



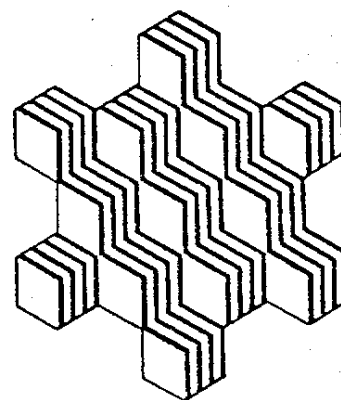
Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère
de l'Éducation

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SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE 522



NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE 522

**DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT PÉDAGOGIQUE
DIRECTION DE LA FORMATION GÉNÉRALE**

**Approuvé par les Comités catholique et protestant
du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation
les 28, 29 juin et 6 juillet 1982.**

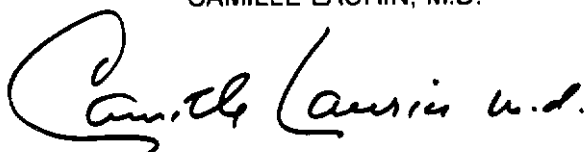
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I am pleased to confirm that the program in North American Literature for Secondary Schools, issued in conformity with Section 3 of the Regulation Respecting the Basis of Secondary School Organization, has received the approval of the Confessional Committees of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and constitutes a program which I authorize for use in all schools beginning July 1, 1983.

CAMILLE LAURIN, M.D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Camille Laurin M.D." in a cursive script. The signature is positioned below the printed name and above the title.

Minister of Education

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PREFACE

The ministère de l'Éducation is appreciative of the work that has been done by the North American Literature 522 Committee in researching and preparing this program over a two year period.

In addition, the ministère wishes to thank those who participated in consultation with the committee at various stages of this its endeavours, particularly:

- the North American Literature 522 teachers and English Department Heads throughout Québec who responded to the questionnaire;
- the members of the Secondary Language Arts Committee;
- the delegates to the Language Arts Conferences in May who participated in workshops on North American Literature 522.

I. INTRODUCTION

Relation to the Former North American Literature Course

This North American Literature 522 program replaces that outlined in document 16-3227A.¹ The orientation of this program has been derived in large part from the evaluation by a research committee of data received from a formal needs analysis in the form of a questionnaire about the former course (as described in 1975) forwarded to all schools offering that course in 1978-79.

As a result in part of the findings of this study, the orientation, as well as the format, of this program is considerably different from that of the former.

For example, the former course listed five general purposes for North American Literature 522, and four equally general expectations for the student, none of which reflects a specific focus on North American literature as such; this new program has a global objective and both general and specific objectives reflecting a central focus on North American literature.

Moreover, the former course is outlined in terms of seven units, most of a generic nature, the requirements for and characteristics of which are specified in terms of the types and number of works to be studied rather than in terms of concepts to be examined; the new program relies on the specificity of the objectives to indicate the concepts to be addressed, and leaves the organization of content and the selection of materials to the teacher to determine. However, suggestions for modes of organization and appropriate materials are provided in the guide which accompanies the new program.²

This new program, like its predecessor, is intended as a one-year option for students who are also taking the compulsory Secondary English Language Arts program at the secondary 4 or 5 level.

Relation to the Secondary English Language Arts I-V Program

The North American Literature 522 program is intended to complement the Secondary English Language Arts I-V program in that students will bring to their study of selected works of North American literature, and to other language activities related to that study, a growing awareness of the communication process as they would apply it to those works and related activities. It is assumed that the teachers of North American Literature 522, who generally speaking are also secondary English language arts teachers, will be thoroughly familiar with the objectives of that program, and will address them, at least indirectly or as intermediate objectives, whenever students are in communication contexts in order to investigate the concepts which are the direct focus of the North American Literature program.

Background

An optional course in North American Literature has been available to students in the Protestant schools of Québec since September 1952. As the outline provided in the *Handbook for Teachers* indicates, the course was originally "planned to give recognition wherever possible to Canadian writers and to foster an appreciation of literature that depicts the scenery, customs, and ways of life on this continent."³ Such a course provided an appropriate complement to the compulsory English program, which at that time tended to stress the study of British authors in its literature component.

In 1971, a new course in North American Literature 522 was authorized by the ministère de l'Éducation for students at the secondary 4 and 5 levels. This course has been offered as an option since that time.

1. *A Teacher's Guide for Secondary Language Arts and Annotated List of Texts*, 16-3227A (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 1975), pp. 56-66; hereafter designated *Annotated List*.

2. Authorized and recommended material are also listed in the *Annotated List*.

3. *Handbook for Teachers in the Protestant Schools of the Province of Québec* (Québec: Department of Education, 1965), p. 55.

In September 1979, a research committee was established by the ministère de l'Éducation to study the existing course and make recommendations. As mentioned earlier, that committee developed its recommendations in large part on the basis of the findings from a detailed questionnaire sent to teachers of North American literature.

4. the need for more explicit guidance and detailed resources to help teachers organize and adapt course content according to the needs and limitations of their local milieu.

The new program, together with the guide, has been developed to address these needs.

Formal Needs Analysis

The value of offering this course has been confirmed over the years. Both teachers and students alike see that North American literature should have "a significant place in the curriculum" (as stated in the 1975 guidelines). Since 1952, the importance of such a course in offering to students an opportunity to explore and to develop an appreciation of their literary and cultural heritage has remained fundamental.

For this reason and because the previous outline was basically a list of materials, a questionnaire was designed, not to survey the purpose of the course, but rather to address the question of what further guidance might be offered concerning the organization, selection and utilization of the content of the course.

Responses to the questionnaire on North American Literature 522 were received from thirty-four (34) schools, representing thirteen (13) school boards and several private institutions, in various parts of Québec. An analysis of these responses together with a critical examination of the former course outline identified the following needs:

1. the need for expansion of the orientation of the course to allow for examination of the literature in relation to its North American context, while at the same time preserving the implicit aim of the former course to study North American literature as literature.
2. the need for a re-examination of not only the selection of materials and the method of grouping them, but also the basic premise of building a course on the foundation of a materials list rather than a set of concepts.
3. the need to provide more opportunities for students to become widely acquainted with North American literature generally and Canadian literature particularly.

II. RATIONALE

Values

The North American Literature 522 program reflects intellectual, aesthetic, and socio-cultural values as expressed in *The Schools of Québec*. By introducing students to the works of major North American writers, by encouraging a wide reading by students of North American literature, both within and beyond the classroom, and by promoting its study within the larger framework of world literature, the program fosters the development of aesthetic taste and discrimination, and of a critical sense that transcends narrow parochialism.

At the same time, by encouraging students to examine works of North American literature within appropriate historical, cultural and geographical contexts, and in relation to literary movements as they have developed in North America, and by promoting the study of literary themes which have emerged in that literature, the program fosters the understanding and acceptance of the diversity of social and cultural communities within the North American mosaic, and the recognition of the uniqueness of North American society as a whole, and of one's own place, regionally and nationally, within that society.

Foundation

The importance of teaching literature has always been recognized. It allows students to understand and appreciate how the language of literature works, how an author builds a world of words which stands on its own. The author's experience becomes a piece of virtual life which, however personal and individual it appears, reaches out to all readers in its grasp of significant factors of human experience. Students not only learn to appreciate their language but begin to explore their personal worlds, their feelings and their attitudes in the more global context of human experience. The relevance of literature is that much greater for students if it reflects their environment and their culture; for Quebec students, the exploration of their time and place within the context of North America.

There are two complementary approaches to literature which provide the foundation for these explorations of North American literature. Literary criticism — the interpretation and evaluation of works of literature according to established criteria — involves both an intrinsic and an extrinsic approach. The emphasis on one or the other of these approaches would be determined by the work itself, its author, its referent, and the degree of external influence on the writer and the work.

On the one hand, then, the literature of North America must be read and interpreted intrinsically, through response to and analysis of the text itself, and judged beyond itself only against the difficult — and elusive — criteria that mark some works as great and enduring regardless of their country or time of origin or of the particular languages in which they are composed. Such an approach to North American literature is fostered in the program through the encouragement of a wide and varied reading, as well as through exposure to a representative body of work by North American writers who seem to have stood the test of time. This sense of the universality and integrity of literature can also be developed as students are encouraged to see links between the literature of Canada and the United States, and between North American literature and that of other continents at various times.

On the other hand, the literature of North America must be recognized as being bound to the specific society from which it has sprung, or to the time and place in which it was conceived and composed by a particular author. Literary movements developed elsewhere but transported to and transformed on this continent have influenced some writers and been influenced by them. Universal themes, ideas and values have been reconstructed and restated in the context of the North American experience. And the particular historical developments and geographical realities that have both shaped North American society generally and produced its regional differences have had a strong influence on some writers and their works. Such an extrinsic approach to the study of North American literature allows students to confirm its discrete character within a universal framework.

The equally important need for these two complementary approaches to literature provides the foundation for the North American literature program and its manifestation in the **global objective** for it:

The North American Literature 522 course will lead students to value North American literature as a discrete and integral component of a universal body of literature.

In aspiring toward this ultimate goal, the program has three major **aims**

- to foster in students an *appreciation* of North American literature as unique and important to their personal and cultural heritage;
- to give students the *ability* to explore a wide variety of North American literature;
- to lead students to *discover* that North American literature is a discrete and integral component of the universal body of literature.

III. THE OBJECTIVES

The General Objectives

The North American Literature 522 program contains four general objectives which together will lead students to appreciate that North American literature is at once a discrete manifestation of a culture and an integral part of a world literature.

If an author has been significantly influenced by a literary trend or movement, by a political, social, or economic situation, by a landscape or climate, or by a specific cultural orientation — or indeed by any combination of these — such influences will reveal themselves in one way or another in a literary work, and should be recognized. They are the ties that bind a work either to a specific society or to a larger literary world, or to both. It is important therefore that students be able to recognize in the literature they are studying whatever influences may be significant to their understanding and appreciation of that literature:

General Objective I: **The student will understand the influence of major literary trends and movements on selected works of North American literature.**

General Objective II: **The student will understand how certain historical, cultural, and geographical contexts relate to selected works of North American literature.**

It is equally important, however, that this understanding of external influences be arrived at *through* the literature, and inductively where possible, with appropriate external frameworks being provided only as needed (and ideally through the students' own investigations). Clearly, the focus for the students must be on experiencing, clarifying, and ultimately valuing the literature, not on learning about, for example, historical periods or literary movements per se.

Such a focus, with its implied requisite of dealing with North American literature ultimately as literature, necessitates that students be provided with

sufficient opportunities to read (and, where possible, listen to and view) a wide variety of works within the framework of the course, and that they be encouraged to increase that exposure beyond the classroom. Acquaintance, and eventually familiarity with North American literature must be gained before students can begin to appreciate it, that is, to enjoy and value it.

That appreciation can be fostered, however, only if students are exposed to selections of literature that are worth appreciating, those that can survive comparison with literature valued elsewhere. In the relatively young society that is North America — and particularly in Canada — such selections can be difficult to make. The distinction between the ephemeral and the classic, which require time and tranquility to make, has not been possible amid, for example, the publication explosion that has taken place in this country over the last thirty years.

Nonetheless, a significant collection of works by major authors does exist, sufficient to allow teachers to make appropriate selections for their students and to have them study some of these authors in depth:

General Objective III: **The student will value the experience of a wide and varied reading of North American literature.**

General Objective IV: **The student will value the literary significance of works by selected North American writers.**

The Specific Objectives

The general objectives of the North American Literature 522 program, which indicate the anticipated development expected in students, are addressed indirectly through five specific objectives. It is expected that, by the end of the program, the students will have attained these specific objectives through the study of selected literary content related to them; accordingly, final evaluation of students will be based on these compulsory specific objectives (see EVALUATION, pp. 19-20).

The general and specific objectives are inter-related in such a way that all the specific objectives are intended to lead to the attainment of all the general objectives, and all the specific objectives are intended to reinforce one another (see diagram, p. 14). For example, Specific Objective A states that:

The student will respond to selected works of North American literature written under the influence of specific literary movements.

Clearly, in this case, the focus will be on general objective I. But the focus on a literary movement will also imply some attention to, for example, cultural and historical contexts (objective II), and the students should be required to respond to a variety of literary works (objective III) of accepted literary significance (objective IV).

While it is understood that not all the specific objectives can or should be addressed at a given time, the judicious selection of course content and activities should ensure a balanced focus on the five specific objectives in turn, and through them, on the general objectives. The curriculum guide accompanying this course suggests various means by which that balance can be attained.

The specific objectives are given on the following pages, together with recommended Related Content. The asterisk (*) beside some items indicates that these are developed in detail in the curriculum guide.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE A:

The student will respond^o to selected works of North American literature written under the influence of specific literary movements.

RELATED CONTENT

Major Movements:

- Romanticism*
- Social Realism*
- Absurd-Experimental*

Other Movements including:

- Confederation Poets
- Transcendentalism

(See also C: Regions)

COMMENTS

- While only one highly representative work of literature might be sufficient to illustrate the characteristics of a movement, it is recommended that several works, if possible in more than one mode, be examined including samples from related or parent movements on other continents (see also objective E).
- ^o For this and other objectives concerned with responding to literature, attention is drawn to *Secondary English Language Arts I-V (16-3236-A)* objective 3, to the *Literature IV/V* guide (16-3209-04A) for details about the responding process and to the Appendix on page 21.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE B:

The student will respond to selected works of North American literature which embody universal themes and ideals restated in terms of the North American context and setting.

RELATED CONTENT

- Universal themes: The Human Journey:^{*}
- Individual and Self^o
 - Individual and his/her Inter-
personal Relations
 - Individual and Society
 - Individual and Nature / God.
- Possible North American Restatements:
- The Puritan Strain^{*}
 - Landscape^{*}
 - Alienation
 - The Immigrant Experience
 - Apocalyptic Vision
 - The Canadian / American Mosaic
 - Women in Canadian Literature.
- (See also: A: Literary Movements
C: Regions)

COMMENTS

- ^o See also *Literature IV/V* guide (16-3209-04A), "The Study of Literature" for suggested materials related to these sub-themes.
- The universality of the themes selected should be illustrated by reference to literature from settings and contexts other than North American, and, where relevant, from periods other than those being directly addressed in the selected North American works.
 - The selection of works should reflect a variety of modes and, if possible, periods, as well as a balance of Canadian and American writers (see also Objective E).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE C:

The student will respond to works identified with specific regions of Canada and/or of the United States.

RELATED CONTENT

American regions:

Eastern Urban*
The South*
New England
The Mid-West
The West
The Southwest

Canadian regions:

The Maritimes
Québec
Central Canada
The Prairies
The West Coast*
The North

COMMENTS

- Although the regions listed tend to be the major ones associated with North American literature, some narrowing of focus might be attempted both geographically (by examining homogeneous works in a particular state, province, or city) and temporally (by examining homogeneous works from a region at a particular period of history) (see also Objective E).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE D:

The student will respond to a variety of works in several modes by major North American authors.

RELATED CONTENT

Major Canadian authors could include:

Margaret Atwood*
Earle Birney
Marie Claire Blais
Morley Callaghan
Robertson Davies
Mavis Gallant
Anne Hébert
A.M. Klein
Margaret Laurence
Irving Layton
Stephen Leacock
Hugh McLennan
Farley Mowat
Alice Munro
E.J. Pratt
Mordecai Richler
Sinclair Ross
Michel Tremblay

Major American authors could include:

Saul Bellow
e.e. cummings
Emily Dickinson
William Faulkner
Robert Frost
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Lillian Hellman
Ernest Hemingway
Henry James
Sinclair Lewis
Bernard Malamud
Herman Melville
Arthur Miller
Eugene O'Neill
Edgar Allan Poe*
Carl Sandburg
John Steinbeck
James Thurber
Mark Twain
Kurt Vonnegut Jr.
Edith Wharton
Walt Whitman
Thornton Wilder*
Thomas Wolfe

COMMENTS

- The lists provided are by no means exhaustive. Criteria for selecting authors should include not only their importance to North American literature but also the availability and suitability of their works to particular students. The addressing of several modes could be achieved either by selecting authors who have written in more than one mode or by balancing the selection of authors. Consideration might also be given to selecting authors whose works relate to one or more of the other objectives.
- It is intended that a collection of an author's works be examined, although special attention might be given to one major work

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE E:

The student will compare the treatment of a theme or subject in selected works of Canadian and American literature of the same mode and/or period.

RELATED CONTENT

Themes: See B: Themes

Subjects: See A: Literary Movements
C: Regions

Modes:

- Fiction and Non-Fiction
- Tragedy, Comedy, Romance, and Satire
- Genres: short and long fiction
 - drama
 - poetry
 - biography

Periods: (See also A: Literary Movements
B: Themes
C: Regions)

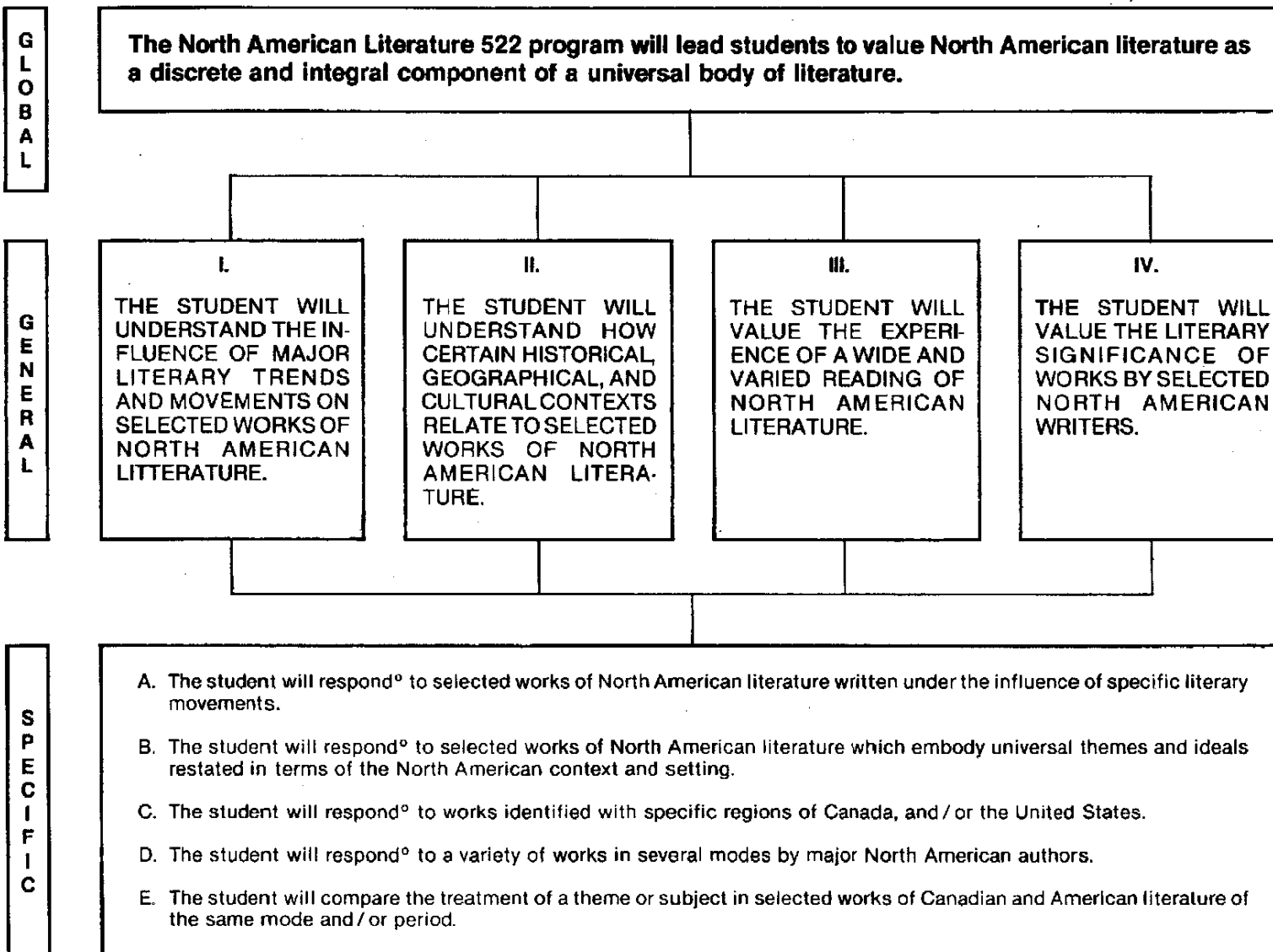
e.g.

- Exploration and early settlement
- The war periods
- The Depression
- Age of technology
- Significant decades

COMMENTS

- The comparisons focussed on in this objective would most effectively be made within the context of addressing one or more of the other objectives.
- The points of comparison should include not only those related to the theme or subject under study, but also those related to the mode in which the works have been composed and/or the period in which they were written or which they depict.

NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE 522 OBJECTIVES



^o For a detailed explanation of **responding** to North American literature, see pages 21-22.

INDICATORS FOR JUDGING WHETHER STUDENTS HAVE MET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

For Specific Objectives A-D

The student will indicate his/her ability to **respond** by:

- articulating an initial reaction;
- modifying or confirming that initial reaction;
- interpreting the work;
- evaluating the work.

At the stages of interpretation and evaluation, the student will be able to address the works in the **contexts** of:
e.g.

- a specific literary movement;
- a universal theme;
- a specific region of Canada and/or the United States;
- a specific mode.

For Specific Objective E

The student will indicate his/her ability to **compare** by:

- showing a knowledge of two or more works of the same mode and/or period;
- explaining the treatment of a specific theme or subject in these works.

IV. THE TEACHING OF NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE

In the preceding pages, certain underlying convictions about the teaching of North American literature have emerged:

- It is important that students be able to recognize in the literature they are studying whatever influences may be significant to their understanding and appreciation of that literature. It is equally important, however, that this understanding of external influences be arrived at through the literature, and inductively where possible, with appropriate external frameworks being provided only as needed (and ideally through the students' own investigations). Clearly, the focus for the students must be on experiencing, clarifying, and ultimately valuing the literature, not on learning about, for example, historical periods or literary movements per se.
- Such a focus, with its implied requisite of dealing with North American literature ultimately as literature, necessitates that students be provided with sufficient opportunities to read (and, where possible, listen to and view) a wide variety of works within the framework of the course, and that they be encouraged to increase that exposure beyond the classroom. Acquaintance, and eventually familiarity with North American literature must be gained before students can begin to appreciate it, that is, to enjoy and value it.
- That appreciation can be fostered, however, only if students are exposed to selections of literature that are worth appreciating, those that can survive comparison with literature valued elsewhere. A significant collection of works by major authors does exist, sufficient to allow for teachers to make appropriate selections for their students and to have them study some of these authors in depth.
- Further, in order for students to enjoy and value these selections of literature, it is important for the students to follow the process of responding (as outlined in the Appendix) which allows them to develop their own response, articulate it and support it.
- It is important to place that response to literary selections within certain specified contexts in order to provide a focus for response (or comparison) and criteria for the student's evaluation of a work.

V. EVALUATION

The Schools of Québec stresses the importance of evaluation and the major role teachers play in the evaluation process:

- 8.1.4 There is unanimous agreement with the statement in the GREEN PAPER to the effect that evaluation takes place first of all in the classroom and that the prime responsibility is the teacher's. This evaluation allows the teacher to follow the progress of his or her students. He or she can, thus, discover their strong and their weak points, appreciate their degree of adjustment and make appropriate decisions. This conception is in accordance with the wishes expressed during the consultation on the GREEN PAPER.
- 8.1.6 For some, evaluation involves only examinations, tests, homework, exercises, etc. Such a conception reduces evaluation purely and simply to the use of measurement instruments, whereas it is much more complex.⁴

It is the complexity that raises these fundamental and interrelated questions:

***Why and when should the students be evaluated?
Who should do the evaluation?
How should the results be interpreted?
What should be evaluated in North American
Literature 522?***

Why and when should students be evaluated?

Why? Evaluation is an essential component of the teaching/learning process. Teachers have always been aware of the importance of evaluation when they are designing their courses, deciding on the units and the lessons, and choosing the activities. Further, they have been involved in evaluation in order to provide feedback to students, parents and administrators regarding the progress of individual students. Each evaluation that a teacher does has an underlying purpose whether it is, for example, to revise content, to change methods, or to report to parents. The clarification of that purpose is the most important decision that a teacher makes, since all other decisions and the effectiveness of the evaluation depend upon it.

There are two major categories of evaluation — formative and summative.

Formative evaluation examines the teaching/learning process. Its purpose is to respond immediately to the needs of the student. Such evaluation enables teachers and students to determine the degree to which an objective has been attained, to decide what must still be learned, and, if necessary, to choose alternate means of fostering the attainment of that objective. Formative evaluation is used to determine the structure and organization of those objectives which a teacher will develop for the students in a given class, to set up a sequence of learning tasks and experiences, to provide feedback on the learning process at each step of the way, and to prescribe alternative learning approaches and tasks, when necessary.

Summative evaluation is more of the order of drawing up a balance sheet. "It is intended to inform the student, the teacher, and others about the mastery of a complex of objectives,"⁵ in order to determine what is to be learned, what has been learned, the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process and the changes that may be needed.

The results are analyzed to determine the extent to which a group of students has attained a complex of objectives and the extent to which each individual student has attained the complex of objectives.

When? Formative evaluation, by its very nature takes place almost daily in the classroom; summative evaluation examines the attainment of objectives at regular intervals throughout the year.

Who should make the evaluation?

The purpose of an evaluation dictates who should do the evaluation. All formative evaluation is effected at the level of the school and is therefore the domain of the students and the teachers. It is important that the teacher should not be the sole judge; students should be encouraged to provide feedback to their peers. Further, students should be encouraged to evaluate their own progress, ultimately to take responsibility for their own development.

Summative evaluation is also the responsibility of the school, but, in some instances the ministère and the school board do assume certain responsibilities as well.⁶

4. Ministère de l'Éducation, *The Schools of Québec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action* (Québec, 1979), pp. 94-95.

5. Ministère de l'Éducation, *General Policy for Educational Evaluation* (Québec, 1981), p. 8.

6. For more information on methods and purposes for formative and summative evaluation, see *Secondary English Language Arts I-V program* (16-3236A), Appendices II and III.

How should the results be interpreted?

Once again the interpretation of the results depends on the "why" of the evaluation. There are two means of interpretation — criterion-referenced and norm-referenced. A criterion-referenced interpretation is made if the student's progress is compared with the level of mastery expected for one or a number of objectives, without reference to the progress of other students. A norm-referenced interpretation is made when the student's progress is related to that of other students with respect to the level of attainment of the same objectives.

In ordinary daily school practice, both the norm-referenced and criterion-referenced modes of interpretation may be used for the same score. This demonstrates that it is not always necessary to use tests which correspond specifically with the form of interpretation being used. The choice of one or the other of these modes of interpretation should not be determined by the tests, but by the information which is needed about the student's learning.⁷

What should be evaluated in North American Literature 522?

The specific objectives of North American Literature 522 require that students either respond to selected works of literature (objectives A to D) or make comparisons between such works (objective E) the latter process implying that the individual works in question have already been responded to. The first requirement of evaluation then, both formative and summative, criterion or norm referenced, is to determine the nature and extent of the student's response, and particularly summatively, the degree of maturity which has been attained in the student's evaluation of a given work as a significant piece of literature.

However, the objectives also place that response to literary selections within certain specified contexts which provide a focus for response (or comparison) and criteria for the student's evaluation of a work. These contexts include literary movements, universal themes, regional characteristics, and modes. The second requirement of evaluation then is to determine to what extent the student's response to a work includes recognition of a given context as it is manifested in that work. Such recognition in turn implies some prior understanding by the student of the characteristics of that context, and that understanding may well require evaluation, particularly of a formative nature and as part of the ongoing classroom process of coming to

terms with the literature. These contexts should not become a direct focus of summative evaluation, however, except inasmuch as they provide significant criteria for determining the student's overall understanding of the literature. Put simply, a student's final performance in North American Literature should not be determined by having him/her list the characteristics of a literary movement, but rather by having him/her discuss to what extent that movement has affected a particular work of literature or the writings of a particular author.

Finally, since the specific objectives imply and general objective III overtly states that the student will "value the experience of a wide and varied reading of North American literature", at least summative evaluation must provide for a variety of works to be addressed by the student, and for the student's degree of success in the course to be determined in part by his/her ability to respond to a variety of works. Moreover, some recognition need be given, through record-keeping or interviewing for example, to extra reading by students of works not dealt with directly in class; such reading must be encouraged as a valuable (as well as evaluable) component of the course.

It is through the balance of these factors — the student's **response** to a **variety** of literary works viewed in an appropriate **context** — that valid modes of evaluation (and of teaching) will be achieved, and ultimately the global object of the course addressed.

7. *General Policy for Educational Evaluation*, p. 9.

APPENDIX

RESPONDING TO NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE

In order for students to attain the goals of the North American literature program, they must "respond" to the literature in a variety of contexts. In order for students to respond to literature, they must be given the opportunity to do so.

Literature is not merely a reflection of life, a chronicle of some individual and/or society, or a presentation of moral, religious or philosophical precepts. Nor is it merely a means whereby students will learn to recognize, define, analyse and categorize a given set of concepts deemed indispensable to an "educated person". Rather, it is, first and foremost, a work of art and as such it offers the reader a new and special experience of the world around. As Aldous Huxley wrote: "Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him".

If we accept this premise, the teacher must reappraise the means by which literature is experienced in the classroom. Just as authors call upon their intellect, knowledge, senses and emotions to create a work, so readers respond by calling on their own intellect, knowledge, senses and emotions to recreate that same work. We must ask ourselves however, whether students are given the opportunity to experience the work closely and in its intended medium. Are students given an opportunity to share their responses to the work with the rest of the class? Are they encouraged to re-examine their responses in the light of the text? Do they extend their knowledge of the text, and thereby their experience of it, through creative activity involving their fellow classmates and their teacher? Do they emerge with additional knowledge, a new perspective and a heightened appreciation of their original experience?

Response to literature can be seen as a developmental process which has several phases:

- **Engagement/Involvement:**

In this first phase, students articulate an initial reaction to a literary stimulus. This reaction should not be elicited by preconceived, teacher directed questions but rather, should be fostered by the teacher assuming the role of attentive listener and by providing the time for the reaction to be expressed. These initial reactions are often emotional, subjective and highly personal: I really liked..., I was angry, I didn't understand it, I like the part about..., or I think it's...

- **Modification or Confirmation of Initial Response:**

In this phase, students move from the initial reaction to a further examination of the text which will support, enhance or refute their initial reaction. If the students themselves question the basis for the reaction of a fellow student, so much the better for a call to return to the text and an examination of the elements of discourse, the language, the form and the style. Students may return to the first phase to clarify or to modify their stance; in fact, they may do this several times as they examine the text in greater detail. If students do not naturally return to the text to confirm their reaction, it may be necessary for the teacher to guide them back. Thus students begin the move from emotionally motivated to intellectually founded judgments.

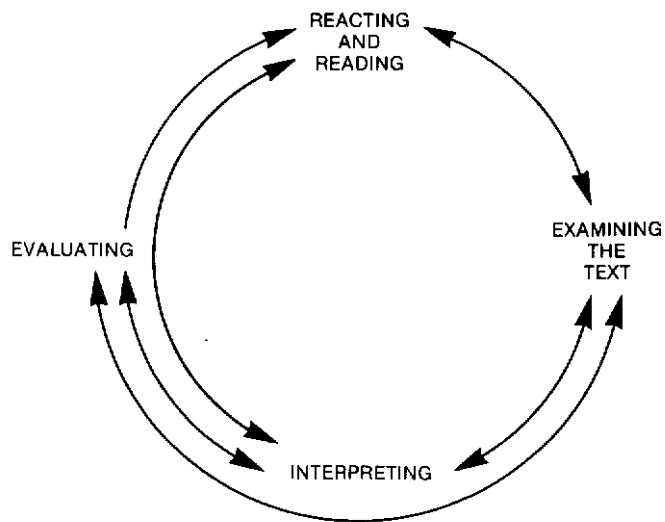
- **Interpretation:**

In this phase, students are attempting to deepen the understanding of their experience by drawing connections between the elements of the work and the meaning it has for them. They will be involved in the process of synthesis: drawing inferences from the work, sketching analogues to it, generalizing about it. Not all experiences of literature will lead to full synthesis.

- **Evaluation:**

In this phase students measure all their reactions, examinations and investigations and thereby, judge the value of the piece of literature to themselves, to their world and the larger world of literary experience.

The process described above may be visualized as follows:



In each of the phases, it is understood that the teacher should not be the only initiator, reactor and judge; rather students should be communicating with themselves, their peers and others in order to develop their own viewpoint concerning "North American literature as a discrete and integral component of a universal body of literature".