that used direct method grammars in French last year re-adopted the Fraser and Squair text this year.<sup>3</sup> All the schools supplement the study of grammar with texts especially arranged for oral work in forms and the principles of their use.

The reading courses are selected from the recommendations

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1. Charlottesville, Farmville, Marion.

2. Harrisonburg High School.

3. Fredericksburg and Williamsburg.

of the State Course of Study, beginning with very simple readers. Beginning with the third year, typical work from the standard authors who represent the best in the Classical, Romantic and Realistic periods form the major part of the reading course. The error of using texts that are too complicated for beginners seems to be fairly well avoided. But the mistake of attempting to read too many pages in a short course is too prevalent. The reading of 700 pages of varied material would ordinarily require a vocabulary of from 2000 to 3000 words. The probability of getting a sufficient mastery of grammar and acquiring a vocabulary of that extent in a two years' course is very doubtful. Such practice simply sacrifices thoroughness for quantity and accomplishes very little, yet the one aim of some teachers seems to be to cover a great mass of reading material.

There seems to be a concerted effort to have the students "feel" the purpose and the value of the foreign language by speaking it. Fifteen schools report that the foreign tongue is spoken 50 per cent of the time in the classroom.<sup>1</sup> Two schools set apart two days each week for oral practice. Another uses English only for the explanation of grammatical principles.<sup>2</sup> The use of the language is "practically none" in three other schools.<sup>3</sup> One teacher:

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1. Alexandria, Christiansburg, Danville, Farmville, Fredericksburg, John Marshall, Lexington, Lynchburg, Newport News, Maury, Petersburg, Roanoke, Woodstock, Winchester.
  2. Newport News
  3. Newport News, Berryville, Salem, Victoria.

writes that, "the language is used a great deal by the teacher but very little by the pupils." Certainly the purpose of oral work must at least be twofold: first, it is to give practice in correct hearing; secondly, it is to train and develop the power of expression. If the teacher has not both purposes in view, the time given to oral work should be limited to reading and dictation. Any system of oral work should be so directed that the students will do at least half the talking.

An interest antithesis relative to methods is noted in the views of two city teachers who are heads of modern language departments in their respective cities. Both are native teachers; one an enthusiastic advocate of the direct method; the other of less determined convictions. The former writes that "there is no word of English used except in translation. When the students go to college, it is at once observed that they have a speaking knowledge and the proper pronunciation of the language because they get it from a native who speaks it correctly." In the words of the other, "it is hard to tell what method is best. As head of the Department, I do not recommend any methods as I believe the best method is the one that the teacher can handle best. I do believe, however, that it is impossible to teach the language and a use of it too. As our students will have very little use for the spoken language, I believe that it is

better to teach the fundamentals well than to teach neither well."

The first view is typical of the native teacher who has had very little experience as a teacher. Possibly the pupils are trained in the use of a few formalities of speech and acquire a fair pronunciation of their limited vocabulary, but any method should seek to give training along at least four lines:

1. Grammatical training.
2. Reading ability.
3. Writing ability.
4. Speaking ability.

To develop efficiency in the first three of these aims requires the best there is in all methods. What chance has the pupil to acquire a command of the language and a good pronunciation within two or even four years? Granting that each pupil recites once each school day, at the end of nine months he will have talked from three to four hours. If he uses the language at each recitation, at the end of his high school course he will have spoken the language less than a day. Reasoning from this angle, which represents the facts in the case, the "speaking command" of the language lies far beyond the high school.

The smaller schools have a very serious handicap that the larger city schools do not have. Very few of the smaller schools can provide departmental teacher and modern language

teachers must carry a mixed schedule. This is one of the greatest handicaps to progressive teaching. It is impossible for a teacher to carry a mixed schedule and do the high type of work that might be done in a single language. But this is not the type of mixed schedule that prevails in those schools that offer only one foreign language. There, the instructor is not only a teacher of French or Spanish but possibly of History, Science or Mathematics. This one thing possibly accounts for more inefficient teaching of languages than even the lack of preparation on the part of the teacher. The solution of this problem will require more money and more teachers; but, surely, it affords a great opportunity for the improvement of language teaching in Virginia high schools. The day of 'one teacher for all subjects' is gone. This is the day of specialization in teaching as well as in other professions. And the teacher of a foreign language, above all others, should be a specialist. The teaching of foreign languages presents peculiar difficulties that are not found in the teaching of other subject. The teacher must not only know the language he is teaching but he must be skilful and tactful in his method of presentation, an art that can be developed only by constant practice and experience. This does not mean that the teaching of other subjects does not require skill and tact, but that the best linguistic results can not be expected when the teacher has a mixed schedule.

The writer has tried to give a sketch, limited though it may be, of the status and methods of teaching modern languages in this state. It is evident from the facts set forth that this is one of the most popular departments of the school curriculum. This popularity is based upon at least three sound educational ideas that insure continued effort towards the improvement of this department:

1. Business needs of the country as never before demand a knowledge of foreign languages.

2. The development of a spirit of international amity and understanding can be brought about only through the media of languages.

3. Only through the study of foreign languages can the great cultural wealth of their literature be brought to our students.

We have seen that the majority of teachers are not carried away by the innovation of theoretical extremists. A modified direct method is the prevailing method of instruction, thus students are given formal grammatical training as well as training in reading, writing and speaking the languages.

Also, we have seen that the majority of language students are studying Spanish in spite of the fact that French is much more generally taught. The Spanish department, in twelve schools that offer Spanish and French, has the greater number of students.

The immediate need is to strive to improve and develop the department in the smaller schools. Too many schools have only a two years' course. This accounts for many of the mixed schedules that teachers have to carry and the results in a very superficial type of work. It should be the ideal of every school to have a four years' course in the language that is offered.

The writer has tried to show the importance and growing interest in modern languages in Virginia schools. Certainly the attitude of the general public and the present needs of the department should inspire teachers of modern languages to greater effort and achievement. No opportunity for the improvement of the teaching of those languages which incorporate the culture of the race since the fall of the Roman Empire should be neglected. The contribution they have made and can make to our culture and civilization is inestimable and this influence is destined to be even greater in the future.

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