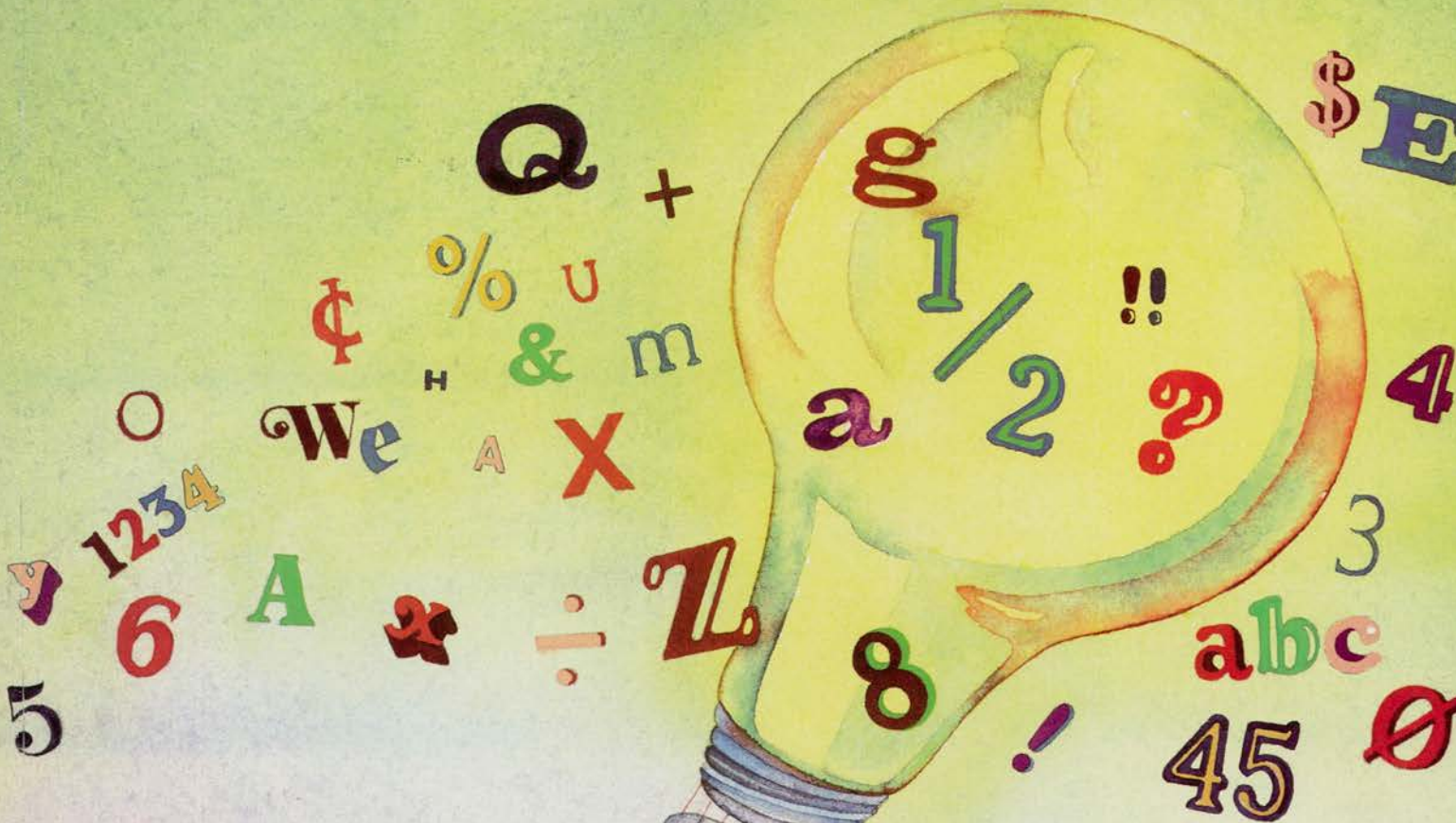


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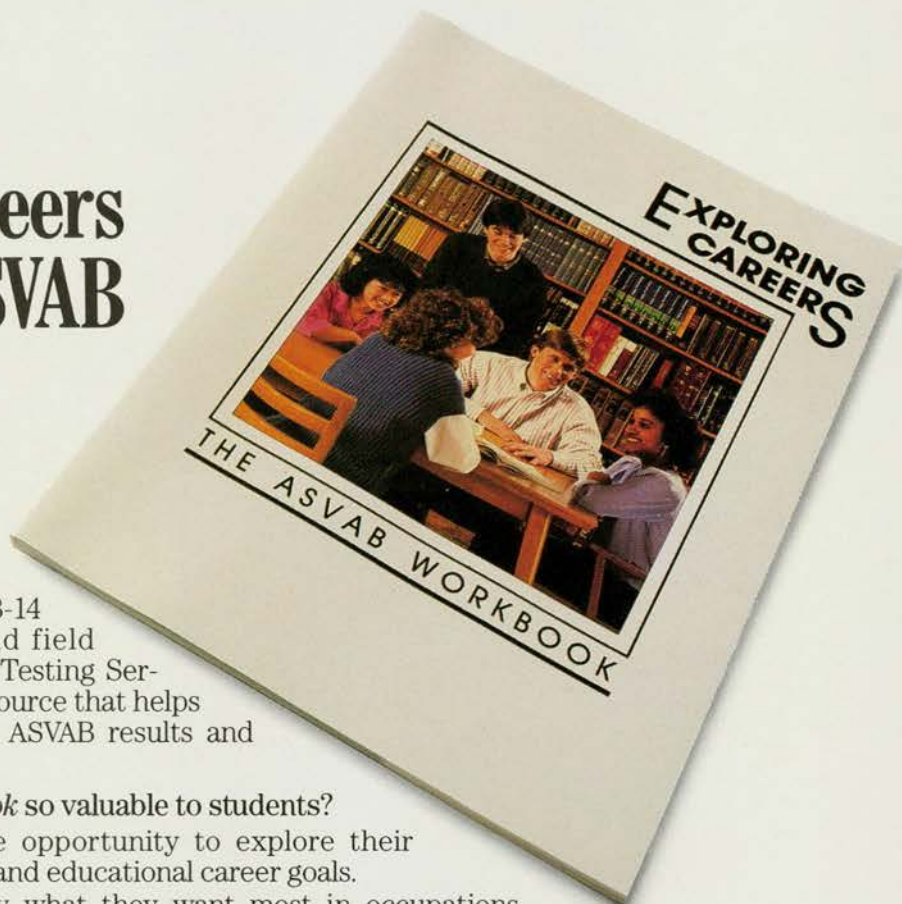
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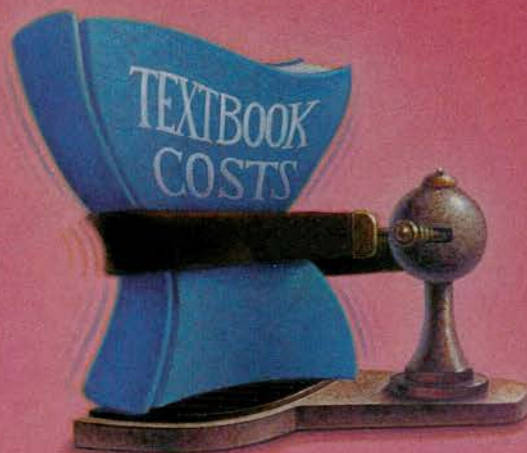
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Healthy communities promote hard work and good behavior. Can schools be organized to do the same? At a growing group of schools in West Germany—characterized by their intensive focus on building close relationships between students and teachers and students and students—the results look very promising.

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Chapter 1 is the federal government's largest contribution to elementary and secondary education. A new report says the program is effective, but could be even more so.

A LOOK BACKWARD AND FORWARD

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With success under our belts, we can now raise the standard to which we hold Chapter 1. And by that standard, Chapter 1 could use some help, preferably of a nonorthodox kind.

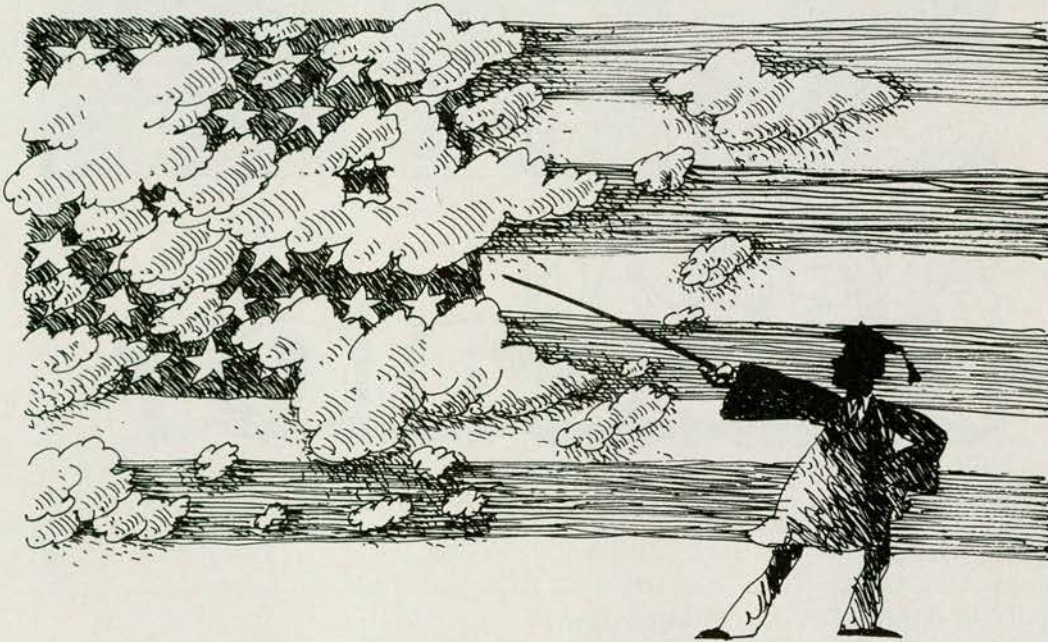
LITERARY LACKLUSTER: THE UNHAPPY STATE OF AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

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Could one reason for student lack of interest in history be the dull-as-dishwater textbooks we foist on them?

NOTEBOOK



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT BARKIN

IDEAS FOR TEACHING DEMOCRACY?

The AFT has received funding to develop lesson plans based on *Democracy's Untold Story*, the highly acclaimed textbook study published by the AFT-co-sponsored Education for Democracy project.

Democracy's Untold Story: What World History Textbooks Neglect evaluated how five popular world history textbooks conveyed the ideas of democracy. It concluded that the books do a terribly superficial job, providing neither teachers nor students much help in sorting out and understanding the ideas and values that underlie democratic society.

Contestants will receive a complimentary copy of *Democracy's Untold Story*, from which they will be asked to choose a chapter, an idea, an event, or a theme and then will be asked to develop a lesson strategy that could effectively convey the material to students of differing abilities. Top winners will receive cash awards of up to \$500 and a trip to Washington, D.C., where they will participate in a ceremony honoring the winners and in discussions about educating for democracy. The winning lesson plans will be published by the AFT.

For more information and a contest application, write *Education for Democ-*

racy, AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001. Applications must be requested by May 30. Completed applications will be due during the summer.

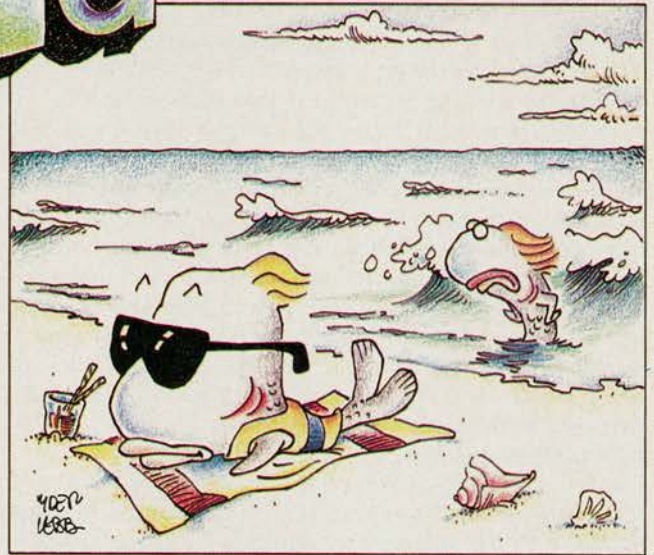
READING TIPS FOR PARENTS

A new brochure for parents, with ten suggestions about how to help children become better readers, has been produced by the National Commission on Reading, publishers of the landmark "Becoming a Nation of Readers." The pamphlet encourages parents to read aloud to their children; give them writing materials; set a good example by reading newspapers, magazines, and books; encourage children to invent stories; and, because children need broad background knowledge to read successfully, expose children to a variety of experiences and events. Single copies are free from the Center for the Study of Reading; 50 for \$17.50; 100 for \$35. Since sales tax differs from state to state, you should first write for a sample brochure and an order card with pricing information. Write to the Center for the Study of Reading, 174 Children's Research Center, 51 East Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820.

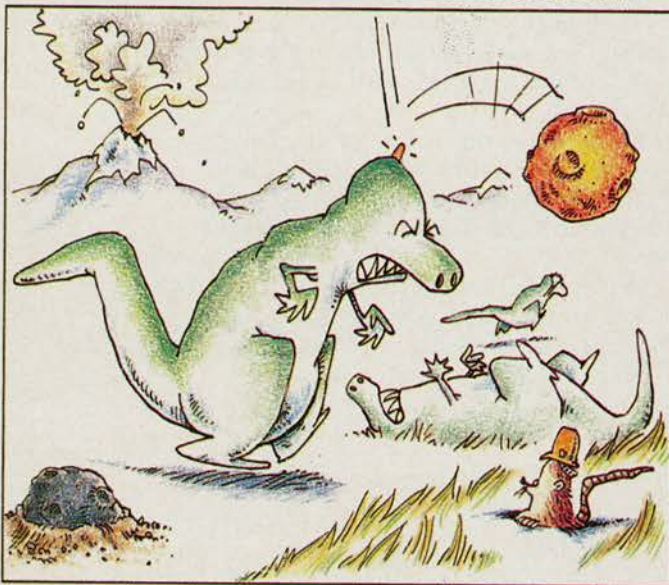


MISSING LINKS IN SCIENCE

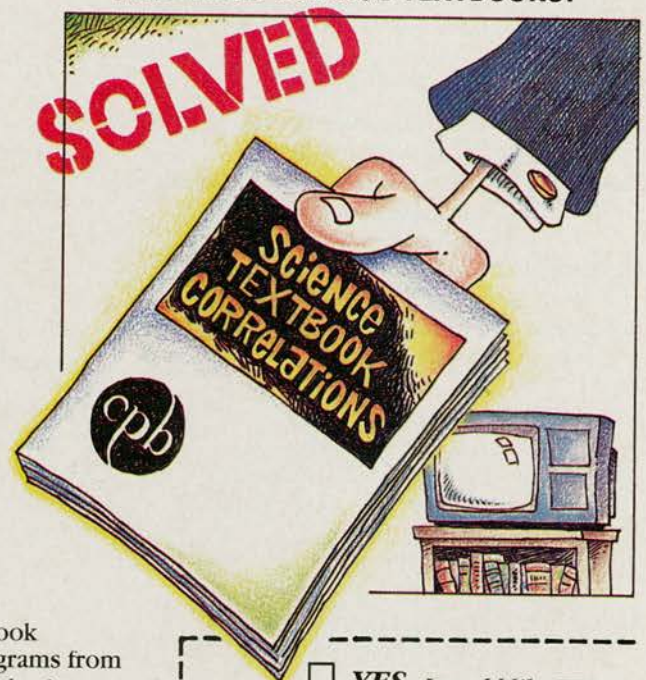
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A PAGE OF POEMS

NORMALLY, THE American Educator does not print poetry. We've made an exception for Edward Gottlieb. As a New York City school teacher, he first joined the teacher union movement in 1926 as a member of the New York Teachers Union, an early forerunner of the United Federation of Teachers/AFT. In 1960, as a school principal at P.S. 165 during the first New York City teachers strike, he joined the picket line and was one of a handful of principals who resisted board of education demands that the names of striking teachers be turned over to the board. At a time when many other principals punished teachers they knew to be union members with poor class assignments and additional duties, Gottlieb always encouraged teachers at his school to join the then-small union. Just as importantly—and just as unpopularly—he encouraged teachers to pursue innovations to improve education. As one teacher who worked with him said, "There was a feeling of freedom and latitude in the schools; we did not feel hidebound to follow certain ways."

Mr. Gottlieb is now retired, in his eighties, and going blind. Always a Renaissance man, he is still a poet.

MOVING OUT OF SIGHT

A shrouded world my eyes survey
And that at best is thru a haze
How hard my brain must strain to weigh
The clouded, bent, enfeebled rays

Dark shadows settle on the stage
Where actors and faces blend
Bold print gets blurred upon the page
On tape recordings I depend

I scan the food upon my plate
No recognition in my gaze
Sight, taste and smell must all debate
What seems most like a bouillabaisse

In conquering the bleak subway
I clutch the rail or hug the wall
And when steep stairs come into play
Cane takes me down to spare a fall

As planetary view recedes
My cosmic sphere approaches nigh
Suffice the memory of old deeds
They tempt no longer failing eyes

OUR TEACHER

As measured by the television range
Her life by word or step is quite confined
Yet in her hands she holds the strings of change
That guide your hearts through realms of humankind

She prods young minds beyond the conscious ledge
Inspiring each to shun the passive role
Then intellect transcending drives a wedge
So conscience be the lever of the soul

So much her bold exploring mind exacts
She grants the casual but off-stage parts
Begrudging every tick that time subtracts
As seeds of growth propel adventurous hearts
Her classroom has a skylight to the world
And on her blackboards dreams of men unfurled

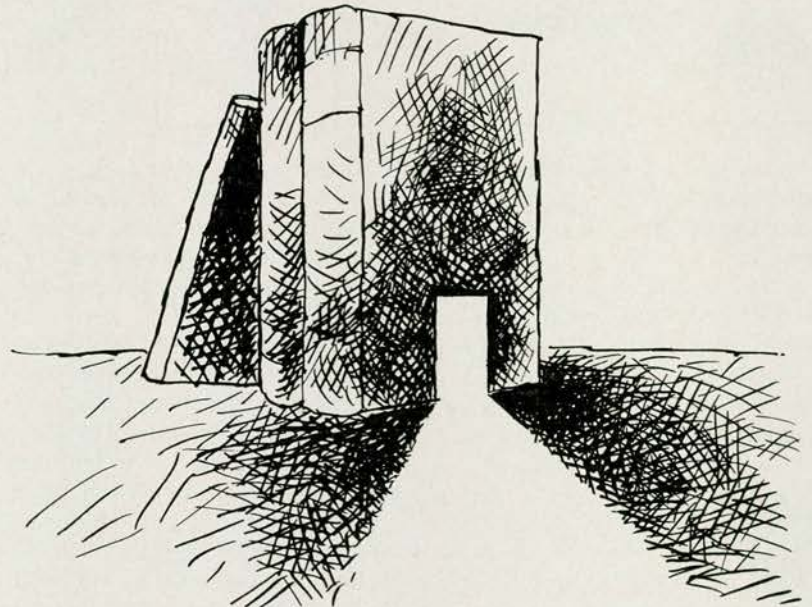
FAREWELL VIA PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

I'll miss your hurry down the street
And bright "Good Morning" at the door,
Your stairway tramp of merry feet, —
These cheerful sounds I'll hear no more.

Will you recall the P.A. voice
The plea to sit up straight and tall;
Each message that should guide your choice
To climb new heights, to heed a call?

I'll think of you with book-bag full
Your white shirts on assembly day,
With fondness for each tug and pull
That brought us close in secret play.

Remember how I shared your top or ball,
Rejoiced to hear you laugh and sing;
Remember how I hushed you in the hall,
To every joyous memory cling!



ILLUSTRATED BY SAVANJOR BRU



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LETTERS

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VALUES

The excellence of the *American Educator* continues. There were a number of outstanding articles in the Fall 1987 issue, but to my mind, "The Values Vacuum" by Harriet Tyson-Bernstein and "Democracy's Jewish and Christian Roots" were among the best I have ever read in the AFT journal.

The common sense theme that runs through both suggests that a lot of the criticism directed at public education can be overcome simply by being practical. We need not teach about God or indoctrinate in a sectarian manner, yet we can still teach what our ancestors thought and how they acted on those beliefs to establish the civilization we have today.

The history of Western Civilization teaches us that religious intolerance was the source of our bloodiest wars. It is necessary to know that history. Yet it is also necessary to know that our ideas about the value of the individual and how we should treat one another are rooted in our Judeo-Christian religious beliefs. We must pass along those moral and historical values or our future will not be as bright and hopeful as much of our past has been.

—PAUL E. FRANCIS
VICE PRESIDENT

PITTSBURGH FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

I have one concern about Paul Gagnon's article entitled "Democracy's Jewish and Christian Roots," which appeared in the Fall edition of the *American Educator*.

I would strongly support the philosophy expressed on the first page of the article: that we should examine ideologies "... because they are forces in history." But as Mr. Gagnon develops his story, he seems to ac-

cept the notion that the Christian and Jewish God is an absolute authority. At one point, he says, "Absent from these texts ... is the idea of individual creation of each soul in the spiritual image of God. ..." He then argues that this is the basis for "... accepting the equality and dignity of every person on earth. ..." I am concerned that there is only a subtle rather than a substantial difference between "... forces in history ..." and religious belief.

He also states that "... God imposes on Jew and Christian the duty to make [the world] better, regardless of obstacles or excuses. ..." I am unsure that this "doctrine of amelioration" is only imposed by the God of Christians and Jews. And finally, in a list, he talks about Christians and Jews and "... those who have absorbed its moral imperatives ..." "... to obey God's law. ..."

Gagnon is on the right track. I am just concerned that he slips off on to the side of the believers in God and excludes the nonbelievers.

—THOMAS Y. HOBART, JR.
PRESIDENT

NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS

The author replies:

I surely did not mean to exclude nonbelievers, and if my language suggests that I did, it is my own failure of clarity. The moral and ethical principles basic to Judaism and Christianity provided not so much the "roots" of democracy, as the title of the article implies, as the fertile soil in which it could later flourish. Essential to the democratic community, as de Tocqueville said, was widespread devotion to justice and social amelioration, to human equality and dignity, to individual liberty and responsibility for moral choice. As Mr. Hobart observes, these are not exclusively Jewish and

Christian principles. But in the West, it was mainly Judaism and Christianity to which most people adhered and from which they first imbibed such ideals. The ideals themselves survived the secularization of Western society and the frequent abandonment of religious belief. Anyone can cherish them, believer or not. But they did not come out of thin air. My quarrel is with texts that leave the student wholly ignorant of their origins and of the moral fervor that sustained them.

—PAUL GAGNON

THE VALUES VACUUM

I enjoyed Harriet Tyson-Bernstein's article "The Values Vacuum" immensely. I thought it entirely appropriate, even to the quotation from "Hamlet."

The only problem I have with it is one statement that was fatally incomplete. She said "parents want 'values' taught in the schools." In fact, what parents want taught is *their* values. "Aye, there's the rub!"

—ALFRED E. BORM, PH.D.
SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

"The lady doth protest too much, methinks." Hamlet III.2.242

Harriet Tyson-Bernstein's article "The Values Vacuum: A Provocative Explanation for Parental Discontent" is provocative and requires rebuttal. Although elegantly written and cleverly phrased, the arguments offered are the familiar conservative positions clothed in new guises. Despite the protests of conservatives to the contrary, there always have been and always will be values in education programs. The real issue is the
(Continued on page 47)

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The Remarkable Impact of
**CREATING
A SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

*One Model of How It Can Be Done
An Interview with Anne Ratzki*

AMERICAN EDUCATORS are constantly called upon to follow some new star—some new method or fad that will eliminate the problems faced by American schools. We have reason to be very skeptical of such panaceas—and reason to remain on the lookout for new approaches that work, particularly if they work for students who have had little success in the traditional school setting. Such a new approach is spreading through West Germany.

The AFT discovered it when a delegation of AFT vice

Anne Ratzki's U.S. program was organized by the AFT International Affairs Department with support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, a West German foundation associated with Germany's trade union movement and Social Democratic Party.

presidents, as part of an ongoing exchange with the West German teachers union, traveled to Cologne, West Germany, and visited the Köln-Holweide school. What they found was a school whose student population was composed of a fairly equal mix of high- middle- and low-ability students; a substantial proportion—one third—of Turkish students, Germany's major minority population; and a representative mix from middle- and lower-income households. Yet only 1 percent of the school's students drop out, compared to a national West German average of 14 percent; and 60 percent of its students score sufficiently well on high school exit exams to be admitted to a four-year college, compared to a national average of only 27 percent. Moreover, the school suffers practically no truancy, hardly any teacher absenteeism, and only minor discipline problems.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONIKA KJEMANN, KÖLN-HOLWEIDE

At the core of Köln-Holweide is the table group: five or six students of varied abilities who work together and tutor each other in every course. The groups stay together for a year or more and group mates are held responsible for each others' success.



Of course, it always has been possible—whether in West Germany or here—to point to an exceptional inner-city school here and there that had drastically improved its test scores, behavior, and so on. But typically, the school's success depends on a single charismatic principal. Once he or she leaves, the school slowly regresses. Significantly, Köln-Holweide's success does not depend on a one-of-a-kind leader; its level of performance has been replicated wherever the concept has been introduced—currently at a total of twenty schools, each serving from six hundred to two thousand students.

Behind Köln-Holweide's success is not a single quick-fix solution, or even a series of piecemeal education "reforms." Rather, the school has been completely restructured, with the goal of transforming the school

into a close-knit community, with all that that implies: an environment in which students will find support for their efforts to learn and grow up and, as is also true in any real community, where they will come up against strong sanctions and pressures if they stray too far from the community norms. To create this community, the school's teachers draw on many techniques that American teachers will recognize—cooperative learning and peer-tutoring techniques (for more information on these, see *American Educator*, Summer 1986), expanded authority and broadened responsibility for teachers, independent study projects and teams of teachers working with small groups of students in schools within a school. But at Köln-Holweide, and its sister schools, each of these ideas is carried further than is typically the case here, and no idea is regarded as an



Several periods are devoted to project work: younger students undertake such tasks as producing holiday greeting cards (above); older ones might be asked to use their knowledge of math and architecture to "design the home of their dreams."

end in itself but as a piece of an overarching plan, of an ongoing attempt to create this community.

THE KÖLN-HOLWEIDE approach grew, eventually, out of a great reform of German education that began in 1963, with the publication of the bestselling *German Educational Disaster*, which focused German attention on an outmoded, class-based school system dating from before the first world war. At that time, Germany's schools were organized largely according to social class. Students were sorted out and tracked beginning at age ten. Children of the upper class (and, after World War II, the most able from other social classes) were sent to the *Gymnasium*, which prepared them to enter the university. Middle-class students went to the *Realschule* and, eventually, to elite vocational schools. Children of Germany's lower class, including many immigrant children, were sent to the *Hauptschule* and went into the workforce at age fifteen. (Later that age was raised to sixteen.)

The problem, according to the *German Educational Disaster*, was that the school system as it was organized was not producing enough qualified students to fill jobs in modern industry, science and technology. The system took potentially talented students, labelled them, and literally ruled them out of consideration for a university education by the age of ten. As a result, Germany was sending fewer students to universities than were most other industrialized countries, and its economy would soon pay the price.

A prestigious national commission called for the creation of "Comprehensive" schools that would enroll students aged ten to nineteen (grades five through thirteen) from all social classes. The first one opened in 1968, and today a network of Comprehensive schools exists side by side with the traditional, stratified three-school system. Most research concluded that, compared to their counterparts still in the traditional school system, a much higher proportion of Comprehensive students earned their "leaving certificate"—roughly equivalent to a high school diploma—and then continued their education. But in a given grade, the achievement of Comprehensive school students did not seem spectacularly higher, and the huge comprehensive schools soon earned a reputation for being "concrete jungles" filled with alienated students and teachers.

After observing how the first Comprehensive schools fared, teachers from Köln-Holweide (and independently, from another school, Gottingen-Geismar) developed their unique approach, what they call the "Team-Small-Group-Plan." In developing their approach they had two aims: to diminish the anonymity that seems to come with a huge school and to design an instructional scheme in which, while working together, students of very different abilities and backgrounds could each reach their potential. The two aims led them to team teaching, with the close relationships it fosters between a relatively small number of teachers and a manageable number of students. The team idea was then extended to the students, and the small-group method—where

students work together in small heterogeneous groups (what we would call "cooperative learning")—became the school's core instructional idea. In American classrooms, cooperative learning tends to be employed in some classes on some occasions. At Köln-Holweide, in order to amplify the close relationships and build the desired community, the students generally work with their same cooperative "table group" for at least a year, and often more, and the teaching team works with the same group of eighty-five to ninety students for six years, from grade five to grade ten.

The striking success these schools have had, with a group of students who had been ignored or failed in the traditional school system, may offer some lessons for Americans. Just as Germany suddenly tried to educate millions of students from poorer, less-educated backgrounds, so we in the United States decided in the fifties and sixties that every student should get a high school diploma. That was a revolutionary change in mindset from pre-World War II days when less than one-third of our students graduated from high school. But we never transformed our schools to meet their revolutionary new mission. Just as the German schools first fared only adequately in their mission, so ours are still bumping along none too successfully. The German attempt to restructure their schools in an effort to meet the needs of these new students is instructive.

To find out more about how and why their school operates as it does, the AFT invited Anne Ratzki, the headmistress of Köln-Holweide, to visit the United States. The following interview is based on discussions she had with the AFT executive council, AFT president Albert Shanker, and members of the AFT staff.

Q. First, tell us a little about your students. How many are there? What kinds of families do they come from? How do they compare demographically to students in other German schools?

A. We have two thousand students. They are quite average and representative. The school is in a suburb, and we have an area where people own their own homes, but we also draw from public housing where residents are too poor or unstable to live anywhere else.

Although I can't cite statistics, I think about 25 percent of our children come from families in which the parents are unemployed. Sometimes we find the children ill clothed and hungry. Because they can't afford the few marks that some school activities cost, we run special fundraising activities. Because of divorce, many children live with only one parent, and they often have very big problems.

Twenty-five to thirty-five percent of the children are of foreign origin, mostly Turks, but also Moroccans, Filipinos, Yugoslavians—fifty-two nationalities in all. The Turks are by far the biggest ethnic group, and they have the biggest problems because their cultural background is very different from ours, especially with respect to the treatment and behavior of men and women. Most Turks hope to return to Turkey so they are not primarily interested in integrating into German society. We must simultaneously teach these students enough German so that if they stay, they can succeed and enough Turkish so that if they return, they can

*The German title is *Die deutsche Bildungskatasrophe*. The author is Georg Picht.

The teacher teams and their students stay together for six years, from the time students enter the school in fifth grade until they earn their leaving certificate at the end of grade ten.

Eleven-year-olds with the theatrical set they created during a lunch activity.



succeed there also. It is very, very difficult to balance these two goals.

The students represent the whole range of abilities: About fifty percent of our students earned the top three German marks—a 1, 2, or 3—in primary school and fifty percent the bottom three—a 4, 5, or 6. I should add that 7 percent of German students are so handicapped or have such terrible behavior and learning problems that they attend special schools. But now even these students are being integrated into Holweide and two other Comprehensive schools.

Q. To get a sense of your school, let's start very broadly. Can you tell me the five ways in which you and your twenty sister schools most differ from traditional American schools?

A. Yes. First, our teachers do not work as isolated individuals, each trying to deal alone with myriad problems that plague his students and the school. They are part of a team of six to eight teachers—six if the teachers are all full time, seven or eight if several teachers share one or two positions.* Together this team is responsible for the teaching and education of three groups of twenty-seven to thirty students—what we call classes.

Second, and this is probably most important, our teachers are responsible not merely for teaching their subjects but for the total education of their students, for making sure that their students succeed, personally and academically. This requires us to cast our net broadly and involve ourselves in many things: We eat with the students, counsel them on personal and academic issues, determine their class schedules, tailor their curricula, help to broaden their interests by offering special lunchtime activities, talk with their parents.

Third, the teacher teams and their students stay together for six years, from the time the students enter the school in fifth grade until they earn their leaving certificate** at the end of grade ten. And the students stay with their class of about thirty all these years also. The team's composition might change a little over the six years, but the idea is for the teachers and students to get to know each other very, very well and for the teachers and parents to get to know each other as well.

Fourth, our teachers make all the instructional decisions, including how the curriculum will be taught, and all sorts of other decisions as well. They develop a varied schedule of lunchtime activities and the class schedule, determining who will teach what and when, whether certain classes are best taught in a single period or a longer bloc of time or if more time should be provided for students to pursue independent study. They instigate inservice training as needed on different topics, they train new teachers and mentor each other, they arrange for someone to cover the class of an absent teacher, they call in social workers when that seems necessary Each team is really running a school within a school and

*By law, German teachers are entitled to work part time. This enables many women who otherwise might leave to continue teaching through most of their child-rearing years.

**The *leaving certificate* is awarded or denied to all German students at age sixteen. Depending on their scores, they are able to continue their academic studies, gain admission to special vocational schools, or only to ordinary ones. The score is based on a series of teacher evaluations and teacher-prepared tests.

has a great deal of autonomy. But that entails a great deal of responsibility also.

Fifth, our students are not forced to compete against each other in a destructive way. In the traditional school, students are pitted against each other at the earliest ages. The child who can't answer the teacher's public questions feels humiliated and, after several such experiences, gives up. Even more humiliating, students who fail are forced to leave their school for a less-prestigious one: a *Gymnasium* student would be demoted to the *Realschule*, or the *Realschule* student to the *Hauptschule*. We get children just ten years old who have already decided, "I can't learn, I hate this."

In contrast, we try to give support to our students. When they first enter the school, they are assigned to a table group of five or six students, integrated by sex, ability, and ethnic origin. Inside these groups, the children tutor and encourage each other. It's an extension of what you call cooperative learning groups. The difference is that our children stay in these same table groups for every subject and normally for at least a year.

Q. How long is "at least a year"?

A. It depends. In any group there will be problems—personality conflicts and so forth. But we try not to just alter groups for this reason. We work with the students to help them overcome their problems. But if the conflicts are too severe, or if the team teachers see that a particular group just isn't learning well together, they will do some minor reshuffling. This probably happens about once a year. In the older grades, students will usually initiate their own minor reshuffling—which must gain teacher approval—also about once a year.

Q. What about personality conflicts between a student and one of his teachers? Six years is a long time to endure each other. What is really gained from this sustained contact?

A. A great deal is gained: First, if we know that a child is our responsibility for six years—that we can't pass him on to someone else—we are forced to come to terms with even the most difficult characters. And if you have a child for six years, not one—especially if you're sharing responsibility for him with six or eight team mates—you stand a chance of winning him over. You're not already defeated at the starting line. Second, we gain educational time: We don't lose several weeks each September learning a new set of names, teaching the basic rules to a new set of students, and figuring out exactly what they learned the previous year; and we don't lose weeks at the end of the year packing students back up. Most importantly, teachers and students get to know each other—teachers get to know how each student learns, and students know which teachers they can go to for various kinds of help. The importance of this is incalculable.

If a personality conflict between a teacher and student is terribly severe, in very rare, extreme cases, a switch of teams could be considered. But in all of our experience, that has never happened.

Q. If I walked into one of your classrooms, instead of children in rows, I would see children

The teacher's role remains the same: to teach. Only the teaching techniques have changed.

Students meet in a "tutorial" twice a week.



around tables. How else would it look different from a typical American classroom?

A. The children would be busy doing something—writing things, talking with each other, reading, solving problems that the teacher had assigned, or preparing a presentation for the rest of the class.

Except for very rarely, the teacher would not be at the front of the class delivering a lesson to the whole class—at least not for most of the period. Instead, he or she would be walking from group to group to see how their work was progressing. Sometimes there would be a whole-class discussion, but this would follow a period of group work in which even the slowest students had been familiarized with the material so that they too could contribute.

Q. So you have really transformed the role of the teacher.

A. Not really. The teacher's role remains the same: to teach. Only the teaching technique has changed.

We found that teaching to the whole class when the students were of such varied abilities didn't work. When you speak to the whole class, you reach a limited number of students. We bore some of the brilliant ones, and we don't reach some of the very slow ones. Children learn early how to give the appearance of attentiveness, but we have no idea what's happening behind their faces. We assume the children are "on task." But only those who are listening and understanding really are.

Our children are always busy and working so it's harder to lose them, and they're always "on task." If a student has a problem, he doesn't have to wait for the teacher, he can ask his table group for help. If the group can't help, then the teacher will—but the first responsibility to help lies with the group.

In the beginning some teachers were uncomfortable in this role. If they weren't up front, talking themselves, they felt they weren't teaching. We tell them to have more confidence in the student. Give them a chance to want to and they'll learn themselves. But with this approach the teacher is no less a teacher. He's coaching, tutoring, and mentoring, arranging things so that the students can get interested and then learn.

Q. Tell me what the teacher and the students are actually doing in a given class.

A. Let's take a foreign language class in English. I'm the teacher. I review what we already know about adjectives and then challenge each group to prepare a list for the overhead of all the adjectives that they know. Each student will contribute some words to his group's list—some more, some less. Then one from each group will display the group's list, translating each word into German.

We'll applaud the best groups, and usually the students will see that the group that performed the best is the one that has worked together the best. When one or two children sit back, the group suffers. I'll ask, "What has happened to your group? Why couldn't you work?" If it's a small problem, we might discuss it briefly in the class. Someone in the group might say, "I was so tired. I was out too late." "Okay, accepted," I say. You can be sure the group will see to it that this child is not tired next

time. They want to win.

Then perhaps I'll give a short lecture on how English adjectives are converted into adverbs. I'll answer some questions, and then maybe as a whole class we will experiment with using the adverbs in sentences.

Then each child has to complete a handout on adjectives, adverbs, and spelling. I'll go from group to group to see how people are doing. Before answering any question that's posed to me, I'll ask, "Have you asked in your group yet?" Even though this is really an individual exercise, students are responsible for helping their group mates.

So you see the teacher has decided how best to present the instruction on adverbs, she's arranged the competition, prepared the handouts, answered questions, counseled the groups—it's quite a mix.

* * *

Q. You said the teachers have a great deal of autonomy and authority and you outlined for us a whole series of their responsibilities. So that we can understand a little better both what the teachers are doing and how the school runs, explain, for example, how the curriculum is developed.

A. Take the mathematics curriculum. Our state's ministry of education publishes a small book that states what students should learn in each grade. We take that book and the textbook that we have selected and meet at a grade-level curriculum conference, composed of one delegate from each of the three teams in that grade. We decide which elements of the prescribed curriculum and which sections of what books should be emphasized and in what order they should be taught. We'll select or develop materials for each class, often developing special materials for the weaker or quicker children. Or, perhaps we'll agree on a good film to bring in.

Q. So these are materials that would be used at the tables?

A. That's right. These are materials that will help students understand what's in the textbook or that will take them beyond the text—handouts, exercises, additional readings, perhaps. Maybe we would develop a simulation game, questions to provoke a table discussion, or instructions and materials for preparing a group project. But, remember, the individual teacher isn't designing all these group tasks all by him or herself. Three teachers are preparing the materials for all the subject teachers in the grade.

Q. What if I don't like the materials the curriculum conference has prepared? Have I lost the freedom to develop the kind of lesson I want to give? Doesn't this become a terrible strait jacket for a teacher?

A. Not really. You are always free to bring your ideas to the conference. But most teachers believe that materials developed by the group will be better than those prepared by a single teacher in isolation. But certainly if someone wants to go his own way, that's okay. Why not? It's never good to force people to do what they don't want to.

Q. Was it clear to you from the beginning which sorts of tasks would elicit the most work and learning from the groups?

A. No, not at all. For example, in the beginning we prepared different activities for students of different abilities. But this was not effective—it was hard for the students to collaborate. We now assign a single difficult task and have the whole group work to solve it.

Also, in the beginning we spent a lot of time inventing totally new tasks for the tables. But that turned out not to be so vital. Once you have trained the groups to work together and to help each other, you can give them traditional tasks like reading a book and answering questions or doing a science experiment.

Q. Let's go back to this curriculum conference. When does it meet?

A. Let me explain the structure of the week. Every Tuesday afternoon, children leave at 1:30, and the afternoon is devoted to a variety of teacher conferences. Several times a year, the whole staff will meet together to discuss issues affecting the whole school. Periodically, all the teachers in a grade will get together. And every other week, teachers from each team meet to discuss such issues as the progress of individual students, groups that aren't working well, and modifications in the class schedule. Or if a teacher will be absent, they'll decide who will cover her classes. We never hire substitutes. Since they don't know the students, they are rarely able to do more than keep order. (In alternate weeks, team members often meet at someone's home and conduct their meeting over a friendly dinner. This is generally not resented because most teachers believe the regular meetings are necessary.)

As for the curriculum conferences, they are essentially subcommittees of the all-grade subject conferences that meet every sixth Tuesday. In this subject conference, the three teachers from every grade who are delegates to, say, an English curriculum conference will meet and discuss curriculum matters that affect all grades—which dictionary to use, for example, or whether to change the textbook. This is also where subject matter research is discussed. A new study on a more promising way to teach a mathematical concept, for example, would be discussed in the mathematics conference. Normally this meeting lasts one-half hour, but once a year the curriculum conference will organize a full-day program for all its delegates—team members will cover the classes of the missing teachers. The program for the one-half hour and day-long meetings is planned and organized by an elected subject chairman who, in order to complete this work, gets an extra free period per week.

After the all-grades meeting, the curriculum delegates split up by grade level and meet in the curriculum conference I described earlier—if nondelegate teachers want to come also, they may.

In addition to developing materials, the curriculum conference may compare how different classes and teams did on the last round of tests.* If one did particularly well, or not so well, we'll want to ask why. Then perhaps someone will volunteer to draft the next test, which will then be circulated to all the other English teachers for their comments and approval. So at dif-

ferent times, everyone prepares something and then gives it to everyone else.

Q. In one way or another, then, the entire faculty, sometimes through delegates, sometimes not, is thinking about everything—the tests, the textbooks, the materials that are used, how to strengthen the working of each group. This is an ongoing discussion.

A. That's right.

Q. What about the running of the larger school? As headmistress, are you still the person who is making the personnel decisions and allocating the resources, for example?

A. Although I am legally the headmistress, our school is run democratically. The school is governed by the panel of lead teachers: myself, two of my deputies who help with administrative chores, the "lead teacher" for each grade and each subject—for a total of twenty people. We meet weekly and discuss such school issues as how to allocate resources among teams and whether to ask the authorities for new staff, and if so who—a new teacher or a social worker, for example.

Q. I understand that German law requires all headmasters to teach at least a few classes per week. In the United States, not only don't principals teach, but a large city high school might easily have five or six other nonteaching administrators. How do you feel about having to teach?

A. In our school anybody with administrative responsibilities also teaches. I teach six to eight periods a week and am a member of a team. I cannot imagine not teaching. I would miss it terribly. Plus, if I weren't teaching, how well could I understand the problems teachers were facing in their classes? How well could I judge their teaching? I don't think as well as I now can.

* * *

Q. What about teacher training? Do you have any special program for training and mentoring new teachers?

A. Every year, we get five to ten new teachers—some are brand new, some transfer in from other schools. They are briefed for one day on the school's structure and main procedures. Then the teams take responsibility for them.

For the first two weeks, the new teachers simply observe their teammates and the working of the table groups. When they begin teaching, their education and training will continue as they interact with the six or eight people of varied experience, with different certifications, and with very different ideas about teaching. They're regularly discussing their teaching, their students, their successes and failures . . . and here is this new teacher. It's a tremendous learning experience.

*By law, students must be tested six times a year in each subject. But these are not standardized tests; they're developed by the teachers and are mainly essay and short answer. Since they're not national tests, it's hard to use them to compare one school's performance to another. But they're very useful for making internal comparisons.

In the curriculum conference, we may compare how different classes and teams did on the last round of tests. If one did particularly well, or not so well, we'll want to ask why.

A table group at work on a social studies assignment.



Plus, they're attending curriculum conferences and other educational meetings.

After three years, the new teachers—not the transfers—will be observed and evaluated by the state superintendent's office. The evaluator can fail the teacher or give one of four passing marks, but our teachers have never received any but the top two marks. The superintendent often comments on how highly qualified our teachers are. But we get the same teachers as the other schools. Ours just get this superb training in the teams. Our staff even includes teachers who have had big problems elsewhere—but now they are doing quite well.

There are, of course, a few teachers—really, a very few—who are unwanted by every team. And sometimes a teacher doesn't fit in with a particular team or even with a second team. But then maybe he finds his ideal team and turns out to be a fine teacher. Teachers develop in different ways.

Q. What about veteran teachers who are not performing well. How do you handle that? It must be a terrible strain on the teams to have one or two members who are very weak.

A. If a teacher is having problems, he can ask a team mate to observe him and his class and make suggestions. This happened to me, actually. When I first started in the Comprehensive school, my only teaching experience had been in the *Gymnasium*. I had big problems: The students were perfectly friendly, but they did not listen. I asked a fellow English teacher on my team—someone who had taught at the *Hauptschule* (attended by students from the lower social classes)—to come observe me. And I went to her class to see what she was doing. We discovered that I was expressing myself in such a complicated way the children didn't understand me. My instructions worked fine for the upper-class children, but they failed with this mixed group. I had to change the way I explained the assignments.

It happens that teachers face problems for which they are unprepared. In a supportive atmosphere like the team, these problems are more often solved.

Q. In other German schools, what would happen to a teacher who found herself in the position you just described?

A. In most cases, the teacher would just suffer. She wouldn't dare tell anyone about her problems.

But on the team you can discuss your problems without losing face. Usually, over dinner maybe, one teacher will say, "Oh, what a dreadful day. The students in class behaved dreadfully. They behaved so well last week. What happened?" The other teachers chime in with their complaints, and every one is relieved of their frustration. Then we can get down to the business of understanding the problems: What *did* prompt the change in behavior?

Q. But what about the teacher in your school with particularly severe problems? In most schools, provided the students aren't completely out of control, this teacher could get by. But in your school he's operating in a fishbowl—every-

(Continued on page 38)

TRAGEDY IN MATEWAN

The Coal Strikes Come to the Screen

BY MICHAEL KERPER

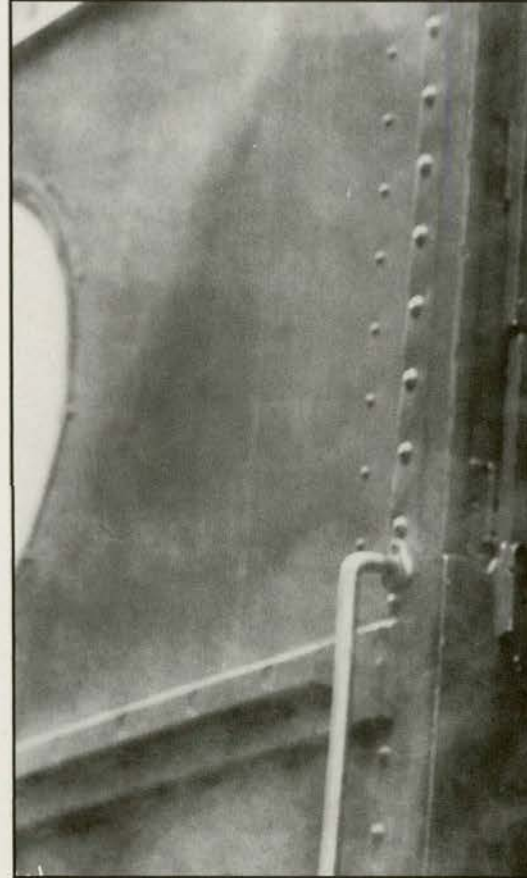
Matewan: one hundred-minute feature film produced by Cinecom Entertainment Group; videocassette distributed by Lorimar Home Video

AMERICAN FILMMAKERS have long been shy about candidly portraying one of the most gruesome yet formative currents in American history: the existence of violent class conflict. This secret social wound, which many have tried to ignore or conceal, is exposed in a powerful and superbly crafted new film called *Matewan*. Written and directed by John Sayles, best known for his *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, *Matewan* far surpasses other "labor" films like *Norma Rae*, *The Molly Maguires*, and *F.I.S.T.* Each of those films offers some insight into labor relations in America, but each suffers from oversimplification, and, in the case of *The Molly Maguires* and *F.I.S.T.*, violence tends to be glamorized. Sayles is different. He offers a realistic view of labor relations in the coal industry, circa 1920, but, more important still, he brilliantly captures the many moral and tactical ambiguities, personal dynamics, and social and political tensions that were—and remain—indispensable elements of any struggle for social and economic change. *Matewan* is no "period piece" or bland documentary about miners. Rather, it touches on a whole range of issues, many of them linked to contemporary struggles.

Matewan is history. While doing research for *Union Dues*, a novel well received by critics in 1977, Sayles delved into American labor history, especially materials chronicling the great organizing drives among coal miners. One day, Sayles, himself a former union meat-packer and service worker, stumbled across the story of the endless and frequently bloody feud between the legendary Hatfields and McCoys. Embedded in the colorful account was a reference to a savage shootout in Matewan, a West Virginia river town once notorious for its gamblers, prostitutes, and coal operators. The so-called "Matewan Massacre" so fascinated Sayles that he fished out old newspaper accounts and, after much effort, managed to stitch together a fairly complete story. Sayles was drawn to the story of Matewan not by its violence, which was hardly unique, but by the intriguing interplay of human beings, broad social forces, and political ideas. "All the elements and principles involved," Sayles writes, "seemed basic to the idea of what America has become and what it should be." And so it is.

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At right: Union organizer Joe Keneban arriving in Matewan, West Virginia. Next page: James Earl Jones as "Few Clothes" Johnson; later he'll join the strikers; here he's running from their stones.



Matewan captures on film a bloody strike, one of many that ravished West Virginia. The year is 1920. The United Mine Workers of America, which would eventually become the flagship of the Congress of Industrial Organizations under John L. Lewis's fiery leadership, already had nearly 400,000 miners, and over 50 percent of the coal industry was already organized. But some companies, like the Stone Mountain Coal Company, operator of the Matewan mine, had stubbornly held out against the union. Mine ownership was very decentralized and competition was cutthroat. In the view of the operators, shrinking profit margins could best be widened by squeezing the workers, who, for the most part, had little or no protection. Minimum wage laws and health and safety standards were still in the future.

As the story begins, the company arbitrarily slashes the miners' pay, which, at the time, was linked to the quantity of coal lifted from the dark, damp, hazardous mines. The miners, not yet formally organized into a union, walk off their jobs in protest. But the company is waiting with an army of strikebreakers eager and ready



to take the jobs of the striking miners. A band of Italian immigrants soon takes up the pickaxes and shovels cast off by the strikers, and the mine resumes operation.

To further intimidate the strikers, the coal company recruits black workers from the impoverished South. Sayles shows striking workers ambushing a train as it secretly unloads black workers a few miles from town. The enraged white strikers viciously assault the surprised blacks who are led by "Few Clothes" Johnson, their burly leader played by James Earl Jones. As white workers fight black workers, as cries of "nigger" roll off the tongues of miners, the *real* enemy and exploiter—the Stone Mountain Coal Company—goes unrecognized. The scene ends with the hapless, stunned black workers beating a hasty retreat to the train.

The train that delivers the unwelcome strikebreakers also carries a "gift" for the strikers, Joe Kenehan, the professional union organizer played by Chris Cooper. Kenehan is young but well tested in the crucible of industrial and political conflict. In a quiet talk with "Few Clothes" Johnson much later in the film, Kenehan reveals that he once served time in a federal prison, apparently for refusing to fight in World War I, which he describes as "workers fighting other workers." Other references suggest that Kenehan was a Wobbly, a member of the ill-fated Industrial Workers of the World, a radical syndicalist movement—"One Big Union"—that once flourished in the United States, especially in the West. At one point, Kenehan admits to being a "Red," which, at the time, meant that one supported the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement, not the totalitarian monstrosities that emerged from Lenin's revolution later in history.

Upon arriving in Matewan, Kenehan moves cautiously. As an outsider, some suspect him of being a union troublemaker, even a Communist, while the workers, familiar with company tactics, suspect him of being a "plant" or company spy. He moves into a rooming house managed by Elma Radnor, played by Mary McDonnell. Elma, the young widow of a miner, is a strong, determined woman, well acquainted with the formidable odds against which the strikers fought. Her fifteen-year-old son, Danny Radnor, played by Will Oldham, is already working in the mines as a "trapper boy." A staunch union supporter, he is a precocious youngster who has already established himself as a revered preacher in the local Baptist church.

Kenehan finally meets with the striking workers and gradually convinces them that he is indeed a "union man." Though the workers accept him, the leadership of the strike never passes to him. He acts as adviser and strategist, but real power remains in the hands of the



rank and file; Kenehan isn't even allowed a vote at meetings.

FOR THE MINERS, the solution is simple: get rid of the "niggers" and "dagos." They want to confront the "scabs" with brute force. But Kenehan, who grasps the wider picture, urges the strikers to invite the blacks and Italians to join the union, a move that is first regarded as utterly preposterous, even repulsive. Whites, blacks, and foreigners in the same organization? Ridiculous. Disgusting. Kenehan argues his case, and finally, the organizational logic of the situation triumphs over racial and nativist bigotry. In a memorable scene, the blacks and Italians, after an agonizing moment of decision, put down their tools and refuse to work.

Sayles avoids romanticizing the solidarity of the white, black, and immigrant workers. Economic necessity, not love, undergirds their unity. Early on, the blacks and Italians learn that the company regards them as expendable equipment, not as human beings. The blacks are quick to see that their new-found freedom differs little from the abject slavery of their parents, and

many of the Italians wonder if things could truly be worse in Milan or Naples. Spurred by the harsh economic realities of the time, worker unity grows, even though distrust, some bigotry, and misunderstanding linger.

The tentative worker unity is met by stepped-up company intimidation. Stone Mountain Coal Company calls in the "labor relations" experts of the Pinkerton-like Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. The Agency, well versed in "pacifying" strikers, dispatches to troubled Matewan two of its finest operatives, Hickey and Griggs. These two professional strikebreakers, wonderfully portrayed by Kevin Tighe and Gordon Clapp, have one assignment: get rid of the union.

Hickey, clearly the man in charge, first turns to the law to crush the will of the strikers. He serves eviction notices on the miners and their families who occupy the dismal company-owned houses. As one Matewan family's meager belongings lay cast in the street, a surprise confrontation takes place. Sid Hatfield, Matewan's wiry, officious chief of police, arrives on the scene and invokes the law—not on behalf of the coal company, but

USING 'MATEWAN' IN CLASS

The one hundred-minute Matewan, which has been nominated for an Academy Award in cinematography, is now available on videocassette in neighborhood video stores under the label of Lorimar Home Video Inc. The videotape can also be purchased for \$79.95 plus shipping and handling by calling 1-800-323-5275.

An innovative teacher of history, economics, ethics, or social studies can find many uses for *Matewan* in the classroom. The story and characters offer endless opportunities for serious and penetrating discussion about historical and contemporary issues. A few suggestions follow.

1. For students studying the emergence of the civil rights movement or contemporary trends in interracial affairs, *Matewan* provides a glimpse of blacks and whites joining in a common economic struggle. Some questions: Why did the white workers fear and despise the blacks? What was the attitude of the black workers? How have relations between black and white workers developed since then? What does the experience of *Matewan's* workers tell us about white-black relations today? Students might examine the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, and Bayard

Rustin to see what major civil rights leaders have said about the relationship between black and white workers.

2. Throughout the film, recourse to violence is a constant temptation for the workers. Students might discuss whether violence is useful and/or morally justified in social struggle. If so, when and under what circumstances? The whole question of nonviolence as a moral value and political strategy might be discussed.

3. The role of Mayor Testerman and Police Chief Sid Hatfield raises questions about civil authority in a democratic polity. Did the Stone Mountain Coal Company have power and authority that surpassed that of democratically elected government? What led the mayor and police chief to defend the interests of the workers? In the United States, has government helped or hindered

mass movements for social change? Comparative government classes could consider how other governments, say, the British in India, the white minority in South Africa, or governments in totalitarian states like the Soviet Union have interacted with mass social movements in their countries.

4. Students studying economics might research the history, structure, and operation of the coal industry. How were wages determined in the industry? In our society? What about collective bargaining? How do contemporary employers decide what to pay workers?

5. High school students who work parttime or during the summer might be asked to reflect on their own experiences as workers and compare them with the workers of *Matewan*. How are things different now? How are things the same as they were then? Topics for discussion might include minimum wages, safety laws, Social Security, trade unions, and health insurance.

6. *Matewan* portrays so well the problems of early European immigrants, specifically Italians. What is the experience of today's immigrants, especially Mexicans, Asians, and various political refugees? How should America react to people who seek to live here? M.K



in favor of the family. Hickey, always the menacing bully, threatens Hatfield, played by David Strathairn, but the police chief—surprisingly—holds his ground. Hickey and his men, in an electric scene, are forced finally, if temporarily, to retreat.

Through legal chicanery and the skillful manipulation of the levers of power, Stone Mountain Coal Company finally ousts the workers from their homes. The strikers still refuse to capitulate. Instead, they move to the hills and build a village of tents and crude shacks. Not satisfied with their momentary victory, Hickey and Griggs move beyond legal maneuvers to blatant threats of violence. When all the miners are gone from the camp, Hickey, Griggs and their cohorts arrive to terrorize the women and children. Kenehan, unarmed and the only man at the camp, faces Hickey down. Determined to put the organizer out of action once and for all, Hickey is ready to move on Kenehan when a ragged band of "hill people," armed with ancient muskets, descend and force him to retreat again, leaving Kenehan the new, calm hero of the strike.

It then dawns on Hickey that brutal intimidation may not be his best weapon. He conspires with C.E. Lively, a local restaurant owner and putative friend of the union, to turn the strikers against Kenehan, thus sowing the seeds of disunity. Lively, who had won the strikers' confidence by hosting union meetings at his restaurant, shows gullible strike leaders a laudatory letter from Baldwin-Felts addressed to Kenehan.

Lively adds more spice by telling Bridey Mae, a young widow in love with Kenehan, that the "outsider" had blackened her reputation by bragging that she had enticed him into her house for a memorable bout of wild lovemaking. Turned against Kenehan by the stories, the strikers decide to execute him.

DANNY RADNOR, the teenage "trapper boy" and part-time Baptist preacher, gets wind of the plot while overhearing a conversation between Hickey and Griggs. Hickey discovers the boy eavesdropping and threatens to kill him if he reveals the plot. The two Baldwin-Felts agents keep the boy under constant surveillance but allow him to preach that evening. Danny preached on Joseph, the Old Testament patriarch falsely accused of adultery by his Egyptian master's wife, who, in fact, had tried vainly to seduce him. By bending the story and altering the ending, Danny signals the perceptive miners in the pews that Kenehan is "Joseph," the victim of a nefarious and self-serving lie. A miner races back to the camp, and seconds before Kenehan, who knows nothing of the plot, is to die at the hands of "Few Clothes" Johnson, the scheme is revealed and Kenehan is saved.

As the strike drags on, patience grows thin on both sides. The time of shrewd, skillfully concocted plans has come to an end. Hickey, surely with the connivance of his employers, turns to armed force. Likewise, the strikers, despite Kenehan's reasoned appeals, turn to sabotage. The stage is set for bloody, horrific disaster.

Hickey assembles a small army of Baldwin-Felts agents to push the miners from their ramshackle camp. As the morning sun rises on Matewan's dusty main street, Hickey and his heavily armed associates march slowly toward the miners' camp. But Sid Hatfield and

Mayor Testermann stop them in their tracks. Shots ring out. A full-scale battle erupts. Armed agents are pitted against the unarmed miners, who have hidden themselves throughout the town. After a furious exchange, the streets of Matewan are strewn with bloody corpses: miners, including Kenehan, agents, including Hickey and Griggs, and bystanders, most notably the well-meaning mayor. No one wins. Not the miners. Not Stone Mountain Coal Company. Certainly not Matewan.

MATEWAN IS much more than an exciting, action-packed, wonderfully filmed motion picture. Sayles raises penetrating questions about fundamental issues like violence, racism, economic injustice, and the techniques of social struggle in industrial societies. Though Sayles sides with the workers, he is no mindless partisan.

Sayles treats violence with delicacy. He portrays it in an astonishingly realistic way, yet he neither glorifies it nor exploits it for purely commercial ends. In his view, the bloody conflict bubbles up from the boiling cauldron of social and economic turmoil that rages out of all control. Significantly, it is the seasoned union organizer and self-admitted "Red," the partisan of the workers and their families, who works unceasingly—but, alas, futilely—to prevent bloodshed. Some of Kenehan's early comments, such as praise for Mennonite draft resisters and his own refusal to serve in World War I, suggest, ever so subtly, that he himself is a pacifist. But his commitment to nonviolence seems to flow not only from some vague moral conviction but also from his political understanding. Kenehan is a realist; he knows full well that revolutionary violence in the United States is futile and, for workers, self-destructive. Real, lasting social change, whether in the mines of West Virginia or in the broader society, has one source: a mass political movement, painstakingly built and sustained by ordinary working people and their allies.

Two enormously powerful forces worked against Kenehan and his strategy. First, and *least* important, was the willingness—indeed eagerness—of employers to bludgeon their workers into submission by whatever means available. And second was the sense of despair and powerlessness that was endemic and so deeply rooted among the workers. On several occasions, workers and their wives voice the slogans of helplessness and quiet resignation. As one Italian says, "If we work, the union shoots us. If we don't work, the bosses shoot us." Another time a woman recalls that in the past the union "came to nothing." Desperation, whether among miners or any group of aggrieved people, can give rise to violence, for violence often seems the only plausible solution to their immediate problems. Moreover, the natural human longing for revenge makes violence stunningly attractive, even when it's obviously self-destructive. The violence of the "Matewan Massacre" is far from glorious. It is simply tragic.

Sayles, who knows American labor history, understands well that the workers' sense of powerlessness is one of the most intractable obstacles to successful organizing. When employers, whether coal operators or school boards, appear omnipotent in the eyes of the workers, organizing drives are inevitably doomed. Not

(Continued on page 45)

HOW TO IMPROVE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Pointers from the National Assessment of Chapter 1

BY BEATRICE F. BIRMAN

CHAPTER 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, formerly Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, serves almost 5 million disadvantaged schoolaged children, or one out of every nine students enrolled in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. Students are selected to participate on the basis of their schools' poverty and their own low achievement; they typically receive compensatory instruction in reading, mathematics, or both, in addition to the regular instruction provided by their schools. At \$3.9 billion in 1987, Chapter 1 is the federal government's largest investment in elementary and secondary education and accounts for 20 percent of the U.S. Department of Education's total budget. The program reaches virtually every school district in the nation.

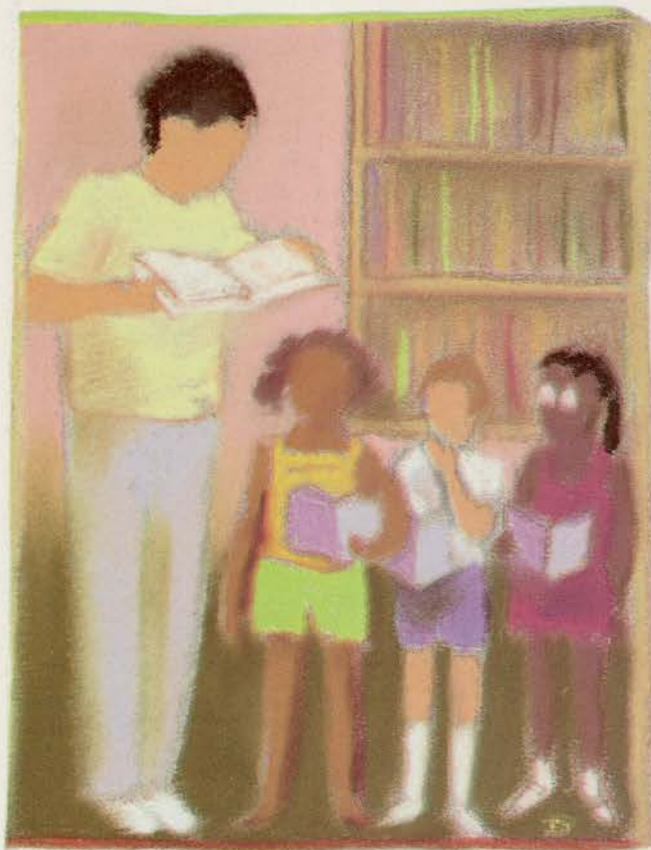
Since the early days of the Chapter 1 program, over twenty years ago, researchers have studied the effects of federal compensatory education services on student

achievement. The most recent review and analysis of the research, found in the second report of the Department of Education's "National Assessment of Chapter 1," concludes that during a given school year, students receiving Chapter 1 services show larger increases in achievement than comparable students not receiving these services. But the gains do not move Chapter 1 students substantially toward the achievement levels of more advantaged students, and the gains do not persist after students leave the program.

The effects of Chapter 1 services vary from district to district and school to school. Some of the differences in the effects can be traced to "given" characteristics of a school district, the Chapter 1 program or the Chapter 1 students. We know, for example, that students in the early elementary programs tend to gain more than students in the later-grade programs and that students in Chapter 1 mathematics programs tend to gain more than those in the reading programs. Also, effects may vary because in some places the achievement tests used to determine "effect" may be more closely aligned to the curriculum (or vice versa) than in others. Finally, programs that serve lower achievers may appear less successful than others since higher achievers tend to show greater gains on standardized achievement tests.

But differences in achievement also result from the quality of local Chapter 1 programs, the quality of regular instruction, and the effectiveness with which the two programs are coordinated. Unfortunately, previous evaluations of Chapter 1 have yielded very little information about particular practices that improve the achievement of Chapter 1 students. Past efforts have identified successful Chapter 1 projects but were

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ILLUSTRATED BY SUSAN DAVIS

unable to pinpoint the specific features that made these projects successful. Large quantitative studies that have tried to isolate those features of instruction responsible for improved achievement have generally failed, largely because of the complexity of most instructional situations.

Previous discussions of Chapter 1 effectiveness also have been hampered by their preoccupation with the setting in which the services were provided. Early research suggested that a "pullout" approach resulted in students missing their regular instruction, in weaker coordination between regular and Chapter 1 instruction, in the stigmatizing of Chapter 1 students and, in general, in the disruption of a student's educational program. But more recent analyses indicate that disruption, labelling, and lack of coordination can occur with in-class approaches as well and that differences in achievement cannot be traced unambiguously to the use of one setting or the other (Archambault, 1986).

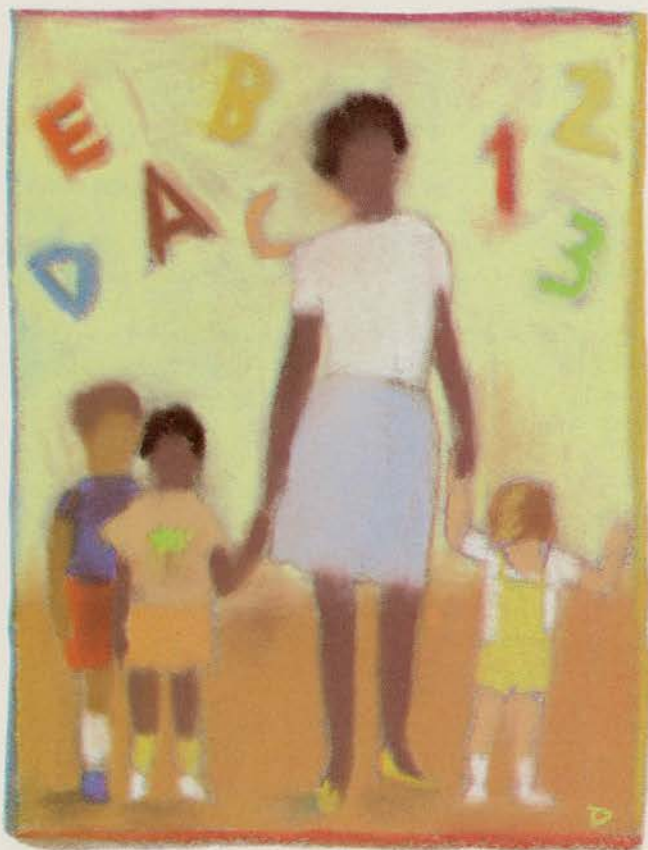
In its effort to shed greater light on the question of effectiveness, the National Assessment of Chapter 1's final report took a different approach. We asked prominent researchers to describe to us those educational practices that would most improve the achievement of disadvantaged children. Then, we had our field researchers, using a combination of surveys and case studies, determine whether and how these practices were being implemented in Chapter 1 programs across the nation. Following the recommendations of the researchers, we studied, among other factors, whether instructional groups were small enough; whether staff was qualified; whether additional time was devoted to instruction; whether regular and Chapter 1 instruction were adequately coordinated; and whether emphasis was placed on teaching higher-order academic skills. The findings of this research are summarized in this article.

OVERALL, WE found that like Title I before it, Chapter 1 continues to be primarily an elementary school program that offers basic skills instruction in reading and mathematics. Services in elementary schools typically are provided outside the regular classroom for about thirty to thirty-five minutes each day. Almost all Chapter 1 elementary schools rely primarily on teachers to provide instruction, though many work with an aide; the educational levels and years of experience of Chapter 1 teachers are about the same as those of regular teachers.

THE FEATURES OF CHAPTER 1 INSTRUCTION: WHAT'S GOOD AND WHAT COULD BE BETTER

Finding: Chapter 1 instructors are generally specialists and their classes are small.

Chapter 1 instruction frequently offers two important advantages to participating students. First, Chapter 1 teachers are much more likely to be specialists than are regular classroom teachers. For example, 69 percent of Chapter 1 teachers report holding a specialist degree in reading, compared to only 28 percent of regular elementary classroom teachers. Second, about 75 percent of Chapter 1 teachers report that they teach groups



of eight or fewer students. In contrast, the typical elementary teacher is responsible for a class of twenty-five; this is important since we know that student achievement increases when learning activities take place in groups of fewer than ten students (Glass, Cahen, Smith and Filby, 1982; Cahen, Filby, McCutcheon, and Kyle, 1983; Cooper, 1986), probably because students are more likely to receive close attention in those settings.

However, while Chapter 1 programs offer low-achieving students an opportunity for special attention from trained teachers, other practices that might enhance student achievement are not widely used in Chapter 1 programs.

Finding: Chapter 1 instruction is sometimes provided for short periods of time and rarely adds to the total time devoted to instruction.

We know that the amount of time a student has available for learning is an important precondition for achievement—although achievement also requires that (Walberg and Frederick, 1983) students be engaged by their lessons and that their lessons draw on relevant skills (Leinhardt, Bickel, and Pallay, 1982; Fisher and Berliner, 1985; Peterson, 1986). We found that in most Chapter 1 elementary schools, Chapter 1 services are provided daily for at least thirty minutes and that in one quarter of them, it is provided for over fifty minutes per day. (In some of these schools, such lengthy services are possible only because the district helps with the funding.) But in the other quarter of Chapter 1 elementary schools, less than one-half hour per day of Chapter 1 instruction is provided. Because the positive effect of small instructional groups is greater when sustained over longer periods of time (Glass, et al., 1982), students who receive very small doses of Chapter 1 instruction are less likely to benefit from the program.

Moreover, public elementary schools provide Chapter 1 services during the regular school day; only 2 percent of them provide it before or after school, and only about 10 percent offer it during the summer. Hence, a tradeoff exists between regular instruction and Chapter 1 instruction. Most classroom teachers report that when students attend Chapter 1 classes, they miss activities in the same subject or in other basic skills. Our case studies show that teachers try to minimize what students miss, often scheduling them to miss seatwork rather than teacher-directed instruction. But, the fact remains: The students usually are not receiving *additional* instruction.

Finding: Chapter 1 aides frequently perform important instructional tasks. However, the quality of that instruction can be more variable than that provided by Chapter 1 teachers.

Many districts employ Chapter 1 aides to assist teachers or to work independently with Chapter 1 students. Since aides are less expensive to hire than teachers, districts can hire more of them and thus lower the student/adult ratio for, or extend Chapter 1 services to, a greater number of eligible students. These motivations are particularly compelling in districts with large numbers of eligible students. Administrators who choose in-class over pull-out arrangements prefer Chapter 1 aides

over Chapter 1 teachers because they believe that combining an aide with a regular teacher minimizes the potential for role conflict that could erupt between two teachers in the classroom.

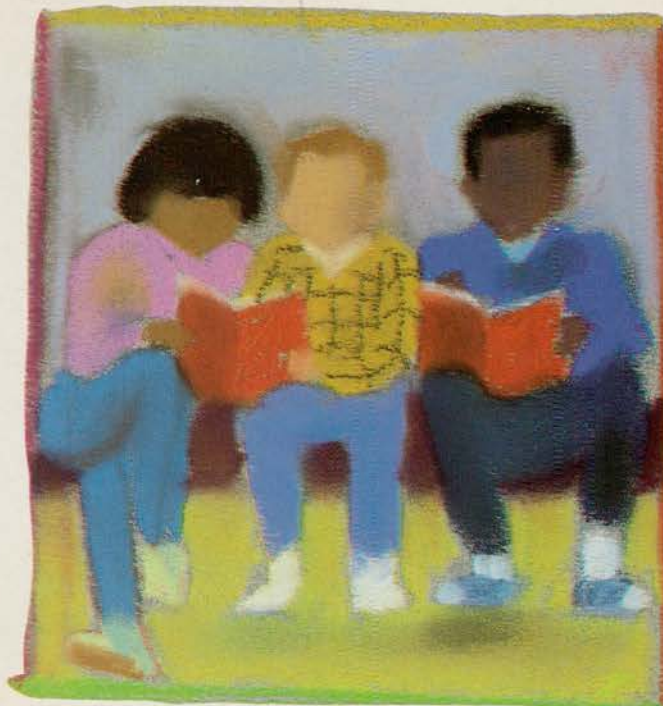
In 1984-85, Chapter 1 programs employed 73,600 full-time equivalent teachers and 64,500 aides. In almost all schools, a teacher is present when an aide provides Chapter 1 instruction. When elementary principals were asked to report the patterns that "best describe Chapter 1 reading instruction in their school," 57 percent said that their Chapter 1 aides worked with either a Chapter 1 or a regular teacher; only 6 percent said that they usually relied on a Chapter 1 aide with no teacher present. Furthermore, when aides are used, they rarely introduce Chapter 1 lessons to students. Instead, the majority of aides work with individual students or small groups to reinforce whatever instruction has been provided by the regular or Chapter 1 teachers.

Nevertheless, the quality of aides' work is clearly very important. In addition to reinforcing instruction, they are almost always involved in correcting students' work and in providing feedback to them. Moreover, close to half of Chapter 1 and regular instructors report that aides provide Chapter 1 instruction independently of a teacher, and about one-third of these instructors report that aides assign classwork to students. For such tasks, it's crucial that aides be given sufficient background and training (Scheutz, 1980), something that does not always happen. As a result, while a number of aides were judged to be excellent instructors, our case studies also show a much greater unevenness in the quality of instruction delivered by aides than in that delivered by Chapter 1 teachers.

Finding: Chapter 1 programs are rarely linked to regular programs in ways that fit the needs of individual students.

Previous research indicates that without strong coordination, the responsibility for student learning may be diffused between the Chapter 1 and the regular teacher, with neither teacher feeling ultimately responsible for the child's success. Weak coordination could also result in students receiving inconsistent lessons and having to make their own connections across lessons—a task that may be particularly difficult for such disadvantaged students (Allington, 1986; Allington and Johnston, 1986).

The relationship between Chapter 1 services and the regular program varies considerably across schools. In some schools, Chapter 1 projects build on the lessons of the regular classroom and are designed to help students keep up with the rest of the class. At the other extreme are Chapter 1 projects that are only loosely linked to the regular classroom, providing an alternative to the instructional experience offered by the regular teacher. Recently, some researchers have argued that either of these approaches might make sense depending on the needs of individual students (Rowan et al., 1986). Alternative Chapter 1 programs may be more effective for students who are significantly behind grade level, while instruction that is closely linked to regular classroom work appears to be especially helpful to students who are only slightly behind. National Assessment researchers found, however, that school staff rarely consider the achievement of individual students when



designing Chapter 1 services. Rather, the programs are designed to fit the teaching preferences of school staff and a preconceived notion of which mode of delivery constitutes best practice (Knapp et al., 1986).

One precondition for providing an integrated program of instruction is communication among teachers. While survey data indicate that teachers often communicate with one another about their Chapter 1 students, they are less likely to go further—to jointly develop lesson plans, for example. In some districts, administrators have set up formal mechanisms to spur better communication: for example, joint planning time for teachers, coordination sheets, and classroom schedules that give both staffs the opportunity to exchange information. But our evidence suggests that such measures may elicit only pro-forma coordination unless strong communication and good interpersonal relationships already exist among school staff.

Finding: Chapter 1 instruction provides students with few opportunities to engage in higher-order academic skills, which some researchers believe should be a component of Chapter 1 instruction.

Recently, some researchers have argued that current approaches to compensatory education systematically underchallenge disadvantaged students and that continual drill and repetition of basic skills may limit Chapter 1 students' opportunities to progress to more challenging material (Calfee, 1986; Peterson, 1986; Romberg, 1986; Smith, 1986). Moreover, simple drill does not alleviate student weakness in understanding subject matter. National Assessment observers reported that in their Chapter 1 classes, students had few opportunities to engage their higher-order thinking skills. In reading, for example, students were taught phonics and vocabulary and to read words and sentences. But rarely were they asked to read paragraphs or stories or to construe meaning from text. In mathematics, students practiced computation skills but seldom applied mathematical facts to solving problems.

The idea of teaching higher-order skills in Chapter 1 programs is new, and many teachers and administrators have not considered it before. We found some opposition from local administrators and teachers to it on the grounds that students need to first master basic skills. But this view is increasingly questioned by researchers (Resnick, 1987). A reluctance to teach higher-order skills also stems from a fear that Chapter 1 teachers and aides may be ill prepared to teach them.

We did find that where the state testing program tests for higher-order skills, local administrators were more likely to add them to the curriculum; and, conversely, where the tests ignore them, they are likely to be absent from it (Knapp et al., 1986).

Finding: Chapter 1 projects rarely adopt schoolwide approaches, although researchers believe such approaches would be promising for schools with large proportions of low-income students.

We found that a high concentration of low-income students in a school is associated with low student achievement, even among students who themselves do not come from low-income families. In such schools, the educational challenges are so great that a relatively self-contained, supplementary Chapter 1 program may be insufficient to improve the academic performance of students.

(Remember, since Chapter 1 funds go to three-quarters of all elementary schools in the nation, not all Chapter 1 schools serve high proportions of low-income children; for example, one-fifth of all Chapter 1 elementary schools in the nation have student bodies with fewer than 16 percent low-income students. But at the other extreme, in one-quarter of Chapter 1 elementary schools, low-income students account for 50 to 100 percent of the student body.)

Our findings suggest that these high-poverty schools face two types of schoolwide problems. First, they suffer disproportionately from vandalism or theft, truancy and chronic tardiness, talking back to staff, low parental involvement, and physical fights among students and thus offer an environment less conducive to learning.

Second, their educational programs seem to differ from those of low-poverty schools, although our data are limited on this point. (For more on this problem, see "Closing the Divide" Robert Dreeben, *American Educator*, Winter 1987.) We found that while many factors—the size of regular classes, days per week of instruction in reading and mathematics, and years of experience and educational attainment of regular teachers—were quite similar across schools with different poverty rates, there was one important difference: Students from low-poverty schools received more minutes per day of instruction in reading and mathematics than students from schools with higher proportions of low-income children. This was true despite the fact that in the high-poverty schools, students spent more time in Chapter 1 instruction. In other words, Chapter 1 students in high-poverty schools spend more time in Chapter 1 but may still receive less total reading instruction than do their Chapter 1 counterparts in low-poverty schools.

Congress has recognized that Chapter 1 students from high-poverty schools may need more than a stan-

dard Chapter 1 program. Since 1978, it has permitted districts in which more than 75 percent of the students are poor to spend Chapter 1 funds on schoolwide projects. These schools are released from the fiscal requirements that prompt schools to separate Chapter 1 students and staff from the core instructional program. Proponents of schoolwide projects argue that with this approach, schools can apply extra resources to the six hours children spend in school each day rather than just the half hour they spend receiving Chapter 1 instruction. Robert Slavin (Slavin and Madden, 1987), for example, argues that Chapter 1 funds should be used to encourage the schoolwide adoption of those instructional practices known to be effective with "at-risk" students. Other researchers note that schools most effectively serve poor children when they emphasize a number of features at once: clear goals; high expectations for students; planning efforts that involve the entire school staff; a safe, disciplined, and orderly school climate; and the involvement of parents in their chil-

dren's education (Purkey and Smith, 1983). They argue that Chapter 1 funds can effect the greatest increase in achievement by helping high-poverty schools to fund such comprehensive approaches. (Smith, 1986; Williams, Richmond, and Mason, 1986). [For an example of what such a comprehensive program might look like, see the accompanying sidebar, "Stopping Kids from Getting Behinder and Behinder."]

Thus far, few schools have adopted the schoolwide approach, primarily because the district is required to match Chapter 1 funds with state or local funds. Districts also worry that if the concentration of poor children in a school dropped, Chapter 1 funding would be scaled back and the project might have to be dismantled.

In these few elementary schools that did implement schoolwide projects, we found they had adopted approaches that were not particularly comprehensive. For example, one school reduced the teacher/student ratio in all classes, one instituted a science-based read-

STOPPING STUDENTS FROM GETTING BEHINDER AND BEHIN

The following report on an important effort to "accelerate" education for the disadvantaged, condensed with permission from Education Week, Vol. VII, No. 37, June 10, 1987, describes the form an effective schoolwide program could take. New legislation will make it more feasible for many schools to organize schoolwide Chapter 1 programs along such lines. For more information, write to Henry Levin, Accelerated Schools Project, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 94305.

BY LYNN OLSON

PALO ALTO, CALIF.—Disadvantaged students fall farther behind in school as they get older because educators are concentrating on remediation instead of providing an accelerated, enriched learning environment, a professor of education at Stanford University argues.

Henry M. Levin estimates that as many as one-third of American students are "disadvantaged" as a result of poverty and cultural factors that limit their academic progress.

But despite more than twenty years of federal and state initiatives designed to address the needs of such students, he says, gains in their achievement have been marginal.

The problem, he argues, is that schools assume that they need to "slow down" instruction for "at-risk" children and do not set deadlines for helping them "catch up" with their peers.

The unintended consequence, according to the Stanford professor, is that many disadvantaged students are labeled "slow learners."

Expectations for them are reduced, he says. And they are deluged with worksheets and drills that would stifle any child's love of learning.

Beginning this fall, Mr. Levin proposes to turn that approach on its head.

Working with two elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay area, he will attempt to "speed up" the education of disadvantaged youngsters and to make their schooling as exciting as possible.

His goal is to bring the achievement of such children up to grade level by the end of the sixth grade.

"To me," Mr. Levin says, "what is meaningful is to bring these kids into the educational mainstream and, ultimately, the social, political, and economic mainstream."

"Simply raising performance from the fifteenth to the twentieth percentile doesn't do that," he notes. "It's statistically significant, but that does not mean that it's socially significant."

[Mr. Levin] says a number of instructional approaches have been developed for at-risk students—including peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and the use of computers.

The problem, Mr. Levin says, is that no one has combined these approaches in one school—or dedicated an entire school to the instruction of poor and minority children.

"The knowledge base is there," he argues. "We can't use that as an excuse any more. It's a matter of going out and doing it."

He has become particularly concerned about the problem in the past few years, he adds, because so much of the education reform movement has focused on college-bound high school students.

The problems of poor and minority elementary school students have been virtually ignored, he says.

Most of the children in both schools with which Mr. Levin is working—Daniel Webster Elementary School in San Francisco and Hoover Elementary School in Redwood City—are minority students.

More than 90 percent at Hoover are Hispanic. At Daniel Webster, Mr. Levin says, about 27 percent of the students are Hispanic, 31 percent are black, 17 percent are Chinese, 9 percent are "other whites," and 5 percent are Latino, with the

ing program and provided training in its use to all teachers in the school, and another established a computer lab and hired a pre-K teacher. While these activities may be useful, they aim at singular aspects of a school and do not capture the breadth of efforts that characterize those schools that effectively serve poor students.

Thus, while the idea of a schoolwide project may be a compelling one, it has not yet been acted on in either a comprehensive or widespread way.

Improving Chapter 1: The power of local educators. This article has summarized findings from the National Assessment of Chapter 1 about promising educational practices that are, or could be, used in Chapter 1 programs. On the plus side, we found that almost all Chapter 1 projects provide instruction to students in very small groups and that Chapter 1 teachers are as qualified as regular teachers and often more so. Both these features are likely to enhance the achievement of students.

But, Chapter 1 programs can also be improved, and it is within the power of local districts to make many of the improvements. There is a pervasive, but unwarranted, belief that the character of the Chapter 1 program is largely predetermined by Congress. In fact, historically, Congress has generally left decisions about the design and implementation of Chapter 1 services in the hands of state and local decision makers. Neither Chapter 1, nor Title I before it, specifies the setting for Chapter 1 services; how long or at which times they should be provided; the type of personnel who should provide services or how they should be supervised; which skills should be taught; or which curriculum materials should be used. While there are certain Chapter 1 fiscal provisions, intended to prevent the misuse of Chapter 1 funds, that do influence program design, many of the most significant features of Chapter 1 programs can be altered without brushing up against these fiscal provisions.

One exception has been the law that requires dis-

DER

remainder belonging to such ethnic groups as Japanese, Korean, and Pacific Islander.

"We don't have all the answers on implementation," he says. "In a sense, the schools are going to show us effective ways of implementing these ideas. It's really collaborative."

IN THE "accelerated schools," Mr. Levin says, the stripped-down, remedial curriculum typically offered to disadvantaged youngsters will be replaced with one heavily weighted toward the use of language—emphasizing reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Teachers will be encouraged to make education "meaningful" to children by relating it to their daily lives.

In addition, the schools will emphasize "diagnostic" assessments to let teachers know how their students are progressing and what they can do to help.

"We want to make sure that these kids are progressing at the rate of more than a month for every month that they're in school," Mr. Levin explains, "and so we want to keep tabs on them."

"We'll have trajectories for kids," he adds, "and we'll know that by third grade, they should have made up, hypothetically, half of the achievement gap."

Equally important, Mr. Levin argues, the schools will encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning.

"There are a lot of things that these parents can give their children," Mr. Levin adds, "even though they are not necessarily the things that middle-class parents can."

He proposes, for example, that the parents, children, and school officials sign written contracts agreeing to fulfill certain responsibilities.

Parents, for instance, would agree to ask the child about school each day; get the child to bed by a reasonable hour; limit the amount of television that the child watches; and set aside time for reading.

Children would agree to attend school every day, do their homework, and participate in the school program.

And the school would agree to keep in touch with the parent, make school an exciting place for the child, and keep track of the child's progress.

Such written agreements would have a strong "symbolic" value for parents, Mr. Levin argues, by indicating that the educational commitment is a serious one. Eventually, he adds, he would like to provide parents with training to encourage them to participate more deeply in the school pro-

gram. And he would like to encourage educators to meet with parents on their own grounds, such as in the housing projects where they live.

Finally, Mr. Levin wants to shift the governance of the "accelerated schools" to the teachers and the school staff.

Unless teachers are treated more like professionals and take "ownership" of the school's mission, he argues, long-term changes will not occur.

Teams of teachers at the two schools with which Mr. Levin is working [began this September to] develop plans for a redesign of their programs.

Mr. Levin anticipates that it will take five to six years to put all the components of an accelerated school in place. But he is asking each school to begin setting priorities now.

Stanford's role will be to provide the schools with technical assistance and information, he says.

In addition, Mr. Levin and his colleagues at the Stanford School of Education are preparing seven background papers on particular problems that the schools will have to tackle, such as parental involvement, language, assessment, mathematics, and writing. □



tricts to match the cost of schoolwide projects. But an expected relaxation of that law should make such projects more feasible in the future [see "Legislative Outlook"]. However, our findings suggest that removal of this legal barrier will not automatically result in the adoption of sufficiently comprehensive schoolwide approaches. While the federal government can make schoolwide projects less costly and provide guidance about which approaches show the most promise, only teachers and local administrators can ensure that these schoolwide programs are well conceived and effective.

Still, to say that local educators have a critical role to play in improving Chapter 1 services is not to say that such changes will come easily. Chapter 1 is a stable program. We found that once local decision makers have designed a program that meets their needs and federal guidelines, they are loathe to make changes from year to year. While such program stability is one source of strength and endurance for Chapter 1, it may work against the introduction of worthwhile modifications. Other factors, including district regulations or state laws, provisions in union contracts, politics (which may preclude concentrating dollars in fewer schools), or practicality often reinforce the sameness of Chapter 1 programs. For example, nothing in the federal law prevents districts from offering Chapter 1 programs in the summer or after school, thus increasing the total amount of time devoted to learning. Yet, probably because of scheduling and transportation difficulties, it's rarely done.

Teachers themselves can have an impact, and with the support and assistance of local administrators, the Chapter 1 program can be substantially improved. Teachers themselves, both inside and outside of Chapter 1, can take steps to increase their classroom emphasis on reading comprehension, mathematics problem solving, or other higher-order academic skills; they can be especially careful about closely matching the duties of an aide with his or her qualifications and training. To make other improvements, teachers would have to overcome a variety of organizational barriers. For example, more effective coordination would require ample time for Chapter 1 and regular teachers to discuss the individual needs of Chapter 1 students and additional training for aides would require district support.

Local attention to improving Chapter 1 services is likely to receive a boost from Congress in the new

Chapter 1 law.* While details of the law are currently being worked out, Congress is considering a range of carrots and sticks to further increase the effectiveness of Chapter 1. The new law is likely to allow local districts to use up to 5 percent of their Chapter 1 funds to explore innovative approaches to delivering Chapter 1 services. Congress is also considering new accountability provisions that would put greater pressure on schools to demonstrate achievement gains for Chapter 1 students or receive assistance from their district or state. Schools that implement schoolwide projects are likely to have to demonstrate that Chapter 1 students in these projects are achieving as well as comparable students.

In light of the heightened congressional concern with the effectiveness of Chapter 1 services, the findings of the National Assessment provide some direction for teachers and administrators working toward the ultimate goal of Chapter 1 programs: success in school for disadvantaged children. □

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LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

BY GREG HUMPHREY

Chapter 1 legislation is now being considered by the Congress. Although final details and funding levels have yet to be worked out by a House-Senate conference committee (which meets to forge a compromise whenever the two houses pass different versions of legislation), it seems fairly certain that the new legislation will include a major funding increase and the following provisions, long advocated by the AFT, that address some of the concerns outlined by Bea Birman and make possible major improvements in the already effective Chapter 1 program.

● **Secondary Programs:** Because Chapter 1 funds have always been tight—at present funding levels, they're sufficient to serve about 46 percent of eligible students—districts have rarely funded secondary school programs, preferring to target the funds to younger students. But Chapter 1's effects wear off when the child leaves the program, usually after elementary school. To stem this loss, it appears that Congress will provide an additional \$200 million earmarked strictly for secondary programs.

● **Preschool Programs:** Congress has funded preschool education for at-risk students through Head Start, which is offered primarily through private, nonprofit institutions, not the public schools. It seems virtually certain that this year a demonstration program will

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be created to allow some public schools to offer preschool to their at-risk students. Called Even Start, the program would fund pilot projects and, significantly, training programs aimed at helping parents of at-risk students to help their children.

● **Schoolwide Programs:** Because of Chapter 1's success in raising achievement through remedial reading and mathematics instruction, there has been a reluctance to try new approaches that might further increase effectiveness—approaches suggested by Beatrice Birman, Bella Rosenberg (see following article), and now being tried by Henry Levin. It appears that under the new legislation, the financial matching requirement, which in the past has dissuaded all but a handful of schools from adopting schoolwide programs, will be relaxed. Where at least 75 percent of a school's students are eligible for Chapter 1 services, schools will now be permitted to explore some of these approaches. In addition, a new provision will allow local school districts to reserve up to 5 percent of their Chapter 1 funds to develop and support innovative programs. Among the areas that can be funded are programs that strengthen coordination between Chapter 1 and the regular school program.

(AFT had hoped the relaxed requirement would apply to schools with 60 percent of their students eligible for Chapter 1, which would have allowed many more schools to participate.)

There is one area of concern, however. The new legislation will include a new "accountability" provision. While most of the pending proposals are well intentioned, the AFT believes one would be damaging: Backed by the Reagan administration, it would establish excessive state control over Chapter 1 projects. If a district's Chapter 1 program failed to show "adequate student improvement" after three years, the state could intervene, and, according to some attorneys who have reviewed the proposal, put a local Chapter 1 program into receivership, which would allow the state to dictate the content of the local Chapter 1 program. The threat of a state takeover would likely choke off any innovative Chapter 1 programs—which are badly needed if we're to make continued improvements in Chapter 1 effectiveness. And, since most districts are inclined to back away from controversy and possible trouble, it would impel districts to simply implement a standardized Chapter 1 program recommended by the state, without regard to the wishes and needs of local staff, students, and parents. This makes little sense at a time when all the education reform literature is recommending that more authority be pushed downwards to the local district, the individual school, and the individual teacher.

This receivership proposal would upset the balance that now exists and place a higher priority on bureaucratic accountability than on educational improvement. □

A LOOK BACKWARD AND FORWARD

*With Success Under Our Belts,
We Can Now Raise the Standard
to Which We Hold Chapter 1*

BY BELLA ROSENBERG

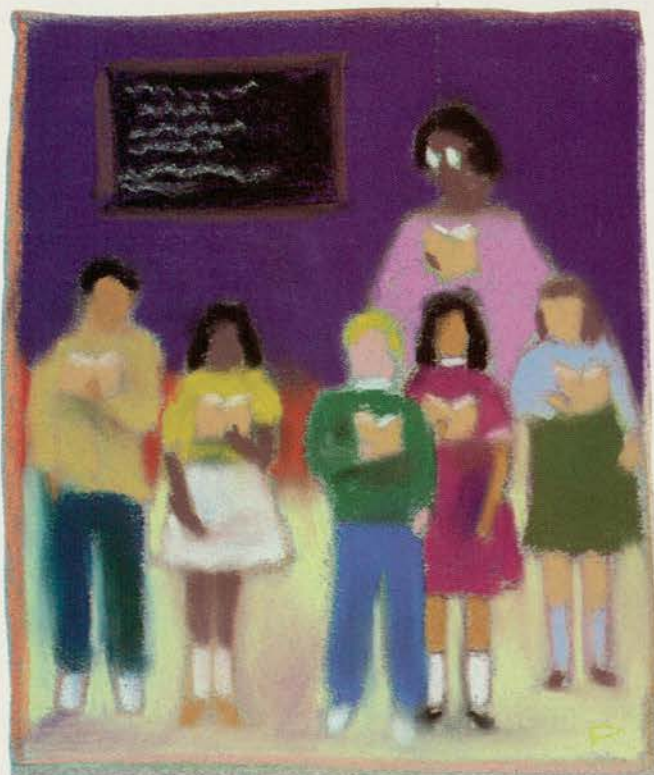
IN THE early days of Title I, now Chapter 1, it was not uncommon to hear horror stories about those hard-won federal funds intended to improve the educational opportunities of disadvantaged children being spent instead on building swimming pools in suburban schools or refurbishing administrators' offices or filling in real or imagined shortfalls in the regular school district budget. Far more typical were the cases of Title I funds not reaching their intended recipients or not being used for distinctive programs, not necessarily because of chicanery but because school districts had scant experience with identifying eligible children or designing and delivering special programs. After all, over twenty years ago, when Title I was initiated, the mere idea of substantial federal funding of education in general, and of compensatory education specifically, was innovative and its realization a major achievement.

Few legislators and advocates anticipated how difficult the experience would be. In retrospect, the real shock should not have been the instances of fraud or incompetence but rather the alacrity and speed with which school districts took up this new and stirring mission of improving the educational opportunities of disadvantaged youngsters.

We've come a long way since the early days of Title I and in a relatively short span of time, considering the current reach and scope of the program: almost five million children in three-fourths of the elementary schools and virtually every school district in this nation are now served, according to the 1987 report of the National Assessment of Chapter 1. Thanks to improved accounting and auditing procedures, school officials' accumulated experience with distributing federal funds, and the enforcement of strict provisions that federal compensatory education funds should supplement and not supplant regular school funds—that is, should not be used to pay for services that would normally be offered disadvantaged (and other) children in the regular course of their education—Chapter 1 funds are, by and large, going to their intended recipients in identifiable Chapter 1 programs. There is still room for improvement in expanding eligibility requirements and targeting resources, but today the questions about Chapter 1 are not so much about targeting and delivering programs as about their quality and effectiveness.

It is easy to underestimate the sea change—indeed, the success—represented by the shift from questions of resource and program delivery to inquiries about what works. So accustomed are we not only to Chapter 1 programs but to the delivery of a raft of now-regularized in-school services for children with special needs that it is hard to understand that what is “normal” now was a mere generation ago a terrific and vexing problem: how to do it? It's the difference between figuring out how to deliver food to the hungry and being concerned about the caloric content and nutritional benefit of the food; it's only when the belly is filled that questions about the quality and effects of the diet become practicable.

Bella Rosenberg is assistant to the president of the American Federation of Teachers.



ILLUSTRATED BY SUSAN DAVIS

Seen from the perspective of program delivery, Chapter 1 is a resounding success. Seen, however, from the perspective of the content and effects of this educational "diet," the results are far more ambiguous. Chapter 1 children are no longer starving educationally, but neither are they flourishing.

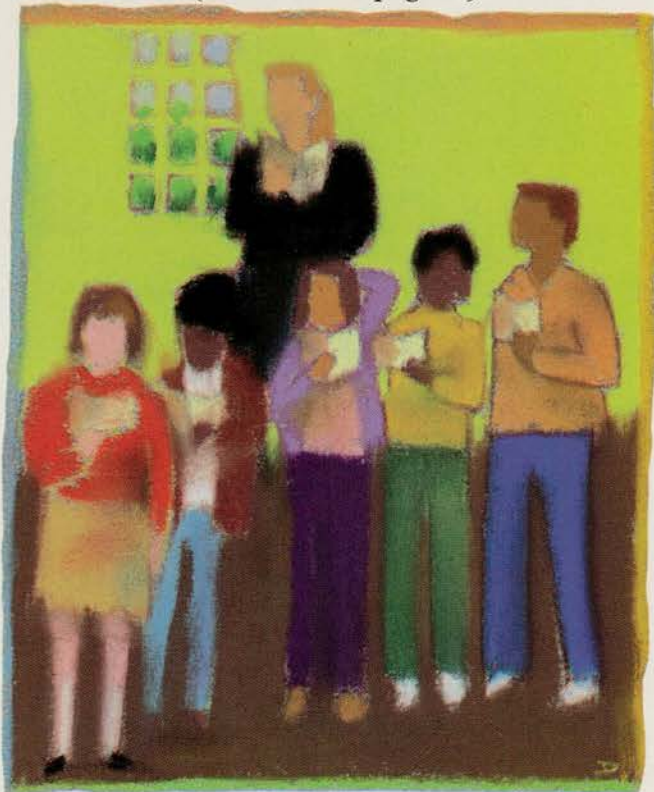
ONE OF the most remarkable findings of the National Assessment of Chapter 1, as reported by Beatrice Birman, is how well Chapter 1 youngsters do on so little. There is a hidden testimony to the effectiveness of Chapter 1 teachers and aides (and also to the educational "efficiency" of their students) in Birman's article, for despite the fact that most Chapter 1 schools provide only a meager thirty minutes a day of Chapter 1 services, Chapter 1 students achieve more during a given school year than comparable students who do not receive these services. The meagerness of the Chapter 1 diet and, therefore, the special noteworthiness of the achievement gains must be underscored. Those thirty minutes are typically not above and beyond regular instructional time; they occur during the normal course of the school day. Contrary, then, to assumptions about the additional nature of Chapter 1 services, Chapter 1 youngsters get no more instruction than any other students, and sometimes even less. And contrary to the hope that a Chapter 1 school would be at least somewhat different from a school in which Chapter 1 youngsters are not predominant—after all, Chapter 1 youngsters are not succeeding in traditional schools—the National Assessment indicates that Chapter 1 rarely alters the usual school program that occupies students for most of their time in school.

In light of these practices, it is hardly surprising that despite the achievement gains of Chapter 1 students, the gap between Chapter 1 and more advantaged students remains substantial. Equally consternating is the finding that the gains Chapter 1 students make while in the program do not persist after services are withdrawn. If the point of the special nourishment of Chapter 1 programs is eventually to enable their students to digest and thrive on regular school fare, then the diet is insufficient.

It is useful to push this nutritional analogy further. As

indicated, Congress intended Chapter 1 funds to be used to supplement the educational program of disadvantaged youngsters and not to supplant local or state education funds that finance the regular school program that all children, including Chapter 1 students, would receive. In other words, Chapter 1 funds are supposed to enrich the regular course of instruction for disadvantaged students, not substitute for it. From an accounting and auditing point of view, this provision is working well: Chapter 1 funds are not being spent on swimming pools or new furniture or non-Chapter 1 students and activities, as far as we can see. But from an educational perspective, Chapter 1 programs *are* substituting for—or at least eating into—the regular course of instruction, whether the services are provided through a "pullout" or in-class approach (recall the typical thirty minutes of

(Continued on page 45)



LITERARY LACKLUSTER

The Unhappy State of American History Textbooks

BY GILBERT SEWALL

American history and social studies textbooks have been the object of much scrutiny and analysis during the last decade. Perceptive studies as different as Frances FitzGerald's *America Revised* (1979) and Herbert London's *Why Are They Lying to Our Children?* (1984) have noted startling changes—in tone, interpretation, and selection of material. Passionate criticism of history textbooks has come from outside the education community itself, wedging itself into political debate and intellectual discourse.

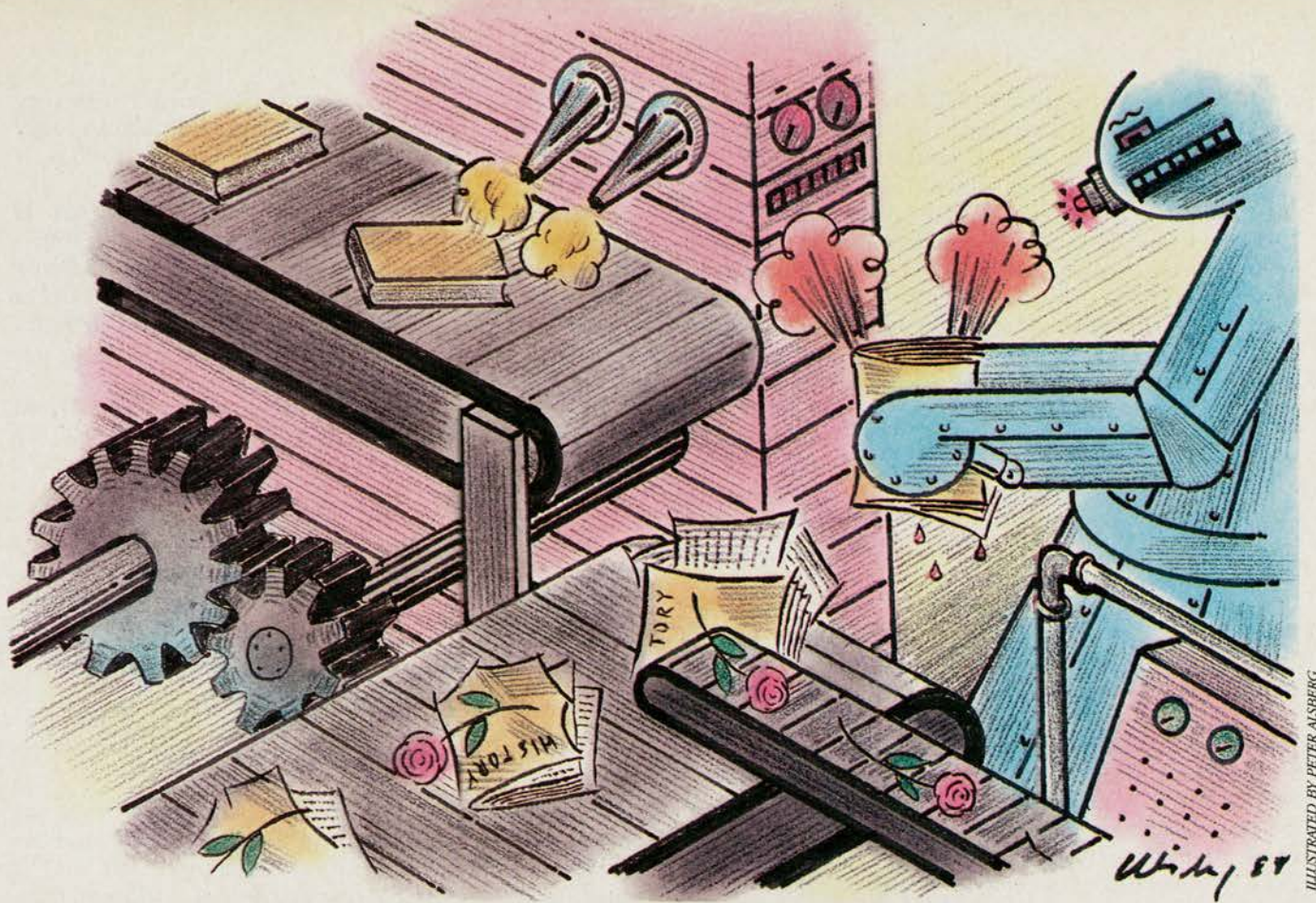
Like FitzGerald, an increasing number of critics note the disappearance of controversies, conflicts, colorful characters, glories, and tragedies—in short, a national history of passion and voice—since such historiography runs the risk of offending one or another textbook client. In a dubious quest for readability, many textbooks simplify style, mechanics, and vocabulary to produce flat and unmemorable prose without zest or elegance. An accumulating body of research indicates that a majority of students consider social studies to be unimportant, redundant, and above all, boring. For example, a study by Schug et al. found that only 17 percent of the

students in a joint elementary and secondary school sample held social studies to be their most important subject; 13 percent indicated that it was their favorite subject. If history and related subjects are disregarded or treated by student and teacher with mutual ennui, the resulting historical amnesia does raise the specter of a wholesale loss of national heritage.

In recent inquiries into social studies textbook quality, the analytical accent has been on content: on what information textbooks include and omit, how that information is slanted, and the impact of such information on the young. Attempts to assess American history textbooks have centered on their accuracy, balance, and representation. Less explored is the literary merit of textbooks, as market forces and clashing ideologies seem to take a toll on elegant, solid, and even honest historical writing. Arguably, the problem of student disinterest toward history lies not with content per se, but in the way it is rolled out and retailed. As indicated by Graves and Slater, textbook passage revisions in accord with the principles of skilled magazine editing—a style of writing employing dramatic style, strong verbs, vivid anecdotes, and rich quotations—seem to result in far higher rates of student recall. Do literary shortcomings in textbooks contribute to a broader problem of successful transmission of American history to young people? Until now, no major research project has examined the explicit role of textbook writing in engaging and holding students' interest in their national history.

THIS ASSESSMENT investigates the capacity of leading American social studies and history textbooks to inspire the imagination of students through effective literary, pictorial, and historiographic techniques. In

Gilbert Sewall is the co-director of the Educational Excellence Network, a confederation of about eight hundred educators, scholars, and journalists devoted to educational quality and the improvement of America's schools. This article is adapted from the Network's recent report "American History Textbooks: An Assessment of Quality." Copies of this report can be ordered from the Network for \$4, Box 32, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027.



ILLUSTRATED BY PETER ALSBERG

1986, twelve panelists were charged to act as expert reviewers of such textbooks at the fifth-, eighth-, and eleventh-grade levels. The full report, based on the panelists' reviews, considers the quality of historical writing in eleven standard American history and social studies textbooks used at the fifth-, eighth-, and eleventh-grade levels, the three ordinary slots for American history in the curriculum. This article considers the three elementary texts that were reviewed in the full report.

The selected texts are representative market leaders, used by millions of students each day in public elementary and secondary schools from Portland, Maine, to San Diego, California, in standard, nonremedial courses, the kind that satisfy state requirements for social studies instruction.

The assessment tries to answer questions like these:

- Are American history textbooks likely to make history come alive for students, giving them a vivid and even inspiring sense of their origins?
- Does textbook writing contribute to student alienation from the subject?
- Are these books well written?
- Do they overwhelm with names, dates, facts, and concepts presented in a pedantic fashion?
- Do they alter or oversimplify history to make fore-ordained points about American society?
- Do they convey to the reader a sense of excitement about the past, about human achievements and frailties?
- Or do they hint that there is little to be learned from the past?
- Have the color, vitality, and contradictions of past epochs been faithfully transmitted or rendered arid and neutral in ill-considered quests for readability, balance,

objectivity, and sensitivity?

- Do attempts to satisfy textbook clienteles with clashing opinions create narratives that strain credibility?

The panelists were invited to consider such questions.

Underlying this considerable effort, over eighteen months and by many individuals, has been the conviction that American history is a linchpin in the school curriculum and that it is a potentially exciting—sometimes electrifying—subject. This assessment of quality in social studies textbooks assumes that without history, especially that of our own nation, vaunted knowledge in other disciplines might be for naught; that without history, the nation might begin to resemble a ship of fools; without anchor or compass, foundering and unable to set a course. The textbooks used to teach American history in elementary and secondary schools, then, warrant close inspection, attention, and constructive criticism.

SILVER BURDETT'S *The United States and Its Neighbors* is a current phenomenon within the world of textbook publishing, part of a blockbuster social studies series that has captured an estimated two-thirds share of the adoption-state market during the 1980s. By calculation, just over one million fifth-grade students in the twenty-one adoption states and the District of Columbia used the book in 1984-85, and from it, were introduced to American history and the social studies textbook. In addition, thousands more fifth graders used the book in open territory, as the Silver Burdett program is also selected at the classroom, school, or district level.

Because of its share, *The United States and Its Neigh-*

bors constitutes a text and package that *de facto* approach a national curriculum. The book's high marginal profits—safe to say, its capital costs were recaptured by earlier editions—would suggest that it is a lucrative addition to the Silver Burdett list.

Given its reach, the book deserves special consideration. In order to please two groups of potential buyers—the first oriented toward American history, the second toward social studies—the book's contents are broken in half: Eleven chapters are devoted specifically to American history, first, what it is, and then, its pre-Columbian civilizations, the age of exploration, colonization, and United States history. The second half of the 502-page book, eight chapters, is a treatment of economic and physical geography by region, a kind of child's travelogue of uneven quality, concluding with an obligatory two-chapter unit (insulting in its superficiality) on Canada and Latin America.

As with other leading textbooks at the fifth-grade level, the design is bright and the graphics outdistance the grey history textbooks of the past. The book goes into considerably more subject detail than standard textbooks used in elementary schools at midcentury. In spite of heralded student ignorance of geography, the textbook devotes much space to the subject. *The United States and Its Neighbors*, like other fifth-grade textbooks, contains many more topics and exercises than the texts of students' parents. No one can argue that the book's "coverage" is inferior to fifth-grade social studies textbooks from the past. But the text is a mere cafeteria of information, not a directed and engaging narrative.

The Silver Burdett book is glossy and colorful. There are over seventy-five four-color maps in the book and myriad average temperature charts, time lines, and special interest materials (e.g., metric measurement, rules of the road, regional interdependence). Each chapter has a skills section at the end, containing such units as using a library, interpreting a cartoon, reading a map, and learning pronunciation symbols.

The United States and Its Neighbors opens with promise, starting with map-reading exercises, moving from a macro- to micro-view, introducing map symbols, roads, mileage, and measurement. Then, in a slightly amazing nonsequitur, the text moves to the subject of mass transit and bus schedules without pausing to make a transition or make a point. Of twenty-nine pages in the chapter, about sixteen total pages are text; pages are almost always less than one-half textual. The historical chapters in the book tend to have fewer breaks, boxes, sidebars, tables, graphs, diagrams, photographs, drawings, and other distractions from the running text than the social studies chapters. Some of the book's graphics are educational and informative; this and other fifth-grade social studies texts are adroit in illustrating structures and technologies. But with all these sections and

breaks, the central narrative begins to get lost very quickly. At an early point the discerning adult reader grows perplexed: Where *is* the running text? Where *is* the story?

The text is easy to read. *The United States and Its Neighbors* and other books in the Silver Burdett series are known in the industry for what is politely called a "low concept load." What *The United States and Its Neighbors* fails to do is impart any sense of excitement, adventure, saga, imagination, or human nature to the investigation of history and society.

Even when the text attempts to animate itself (and comply with readability formulas), the results are wooden:

Now let us look at one exciting event in the life of a Pueblo girl.

"Run! Run! The Navajo are coming!" Tuma was washing her hair in a little stream. But she ran home as quickly as she could. The Navajo were another tribe who lived nearby. They tried to raid Pueblo villages in search of food and other supplies. The peace-loving Pueblo did not like to fight. But they could not allow their food to be stolen. They would fight for their food.

"Hurry, Tuma," cried Yonga, her older brother. Tuma scrambled up the ladder. Yonga pulled it up after him.

Tuma's building was like an apartment house.

In Tuma's case, she hugs her kachina doll inside as Yonga goes out to fight, giving the textbook a chance to declaim on kachina spirits, Tuma's home, and Pueblo customs. Amazingly, the text's writers take the reader on a boring anthropology excursion into Tuma's dark "apartment" when there is a *battle* going on outside. The reader remains with Tuma, while Yonga is chasing Navajos. Whoever chose this imagined anecdote seems to have little understanding of or stomach for fifth-grade tastes. It is significant that children's book editors and authors repeatedly note that boys *and* girls of this age are attracted to action-packed, even gory, stories of adventure. The story ends:

A sharp bang frightened Tuma! It was Yonga. He had dropped his club in returning from the roof. He was out of breath but happy.

"The Navajo have gone away," he said. "They used tree trunks to climb our pueblo. But we drove them away—this time."

Tuma gave her kachina doll a hug. She was happy too. She knew why the Navajo had been driven away. She must remember to thank the good spirit who protected her people.

A chance for real drama escapes: Any accomplished storyteller or moviemaker knows that the action, what will elicit interest, at least at this moment, is with Yonga. The chance even to focus dramatically on the supernatural rites and arcane mysteries of the Pueblo, also potentially interesting to fifth graders, is lost. Instead, the reader (who has been promised an exciting event) obtains a limp lesson in pre-Columbian life adjustment.

HERE AND elsewhere, *The United States and Its Neighbors* neutralizes. There is no verve, no gripping story styled to the appetites of ten-year-olds. Cursory, sometimes artificial efforts—such as the use of the second-person voice—are made to involve. Sometimes the reader receives a nugget in passing. ("Can you imag-

REVIEWED ELEMENTARY TEXTBOOKS

The United States and Its Neighbors. Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Company, 1986.

The United States and the Other Americas. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985.

The United States Past to Present. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1985.

ine how hard it was to live in dugouts and sod houses? When it rained, mud oozed from the walls and dripped from the roof, and the floor became a puddle. Dust was everywhere in dry times. Dirt fell from the roof and walls onto the beds, chairs, tables, dishes, and food. Gophers, snakes, and other creatures burrowed through the walls into the rooms. No wonder some families could not take it [*sic*] and moved back East.") But the book's tone is generally lifeless, monotonic, without feeling; accordingly, a bus schedule and the Vikings are treated with equal passion.

Consider this textbook's treatment of the pioneers in Oregon Country, an epic drama in America's midnine-

teenth-century past, ripe for storytelling:

The Southwest was not the only place of growth and activity in the 1840s. People from all over the East caught "Oregon fever." They had heard reports of the beautiful land and plentiful game found in the Oregon Country. The Oregon Trail was made up of hopes and dreams of men and women who wanted to start new lives in Oregon. With every thing they owned in covered wagons, people took on the challenges and dangers of the rugged 2,000-mile (3,200 km) journey west. "Oregon or Bust" was the slogan of the day. Thousands moved to Oregon. Many died trying.

Not only can this style of writing produce a coma-like state of boredom, but the passage never really is

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The physical size and weight of textbooks discourage enthusiasm for their contents.

From whatever angle they pursued their analyses, the reviewers *all* stressed the sheer size of the books, daunting, fearsome, and intimidating, even to the child or teenager drawn to reading. "No one will ever curl up, cuddle up with one of these behemoths," concluded Columbia University former professor of the humanities Robert Nisbet with some exasperation. "Perhaps the schools insist upon such weight as a means of discouraging pupils from ever taking a book home to read, and thus risking loss." Milton Meltzer, an author of children's and adults' history books, asked the central question: "How can we expect a boy or girl to plunge into such forbidding books with any enthusiasm?"

2. The prose style of most textbooks is bland and voiceless.

The quality of writing in textbooks reviewed varied considerably by individual text. Still, the overall literary style of the textbooks assessed fell well short of the mark. "The books are universally bland, repetitious, fact filled, and deadly in their lack of attempts to stimulate and catch the interest of the audience," said reviewer Joan Grady, the principal of a Colorado middle school. Reviewers found textbooks generally to be more catalogues of factual material about the past, not sagas peopled with heroic and remarkable individuals engaged in exciting and momentous events.

3. Excessive coverage makes textbooks boring.

Many textbooks, reviewers noted, were most effective as almanacs, encyclopedias, and reference guides. The mere mention of a person or event, they agreed, did not necessarily guarantee substance and fullness.

In introductory texts, some mention of less than scintillating, even secondary events is inevitable. But in American history textbooks, names and episodes dart past like telephone poles seen from the window of a swift-moving train. Part of the problem lies with publishers' growing reluctance to make choices and value judgments that might offend some individual or group.

4. Group consciousness contributes to flawed textbook writing.

All the books reviewed exhibit the group consciousness that has so affected our sense of the past during the last generation. Christopher Columbus has not left the scene,



but women and blacks are two new groups prominent in the American history textbook. The new groups can be incorporated into the larger parade of American history with integrity and even passion. In some cases the textbooks reviewed do so admirably. The stories of Clara Barton, Booker T. Washington, and Custer's Last Stand endure. Items like *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the Seneca Falls resolutions have gained deserved prominence. But in some cases the textbooks' effort to focus on women, blacks, Indians, and other groups is superficial, forced, and occasionally ridiculous. Trivial examples and strained statements crowd out significant and exciting political, economic, or cultural events in order to engage in a kind of textual affirmative action.

5. Textbook format and graphics diminish the style and coherence of the running text.

The running text is the skeletal and muscular system of a textbook. This basic narrative comprised perhaps 90 percent of textbook content a generation ago. To be television competitive and engaging, as well as to concentrate on skill development, textbook publishers have altered this convention, substituting endless photographs, diagrams, charts, boxes, sub-units, study exercises, skills applications, and so on, especially in lower-grade-level textbooks. The result is that the textual qualities of the history book are reduced to a bloodless subset of a workbook, a mere reading sample by which to test reading comprehension and other practical skills. □

focused. Nothing seems to occupy center stage or have special significance. It describes a world of generalities and collectivities. Excitement, momentous events, people seem not much to matter.

In *The United States and Its Neighbors*, Abraham Lincoln warrants two paragraphs, slightly more than Molly Pitcher, a minor heroine of the Revolutionary War. Valley Forge goes unmentioned. The production of potatoes, blueberries, and cranberries in New England receives approximately the same coverage as the history of the Progressive movement. World War II is covered in less than four pages, introduced with the subhead "Another War." And why exactly is the reader introduced in a large four-color photograph to someone named Toney Anaya, not mentioned in the text, who was governor of New Mexico from 1982 to 1986?

The evident, grim answer is that Anaya is of Hispanic birth, thereby providing Silver Burdett a chance to score political points even if it shortchanges more significant individuals and events in the process, distorting the content of history. This willingness to distort in order to mention and appease various interest groups marks many of the history textbooks assessed in this study, much to the consternation of this assessment's reviewers, who repeatedly noted how crude and obvious, not to say meretricious, most of these efforts were.

The United States and Its Neighbors finishes its historical section by telling students that "Americans must realize what a wonderful place this is to live," and that "it is our responsibility to continue to build our country and fulfill the dreams of the brave men and women who have gone before us." These are true and noble statements. But the abstract, disembodied quality of these very statements reflects the book's hesitancy to *show* students (not *tell* students) why these statements might be noble and true, if not absolute.

In the concluding historical chapter, the text reminds students: "People and events have come together to change the way our country thinks and acts." Then, leaping from topic to topic, the chapter ranges from the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations to Theodore Roosevelt to synthetic fibers to automobiles to the Great Depression to Franklin Roosevelt to Martin Luther King, Jr. to human rights. In terms of tracking, that is, using one topic to embellish the next so that the sum total of a chapter is more than its components, the chapter is very hard to follow. Easy to read, sentence by sentence, yes; but taken as a whole, incoherent.

In order that *The United States and Its Neighbors* contain *some* message, as reviewer David Blight suggested, an annoying assumption runs through the book—that things in the United States are getting better through some providential or grand social scientific design. The text does reach the following conclusion: "The movement toward equality is a process that has been carried on throughout history. It will not end until *all* Americans can say for themselves the words carved on Dr. King's tombstone: 'Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last.'" The text's epilogue culminates in a frank, vacuous endorsement of personal choice: "We must choose what kind of world we want, and work for it."

An unrestrained use of the doctrine of progress, of

course, may help children look to history for hope. But such historiography does not help them understand the cyclonic human struggles over politics, wealth, religion, and ideas that give history its edge. Reviewer Jack Beatty, senior editor of *The Atlantic*, applauded the book's preoccupation with questions of race, given the peculiar institution of slavery as a centerpiece of nineteenth-century history, while questioning its unwillingness to confront the current plight of an urban underclass. "You don't want to dash the morale of the young black student, nor encourage white students in their negative stereotyping of blacks," he says. "On the other hand, you want to put the young child in touch with reality." When unpleasantness occludes the sunlight, *The United States and Its Neighbors* shrinks from it. The book frequently seems to view the world with an attitude that crosses Candide's with Edward Weston's *The Family of Man*. Only accredited victim groups suffer, and then they suffer absolutely. When realities are bloody and vicious and complicated, the *why* of history is avoided. "Children need truth to steer their way successfully around this world," Beatty concluded. "This book, at too many points, prefers to keep them dumb."

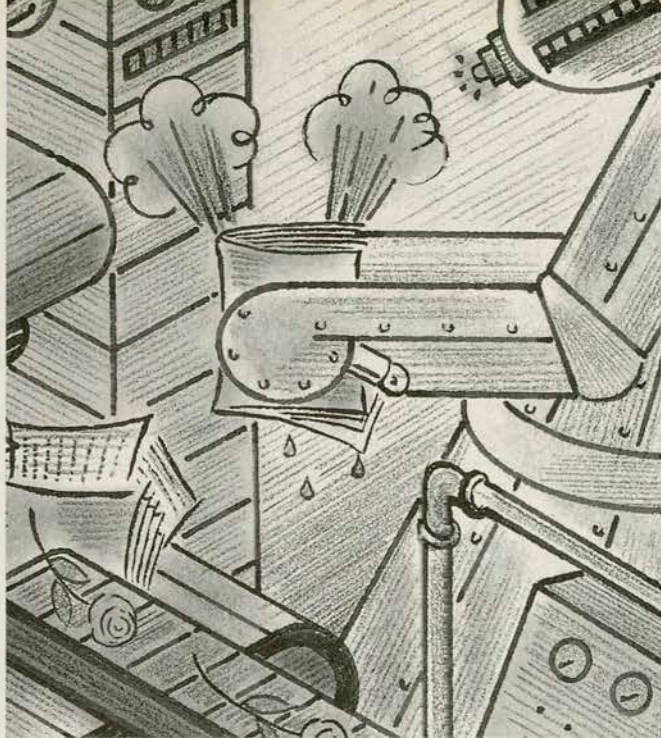
MACMILLAN'S *The United States and the Other Americas*, a second leading fifth-grade social studies reader, seems an imitation—almost a clone—of the Silver Burdett book. Again, the Macmillan text breaks the subject matter of the book into two, deemphasizing American history and trying to strike a duality between history and descriptive social science, with the obligatory chapters on the remainder of the hemisphere again stitched to the end.

The style of writing? Reviewer Eric Rothschild, history department chairman at Scarsdale High School in Scarsdale, New York, characterizes it as "happily ever after" in tone, warping truth in the process. As with the other fifth-grade texts, statements are reductive, misleading, and sometimes deterministic. The Macmillan text, for example, concludes: "The equal rights movement has made many gains. The movement will continue until all the people in the United States enjoy full equal rights." Re Latin America: "Better housing is being built. Industry is increasing. Most important, education is improving." It is all quite vague—and only partly correct.

The truncated prose in *The United States and the Other Americas* is intended to advance clarity. Yet confusion may result from superficiality, as in the text's introduction: "The United States was settled by people from all over the world. Many of them became naturalized citizens. Most immigrants settled on the East Coast, a crowded part of the country. In the 1970s, Americans began moving to the Sunbelt."

In the latter section of the book, geared toward social studies, the writing becomes noticeably thin. "Suppose that you lived in the southeastern part of the United States," the book reads. "You would have a great deal of rainfall during the year. It also would be warm or hot all year round. Therefore, your climate would be described as wet and warm or hot all year round."

Individuals are trivialized. For example, Thomas Jefferson is never treated as a leading political philosopher and seminal democratic theorist. "The Decla-



ration of Independence shows to all how well he wrote," the text says, before turning to Jefferson's inventions, the swivel chair and the dumbwaiter, "used to carry food and other small items from one floor to another." Jefferson comes across as a slightly cranky inventor who just happened to be a great national leader.

Avoiding complicated religious, political, and economic concepts that might be beyond the grasp of the fifth grader may be natural and proper. But the bland treatment of heroic individuals and exciting situations, rendered lifeless in these texts, does no service to student learning and must surely dampen enthusiasm for history.

As in the case of the Silver Burdett book, the Macmillan text is clearly more comfortable treating social studies subjects outside history, content to create a pleasant combination of travelogue, economics, and social science in the second half of the book. In explaining cotton production and processing, or in taking a trip through the Great Lakes, for example, the text becomes animated and engaged. It does not seem accidental that these sections succeed in part because they deal with things and processes, not with human beings and their beliefs. Safe topics, they are approached directly, without timidity or cryptic vagueness.

BY CONTRAST, reviewers generally admired D.C. Heath's *The United States Past to Present*. They praised the text for its historical (not social studies) approach, densely woven enough to give a full-bodied portrait of the national past. In anchoring the text in history, focusing on the American story from Christopher Columbus to the space industry, the D.C. Heath book avoids the disjointed, bifurcated quality that the reviewers found so distracting in the other two fifth-grade social studies books.

A straightforward American history, again with token chapters on the remainder of the hemisphere, this text concentrates on the earlier periods of American history and compresses post-World War II history into mere outlines. "Events do not, for the most part, just happen,"

reviewer Jean Karl, a children's book author, said of the book. "They come about as a result of events that have gone before."

Directness and clarity in this text sometimes comes at the expense of fine writing, however. Especially for brighter students, some explanations and definitions may seem tedious. Some review questions, such as "List two beliefs that are part of the pioneer spirit," are fuzzy and banal. "Some students will be put off," reviewer Jack Beatty noted. "Others will find it helpful to have a 'fort' and a 'stockade' defined for them." He concludes: "It is probably a good idea to be elementary in an elementary school textbook. We can all remember not knowing the enabling rules of a subject, and thus being utterly out of it in any discussion that assumes mastery of those rules."

In *The United States Past to Present*, such assumptions seem to benefit historical understanding: The book defines a constitution, for example, as a "plan of government." The book succeeds with other details as well. "The windows around the big hall were tightly closed so that no one outside could hear what was going on inside," it says, describing the writing of the Constitution inside the sweltering hall where the Founders worked through the torrid Philadelphia summer.

The D.C. Heath book is not venturesome. The language of the book is not literary. Like other fifth-grade textbooks, its prose tends to be monotonic. ("It was a long, hard journey. About 4,000 people died along the way. The Cherokee called the journey the Trail of Tears.") But the text is generally clear, concise, and, in places, lively. Paragraphs are well constructed. Main ideas are set out, explained. No attempt is made to weave the material into a paean to progress or student self-development. Relatively speaking, the running text has coherence, style, and interest.

In the case of westward expansion, for example, we join a travel party:

Once the pioneers were on the road, each wagon train followed the same routine. Every day the travelers woke at about four o'clock in the morning. They fixed breakfast, packed up their bedding, and rounded up their animals. By seven o'clock, the wagons began to move out.

The guide and half a dozen men went ahead with picks and shovels. Their job was to smooth the way for the wagons. They removed stones from the path and cleared away brush. Several other men left the wagon train to hunt for buffalo and deer. The rest of the group stayed with the wagon train.

In *The United States Past to Present*, women, blacks, and other groups come into the story, not as artificial "add-ons," but in ways that help reflect the fact that they were excluded or segregated in public arenas until the recent past. Reviewers commented independently on the text's good taste and reasonable balance in treating minorities. The reader meets the Grimké sisters and Harriet Tubman, learns about the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and encounters Topeka's Linda Brown. In contrast to the Silver Burdett and Macmillan books, these people and causes are stitched into a broad fabric of the American past and not magnified at the expense of majority concerns. Their presence amplifies the historical record rather than replaces or distorts it. □

CREATING A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

(Continued from page 17)

one knows he's not doing his job well. Isn't he terribly anxious and embarrassed?

A. First, it's rarely the same teachers always having the problems—it's different teachers having problems with different classes and different pupils. But whether it's different teachers or the same ones, because the teachers are regularly talking about the problems faced by the team—including these teaching problems—many of them are solved. One teacher hears how another is handling a similar problem. He borrows those ideas or adapts them. He can visit other classes and observe different teaching styles. He can change his teaching style; he has models to choose from. Many problems that could become big somewhere else never do.

There are also teachers who are doing poorly because of personal difficulties—for a time, they are unable to put their full energy into teaching. In this case, team members may agree to cover a bit of the teacher's work so he can relax.

And then there are teachers who just don't like to prepare their lessons. They are poor teachers because they don't put in the time. You're right that this strains the group, and you can be sure the group will exert pressure on these teachers—much more than any headmistress could.

* * *

Q. You mentioned "lunch activities." I understand you offer an organized program of non-academic activities during lunch.

A. Your students aren't in similar programs?

Q. No. In most American schools, lunch is short and can be rather unpleasant, especially for the

adults who have to supervise it. The students are jammed into a big lunchroom and processed quickly so the next group can get in. Usually one teacher and several paraprofessionals are trying to keep hundreds of students in order. The idea of having a program during lunch would be out of the question. But talk a little about it. Why do you do it? What's the program?

A. In the beginning, we had no program, and we had the same problem as you: Everyone was running around, and it wasn't very pleasant. Then we asked parents to serve as lunch monitors. But since their job was simply to exert control, they were resented, and the students ignored them.

The faculty discussed the problem at length and created a new plan. Now the students sit with their team, and in the younger grades, with a team teacher. That teacher isn't just a policeman. She knows the students. She can say, "How are you today? Why can't you be quiet and stop cutting into the line?" She can chat with them. They can bring their problems to her. So the atmosphere is completely changed, it's more pleasant.

Q. How long is the whole lunch break?

A. Twenty minutes for lunch and then another hour, for a total of eighty minutes.

After lunch, students can attend a variety of activities. In some cases, the teachers and parents in a team might take the full eighty minutes to teach cooking and then cook lunch. Other students might, after lunch, just make tea and talk with each other and a team teacher about their problems. This is very, very popular. Or they can play table tennis, or football, or go to the gym. All the sports facilities are opened up and students can drop by. And there are scheduled activities—lessons in ceramics or theater, for example, which the students attend on a regular basis.

Sample Schedule of Eleven-Year-Old Student on Team 6

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Free learning	Mathematics	No class	German	Natural science
2	Religion/Turkish language ¹	English exercise ⁴	Mathematics	English	Natural science
3	Religion/Turkish language	German	Shop	Free learning	Social science
30-minute pause					
4	Tutorial	Social science	Shop	Tutorial	English
5	Natural science	English	German	Free learning	German
6	Natural science	No class	No class	Project work	No class
7	Lunch/Lunch activities				
8	Creative arts elective ²	No school	Social science	Project work	Mathematics
9	Creative arts elective	No school	English	Physical education	End-of-week-celebration ⁵
10	No class ³	No school	Mathematics	Physical education	No class

¹There are a few subjects in which students are not with their class. Religion and Turkish language (taken by Turks who wish to maintain their native language) are two such subjects. Also over the objections of Comprehensive school officials, national law requires that in the later grades math and English courses be tracked according to ability.

²Each half-year, students choose from among such courses as art, theater, and dance.

³Students in younger grades take six fewer periods than older students.

⁴During English exercise, students work on their English language homework.

⁵In the younger grades, one class per week takes responsibility for planning a special program; for example, they could bring in a speaker or stage a play.

Q. Where are the teachers?

A. Some are off on their own. But almost all have made lunch activities a part of their schedule on at least some days. These teachers might offer a class in pottery, sports, or sewing—whatever they enjoy teaching. Or they may supervise the gym, for example, or the disco. Parents offer courses too. It ends up seeming rather sexist, though. The mothers all volunteer to teach cooking and sewing and the fathers, sports.

Q. What about the disco?

A. It's always the fullest room in the house. Two to three-hundred children every day. It's packed.

One of our social workers—we have three on the staff—is always on duty there, along with a teacher. For the social worker, the disco is an ideal working field. You witness boys' and girls' relationships. You see who's getting along with his peers and who's not.

A close relationship develops between the social workers and many of the students who are disco regulars. We find that often many of these students will talk with the social worker about things they won't discuss with their parents or teachers. The talk is less risky for them because later, if they want to avoid the subject, they can avoid the social worker.

* * *

Q. You said the children are released early every Tuesday. Don't the parents get angry about this?

A. No, that does not happen at all. Our students and all Comprehensive school students are in class a lot: from 8:15 A.M. until 4:15 P.M. Tuesday afternoons are the time for students' doctors' appointments, their piano lessons, and other activities for which there is little time during

the week.

Q. Is that eight full hours of schoolwork?

A. Not really. The younger students take seven periods a day, and the older ones eight periods. We have a thirty-minute pause in the morning, an eighty-minute lunch period, and each day the child's schedule probably includes one or two periods for a tutorial or what we call project work or free learning. [See sample student schedule.]

Q. Do the students also have homework every night?

A. Occasionally, in the top two grades. Since most homework requires help from parents, students without educated parents are immediately at a disadvantage. They can't do the work themselves, they get frustrated, they get a poor mark on it. What's the point?

In fact, they get the equivalent of homework, but they work on it during their free learning period, where they can get help when they need it, either from their group mates or from a teacher. Moreover, after eight hours, these kids have put in as many hours as most adults. Why should they have to go home and work more? They need some time to be kids.

Q. Are the teachers also working eight hours?

A. No. The teachers are required to work 24 forty-five minute periods a week, which is the same as *Gymnasium* teachers—*Realschule* teachers are required to teach twenty-six periods and *Hauptschule* teachers twenty-eight periods. Beyond that and the Tuesday conferences, they are free to do whatever they like. They can go home, or go shopping, or stay at school and correct tests, or drink coffee in the teachers' lounge.

Sample Schedule of Team 6 Teacher

This teacher is an English, art, and music teacher on Team 6. She tutors class 6.1 (6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 are the three team 6 classes) and spends two periods providing extra help to Turkish students having difficulty with the German language.

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	¹ Free learning (6.1)				Art (6.3)
2			English (6.1)		Art (6.3)
3		English (6.1)	Music (6.1)	Work w/Turkish students (6.1-3)	
30-minute pause					
4	Tutorial (6.1)		Music (6.1)	English (6.1)	Work w/Turkish students (6.13)
5	Art (6.2)	Tutorial (6.1)	Work w/Turkish students (6.1-3)	Free learning (6.1-3)	English (6.1)
6	Art (6.2)		60 minutes: lunchtime activities with team students	Free learning (6.1-3)	60 minutes: lunch activities (disco)
35-minute lunch					
7					
8	Art & theater	Conferences			
9	Art & theater	Conferences	English exercise (6.2)		English exercise (6.1)
10		Conferences			

22 Teaching periods

¹Free learning and project work are explained on page 40.

1 Lunchtime activity with team students

1 Lunchtime activity schoolwide (disco)

24 periods

What students need more than videos and the excitement of street life are close personal relationships.

Most of these 24 periods are spent in subject classes but they also can include lunch duties, lunch activities, supervising free learning sessions and, for the various lead teachers, free periods to do their organizational work.

Q. Describe the free learning and project work that students take for five periods a week.

A. In the free learning period, students get assignments similar to what your students might get as homework—maybe a set of exercises in math, in German spelling, or in English phonetics. The assignments are meant to be completed within two weeks.

The students can work on them immediately or put them aside to pursue a special interest. Some students might develop computer programs in the computer center, create a piece of pottery, or join together to produce a play. Some will use the time to prepare scientific experiments for the national competitions. Students who are falling behind can use the free learning period to get extra help from the team teacher who is staffing the period. And any student might use the time to chat with a team teacher about an academic or personal concern. In general, students can do anything during this period that they want, except relax. They must be learning in some way.

Project work is different. Students work together in a group—though not necessarily their table group—to pursue a multifaceted project for a period of six to eight weeks. For example, in “Project Cologne,” which is always done once in a student’s career, the student groups determine what they would show a visitor to Cologne. To make this determination, one group of students might try to interview the mayor, another might visit some museums. In “Project Living,” students ultimately design their own dream house. First, they visit a construction site and see how houses are made, they’ll use their math skills, and they’ll study housing market economics and architecture, for example.

* * *

Q. What happens when children don’t pass their regular six-week tests? If they consistently fail them, are they left back a grade, as is normally done here?

A. No. If they fail a test, they’ll get help. During the free learning period a teacher will work with all the students who failed a test in a particular subject. In a subsequent free learning period, the students will repeat the test. So the whole school is structured to allow kids to catch up and pass.

Q. How do the students who have passed view the students who have failed? Aren’t these students the “dummies”?

A. I don’t think so. First, these students are in table groups, and when they studied for the test they should have received help from their groups. If a group member fails, it’s actually the responsibility of the group, which evidently has not been working well.

Q. What about students who excel in no academic subject?

A. That happens only when a child has a behavior problem or dislikes learning. My experience is that if we can get them to the point where they say, “We want to learn,” nearly all children can learn nearly everything if they’re helped.

The problem is with the students who say, “I don’t want to,” or “I can’t.” We had a tenth-grade girl whose mother was an alcoholic and was always threatening to commit suicide. She was understandably preoccupied and couldn’t learn. Her group understood and was very kind, but there was no way to help her succeed with her academics; her personal problems were just too great.

But most of our students have the confidence to learn. When children do so much together, period after period, in school and out, year after year, there is a lot of comfort. You really have something. We are always helping the table groups function better. Confronting a table’s problem—maybe one member is disruptive, arrogant, or they lack the skills to help someone—is one of our teachers’ most difficult tasks. But it’s worth it. When the children care about each other and get along, and if a team has worked well as a group, they are very, very strong learners.

Q. We regularly have students in our ninth- and tenth-grade classes who read and calculate at a fourth- or fifth-grade level. You don’t have that? You pull students back up to grade level as soon as they fall behind?

A. Essentially, yes. But we do not have the standardized tests that are so common in America, so we don’t calculate grade level in the same way that you do. What I can say is that it’s very, very rare for a child to be so behind that he can’t work productively with his table group. And eventually each child will pass most of the tests. One child may do much better, but every child reaches a certain level of mastery. And virtually every child does well enough to earn a leaving certificate.

Q. What is your absentee rate among students? How does it compare to schools in which there are not teams and small groups?

A. Again, we don’t keep comparative statistics the way you Americans do. But I know that our rate is very low. We often hear from parents that students can’t wait until the holidays end because they want to return to school. Even on days when there are no classes—for example, there are days when parents come in and meet with the teachers—many students are nonetheless in the school. They come here because it is where they meet their friends and can play games like table tennis.

Q. Outside the most elite public and private schools, it's rare here to find any but the most successful secondary school students eager to come to school. When our students are not engaged, we often say it's impossible for the school to compete with such distractions as are dished out by our high-tech video culture. But your students face the same temptations as ours. What's the difference?

A. What students need more than videos and the excitement of street life are close personal relationships. That's what exists between our teachers and students.

Q. If the teacher is simply the dispenser of information, or if he is forced to play the entertainer bound to capture his audience's attention, he can't compete. But nothing can compete with a warm relationship. If we can build those relationships, the schools become magnets.

A. And don't forget the peer relationships. These are the most important to an adolescent. If we can take much of the competition and aggression out of these relationships, they become very special, a source of real strength for the students. So we care for these rela-

We've found that if we do a good job of building the community, it's much easier to convey the academic subjects.

tionships. We have "group-training days" in which we observe the group interaction and help the students, if they need it, to get along better and to help each other more. Also the groups have to find out-of-school activities, like swimming or going to the cinema, that they can enjoy together.

Q. In a traditional teaching situation, we are inclined to separate two friendly children because their talking disrupts our lesson. But in your situation, where there's no public lesson to disrupt, you're able to use the students' peer relationships to strengthen the school. You've created a group—a community, really—that cares for each other but also applies peer pressure when necessary. And you've made all of this part of the educational program. Education is no longer just dispensing information.

A. We've found that if we do a good job of building the community, it's much easier to convey the academic subjects. It's easier because the students feel secure with their peer group and their teachers, whom they see as much more than just authority figures.

Q. What about discipline problems. You must have some students who are incorrigible. What do you do with them?

A. We do have children like that. These problems exist mostly in the lower grades, before we've really been able to work with the groups and the individuals. The team teachers observe them and perhaps they'll talk with the parents, or, if the table group is strong enough to help, they'll talk with them. We may give the students additional work. We may call a psychologist. But there is rarely a problem we can't handle, because no teacher has to handle it alone. You put together the abilities and experience of six or eight teachers, and you can solve most problems. It sounds Pollyanna-ish. But it's true.

Q. If the students are impossible, do you expel them?

A. In thirteen years, we have expelled one student. He belonged to a gang and followed a cult. He said, "I want to be king of the school." He threatened the other students, and his gang members would beat up his younger classmates. We had to expel him to protect the others.

* * *

Q. Your teachers are supposed to be more than instructors—they're teachers, tutors, counselors, group facilitators, social workers. . . . Do they resent it? Do they wish it would all go away so they could focus on teaching their discipline?

A. That's a good question. It's fiercely discussed here. In other German schools, especially in the *Gymnasium*, teachers do resent this. They say: "We have been trained to instruct pupils in a certain subject. We're not social workers." But in our school, we see that we can only teach the pupils properly when we also do the social work they need.

Q. Your teachers are also required to teach in more than one discipline. I don't think this would be regarded kindly by most American teachers. Sometimes, we're forced to teach out of our area of certification, but we don't like it, and the union often gets involved in trying to limit this practice. What do you think you gain by having teachers teach more than one subject?

A. More contact between teachers and the students on their teams. For example: Since there are only three classes per team, a teacher who only taught art and music could only teach in his team for twelve periods of his schedule—he would probably have to fill out his schedule by leaving the team for one or two periods a day. He would be torn between the demands of several teams, and he could never develop that close relationship with the students. In contrast, if he also taught German and volunteered for some other assignments—perhaps tutoring* or lunchtime activities—he could teach all his twenty-four periods in the team. [See sample teacher schedule.]

*Like our homeroom teachers, tutors keep attendance and other administrative records on their students. The Holweide tutor also leads his or her class—there's usually one male and one female tutor per class—in two tutorials per week, one on general issues and one on human relations and sex education, and also counsels his students on various personal and academic problems.

Q. Do your teachers find it a strain to teach in two disciplines?

A. It depends. Our teachers graduate from one of two teacher training programs. Those who were trained to teach in the *Gymnasium* or the *Realschule* were trained as departmental specialists and had to get certified in two disciplines—math and physics, for example. Other teachers were trained for the *Hauptschule*—which enrolls the most difficult pupils from the most underprivileged families—and they generally have had a broader, less specialized education. The thinking is that these students have great difficulty learning. They don't need academic specialists, just teachers who will look after them.

Q. So you have the specialists at one end and the custodians at the other.

A. That's right. And they come together in our teams. The *Hauptschule* graduates have a feel for the Comprehensive school students. And the others have a great deal of specialized knowledge and very high standards. So they share their knowledge and learn from each other.

Q. What if a teacher doesn't want to teach outside his or her certification?

A. In the beginning we had some of that—teachers were understandably anxious about venturing beyond what they knew. We had an art and music specialist who insisted she wanted to teach nothing else. "Fine," we said. And she taught a few courses in her team and a few in the neighboring team. After half a year she said the experience of being "just a traveling art and music teacher" was so much less than teaching in the team where, she said, you know the children and receive so much support.

Q. What did she take on?

A. Social sciences. There were specialists on the team who worked with her and helped her.

Q. She didn't have to get additional training? She was just trained within the team?

A. The subject conference provides her with materials, help in planning, and general expertise. Along with help from the team, she's become a fine social studies teacher.

* * *

Q. This kind of teaching makes very high demands on teachers. Not only are they being called on to interact closely with ninety students, they also have responsibility for every aspect of the school, and they are expected to occasionally meet outside of regular school hours. I imagine you must attract the most dedicated, energetic teachers. But even they must burn out quickly.

A. It is a very intense form of teaching, and originally some teachers were skeptical of it. But there is almost no teacher who does not prefer it. In thirteen years, I know of only two teachers who have transferred because they didn't like the system. And every year we get applications from many more teachers than we can hire.

In thirteen years, I know of only two teachers who have transferred because they didn't like the system.

Q. Why do teachers prefer it?

A. With the team you are not isolated. Your frustration is less because you have colleagues to talk with. You have a place to turn with your teaching problems. The stress is less, the strain is less. And whether you are an adequate teacher or a superior one, you have an opportunity to get better because you can draw on the talent of more experienced teachers.

The teams are simply a very strong backup—if a teacher has personal problems and feels that she can't work as well as she previously had, the team often says, "Relax, we'll do some of your work for a time."

Also, discipline—which is so draining—is less of a problem when you know the students. And actually, we need less preparation time than other teachers. The curriculum conference prepares most materials, and, since we are teaching in just one grade, we may end up with fewer preparations than a counterpart teacher at a traditional school.

Q. Also, burnout tends to develop when people have no control over their situations, when, for example, teachers are given insufficient time to work with needy students or when a curriculum is forced on them that is simply inappropriate for a certain group of students. Your teachers don't face that.

A. That's generally right. Of course we never feel we have enough time to do everything either. But we are freer to adjust the schedule and curriculum to the students' needs. Plus, our teachers are free to vary their schedule. They can teach pottery one year during lunch, and cooking the next. If they have the interest, they can learn to teach a new subject. And they can participate in a different curriculum conference or a special conference on counseling or project work, or take more responsibility for developing materials or tests. So it doesn't have to be the same year after year, which is sometimes, though certainly not always, a complaint of traditional teachers.

* * *

Q. How does your drop-out rate compare to that of other German schools?

A. We don't calculate dropouts the way you do. German students are required to stay in school until age nineteen, although from age sixteen to nineteen most students are enrolled in a work program in which they

attend school one day a week and work all of the other days.

But there are two ways to measure our students' achievement: Do they earn their "leaving certificate," and, for those who continue in school after age sixteen, how do they fare on the *Abitur*, which students must pass in order to enter the university. Students can fail the leaving exam; earn a *Hauptschule* certificate, meaning they performed at the lowest possible passing level, the level that is expected of *Hauptschule* students; earn a *Realschule* certificate, the equivalent of having succeeded at the *Realschule* level; or they can receive a grade in the top range, which means they may continue in school, study for their *Abitur*, and then, if they pass that, proceed to the university.

Nationwide, 14 percent of students fail to receive their leaving certificate. Only 1 percent of our students never receive it. Twelve percent of our students receive a *Hauptschule* certificate, 28 percent a *Realschule* certificate, and 60 percent score high enough that they are eligible to study for the *Abitur*.

In the traditional school system, 25 percent of students go on to pass the *Abitur* and enter the university. In the Comprehensive schools, this number is much higher, and in our school, 40 percent continue. (Though 60 percent are eligible to continue, many have already been offered good jobs so they leave full-time schooling.)

Q. Describe the *Abitur* examination. If we moved and placed our children in German schools, what would they face?

A. After getting their leaving certificates, continuing students take three more years of classes. They specialize in four subjects, each of which will be tested on

When we first began, many people were skeptical. But by last year, we had 340 applicants for only 220 places.

the *Abitur*. In two subjects they will take a six-hour written examination, in one subject, a three-hour one, and in one a thirty-minute oral examination. The *Abitur* is supervised by the state, and the standard for passing is very high. All of the questions are of an essay type.

Q. This is a state-prepared examination that is the same across the country?

A. No. We have no exams like that. The teacher prepares the exam and submits it to the authorities for approval. If the authorities believe it is not good enough or difficult enough, they send it back and the teacher

must prepare a new one. Teachers, obviously, try very hard not to have their tests returned.

Q. Let me ask about your results in a different way: It sounds like your students are schooled in a very protected, sheltered environment—it sounds almost like an extended family with the groups, the teams, the lunch activities. How do your students do when they leave you? Can they cope in the real world where there are no groups and teams and where competition is the rule?

A. As of yet, there are no studies that track our students once they have left school. We are initiating such a study ourselves. But people certainly have impressions, and I can tell you this: The businesses are pleased to hire our students—not just because they are academically able but because they understand team work. Our students have no real difficulty finding jobs even though unemployment in Germany is quite high.

Q. Let me switch gears again. I can see how this approach would be a godsend for the average and slower children who are chopped up and worn down in the traditional school. But what about the brightest students? I can see how they might be stifled by this system.

A. Ironically—though not surprisingly—the studies that have been done show that while all students benefit, the largest gains are made by the brightest. There are several reasons this could be so. One researcher who studied us speculated that the tutoring that these top students undertook strengthened their intellectual skills and deepened their understanding. He commented on their diligence in tutoring, noting that if they couldn't help their peers on some task, they would seek out bright kids in other teams to find out how they were teaching it. Also, these students, who might be ostracized and mocked as "eggheads" in another school, are generally valued group members here. There's less pressure for them to conceal their knowledge and talent. Finally, the free learning periods provide an opportunity for them to excel that they might not have elsewhere.

I can tell you that upper-class families that earlier shunned the Comprehensive school in favor of the *Gymnasium* are now eager to enroll their children with us.

Q. Do other Germans share your confidence in this approach?

A. When we first began, many people were skeptical. But by last year, we had 340 applicants for only 220 places. (Despite the growing applicant pool, we still aim for a student body that is mixed according to ability, ethnicity, and sex.) Around the country twenty schools like ours now exist, and many other schools are incorporating pieces of our approach, particularly the pairing of a team of teachers with a particular group of students.

Still it takes a long time for an idea like this to spread. Many superintendents and principals are not too keen on it. But we see that it works for students, that it gives them the strength and support and security they need to succeed in school and in life. So we will continue to use it. As other try it, I think they will see the same, and it will continue to spread. □

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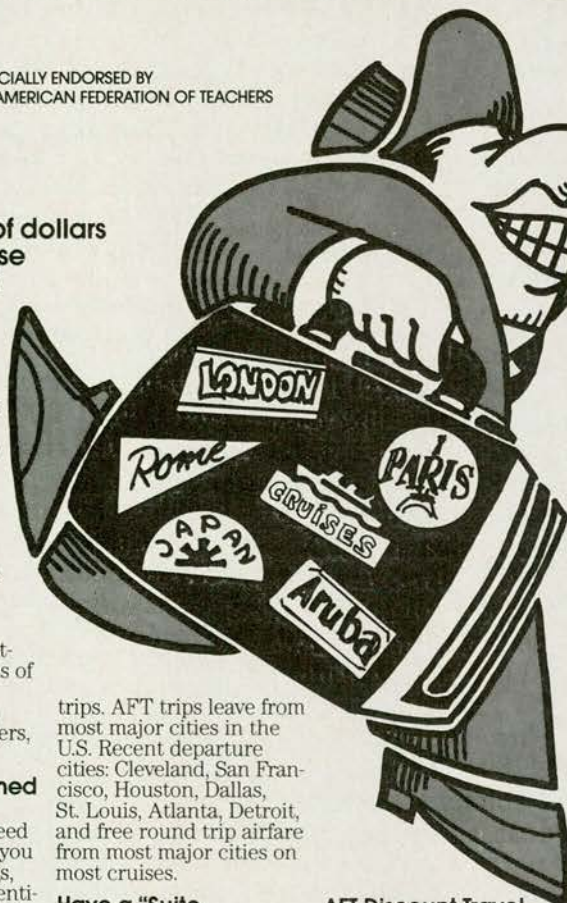
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TRAGEDY IN MATEWAN

(Continued from page 21)

until the employer is seen as vulnerable can organizing take hold. This truth is evident in *Matewan*. At the outset, the company seemed invincible and immovable. Bit by bit, however, the colossus began to chip and crack, first with the conversion of the strikebreakers, then with the surprisingly courageous stand of the mayor and chief of police. Unfortunately, the erosion of the company's position was too slow for the workers. Kenehan, despite his best efforts, was no longer able to restrain worker anger; violence became inevitable and uncontrollable.

One of the remarkable strengths of *Matewan* is that Sayles has managed to portray the human face of social conflict. Surely, the movie is about the monumental clash of institutions, but labor and capital are not cold, disembodied abstractions. They are made up of human beings, people of flesh and blood. For Sayles, the union is much more than a dull letterhead filled with the names of officers. As Joe Kenehan says to the assembled miners, "The union is you!" Significantly, nowhere in *Matewan* does anyone explicitly mention the United Mine Workers or its leader, John L. Lewis, who was a rising star at the time. The attention is riveted solely on the faces of *Matewan*'s miners and their kin. The same is true on the employer's side. Hickey and Griggs, not the tycoons of the Stone Mountain Coal Company, are the only faces of "management." As Sayles presents it, the conflict is social, yet intensely personal.

Intriguing little touches by Sayles add a fascinating note of ambiguity to the principal characters. Hickey, for example, is undeniably cruel, yet in one scene he speaks to Danny Radnor about his terrible ordeal in the trenches of war-ravished Europe. No doubt a courageous, generous, and patriotic man, circumstances dictated that he trample on others. Perhaps Hickey was just another helpless pawn doing his job. Certainly, Sayles doesn't paint him sympathetically, rather he adds a faint dab of ambiguity, just enough to make one wonder. Likewise, the workers have their faults, most notably a racist streak, a peculiar faith in violence, intolerance toward "foreigners," and a quickness to distrust others, even Kenehan.

Matewan also raises interesting questions about the law and political democracy. At the time, employers were able to manipulate the law and government with abandon, but at some crucial moments, the rule of law prevailed. Mayor Testermann and Sid Hatfield, local personifications of the law, were not so much partisans of the union as they were defenders of fairness and civil order against the company, which was willing to destroy the social amity of *Matewan*. Despite the massive power of the coal operators, the rule of law could not be completely subverted and rendered a sham. If anything, Sayles demonstrates the durability of democratic rule, at least at a minimal level.

For a host of reasons, *Matewan* has not been widely promoted. Now that Cinecom has released it as a video-cassette, perhaps it will have the large audience that it certainly deserves. No film has ever told the story of American labor with as much vigor, excitement, honesty, and understanding. □

A LOOK BACKWARD AND FORWARD

(Continued from page 31)

Chapter 1 services during regular, not additional, school time that these students receive). Not only is the Chapter 1 diet nonsupplementary in terms of time, it is also lean in content: drill and repetition of basic reading and mathematical skills and sub-skills, mostly geared to standardized tests, and little or no enrichment through materials that engage higher-order skills and, likely, the motivation and zest for learning. The bureaucratic, factory model of schooling, which has worked well for regularizing Chapter 1 program "delivery" and its accounting and auditing, has also infiltrated the Chapter 1 instructional program.

Chapter 1 students are therefore being offered a more intensive helping of the regular school fare that they couldn't digest in the first place. Undoubtedly, it is a better prepared helping. Chapter 1 students are being taught by highly qualified teachers, the overwhelming majority of whom are specialists; the students receive special attention from aides, many of whom were judged to be excellent Chapter 1 instructors; and most of the students are in an optimal, small setting when in their Chapter 1 classes—eight or fewer students. These are important advantages and seem to be the major reasons for the school-year achievement gains registered by Chapter 1 students.

SO WHY, with these important advantages, are the achievement gains not more dramatic or sustained? The clues to the answer may be found in a critical lesson that a growing number of educators are drawing from the history of American education and are applying in their analyses of the current education reform movement: although a better version of the traditional model of schooling and instruction is superior to a worse version, the same old thing simply will not suffice. Indeed, it is hard to escape the conclusion that it is the "same old thing"—a predisposition at all levels of the school system to delivering a "canned" curriculum that promises success by emphasizing lecture and recitation, constant drill in narrow skills and sub-skills, and content-impooverished worksheets—that is responsible for Chapter 1's shortcomings in substantially and lastingly overcoming the educational problems of disadvantaged youngsters, despite the important benefits they receive from being instructed by excellent teachers and aides in very small groups. Thus we have excellent and hard-working teachers (the reformer's battle cry), more aides and small class size (the teacher's ideal)—yet few of the leaps in achievement long foretold as an outcome of these conditions.

It is typical, in fact habitual, with findings such as these to hear a chorus of recommendations for better planning and coordination, even more individualization of instruction, and perhaps even more time. It is hard to be against better planning and coordination and individualization, and, especially in the case of Chapter 1 services, more supplementary time seems reasonable. But it is also reasonable, even urgent, to ask whether better planning and coordination of and more time for the traditional program will make the dramatic difference we're looking for. There seems already to be substantial

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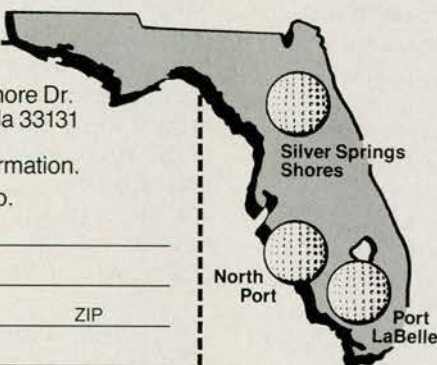
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planning and program design in Chapter 1. Of what use is there to have more of it, however, if it continues as it is, abstracted from real students in schools, based instead on some centrally determined prototypical Chapter 1 student (who probably no one has ever met) and thus leading to what Birman calls a "preconceived notion of which mode of [program] delivery constitutes best practice" . . . ? Similarly, since there is already a substantial amount of individualization in Chapter 1, what is the marginal benefit of even further reducing Chapter 1 class size if we continue to confuse individual attention (which Chapter 1 students do receive) with an individualized program (which Chapter 1 students do not receive because of the preconceived design and delivery mode that does not necessarily fit their particular learning needs)? As for improving coordination between Chapter 1 and regular teachers, we should by all means do so. But given the shamefully paltry amount of time all teachers have for planning and the virtually nonexistent opportunities for professional consultations with their colleagues, Chapter 1 and regular teachers are probably coordinating as much as they are able to under existing conditions. Unless these conditions are altered, calls for more coordination are hollow. Finally, there is the question of providing more Chapter 1 program time for Chapter 1 students. But again, of what additional value is devoting more time to the very practices that do not work well, at least not for sufficient numbers of students to register the gains that might justify this strategy?

CHAPTER 1 works too well to even consider abandoning or diminishing it. But Chapter 1 does not work well enough to justify either complacency with the main of present programs and practices or confidence that mere tinkering or "getting tougher" will make a substantial difference. This should not be cause for despair but a moral invitation to thinking and action. In fact, the field is clear for such an approach.

For one, there is nothing in the Chapter 1 legislation that mandates the typical Chapter 1 programs and

strategies found by the National Assessment. The law does not preclude innovative approaches that engage higher-order skills, nor does it prevent before- or afterschool or summer programs. The law does not require schoolwide Chapter 1 services to be confined to a singular project such as a computer lab or a new reading program or a new specialist. Although experience with what is acceptable under the category of schoolwide services is limited, there is nothing to suggest that funds could not be used to redesign the entire school on the basis of a careful consideration of the needs of its disadvantaged students. Similarly, there is nothing in the law to prohibit peer tutoring of Chapter 1 students or cooperative learning, both of which benefit all students and allow them to find their strengths as well as confront their weaknesses. There does not appear to be an injunction against non-age-graded early elementary classes, which allow curriculum and practice to fit the different developmental states of different children rather than forcing children (and teaching) to fit a preconceived notion of grade level—or be left behind, stigmatized, and likely destined for dropping out in later grades. And why not team teaching or a group of teachers taking responsibility for a class for more than one school year in order to build familiarity with, and professional responsibility for, the students and to give these youngsters the continuity and security they so frequently lack? Or why not use drama, music, art, and movement to teach basic skills? For surely the children who have trouble decoding or computing, for example, have other strengths that can be harnessed to overcome such weaknesses. The list could go on.

What its elements would have in common is that they would not necessarily be more and better of the same, they would be different (and tested) approaches that teachers together would plan, monitor, assess, and perhaps alter based on their professional judgment of their particular, not prototypical (or mythical), students' needs and conditions. In other words, we could do no better than to bring Chapter 1 programs into the growing movement to restructure our schools. □

LETTERS

(Continued from page 8)

nature of those values. Older conservative values based on religious beliefs and myths have been replaced with rational scientific values based on observations of our world.

I agree with Tyson-Bernstein's belief that schools "are sometimes blinded by a world view that is biased in favor of that knowledge that is 'objective,' seeable, and provable and against that which is more subjective, abstract, or philosophical." Objectivity is exactly what American education is supposed to teach. Most Americans want our children to learn to think rationally for themselves.

Louis Harris has evaluated a series of opinion polls in *Inside America* [New York: Vintage, 1987]. Fred Hechinger of the *New York Times* wrote, "Mr Harris's statistical snapshot of America is quite different from the picture offered by some conservative groups." Harris found that two-thirds of those polled had confidence in the current education system. The evidence seems to contradict Tyson-Bernstein's assertions that there is discontent in American education that extends "far beyond" right-wing conservatives.

The real conflict between science and religious fundamentalism is that science is knowledge, but religion is faith. Science is the ever-growing body of knowledge about the universe. New knowledge leads to new scientific thinking, and the old scientific theories are discarded. Science at this level is philosophy. I think all will agree that Aristotle, Plato, Bacon, Newton and Einstein were both scientists and philosophers. The scientific mode of thinking is philosophical, which is why it contends with religion. Religion and science both attempt to explain the universe to humanity, but in very different ways.

There is a conflict between moral knowledge and scientific knowledge because moral and scientific knowledge purport to describe the universe and answer ontological questions. Invariably, rightist religious groups have fought the advancement of scientific knowledge when it conflicted with their moral knowledge. I think the vast majority of Americans

want scientific knowledge, and not moral knowledge, taught in school. And the evidence supports my view, as Hechinger points out in the *New York Times* of October 13, 1987:

Personal association with religion and a belief in God were found to be "as common in the U.S. as nearly any other experience," Mr. Harris says. Yet the majority of Americans do not appear to support efforts by the Reagan administration and the fundamentalist religious groups to bring prayer into the public schools. Sixty-six percent are "wedded to the notion" that religion must remain a private affair, totally separated from the state.

In the final argument, the author claims that more reason and teaching "about religion" will make the students more aware of the great conflicts in life. This is the position that the new value-neutral curriculum takes and is exactly opposite from that of the conservatives, who protest so much. The right-wing protestors do NOT want religion taught *about*, as the article repeatedly states, they want their religion taught. And they do not want true philosophical thinking taught, they want their religious and moralistic teaching taught. As Gertrude did to Hamlet's father, the conservatives are pouring poisoned lead into the ear of the sleeping American public.

—MICHAEL BOCCIA

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE

The author replies:

Michael Boccia misses the point of "The Values Vacuum" when he aligns my position with that of the right-wing, Christian fundamentalists and when he maintains that "science" informs the world view of the public schools. My complaint is that the methods of science are rarely taught where they should be—in science classes; and that scientism, not science, infuses both school administration and much of the curriculum (only the literature curriculum seems to have escaped the clammy hand of pseudo-science).

Boccia is quite right when he notes that science is a branch of philosophy. Our students would be better taught and enjoy science more if their science teachers and books showed them how the great scientist/philosophers he mentions

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grappled with the fundamental questions of physical nature. Part of the reason so many students dislike science or find it hard to understand is that they are offered little evidence in support of accepted scientific theories. Support for scientific findings is usually couched in terms of belief or majority opinion, as in "Some scientists believe that dinosaurs once roamed the earth."

There is nothing scientific, however, about Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Erikson's stages of growth. These are merely classification systems that may be useful in thinking about personal and social issues. Unfortunately, students aren't told that in their textbooks or classrooms. Nor is there very much "science" in needs assessments or other devices of "scientific" management. My complaint is that the public schools are so imbedded in their own world view that they are unaware of their own premises and fail to expose children to contrary premises.

When it comes to the degree of public satisfaction with the public schools, Boccia and I are evidently looking at different data or interpreting the same data differently. The 1987 Gallup poll, published in the September Kappan, shows 62 percent of the public favoring some form of character education, and a similar percent believing it is possible to mount such a program in their communities. The rapid growth of Christian schools, the growing number of children being taught at home, the high enrollment of inner-city minority non-Catholic youth in Catholic schools—all of these phenomena suggest that it is not only the Fundamentalists who are unhappy with the world view of the public schools.

I agree with Boccia that many Fundamentalists want the schools to indoctrinate children in their particular beliefs and would probably oppose any objective teaching about the role of religion in history and in contemporary society. My proposal is not designed to satisfy those who reject the religious pluralism of the United States but, rather, to satisfy those who are increasingly uncomfortable with the aridity of the public school curriculum.

—HARRIET TYSON-BERNSTEIN

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