

510, 07

H758a

UC-2

END-OF-TOUR REPORT

PD-AY-644

IN 50153

Rita Joan Holthouse  
Specialist in English

Apr - 1967

620-11-660-732

000138  
5

A.I.D.  
Reference Center  
Room 1656 HS

August, 1967

## END-OF-TOUR REPORT

Name: Rita Joan Holthouse  
Job Title: Specialist in English  
Country of Assignment: Nigeria  
Contract Employer: Ohio University  
Tour of Duty Began: August 6, 1965  
Tour of Duty Ended: August 17, 1967  
Prior Country Assignments and Years: None  
Project Activity: Ohio University/USAID Project in Kano  
(Advanced Teachers College, Kano)

### I. Differences Between United States and Local Practices

One of the most basic differences between teaching practices in the United States and Northern Nigeria lies in the effects of the terminal examination given at the end of each period of schooling in Nigeria. In United States schools students are continually evaluated during the period of schooling--whether it be primary, secondary, or advanced work. At none of these levels is there a terminal examination which solely determines the success or failure of the student; instead, his work is periodically evaluated, and the student is either promoted to the next level or detained for further instruction at the present level. In Northern Nigeria largely as a result of the British influence upon the educational system, a student is automatically progressed through the various levels of the program; little importance is attached to his classwork or term marks; and the terminal examination is the sole determiner of his success or failure. Because of the increased importance given to the terminal examination, American teachers in Nigeria must adapt their teaching toward a terminal examination, realizing that some students will not regard their examinations and marks as being very important, and accepting the importance of covering a definite syllabus.

A second difference lies in the language used in the classroom. In the United States both the teacher and the students use their first, or native, language. In Nigeria the students use their second language, English, in their classwork. For the American teacher, this difference means that he must curtail his reading assignments, do more extensive vocabulary work in his classes, and expect the necessity of much explanation.

The American teacher who is accustomed to using language laboratories, film rooms, tape recorders, educational television, overhead projectors, etc. faces a much different situation in the Nigerian schools. First, his students will not be accustomed to learning via those teaching aids. Second, he must realize that his students will teach in typical primary or secondary schools, which will have few of the above aids; in fact, they may lack textbooks and even paper for their students. Thus, the American teacher must not emphasize these teaching aids.

In my specific area of teaching English to Nigerian college students, I found few differences except as the teaching was affected by the forementioned general differences. Although the students were older with mature interests and tastes in literature, English was their second language. Thus, unabridged editions of literature classics were unsuitable because they were too difficult for the students to read; however, simple books did not interest the mature students. Therefore, it was necessary to find and teach simplified texts of classic novels—a practice discouraged in American schools.

The teaching of methodology had to be done with a view to the type of schools in which the students would teach. Whereas a methods class in the teaching of English language in the United States would certainly include sections on the use of audio-visual aids and machines and extensive libraries,

methodology instruction in Nigerian schools had to be more basic. Any suggestions for visual aids had to be based upon materials readily available even to isolated teachers in the "bush" schools, e.g. calabashes, newspaper, blackboards.

Nigerian students in general expect lecture-type classes with little discussion; hand-out note sheets or notes written on the blackboard; essay -type examinations where quantity is of paramount importance; no tests until the final examination at the end of a term. They adapt readily to discussion classes and to individual note-taking. However, they are skeptical of the value of quizzes and of objective test questions.

## II. Future Measures and Direction for United States Activities

My recommendations for future steps the United States Government could take in the educational development of Northern Nigeria are as follows:

1. The West African School Certificate examination is the terminal examination given at the end of teacher training courses. Thus, it is a very important examination. There is a great need for a complete teaching syllabus for the five years of a Grade II course. This syllabus should be written only after a technician has thoroughly studied the West African School Certificate examinations, the Grieve Report on the teaching of English in West Africa, available post-Grieve textbooks, syllabuses of various colleges in the Northern area, and the abilities and deficiencies of students entering teacher training colleges in the North. At the present time, each college prepares its own syllabus, and there is general dissatisfaction with all teaching syllabuses. I feel this is one of the most beneficial projects that could be done for the teacher training colleges in the area of English language instruction.

2. There is need for a good textbook on the teaching and/or learning of registers. Register refers to a group of words used in a certain area of activity, such as medicine, transportation, or health. Registers were recently added to the Grade II examination, a step recommended in the Grieve report. While several books on this type of vocabulary study were hurriedly written, a comprehensive book is needed. It should consist of a set of five books, one for each year of the Grade II program.

3. Many colleges have tried to use the Science Research Association's reading laboratories. The various kits have been found to contain too many passages outside the cultural understanding of the Nigerian students, i.e., American football, skyscrapers, subways. I recommend that a reading specialist become familiar with West African culture and then determine which SRA and RFU passages create cultural difficulties and rewrite those particular passages, maintaining the same level of reading ability. SRA's cooperation would, of course, be necessary, but their replies to inquiries by various colleges have indicated that they would be interested in such a project.

4. At the advanced level in literature teaching, there is a need for a survey book which includes selections from African, English, and American literature. The book should be compiled by someone who is familiar with the interests of these students and with the West African culture. At the present time, students must purchase separate books for their study of these literatures; these books are too expensive for the average student and are very difficult to obtain through local bookstores. Furthermore, many of the selections in the American and British literature books are not suitable for West African students.

5. Another textbook which needs to be written is one in the methodology of teaching English in secondary schools and teacher training colleges in Northern Nigeria. Such a textbook should be written with the local school conditions in mind, i.e. English as a second language, lack of audio-visual aids, isolation of many schools from adequate libraries.

AppendixIII. Summary of Efforts and Achievements During Tour

Curriculum Development. When I arrived at my post in August 1965 and began my duties as an English specialist, it was clear that one of the priority tasks to be done was to write a new teaching syllabus for the advanced Nigerian Certificate of Education program. My predecessor had written a comprehensive syllabus for the NCE program; however, from necessity, he had written it without any experience with the students who were to use it. After following the syllabus for two terms, I was convinced that it was unsuitable. After much studying of other NCE syllabuses and much evaluating of the students' abilities and deficiencies, I wrote General English and Methodology syllabuses and assisted in the writing of an Advanced Literature syllabus. The new syllabus was completed in July 1966. During the last year I have constantly revised the syllabus, as increased teaching experience, trial of textbooks, changes in the College's general curriculum, and attendance at syllabus conferences have indicated necessary alterations. I have just completed my final revision of the teaching syllabus.

Recently I participated in a curriculum meeting at which the general curriculum of our NCE program was evaluated, and I helped in producing three major changes, affecting the final examinations, number of class hours per week for students, and the commencement of the study of major subjects.

I attended many conferences about Grade II syllabuses and studied numerous Grade II colleges syllabuses. Although I did not write a teaching syllabus for that program, I am leaving suggestions for the syllabus writers.

In-Service Activities. My major work in in-service consisted in being the co-ordinator and a writer of a correspondence course in English for the Northern Ministry of Education. As co-ordinator, I selected textbooks; organized the material into lessons; distributed the writing responsibilities among the other writers; supervised the typing, proofing, and correcting of the lessons. As a writer, I wrote 1/3 of the lessons. Since August 1965, seven terms (70 lessons) have been written, thus completing the four-year course.

In addition, I recorded English-instruction radio tapes for use by the regional radio station and wrote numerous radio scripts for other tapes. During in-service courses and workshops, I assisted in the registrations, enrollments, and visual aids rooms. When the Teacher In-Service Education Program was in the planning stages, I assisted in writing the syllabus for the English part of the curriculum and attended some planning sessions for TISEP as a consultant on the correspondence course and on the English syllabus.

Textbook Selection. A priority task in the Grade II program in August 1965 was the selection of new textbooks. Those in use were out-of-date, especially after the Grieve Report recommendations were accepted. During my first few weeks at the College, I studied the Grieve report, attended conferences on it and the WASC examination, and reviewed sample texts. Finally I selected and ordered the complete series of Practical English, which was later recommended by the Ministry of Education as a post-Grieve textbook. All of the texts have arrived and are in use.

I also arranged for enough dictionaries to be purchased by the College for each Grade II student to have a copy, for numerous sets of supplementary reading books for Grade II students to be purchased, and for several hundred simplified reading books to be placed in the library. I assisted the librarian, during trips to Lagos and Zaria, in the purchasing of English books for the library.

A very time-consuming duty was the handling of textbooks for the NCE students. As head of the English department, I have selected, ordered, received, distributed, and collected money for several

thousand books during the last two years. In addition, I did a thorough evaluation of every textbook used in every NCE course. To facilitate my successor's work, I have prepared a schedule of when each term's books should be ordered.

Teaching. Although most of my time was devoted to developmental projects such as curriculum planning and correspondence course writing, I also taught an average of 14 hours of advanced English courses per term. This work aided me in writing the syllabus and in evaluating the textbooks. Each term, I observed student teachers from the Grade II program. Each year I assisted in the administration of entrance examinations to prospective NCE entrants, travelling to Bauchi and Yola. In addition, I interviewed candidates for the NCE and post secondary programs.

Publications. As a member of the publications committee, I planned the format of a newsletter about the project and assisted in the editing of the first issue. During my first year with the project, I assisted in the preparation of a fact sheet for visitors;

Administrative. As head of the English department, I assisted in drawing up the general class schedules each term, scheduled and assigned classes within the English department, attended administrative meetings of all departmental heads, organized and hosted several local Board of Studies meetings, attended three meetings of English teachers from all of the NCE colleges in Nigeria, and wrote the English sections of the college handbook.