

what the pupil knows, measuring his progress and deficiencies, is, indeed, a part of teaching, and quite as essential a portion of it as the imparting of information. The true teacher should be constantly both developing the mind of his pupil, and ascertaining how rapidly and beneficially the process is going on. One of the defects of much of our teaching—and especially of the lecture system—is that this second part of the function of education is to a great degree lost from sight. An improvement in our examination system which will measure the grasp of a whole subject is, I believe, the most serious advance that can be made in American education today.

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL

FROM STRATFORD TO CLASSROOM

AFTER the class had read the *Merchant of Venice*, I asked, "Who is the main character, Shylock or Antonio?" In answering, the class divided itself into two groups, more than half favoring Shylock.

"Let us settle it," said one boy, and both factions went to work to search for proof. As an outgrowth of this character study, we decided to make a Shakespearean Book to contain a sketch of the main characters in the *Merchant of Venice* and in *Julius Cæsar*. (They had already asked to study the latter.)

In reviewing the plays to make this book, they grasped the importance of scenes they had read hurriedly before.

"Would you like to dramatize these scenes?" I asked.

"Yes, at the next meeting of our Literary Society," a girl replied.

While we were working on these scenes the question of the type of stage that Shakespeare knew came up. This caused the children to want to study the Shakespearean theatre.

The following is an account of how the work developed:

I. *Activities the Children Engaged In*

A. They made a Shakespearean Book containing the following:

1. A "Who's Who" in the Shakespearean World. This included sketches of the main characters in the *Merchant of Venice* and in *Julius Cæsar*. The pupils gave their opinions of the characters and supported them by facts grouped around the following outline:
 - a. What the character did.
 - b. What the character said.
 - c. What others said of the character.
 - d. How others treated the character.
2. Quotations bearing on each character.
 - a. Quotations that are familiar.
 - b. Quotations that show brilliant wit, common sense, humor or pathos, observation of nature, intense feeling, beauty of thought, or customs of the day.
3. A Shakespearean Dictionary. This included the few obsolete expressions found most frequently in both plays: *anon*, *marry*, *in sooth*, and *methinks*.
4. Pictures of Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, and of Shakespearean characters.

B. They dramatized the court scene in the *Merchant of Venice*.

1. They elected a manager who selected the characters, and appointed a committee who was responsible for the costuming and stage directing.
2. In order to better understand the customs of the day, they read the following:
 - a. Noyes—*Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*.
 - b. Jenks—*In Days of Shakespeare*.
 - c. Bennett—*Master Skylark*.
 - d. Rolfe—*The Boy Shakespeare*.
 - e. Black—*Judith Shakespeare*.
3. They met for rehearsals.

4. They presented the dramatization.
- C. They made a miniature Elizabethan theatre.
 1. They divided into two groups. One group did research work, while the other did the mechanical drawing and construction. The two groups had joint meetings to discuss problems arising, such as shape and size of the theatre.
 2. They used very light oak tag for construction, and grass for the thatched roof.
- D. They discussed the following problem questions which arose as the work progressed:
 1. Do you think Portia knew which casket contained her picture?
 2. Bassanio had promised Portia never to part with the ring. The doctor had rendered a great service to Bassanio and would accept nothing else in compensation. Was Bassanio justified in breaking his promise?
 3. Did your attitude toward Shylock change as you neared the end of the play?
 4. Did Shylock grieve more over the loss of his daughter or over the loss of his ducats?
 5. Do you feel more sympathy for Brutus or for Cæsar?
 6. What ideals are fostered in *Julius Cæsar*?

II. Information Gained

- A. They learned the following facts about the theatre:
 1. There were three great theatres in Shakespeare's time; namely, the *Rose*, the *Swan*, and the *Globe*.
 2. The theatres of this period were round or octagonal. The stage was elevated several feet above the pit. There were three parts to the stage: an inner stage, a middle stage, and an outer stage.
3. The pit was the space before the stage where the common people stood. This part of the theatre had no roof.
4. Wealthier people sat in the galleries. Dudes sat on the corner of the stage to show off their new suits; a possible similarity exists in the present-day theatre box.
- B. They learned that the plays were usually given in the afternoon or morning because they had poor means of lighting the stage. They also learned that we get our word *matinée* from the custom of giving the plays in the morning.
- C. They learned the following facts about the Shakespearean actors:
 1. Players formed themselves into companies.
 2. Men and boys took the rôles of women.
- D. They learned the following facts about Shakespeare:
 1. His home was at Stratford on the Avon river.
 2. He was an actor before he became a playwright.
 3. His plays are translated into the languages of all civilized nations.
- E. They learned the following facts about the *Merchant of Venice*:
 1. The *Merchant of Venice*, which had as its historical basis the hatred of the Jew, contained four plots: namely, the bond plot, the casket plot, the love affair of Jessica and Lorenzo, and the ring episode.
 2. The outstanding characters of the *Merchant of Venice* were: Shylock, Antonio, Portia, and Bassanio.
- F. They learned the following facts about mob psychology:
 1. A crowd usually waits for a leader.

2. The attention of a crowd is easily diverted, it being more inclined to act on impulse than after deliberate thinking.
- G. They learned that Shakespeare had superior ability in portraying human emotions.

III. Other Values Derived From the Unit

- A. Principles the children decided that *Julius Cæsar* illustrated.
 1. Civil responsibility rests upon us all.
 2. Our allegiances often seem to conflict, but in settling such problems we become stronger in character.
 3. There is danger in associating below one's level.
- B. Skills strengthened.
 1. They developed the following abilities in note taking:
 - a. Condensing material.
 - b. Organizing subject-matter in a logical order.
 2. They improved in the mechanics of writing by rewriting their character sketches until they were satisfied with:
 - a. the form of manuscript
 - b. the structure of the sentences
 - c. the use of punctuation marks and capitals.
 3. They improved in oral English by:
 - a. reading and interpreting rôles of different characters
 - b. reading aloud portions from reference books
 - c. speaking freely in class discussion.

IV. Pupil's Bibliography

Jenks—*In Days of Shakespeare*
 Noyes—*Tales of Mermaid Tavern*
 Bennett—*Master Skylark*
 Rolfe—*The Boy Shakespeare*
 Black—*Judith Shakespeare*

V. Teacher's Bibliography

Bolenius—*Teaching of Literature in Grammar Grades and Junior High School*
 Tisdell—*Studies in Literature*
 Smith—"Teaching Shakespeare in School"—*The English Journal*.
 Smith—"Local-Coloring Shakespeare"—*The Virginia Teacher*
 Thorndike—*Shakespeare's Theatre*.

RUTH FRETWELL LEWIS

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION AS A LAYMAN SEES IT

SOME of you will want to know who I am, and why I came over here to talk to you this afternoon. I am a member of the Business and Professional Women's Club, a working woman, and I was sent here with a message from other women of Norfolk who work down town in offices and stores. This Business and Professional Women's Club has nearly a hundred members, stenographers, secretaries, doctors, a lawyer, trained nurses, owners of tea rooms, and even an undertaker. The women in this club have worked, studied, and struggled to obtain whatever position they have in the business and professional world today, and it is because they believe they have a most helpful message for the girl who is still in the school room that I am before you now.

Their message is, stay in your school rooms as long as you can. It does not matter what sacrifice you or your parents have to make, finish your grammar school work, and then go on to high school, and college, if possible. Do not try to enter Life's battle badly equipped and poorly trained.

Today there are thousands of boys and girls right here in Norfolk, who, with more wonderful opportunities and privileges than the youth of any age or any country have ever known, stand and calmly debate as to whether it would not be better to throw them all way and go out into the world and seek a "job."

At a time when it is handed to them on a silver platter, they weigh an education against a job—a job that will bring them so much money each week, new dresses, hats, shoes, and a moving picture show now and then—and I don't blame any girl for thinking about these things and wanting them, because she will if she is normal and human. At times she will positively ache for

This address was made to pupils of the Ruffner Junior High School, Norfolk, by a member of the Education Committee of the Norfolk Business and Professional Women's Club.