

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

PROJECT ENGLISH - UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

EUGENE, OREGON 97403

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19 May 1965

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Mr. Peter Caws, Executive Associate
Carnegie Corporation of New York
589 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

CARNEGIE CORPORATION		
MAY 24 1965		
ANSWERED	RECORDED	FOR FILING

Dear Peter,

Jim Squire has told me that you and he have discussed informally the idea that Boris Ford and I developed last fall in Cleveland, and he reports that you would like to have a letter from me and one from Professor Ford outlining the project in a little more detail.

The idea arose during a discussion between Professor Ford and myself in which we were considering the problems of developing new English curricula, since Professor Ford had expressed an interest in organizing a British equivalent of the Curriculum Study Centers. Both of us were keenly aware that one of the principal difficulties obstructing such efforts is that there remain so many unanswered questions about the nature and content of the English curriculum and about the teaching of that curriculum at various levels of education. The "Basic Issues" conference in the late 1950's brought together a large number of highly qualified people to discuss this sort of problem, but they met for only a few days and could do no more than pose a large number of questions that urgently needed answering. The mere asking of these questions has, of course, been beneficial, for the questions have helped to crystalize dissatisfaction and make clear that the easy and obvious solutions to the difficulties of teaching English more effectively are usually deceptive or mistaken or both.

It seemed to Professor Ford and me, then, that a major contribution to the entire profession of English teaching, in both England and America, and to the young people whom we try to educate, might be possible if someone could organize an extended conference of first-rate people in England and the United States. The conference ought to last at least four weeks--preferably six--so that participants would have time to read, talk, reflect, form definite conclusions, and write these conclusions down in a detailed formal report with specific and concrete recommendations.

Mr. Peter Caws

-2-

19 May 1965

We thought that 25 or 30 people should be involved, at least a third of them from Great Britain where some extremely interesting work is being done in a number of the areas that relate to the teaching of English in the schools, work that is little known if at all to American teachers of English. Among the specialists to be invited would be ones representing various schools of literary analysis and criticism, of linguistics (historical, as well as both structural and transformational at a minimum), rhetoric, semantics, logic, and several of the behavioral sciences. In addition, a few people who have a detailed practical knowledge of the teaching of English at the elementary and secondary school levels should be included. I am thinking of such people as Randolph Quirk, David Holbrook, Denys Thompson, George Allen, David Daiches from England; and Northrop Fry, W. Nelson Francis, Father Walter Ong, Richard M. Ohmann, Wayne C. Booth, Wayne A. O'Neil, Roy Harvey Pearce, Reuben Brower, James R. Squire from this country and Canada.

The conference itself probably ought to be held in the United States, since it would be less expensive because of the likelihood of fewer people coming from England than from the United States. The site should be the campus of a leading university with excellent library facilities, located if possible in a part of the country where there is pleasant summer weather. The University of Washington at Seattle or the University of California at Berkeley come to mind.

We think the conference should be scheduled for the summer of 1966, though we have not progressed so far yet as to suggest specific dates.

Before such a conference can be arranged, a good deal of preliminary planning must of course take place. Professor Ford and I have therefore suggested to the National Association for the Teaching of English in Great Britain, and to the National Council of Teachers of English in this country, that a planning session be scheduled for the latter half of October somewhere in England this coming autumn. The Executive Committee of NCTE, at our meeting last week in Chicago, authorized sending three representatives of NCTE to England for this purpose next October, provided other arrangements have been worked out satisfactorily. (They will be Mr. Squire, Professor Albert H. Marckwardt, and possibly myself.) Mr. Squire has been authorized by the Executive Committee to communicate this plan to Dr. John H. Fisher of the Modern Language Association and urge that, if MLA is interested, that organization send up to three representatives at its expense to the meeting in England likewise, since the cooperation of MLA is essential to the success of the proposed conference. NATE would insure that the necessary British representatives would be available at the meeting.

Why not N.E.
much cheaper.

Mr. Peter Caws

-3-

19 May 1965

From such a meeting, which I think need not last longer than a week, should emerge a detailed proposal and plan for the big conference the following summer. We would hope to submit a request to the Carnegie Corporation, coming jointly from NATE, NCTE, and (I trust) MLA, seeking a grant to support the 1966 conference. The cost of the planning meeting next fall would be borne by the three organizations as evidence of seriousness of intent.

How much the large conference would cost is uncertain at present, since it would depend on the length of time finally decided on, and on the number of participants. Certainly the participants will have to receive honoraria to compensate them for relinquishing opportunities for other summer employment. And of course there will be travel and living expenses. At a rough guess, I should say that the cost could vary anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

I will be happy to elaborate on any of these points mentioned above or to answer any questions that you may have. I think that such a conference is urgently needed and that from it would flow enormous benefits for both British and American education, primarily in the pre-college years but certainly with important implications that would favorably affect a great deal of undergraduate education, at least in this country and probably in many of the newer universities of Great Britain.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Albert R. Kitzhaber

cc: Dr. James R. Squire
Dr. John H. Fisher
Professor Boris Ford
Mr. George C. Allen