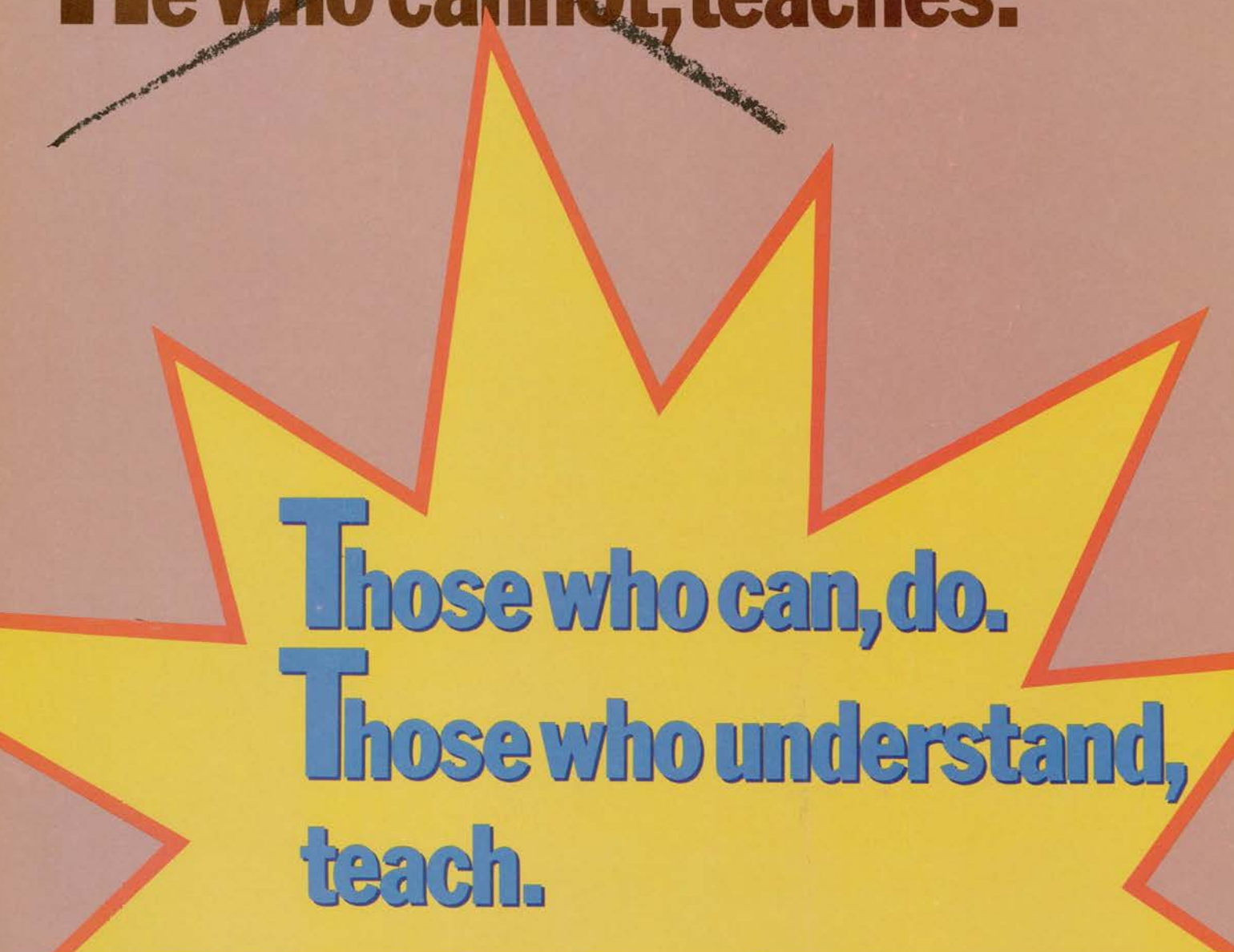


AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
SPRING 1986

AMERICAN
Educator

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~~He who cannot, teaches.~~



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Those who understand,
teach.**



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NOTEBOOK

Bill of Responsibilities

Preamble. Freedom and responsibility are mutual and inseparable; we can ensure enjoyment of the one only by exercising the other. Freedom for all of us depends on responsibility by each of us. To secure and expand our liberties, therefore, we accept these responsibilities as individual members of a free society:

- *To be fully responsible for our own actions and for the consequences of those actions.* Freedom to choose carries with it the responsibility for our choices.
- *To respect the rights and beliefs of others.* In a free society, diversity flourishes. Courtesy and consideration toward others are measures of a civilized society.
- *To give sympathy, understanding and help to others.* As we hope others will help us when we are in need, we should help others when they are in need.
- *To do our best to meet our own and our families' needs.* There is no personal freedom without economic freedom. By helping ourselves and those closest to us become productive members of society, we contribute to the strength of the nation.
- *To respect and obey the laws.* Laws are mutually accepted rules by which, together, we maintain a free society. Liberty itself is built on a foundation of law. That foundation provides an orderly process for changing laws. It also depends on our obeying laws once they have been freely adopted.
- *To respect the property of others, both private and public.* No one has a right to what is not his or hers. The right to enjoy what is ours depends on our respecting the right of others to enjoy what is theirs.
- *To share with others our appreciation of the benefits and obligations of freedom.*

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To help promote a better understanding of the balance between rights and responsibilities in a free society, a group of leading citizens and scholars, under the sponsorship of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, has drafted a Bill of Responsibilities.

The Bill, which briefly describes a set of ten citizen responsibilities, is intended to serve as a catalyst, encouraging a broad public discussion of the concept of rights and responsibilities in canon. Because it is especially important to involve young people in this discussion, Freedoms Foundation is making 11" x 16" posters of the bill available at no charge to teachers. To obtain your copy write: Bill of Responsibilities, Freedoms Foundation, P.O. Box 706, Valley Forge, PA 19481.

Teachers can also help the foundation in developing companion and teaching materials to accompany this bill by send-

ing their ideas on classroom uses for the Bill of Responsibilities to: John Barth, Freedoms Foundation, Suite 401, 1701 K Street, N.W., Washington DC 20006.

SHARE THE WEALTH

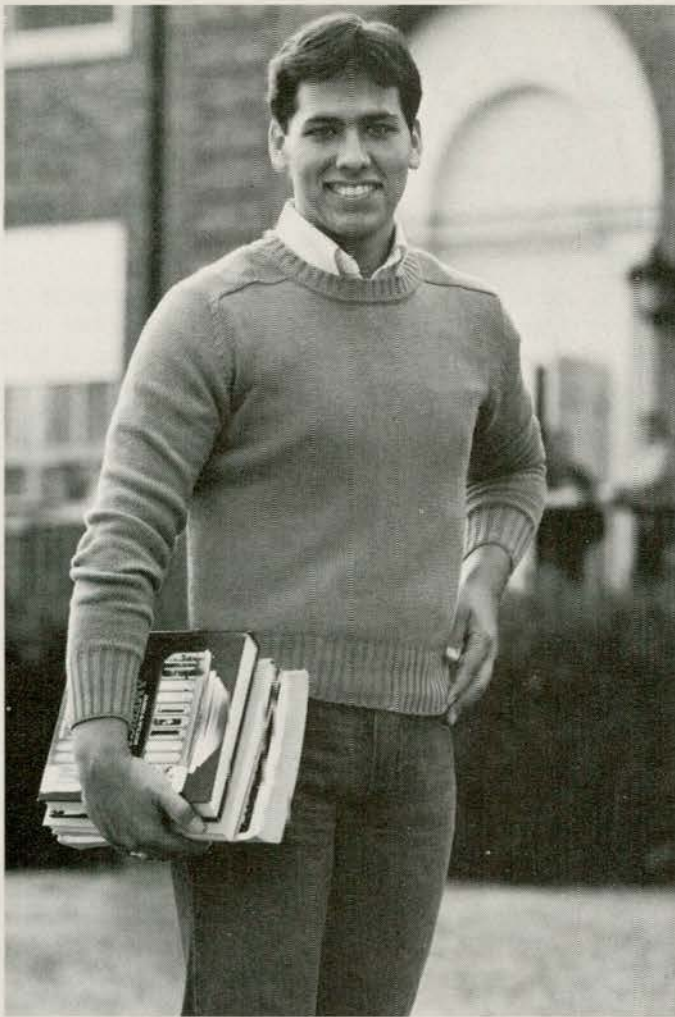
A nationwide search is on for exemplary education practices in the teaching of math and science, grades K-8. All nominated practices will be published in a national directory and made available to teachers and administrators. Based on evidence of their effectiveness and their innovative contributions to science and mathematics education, the best techniques and programs will then be chosen to be the subject of more intensive case studies.

The project is sponsored by the National Science Foundation in cooperation with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the American Association of School Administrators.

To share with your colleagues the best of what you do, request a nomination form by writing to Herman R. Goldberg, AASA, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209.

LETTERS

We welcome comments on *American Educator* articles. Address letters to: Editor, *American Educator*, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Letters selected may be edited for space and clarity.



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Your students can find out more about ACES from their local Army Recruiter, who's listed in the Yellow Pages. Experience has taught us that the more our soldiers can learn, the better it makes the Army.

ARMY. BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

LETTERS

SELF-ESTEEM AND LEARNING

I just read Barbara Lerner's article in the *American Educator* ("Self-Esteem and Excellence: The Choice and the Paradox," Winter 1985) and want to thank her for having written such an enlightened and enlightening piece.

I was raised and educated in Europe, and indeed nobody ever considered whether my self-esteem was properly nurtured or not! However, I grew up and acquired an education and a lot of "earned self-esteem" in the process. So did everyone around me.

I must say, though, that I was seduced at first by the novel approach prevalent in American elementary schools when my five children were small, especially since my oldest son had great difficulties in school.

It was only later that, as a mother and as a teacher, I measured the damage done by the absence of the self-critical stance Binet talks about.

I cannot emphasize enough the deep resonance Ms. Lerner's article found in me. She analyzes and expresses so well something I could never put into words.

I even sent the article to my school superintendent who, I hope, will make it the philosophical basis of discussion for our newly formed committee on excellence.

—SIMONE OLMSTED
FRENCH AND LATIN TEACHER
Mount Vernon High School
Mount Vernon, NY

My deepest gratitude goes to Barbara Lerner for challenging the assumptions in current education about the self-esteem of children. I hope her work will be taken very seriously by educators, who have a long way to go to bring self-esteem back to its proper place in education.

During the last five years (of eighteen) I have been aware of the destructive effects of feel-good education, effects that are accumulated and intensified by the time students reach high school. Unwillingness to

work hard, see projects through, perform independently, and refusal to meet the rest of the world are some of the manifestations of students who really believe they can't.

Natahanial Branden, in his *Psychology of Self-Esteem*, states that self-esteem is attained when a person learns to be honest with oneself. Deceptions about a student's performance, for the sake of feel-good-now, are lies that could actually undermine the development of self-esteem. I believe they do.

The greatest moments in my teaching career have come when students who thought they could not do something found out they could. The pride they had in themselves is one cornerstone of self-esteem. To have faith that a student is capable is an act of respect, another cornerstone of self-esteem.

Public schools should never be a place where the satisfying of egos is the primary goal. As Ms. Lerner proclaims, two decades of such a philosophy have proven its foolishness. Schools must be a place for real achievement. Midway between the self-absorption of young egos and the familiarity of the surroundings of early life, schools can be a place for the challenging breadth of potentially wonderful experiences possible for all humans.

—MYRL M. BISHOP
SCIENCE TEACHER
Port Aransas High School
Port Aransas, TX

In recent years I have been amazed at the numerous freshmen who claim that they have always been excellent students of mathematics, who say they got straight A's in their high school math classes, and who nevertheless are unable to cope with any but the simplest of mathematical concepts. Barbara Lerner's article on the misguided "self-esteem-now" theory of education has enlightened me somewhat as to the cause of this unfortunate phenomenon. College instructors who have taught in foreign countries are even more amazed and appalled than I at the

current intellectual level of American students. I urge all American high schools to *please* establish reasonable academic standards. As for self-esteem, conversations with those who are or were employed in public school classrooms indicate to me that the self-esteem most in need of bolstering is that of the *teachers*.

—FORREST DRISTY
PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS
State University of New York
Oswego, NY

Barbara Lerner asks us to conclude that our education system is failing and that the reason is because teachers do not demand that their students "earn" their self-esteem.

As a psychologist, lawyer, and corporation president, Ms. Lerner should be aware that the schools do not lead the society in which they function, but rather reflect its wants and desires.

If, during the past two decades, our schools have deteriorated, then the reason is because our society has likewise deteriorated. If assassinations of political leaders, involvement in an unpopular and costly war, the resignation of a discredited president, rampant inflation, racism, collapse of our inner cities, and widespread poverty could be considered signs of a failing society, then it should be of little surprise that the quality of education has also deteriorated.

Ms. Lerner says that the old theories of child development (Binet, Freud) tell us that "feel-good-now self-esteem, at home and at school, will not produce happiness. It will produce restlessness and dissatisfaction, a constant hunger to get more for less, and a life organized in search of it."

Has Ms. Lerner looked at society lately, or only at our schools? We *are* a society devoted to getting more for less. The quality of our products decline in direct proportion to the increase in their prices. Our society, for better or worse, is organized around the profit motive. Our peo-

(Continued on page 48)

THIS IS HOW TODAY'S KIDS STAY HEALTHY.

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THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND: A CONCEPTION OF TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

BY LEE S. SHULMAN

HE WHO can, does. He who cannot, teaches." I don't know in what fit of pique George Bernard Shaw wrote that infamous aphorism, words that have plagued members of the teaching profession for nearly a century. It is found in "Maxims for Revolutionists," an appendix to his play *Man and Superman*. "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" is a calamitous insult to our profession, yet it is one readily repeated even by teachers. More worrisome, its philosophy appears often to underlie the policies that arise around the occupation and activities of teaching.

Where did such a demeaning image of the teacher's capacities originate? How long have we been burdened by assumptions of ignorance and ineptitude within the teaching corps? Is Shaw to be treated as the last word on what teachers know and don't know, or do and can't do?

We begin our inquiry into conceptions of teacher knowledge with the tests for teachers that were used in this country during the last century at state and county levels. Among the most fascinating archives in which to delve are the annual reports of state superintendents of education from over a century ago, in which we find

Lee Shulman is professor of education at Stanford University and past president of the American Educational Research Association. He was previously professor of educational psychology and of medical education and co-director of the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University. This article is based upon his presidential address to the AERA, which was given at its April 1985 conference in Chicago, Illinois. The full text can be found in the February 1986 issue of Educational Researcher.

copies of tests for teachers used in licensing candidates at the county level. By looking at these tests, we can get a clear idea of how teacher knowledge was defined. Moreover, we can compare those conceptions with their analogues today.

I have examined tests from states that stretch across the country: Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Colorado, and California. Let us take as a representative example the California State Board examination for elementary school teachers from March 1875. First, let's examine the categories the examination covered:

1. Written Arithmetic
2. Mental Arithmetic
3. Written Grammar
4. Oral Grammar
5. Geography
6. History of the United States
7. Theory and Practice of Teaching
8. Algebra
9. Physiology
10. Natural Philosophy (Physics)
11. Constitution of the United States and California
12. School Law of California
13. Penmanship
14. Natural History (Biology)
15. Composition
16. Reading
17. Orthography
18. Defining (Word Analysis and Vocabulary)
19. Vocal Music
20. Industrial Drawing.

The total number of points possible on this day-long essay examination was 1,000. The examiners were instructed not only to score for the correctness of responses, but also to deduct points for errors of composi-

tion, grammar, or spelling.

What kinds of questions were asked on the examination? We shall review a smattering from several of the categories.

- Find the cost of a draft on New York for \$1,400 payable sixty days after sight, exchange being worth $102\frac{1}{2}$ percent and interest being reckoned at a rate of 7 percent per annum. [Written Arithmetic, one of ten items]

- Divide 88 into two such parts that shall be to each other as $\frac{2}{3}$ is to $\frac{4}{5}$. [Mental Arithmetic, one of ten items]

- When should the reciprocal pronouns *one another* and *each other* be used? the correlative conjunctions *so . . . as* and *as . . . as*?

- Name and illustrate five forms of conjugation. Name and give four ways in which the nominative case may be used. [Grammar, two of ten items]

- Define *specific gravity*. Why may heavy stones be lifted in water when on land they can scarcely be moved?

- What is adhesion? What is capillary attraction? Illustrate each. [Natural Philosophy, two of ten items]

- Name five powers vested in Congress.

Lest you think that all of the items on the 1875 California Teachers Examination dealt with subject matter alone, rest assured that there is a category for pedagogical practice. However, only 50 out of the total 1,000 possible points are given over to the ten-item subtest on theory and practice of teaching. Examples of those items are as follows:

- What course would you pursue to keep up with the progress in teaching?

- How do you succeed in teaching children to spell correctly the words commonly misspelled?

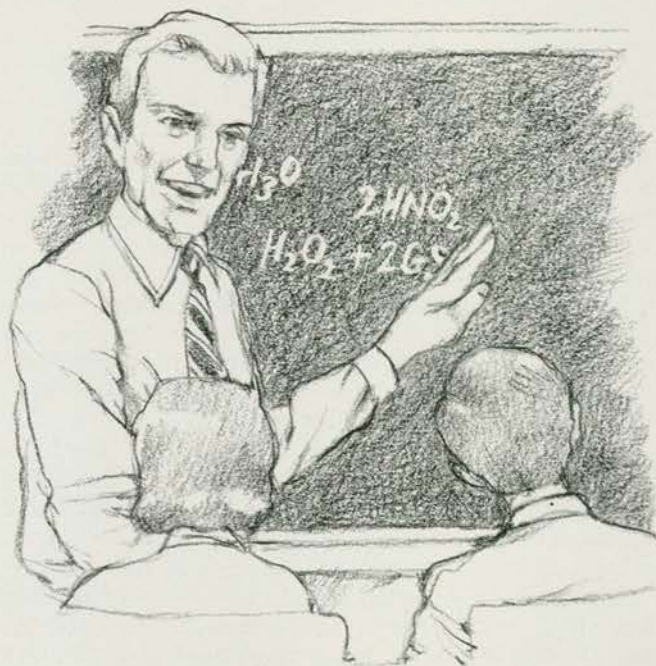
- How do you interest lazy and careless pupils? Answer in full [!].

All the tests I have found from that period follow the same pattern. Ninety to ninety-five percent of the test is on the content, the subject matter to be taught, or at least on the knowledge base assumed to be needed by teachers, whether or not it is taught directly. Thus, aspects of physiology are apparently deemed necessary because of the expectation that teachers understand the biological functioning of their pupils.

The assumptions underlying these early tests are clear. The person who presumes to teach subject matter to children must demonstrate knowledge of that subject matter as a prerequisite to teaching. Although knowledge of the theories and methods of teaching is important, it plays a decidedly secondary role in the qualifications of a teacher.

THE EMPHASIS on the subject matter to be taught stands in sharp contrast to the emerging policies of the 1980s with respect to the evaluation or testing of teachers. Nearly every state is reexamining its approaches to defining what teachers must know to be licensed and subsequently tenured. Many states have introduced mandatory examinations, but these do not typically map onto the content of the curriculum. They are tests of basic abilities to read, spell, calculate, and solve arithmetic problems. Often they are treated as prerequisites for entry into a teacher education pro-

As we compare these [contemporary criteria for evaluating teachers] to those of 1875, the contrast is striking. Where did the subject matter go?



gram rather than as standards for defining eligibility to practice.

In most states, however, the evaluation of teachers emphasizes the assessment of capacity to teach. Such assessment is usually claimed to rest on a "research-based" conception of teacher effectiveness. I shall take as my example a list of such competencies prepared by a state that I briefly advised during its planning for a statewide system of teacher evaluation.

The following categories for teacher review and evaluation were proposed:

1. Organization in preparing and presenting instructional plans
2. Evaluation

3. Recognition of individual differences
4. Cultural awareness
5. Understanding youth
6. Management
7. Educational policies and procedures.

As we compare these categories, which are quite similar to those emerging in other states, to those of 1875, the contrast is striking. Where did the subject matter go? What happened to the content? Perhaps Shaw was correct. He accurately anticipated the standards for teaching in 1985. He who knows, does. He who cannot, but knows some teaching procedures, teaches.

Yet policymakers justify the heavy emphasis on procedures by referring to the emergent research base on teaching and teaching effectiveness. They regularly define and justify these categories by the extremely powerful phrase "research-based teacher competencies." In what sense can it be claimed that such a conception of teaching competence is research based?

The designers of recent approaches to teacher evaluation cite the impressive volume of research on teaching effectiveness as the basis for their selection of domains and standards. They base their categories and standards on a splendid and growing body of research on teaching, research classified under the rubrics of "teaching effectiveness," "process-product studies," or "teacher behavior" research. These studies were designed to identify those patterns of teacher behavior that accounted for improved academic performance among pupils.

Whether by contrasting more effective with less effective teachers, or by conducting experiments in which teachers were trained to employ specific sets of teaching behaviors and monitoring the results for pupil achievement, this research program has yielded findings on the forms of teacher behavior that most effectively promote student learning. The work has been criticized from several perspectives, both technical and theoretical, but for our purposes I would consider the research program a thriving and successful one.

NEVERTHELESS, THE policymakers' decision to base their approaches to teacher evaluation standards on this work demonstrates a failure to understand that there is an unavoidable constraint on any piece of research, in any discipline. To conduct a piece of research, scholars must necessarily narrow their scope, focus their view, and formulate a question far narrower and less complex than the form in which the world presents itself in practice. This holds for any piece of research; there are no exceptions. It is certainly true of the corpus of research on teaching effectiveness that serves as the basis for these contemporary approaches to teacher evaluation. In their necessary simplification of the complexities of classroom teaching, investigators ignored one central aspect of classroom life: the content of instruction, the subject matter.

This omission characterized most other research paradigms in the study of teaching as well. Occasionally, subject matter entered into the research as a context variable, a control characteristic for subdividing data sets by content categories ("When teaching fifth-grade mathematics, the following teacher behaviors were

correlated with outcomes. When teaching fifth-grade reading, . . ."). But no one focused on the subject matter itself. No one asked how subject matter was transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into the content of instruction. Nor did they ask how particular formulations of that content related to what students came to know or misconstrue (even though that question had become the central query of cognitive research on *learning*).

My colleagues and I refer to the absence of focus on subject matter among the various research paradigms for the study of teaching as the "missing paradigm" problem. The consequences of this missing paradigm are serious, both for policy and for research.

Policymakers read the research on teaching literature and find it replete with references to direct instruction, time on task, wait time, ordered turns, lower-order questions, and the like. They find little or no references to subject matter, so the resulting standards or mandates lack any reference to content dimensions of teaching. Similarly, even in the research community, the importance of content has been forgotten. Research programs that arose in response to the dominance of process-product work accepted that concept's definition of the problem and continued to treat teaching more or less generically, or at least as if the content of instruction were relatively unimportant. Even those who studied teacher cognition—a decidedly non-process/product perspective—investigated teacher planning or interactive decision making with little concern for the organization of content knowledge in the minds of teachers.

WHY THIS sharp distinction between content and pedagogical process? Whether in the spirit of the 1870s, when pedagogy was essentially ignored, or in the 1980s, when content is conspicuously absent, has there always been a cleavage between the two? Has it always been asserted that one either knows content, and pedagogy is secondary and unimportant, or that one knows pedagogy, and is not held accountable for content?

I propose that we look back even further than those 1875 tests for teachers and examine the history of the university as an institution to discern the sources for this distinction between content knowledge and pedagogical method.

In *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*, Father Walter Ong describes a world of teaching and learning in the medieval university, where instead of separating content and pedagogy (what is known from how to teach it), they were both part of one indistinguishable body of understanding.

To this day, the names we give our university degrees and the rituals we attach to them reflect those fundamental connections between knowing and teaching. For example, the highest degrees awarded in any university are those of "master" or "doctor," which were traditionally interchangeable. Both words have the same definition; they mean "teacher." "Doctor" or "dot-tore" means teacher; it has the same root as "doctrine," or teaching. Master, as in school master, also means teacher. Thus, the highest university degree enabled its recipient to be called a teacher.

The basic structure of the doctoral examination — the final stage of demonstration that one possesses the necessary capacities for the highest university degree — has remained constant from medieval times to this day in the form of the oral exam. The purpose of the examination is to demonstrate that the candidate possesses the highest levels of subject matter competence in the domain for which the degree is awarded. How did one demonstrate such understanding in medieval times? Through demonstrating the ability to *teach* the subject. Here is Ong's description:

Arrived at the cathedral, the licentiate delivered a speech and read a thesis on some point of law, which he defended against opponents who were selected from among the students, the candidates thus playing for the first time the part of a doctor in a university disputation.

Consider the still current form of the oral exam. First, the candidate presents a brief oral exposition of the thesis. He then defends the thesis in dialogue with the examiners. These parallel the two modes of teaching: the lecture and the disputation. The oral examination is the ultimate test of subject matter expertise; it examines the candidate's ability to teach the subject by employing the dual methods of lecture and discussion.

The universities were, therefore, much like normal schools: institutions for preparing that most prestigious of professionals, the highest level of scholar, the teacher. The tradition of treating teaching as the highest demonstration of scholarship was derived from the writings of a far greater authority than George Bernard Shaw. Aristotle, whose works formed the heart of the medieval curriculum, made the following observations in his *Metaphysics*:

We regard master-craftsmen as superior not merely because they have a grasp of theory and *know* the reasons for acting as they do. Broadly speaking, what distinguishes the man who knows from the ignorant man is an ability to teach, and this is why we hold that art and not experience has the character of genuine knowledge (episteme)—namely, that artists can teach and others (i.e., those who have not acquired an art by study but have merely picked up some skill empirically) cannot.

We thus find in Aristotle a very different view of the relationship between knowing and teaching than we find in either Shaw or in the criteria for certification and licensure in some of our sovereign states. Moreover, identification of teaching competence with pedagogy alone was not even commonplace during Shaw's time. A century ago the defining characteristic of pedagogical accomplishment was knowledge of content.

THE PENDULUM has now swung, both in research and in policy circles. Reading the literature of research on teaching reveals that central questions have gone unasked. The emphasis is upon how teachers manage their classrooms, organize its activities, allocate time and turns, structure assignments, ascribe praise and blame, formulate the levels of their questions, plan lessons, and judge general student understanding.

What we miss are questions about the *content* of the

We thus expect that the subject matter understanding of the teacher be at least equal to that of his lay colleague, the mere subject matter major.



lessons taught, the questions asked, the explanations offered. From the perspectives of teacher development and teacher education, a host of questions arise. Where do teacher explanations come from? How do teachers decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students regarding it, and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding? The cognitive psychology of *learning* has focused almost exclusively on such questions in recent years, but strictly from the perspective of learners. Research on teaching has tended to ignore those issues with respect to teachers. My colleagues and I are attempting to redress this imbalance through our research program, "Knowledge Growth in Teaching."

What are the sources of teacher knowledge? What does a teacher know and when did he come to know it? How is new knowledge acquired, old knowledge retrieved, and both combined to form a new knowledge base?

What are the sources of analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations, rephrasings? How does the

novice teacher (or even the seasoned veteran) draw upon expertise in the subject matter in the process of teaching? And what pedagogical prices are paid when the teacher's subject matter competence is itself compromised by deficiencies of prior education or ability?

Our work does not intend to denigrate the importance of pedagogical understanding or skill in the development of a teacher, or in enhancing the effectiveness of instruction. Mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill. But to blend properly the two aspects of a teacher's capacities requires that we pay as much attention to the content aspects of teaching as we have recently devoted to the elements of teaching process.

AS WE have begun to probe into the complexities of teacher understanding and transmission of content knowledge, the need for a more coherent theoretical framework has become rapidly apparent. What are the domains and categories of content knowledge in the minds of teachers? How, for example, are content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge related? What are the forms in which these domains and categories of knowledge are represented in the minds of teachers? What are promising ways of enhancing acquisition and development of such knowledge? Because I see these as among the central questions for disciplined inquiry into teacher education, I will now turn to a discussion of some ways of thinking about one particular domain, content knowledge in teaching, and some of the categories within it.

How might we think about the knowledge that grows in the minds of teachers, with special emphasis on content? I suggest we distinguish among three categories of content knowledge:

- Subject-matter content knowledge
- Subject-matter pedagogical knowledge
- Curricular knowledge.

Subject-matter content knowledge. This refers to the amount and organization of knowledge *per se* in the mind of the teacher. To think properly about content knowledge requires that we go beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. It requires understanding the structures of the subject matter in the manner defined by such scholars as Joseph Schwab.

For Schwab, the structures of a subject include both the substantive and the syntactic structures. The substantive structures are the variety of ways in which the basic concepts and principles of the discipline are organized to incorporate its facts. The syntactic structure of a discipline is the set of ways in which truth or falsehood, validity or invalidity are established. When there exist competing claims regarding a given phenomenon, the syntax of a discipline provides the rules for determining which claim has greater warrant. A syntax is like a grammar. It is the set of rules for determining what it is legitimate to say in a disciplinary domain and what "breaks" the rules.

Teachers must not only be capable of telling students what are the accepted truths in a domain. They must be able to explain why a particular proposition is deemed warranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions, both within the discipline and without, both theoretical and practical. Thus, the biolo-

gy teacher must understand that there are a variety of ways of organizing the discipline. Depending on the particular series of one's biology text, biology may be formulated as a science of molecules from which one aggregates up to the rest of the field, explaining living phenomena in terms of the principles of their constituent parts; or as a science of ecological systems from which one disaggregates down to the smaller units, explaining the activities of individual units by virtue of the larger systems of which they are a part; or as a science of biological organisms, those most familiar of analytic units, from whose familiar structures and functions and their interactions one weaves a theory of adaptation. The well-prepared biology teacher will recognize these and other alternative forms of organization and the pedagogical grounds for selecting one under some circumstances and others for other purposes.

The same teacher will also understand the syntax of biology. When competing claims are offered regarding the same biological phenomenon, how has the controversy been adjudicated? How might similar controversies be adjudicated in our own day?

We thus expect that the subject matter understanding of the teacher be at least equal to that of his lay colleague, the mere subject matter major. The teacher need not only understand *that* something is so; he must further understand *why* it is so, on what grounds its warrant can be asserted, and under what circumstances our belief in its justification can be weakened and even denied. Moreover, we expect him to understand why a given topic is particularly central to a discipline while another may be somewhat peripheral. This will be important in subsequent pedagogical judgments regarding relative curricular emphasis.

Subject-matter pedagogical knowledge. This second type of knowledge goes beyond knowledge of subject matter *per se* to the dimension of subject matter knowledge *for teaching*. I still speak of content knowledge here, but of that particular form of content knowledge that embodies those aspects of content most germane to its teachability. (There is also pedagogical knowledge of teaching—as distinct from subject matter—which is also terribly important, but not the object of discussion in this paper. This is the knowledge of generic principles of classroom organization and management and the like that has quite appropriately been the focus of study in most recent research on teaching. I have no desire to diminish its importance. I am simply attempting to place needed emphasis upon the hitherto ignored facets of content knowledge.)

Within the category of subject-matter pedagogical knowledge I include, for the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, demonstrations—in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others. Since there are no single most powerful forms of representation, the teacher must have at his disposal a veritable armamentarium of alternative forms of representation, some deriving from research while others have their origins in the wisdom of practice.

Subject-matter pedagogical knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific

topics easy or difficult, of the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons. And if those preconceptions are misconceptions, which they so often are, teachers need knowledge of those strategies most likely to be fruitful in reorganizing the understanding of learners, since those learners are unlikely to appear before us as blank slates. Here research on teaching and on learning coincide most closely. The study of student misconceptions and their influence on subsequent learning has been among the most fertile topics for cognitive research. We are gathering an ever-growing body of knowledge of the misconceptions of students and on the instructional conditions necessary to overcome and transform those initial conceptions. Such research-based knowledge needs to be included at the heart of our definition of needed pedagogical knowledge.

Curricular knowledge. If we are regularly remiss in not teaching subject matter pedagogical knowledge to our students in teacher education programs, we are even more delinquent with respect to the third category of content knowledge, *curricular knowledge*. The curriculum is represented by the full range of programs designed for the teaching of particular subjects and topics at a given level, the variety of instructional materials available in relation to those programs, and the set of characteristics that serve as both the indications and contraindications for the use of particular curriculum or program materials in particular circumstances. The curriculum and its associated materials are the *materia medica* of pedagogy, the pharmacopeia from which the teacher draws those tools of teaching that present or exemplify particular content, and remediate or evaluate the adequacy of student accomplishments. We expect the mature physician to understand the full range of treatments available to ameliorate a given disorder, and the range of alternatives for particular circumstances of sensitivity, cost, interaction with other interventions, convenience, safety, or comfort. Similarly, we ought to expect that the mature teacher possesses similar understandings with respect to the curricular alternatives available for instruction.

How many individuals whom we prepare for teaching biology, for example, understand well the materials for that instruction, the alternative texts, software, programs, visual materials, single-concept films, laboratory demonstrations, or "invitations to enquiry"? Would we trust a physician who did not really understand the alternative ways of dealing with categories of infectious disease, but who knew only one way?

In addition to the knowledge of alternative curriculum materials for a given subject or topic within a grade, there are two additional aspects of curricular knowledge. I would expect a professional teacher to be familiar with the curriculum materials under study by his or her students in other subjects they are studying at the same time. This lateral curriculum knowledge (appropriate in particular to the work of junior and senior high school teachers) underlies the teacher's ability to relate the content of a given course or lesson to topics or issues being discussed simultaneously in other classes. The vertical equivalent of that curriculum knowledge is

familiarity with the topics and issues that have been and will be taught to these students in the same subject area during the preceding and later years in school, and the materials that embody them.

A CONCEPTUAL analysis of knowledge for teachers would necessarily be based on a framework for classifying both the domains and categories of teacher knowledge, on the one hand, and the forms for representing that knowledge, on the other. Following the pattern of "threes," I would like to suggest three forms of teacher knowledge: *propositional knowledge*, *case knowledge*, and *strategic knowledge*. Recall that these are "forms" in which each of the general domains or particular categories of knowledge discussed above—content, pedagogy, curriculum—may be organized.

Much of what is taught to teachers is in the form of propositions. When we examine the research on teaching and learning and explore its implications for practice, we are typically (and properly) examining propositions. When we ask about the wisdom of practice, the accumulated lore of teaching experience, we tend to find such knowledge stored in the form of propositions as well. The research-based principles of active teaching, of reading for comprehension, of effective schools, are stated as lists of propositions. The experience-based recommendations of planning five-step lesson plans, of never smiling until Christmas, of organizing three reading groups, are posed as sets of propositions. In fact, although we often present propositions one at a time, we recognize that they are better understood if they are organized in some coherent form, lodged in a conceptual or theoretical framework that is generative or regenerative. Otherwise they become terribly difficult to recall or retrieve.

The representation of knowledge in the form of propositions has both a distinct advantage and a significant liability. Propositions are remarkably economical in form, containing and simplifying a great deal of complexity. The weakness of propositions is two-fold. First, they become very hard to remember, especially as they aggregate into long lists. This is where theoretical frameworks as intellectual scaffoldings become indispensable. Second, they gain their economy precisely because they are decontextualized, stripped down to their essentials, devoid of detail, of emotion, of ambience. Yet, to be remembered and then wisely used, it is precisely the detail and the context that may be needed. While principles are powerful, they are not particularly memorable, rendering them a problem to apply in particular circumstances. *How* does a teacher apply, for example, the principle "check for understanding," certainly among the most important in the direct instruction and the active teaching research bases? For these reasons, I am proposing that we look seriously at the usefulness of a second type of knowledge, a necessary complement to knowledge of propositions, *case knowledge*.

THE ROOTS of the "case method" in the teaching of law in this country, certainly the best known approach to employing cases as vehicles for professional education, lay in their value for grasping theory, not practice. Christopher Columbus Langdell became Dean

Case knowledge is knowledge of specific, well-documented, richly and thickly described events.



of the Harvard University Law School in 1870, and was responsible for advancing the case method of legal education. His rationale for employing this method was not its value as a way of teaching methods or approaches to practice. He believed that if practice were the essence of law, it had no place in a university. Instead, he advocated the case method of legal education because of its effectiveness in teaching law as science, in teaching legal *theory* through cases.

A case, properly understood, is not simply the report of an event or incident, an anecdote. To call something a case is to make a theoretical claim, to argue that it is a "case of something," to argue that it is an instance of a larger class. A red rash on the face is not a case of something until the observer has invoked his theoretical knowledge of disease. A case of direct instruction or of higher-order questioning is similarly a theoretical assertion. I am therefore not arguing that the preparation of teachers be reduced to the most practical and concrete; rather, using the power of a case literature to

illuminate both the practical and the theoretical, I argue for development of a case literature whose organization and use will be profoundly and self-consciously theoretical.

Case knowledge is knowledge of specific, well-documented, richly and thickly described events. While cases themselves are reports of events or sequences of events, the knowledge they represent is what makes them cases. The cases may be examples of specific instances of practice, detailed descriptions of how an instructional event occurred, complete with particulars of contexts, thoughts, and feelings. On the other hand, they may be exemplars of principles, exemplifying in their detail a more abstract proposition or theoretical claim.

The identification of case knowledge, a case literature, and case-based teacher education as central elements in our discussions and inquiries produces a rich and vital agenda for research. What is involved in the elevation of an event into a case? How are cases aggregated into case knowledge, or alternatively, how does knowledge of cases become case knowledge? How does one learn from and use cases in teaching? If the conception of propositional knowledge is deductive, where applications are deduced from general propositions, how is the analogical reasoning from cases learned, practiced, and tuned? Can we learn from other disciplines or professions where analogical reasoning from cases is much more typical, such as law or architecture, how to conceive of and use case knowledge in education? Why are cases memorable? Is it because they are organized as stories, reflecting the grammar of narrative forms of discourse, that makes them more readily stored, ordered, and retrieved than their expository or propositional analogues?

As these questions are answered, we will begin to develop a more extensive case literature, as well as a pool of scholars and reflective practitioners capable of preparing and interpreting cases.*

THE PRINCIPLED skills of teaching and the well-studied cases must be brought together in the development and formation of the third "form" of teacher knowledge, *strategic pedagogical knowledge*.

Both propositions and cases share the burden of unilaterality, the deficiency of turning the reader or user toward a single, particular rule or practical way of seeing. Strategic knowledge comes into play as the teacher confronts particular situations or problems, whether theoretical, practical, or moral, where principles collide and no simple solution is possible. Strategic knowledge is developed when the lessons of single principles con-

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*I must also acknowledge some potential disadvantages of cases as sources of teacher knowledge. Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky (1982) have pointed out the potentially misleading character of cases. They refer to the memorable quality of vivid cases as significant sources of bias in reasoning. Both availability and representativeness are characteristics of cases that make them readily retrieved from memory; they also bias the decision maker's estimates of the frequency of their occurrence. The important test of a case is its contrast with other cases and its examination in the light of principles. Such disciplined evaluation of cases can temper the inappropriate inferences that might be drawn from cases without diminishing their other virtues.

FORCES THAT UNDERMINE REFORM: A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

A REVIEW BY ADAM URBANSKI

Our Last Term: A Teacher's Diary by Lucille G. Natkins
(Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985).

THE PLANE had already begun taxiing for takeoff when I noticed that it was heading back to the gate.

"Is there a problem?" I asked a flight attendant.

"Well," she said, "the pilot doesn't like the sound of the engine."

"Does that mean we're going to change planes?" I inquired.

"No. We're going to change pilots."

I guess it's a matter of perspective.

So, too, with education reform. The public became alarmed at the "sound" of all that ails public education, and so it decided that we must change the teachers. A deluge of reports, commissions, statutes, and studies proposed—and sometimes rapidly implemented—new regulations and higher standards for teachers.

And it's neither surprising nor inappropriate that teachers became the focus of education reform efforts. While it is true that not all problems in education can be

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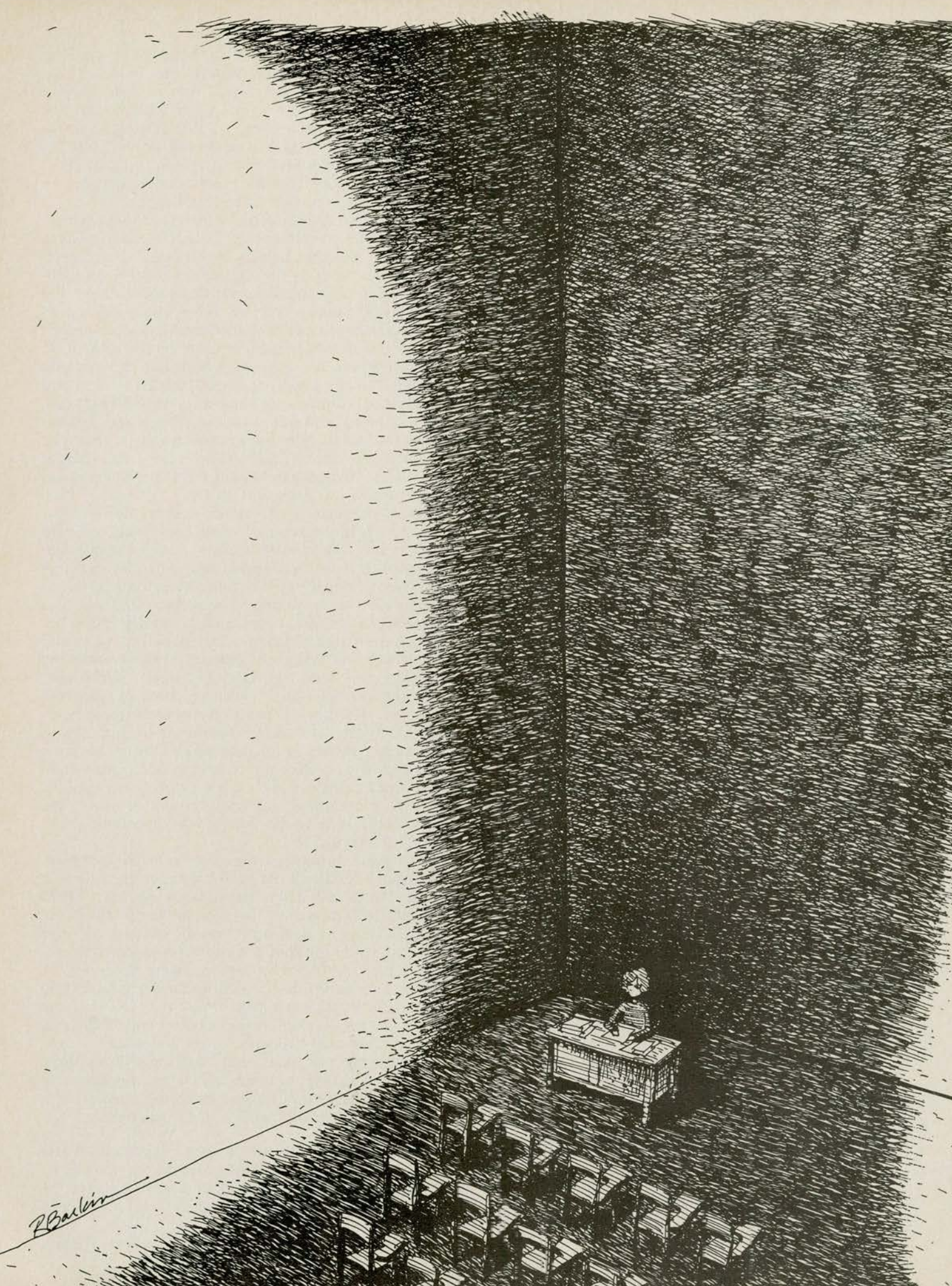
fixed by merely fixing the teachers, they are central to the education process. Our profession is so troubled that, if not effectively addressed, we will soon be faced with a teacher shortage of unprecedented proportions. Bright young college graduates do not want to enter a "profession" that virtually guarantees isolation from one's colleagues, is increasingly devoid of intrinsic rewards, and lacks most of the characteristics typical of a real profession. In fact, if one were to design a model of how *not* to structure a profession, one need look no further than the current state of teaching. Consider the evidence:

- Teachers learn their trade through sink-or-swim. New teachers serve no internship and get little help. As much is expected of them their first day on the job as is expected from a thirty-year veteran.

- Teachers cannot be promoted except out of teaching. Consequently, a teacher's status, pay, and responsibilities are not substantially different on retirement than on the day that teacher was hired.

- Pedagogical decisions are made by non-practitioners. The farther one escapes from the classroom, it seems, the more right one has to dictate to those left behind.

- Teachers are often evaluated and "assisted" by administrators who can see that the window shades are all evenly drawn, but can rarely assess the teachers' competence or knowledge of subject matter.



R. B. B. B.

ALTHOUGH TEACHERS have been the focus of the attention, there has been little attention to *their* concerns as they see them from the front lines. Those who know best have been consulted the least. Remarkably missing in virtually all the reports and studies has been the very important question: "What do the practitioners think?"

Lucille Natkins, a teacher of social studies in urban schools for nearly twenty-five years, helps to address that vacuum. She kept an earthy log of events in her school that yielded a well-written and vivid account entitled *Our Last Term: A Teacher's Diary* [see excerpt, pages 20-21]. Diane Ravitch was impressed with this "relentlessly realistic and vivid portrait of life in an urban high school and of the forces that undermine good education." Assistant Secretary of Education Chester E. Finn Jr. called the book "warmly sympathetic and chillingly foreboding." I call it telling it like it is.

Natkins describes her high school's downward slide from being "one of the best schools in the city, if not the country," a place that was "routinely at or near the top of all the good academic lists" and where "aspiring teachers, many of them former graduates, knocked down our doors," to a place of disorder and violence, its once high standards gone, its teachers weary and demoralized. In depressing detail, with vivid character description and authentic and at times brutal dialogue, Natkins chronicles the change. In so doing, she also airs the debate over the causes. And while she knows the roots lie beyond the control of the schools — problems that the overall society must deal with — she doesn't use that as a reason for letting the decision makers in education off the hook. Wrong-headed policies, usually made by administrators and judges too far removed to witness (or care about?) the consequences of their directives, incompetent bureaucrats, and spineless principals have exacerbated and in some cases caused the situations she describes.

The author keeps anonymous the name of the city in which her school is located; in so doing, she implies that the problems she describes are universal, that her school could be found in countless other large cities across the country.

The similarity between the episodes in Our Last Term and what I recalled from personal experience seemed eerie.

Our Last Term is not just another book in the long series of treatises on education reform. In fact, it's an attempt to address that which the "experts" forgot. "Kozol and Kohl and Holt and those other bastards of the '60s had all the answers. . . ." Natkins quotes a colleague, "but they don't do it day in and day out." Natkins does (teach) day in and day out, and in *Our Last Term* she tells the truth from the practitioner's perspective. She chronicles the view of an insider.

So, what are the concerns of the classroom teacher? Sometimes they're rather basic: "For the second week in a row, the women teachers' bathrooms . . . have been out of toilet paper," writes Natkins. "Cathy brings wash-and-dries and says that she packs for school each day the same way she does when she visits a third-world country." Teachers in *Our Last Term* became so discouraged with the "system" that many became cynical about it all, and still others, worse yet, lost hope that things could change. "Budget cuts continued," Natkins writes, "and we grew accustomed to doing without. Without texts, without paper, without chalk and erasers, and without maps and globes. Without enough teachers. Our telephone access was cut in half. It was easier to call a parent from home than to stand in line for a telephone. It was easier not to call parents at all."

Sound familiar? Even Natkins' examples of how devastating an impact inadequate conditions can have are not startling to most teachers. Indeed, about halfway through *Our Last Term* I realized that it was taking me twice as long to read this book. Most teachers have a book inside them waiting to be written, and as I read Natkins' stories and accounts of day-to-day life in her school, they triggered memories and caused me to nod knowingly. I suddenly remembered the funny things my students said seriously. One explained "stereotype" with the example "all Polacks are dumb just because most are." Another insisted on partial credit for answering "monotony" to a question requiring "monogamy" as the correct answer. I remembered also the not so funny incidents: the occasional threats of violence; the virtual absence of manners and common courtesy; the creative excuses for laziness and irresponsible behavior; the high school senior who asked "Why d'ya flunk me? I didn't do nothin.'"

The similarity between the episodes in *Our Last Term* and what I recalled from personal experience seemed eerie. "Arnie called this morning to ask for a lift to school," Natkins writes, "because his car is still in the shop. Kids put a bag of sugar into the gas tank last term and apparently the stuff got into the fuel injection system. Arnie's out-of-pocket expenses were close to \$500, and he figures he'll have to dump the car for a \$5,000 loss. His insurance company won't pay." Neither did mine. And the only difference between what happened to Arnie and what happened to me is that, in my case, the kids used chocolate milk, not sugar. They were "special education" students who later complained to me that the filler tube was recessed too deeply and it was difficult to get the milk into the gas tank. . . .

NATKINS WRITES about senior high school students who can't spell their own names, don't know the alphabetical order, and let their lives be directed "by buzz words, by half-baked, ill-conceived ideas." They

are unmotivated, alienated, and difficult to teach. "If I tell them in advance there'll be an essay, there's an outbreak of bubonic plague on the day of the test. Mention term papers, and they hemorrhage." When six students had written in their homework that Afghanistan was in Africa, Natkins confesses that she checked the map after the third time she read it and went back to the map after the sixth time. "I thought I was flipping," she admits.

"I read exam papers and all I can think of is how I've wasted my life," laments another teacher.

Through it all, she maintains her sense of perspective. "When a kid, speaking loudly to a friend about a rock concert, told me, in wide-eyed protest, barely suppressing a grin, 'I ain't talkin, I was just aksin' her about the story,' it was an obvious con. (It was not, to the kids, an obvious, self-contradictory assertion.)" And she also keeps her sense of humor. She writes that she "didn't know whether to laugh or cry when a student identified New York's Senator as 'Jackup Jabbis,' the Secretary of State as 'Sypurs Fance,' and the artist whose works are being shown at [the modern art museum] as 'Picass-hole.'"

I don't blame her. Under similar circumstances I, too, didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I still don't.

In a priceless story, rivaling Abbott and Costello's "Who's on First?" routine, Natkins illustrates the pronounced student lethargy facing many of today's urban school teachers:

I distributed a typed sheet that listed four assignments. The bottom of the page read:

"Assignments 1 and 2 are due on Monday, February 11.

"Assignment 3 is due on Tuesday, February 12.

"Assignment 4 is due on Wednesday, February 13."

I asked the kids to read the assignment sheet carefully, so that if they had any questions they could ask them before they began to work.

"When are these due?"

"You can answer that question yourself. Look at the bottom of the sheet."

"Well, why doncha just tell us?" (The plural pronoun was becoming increasingly common as more and more kids became self-appointed spokespersons for their classmates.)

"Because you can answer your own question by looking at the bottom of the sheet."

"Oh, I see."

"When are these due?" Somebody else had just joined the act.

"I just answered that question." At this stage of the term my style is lighthearted-patient-going-on-weary. I don't want to be too much of an ogre but I sure don't want to win any coddling awards.

"Well, I didn't hear you. When are these due?"

We do a repeat of the earlier when-are-these-due dialogue.

"Where we spose to get the answers to these questions?"

That one needed translating, since each assignment number was followed by the title of the article to be read, and the page on which the article began. "Do you mean in which issue do you find the articles?" (I had previously distributed two issues left over from the term before.)

"Yeah, that's what I mean."

"Look at the top of the sheet. what does it say?"

The top of the sheet read:

City High School	Social Studies Dept.
Mary A., Principal	William Z., Assist. Principal
American Studies CW_____	Ms. N._____
Assignments	

February 11 Newsweek

"It says American Studies."

"Read the rest of the heading."

"All you have to do is tell us!"

"You can find it yourself. You don't need anyone to tell you."

"Is it the February 11 issue?" I tell him I'm pleased that he found it by himself.

Another hand goes up. "When are these due?"

Ten, fifteen minutes shot.

I changed the format of the next assignment sheet and placed the due date immediately after the assignment ("Assignment 7 — due Wednesday, February 20"). The sheets were distributed and I braced myself for the inevitable.

"When are these due?"

No wonder that "Where do I start?" became the plea most often heard in her school's teachers' workroom. To boot, the students would taunt their teachers, adding insult to injury: "Hey, man, how much you make? You make under thirty thou? Man, you're boring! I think I'd rather have a kid take a knife to me." And sometimes they did. In Natkins' school, as in many urban schools, slashes with razors and robberies at gunpoint are not unheard of.

NATKINS' COLLEAGUES found teaching exhausting, depressing, and plain miserable. "I'm beginning to think that truants have an insight that we lack," she quotes one teacher. "When I see what these kids don't know after four years of high school, I could cry. I break my back day after day and most of them end up knowing nothing. I read exam papers and all I can think of is how I've wasted my life," laments another. Still another teacher echoed the same sentiment by insisting

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An entry from *A Teacher's Diary* by Lucille G. Natkins

THE FACULTY CONFERENCE

Our staff brings to the first faculty conference of the term the same degree of enthusiasm that the kids bring to the first day of classes. Like the kids, we fill in the seats from the rear. For us, as for our students, the only redeeming feature of this command performance is that it offers a chance to schmooze with friends, an activity best performed surreptitiously at the back of the room.

"Welcome to Peter" was Roman Numeral I on the agenda and Mary [the principal] opened the conference by beckoning him to stand and saying "Well, here he is." He got a warm round of applause. Peter, a former colleague, was joining us as assistant principal (or AP) in charge of administration. Mary was also a former colleague as was Budd, our other AP, who was in charge of guidance.

Peter, who had worked at the Board's math department for the last few years, made an it's-good-to-be-home speech, and was brisk and brief. Not so Budd, who was next on the agenda. Budd, a swimming teacher in his pre-AP days, was jaunty and, with his red hair, freckles and pug nose, boyishly good-looking. Things needed shoring up, he told us, and it was getting harder to do as the staff kept shrinking because of "you know, budget cuts and layoffs." There were a lot more kids in the halls during classes, and "a lot more incidents, you know, some problems in the bathrooms and stuff like that." Budd's incidents and stuff like that were euphemisms for the thefts, arson, drug dealing, and assorted acts of vandalism that had plagued us, exponentially, for the past few years.

"We need a handle on the kids who leave your room, you know, who's leaving, when, and where. We're going to start a new system requiring kids to sign in and out of rooms, giving the times of departure and arrival."

"Sounds like an airport tote board," Sid muttered.

A couple of dumb questions on the signout sheet ("Should we keep the sheet in the Delaney book or in the desk drawer?") shot the next ten minutes until Agenda Item III, a guest speaker. ("We don't hardly get none of those," drawled a voice behind me.) Dr. Young, a psychologist, was on the staff of a local hospital and had a federal grant, Mary said, to find the causes of aggression and violence. He was young, charming, and politic. He needed our help, he said. He wanted

to develop a coterie of concerned faculty members and a close personal relationship with kids who were in trouble or kids who might be headed for trouble. He hoped he would be able to spend four or five hours a week working with us.

"Are there any questions for Dr. Young?" Mary asked brightly. There weren't. "Any comments?" She seemed hopeful. There were a few desultory ones.

"This is a support structure we've never had before," Mary chirped enthusiastically. But she couldn't drum up much business and the questions died.

"This is a support structure that sounds as if it isn't worth a damn," Sid said. "Four hours a week from a shrink to solve *our* problems?"

AGENDA ITEM IV was an obligatory "professional" item, Mary's report on *15,000 Hours*, a book about an inner city London school. Dr. Mortimer, the author, thought that the age and condition of school buildings and the age and ability of teachers had nothing to do with school success. ("You mean I don't have to know nothing, nohow?" asked Arnie, looking up from *The Daily* he'd been reading.) But good attendance, good behavior was important. Also homework (given, legitimate, marked and returned), display of pupil work and praise. Ditto the cleanliness of the school and student involvement. But most important, Mortimer said, was positive expectations on the part of the staff and bell-to-bell teaching. ("I knew it," Arnie said, "if I do something right, like know the name of the President, it doesn't matter, but if I do something wrong, like tell a kid he's a moron and kill half the period, it does.") Arnie, like Nettie and Sid and me, taught social studies, and we usually all sat together at faculty conferences.

"People have said that we're changing," Mary concluded, "but we try to identify those areas that need straightening so that we will not change. Dr. Mortimer's message is one we've always known. We can't relax standards, behavioral or academic. Holding to standards is what this school has always been about."

"Yea, verily," Sid said, "holding to standards is what this school has always been about. Amen."

Nettie wasn't amused. "If you say it, it's all right, but if it comes from the principal it's wrong."

"If I thought Madame Principal

meant it I'd wave the flag with her. I held to standards" (Sid said the phrase in mimicry) "last term in my soph classes and failed half of them. Bill was very upset because our department failure rates were 'too high.' He didn't think Mary would be happy when she saw them and she wasn't. She was pressing him to the wall about our percentages and I heard the other chairmen were getting the same kind of pressure. Anytime Mary wants to hold to standards I'll hold with her. Just don't leave me alone in left field and tell me you're right behind me."

THE BICKERING about teacher-versus-administrator responsibility for school security ended in a standoff ten minutes later when Gus, a burly six-footer who looked like the college football champ he'd been thirty years ago, waved Louie aside and claimed the mike. Officially, Gus was chairperson of the department the Board called industrial arts and everyone else called shop. Unofficially, he was the chief school disciplinarian and the principal's good buddy.

The tone of this place, Gus told us, needed work and 75 percent of our problems could be solved if we tightened up on lateness to class and the use of passes, and if we watched the halls during the change of classes.

Were there any other suggestions to improve school tone, Gus wanted to know. He asked with the confidence of the defense attorney who knows exactly what answers to expect and is prepared to demolish any not to his liking.

"What about gangs?"

"We're working on that. We got the 83rd precinct and the civilian security patrol alerted and we're gonna get that cleaned up."

"What happened to the Honor Guard? Why don't we use them any more?" The Honor Guard was a group of students that had been posted at strategic places such as the first floor doors and staircase exits.

"I can't ask kids to be enforcement officers. I told one kid not to let anyone leave the building and he flattened six kids in a week. Four parents were in."

"Four out of six isn't bad," yelled a voice from Row Z.

"Okay, we'll bring the Honor Guard back, but all we can ask them to do is point that-a-way when we come running after someone."

"Why don't we lock up all the first

floor doors except the main one?" A howl of objections went up. The main door led to the street. The other doors led to the teacher parking lots.

"Well, you heard it," Gus said smugly. "We close those doors and a lot of you guys complain that you have to walk around to the front to get into the building."

"What schnuk handed *that* one to Gus?" Arnie asked.

"Besides," Gus added, "our intruders come in through the back door because their friends get out during class and wedge a door open. We're not about to violate the fire laws by locking doors from the inside. And we don't have the manpower to watch the damn doors all day long."

"Gus, has any special effort been made to contain the CEH [Children with Emotional Handicaps] program?"

"Try to contain it? Are you kidding? Every goddamn day Mary and I are on the phone with anybody who'll talk to us about moving those kids out of the building. We've gotten eight of the biggest twelve troublemakers removed and the four left will literally drive us crazy. But cheer up," he beamed, "generally they get involved with each other."

Gus was doing a good job of fielding the questions he'd invited but they were coming at him from all corners and more hands signaled to be recognized every minute.

MARY HAD been sitting quietly in Row A. Abruptly, she got up and walked to the mike. Gus looked surprised, but said nothing and moved aside.

Mary stood poised at the mike but didn't say a word. If it was everyone's attention she was waiting for, she got it, and fast. No one pushed Big Gus aside, not even his good buddy, the principal. What was up?

"I . . . don't . . . believe. . . ." Mary began, pausing dramatically between words, "I just don't believe that I'm listening about this high school! My teachers think they're in the middle of an inferno. But outsiders think we're nuts. I asked the Board for more security and was told no. The trouble is in the streets, they told me, not in the building. Let's be realistic, for heaven's sake! Our problems are not the catastrophic situation you are envisioning. We can count the number of assaults," she spoke slowly and deliberately, "on one, *one* hand, half, *half* caused by CEH kids. We can count the number of teacher assaults," there was another pause, "on two, *two* fingers. I can't accept that we're living in a behavioral

cesspool. It's not realistic! It's not true! There are *maybe* 30 boys, *maybe* 20 girls who give us grief. We've got a population of 3,000!

"I had ten phone calls from parents last week about 'the rape.'" She underscored the words. "What rape? There hasn't been any! We're feeding on rumors!"

"She won't be the first lady superintendent if we go down the tube," said a voice behind me. "She's on probation and she's sweeping it under the rug," echoed the voice's neighbor.

The air in the auditorium was strained.

"We don't want rumors, but why are you giving us coverups?"

"Are we supposed to compare ourselves to other schools, or to our past?"

The rhetorical questions were shouted from the rear and Mary seemed not to hear them. Stan's hand was up and she recognized him.

Stan, a math teacher whose normal demeanor was serious-bordering-on-grim, looked and sounded as if he were ready to pounce. ("Why is she going to tangle with *him*?" Nettie asked in disbelief.)

"Mary," Stan began, "you introduced Peter by saying that 'it's not often we have a pleasant task, given the climate of school life these days.' And read your agenda." Stan did, ticking off the Roman numerals and slapping the sheet for emphasis as he read. "One, Welcome to Peter, Two, Signout Sheet, Three, Dr. Young, Causes of Violence and Aggression, Four, *15,000 Hours*, Five, School Security Committee Report, Six, Improvement of School Tone. *You* picked those discussion topics, we didn't! And when have we ever had such an agenda in this school?" Stan looked at Mary defiantly and waited for an answer. He didn't get one.

"I think this discussion is fruitless and should best be terminated," Mary said evenly, pointedly not looking in Stan's direction.

"Why can't we respond?" Stan persisted. "I'll repeat, *you* picked this discussion . . . topic." "Touché," someone whispered behind me.

"Violence is not a daily occurrence," Mary said in measured tones, still not looking at Stan. "Some of us are making it sound spectacular. We're not, repeat, *not* in an adversary relationship. We can't control the fact that the Board sends us murderers. We can control the fact that if the murderer is late to class we can bother him."

"You're minimizing!" Stan said.

This time she made eye contact.

"Your perceptions, Stan, are not mine. My feeling for the school's safety and reputation and my feeling for my personal safety is as strong as yours.

There's no quarrel intended. There is a right to disagree."

"But we're accustomed to a certain atmosphere," Cathy, another of my social studies colleagues, called out, "and we're uneasy because we see cracks in the seams. Don't tell us that others have cancer and we just have an ulcer."

A DOZEN hands shot up and there was an audible chorus of support for Stan and Cathy. Gus, all two hundred pounds of him, came to the mike to bail Mary out. ("After what she did to him before?" the voice behind me asked in surprise. "Maybe his psyche is as fragile as his physique," the voice's neighbor replied.)

"You guys are always in such a hurry to get out of a faculty conference and now you wanna stay here forever," Gus boomed. "C'mon, fellas, we've aired everything. Let's beat it!" Gus's style wasn't subtle but it worked. We beat it, but we continued airing.

"We're in trouble. Mary's not facing the problem and I don't think she can handle it if she does face it. Do you realize we have a principal and two APs who've never held administrative jobs at any other school? It's nice to be cozy with them but they don't know what a tough school is like." It was Sam, also a social studies teacher. He'd transferred to our school after twenty years at a school reputed to be one of the hellholes of the city.

"Mary and I don't work in the same school," Stan said, "and if our perceptions differ as greatly as she says they do, I'd better check in with my shrink."

"For years we've been told we're different. Now Mary tells us we're the same. I can't make the adjustment," Cathy said. "And Her Highness can't admit that we've had it. This is our last term. We're dead as a school."

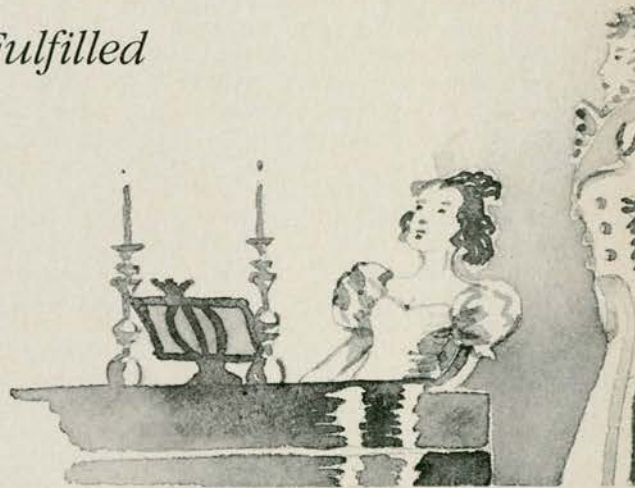
"Do you get the feeling," Arnie chimed in, "that battle stations are being manned?"

"Yeah," replied Stan, "but by the privates, not the generals." □

—Condensed from *Our Last Term: A Teacher's Diary*. © 1985 by Lucille G. Natkins. The book may be ordered directly from the publisher (send \$9.25 plus \$1.25 postage to University Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Maryland 20706), or through your local university bookstore.

CLASSICS IN THE CLASSROOM

Great Expectations Fulfilled



BY SHELA PEARL

WITH TREPIDATION on both our parts, mine showing in my enthusiastic bubbling, theirs in that teen mask of boredom, we rearranged the chairs informally, and I began to read aloud to the thirty-five skeptics, sprawled almost defiantly in their chairs. But the narrative voice of Pip, the adult looking back at himself, the orphan child alone in the graveyard who introduces himself with the mispronunciation of his own name, struck a responsive chord. I read slowly and with great sympathy for this frightened, lonely, but obviously now grownup person who was reminiscing. As Pip places himself in the picture, only to have his view of the world literally turned upside down by the convict, my students leaned forward. Some had been victims of or witnesses to violence themselves; muggings and even murders are a reality of their world. I was apprehensive that they might think Pip's obedience to the convict demeaning; instead, they applauded Pip's "cool" as he politely asks to be set upright again, so that he might carry out the convict's demands for food and a file. My students — streetwise yet gentle — were already beginning to accept Pip as one of their own.

With this scene from *Great Expectations*, I began the development of a classics core curriculum for ninth-grade students at my school, located in a ghetto in Queens, N.Y. It was an act of faith on my part, inspired by my participation in a National Endowment for the

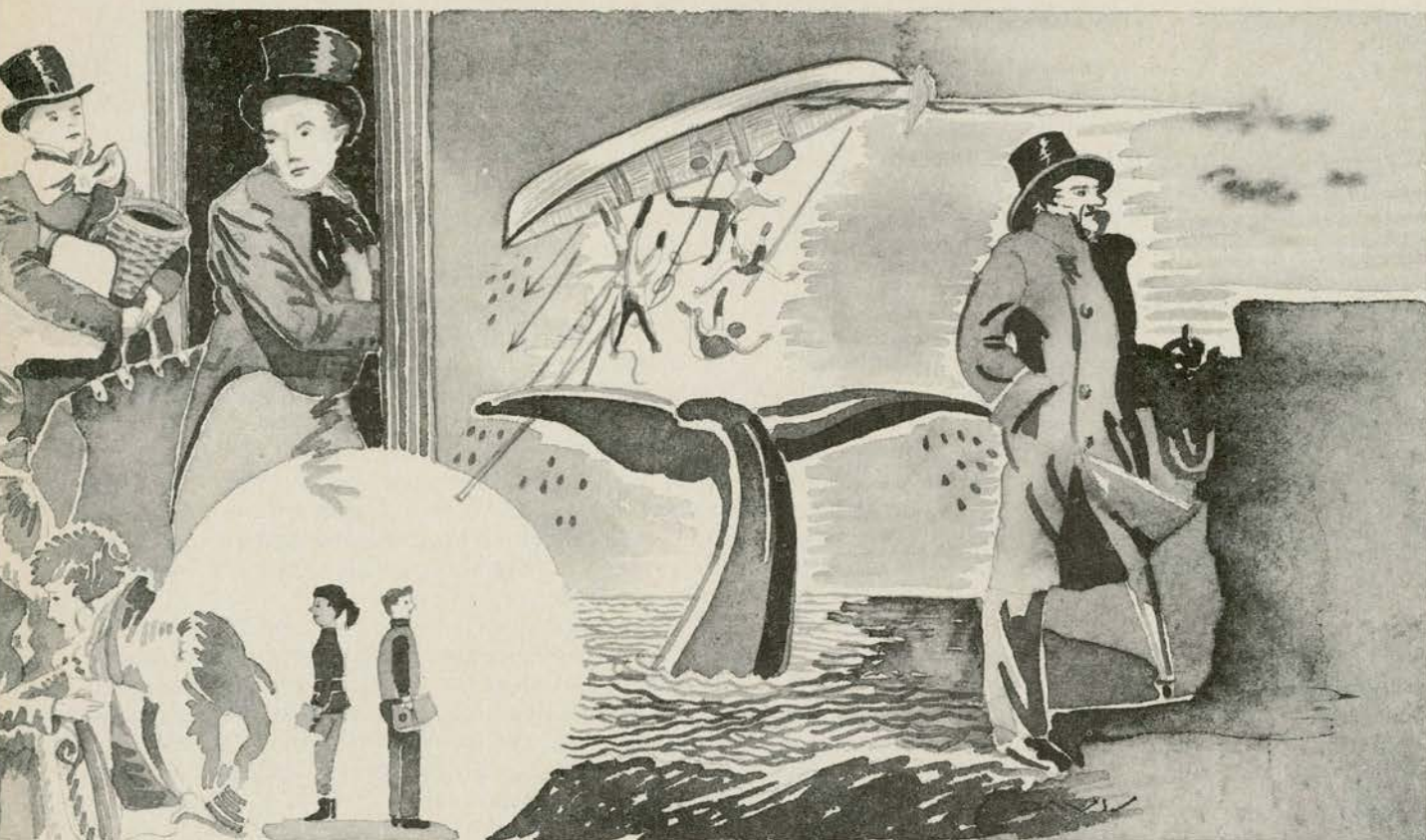
Humanities seminar at Berkeley, California, in the summer of 1984.

Although my own passion for the classics had never wavered, I had reluctantly acquiesced to the sentiment that had come to prevail during the 1970s: that texts must be "relevant," easily accessible, and speak to our students' immediate and recognizable experience. So-called "teen novels," and other selections that "spoke their language" and "validated their experiences," were touted as the sure path to elevated self-esteem, which would then lead past all detours to blooming egos and greater achievement. But we had been led astray. Instead of lifting their sights, expanding their experiences, and enriching their understanding, we limited our students to the familiar, the easy, and the trivial. Bereft of our inspiration, they were left unguided, unable to find their own paths to the best of humanity's imaginings and reflections.

Since I had been educated at Brooklyn College, with its unwavering classics core curriculum, I had been able to hold fast to my personal standards. But until I returned to the humanities nest at the NEH seminar, where fifteen other colleagues from all over the country were searching as I was for both the way and the reassurance to transmit the best our culture has to offer, I had not the strength to insist that my students had the right and ability to become engaged with the world's greatest literature, especially since they were culturally and economically deprived.

But in the ideal learning environment at Berkeley, as we ourselves found new richness and insights from the literature we were exploring, we realized that we could

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ILLUSTRATED BY SUSAN DAVIS

and should transmit this to our students just as we were receiving it. We focused on five Victorian novels. Each portrayed how a young hero or heroine comes to adulthood, the most relevant topic for our students. We studied the relationship of the main characters to society, how society satisfied or frustrated their desires, how their social roles circumscribed their expectations. We came to understand not only the world of the novel but the way in which the novelist created that world.

HAVING THUS re-established my own professional convictions, I returned to Queens with a mission. I had always respected my students for their achievements despite severe odds, but it took my seminar experience to enable me to make the leap of faith needed by me for my students. Our students need our reinforcement and they respond to our image of them. I was determined to help them reclaim their legacy. I wanted to share with them the finest examples of our language and heritage. That this was a group of either first generation or recent immigrants from thirty-one different countries, as well as blacks from the south and inner city, meant that here in New York, as Americans, they were entitled to share the best of our traditions.

My students — Carlos, Soraya, Raoul, John, Lilliana — struggle against both the reality of their environment and their “expectations” of it, just as did their counterparts in the age of Dickens. They are often fearful and negative, for they live outside the mainstream of the “desirable” society. Part of my role is to reintroduce them to a world that is rich with possibility, if they are equipped to recognize and utilize it. My students can

begin to understand literature as a triumph of humanity. Reading about how the individual in the novel is shaped by his background — and often builds upon it — helps them discover who they are, and stimulates them with the knowledge that we are always in the process of becoming, reaching, and growing.

Somehow, I managed to transmit my fervor to my skeptical, but not negative, principal. As if to affirm the correctness of my decision, our jumbled book room yielded three hard-cover class sets of *Great Expectations*, unused since their purchase in 1967. Can one believe in miracles? Our budget had already been spent on drill and work books for the term.

The students were delighted with the find — their first set of unmarked fresh books. But when they discovered a total of 438 pages, these children of the “now-era” winced: my first obstacle. Solution: rash promise of absolution from required book reports while we shared Pip’s perils. Such was my enticing salesmanship. Assuring them that they could “trust me,” I drew upon their favorite family activity, watching soap operas, for reinforcement. They often spoke of “the soaps” as if they were happening to them or their friends. As part of our agreement, I had to watch episodes of their favorite shows, even the Hispanic and Japanese soaps that many of their mothers enjoyed and that preempted the TV sets at home.

But I put my part of the bargain to advantage. We outlined the soaps’ plots in great detail, and to prove that Dickens was as good a storyteller, we outlined the plot of *Nicholas Nickelby* for comparison. Dickens had written in installments also, I explained, and was ex-

tremely popular in his own day, a fact I proved to them with newspaper accounts of his voyages to America. They grudgingly agreed to give it an open-minded try for my sake.

PIP'S FAMILY plight was especially recognizable and touching to my students, many of whom are from broken homes or are in foster care. When Pip's sister uses him as a "connubial missile" to hurl at Joe, they applauded Dickens' phrasing and identified with motherless Pip, who lives in a world as hostile as some of theirs. Students who have been battered and abused as some of mine have become as adept as Pip at self protection, but they, too, shared his guilt and fear.

My students are always eager for Christmas, and when they realized that the scene in the marshes occurs on Christmas Eve, they were doubly sorry for Pip, a sympathy that they retained through much of Pip's later selfishness. When Pip is humiliated at the Christmas dinner table and fed animal parts like a dog, they noted the similarities with the convict, who eats like an animal; they had begun to be sensitive to Dickens' parallels and metaphors.

And already they were discovering the multidimensional quality of these characters, in contrast to their sudsy friends. For example, although they found him terrifying, they also recognized the pathos of Pip's convict as he hugs himself for warmth and support.

They were intrigued and eager when I assigned the next chapter for homework, but this was more than the curiosity for a potboiler; they had gained access into a brave and frightened little boy, whose exterior is never quite clear, but whose inner qualities are recognizable to my students, his peers. So, home they went with their new books. Since I was apprehensive about their ability to continue reading on their own (despite their strong motivation), I suggested reading aloud at home if they had any problems, reminding them of the pattern of Victorian reading groups. They sloughed off my warnings, but I knew that my dramatic reading and pregnant pauses punctuated with pivotal questions and observations might have given them unwarranted security.

I had asked them to take note of Pip's tormented conscience during these early chapters. His usual eating competition with Joe, which I had had two of them enact, was corrupted by Pip's guilty secret. From the outset, we questioned Pip's behavior and the effect of circumstance upon it. What kinds of qualities of character does Pip show compared to Joe? We looked for

And they were discovering the multidimensional quality of these characters, in contrast to their sudsy friends.

examples of exaggeration, which added humor to desperate, angry characters such as the convict and Mrs. Joe, and the class began to look beyond the surface. I had alerted them to the differences between the two convicts, but they had shown their own understanding for Mrs. Joe, until she fawned over Uncle Pumblechook.

With their revelations, some of my apprehensions were lessening, but so was the volume and strength of my voice, as I read the first chapters to my third class that day. Therefore, that night I taped the next chapters. And I made a few deletions, which I justified to myself on the basis of Dickens' words-for-pay style.

THE NEXT day, before we listened to the tape, I asked them how they had managed alone the previous night. Most reported a great deal of difficulty, but that was mitigated when they heard me read the chapters aloud. It was also apparent to me from their expressions that they had understood some of the passages on their own. So, as we again sat around in class and listened together, I interrupted the tape to emphasize points of character, plot advancement, narrative voice, and style.

I was amazed at their level of interest and response. They noticed nuances jaded adults might have missed altogether — such as the parallel of Pip's burden, with the bread on his leg, and the convict's, with the chain on his. I enjoyed the intricately woven tapestry of foreshadowings, but realized they would not be able to recognize it until the end.

While I was not anxious to read the entire book aloud, I realized they needed this temporary security and reinforcement. I did not want to do their daily work for them, but since this was such a challenging venture and since they were so responsive, I had faith that we would accelerate eventually and finish before the term's end. Therefore, before we put the tape on each day, I asked them for responses to homework questions about their portions. Soon, I began to notice more confidence and some very astute comments.

And they began to be very personally involved with Pip and his problems. When Pip's self-esteem is shaken by Estella, they become annoyed with him, an irritation that grows through the book, as he rejects those who really love him, singlemindedly pursuing his great expectations. The students resented Pip's instant glory, which he had done nothing to merit. They respect people who earn what they get, but all agreed that they would not turn down a gift of a fortune. When both Pip and Estella do not take responsibility for themselves and their actions, the students got angry, but kept rooting for the little chap they remembered from the beginning.

AFTER A week of this reinforcement, I suggested that they begin to jot down their impressions in a journal. Reading the book with pen in hand and mind honed enabled them to become part of the creative as well as the critical process, as I had been in the seminar. How clever they felt when their own ideas and judgments were validated in class, and how challenged and eager they were to try again the next day, since we literally applauded each other's discoveries.

I made certain to read and return their journals daily, affirming their insights while ignoring their technical

errors. Some were able to observe patterns that they built into interpretations of Dickens' overall design. Others never moved beyond unrelated insights.

Comparing their own schooling with Pip's, they laughed at his so-called "classical" education: While Mrs. Wopsle slept at her desk in front of the class, Mr. Wopsle put the children to sleep with his long, soporific treatises. They enjoyed Joe's glorification of Pip's meager literacy when they saw the grossly misspelled letter that is the source of Joe's praise; the poignancy of Joe's loving ignorance heightens the impact of this foreboding scene. They noticed too the irony of Pip's loss of sight as he sets out for Miss Havisham's. And they were irritated as Pip distances himself from Joe in favor of the more wealthy and less loving. Pip's growing discontent and realization of his own coarseness was made painfully clear to them when Pip is annoyed by Joe's clumsy heavy boots as he climbs up to see Pip in London.

We enjoyed sharing our journals and stimulated each other to creative projects — such as scene enactments, family albums, musical scores, imaginary letters and diaries from characters, scene revisions, and moral-issues debates. In addition, some tried writing in their journals in the styles of the characters, but basically they preferred to write as themselves, since they were so personally involved with the characters, their lives, and the depiction of their world.

Many questions central to human existence were raised, and the students' growing affinity with Pip and his growth into adulthood encouraged them to grapple with their own expectations of love and property, true affection, manipulation, loyalty, self-knowledge, and self-respect. These youngsters, who were most eager to succeed, had begun to question goals and what it sometimes costs to achieve them.

In addition to feeling challenged and pleased by the subject matter, some found validation of their work by reading aloud to parents and siblings. A few of the parents who had attended British schools in India, Guyana, and the West Indies reminisced with them about their own reading of Dickens and other fine writers; the children and parents shared a pride and unity that seemed to enhance both groups' self image. Some parents even uncovered old treasured copies of classics they had brought with them to America, which their children used in subsequent assignments. The parents began to feel that their children's education was more valuable than they had thought and allowed them more time away from chores for study.

EVENTUALLY, THE students found less need for my tapes and began to tape scenes themselves, such as Pip's meeting with Estella and Miss Havisham and his rescue of the burning old woman and later his convict benefactor. When they scripted and acted such powerful scenes, I knew they had fulfilled my expectations of them, but it wasn't until our trip to see the 1942 film of the novel that I realized that they had taken charge of this project.

As we neared the third book in the series, I arranged a viewing of the film, to be shown at the library in Great Neck, since my school and local library did not have the facilities. To prepare, we began to act out more scenes and speculate as to which parts would be included and

which left out and the possible reasons for the director's choices. To herald our excursion, the students made vivid posters illustrating significant scenes and themes — to generate enthusiasm and concretize their view of the book, now almost an obsession with us. I had decided to forego any interruptions and focused all learning around the book, drawing vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, composition, and oral communication lessons from its rich pages. We hoped that Dickens would have enjoyed our learning the use of quotation marks from his exciting dialogues. We thought he would.

The book was theirs; no one dared violate it without incurring their wrath.

In enthusiastic anticipation of our trip to Great Neck, we set up discussion panels to help us understand the structure of the book compared to the movie's. Students explored how character description could be translated into visual terms. Even the scenery — an integral part of the book's mood and foreshadowing — was like a character, they decided. Here, they summed up ongoing discussions of the themes of revenge, poverty, guilt, relationships, law, and love that they felt held valuable life lessons. I was delighted by their affirmation of traditional values, which had been reinforced by the price Pip pays for his greed and unjustified great expectations; they learned from him that you must earn excellence. The final panel discussed the possible endings, obviously an issue with Dickens, whose message and conclusions were not as clear as the students saw them.

When we finally visited the library, they were an astute audience, to the surprise of the staff. The students rose to the occasion by behaving maturely. But they were most demanding critics: They resented many of the movie's deletions and changes in what they considered to be their book. And they were amazed when David Lean added still this third ending, which they felt violated the integrity of the book. The book was theirs; no one dared violate it without incurring their wrath. Their righteous indignation was yet another testament to their growth.

The greatest compliments came from Soraya, who felt that after Pip pays for all his faults and mistakes, "he should have a happily-ever-after." In addition, she was delighted to discover that she read the book with as much enjoyment as if it were not a school assignment.

Each of my students has now read several classics from the NEH list and my expansion of it, and they have shown both improved skills and self-esteem. Their engagement with these books, so different in time, place, and language from their everyday world, tells of the universality of the classics as a link between us all. As for myself, I feel proud and grateful to have accompanied my students on this great literary journey. □

OVER-PROGRAMMED MATERIALS: TAKING THE TEACHER OUT OF TEACHING

BY ARTHUR WOODWARD

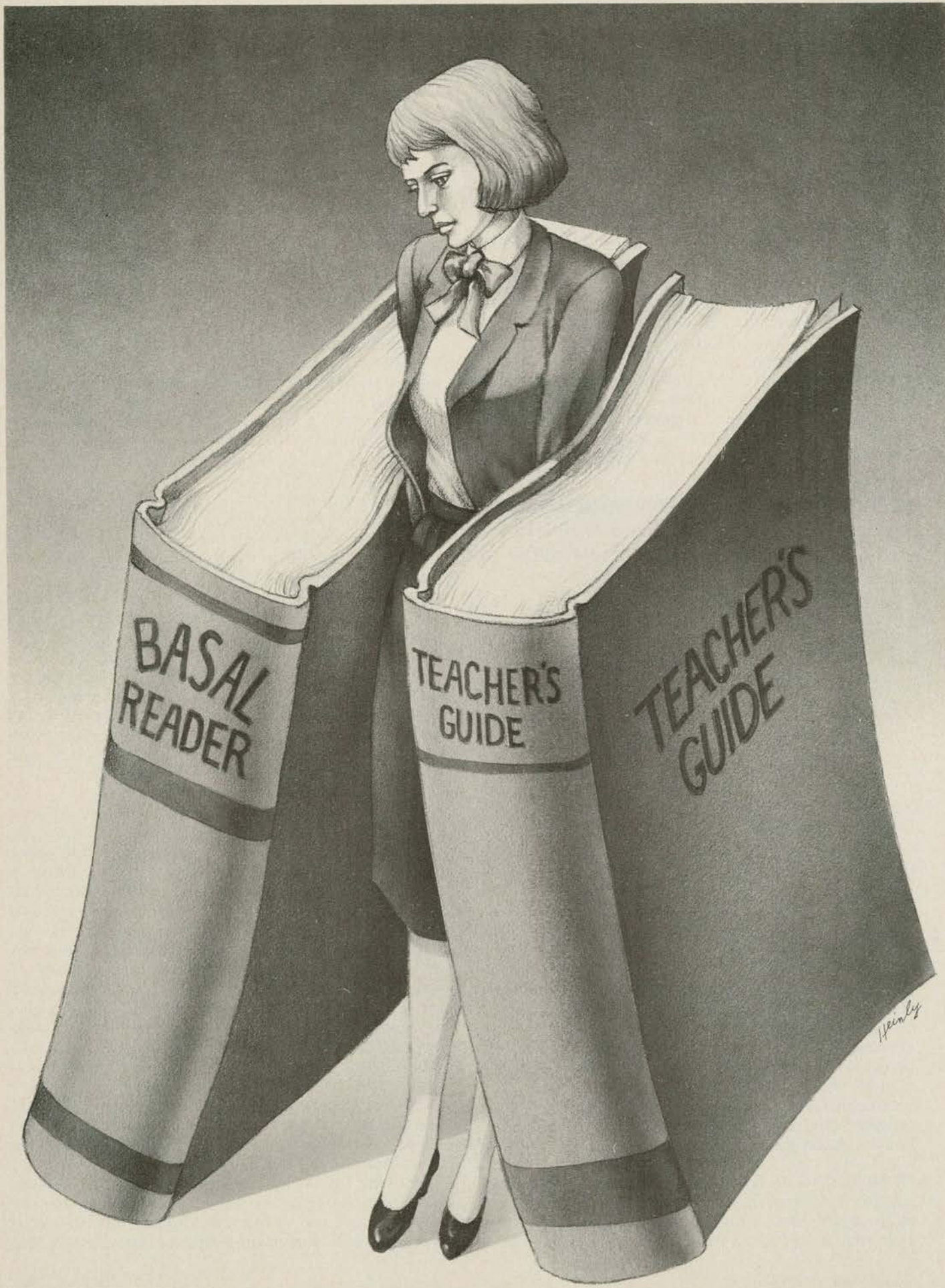
THERE IS little doubt that teaching is in profound crisis. In the numerous school reform reports beginning with the National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the subsequent reports by state departments of education and professional associations, the problems facing the teaching profession were identified over and over again as a major reason for the decline of educational quality. The reports noted the attrition through retirement and career changes of highly qualified teachers, the continuing shortage of teachers in the sciences, the difficulty of attracting highly qualified candidates into teaching, low pay, and the poor academic performance of many students who plan to become teachers. Efforts to alleviate these problems through higher entering salaries, undergraduate scholarships, master teacher programs, and more extensive inservice training and retraining are now underway in many areas.

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However, these reforms, in my opinion, will fail to attract our ablest young people into teaching unless they can be assured that they are entering a field where they will have the opportunity to use their creative abilities and to exercise the broad discretion and decision-making power that is normally characteristic of professional status. Based on numerous visits to a cross-section of elementary and junior high school reading and mathematics classrooms, I have to conclude that this is not the situation today.

Many of the teachers I observed (both experienced and less experienced) followed their textbooks almost word for word. There seemed to be no lessons that did not closely follow the lesson plan found in the teacher's guide, nor were there activities that had not been suggested by the guide. In the basal reading programs, there appeared to be a rigid adherence to a highly managed series of teaching and learning activities presented in the teacher's guides. It seemed as if the textbook program contained everything that could possibly be needed, and it was rare indeed for spontaneous activities or activities that departed from the teacher's guide outline to occur.

In the reading classes I observed, there was little



BASAL
READER

TEACHER'S
GUIDE

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extended reading and comprehension-based teaching, but there was lots of workbook activity. In some cases, so slavishly did teachers follow their guides that students who correctly answered textbook questions were "wrong" because that particular answer did not appear in the guide's answer key.

Why did so many teachers allow the materials to be the relentless overseer of their teaching? In discussions with them, it was clear that they felt that if they followed the lesson plans, skill strands, and management/testing system of their series, their students would succeed in reading. They were also fearful of departing from the strict sequence and tight format because administrators were so committed to the materials and expected teachers to fully implement each step and stage. Indeed, 77 percent of the teachers participating in a 1982 study conducted by Patrick Shannon reported that they would not be allowed to teach reading without basal readers and worksheets.

It appeared that the onus of teaching students now fell on the instructional materials. They were touted as fail safe and fool proof. Teachers were simply implementers or managers of these materials, administrators of the numerous tasks the manual required be done seriatim.

Administrators . . . expected teachers to fully implement each step and stage.

Clearly, there is little problem in teachers consulting a teacher's guide. However, there is a problem when successful teaching is defined as the total, lockstep implementation of all the suggestions that the modern teacher's guide contains. The result is that teacher discretion is discouraged, as the manuals provide for every contingency. For the exceptional teacher there is little problem in implementing the program outlined by the manual; the cost, in certain cases, is the creativity and spontaneity of teaching. For the less exceptional teacher these modern manuals seem to encourage an excessive dependency.

TEACHING AS seen in the classrooms I visited was not how I remembered it (idealistically or not) as a student. The more I looked at the instructional materials that were being used, especially the teacher's

guide, the more it seemed that they represented a metaphor of how we viewed and what we expected of our teachers. For example, in an enrichment exercise on context clues in one recently published series (1978), the guide suggested that "capable pupils" make up words a Martian might use and have their fellow students decipher the meaning of the words by using the context of the surrounding sentences and vocabulary. The example in the guide — "I brushed my teeth with peppermint *zzuxxl* and my toothbrush" — was accompanied by the following information: "Allow pupils to trade word lists and try to guess what each other's Martian words mean from the context clues. (In this case, *zzuxxl* is toothpaste.)" It seemed as if the editors and writers of this section of the guide could not be sure that teachers themselves would have mastered context skills and so be able to "fill in the blank."

Another example of this insulting, spoonfeeding approach was the directions found in a 1966 guide for how to stand in front of a chalkboard. It stated "Note: As the teacher writes the new words on the chalkboard, she should stand so that the children can see the words develop from left to right, pronouncing the words carefully as she is writing them. Italics are used to indicate the words that are to be written on the chalkboard." Unfortunately, these examples are not isolated ones. Too many curricular materials convey an image of the teacher as incapable of creating lessons, inferring the answers to student exercise questions, or of knowing what to say in class. There is very little that could be called *professional* about the role of the teacher as portrayed in these materials. Rather teachers appear to have been disenfranchised or *deprofessionalized* from the discretion, judgement, and decision making for so long characteristic of teaching. But, ironically, while the underlying assumption conveyed by these examples is of the disinterested and unintelligent teacher, it would take an exceptional teacher to fully implement every aspect of the management system, lesson plans, and components of these complex materials.

WAS THERE more to this image of the deprofessionalization of teaching than an impressionistic review of a few textbook series? In order to find out I began a research project that analyzed reading basals and teacher's guides that had been published each decade since 1920. I originally intended to analyze the fourth- and sixth-grade reading materials published by five long-established publishers, but this proved impossible because of lack of availability of series and books. Ultimately, the fifth-grade textbooks and guides of series published by just two companies were analyzed. However, in the process of narrowing down to these two series it became clear that the publishers I selected were representative of other companies, and the findings from the fifth-grade teacher's guides and pupil books were generally mirrored in the fourth- and sixth-grade materials. Because of the small sample, the publishers are referred to as Publisher or Series A and Publisher or Series B.

Until the 1960s the philosophy on which the reading series were based and organized was the belief that the most effective way of teaching children to read was to give them plenty of reading practice. For example, the

1937 guides of Series B noted that "Children's experiences should be greatly enriched by . . . wide reading. . . . No attempt should be made to isolate any habit or skill nor to provide separate training for its development." The practice of encouraging extensive reading was not limited to the stories in the pupil text. The authors of Series A (1944) noted that the thirty-five to forty stories in most of the textbooks could take up to one class period each; the rest of the time was to be spent in extension and library reading activities. The 1956 guide of Series B articulated the benefits of extended reading by noting that "research studies show that opportunities to read widely in varied types of materials strengthen and enlarge the child's recognition and meaning vocabularies." In order to encourage such development, the guide contained a student bibliography of 200 library books. Although basals published in the 1960s were still based on the notion that it was important to foster reading, Series B (1966), for example, included "carefully structured sequences" of stories and activities, whereas previous series had assumed a great deal of teacher selectivity. The 1970s manuals contained few references to the importance of capitalizing on student interests and the key role of extended and independent reading.

IN THE 1920s, and especially by the 1930s and 1940s, stories were grouped into interest themes such as "The Outdoor World," "Workers and Their Work," and "Famous Heroes from Long Ago" (Series A), and "Round About America," "Aeronautics," and "Neighbors to the South" (Series B). The choice of stories and themes was usually based on some kind of research. However, few publishers went to the length of Publisher B, who reported that the story selections for its 1923 series were based on responses of 50,000 pupils and 1,500 teachers. The idea was that each story in a theme would build into the next one and provide a "critical mass" of knowledge, interest, and motivation that would encourage reading development and additional library reading. Thus the authors of Series A (1956) stated:

As concepts and generalizations that are common to any given unit become apparent to boys and girls, added meaning, purpose, and motivation are given to their reading. They develop an inner drive to seek materials that satisfy their growing interest in some aspect of the general unit theme. A strong motive for personal reading will have been established—personal reading for which a background of basic concepts, generalizations, and interests has been systematically developed.

Although in the 1960s the teacher's guides still advocated the importance of reading, in the case of Series A themes became quite general ("Thresholds," "Kaleidoscope," and "Frontiers"). The 1978 basal included no themes but instead adopted a "magazine" approach.

In order to support the theme approach, beginning in the 1930s the series of both publishers included extensive student bibliographies that were correlated with each story or theme. Publisher B included 50 citations in its 1937 fifth-grade teacher's guide, 218 in its 1956 guide, and 200 in its 1966 guide. In the case of both publishers, *no* student books were listed in the guides published in the 1978 and 1976 editions. Al-

Reading became a matter of the mastery of hundreds of skills and subskills.

though the fifth-grade texts of Series A (1978) and Series B (1976) contained about the same number of stories as previous editions, they lacked both student bibliographies and the underlying assumption that reading instruction automatically involved extended, outside reading. In the case of Series A (1978), unit themes had been abandoned and each "section" instead consisted of disparate fiction and non-fiction selections. The adoption of this "magazine" approach implied a hodge-podge selection of fiction and non-fiction selections that might include such diverse stories as a Japanese-American girl's adjustment to a new school, the adventures of an Alaskan dog team, and a description of quicksand. It was a far cry from the theme approach of earlier decades. Instead, as reflected by these teacher's guides, reading became a matter of the mastery of hundreds of skills and subskills and the completion of worksheets, workbooks, remedial exercises, and the like. Although reading skills were listed in teacher's guides published before 1970, they tended to be quite general and did not approach the technical sophistication of later materials.

EXCEPT FOR those published in the early decades, all the basals in this study were accompanied by additional learning materials such as workbooks, story books, or activity books. However, through the 1950s the clear assumption of the publishers of these basal series was that teachers would need to use many additional materials—library books, magazines, books from other subject areas, and so on. By the 1960s the inclusion of an almost book-length story of the early life of Helen Keller augured the development of the self-contained basal that relied on no additional materials other than those found in the basal package. Thus, the basal of the 1970s appears remarkable in its complexity and comprehensiveness. In the pupil text there are poems, plays, stories about families and animals, stories about ethnic groups, non-fiction selections or topics ranging from tidal waves to police horses, and lessons teaching particular skills and the exercises reinforcing them. In the teacher's guide, the pupil text is trans-

So self-contained are these series that using outside materials is not particularly encouraged.

formed into a spiral-bound book within a book; around the reduced pupil pages are a host of teaching suggestions, questions to ask, answers to accept, activities to be undertaken, and tests to be administered. Preceding this section of the guide are pages and pages of scope and sequence charts. These charts list all the reading skills covered in the fifth-grade texts, skills ranging from how to use a dictionary, finding the meaning of words through context, using encyclopedias, to cross-referencing. Additionally, the back of the guide might contain examples of class record sheets, individual record sheets, section tests, and reduced facsimiles of the pupil text glossary.

So self-contained are these series that using outside materials is not particularly encouraged. For example, these textbooks might contain a small number of "bonus" reading selections for advanced readers (no going to the library here), or in a lesson on using alphabetization skills to identify the correct volume of an encyclopedia the activity is based on a line drawing of a set of these volumes, not the real thing (which even the poorest equipped library must possess).

IF WE try to construct a typical lesson as reflected in each teacher's guide for each period, we can get a good sense of the degree of discretion and independence accorded the teacher as well as the kinds of suggestions and resources available to help him or her teach. In the early manuals, suggestions were very general. The 1923 Series A guide contained a number of lesson objectives from which the teacher could choose, such as rapid silent reading or making an outline. The guide contained various suggestions for obtaining outside resources to stir pupils' interest in the unit and story theme. By the 1930s, as the reading programs began to emphasize the use of interest themes, the guides discussed the kinds of strategies and activities that could be used to introduce the basal themes and stories. In the case of a unit on travel and communication, general objectives were listed and ongoing projects suggested such as finding out about modern explorers (this was the period of great exploits by ex-

plorers and aviators). All suggestions to the teacher were quite general. It was expected that pupils would silently read through each story and then read it again and answer a number of questions. Apart from occasional model lesson plans that delved quite deeply into the method of teaching a story, the teacher's guide simply contained lesson objectives such as "to satisfy curiosity." It was assumed that the teacher could and would construct an appropriate lesson.

Basals published in the 1950s continued to follow the pattern established by prior materials. However, in the case of Series A (1956), teachers were to interrupt the silent reading of each story three times to ask specific questions about events and characters in the story. Both Series A and B provided complete study skill and comprehension exercises after each story.

The 1960s teacher's guides reflected the move to greater and greater "support" of the teacher, with the introduction of scripts that the teacher was supposed to read verbatim in introducing a story or assignment, and a general prescriptive approach throughout. By the 1970s the manuals were more scripted and more comprehensive in the kinds of suggestions and activities they included. Each story was usually preceded by an "overview" and followed by a number of exercises and workbook activities. In the case of Series A (1978), a rigid time schedule was laid out in which thirty-six skill sequences were to take four days each, seventeen bonus selections a total of twenty-three days, and four checkpoint sections a total of eight days. Each four-day sequence was to consist of the teaching and practice of a skill, applying skills to a reading selection, reteaching and then enriching skills. A distinction was made between good and poor readers. Poor readers were to be interrupted half-way through each story and asked factual questions about it. Brighter pupils could read the story all the way through and then answer comprehension-based questions.

BY THEIR very nature, teaching materials, especially the teacher's guide, reflect an image of the teacher who is to use them. What is notable in the case of the modern basal—in contrast to earlier materials—is the role of the teacher as a manager of preset lessons, questions, and activities. Because recently published basals and teacher's guides attempt to meet every eventuality and need, teachers have little discretion as to what can happen in a lesson. Also because these materials are based on a philosophy of reading that emphasizes the sequential acquisition of hundreds of skills within the framework of a management system that determines pupil placement and assignments, it is not surprising that the teacher's role is that of an administrator of a preplanned lesson. Discretion and judgment, essential elements of teaching and professionalism, are skills that have little place in such a reading lesson.

The "total package" approach and its effect can be seen in the lesson plans of the teacher's guides. There are lesson objectives, warmup questions to ask students to prepare them for the story selection, vocabulary to be taught and reinforced, exercises to complete, and page citations for workbooks and activity books. Unfortunately, these helpful hints become insulting in the context of the guides' view of the teacher. For example,

modern guides (as early as the 1960s) provide extensive scripts that teachers can follow. In the case of Series A (1966) the guide went as far as to tell the teacher to "Say . . ." As the word *scripts* implies, the intention has to be that teachers will stand in front of the class (as I have seen them do) and read from the script. The effect of following a script can be quite dampening (for teaching is nothing if not a spontaneous activity); the introduction of stories can be confined to overly abstract concepts, questions and answers are predetermined, and it becomes difficult for teachers to accommodate unanticipated learning opportunities.

Although most teacher's guides in the sample usually included some kind of summary of each story, the function of these summaries seemed to change. Prior to the 1970s, summaries of stories were a combination of brief summary, commentary, and overview that attempted to relate the story to motivational issues or the unit theme. It was assumed that teachers would read the story that would form the basis of their reading lesson. However, this assumption seemed to be problematic in the 1970s; the guides contained a full (sometimes inaccurate) summary of each story. Modern guides also always included the answers to questions.

Discretion and judgement — essential elements of teaching and professionalism — have little place in such a reading lesson.

stimulate student motivation by including stories that would excite even the most jaded child continued through the 1960 basals. The pre-1960 teacher's guides contained no scripts. Teachers were expected to make professional decisions about how to teach reading. Few answers to questions were provided, for it was expected that at the very least teachers would know them (or could infer them). The earlier guides seemed to expect that the teacher would naturally be interested in knowing the research and philosophy underpinning the series. In contrast, the modern basal contained no such discussion. It was as if the authors and editors had decided that either teachers would not take the time to read such material or that they were simply not capable of understanding it. In any event, the 1970s basal simply described what was; there was no justification, no rationale, no effort to convince the teacher that the approach underpinning the basal was a sound one. Unfortunately, recently published materials reflect a view of a teacher who must be coaxed and coached; a teacher who does not have time to read a story, make sense of questions, and who needs a script in order to teach. The teacher as reflected in these materials is a one-dimensional figure, essentially a manager rather than a teacher.

Equally disturbing is the image of what reading has become according to these teacher's guides. Reading appears to be the acquisition of an infinite number of skills and subskills that are to be learned, practiced, and reinforced in a certain preset order. These materials imply that reading is the sum of skills learned. It is not greater than the sum of its parts, as many reading researchers now acknowledge. Thus, in these self-contained materials very little extended reading takes place. There is little encouragement of library reading. Good readers are often simply given more worksheets and exercises to do, not books to read. And poor or average readers get a lot of practice filling in blanks and answering questions, but not much in reading.

It is easy to blame publishers for the quality of materials now being used in classrooms and the assumptions they make about teaching and teachers. Publishers do make easy and visible scapegoats. However, the materials publishers produce are based on careful market research and feedback from teachers and administrators. Publishers often respond to criticism about their materials by stating that they publish what will sell, and cite examples of a publishing house investing millions of dollars in an innovative program only to see it fail in the marketplace. The situation is not exactly one of supply and demand "gridlock," for there is nothing to stop publishers from producing textbook series that are just a bit different. But, the important factor in determining what is published is the market, and while changes in "demand" will not result in the overnight publication of new and different books, these textbooks and teacher's guides will be developed and published if the education community wants them.

Clearly, the ills affecting the teaching profession cannot be cured overnight. Many initiatives have to be taken to reestablish teaching as a valued occupation. One of those initiatives could be the revision of textbooks and teacher's guides to reflect what society and the educational community want teachers to be. □

An important feature of earlier guides was the inclusion, especially in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, of extensive discussions of the philosophy and the learning and reading research underpinning the series. These sections were informative and spoke to the teacher as an equal. The assumption seemed to be that of course teachers would be interested in such information. The 1970s guides contained no such discussion.

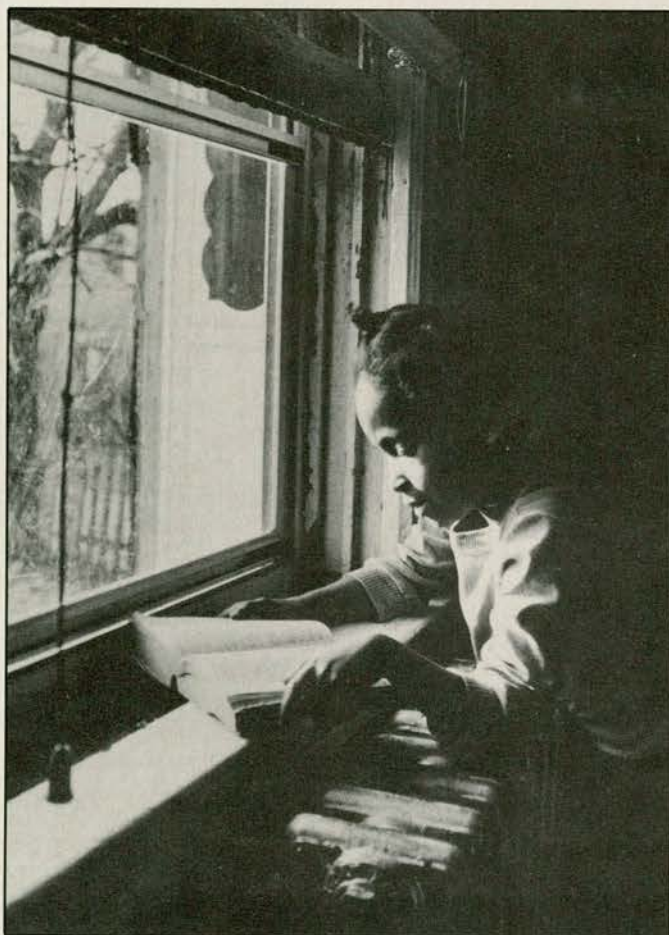
AS SEEN through elementary school teacher's guides, the decline of the teacher as a professional seems an inescapable conclusion. Although the early teacher's guides were certainly crude and often mirrored the fads of the day (good posture, for example, or mental hygiene) they emphasized a view of reading that was based on having students read. The basic thrust of encouraging pupils to read, to develop a love of reading, to correlate reading with other subject areas, and to

A NATION OF READERS

WE READ for many reasons. We read to enjoy, we read to become better informed, we read to communicate with our loved ones and colleagues, we read to experience the world in which we live — and to glimpse worlds we can only imagine. Where, when, why, and what we read are choices each of us makes freely. Indeed, reading is part of America's tradition of democratic individualism.

Today, that tradition is threatened . . . not by technology, but by the twin menaces of illiteracy (not being able to read) and aliteracy (not reading even when one knows how). Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin recently expressed his concern about this threat: "What we do about books and reading in the next decades will crucially affect our citizens' opportunities for enlightenment and self-improvement, their ability to share in the wisdom and delights of civilization, and their capacity for intelligent self-government."

American Educator is pleased to present these photographs that celebrate the wisdom and delights to be discovered in reading.

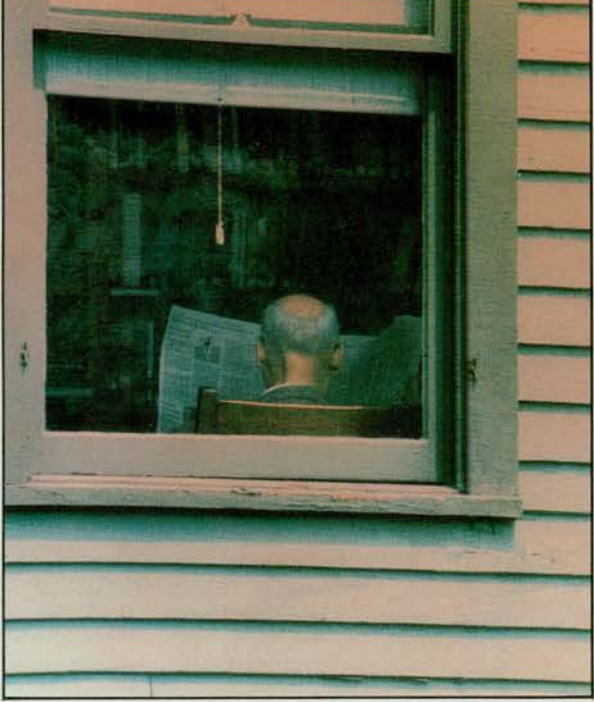


Untitled Marc Parfait, South Ozone Park, New York.
ALA president's prize.

They are among the forty-one prize winners in the "Nation of Readers" contest sponsored by the American Library Association in cooperation with the Center for the Book of the Library of Congress. More than 1,200 winning photographs were selected for judging in the national contest from approximately 70,000 photographs submitted in 606 libraries across the country during National Library Week in 1985.

The winning photos are currently on exhibit at the Madison Building of the Library of Congress. The Center for the Book, with the support of Pizza Hut, Inc., is currently organizing a nationwide tour for the show, and invites proposals to bring it to your city. Write or call the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540, telephone 202-287-5221.

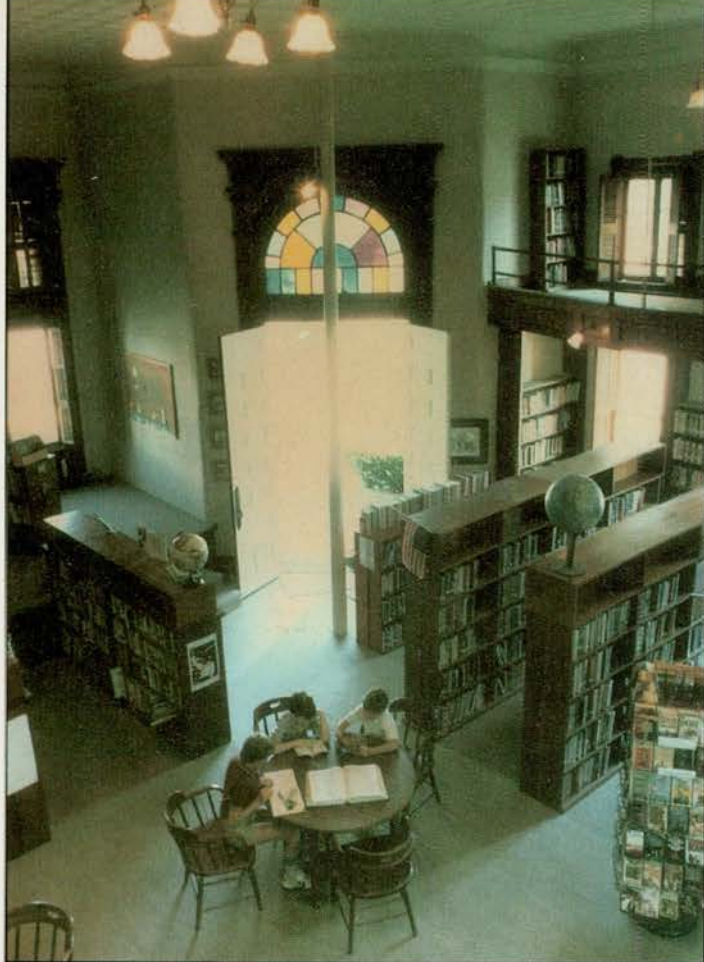
In addition, the ALA has produced a 22" x 34" poster that features a composite of some of the prize-winning photos. Send \$4 to the American Library Association, 30 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



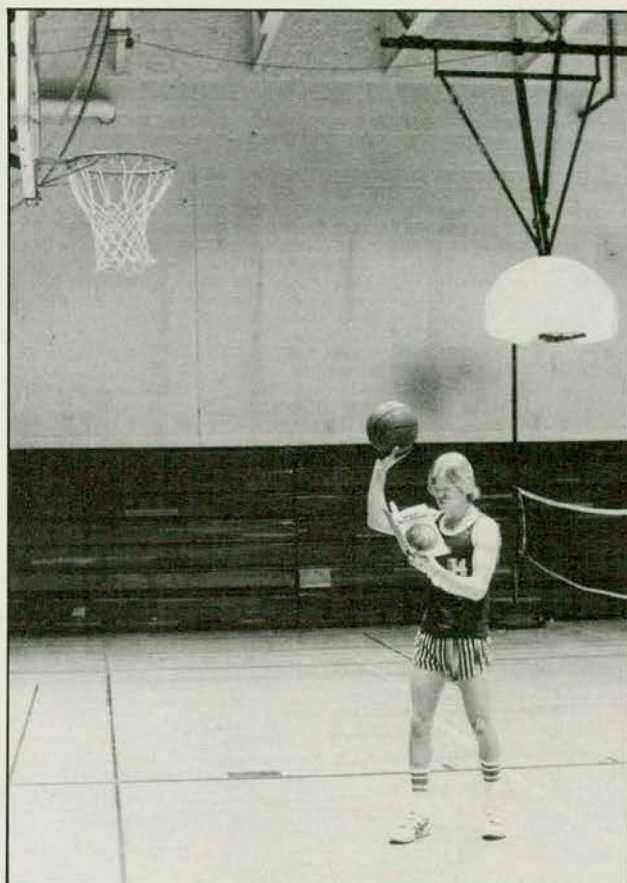
Mohonk Library *Doris Weiss, Abington, Pennsylvania.*
Adult, color: honorable mention.



GrandMary Reads to Us Often *Carol S. Fulks, Charleston, West Virginia.*
Adult, color: honorable mention.



The Doors Are Open Patricia Gilliam, Austin, Texas.
Adult, color: honorable mention.



Untitled Johan Schwartz, Pine River, Minnesota.
Youth, black and white: honorable mention.



As the Twig Is Bent Scott Haynie, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Youth, color: honorable mention.



*Never Alone William F. Thompson, Palo Alto, California.
Adult, color: first prize.*



*Private Reader Dave Fisher Jr., Greensboro, North Carolina.
Youth, black and white: honorable mention.*

BY MICHAEL F. GRAVES AND WAYNE H. SLATER

FOUR YEARS ago, before Wayne and I decided to do our study, I was sitting around late one night with a friend and colleague from graduate school, Priscilla Drum. We were discussing a topic that we often discuss late at night. Pris, who is on the faculty at the University of California at Santa Barbara, was teaching a summer course at the University of Minnesota, and she was staying at our house. Earlier that evening, I had shown her some 1944 issues of *Time* magazine I had come across, and we had discussed *Time*'s huge circulation. (*Time*'s recent circulation was over 4 million, as compared to *Harper's*, which was just over 150,000.) At any rate, our discussion about *Time*, together with the fact that the class Pris was teaching dealt with expository writing, led us to the idea of comparing *Time*'s treatment of a historical topic with a high school history text's treatment of the same topic. Our thinking was that *Time*'s huge audience consisted of people who not only read the magazine voluntarily but who paid to do so—a situation that contrasts dramatically with the captive audience of a high school history class—and that *Time*'s approach might well contain some clues to improving the writing in textbooks.

Well, as is often the case with late night discussions, this one didn't lead to any action, at least not directly. Pris and I talked about the idea a number of times, but we never did the study. Fortunately, I also talked about the idea with Wayne Slater, a former student of mine who now teaches at the University of Maryland, and Wayne subsequently contacted two *Time* editors and served as the driving force behind a study quite similar to the one Pris and I had originally discussed.

There are three areas I'd like to cover in this article. First, I'd like to describe the study that Wayne and I and several other people eventually did complete, and report the results. Second, I'd like to generalize beyond those immediate results to those qualities that I think make writing both understandable and memorable. Finally, I'd like to make one very specific suggestion for improving textbooks and their selection.

Before I do any of those things, however, I want to answer the two questions posed by the title of this article. The answer to the first question, Could books be better written? is a definite yes. The answer to the second question, Would it make a difference? is, again, yes. The results of our study, as well as the results of other studies, suggest that better writing *can* signifi-

Michael Graves, professor of education at the University of Minnesota, served as the editor of the Journal of Reading Behavior and the associate editor of Research in the Teaching of English. He is currently co-authoring QUEST, a reading series for middle grade students. Wayne Slater, assistant professor of education and English at the University of Maryland, College Park, conducts research in the areas of discourse processes, composition, and vocabulary development.

This article is based on a paper delivered by Professor Graves to a conference on textbook reform held in May, 1985, in Washington, D.C., and sponsored by the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

COULD TEXTBOOKS AND WOULD I



cantly improve student comprehension and recall. Although, I warn you in advance, the results also suggest that writing better books is no mean task, and that there is no magic formula for doing it.

LET ME turn now to what I'll call the "better books" study. The long-range purpose of the study was to determine what constitutes good expository writing—writing that is interesting, understandable, and memorable, and that leads kids to want to read. The more immediate goal was to determine what types of revisions writers with different backgrounds would make in attempting to improve the comprehensibility of expository passages, and what effects these changes would have.

Three pairs of writers, each of whom represented a different perspective, participated in the study. The first pair of writers were text linguists—people whose training is in the area of linguistics and psychology, who tend to take a highly structured and formal approach to writing, and who tend to teach courses about writing and about language, but who do not teach people to write. The text linguists participating in the study were Duane Roen and Patricia Hazeltine from the University of Arizona.

The second pair of writers were college composition

BE BETTER WRITTEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



ILLUSTRATED BY SALVADOR BRU

instructors—people whose training is in the area of English or education, who at the present time are emphasizing the process one goes through in writing rather than the product one comes up with, and who actually teach writing—primarily composition courses for undergraduate students. The composition instructors were Ann Duin and David Furniss of the University of Minnesota.

The third pair of writers were popular magazine editors—people whose training is sometimes in English but is often in other areas, who have learned much of their craft on the job, and who themselves write for a living. The magazine writers were former Time-Life editors Martin Mann and Teresa Redd-Boyd. Mr. Mann is now retired, following a twenty-seven-year career with Time-Life; Ms. Redd-Boyd is currently on the faculty at Howard University.¹

We asked each of these three pairs of writers to revise two history passages to make them more readable, understandable, and memorable. We also asked each of the teams to think aloud as they considered their changes, and attempt to understand and record *why* they were making the revisions they did.

The passages used in the study were taken from a popular senior high school history text titled *A History of the United States*. One passage, "The Cold War Under

President Eisenhower," dealt largely with the end of the Korean War and problems over Formosa. The other, "Communists Threaten South Vietnam," dealt largely with American involvement in the Vietnam War between 1964 and 1968. Both passages were about 400 words long, and both took the sweeping and impersonal perspectives typical of school history texts. (The original Vietnam passage and each team's first revision appear on pages 40-41.)

The rest of our study was conducted as follows. The three pairs of writers were each matched to a group of 100 eleventh-grade students. The students who worked with the text linguists were from a city school in Arizona, a school that included both middle-class and lower-middle-class kids. Those who worked with the composition instructors were from a suburban school in Minnesota, a school that consisted of largely middle-class kids. And those who worked with the Time-Life editors were from a suburban school in Maryland, a public but specifically college-preparatory school that again consisted of largely middle-class kids.

Within each school, the students were divided into two subgroups. One subgroup read the two original passages; the other subgroup read the two revised passages. Immediately after reading each passage, they wrote down everything they could remember about it. Then, a formal system was used to compare the number of ideas they wrote down to the number of ideas in the passages. The students' essays were then scored against whatever version of the passage they read to see what percentage of information they recalled. I don't want to get into the specifics of the scoring system because that would take more space than we have, but I do want to assure you that this procedure has proved to be a valid and reliable indicator of comprehension and is widely used and widely accepted.

BEFORE I present the results, I want to describe the thinking behind the revisions made by each of the three pairs of writers, and before I do that I want to present two caveats. First, although I will be directly quoting the various writers a good deal of the time, I will also be paraphrasing them; and I will not distinguish between the paraphrases and the direct quotations. Second, note that the revisions were differentially effective and that it is probably as important to consider what sorts of revisions did not work or were less effective as it is to know which sorts did work or were more effective.

I'll begin with the text linguists' revisions:

Our revisions consisted of a variety of textual manipulations. In general, we attempted *not* to add information to the texts or delete information from them, but the revised versions did contain some additional information. This was included to establish ties between the texts and the world that exists outside of the texts.

In addition to strengthening textual ties to the outside world, some revisions to the passages were designed to strengthen ties within the texts. In some cases, we added cohesive conjunctions to help signal the types of semantic relationships existing between adjacent sentences or adjacent paragraphs. In other cases, we created ties by the reiteration of elements: the use of exact repetition, synonyms, and superordinate terms.

Some revisions were designed to make the texts conform to the "given-new contract," which states that old information is presented before new information and that

new ideas, when they do appear, are tied to ideas that have been introduced earlier in the work.

The overall structure of one of the passages was changed so that the passage followed what has been called a problem-solution structure. That is, the passage presented a specific problem followed by a suggested solution to the problem.

The order of ideas in the texts was changed so that the order of events in the texts conformed to the chronological order of events in the world.

Finally, the order of the ideas in the texts was also changed so that relatively important ideas were placed in appropriate textual positions.

In summary, the text linguists' revisions were organizational or structural, and they were directed at such matters as clarity, coherence, and emphasis.

Let me turn now to the revisions made by the composition instructors:

To begin with, we decided not to revise the gist of the passages; we wanted to preserve the content already there. Instead, we concentrated on determining when new information was not clear, when new information was not linked to old information, and when information was irrelevant to the key concepts in the passages.

We decided upon the key issue or central concept for each paragraph and clarified the concept by substituting, adding, or deleting information so that the central concept was stressed.

The six main purposes we had in mind when revising the passages were simplifying information, adding background information, clarifying information, supplying transitions, emphasizing key material, and keeping the passages smooth and readable.

In attempting to achieve these purposes, we made three sorts of changes: vocabulary changes, structural changes, and additions and deletions of information. At the vocabulary level, we substituted words, added words, or deleted words in order to clarify, simplify, or emphasize information. At the structural level, we rearranged sentences or words within sentences in order to further clarify, simplify, or emphasize information, or to make a sentence smoother or more readable. At the concept level, we added background information if it seemed necessary to understanding the piece and deleted information if it seemed unnecessary or irrelevant to the main points the author was making, but we did not add or delete any more information than we thought necessary.

As was the case with the text linguists, the composition instructors concentrated primarily on clarity, coherence, and emphasis. As was also the case with the text linguists, the composition instructors attempted to avoid changing the content of the passages. Finally, unlike the text linguists, the composition instructors deliberately tried to simplify the passages.

I turn now to the Time-Life editors, who took a very different tact. I should note that these two did not sit down together and revise the passages as did the other pairs. Instead, the junior member of the team, Teresa Redd-Boyd, did the writing, and the senior member, Martin Mann, critiqued and edited it. Their approach is explained by Ms. Redd-Boyd:

When my assistant managing editor and I received two excerpts from a high school history textbook, we were aghast. Before us lay some of the driest prose we had ever had the displeasure of reading. Our first thought was to discard the passages entirely and simply begin writing new ones from scratch, because no Time-Life editor would have revised such woefully inadequate texts. This, however, was not what we had agreed to do, and so we worked from the existing passages.

Since my role was that of the writer, I began the revision process, experimenting first with the language of the passages. To intensify the action, I replaced weak verbs such as "tried to get," "moved," "fight," and "increased" with words such as "tried to lure," "hustled," "grappled with," and "skyrocketed." I added metaphors, changing, for instance, "The Vietnam War Escalated" to "The Vietnam Bomb Explodes." I also added colloquialisms such as "a go ahead for an invasion" to make my version more conversational than the original.

Above all, I sought to build a sense of drama. Consider "Though the Chinese Communists periodically bombarded Quemoy and Matsu, they did not risk an invasion of the offshore islands." This sentence became "Though the Communists did not dare to invade Quemoy and Matsu, their periodic air raids on the islands continually reminded the U.S. that Red China was indeed a force to be reckoned with."

However, tinkering with the language did not give the passages a Time-Life quality: They were still too panoramic, too impersonal. In the words of my assistant managing editor, "The facts included in these samples resist interesting presentation, cannot stimulate readers to learn more, and fail to inform adequately about the events of the respective periods. They are too vague about things that are interesting and significant, and too specific about details that no one will remember or care about."

To enrich the content, I inserted "nuggets" gleaned from library sources. Nuggets are vivid anecdotes and details that remind us that PEOPLE, not events, make history. A Time-Life story is not so much a sequence of events as a string of nuggets. The historical chronology serves only as the thread that binds these nuggets into a coherent story. The nuggets I inserted included facts about the "cold war" over seating arrangements, the Chinese Nationalists' disillusionment, the Viet Cong's ingenious traps, the perilous Ho Chi Minh Trail, and the daily air strikes.

I also incorporated choice words from Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. After all, why should the textbook quote Kennedy's statement that South Vietnam was of "vital interest" to the U.S. when Kennedy so graphically called the country "the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike"?

Obviously, the Time-Life revisions were undertaken from a radically different perspective than those of the text linguists and the composition instructors. The Time-Life editors certainly did not confine themselves to making structural changes; they changed content and they changed it with a vengeance. Equally importantly, their attempt was not limited to making the passages lucid, well-organized, coherent, and easy to read. Their revisions went beyond such matters and were intended to make the texts interesting, exciting, vivid, rich in human drama, and filled with colorful language.

ITURN now to the results of the revisions, and I will be presenting these in an abbreviated form, but I think it is sufficient for our purposes here.

Results with the text linguists' revisions indicated that students reading the revised versions recalled 2 percent more than those reading the original versions, an obviously trivial difference.

Results with the composition instructors' revisions indicated that students reading the revised versions recalled 2 percent *less* than those reading the original versions, a difference that is both trivial and in the wrong direction.

Finally, results with the Time-Life editors' revisions indicated that students reading the revised versions recalled 40 percent *more* than those reading the original versions, a difference that is both in the right direc-

tion and anything but trivial.

As you might imagine, these results left us with some rather disgruntled text linguists and composition instructors. Essentially, we had told them, "Do anything you want to these cruddy texts in order to make them more readable, more understandable, and more memorable," and they had made a host of changes but had failed to produce any results whatsoever.

In response to the disappointment of the text linguists and composition instructors, and because we wanted to understand more about what had happened ourselves, we asked each of the three groups to again revise the same two passages. In making these second revisions, none of the groups knew what the other two groups had done, but each group did know what their own results had been. Each group also knew that they would have to get up at a conference in about a month and report the results of their first set of revisions, and that they would have to get up in another four months to present the results of their second revisions. More to the point, the composition instructors and text linguists knew that they were soon going to have to get up and present the failure of their first revision and that if they failed a second time they would have to get up and report the failure of that revision too. Given the upcoming presentations, we think these two groups were particularly highly motivated to do well this second time. Additionally, we modified the instructions to all three groups somewhat to make it very clear to the composition instructors and text linguists that they could change the content of the selections if that was what they thought was needed.

Lack of space prevents me from doing anything but very briefly characterizing the revisions the groups made this second time, but there are several points I do need to make.

The text linguists' second revisions were not radically different from their first ones. The major difference was that they deleted a good deal of information that they did not see as central to the topics being discussed. Thus, they did change content, although they subtracted content rather than adding it.

The composition instructors' second revisions varied more from their first ones than did the text linguists'. This time, the composition instructors very definitely changed content. In fact, they specifically divided their changes into content changes (adding or deleting information in order to make the passages follow a coherent plan) and structural changes (clarifying, simplifying, or supplying transitions), and stated that they made many more content changes than structural ones.

The Time-Life editors' second revisions were not as different from their first ones as were the composition instructors'. However, recall that the Time-Life editors' first revisions were much more extensive than those of the other two groups; they had already changed content a great deal. The largest change they noted this time was a specific content change: expanding an anecdote about arguments over seating arrangements at the Korean peace talks. In a note to Ms. Redd-Boyd, Martin Mann wrote:

This episode brings home to the reader the unexpected, subtle difficulties in East-West relationships. The story will fascinate students and make them remember the grimy

details of who fought whom and when and where and why. Nuggets are good but insufficient; an interesting text needs fully developed anecdotes, and this one is ideal.

Again, about 100 eleventh-grade students in each of three schools were tested. However, three different schools were used this time.

With the text linguists' second revisions, students recalled 16 percent more than those reading the original passages, a substantial difference and one obviously in the right direction.

With the composition instructors' second revisions, students recalled 21 percent more than those reading the original passages, a more substantial difference.

Finally, with the Time-Life editors' second revisions, students recalled 37 percent more than those reading the original passages, a still more substantial difference, and one consistent with the 40 percent increase in the first Time-Life re-write.

AT THIS point, I want to turn to what I see as the implications of the results of the studies for changing textbooks.

First, taken together the studies forcefully demonstrate that revising texts can markedly improve comprehension. These improvements are not trivial; they are substantial gains that are indeed educationally significant.

Second, it needs to be noted that making revisions that improve comprehension is by no means an easy task. Recall that in their first attempt neither the text linguists nor the composition instructors were able to increase students' recall of the passages at all. Moreover, the failure of revisions to improve the comprehensibility of texts is not an isolated phenomena. In the past fifteen years, the majority of studies that have attempted to improve texts have produced little or no improvement.²

Third, it needs to be stressed that the revisions were not equally effective.

Consideration of the sorts of changes that each of the authors made suggests some generalizations about writing memorable texts.

The two attempts to change only structure failed to have any effect; the two attempts to change some content, but to change it only for the purpose of making the passages more coherent, produced results in keeping with the kinds of content changes made; and the two attempts to attend to style as well as content—attempts directed at enlivening the passages, giving them more verve, making them less impersonal, and providing more human drama—produced by far the strongest effects. It is not an empirical finding of these studies, but it is both common sense and a deduction that the studies allow to conclude that writing first-rate texts—texts that kids want to read, can read, and will remember (and, I would add, that motivates and encourages them to read outside of school)—requires attention to structure, attention to content, and attention to style.

BORING IS defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the practice of annoying and wearying others." It was one of the words I heard kids use most frequently in referring to texts when I was teaching, and

(Continued on page 42)

Original Vietnam Passage

COMMUNISTS THREATEN SOUTH VIETNAM

The most serious threat to world peace developed in Southeast Asia. Communist guerrillas threatened the independence of the countries carved out of French Indochina by the Geneva conference of 1954. In South Vietnam, Communist guerrillas (the Viet Cong) were aided by forces from Communist North Vietnam in a struggle to overthrow the American-supported government. During the Kennedy administration the United States sent some 10,000 servicemen as advisers, instructors, pilots, and supporting units to help the South Vietnamese government build a military force to fight the Viet Cong. In President Kennedy's opinion, preserving the independence of South Vietnam was of "vital interest" to the United States.

After President Johnson took office, he continued to follow the Kennedy policy of limited support for the South Vietnamese government. Then, in the summer of 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats were thought to have attacked two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. In response, Johnson ordered an air strike against North Vietnamese coastal bases. But during the presidential campaign of 1964, the President made it clear that he did not want to broaden the war.

THE VIETNAMESE WAR IS ESCALATED

Shortly after the election, Communist gains prompted President Johnson to alter his policy concerning Vietnam. American military forces in Vietnam were increased from about 20,000 men in 1964 to more than 500,000 by 1968. Even so, North Vietnamese troops and supplies continued to pour into South Vietnam. In order to cut off this flow of men and material, the President announced that American planes would bomb North Vietnamese supply routes, bridges, and other military targets. The bombing attacks began in 1965 and, like the troop buildup, steadily increased over the next two years. American military leaders asserted that the air strikes were effective. Yet communist troops and supplies continued to enter South Vietnam from the north. Meanwhile, the Johnson administration did what it could to bolster the South Vietnam government. A constitutional convention was held, and in the fall of 1967 South Vietnamese voters elected a president, vice-president, and a 60-member senate.

Johnson tried to get the North Vietnamese to the conference table. Early in 1966 and again in 1967 he suspended bombings and redoubled his efforts to get peace talks underway. But the president of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, proved unwilling to talk. He said there would be no talks until "the bombing raids and all other acts of war" against his country were stopped "unconditionally." American planes resumed their attacks on North Vietnam.

Text Linguists' First Revision of Vietnam Passage

AMERICAN RESPONSES TO COMMUNIST THREATS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

In the 1950s, the most serious threat to world peace developed in Southeast Asia when Communist guerrillas threatened the independence of countries carved out of French Indochina by the Geneva conference of 1954. In South Vietnam in particular, Communist guerrillas (the Viet Cong) were aided by forces from Communist North Vietnam in a struggle to overthrow the American-supported government. During the Kennedy administration, support consisted of 10,000 servicemen who functioned as advisers, instructors, pilots, and supporting units helping the South Vietnamese government build a military force to fight the Viet Cong. This support was provided because, in President Kennedy's opinion, preserving the independence of South Vietnam was of "vital interest" to the United States.

The Kennedy policy of limited support for the South Vietnamese government continued under President Johnson. Johnson maintained this policy of limited support even after North Vietnamese torpedo boats were thought to have attacked two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin in the summer of 1964. Although Johnson did order an air strike against North Vietnamese coastal bases in response to the naval attack, he made it clear during the presidential campaign of 1964 that he did not want to broaden the war. Shortly after the election, however, President Johnson altered his policy of limited support when Communists made military gains in South Vietnam. Specifically, Johnson increased American military forces in Vietnam from about 20,000 men in 1964 to more than 500,000 by 1968. This increase, however, did little to stop the influx of North Vietnamese troops and supplies into South Vietnam. As a next measure, the President announced that American planes would bomb North Vietnamese supply routes, bridges, and other military targets in order to cut off this flow of men and materials. These bombing attacks began in 1965 and, like the troop buildup, steadily increased over the next two years. Although American military leaders asserted that the air strikes were effective, Communist troops and supplies still continued to enter South Vietnam from the north.

In an effort to get the North Vietnamese to the conference table to begin peace talks, Johnson suspended bombings early in 1966 and again in 1967. But the President of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, proved unwilling to talk, insisting that there would be no talks until "the bombing raids and all other acts of war" against his country were stopped "unconditionally." Subsequently, American planes resumed their attacks on North Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the Johnson administration did what it could to bolster the South Vietnam government: A constitutional convention was held, and in the fall of 1967 South Vietnamese voters elected a president, vice-president, and a sixty-member senate.

Composition Instructors' First Revision of Vietnam Passage

COMMUNISTS THREATEN SOUTH VIETNAM

A serious threat to world peace developed in Southeast Asia. Communist forces threatened the independence of countries in this area. In South Vietnam, Communist guerrillas called the Viet Cong were aided by forces from Communist North Vietnam in a struggle to overthrow the American-supported government. During the Kennedy administration the United States sent 10,000 servicemen as advisors, instructors, pilots, and supporting units to help the South Vietnamese government build a military force to fight the Viet Cong. This reflected President Kennedy's belief that preserving the independence of South Vietnam was of "vital interest" to the United States.

President Johnson took office following President Kennedy's assassination and continued to follow Kennedy's policy of limited support for the South Vietnamese government. Then, in the summer of 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats were thought to have attacked two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. In response, Johnson ordered an air strike against North Vietnamese coastal bases. This was the first act of war by the United States against North Vietnam. However, during the presidential campaign of 1964 the President made it clear that he did not want to broaden the war.

JOHNSON ESCALATES THE VIETNAM WAR

Shortly after the 1964 election, Communist gains prompted President Johnson to alter his policy concerning Vietnam. He increased American military forces in Vietnam from about 20,000 men in 1964 to more than 500,000 by 1968. In spite of this escalation, North Vietnamese troops and supplies continued to pour into South Vietnam. In order to cut off this flow of men and material, the President announced that American planes would bomb North Vietnamese supply routes, bridges, and other military targets. The bombing attacks began in 1965 and, like the troop buildup, steadily escalated over the next two years. Although American military leaders insisted that the air strikes were effective, Communist troops and supplies continued to enter South Vietnam from the north. Meanwhile, the Johnson administration did what it could to bolster the South Vietnam government. A constitutional convention was held, and in the fall of 1967 South Vietnamese voters elected a president, vice-president, and a 60-member senate.

At the same time as Johnson escalated the war, he tried to get the North Vietnamese to negotiate an end to the war. Early in 1966 and again in 1967 Johnson suspended bombings and intensified his efforts to get peace talks underway. But the President of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, proved unwilling to talk. He said there would be no talks until "the bombing raids and all other acts of war" against his country were stopped "unconditionally." In response, Johnson ordered American planes to resume their attacks on North Vietnam.

Time-Life Writers' First Revision of Vietnam Passage

COMMUNISTS INFILTRATE SOUTH VIETNAM

In the early 1960s the greatest threat to world peace was just a small splotch of color on Kennedy's map, one of the fledgling nations sculpted out of French Indo-China by the Geneva peacemakers in 1954. It was a country so tiny and remote that most Americans had never uttered its name: South Vietnam. Yet in Kennedy's eyes, this pro-western regime was "the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike."

Aided by Communist North Vietnam, the Viet Cong guerrillas were eroding the ground beneath South Vietnam's American-backed government. Village by village, road by road, these jungle-wise rebels were waging a war of ambush and mining: They darted out of tunnels to head off patrols, buried exploding booby traps beneath the mud floors of huts, and hid razor-sharp bamboo sticks in holes. Determined to block the deepening Communist inroads, Kennedy dispatched some 10,000 servicemen as advisers, instructors, pilots and supporting units to help the South Vietnamese muster a military force formidable enough to grapple with the indefatigable Viet Cong.

After Kennedy's assassination, President Johnson continued to carry out his predecessor's policy of limited support for the beleaguered South Vietnamese government. Then, suddenly in the summer of 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats allegedly pounced on two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. In retaliation, Johnson launched an air strike against North Vietnam's coastal bases. Nevertheless, as he campaigned for election in 1964, Johnson insisted that he would not fan the flames of the Vietnamese conflagration.

THE VIETNAM BOMB EXPLODES

No sooner had Johnson won the election than Communist gains prompted Johnson to go back on his campaign promise. The number of American soldiers in Vietnam skyrocketed from 20,000 in 1964 to more than 500,000 by 1968. But in spite of GI patrols, leech-infested jungles, swarms of buzzing insects, and flash floods that made men cling to trees to escape being washed away — North Vietnamese troops streamed southward without letup along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. To stem this flow of men and matériel, in 1965 Johnson announced that American planes would bombard North Vietnamese supply routes, bridges, and other military targets. Like the troop buildup, the bombing raids steadily escalated, dropping as much as 800 tons per day during three and a half years. While American commanders boasted that U.S. bombers were hitting their marks, Communist troops and supplies continued to stream into South Vietnam from the north. Meanwhile, Johnson did what he could to prop up the South Vietnamese government, paving the way for a constitutional convention and elections. Thus in 1967 a newly elected president, vice-president, and 60-member senate took hold of a situation that was rapidly getting out of hand.

Early in 1966 and again in 1967, Johnson tried to lure the Vietnamese to the conference table by temporarily suspending bombings. But Ho Chi Minh, the president of North Vietnam, refused to talk until "the bombing raids and all other acts of war" against his country were halted "unconditionally." And so once more American bombers took to the skies over North Vietnam.

WRITING BETTER TEXTS

(Continued from page 39)

it is a word my own kids still use. Clarity and brevity are certainly important in writing texts. But there are other considerations:

Clarity and brevity, though a good beginning, are only a beginning. By themselves, they remain bare and bleak. When Calvin Coolidge, asked by his wife what the preacher had preached on, replied "Sin," and, asked what the preacher had said, replied "He was against it," he was brief enough. But one hardly envies Mrs. Coolidge.³

In his *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Joseph Williams offers another opinion I very strongly endorse:

The unrelenting simplicity of the plain style can finally become very flat and dry indeed, eventually arid. Its plainness invests prose with the blandness of unsalted meat and potatoes — honest fare to be sure, but hardly memorable and certainly without zest. Sometimes a touch of class, a flash of elegance, can mark the difference between forgettable Spartan plainness and a well-turned phrase that fixes itself in the mind of the reader.⁴

I certainly believe that textbooks ought to have a touch of class. They should also be interesting and filled with anecdotes and human drama that "will fascinate students and make them remember the grimy details of who fought whom" or whatever the topic of the text.

I don't think we'll ever be able to specify the characteristics of a successful text fully — if by specifying fully we mean creating some sort of formula for what constitutes good writing. But one way of encouraging writing with these characteristics, and a way that is feasible today, is to get professional writers — people who write for a living and have learned what sorts of writing lure large audiences to voluntarily read their work — involved in both writing texts and in adopting them. In particular, I think journalists who write for mass audiences — journalists such as the Time-Life editors who took part in our study, or other authors who have demonstrated their talent and their popularity, or lesser-known yet still skillful writers with experience in writing for mass audiences — could play important

roles in textbook reform. I think that their participation in the process of writing and selecting textbooks could do much to make textbooks more appealing, more memorable, and filled with the sort of writing that would encourage students to become lifelong readers. □

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3. Quoted in Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. Glenview, ILL.: Scott, Foresman, 1981.

4. *Ibid.*

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tradict one another, or the precedents or particular cases are incompatible. From Rowe's (1974) research on wait-time we learn the principle that longer wait-times produce higher levels of cognitive processing. Yet Kounin's (1970) research on classroom management warns the teacher against slowing the pace of the classroom too severely lest the frequency of discipline problems should increase. How can the principle of longer wait-times and that of quicker pacing both be correct?

It is in the very nature of the practical or policy fields that individual principles are fated to clash on particular occasions. Knowledge of the relevant propositions and cases is needed to form the underlying knowledge base. Strategic knowledge must be generated to extend understanding beyond principle to the wisdom of practice. We generally attribute wisdom to those who can transcend the limitations of particular principles or specific experiences when confronted by situations where each of the alternative choices appears equally "principled." Novice bridge players rapidly learn the principles of the game, embodied in such maxims as "Lead fourth highest from your longest and strongest suit," and "Never lead away from a king." But when you must lead away from a king to lead fourth highest, then propositional knowledge alone becomes limited in value. Strategic knowledge (or judgment) is then invoked.[†]

I envision the use of the case method in teacher education, whether in our classrooms or in special laboratories with simulations, videodiscs, and annotated scripts, as a means for developing strategic understanding, for extending capacities toward professional judgment and decision making. These methods of instruction would involve the careful confrontation of principles with cases, of general rules with concrete documented events, a dialectic of the general with the particular in which the limits of the former and the boundaries of the latter are explored. What happens when cases are applied to principles? principles to cases? What happens when two principles are in conflict, or two cases yield contradictory interpretations?

When strategic understanding is brought to bear in the examination of rules and cases, professional judgment, the hallmark of any learned profession, is called into play. What distinguishes mere craft from profession is the indeterminacy of rules when applied to particular cases. The professional holds knowledge, not only of how—the capacity for skilled performance—but of what and of why. The teacher is not only a master of procedure, but of content and rationale, capable of explaining why something is done to himself and to

others. He is capable of reflection leading to self-knowledge, the metacognitive awareness that distinguishes draftsman from architect, bookkeeper from auditor. A professional is not only capable of practicing and understanding his or her craft, but of explaining why, of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others.

What distinguishes mere craft from profession is the indeterminacy of rules when applied to particular cases.

This sort of reflective awareness of how and why one performs complicates action rather than simplifying it, renders it less predictable and regular. Knowledge guarantees only grounded unpredictability, the exercise of reasoned judgment rather than the display of correct behavior. If this vision constitutes a serious challenge to those who would evaluate teaching using fixed behavioral criteria (e.g., the five-step lesson plan), so much the worse for those evaluators.

THE IMPLICATIONS of our discussion are several. First, we can begin to conceive differently of how professional examinations for teachers might be organized and constructed. I firmly believe that we must develop such examinations, though their existence will constitute no panacea. They must be defined and controlled by members of the profession, not by legislators or laypersons. They must reflect an understanding that both content and process are needed by teaching professionals, and within the content we must include knowledge of the structures of one's subject, pedagogical knowledge of the general and specific topics of the domain, and specialized curricular knowledge. As such, they would distinguish between, say, a biology major and a biology teacher, and in a pedagogically relevant and important way. They would be a good deal tougher than any examination currently in use for teachers.^{††}

I envision the design of research-based programs of teacher education that grow to accommodate our conceptions of both process and of content. These programs will articulate with and build upon instruction in the liberal arts and sciences as well as the specialty content areas of each candidate. They will draw upon the growing research on the pedagogical structure of student conceptions and misconceptions, on those features that make particular topics easy or difficult to

^{††} Although in this paper I discuss aspects of content knowledge exclusively, a proper professional board examination would include other equally important sections as well. These would assess knowledge of general pedagogy (including classroom management and motivational techniques), knowledge of learners and their diverse backgrounds, principles of school organization, finance and management, and the historical, social, and cultural foundations of education, among many more. Exams would also tap teaching performance and other capabilities unlikely to be adequately assessed using conventional paper-and-pencil instruments.

[†] It may well be that what I am calling strategic *knowledge* in this paper is not knowledge in the same sense as are propositional knowledge and case knowledge. Strategic "knowing" or judgment may simply be a process of analysis, of comparing and contrasting principles, cases, and their implications for practice. Once such strategic processing has been employed, the results are either stored in terms of a new proposition (e.g., "Smiling before Christmas may be permissible when. . .") or a new case. These then enter the repertoire of cases and principles to be used like any others. In that sense, it is possible that strategic analysis occurs in the presence of the other forms of knowledge and is the primary means for testing, extending, and amending them.

learn. They will employ a growing body of case literature extensively, both to represent a far wider and more diverse range of teaching contexts than can possibly be experienced within any one teacher education program, as well as to provide teachers with a rich body of prototypes, precedents, and parables from which to reason.

We reject Mr. Shaw and his calumny.

The fact that we do not possess such a case literature at this time suggests new agendas for research in teacher education. In addition to the obvious tack of encouraging the continued growth of disciplined case studies of teaching by scholars, another alternative also suggests itself. Fred Erickson of Michigan State University has noted that one of the exciting features of case studies is that you don't necessarily have to be a Ph.D. social scientist or educator to learn to prepare useful case materials. Given proper preparation and support, teachers and teacher educators can contribute to the case literature themselves. As they do so, they will begin to feel even more membership in the broader academic guild of professional teachers.

This then is the vision of teaching and teacher education I hold, a vision of professionals who are capable not only of acting, but of enacting—of acting in a manner that is self-conscious with respect to what their act is a case of, to what their act entails.

We reject Mr. Shaw and his calumny. With Aristotle we declare that the ultimate test of understanding rests on the ability to transform one's knowledge into teaching.

Those who can, do. Those who understand, teach. □

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FORCES THAT UNDERMINE REFORM

(Continued from page 19)

that the more he teaches the more he doubts the connection — "if there is one" — between schools and education. But his deeds belie his words. His despair hasn't yet overcome the habits born of a lifetime of integrity as a teacher: "He's written the syllabus and half the materials for a new course this term, and goes over each kid's homework each day with a fine tooth comb," comments a colleague. "If he believes what he says, why is he still working himself into the ground?"

But since there are few incentives and little appreciation for a job well done, some teachers have learned to do just enough to keep everyone off their backs. And since no one listens, why *should* they care? Not caring becomes a disease very prone to contagion. Cynicism becomes a matter of coping with frustration and repeated disappointment.

When a history teacher complained about "spending hours marking essays that are garbage," an English teacher, who boasted that he spent less time marking papers than a gym teacher did, admonished him severely: "Are you still giving essays? Then you're a bigger horse's ass than anybody in the administration!" This, Natkins implies, was not only an example of teacher frustration but also an illustration of the utter disdain that teachers felt for "The Board" (Central Office) and for the administration.

ADMINISTRATORS IN *Our Last Term* are depicted as incompetent, unsupportive, and invisible. Kids ask teachers whether the school has a principal while teachers wonder how many kids would be able to pick any one of the school administrators out of a lineup. Not only "the kids haven't seen the principal in so long they wouldn't recognize her if she fell on one of them," but teachers resent the fact that "once a month the principal surfaces at a faculty conference and tells us to hold to standards and then she goes underground for thirty days." They wonder what it means to be told to hold to standards at the same time that a youngster is permitted to "open a mouth like a sewer." They witness that no consequences are imposed on students found guilty of "a minor infraction like carrying a butcher knife. . . ." They recognize that "so little in terms of academic standards is imposed on students — and none in terms of behavior," and ask, in painful exasperation, "How do we enforce standards that the rest of the world has abandoned?"

Our Last Term blames administrators, more than anyone else, for the plummeting standards. They minimize problems ("Let's remember, before we came down on some of these kids, that we weren't all perfect when we were teenagers"), make excuses for student failure ("Something must be wrong with [the tests] if so many students failed them"), and insist that kids get promoted just to get rid of them. Consequently, teachers resign themselves to the reality that "insisting that kids learn something to earn a passing grade is a policy tantamount to genocide — or at least cruel and unusual punishment." Meanwhile, the gap between the few academic classes and the rest of the students continues to widen: "Kids who took Biology in Everyday Life knew less

QUESTION:

WHY SHOULD CHILDREN HAVE CHIROPRACTIC SPINAL MANIPULATION?

ANSWER: Because growth and development can be affected by minor bumps, jars and falls.

Every year, thousands of structural health problems in students of grade and high school level go undetected even though teachers, coaches and physical education instructors watch for health irregularities which might interfere with a child's physical performance and learning ability.

Part of their jobs? Not really. It's that extra sense of dedication that makes these already over-worked public servants give children that extra attention. The "school guardian" is responsible in many cases for the detection of potential health problems and the funneling of children to proper health authorities.

What most people don't know is that most health problems are far too complex for the teacher to note. And with a busy schedule, the educator can't be expected to have the time to screen problems that are beyond his or her scope of training, no matter how conscientious the teacher may be. The result: many children have health problems that retard their

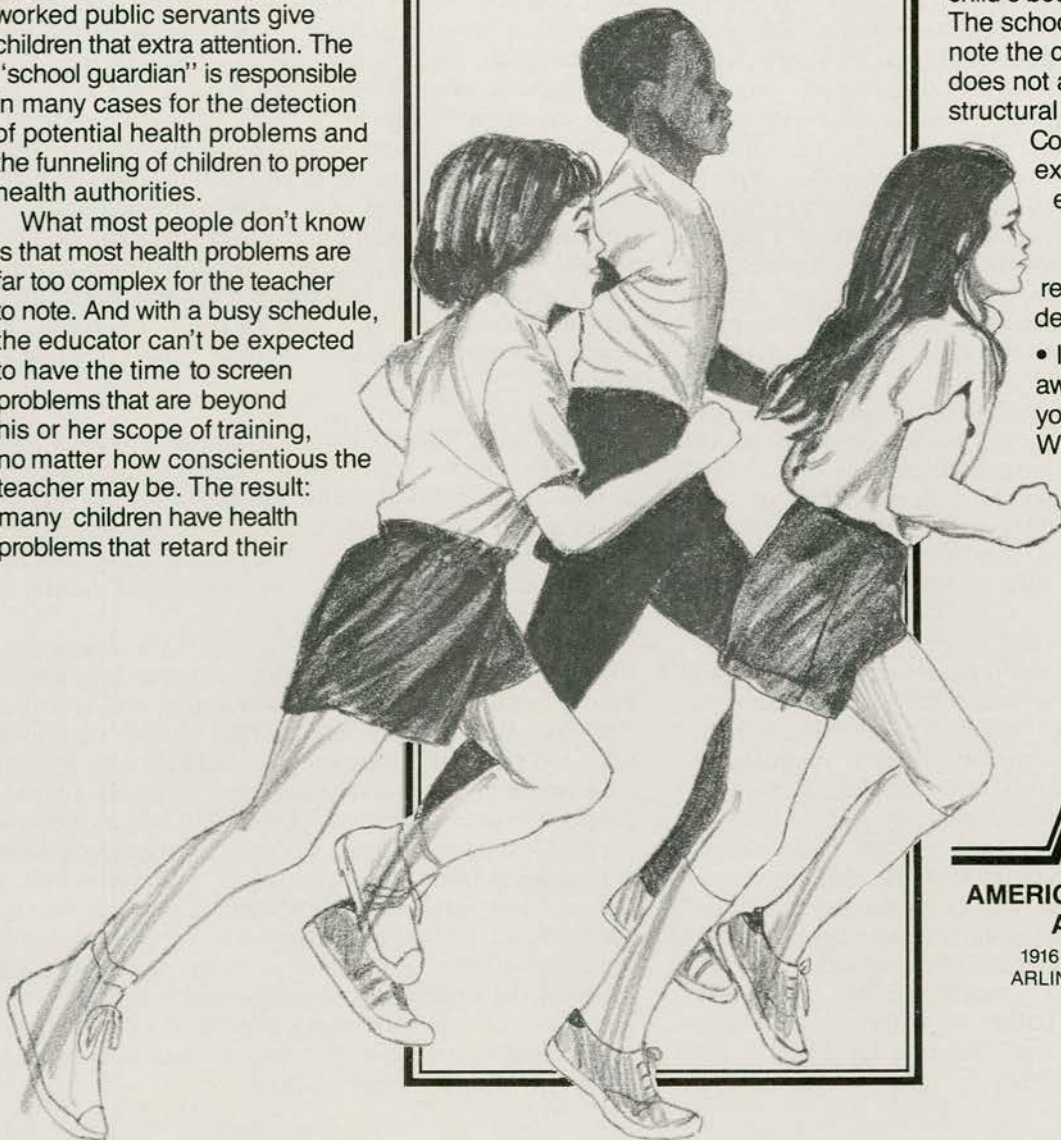
ability to learn or engage in sports effectively.

Here's what you can do:

- Parents should be urged to take more responsibility for their children's health.
- Parents and teachers should be alert to such things as changes in energy level, postural changes, moodiness, listlessness or any unusual signs that signal a problem that will impede learning. One of the observable signs is lack of interest in school activities.
- The structural balance of the child's body should be considered. The school teacher will no doubt note the child's posture, but that does not always indicate the structural integrity of the body.

Comprehensive chiropractic examinations, including examinations of the spine, pelvis, neck and limbs should be recommended to avoid developmental problems.

- Incorporate posture awareness programs into your class projects. Write for suggestions and materials.



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about kids who took Advanced Placement Biology than they did about Martians."

In the midst of all this, Central Office administrators seem comically oblivious to the real world around them. They overlook the concerns of classroom teachers and myopically concentrate on the trivial. "Christ . . . the place is going down the tube and he wants to see the bulletin boards. Lewis Carroll couldn't improve on that one." Long-distance decision making by those who know little or nothing about the realities of classroom teaching often exacerbated the already desperate environment. "The Board" developed unrealistic inservice programs for teachers, ordered a rigid format for lesson plans, ignored teacher input concerning questions on the final exam, and targeted teachers to suffer the brunt of the annual budget cuts. "If they can't help us, why must they be a constant hindrance?" one teacher asked rhetorically. "Someone get them off our backs."

If administrators were on teachers' backs, the judicial system, in Natkins' opinion, had her school in a stranglehold. Throughout the book, she deplors a court decision that resulted in what she describes as "emotionally handicapped children" being moved out of special and separate day schools and placed in her school: "Close to one hundred such children (more, we thought, than any other city school, but no one was sure), all with a history of emotional problems, many with a history of documented violent conduct, had been 'mainstreamed' into our school as a result of [a judicial] decree. Most of these youngsters ('They *can* be volatile,' Mary [the principal] admitted) were assigned to special homerooms in the math corridor, and the outcries from that department were immediate, loud, heartfelt and never-ending. The CEH kids, said the math teachers bitterly, roamed the corridor, shouted profanities, banged on walls and doors, broke into classrooms and the teachers' workroom, fought with each other constantly, and menaced teachers and students entering, in, or leaving math classrooms."

During an inservice training day to discuss the "needs" of these students, teachers left no doubt about their view of the judge's long-distance decision making: "Why the hell don't we get the judge into this building to see the result of his goddamned decision?" asked one. Another summed it up this way: "These kids . . . shouldn't be handled in this school. They're killing it."

THROUGHOUT *Our Last Term*, teachers turned to their union for help and representation. The union building representative, who had the "classic thankless job" that nobody wanted, reacted to deviations from contractual language "much as Urban II might have reacted to blasphemy" but felt powerless to intervene in any situation that was not technically grievable. And many of the concerns the teachers had — over such matters as safety violations, appropriate student placement, and the enforcement of behavioral and academic standards — were not grievable; they were policy areas from which the union had been effectively shut out. It's not that the union didn't care about the interest of teachers and students. Rather, it's that management monopolized the power to deliberate; delegated to administrators the responsibility to implement; mandated

Central Office administrators seemed comically oblivious to the real world around them.

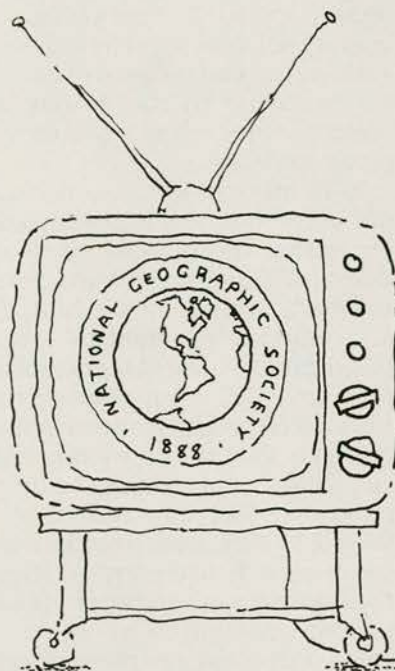
that teachers do what they're told; and left the union to grieve over a relatively narrow area. Natkins justly implies that such a management model does not serve us well: It's inefficient, ineffective, and in the wrong hands.

Like hired hands, in an education factory, teachers in Natkins' school punch a time card. They cope with unrealistic directives, excessively relaxed standards, and a student population that often heaps vulgarity and violence upon them. They exist in an atmosphere of apathy, cynicism, and isolation. They lack not only supplies and materials but also support and respect. Some have not only lost hope but have also internalized the negativism about teaching. Their self-image has been adversely affected: "Okay, we're secondary talents, at least most of us and I sure as hell couldn't make it in the real world, but . . . most of us try our damndest and most of us care. What the hell good does it do? These days we're barely making a dent." Yet despite the problems, Natkins and many of her colleagues maintain their enthusiasm for teaching and refuse to give up. "The school may have changed, but right and wrong haven't, and I still know the difference between them," one teacher proclaimed. "If I have to teach differently, I'll teach differently," insisted another, "but I'm going to teach!"

OUR LAST TERM is a plea for attention to what truly ails public education in urban schools. It announces that, in the final analysis, teachers can make a difference if they secure a larger role in the governance of their schools. It is also a call for higher standards and greater accountability from every segment of the educational community.

Between the lines, Natkins shouts that teachers want to teach; that they expect administrators to help ensure an environment conducive to teaching and learning; that they, the teachers, are the true experts on education; and that our public schools, with all their formidable problems, are salvageable. But those who would propose answers to our problems would do well to first consult teachers and learn what the right questions are.

Realism is often proportionate to the distance from the problem. And since most education experiments are doomed to succeed, education reformers should understand what teachers require to effectively meet the needs of students. Without greater attention to the concerns of the practitioners, education reform efforts will continue to flounder, and in our beleaguered schools it'll be business as usual. □



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LETTERS

(Continued from page 4)

ple thrive on buying now and paying later. Our children are raised to consume, not produce. This is what our society is all about, and our schools merely reflect it.

Society has to decide if it is now ready to take the education of its children seriously. For the past three decades, students and teachers have been well aware that our society has given little priority to education. Now, after some thirty years of neglect, the Excellence Commission has indeed spoken, but its findings should shock no one.

One has to wonder what our schools would have looked like today if some of the billions and billions of dollars that were squandered in Vietnam by misguided political leaders had been applied instead to our children's education. Can anyone really believe that "esteem" of any kind is the fundamental issue in education today?

Providing quality education has little to do with "feel-good-now self-esteem" or "earned self-esteem." Studies have consistently demonstrated that children will learn under a wide variety of conditions. To suggest that teachers' support of student self-esteem is somehow harmful to the education process is both simplistic and misleading. If we are unable to define clearly the problems of today's education system, we certainly will be unable to solve them.

—MICHAEL N. GORDON
Syosset, NY

The Winter 1985 issue of the *American Educator* contained a most provocative article on self-esteem. It is a truism that mediocrity of learning and low self-esteem produce students with marginal skills for academic achievement. As a school social worker, I have observed that improved self-esteem is not a prerequisite for effective learning. Increased self-esteem is the result of applied effort with reasonable success in the acquisition of academic skills. Barbara Lerner is correct in saying that self-esteem has become a sort of sacred cow before which the demands of teachers' expectations must yield to protect the "helpless"

students.

However, in this decade of accountability, budget balancing, and bottom-line performance objectives, I am observing that the theory of self-esteem no longer holds its preemptive clout in the grading, promotion, and graduation of students who are deficient in skills. Competency testing for minimum skill-mastery is becoming increasingly popular. The shopping mall high school, offering 450 electives, is a dangerous and subversive curriculum yielding to the whims and comfort-zones of inadequately prepared students.

As its major objective, schools are not in the business of teaching and protecting the self-esteem of students. Academic and discipline standards should not be diluted to accommodate the students' esteem of self. Effective learning of academic objectives will occur whenever the students feel the appropriate tension between what they presently know and what they are being challenged to know. The effective teacher knows, by diagnosis, what appropriate tension is necessary to stretch the students towards the grasping of a new concept. With the right amount of stress, people perform at their peak level and become very productive.

I agree with Barbara Lerner's thesis that low self-esteem is not corrected by more and constant praise from the teacher. This violates the students' integrity. The American educator's paradox is: Focusing on students' happiness will result in a greater number of unhappy students.

Over the last twenty-five years, teachers have been informed by psychological theorists to yield, protect, and maintain students' well-being and adjustment. What is it about our American culture that it prefers self-esteem to academic achievement? "Pseudo" self-esteem acquired by inflated grades, praise, and rewards is like building a structure on sand—it will eventually collapse due to the test of time.

In our Declaration of Independence, it is stated that we are all endowed with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet happiness, like self-esteem, still eludes us when we seek it primarily for its own sake. The authentically

educated person knows that the intrinsic rewards come from the happiness of the learning pursuit, not vice versa.

—ROBERT MacDONALD
Dearborn Public Schools
Dearborn, MI

Barbara Lerner makes an important error in her reasoning. She confuses praise and encouragement and consequently muddies the already murky waters in which studies of children's self-esteem lie.

Encouragement is not another term for praise. Although both focus on positive behaviors, the result as well as the underlying movement of each is different.

Praise is a verbal reward that must be earned, is competitive, and focuses on production of superior product. The communication to the child is "If you do something I consider good, then you will be held high in my estimation." Praise is only given for well-done, completed tasks. Praise is a covert method of controlling children by inducing them to live up to particular external standards.

Encouragement is given freely in response to a child's *effort, not product*. It focuses on assets and strengths. It recognizes the contributions children make as opposed to the status they achieve with their product. It teaches children that they are valued for who they are, that they are good enough as they are, and that they do not have to be superior to others.

Encouragement can be given when children feel low, praise cannot. Encouragement can be given when children fail, praise cannot. Encouragement instills faith in personal power, individual power.

A focus on praise instills external controls in the child. As a result, when the praise is not forthcoming, the child stops striving for achievement. A focus on encouragement instills an internal control in the child. It helps ensure that self-esteem grows. It helps foster "earned self-esteem" and continued achievement. Through the systematic application of encouragement, teachers can more effectively foster the type of self-esteem Lerner sees as necessary to intellectual development.

—DAVID J. CAREY, Psy.D.
Prospect, CT

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