AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
WINTER 1998

AMERICAN Educator

Teaching Is a Cultural Activity

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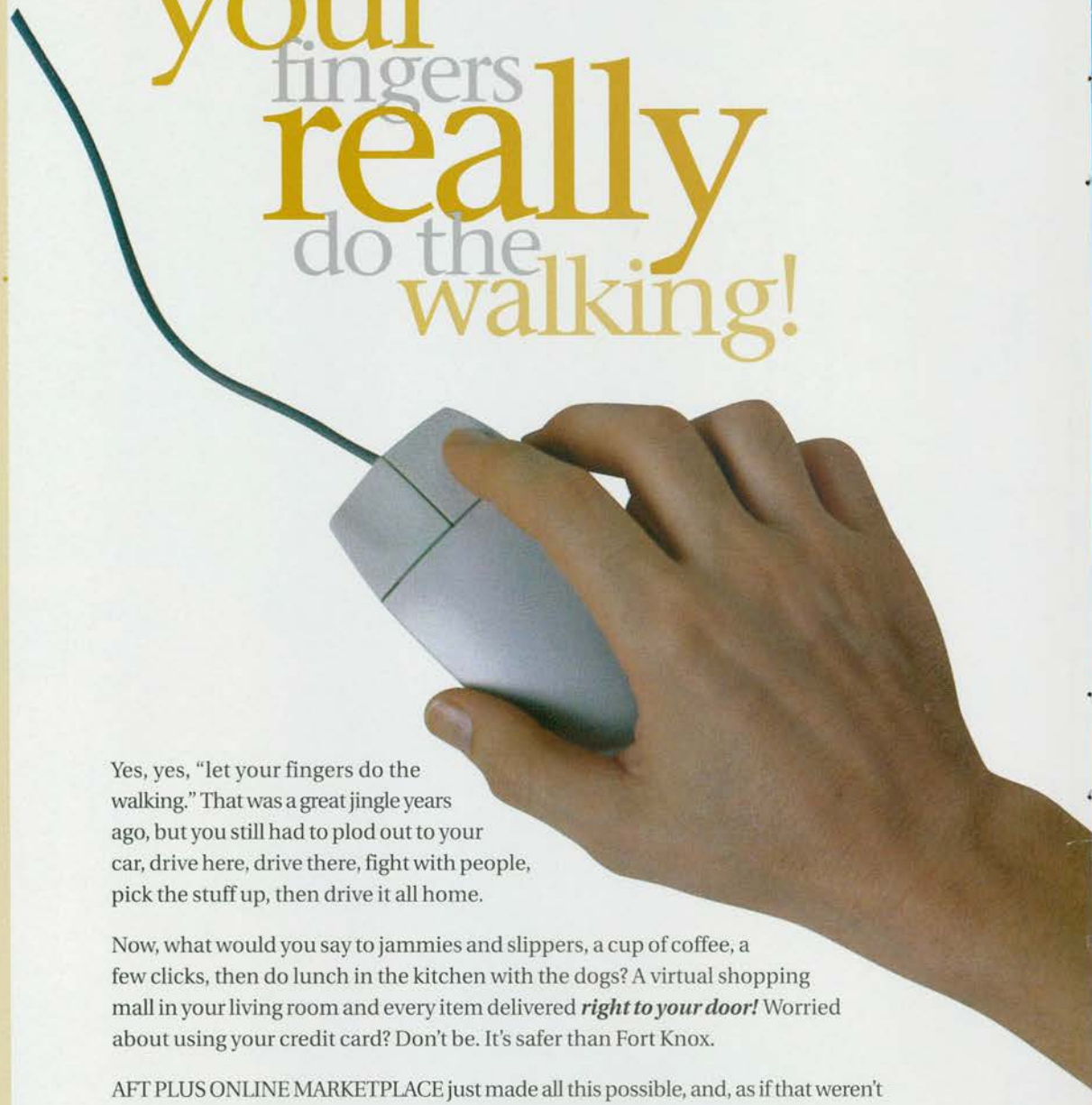

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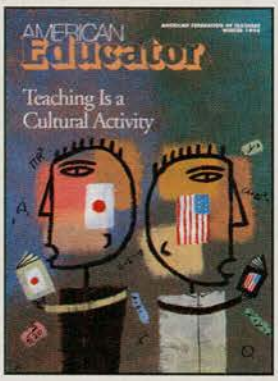

Cover illustrated by James Yang

AMERICAN Educator

The Professional Journal of the American Federation of Teachers
Volume 22, No. 4
Winter 1998

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The **American Educator** (USPS 008-462) is published quarterly by the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20001-2079 Telephone: 202-879-4420

American Educator is mailed to all AFT teacher, higher education and other school-related professional members. Annual subscription price: $1.75 (included in membership dues) and available only as a part of membership. Subscription for others: $8.

Signed articles and advertisements do not necessarily represent the viewpoints or policies of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

American Educator cannot assume responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Please allow a minimum of 60 days for a response.

Letters to the Editor may be sent by regular mail or via e-mail to shendric@aft.org

Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes to
American Educator
555 New Jersey Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001-2079

General advertising office
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-879-4420

Advertising Sales Representative
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Peter Li, Inc.
801 Wells St., Suite 901
Chicago, IL 60607
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American Educator is produced with the assistance of members of Local 2, Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, and members of AFT Staff Union. Composition and printing are done in 100 percent union shops.

LETTERS

I was a little amazed by the articles in the Fall 1998 issue of *American Educator* addressing the question of how to fix low-performing schools. Their proactive thrust completely ignored the fact that the people who control education may very well not wish to improve it.

Recently, the chairperson of the board of the school district that employs me met with teachers at my blue ribbon high school to advise us about next year's budgetary cuts. He welcomed suggestions concerning ways in which the district might save money. I noted the apparently large amount of money spent every year for district-level staff and programs, purportedly intended to increase my effectiveness as a teacher. I said that, to my knowledge, the payoff from this investment had not been assessed, and neither I nor colleagues I respected were aware of any significant benefits resulting from it. I wondered whether the school board holds the superintendent accountable for budget allocated to this area.

His reply was that the school board does not perceive this to be part of its function. The board's function, he said, is to make certain that the budget is implemented but not exceeded.

I hold a doctoral degree, have over twenty years of teaching experience and teach in a public high school. Last year I earned less than $40,000. In an earlier career, I recruited and trained corporate personnel. The companies that employed me paid the equivalent of $60,000 to $80,000 in today's market for the skills required to accomplish the same kinds of tasks that challenge good teachers. Colleagues whom I respect perceive, as I do, that we are rarely held accountable for being good teachers—only for being satisfactory classroom managers. Our educational standards for our students rarely seem to be shared by our employers. We feel more valued as day-care workers than as educators. Since our salary is consistent with this perception, perhaps this is really what we are.

Applying Ockham's razor, as I try to teach my students to do, I conclude that perhaps the institutions and practices that seem in error to me and the AFT are entirely satisfactory in terms of the real goals of the U.S. educational system. Before we address what we view as systemic problems, therefore, perhaps we had better address the question of how to change the system's fundamental orientation.

They have a saying in Israel when trying to figure out how to fix an organization: "The fish always stinks from the head." That is to say, given the larger picture of the way public education is funded and managed in the United States, how could it possibly be other than very bad?

—DAVID WEINER
Austin, TX

Write Us!

We welcome comments on American Educator articles. Address letters to Editor, American Educator, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 or via e-mail at shendric@aft.org. Letters selected may be edited for space and clarity.

Reading the Fall 1998 issue, my attention was captured by the anonymous letter from San Francisco. That writer is not alone in recognizing the importance of learning phonics. I was then further delighted by "The Poetry Road Show" and Andrew Carroll's wonderful quest. I agree completely with Carroll's statement that the initial push towards literature is so important. He is doing for literature what Arthur Fiedler did for music. What use are all the lofty volumes if people are not initially engaged? Are they only for elitist professors to dust off as they bemoan the decline of American cultural life? Mr. Carroll truly lives the words, "It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness."

—Andrea Albanese
Brooklyn, NY

Kudos to Dan Murphy for his article on the Milwaukee and Cleveland voucher programs ("When You Weigh The Evidence . . . ," Fall 1998).

As a math teacher (and UFT activist) at Beach Channel H.S., I value good research based on numbers. The information in this article will help me battle pro-voucher advocates in my community, like our former U.S. Representative, the Rev. Floyd Flake, who as pastor of the Allen AME Church, has spent his post-congressional career attempting to find public funding to subsidize his private Allen Christian Early Childhood Center and Allen Christian School by criticizing the hard working UFT educators in the community that I live in.

—David Scott Pecoraro
Rosedale, Queens, NY

I enjoyed your article "Work" (Fall 1998).

If we spent more time teaching students to seek, achieve, and maintain employment, we would enable them to become self-supporting. It is not enough to teach students academics and/or career study when the most important subject—along with academics and career study—is a job.

—Harry Campbell
Oakdale, NY

Teaching Is a Cultural Activity

By James W. Stigler and James Hiebert

Editor's note: The discussions of Japanese and American teaching styles in this article are based on a videotape study of classroom teaching conducted by Professor Stigler in conjunction with the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, 1994-95. The videotape study is described in the accompanying article (see page 7).

FOR MANY people, family dinners are everyday events. They participate in these events without realizing the many aspects that are taken for granted. Everyone comes to the table and begins eating at about the same time. There are no menus; the food is brought to the table in containers and everyone eats the same things. The food is then parceled out by passing the containers around the table, with everyone dishing up their own portions. Adults often help children with this task. Conversation usually is open, with no set agenda. Comments from everyone are welcome, and children and adults participate as conversational partners.

Family dinner is a *cultural* activity. Cultural activities are represented in cultural scripts, generalized knowledge about the event that resides in the heads of participants. These scripts not only guide behavior, they also tell participants what to expect. Within a culture, these scripts are widely shared, and therefore they are hard to see. Family dinner is such a familiar activity that it sounds strange to point out all of its customary features. We rarely think about how it might be different from the way it is. But, we certainly would notice if a feature were violated: We'd be surprised at a family dinner, for example, to be offered a menu or presented with a check at the end of the meal.

Cultural scripts are learned implicitly, through observation and participation—not by deliberate study. This differentiates cultural activities from other endeavors. Take, for example, the activity of learning to use a computer. For older Americans, using the computer is usually not a cultural activity. We learned how to use the computer by consciously working on our skills—by reading manuals, taking notes, getting help from experts, and practicing. Using computers is an interesting example because it is rapidly becoming a cultural activity. Children, for example, learn naturally, by hanging around computers. But there still are those for whom learning about computers has the distinctly noncultural trait of intentionally and deliberately and self-consciously working through the activity.

Teaching, in our view, is a cultural activity.[1] It is more like eating family dinners than using the com-

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James W. Stigler is a professor of psychology at UCLA and co-author, with Harold W. Stevenson, of The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education *(Summit, 1992). James Hiebert is H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Education at the University of Delaware, Newark. Stigler and Hiebert's new book, from which this article is excerpted, is called* The Teaching Gap. *It will be published this summer by Free Press, and the selection here is reprinted with the publisher's permission. Further information about the TIMSS video study on which this article is based, and about the new TIMSS-R video study of mathematics and science teaching in seven countries, can be found at the authors' website (www.lessonlab.com/timss-r).*

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES YANG


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(XY+AB)
(A+B)+(X+Y)
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puter. This may be surprising because teaching is rarely thought of in this way. Some people think that teaching is an innate skill, something you are born with. Others think that teachers learn to teach by enrolling in teacher-training programs. We believe that neither is the best description. Teaching, like other cultural activities, is learned through informal participation over long periods of time. It is something one learns to do by growing up in a culture rather than by formal study.

Although most people have not studied to be teachers, most people have been students. People within a culture share a mental picture of what teaching is like. We call this mental picture a *script.* The script is, in fact, a mental version of the teaching patterns we describe briefly in the accompanying article. The difference is that the patterns were observable in the videotapes; scripts are mental models of these patterns. We believe that the existence of scripts provides an explanation for the fact that the lessons within a country followed distinctive patterns. The lessons were designed and taught by teachers who share the same scripts.

It is not hard to see where the scripts come from or why they are widely shared. A cultural script for teaching begins forming early, sometimes even before children get to school. Playing school is a favorite preschool game. As children move through twelve years and more of school, they form scripts for teaching. Any adult probably could enter a classroom tomorrow and act like a teacher because all of us share this cultural script. In fact, one of the reasons that classrooms run as smoothly as they do is because students and teachers have the same script in their heads; they know what to expect and what roles to play.

TEACHING IS a complex system created by the interactions of the teacher, the students, the curriculum, the local setting, and other factors that influence what happens in the classroom. The way one component works—say the curriculum—depends on the other components in the system, such as the teaching methods being used. To say that teaching is a cultural activity reveals an additional truth: Cultural activities, such as teaching, do not appear full-blown but rather evolve over long periods of time in ways that are consistent with the stable web of beliefs and assumptions that are part of the culture. The scripts for teaching in each country appear to rest on a relatively small and tacit set of core beliefs about the nature of the subject, how students learn, and the role that a teacher should play in the classroom.[2] These beliefs, often implicit, serve to maintain the stability of cultural systems over time. Just as features of teaching need to be understood in terms of the underlying systems in which they are embedded, so too these systems of teaching, because they are cultural, must be understood in relation to the cultural beliefs and assumptions that surround them.

A good way of looking at these issues is to compare American teachers' use of the overhead projector with the use of the chalkboard by Japanese teachers. Many teachers in the U.S. have replaced the chalkboard with the overhead projector, whereas Japanese teachers have not. One can see this difference in terms of the different instructional systems in which the visual aids are used. In U.S. classrooms visual aids function to guide and control students' attention. Seen in this light, the overhead projector is preferred because it gives teachers a high degree of control over what students are attending to. Within the Japanese system of teaching, visual aids serve a different function. They are not used to control attention but to provide a cumulative record of the lesson's activities and their results. Japanese teachers do not use the overhead projector because it is not possible to fit the cumulative record on an overhead transparency.

To dig deeper, we must ask why Japanese teachers want a cumulative record of the lesson to be available to students and why U.S. teachers want to control students' attention. To answer these questions, we need to situate these two systems of teaching in the context of cultural beliefs about how students learn and the role the teacher can play in this process.

As we pursue deeper comparisons of teaching, we focus on Japan and the U.S. because this comparison is more dramatic than the comparison between U.S. and German teachers, and, therefore, illustrates well the role that beliefs can play in generating and maintaining cultural scripts for teaching.

THE TYPICAL U.S. lesson is consistent with the belief that school mathematics is a set of procedures. Although teachers may believe that there are other things that must be added to these procedures to get the complete definition of mathematics, many *act* as if it is a subject that is useful for students, in the end, as a set of procedures for solving problems.

As noted in the accompanying article, we asked teachers who participated in the videotape study to identify the "main thing" they wanted students to learn from the lesson. Sixty-one percent of U.S. teachers described *skills:* They wanted the students to be able to perform a procedure, solve a particular kind of problem, and so on.

Many U.S. teachers also seem to believe that learning terms and practicing skills are not very exciting. We have watched them trying to jazz up the lesson and increase students' interest in non-mathematical ways: by being entertaining; by interrupting the lesson to talk about other things, like last night's local rock concert; or by setting the mathematics problem in a real-life or intriguing context, such as measuring the circumference of a basketball. Teachers act as if the interest must come from outside the mathematics.

Japanese lessons appear to be generated by different beliefs about the subject. Teachers act as if mathematics is a set of relationships between concepts, facts, and procedures. These relationships are revealed by developing methods to solve problems, studying the methods, working toward increasingly efficient methods, and talking explicitly about the relationships of interest.

In response to the same question, 73 percent of Japanese teachers said the main thing they wanted their students to learn from the lesson was to think about things in a new way, such as seeing new relationships between mathematical ideas.

Japanese teachers also act as if mathematics is inherently interesting; and they believe that students will be

interested in exploring mathematics by developing new methods for solving problems. The teachers seem less concerned about motivating the topics in non-mathematical ways.

If one believes that mathematics is mostly a set of procedures and the goal is to help students become proficient in executing the procedures, as many U.S. teachers seem to believe, then it would be understandable also to believe that mathematics is learned best by mastering the material incrementally, piece by piece. This view of skill-learning has a long history in the U.S.[3] Procedures are learned by practicing them many times, with subsequent exercises being slightly more difficult than the exercises that preceded them. Practice should be relatively error-free, with high levels of success at each point. Confusion and frustration should be minimized; they are signs that the earlier material was not mastered. The more exercises, the more smoothly learning will proceed.

Suppose students are studying how to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators, such as 2/3 + 4/7. These beliefs about learning would say that stu-

The TIMSS Videotape Study

By James W. Stigler and James Hiebert

THE VIDEO study that we conducted as a part of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) collected samples of classroom instruction from 231 eighth-grade math classrooms in Germany, Japan, and the United States. It was the first time anyone had videotaped classroom instruction from nationally representative samples of teachers.

The study was a test run to allow us to see whether such a study would be feasible on a large scale. In the meantime, we hoped to get insight into what actually goes on inside the eighth-grade math classrooms in these three countries. It is relatively easy to gather data about classroom input by looking at curricula and textbooks and to get an idea about results from test scores. However, the classes themselves have been a black box; we have had little or no information about the process of teaching. Once coded and analyzed, the videotapes opened a new window on classroom practice. Furthermore, they revealed some fascinating national differences in a number of areas, including the following:

- The way the lessons are structured and delivered
- The kind of mathematics taught
- The kind of thinking students engage in during the lessons
- The way teachers view reform

Procedures

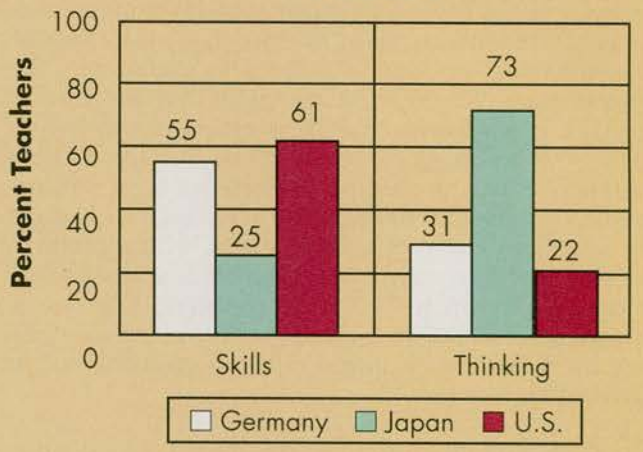
We videotaped each classroom one time, on a date convenient for the teacher. In order to discourage teachers from making special preparations for the videotaped lesson, we issued instructions telling them that our goal was to capture a typical lesson and that we wanted them to show us exactly what they would have done had we not been videotaping.

In addition to the data from the videotapes, we collected responses to a questionnaire and some supplementary materials—for example, copies of textbook pages or worksheets. The questionnaire asked teachers to describe the goal of the lesson, its place within the current sequence of lessons, how typical the lesson was, and whether teachers had used methods recommended by current reforms.

Lessons: Structure and Delivery

1. Lesson Goals

FIGURE 1



Teachers' descriptions of the lesson goal

To evaluate a classroom mathematics lesson, you must first know what the teacher was trying to accomplish. We asked teachers, on the questionnaire, to tell us what they "wanted students to learn" from the lessons we videotaped. Most of the answers fell into one of two categories:

> Skills—These answers focused on students being able to *do* something: perform a procedure, solve a specific type of problem.
>
> Thinking—These answers focused on students being able to *understand* mathematical concepts or ideas.

As the graph indicates, Japanese teachers focused on thinking and understanding; German and U.S. teachers on skills. These different goals led Japanese teachers to construct their lessons in a different way from U.S. and German teachers.

(Continued on page 43)

dents should first master adding fractions with like denominators, such as 1/5 + 2/5; then be shown how to add simple fractions with unlike denominators, such as 1/2 + 1/4, being warned about the common error of adding the denominators (to minimize this error), before practicing the more difficult problems, such as 2/3 + 4/7.

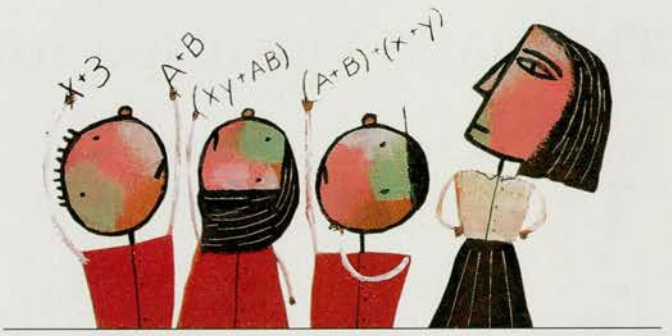
Japanese teachers appear to hold a different set of beliefs about learning and probably would plan a different kind of lesson for adding fractions. They seem to believe that students learn best by first struggling to solve mathematics problems, then participating in discussions about how to solve them, and then hearing about the pros and cons of different methods and the relationships between them. Frustration and confusion are taken to be a natural part of the process because each person must struggle with a situation or problem first in order to make sense of the information he or she hears later. Constructing connections between methods and problems is thought to require time to explore and invent, to make mistakes, to reflect, and to receive the needed information at the appropriate time.[4]

What kind of lesson on adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators would these beliefs generate? A teacher's manual in a popular Japanese textbook series gives us a clue.[5] It alerts teachers that the error students are most likely to make is to add the denominators. Students will learn to understand the process more fully, says the manual, if they are allowed to make this mistake and then examine the consequences. Some suggestions are given for how to help students reflect on the inconsistencies they will encounter if they add, for example, 1/2 and 1/4, and get 2/6. Teachers are to begin the lesson with a problem like this and then compare the different methods that students develop to solve the problem. Obviously, struggling and making mistakes and then seeing why they are mistakes is believed to be an essential part of the learning process.

GIVEN THE differences between the U.S. and Japan in the apparent beliefs about the subject and learning, it is not surprising that there seem to be marked differences in beliefs about the role of the teacher. U.S. teachers appear to feel responsible for shaping the task into pieces that are manageable for most students, providing all the information needed to complete the task, and assigning plenty of practice. Providing sufficient information means, in many cases, demonstrating how to complete a task just like those assigned for practice. Teachers act as though confusion and frustration are signs that they have not done their job. When they notice confusion, they quickly assist students by providing whatever information it takes to get the students back on track.

We have seen the following event happen over and over. Teachers assign students seatwork problems and circulate around the room, tutoring and monitoring students' progress. Several students ask, in quick succession, about the same problem. Teachers interrupt the class and say, "Number 23 may be a little confusing. Remember to put all the *x*-terms on one side of the equation and all the *y*-terms on the other, and then solve for *y*. That should give the answer." Teachers in the U.S. try hard to reduce confusion by presenting full information about how to solve problems.

Japanese teachers often choose a challenging problem to begin the lesson.



Teachers also take responsibility for keeping students engaged and attentive. Given their beliefs about the nature of mathematics and how it is learned, moment-by-moment attention is crucial. If students are watching the teacher demonstrate a procedure, they need to attend to each step. If their attention wanders, they will be lost when they try to execute the procedure on their own. Now we have a deeper explanation for the frequent use of the overhead projector by U.S. teachers. The projector's capability of focusing attention fits well with the teachers' belief about teaching mathematics.

In addition to using the overhead projector, U.S. teachers use a variety of other techniques to hold students' attention. They pump up student interest by increasing the pace of the activities; by praising students for their work and behavior; by the cuteness or reallifeness of tasks; and by their own power of persuasion through their enthusiasm, humor, and "coolness."

Japanese teachers apparently believe that they are responsible for different aspects of classroom activity. They often choose a challenging problem to begin the lesson, and they help students understand and represent the problem so they can begin working on a solution. While students are working, the teachers monitor the solution methods in order to organize the follow-up discussion in which students share solutions. The teachers also encourage students to keep struggling in the face of difficulty, sometimes offering hints to support students' progress. Rarely do teachers show students, midway through the lesson, how to solve the problem.

Japanese teachers lead class discussion, asking questions about the solution methods presented, pointing out important features of students' methods, and presenting methods themselves. Because the teachers

seem to believe that learning mathematics means constructing relationships between facts, procedures, and ideas, they try to create a visual record of these different methods as the lesson proceeds. Apparently, it is not as important for students to attend at each moment of the lesson as it is for them to be able to go back and think again about earlier events and connections between the different parts of the lesson. This presents a further explanation of why Japanese teachers prefer the chalkboard to the overhead projector—indeed of why they cannot use the projector.

AS A CONSEQUENCE of their apparent beliefs about the subject, learning, and the teacher's role, teachers appear to hold a set of beliefs about individual differences among students. U.S. teachers generally believe that individual differences are an obstacle to effective teaching.[6] Meeting each student's needs means, ideally, diagnosing each student's level of performance and providing different instruction for different levels. This is not easy to do in a large class. As the range of differences increases, the difficulties of teaching increase. In simple terms, this is the reason for tracking students into separate classes by ability or past performance. It is also the reason for reform efforts directed toward reducing class size. This belief says that the tutoring situation is best, academically, because instruction can be tailored specifically for each student or small group of students.

Japanese teachers view individual differences as a natural characteristic of a *group*. They view differences as a resource in the mathematics class, a resource both for students and teachers.[7] Individual differences are beneficial for the class because they produce a range of ideas and solution methods that provides the material for students' discussion and reflection. The variety of alternative methods allows students to compare them and construct connections among them. It is believed that all students benefit from the variety of ideas generated by their peers. In addition, tailoring instruction to specific students is seen as unfairly limiting and as pre-judging what students are capable of learning: All students should have the opportunity to learn the same material.

For the Japanese teacher, the differences within a group are beneficial because they allow a teacher to plan a lesson more completely. Japanese teachers plan lessons by using the information that they and other teachers have previously recorded about students' likely responses to particular problems and questions. If the student group is sufficiently large, the teachers can be quite sure that these same responses will be given by these students. The teachers then plan the nature of the discussion that is likely to occur. The range of responses also provides the vehicle teachers use to meet the needs of different students. Teachers expect that different students will understand different methods and will think about the material at different levels of sophistication. Not all students will be prepared to learn the same things from each lesson, and the different methods that are shared allow each student to learn *some* things.

Another set of beliefs pertains to the significance of the classroom lesson. Lessons, of course, are the most common form of teaching around the world. Students' lives in most schools are organized around a series of forty-five to sixty-minute periods that they move through in the course of a day. But different beliefs about teaching lead to treating lessons in quite different ways.

In Japan, classroom lessons hold a privileged place in the activities of the school. It would be exaggerating only a little to say that lessons are sacred. They are treated much as we treat lectures in university courses or even religious services. A great deal of attention is given to their development.[8] They are planned as complete experiences, as stories with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Their meaning is found in the connections between the parts. If you stay for only the beginning, or leave before the end, you miss the point. If lessons like this are going to succeed, they must be coherent. The pieces must relate to each other in clear ways. And they must flow, free from interruptions and unrelated activities. Now we know why Japanese lessons are never interrupted from the outside—not by announcements from the public address system, not by lunch-count monitors, not by anyone.

It is quite easy to see how the beliefs about mathematics, learning, and the role of the teacher lead to treating lessons in this way. Mathematics is made up of relationships between ideas, facts, and procedures. To understand these relationships, students must analyze mathematical problems and the different methods that can be used to solve them. Students must struggle with problems first in order to make sense of later discussions about how to solve them and to understand the summary comments made by the teacher. So, the lesson must tell a tightly connected, coherent story; the teacher must build a visible record of the pieces as they unfold so connections between them can be drawn; and the lesson cannot be sidetracked or broken by interruptions.

In the United States, lessons are treated differently. This is not surprising given the different beliefs about mathematics, learning, and the teacher. The activities within a lesson are more modular with fewer connections between them. Practice time might be devoted to the procedures demonstrated today, yesterday, or last week. Because it is believed that learning a procedure depends largely on practicing the procedure, temporary interruptions, such as outside intrusions or unrelated activities, will not ruin the lesson. These distractions might be annoying, but they just reduce the number of practice exercises for that day. It may not be surprising, then, that we found that more than one-fourth of the U.S. lessons were interrupted in some way.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES are highly stable over time, and they are not easily changed, for two reasons: First, cultural activities are systems; and systems, especially complex ones such as teaching, can be very difficult to change. The second reason is that they are embedded in a wider culture, often in ways not readily apparent to members of the culture. If we want to improve teaching, we must recognize and deal with both its systemic and its cultural aspects.

Teaching systems, like other complex systems, are composed of elements that interact and reinforce one another; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

One immediate implication of this fact is that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to improve teaching by changing individual elements or features. In a system, all the features reinforce each other. If one feature is changed, the system will rush to "repair the damage," perhaps by modifying the new feature so it functions like the old one did. If all teachers in the U.S. started using the chalkboard tomorrow, rather than the overhead projector, teaching would not change much. The chalkboard simply would be used to fill the visual aids slot in the teachers' system, and therefore would be used just as the overhead projector is—to catch and hold students' attention.

This point is missed in many popular attempts to reform teaching in the U.S. These reforms start with indicators, like those we present in the accompanying article, and try to improve teaching by influencing the level of the indicator. For example, having found that Japanese and German students encounter more advanced mathematics, reformers might propose that we present more challenging content in our schools. Or, because Japanese teachers switch back and forth between classwork and seatwork more often than American teachers do, reformers might propose lessons with shorter classwork and seatwork segments. German and Japanese students do proofs, so perhaps we should include proofs in our lessons. Educational reforms in this country often have been driven by an effort to change our performance on quantifiable indicators like these.

Because teaching is a complex system, these attempts to change it generally don't work. It has now been documented in several studies that teachers who are asked to change features of their teaching often modify the features to fit within their pre-existing system instead of changing the system itself. The system assimilates individual changes and swallows them up. Thus, although surface features appear to change, the fundamental nature of the instruction does not. When this happens, anticipated improvements in student learning fail to materialize, and everyone wonders why.[9]

A WELL-KNOWN example comes from the "New Math" reforms of the 1960s. A major thrust of these reforms was changing the textbooks. Because most mathematics teachers rely quite heavily on the textbook, one might think that changing the textbook would change teaching. In 1975, after the changes had time to take effect, the National Advisory Committee on Mathematical Education commissioned a study of school mathematics instruction. The committee concluded that in elementary schools, "Teachers are essentially teaching the same way they were taught in school. Almost none of the concepts, methods, or big ideas of modern mathematics have appeared."[10] Even textbooks can get swamped by the system.

A more recent and personal illustration of the stability of systems of teaching occurred when one of us was participating with a group of American teachers analyzing videotapes of Japanese mathematics instruction. A fourth-grade teacher decided to shift from his traditional approach to more of a problem-solving approach as shown in the Japanese lessons. Instead of asking short-answer questions, he began his next lesson by presenting a problem and asking students to spend ten minutes working on a solution. Although the teacher changed his behavior to correspond with the teacher in the videotape, the students, not having watched the video and not having thought about their own participation, failed to respond like the students on the tape. They played their traditional roles and waited to be shown how to solve the problem. The lesson did not succeed. Even students are part of the system.

Systems of teaching are much more than the things the teacher does. They include the physical setting of the classroom; the goals of the teacher; the materials, including textbooks and district or state objectives; the roles played by the students; the way the school day is scheduled; and other factors that influence how teachers teach. Changing any one of these individual features is unlikely to have the intended effect.

TRYING TO improve teaching by changing individual features usually makes little difference, positive or negative. But it can backfire and leave things worse than before. When one or two features are changed, and the system tries to run as before, it can operate in a disabled state. Geoffrey Saxe and his colleagues at UCLA found that when elementary school teachers were asked to teach fractions by implementing an innovative curriculum, some did so with higher student achievement than a comparison traditional program, and some did so with lower student achievement.[11] The difference was that the successful teachers were provided with information and assistance that, in our words, helped them improve their *system*. The less successful teachers did not receive such assistance and tried to operate their conventional system with the new curriculum. This was not a good fit and did not promote students' learning. The point here is that trying to improve by changing individual features is not just ineffective; it is downright risky.

Bombarding teachers with waves of ineffective reforms can have another downside: Teachers can grow weary. They are asked over and over to change the way they do x, y, or z. Even when they try to accommodate the reformers and adopt a new feature or two, nothing much happens. They do not notice much improvement in students' learning. Although it may feel to teachers as though they are changing, the basic system is running essentially as it did before. Always changing, and yet staying the same, is a discouraging state of affairs. It can lead to a defeatist kind of cynicism. "Not another reform," says the veteran teacher. "I'll just wait this one out." Quick fixes that focus on changing individual features leave behind a skeptical teaching corps.

The fact that teaching is cultural further complicates and impedes efforts to change it. The widely shared cultural beliefs and expectations that underlie teaching are so fully integrated into teachers' worldviews that they fail to see them as mutable. The more widely shared a belief is, the less likely it is to be questioned, or even noticed. This tends to naturalize the most common aspects of teaching, to the point that teachers fail to see alternatives to what they are doing in the classroom, thinking that this is just the way things are. Even if someone wanted to change, things that seem this natural are perceived as unchangeable. It is no wonder

The more widely shared a belief is, the less likely it is to be questioned, or even noticed.

that the way we teach has not changed much for many years. Is it impossible to change? We don't think so. But we must be sure that our efforts to improve are appropriate for changing *cultural* activities. If teaching were a noncultural activity, then we could try to improve it simply by providing better information in teachers' manuals, or asking experts to demonstrate better techniques, or distributing written recommendations on more effective teaching methods. Notice: This is exactly what we have been doing. We have been acting as though teaching is a noncultural activity.

If we took seriously the notion that teaching is a cultural activity, we would begin the improvement process by becoming more aware of the cultural scripts that we are using. This requires comparing scripts, seeing that other scripts are possible, and noticing things about our own script that we had never seen before. Becoming more aware of the scripts we use helps us see that they come from choices we make. The choices may be understandable, but still they are choices, and, once aware of them, other choices can be made.

Improving cultural scripts for teaching is a dramatically different approach than improving the skills of individual teachers. But it is the approach called for if teaching is a cultural activity. No matter how good our teachers are, they will only be as effective as the script they are using. To improve teaching over the long run, we must improve the script.

(Note: In the three chapters that conclude The Teaching Gap, *Stigler and Hiebert discuss how teachers can become aware of the cultural scripts that influence their teaching and take steps to alter them. The authors' suggestions have a good deal in common with ideas about professional development discussed in the articles by Catherine Lewis and Ineko Tsuchida and by Anthony Alvarado, which follow.)* □

Endnotes

[1] Ronald Gallimore makes many of these same points in a 1996 chapter, "Classrooms are just another cultural activity." In D.L. Speece & B.K. Keogh (Eds.), *Research on classroom ecologies: Implications for inclusion of children with learning disabilities* (pp. 229-250). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

[2] The same categories of core beliefs have been suggested by other researchers. See, for example, Griffin, S., & Case, R. (1997). "Re-thinking the primary school math curriculum: An approach based on cognitive science." *Issues in Education, 3*(1), 1-49; Thompson, A. G. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and conceptions: A synthesis of research. In D. A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 127-146). New York: Macmillan.

[3] There is a strong American tradition in behaviorist psychology, a psychology that addresses, most directly, issues of skill learning. Behaviorism, or connectionism, was developed most fully by E. L. Thorndike in the early 1900s and elaborated in different ways by B. F. Skinner and R. M. Gagne.

[4] The psychology of learning that underlies this approach is familiar in the U.S., but it is not the psychology that has taken hold in everyday teaching in the U.S. See, for example, the writings of J. Dewey and J. Piaget and numerous recent works that have elaborated these ideas.

[5] Kyoshiyo shidosho: Shogakko sansu 5 nen *(Teacher's guidebook: Elementary mathematics 5th-grade)* (1991). Gakkotosho: Tokyo.

[6] One item on the questionnaire given to U.S. eighth-grade mathematics teachers in the TIMSS sample asked them to select, among sixteen choices, those that limited their effectiveness in the classroom. The second most frequent choice, just behind lack of student interest, was the range of abilities among students in the same class (selected by 45 percent of the respondents). See also a survey of its members by the American Federation of Teachers, reported in the Spring 1996 (Volume 20, Number 1) issue of *American Educator*, pages 18-21.

[7] See the following article for an analysis of how the variety of student responses in a Japanese classroom benefits the whole class: Hatano, G., & Inagaki, K. (1991). "Sharing cognition through collective comprehension activity." In Resnick, L.B. Levine, J.M. & Teasley, S.D. (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition* (pp. 331-348). Washington, DC: APA.

[8] Lewis, C., & Tsuchida, I. (1997). "Planned educational change in Japan: The case of elementary science instruction." *Journal of Educational Policy,* 12, 313-331; Sasaki, Akira (1997) Jugyo kenkyu no kadai to jissen *(Issues and implementation of lesson study)*. Kioiku kaihatsu kenkyujo: Tokyo.

[9] Cohen, D. (1996). "Standards-based school reform: Policy, practice, and performance." In Ladd, H F. (Ed.)., *Holding schools accountable: Performance-based reform in education.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; Guthrie, J.W. (Ed.) (1990). *Educational and Policy Analysis, 12*(3), Special Issue.

[10] Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences (1975). *Overview and analysis of school mathematics, K-12.* p. 77 Washington, DC: Author.

[11] Saxe, G. B., Gearhart, M., & Dawson, V. (1996). "When can educational reforms make a difference? The influence of curriculum and teacher professional development programs on children's understanding fractions." Unpublished paper.

A Lesson Is Like a Swiftly Flowing River

How Research Lessons Improve Japanese Education

By Catherine C. Lewis and Ineko Tsuchida

In recent years, Japanese elementary school teachers have succeeded in making a basic change in their approach to science teaching. They have shifted from "teaching as telling" to "teaching for understanding," and they accomplished this as they taught their classes and continued with their usual professional duties. How did they achieve this remarkable change? As we investigated the question over the past three years, Japanese teachers repeatedly pointed to the impact of "research lessons" (*kenkyuu jugyou*) as central to individual, schoolwide, and even national improvement of teaching.

Studying Pendulums

Forty Japanese fifth-graders, working in pairs, weight small wire pendulums with clay and "race" them. They are trying to figure out which of three variables suggested by the class—the length of the wire, the clay's weight on the pendulum, or the angle of release—affect the pendulum's cycle time. The students are intent on their investigations, so they pay little attention to their teacher's tape recorder or to the more than twenty observing teachers who are taking detailed notes, snapping flash pictures, and recording the lesson on videotape.

After the lesson, the teachers move to another room to discuss what they've just observed. The classroom teacher, Mr. Ohara, begins by explaining that the lesson was designed to see whether students would demonstrate scientific thinking by "untangling the three variables...to study them one at a time." A lively debate ensues. Several teachers argue that it would have been better to tell students to control the variables since few did so spontaneously, but other teachers disagree.

Some teachers also say that using a stopwatch to measure the impact of the variables would have been preferable to comparing the pendulums side by side. Mr. Ohara explains that he rejected the idea of a stopwatch because fifth-graders take differences of just a hundredth of a second very seriously, and they would have been likely to draw erroneous conclusions about a variable's effect. Other teachers counter that fifth-graders are old enough to discuss and understand measurement error. As the two-hour colloquium on the lesson draws to a close, teachers offer their opinions on how Mr. Ohara should structure the next day's lesson in which students will report and discuss the results of their (often uncontrolled) experiments. Once again, tomorrow's lesson will be observed, recorded, and discussed by teachers from within and outside the school.

What Are Research Lessons?

Research lessons are actual classroom lessons, taught to one's own students, but they embody a number of special features that set them apart from an everyday class:

- *They are observed by other teachers.* A research lesson is always given before an audience of other teachers. Sometimes the observers are limited to other teachers in the school or to the faculty with a

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ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES YANG

few invited outside commentators. But research lessons can be open to teachers from a district, town, region, or even the whole of Japan.

- *They are carefully planned, usually in collaboration with one or more colleagues.* In one school we studied, the four third-grade teachers met regularly for several months to discuss how to promote students' "initiative" in the study of science. When they decided that asking productive questions was a key, the teachers came up with strategies designed to encourage such questions. They honed their strategies by watching one another's lessons and discussing them. Finally, one of the teachers presented their new approach to the entire faculty as a research lesson while the other teachers recorded the session and distributed written background materials presenting highlights of their months of work together.
- *They are focused.* Research lessons are designed to embody a particular goal or vision of education. Teachers often choose a goal that is part of the current national debate about education. Examples of such goals from the research lessons we observed included helping students to "take initiative as learners," "be active problem-solvers," "be active problem-seekers," "develop scientific ways of thinking," and "develop their individuality." Research lessons can also be used to develop and demonstrate a successful approach to a particular topic—for example, to help children understand solar cells or grasp the connection between sound and vibration.

  Other teachers do not consider research lessons as finished products that they are to take up and use without any alteration. The lessons are examples of a particular goal or vision in action, and individual teachers feel free to draw on them as appropriate to their own philosophy and classroom.
- *They are recorded.* Usually teachers record these lessons in a number of ways, including one or more videotapes, one or more audiotapes, narrative and/or checklist observations, and copies of student work. Recording is focused on particular issues of interest to the instructing teacher. For example, we observed lessons in which the teacher asked colleagues to tally the number of students who volunteered their ideas during whole-class discussion, record the discussion in each small group, and transcribe all comments made by three selected children (one very shy, one outspoken, and one very knowledgeable in science).
- *They are discussed.* The faculty, sometimes joined by outside educators, discusses the research lesson during a colloquium or panel discussion. Typically, such a gathering begins with presentations by the teachers who planned and taught the lesson. Then, teachers who observed the lesson comment on its strengths and weaknesses and ask questions. Often an invited outside educator or researcher also comments on the lesson.

Types of Research Lessons

The most common research lesson is the in-school research lesson (*kounai kenkyuu jugyou*). These take place regularly at ordinary elementary schools throughout Japan. As one Japanese elementary teacher told us:

> The research lesson system is valued very highly by Japanese teachers. You find it even in very isolated mountain schools where there are fewer than twenty students. You won't find a school without them. That's one reason why the education throughout Japan is fairly standard, whether you're talking about Tokyo schools or the remotest mountain school.

Another teacher told us that research lessons were common because they were of such basic importance: "Why do we do research lessons? I don't think there are any laws [requiring it]. But if we didn't do research lessons, we wouldn't be teachers."

Teachers themselves decide the theme and frequency of research lessons. At the schools we studied, the lessons might occur several times a year or even as often as once a month.

A second type of research lesson is the public research lesson (*koukai kenkyuu jugyou or gakushuu kenkyuu happyoukai*). These research lessons are open to teachers from outside the school, and invitations may be sent to educators in the local district, the region, or even the whole of Japan. When schools receive grants to develop some part of their educational program—such as computer instruction or international education—they are often expected to conclude their work with a public research lesson. Public research lessons like these also help prepare teachers for changes in Japan's national curriculum. For example, when a new subject—life environment studies—replaced science and social studies for first and second-graders, teachers flocked to research lessons at schools that had pioneered the new subject.

Perhaps the largest and best-known public research lessons are those conducted several times a year at national elementary schools, the seventy-three selective-admission public schools throughout Japan where new educational approaches often originate. When we emerged from a Tokyo subway station in 1996 to attend a research lesson at a national elementary school, the broad walkways leading to the school were jammed with educators from all over Japan, in a scene reminiscent of the huge crowds that pay homage at shrines on New Year's Day. During the two days of research lessons, the elementary school attracted nearly

During the two days of research lessons, the elementary school attracted nearly five thousand educators.

five thousand educators. As lessons went on throughout the school, dozens of teachers crowded inside each classroom, and dozens more looked in from the hallways through large sliding windows. Visitors all received background materials on lesson goals, philosophy, and the larger unit of which the lesson was a part. During panel discussions following the lessons, they questioned the teachers about their lessons, exchanged views, and listened to the teachers' own assessments of what went well and what went poorly.

Research lessons occur in many other contexts. For example, at the annual conference of Japan's Elementary Science Education Association, which rotates yearly to different regions of Japan, the thousand or so teachers who are attending spend most of their time observing and discussing research lessons. Only at the end of the conference do participants assemble for a plenary session. Research lessons are also central to the work of many teachers' study circles and school districts' professional development (for example, the required professional development that is provided in some districts during the first, fifth, and tenth years of teaching).

Like Rings of Water in a Pond: The Impact of Research Lessons

Research lessons are centered in the practice of ordinary teachers in ordinary classrooms. But their impact does not stop there because, at the same time, a mechanism exists that allows these examples of good practice to be disseminated all over the country and thus contribute to the improvement of Japanese education.

1. Improving Classroom Practice

The teachers we interviewed were often very specific about the role research lessons had played in their own professional development. For example, the comments from other teachers helped them to see things about their teaching that might otherwise have escaped them. One teacher put it this way:

> Research lessons help you see your teaching from various points of view.... A lesson is like a swiftly flowing river; when you're teaching you must make judgments instantly. When you do a research lesson, your colleagues write down your words and the students' words. Your real profile as a teacher is revealed to you for the first time.

The comments on a research lesson often take the form of tips and suggestions like the ones offered to these three teachers:

> As a brand new teacher, my colleagues who saw my research lesson told me I talked too fast. They were right. My students were having a hard time keeping up with what I said, and I didn't even know it!

> I was told after a research lesson that I talked too loudly and scared the children. I had never taught first grade before, just upper grades, and I didn't realize how big my voice sounded to young children. They weren't used to a male voice.

> A teacher who saw my research lesson commented that it was taking me a lot of time to write on the blackboard each word of every student comment—that I should just write brief phrases instead.

In one research lesson, an observing teacher told her colleague, "Only 47 percent of the children spoke up today during your science lesson. To increase participation, you might have quickly polled all students, especially since you already had their names on magnets."

When we asked how they had been able to change their teaching practice from lecture-centered to student-centered science, teachers often mentioned strategies they had picked up at research lessons. One teacher talked about a technique for bringing the previous day's discussion back to life:

> I've learned a lot from [the research lessons given by] other people. For example, to write on chart paper rather than the blackboard. That way, you can save it as a record. You can pull it out at the beginning of the next lesson, and the image of the prior lesson comes to mind immediately. Typically . . . there are some kids who have a hard time remembering. But if you have the poster paper, everyone can remember. You can also pull out the charts to show the path of learning over the year; you can reflect on the path of learning.

The same teacher said that a research lesson had taught him how to get a debate going when an overwhelming majority of the students are in basic agreement about the point under discussion:

> If there's just one child holding the "B" point of view, and the rest of the class holds the"A" point of view, the child holding B may feel bad if you stimulate a debate between views A and B. The B child may feel alone, and want to switch to be with the majority. That's a kind of torture for children. One thing many teachers will do in that situation is to take the B point of view themselves. But then the teacher is talking a lot, instead of the students. What I learned is that you can ask children how sure they are of the viewpoint they espouse. Are they 100 percent sure, or 80 percent sure, or half sure? Then you can ask what their doubts are about the idea, and have a debate between people who do and don't have doubts of a certain kind.

In addition to seeing research lessons as a source of feedback and of new techniques, teachers described how the lessons influenced their philosophy of teaching. For example, one teacher recalls that research lessons led to a radical change in his ideas about education:

> [Before I joined the teachers' research group], I had always seen education as teachers giving knowledge to children, as a top-down process. Through my work with the elementary science research group, I came to see education not as giving knowledge to children but as giving them opportunities to build their own knowledge. Initially, that was not what I believed. Even when I saw it in practice, I couldn't believe in it at first. When I first saw lessons in which children were building their own knowledge, I thought, "Is this kind of instruction really OK? It takes so much time." But then I began to realize that if children don't experience something, they don't understand it. They can memorize it, but when the time comes to use it, they can't.

2. Spreading New Content and Approaches

When a new topic—such as solar energy—is added to the curriculum, it often becomes a popular focus for

research lessons. The research lessons, which are held at schools where the new curriculum is developed and tried out, give teachers a chance to think through problems and question other teachers who have already worked with the new material in the classroom. In the discussion that followed a fourth-grade research lesson on solar energy, a teacher, who obviously did not consider herself an expert on the subject matter, was able to resolve a question that troubled her:

> I want to know whether the three conditions the children described—"to put the battery closer to the light source," "to make the light stronger," and "to gather the light"—would all be considered the same thing by scientists. They don't seem the same to me. But I want to ask the teachers who know science whether scientists would regard them as the same thing.

In addition to helping teachers understand new content being added to the curriculum, research lessons can also give them a chance to talk and think about the reasons for the changes. After the same solar energy research lesson, another teacher commented:

> I haven't taught fourth-graders for a while, so I have no idea how and why solar batteries were added to the curriculum. I'm only guessing that including solar batteries reflects adults' hope that children will become . . . interested in solar energy and thereby help Japan. Science education specialists might be concerned about children using the proper vocabulary or setting up certain experimental conditions, but if the goal of including solar batteries in the curriculum is to get children interested in the fact that electric current can be changed by light, then Mr. Hori's lesson fulfilled that. So I'd really like to know the reason why solar batteries were included as a new curriculum material for fourth-graders.

When we asked principals how they helped teachers shift to "life environment studies," the subject that replaced primary science and social studies, many, like this assistant principal, mentioned the importance of research lessons:

> The way to improve life environment studies is to see many good actual examples. We can do that by going to lots of schools that are doing presentations and research lessons on life environment studies. Many people from this school have gone. Each school has its own way of approaching the new subject. Some are appropriate for your school, some aren't. What works elsewhere might not work at your school because the children are different. So you need to see lots of examples.

3. Connecting Classroom Practice to Broader Goals

In recent years, as concerns that Japan's students are passive, unimaginative test-takers have dominated the Japanese press, national educational guidelines have increasingly emphasized student qualities such as "initiative," "autonomy," "desire to learn," and "active problem-solving." As already evident in some of the earlier examples, the qualities discussed and advocated at the national level often find their way into the goals chosen by school faculties for their research lessons.

For example, in a school that had chosen student "initiative" as its research goal, third-grade teachers who used to start the science unit on sound by asking students "What is the connection between sound and vibration?" redesigned the unit so that it began by having students build musical instruments. Their intent was to provoke *students* to ask about the connection between sound and vibration, rather than have teachers introduce the question.

In another school, where stimulating students' "desire to learn" was chosen, teachers who had formerly taught about levers using small desktop models decided on a new approach. They would make poles and ropes available and challenge students to lift 40-kilogram sacks of sand using classroom furniture as fulcrums. Teachers talked about the effect of the materials on their goal of building students' desire to learn: "How can you discover the beauty of a lever if you're using it to lift something you could lift easily with your bare hands?"

Research lessons provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss big ideas currently shaping national educational debate, think them through, and bring them to life in the actual classroom. The impact of research lessons in connecting teachers with practice outside their school is reflected in the comments of teachers who said they attend national school research lessons "to see where Japanese education is going" and "to find out what's new."

Teachers also reported that research lessons connected them with teachers *within* their schools. A teacher who had just completed a research lesson commented:

> The research lesson is not over yet. It's not a one-time lesson; rather, it gives me a chance to continue consulting with other teachers. For example, I may say to other teachers, "I want to ask you about my last lesson you saw. . . ." Then, the other teachers can provide me with concrete suggestions and advice because they have seen at least one lesson I conducted. We teachers can better connect with each other in this way.

4. Exploring Conflicting Ideas

Research lessons can also give teachers a chance to bring up, discuss, and perhaps reconcile competing goals or visions of education. The following discussion occurred after the pendulum research lesson:

> Host Teacher: We have the feeling that recently in science education the process has been overemphasized and the results and conclusions underemphasized. We feel that the conclusions—what you might want to call children's knowledge—have been underemphasized of late. Why is a lesson good simply because children are active?
>
> Visiting Teacher: If children are making connections with daily life, then that's science. [Reads a quote to that effect from the national science Guidelines.]
>
> Host Teacher: Not just any kind of experience qualifies as science. If children leave here thinking that weight makes a difference in a pendulum swing, then there's something wrong with the scientific process that's going on here.
>
> Visiting Teacher: Do you call it scientific reasoning if they get the right answer, but not if they don't? When does it suddenly become unscientific thinking?

Research lessons expand teachers' ideas of what teaching can be.

In this conversation, two views of science education are coming into conflict. Is it more important to have students gain the factual knowledge that weight does not influence pendulum cycles or to be active, interested scientific experimenters? The research lesson system increases the likelihood that such opposing views of education will bump up against each other and that teachers will be forced to listen to and consider views different from their own.

In the discussion following a research lesson on solar batteries, several people suggested that the teacher should have used the students' words, rather than his own, to summarize the lesson. One teacher said, "I felt sorry for the students when the teacher concluded the lesson with his own summary statement." Another agreed that the teacher had pushed students' results into his own summarizing statements. Yet other teachers disagreed. One said:

> I don't agree...that students' ideas were somehow stifled by the teacher's summary. As someone who doesn't know much about electricity, I found the teacher's summary helpful. Students who, like me, have limited knowledge about solar cells may have found the teacher's statement helpful, after hearing such a wide variety of [student] opinions.

As recent battles over both reading and mathematics attest, U.S. education is often plagued by pendulum swings between different educational approaches. How often do U.S. teachers have opportunities for conversations like the one above, where Japanese teachers debated the importance of facts vs. process in the context of a lesson they had all watched? Research lessons bring together teachers from the whole spectrum of viewpoints to plan, view, and discuss lessons. It seems likely that the more frequently different educational philosophies come into contact around a shared lesson, the more likely teachers are to notice the strengths of approaches that are different from their own and modify their practice so, for example, it attains a balance between scientific content and inquiry. An American teacher who saw our videotape of a Japanese research lesson commented: "How different American mathematics education might be if we saw each other's lessons and found out what other teachers actually meant by terms like 'constructivism.'"

5. Creating Demand

Richard Elmore (1996) has made the case that education in the U.S. suffers not from a low *supply* of good educational programs, but a low *demand* for those programs. Demand occurs when teachers want to improve their practice—and when they can see the possibility of doing so. Research lessons expand teachers' ideas of what teaching can be. One Japanese teacher recalled how, early in her career, she burst into tears after seeing a wonderful research lesson by her fellow first-grade teacher:

> I felt so sorry for my own students. I thought their lives would have been so much better if they'd been in the other teacher's class. You realize you have had a big impact on your students. You see how authoritarian teachers have very quiet classes. Teachers who value students' ideas have very active classes. You see how teachers are creating a class, not just teaching a lesson. The teacher's way of speaking and the teacher's way of getting angry are all passed on to the students.

Several principals expressed the view that research lessons build momentum for improvement much more effectively than direct leadership by the principal (see also Bjork, unpublished). One principal, a science expert, explained that he could have instructed his teachers who, he said, did not "know much about science." However, he relied instead on research lessons to stimulate demand for improvement among teachers:

> It is necessary for teachers themselves to think about how to teach science, to tell their ideas frankly to other teachers, to get ideas from other teachers, and to improve themselves. The teachers in this school don't know much about science, but with their own knowledge, they will express their opinions as to what kind of lessons they want to do and what kind of teaching materials they want to develop.... Since there isn't a science specialist here, they don't know at all whether their ideas are good or bad. They come to me, but I try not to interject my own ideas. So who can advise them? Since this school will be...the site for the National Science Teachers' Association conference, teachers in Tokyo will assist this school because they want the research lessons at the Tokyo conference to be successful. Members of the Science Teachers' Association in Tokyo want to assist us. Our teachers can discuss with them how to design the flow of the lessons, and what kinds of teaching materials should be developed. Based upon their exchange of opinions, our teachers will redesign lesson plans...and then, they will conduct the research lessons. Our teachers and those teachers who assist them...will improve themselves together. That is how we work together.

6. Shaping National Policy

As already noted, research lessons are influenced by national educational policy, but, on occasion, the influence goes in the other direction. Solar energy, for example, entered the national *Course of Study* after individual classroom teachers pioneered research lessons on the topic. These lessons spread among teachers through the research lesson system, and were noticed by members of the national curriculum committee.

A second way in which research lessons can influence national policy is through the outside commentators invited to research lessons. Commentators are

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT *IS* THE JOB

By Anthony Alvarado

THE STANDARDS movement presents us with enormous challenges, and they don't always take the form we expect. We all know that if standards are to succeed in raising student achievement, there will have to be a massive change in the way we do business. Most people tend to look at the change in terms of its impact on students: The kids will have to do more challenging and rigorous work, and they'll be held accountable for their success. But after we set these high and demanding standards and we have assessments that tell us our kids are not performing to the standards, we'll turn to one another and say, "Our kids were not jumping very high before, and now we expect them to jump higher. What makes us think we can get them to do that?"

There are a million theories operating in the United States of America about what it takes to educate a kid and why we do things the way we do. When the theory is that the teacher and the child—that dyad—is where the rubber meets the road, all roads lead to professional development. But in the new world of standards-based education and helping our students meet them, it is professional development of a kind that we have not previously experienced. In the past, it has been a fairly mundane and superficial matter of speakers and workshops, with here a new technique or procedure for classroom management and there an inspirational talk about diversity. The new professional development must be different and much more powerful, and it will involve solving problems and collaborating at levels that we have never even contemplated.

Teachers and administrators will have to think together about how to create conditions that allow, in fact ensure, that kids meet the demands of standards-based education. We will have to change practice, and to do that we need a theory of action. I have a very simple one: We want children to perform at much higher levels, and that will happen as a result of an interaction with teachers. Therefore, what teachers do will have to be different and much more powerful. We will have to find ways of getting deeply into the specifics of how to help students master subject matter. And we will have to create contexts that support changes in thinking and pedagogy on the part of teachers. The standards movement is, first and foremost, a challenge to the adults because it is what they do that will determine the quality of the work the kids do.

Deciding About the Cow

A little while ago, my office got a call from a representative of a dairy association. This was the message that was left on the answering machine:

> Every eight years, we bring a cow into the San Diego elementary schools, and because of the needs of the cow, it has to come in the morning. We are hearing that, because you have a morning literacy bloc, the cow is being denied entrance into the schools. We think this is a fabulous program. Will you call the schools to let the cow in?

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES YANG

Anthony Alvarado is chancellor for instruction in the San Diego (California) City Schools. This article is adapted from a speech he gave at the AFT/NEA Teacher Quality Conference in September 1998.

We said, "That's a school-based decision." And of course the schools made different decisions about the cow for different reasons, some good and some bad. Some schools had already, when we talked about the literacy bloc, looked at their assembly programs and said, "You know, we have too many of these programs, and our kids are not reading enough." So they decided to pare down their assembly programs, and out went the cow. Some schools called the dairy association and said the district had said *no* to the cow. Other schools said, "Let's bring the cow in and create literacy work around the cow." And the next day, there were all kinds of student writing about the cow. Different approaches to the same question.

In this new world of standards-based learning, there are no uniform answers—even when it comes to making decisions about cows. You have to ask yourself, what is the right answer for a particular situation and school. That decision has to be made in a context of standards-based education, and you can't think usefully unless every teacher, every principal, every district office member, and, most important, every student, has a focused, coherent, and common vision of what is expected of them in standards-based classrooms.

When I talk about standards, I often tell the audience that if I handed out little slips of paper and asked each of them to define standards-based education, I would probably get as many different descriptions as there were people in the room. But unless, and until, we get a focused, coherent, and common vision, standards-based education is just another big idea that will wreck itself on the shoals of implementation.

Olympic Standards

There is not much in our current educational system to enlighten people about how standards work, but Olympic competition does offer some useful parallels. Take Olympic diving, for example. There is general agreement about how difficult a particular dive is and also about what is good form when a diver executes a dive. Coaches help their students train to meet those standards. When you see an athlete dive off the board, hit the water, and then come up again, you may already see him going "Yes!" or "Phhht!" because he has a pretty good idea of how well he's done. Then—and this is very interesting—you have a panel of people from different countries who probably cannot speak to each other because they speak different languages. Five seconds after the diver comes up, you see 9.9, 9.8, 10, 9, and you never see a 1 and a 10 given to the same dive because the judges have internalized the standards and largely agree on what it takes to make a 10.

Students in our schools should be able to do something similar. They should be able to describe what it takes to get an A. Now, when we ask children, "What are you learning?" they may even say, "I don't know." Or, "We're studying...this is a history class." Or maybe, "We're studying the Civil War." What about...? "Oh, I don't know. Some fire." That's why education is in the mess it is. With standards, there are clear expectations, understood and internalized by students and teachers. Students know that their work has to meet those standards, and they have access to teaching that can get them there.

How would this vision manifest itself in the classroom? If you asked a student, "What are you learning?" he would say, in the context, for example, of a piece of writing, "I'm writing a descriptive composition, and I know my composition doesn't yet make the grade because my central idea is still too weak and my detail isn't rich or sharp enough. But I'll know when I meet the standard because I know what is required." And every other child in the class would also be able to answer such a question by measuring his achievement against the external standard. So would that child's teacher, all the other teachers in the school, and the principal, so that there is coherence in what is expected and what is done in the school. The parents, too, would understand the standards on which teaching and learning were based.

That is the vision for what a classroom looks like—every child able to describe what he or she is expected to do; every teacher understanding the same thing. But then—and this is of the utmost importance—the teachers have to have access to professional development, to experiences, to knowledge, to skill that can give them the power to get every kid not merely to understand the criteria but to meet them. That is a daunting task; the expectation for teachers is as sophisticated and complex as the Manhattan Project was for the scientists who participated in it. Do we understand when we talk about standards-based education what we're really asking a system to do? This is tough, demanding work, and it requires a kind of professional development that is of a different order from any we've seen before.

Learning from a Master

What would professional development look like in this

new world order of standards-based education? Here are some snapshots, but the truth is they are merely suggestions because everything has to be based on what goes on in particular schools, and no two schools are alike. So schools have to invent their own versions because working on standards, above anything else, is intellectual work; it means thinking, solving problems, gaining knowledge, and applying it in situations so that one can create a new situation.

One component of the new professional development would certainly be encouraging teachers to visit one another's classes. We all know that, now, our classrooms are separate units and teachers are essentially isolated from one another. If we are to do standards-based education in a meaningful way, we must move private practice into the public sphere. In a school where classrooms are open, teachers will be talking to one another and in each other's classrooms, frequently and with a purpose. This isn't social visitation: I am going into the second-grade classroom because I am looking at "writers' workshops," and I want to find out how this master teacher uses them to link reading and writing in this grade. When I understand, I don't just take my knowledge and go back to my classroom. I have a responsibility to spread what I've learned to the rest of the faculty. And I need to do it quickly—in weeks, not months or years.

The cycles of change in our schools are very slow. We decide to try out a new little idea in September, and we're going to check in June to see how well it's working. Well, you know what schools are like in June. So maybe we say, "Wait until September," and by then a year has passed. (And maybe we never bother to check.) We have to develop a sense of urgency, to speed up the pace, or we'll all be 110 and Godot will have arrived before we get change in the schools. Or, more likely, we will lose the franchise in the meantime.

What this means in practical terms is that the teachers who visit the writers'-workshop master take her ideas and try them out. The master teacher answers their questions and goes into their classrooms to help them make the idea work. Then, they make a presentation to the full faculty. In six weeks, a school working like this can get writers' workshops up to the highest quality of practice.

And this kind of activity doesn't stop because we think we've gotten there. The underlying vision for professional development is that it is continuous, and that it is for everybody. The best people in the United States of America in any profession are the people who work hardest at improving their practice. Jerry Rice of the San Francisco 49ers is a great pass receiver, but he doesn't say, "I'm the best receiver in pro football today, so I don't have to work at it." No. He says, "In order for someone who does great work to get a little better, that guy has to work ten times harder." If you run a mile in eight hours, it doesn't take much to run it in seven hours and fifty-nine minutes. But if you run it in three-and-half minutes, each one of the seconds you knock off is a killer. You may strain a year to do it. That's the kind of attitude and approach to growth—the culture of growth—that has to be present in schools.

So, continuous visitation is one way of stimulating the professional growth I'm talking about. When I was superintendent in New York City's District 2, almost a quarter of our professional development budget always went right there: Teachers went singly or in pairs to visit other teachers in their school and they went to visit classes in other schools. We thought at the beginning that one round of visitations within a school would be enough, but that ignored the enormous possibilities for continuing growth that visitation offered. What it generates, at its highest level of practice, is what business calls "benchmarking." By comparing what they do with the work of other teachers, teachers become prolific creators of good practice. But there has to be an understanding that just that kind of constant comparison and effort to improve is the expectation—and there is a culture that supports it and money up front to carry it out.

What About the Money?

Most school districts, if they looked in their budgets for their professional development money, would have a hard time finding it because it doesn't amount to much. You can talk all you want about professional development and have high-toned conversations about models, but if the money isn't in the budget to do professional development, you don't care about it. And that's something for school board members, for superintendents, for school-based committees, for everybody to understand. They've got to put their money where their mouths are; and if professional development is the lever for change—and I'm convinced it is—they've got to put the money there.

In my first year in District 2, barely one-tenth of 1 percent of our budget went for professional development. By the time we were spending 3 percent, people were writing papers about our professional development program. When I left District 2, 6 percent was going to professional development—and I know that's nowhere near the amount of money necessary to do the job. By the way, I'm not talking just about getting new money but also about determining to spend the money you have in new ways. Although the federal government has been encouraging us to use Title I money for professional development, we still use a lot of it for pullouts. (And when we get rid of a pullout by making it a push-in, we often think we've accomplished something great, without even asking whether people have changed what they're doing.) In fact, there are massive amounts of money in reimbursable programs that are not being put toward professional development, often because management has its sacred cows and so does labor. Decisions to stop doing some things we've always done could be very tough. People could lose their jobs if money is rerouted into professional development to support the learning of teachers. We've never had to face these kinds of issues in a real-world environment.

Another sacred cow we're going to have to sacrifice—and this will also sound tough—is spending money on service for kids. The theory here is that better practice, not more practice in the old mode, creates learning. If I have a choice between spending $10 on a teacher or creating another little intervention, I'll

spend the $10 on the teacher because, in the long run, the rise in professional knowledge and skills lifts all boats. The after-school stuff doesn't do anything to change most of the practice in schools.

The lion's share of professional development money has to go for what we usually call "master teachers," people adept, for instance, at teaching decoding to kids who are just learning to read or teaching important beginning math concepts and skills. Coaching is at the heart of this. It is stupid to believe that you can give a teacher a book and say, "Here are the second-grade reading standards. Go and implement them." Unfortunately, this is the way we generally do things. Teachers are starved for access to practice that can help them improve what they do in the classroom. They need other teachers whose practice has reached a very high level standing there with them, observing, giving them feedback, modeling the right way to do things. A generalized version of mentorship won't do. We need something specifically focused on practice if we hope to get kids' performance up.

Of course the standards for selecting these master teachers have to be high and demanding. Tennis players who want to improve their game won't get anywhere if they always play with people who are at their level. They need a tennis pro who is highly skilled—and the same goes for master teachers.

Sometimes administrators are less than enthusiastic about recognizing master teachers in their midst and using them in this way. They ask, "How can I take my best teacher out of the classroom? The PTA president's daughter is in her class." This attitude is understandable, but it loses sight of the goal, which is to raise all

boats, rather than create isolated masters.

There are many other ways to create professional development based on the idea of continuous improvement; they will vary with individual schools or districts. For example, in District 2, we sat down with the union and created the Distinguished Teacher Program, a variant of the master teacher idea. The idea was to identify an outstanding teacher and assign him or her as a consultant—or visiting expert—to a struggling school. In the case I'm thinking of, the distinguished teacher co-taught the literacy bloc with other teachers for part of the day and then spent the rest working individually with other teachers. The results were dramatic. In one year, the school moved from having only 27 percent of its students meet the state reading standard to 70 percent.

Are cadres of National Board certified teachers part of this story? They could be, but our efforts in that direction are still minuscule. If we're serious about making them part of the continuous professional development I'm talking about, somebody has to get moving. I hear, "Oh, I have eight National Board certified teachers" (in a system of 150,000 kids). Or "Oh, I have ten National Board certified teachers." Unless we step up the pace, Godot's *son* will have arrived before board certification has had an impact. Again, the issue is not, "Is this a good idea?" It is, "Will this work in my school?" and "How quickly?"

A New Brand of Collaboration

The professional development I've been talking about rests on money and on time. Unless teachers can visit classes in their school (and other schools), unless they can be coached and coach, there is little possibility of affecting practice in this way. It also rests on collaboration. The basic collaboration is the one between a teacher and a master teacher or coach. It is about the practice of a particular person, and it cannot be figured out in the central office or legislated by a school-based council. Ideas and frameworks for what might be done can come from lots of places, and the process can be jointly developed. But the kinds of changes I'm talking about have to be worked out where the teaching takes place—in a particular teacher's classroom.

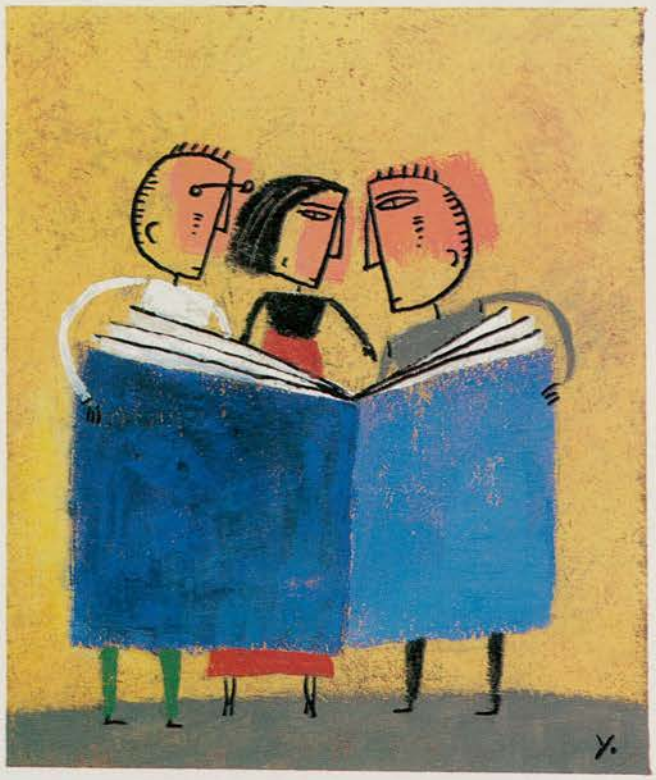
But inventing and refining practice in one or two classrooms is not enough; invention has to go on throughout a school or school district, and to achieve that, we need collaboration among all the levels of the school or district. For example, we need a new kind of collaboration between teachers and principals—indeed, we need a new role for principals. Since professional development, as I am describing it, is not something that happens at certain times and places, the principal has to be involved, on a day-to-day basis, in making the new professional development work: scheduling, arranging, facilitating, monitoring. Instead of being a very occasional classroom visitor and the person in charge of discipline and keeping the physical plant running, the principal must now be as vitally engaged in teachers' ongoing professional development as teachers are themselves.

We will also need a new kind of labor-management

pact that is geared to the intellectual expectations of standards-based education and this view of professional development. School boards and administrators on the one hand and teacher unions on the other have been struggling for a long time to collaborate over contractual and management issues, and we've been making progress; we're growing up. But the issues we've previously squabbled over are trivial compared to the ones we face now. This is no longer about who said what or how the third item in a checklist for classroom evaluations should be worded or even about a policy for hiring and transferring teachers—important though that is. These issues will not even get us into the ballpark of standards-based education, with the professional development we need to make it work. But we don't have any choice; we have to put our heads together; even though there is going to be tension and debate about how we do it.

The necessity of speeding up the pace of change will intensify some of the tensions we'll face. When we thought we had all the time in the world, we—and I mean teachers and their colleagues, teachers and administrators, labor and management—often had a hard time collaborating about mundane issues. Now, with pressure from the outside and a sense that we have to accomplish a great deal in a short time, we are also trying to get together on some very tough intellectual issues. So this is a hard nut, but we'll have to crack it if we're going to be successful.

The kinds of things that now pass for professional development—one-shot workshops on diversity training, cooperative education, classroom discipline—won't do a thing to improve practice. But we do know from research a lot of things that we don't pay any attention to. We know cross-role training works. Why? Because the principal might actually know something about how to think about and change classroom practice and might be able to help teachers make necessary changes. We even have research—David Cohen's study of mathematics networks in California—confirming that when teachers receive professional development



dealing with the content that they're supposed to teach the students, the students learn more.

Why is it then, that school systems continue with the same old patterns and traditions when it comes to professional development programs? One of our problems is that we are besieged by the outside world—by *herds* of cows, if you like. Every snake-oil salesman who has a program comes knocking on the door, and we have to learn to say *no* so we can focus on stuff that's important. But in order to separate the wheat from the chaff, we have to be able to think, and we have to know what instruction is. Otherwise, we'll buy any program that's out there, because we need salvation. That's why every single program that's ever been invented, however lousy, is in use in some teacher's classroom. This is not because teachers are dumb—or administrators, either. It's because we are starved for ways to improve practice, without having any way of focusing on how to do it and, thus, separating the good from the worthless.

Many school districts—perhaps most of them—still have a very constricted view of professional development. It goes like this: Some of us are teachers; some are administrators; and professional development is something we go somewhere to have dosed out to us. The point I'm trying to make is that *our work* is professional development. Thinking about our work and improving what we do—these things are professional development. So is collegiality—teachers talking about their practice and how to make it better. It's a big mistake to think that teaching is what we do every day and professional development is an occasional seminar or workshop or institute. No! *The job* is professional development, and professional development *is* the job. When we learn that—really learn it—we'll be on our way. □

Professional Development in District 2

A good example of how the ideas described here have been put into practice is New York City's Community School District 2, a racially and socioeconomically diverse K-9 school district, where Anthony Alvarado served as superintendent from 1987 to 1998.

For an account of how District 2 integrates professional development into the daily life of teachers and principals—and the effect this has on student learning—see Kate Maloy's "Building a Learning Community: A Portrait of New York City Community School District #2."

To order the video and companion report, call, write or e-mail Nancy Israel, 3939 O'Hara St., Room 806, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; (412) 624-7452; nisrael+@pitt.edu.

The Nashville Lunch-counter Sit-ins

By John Lewis

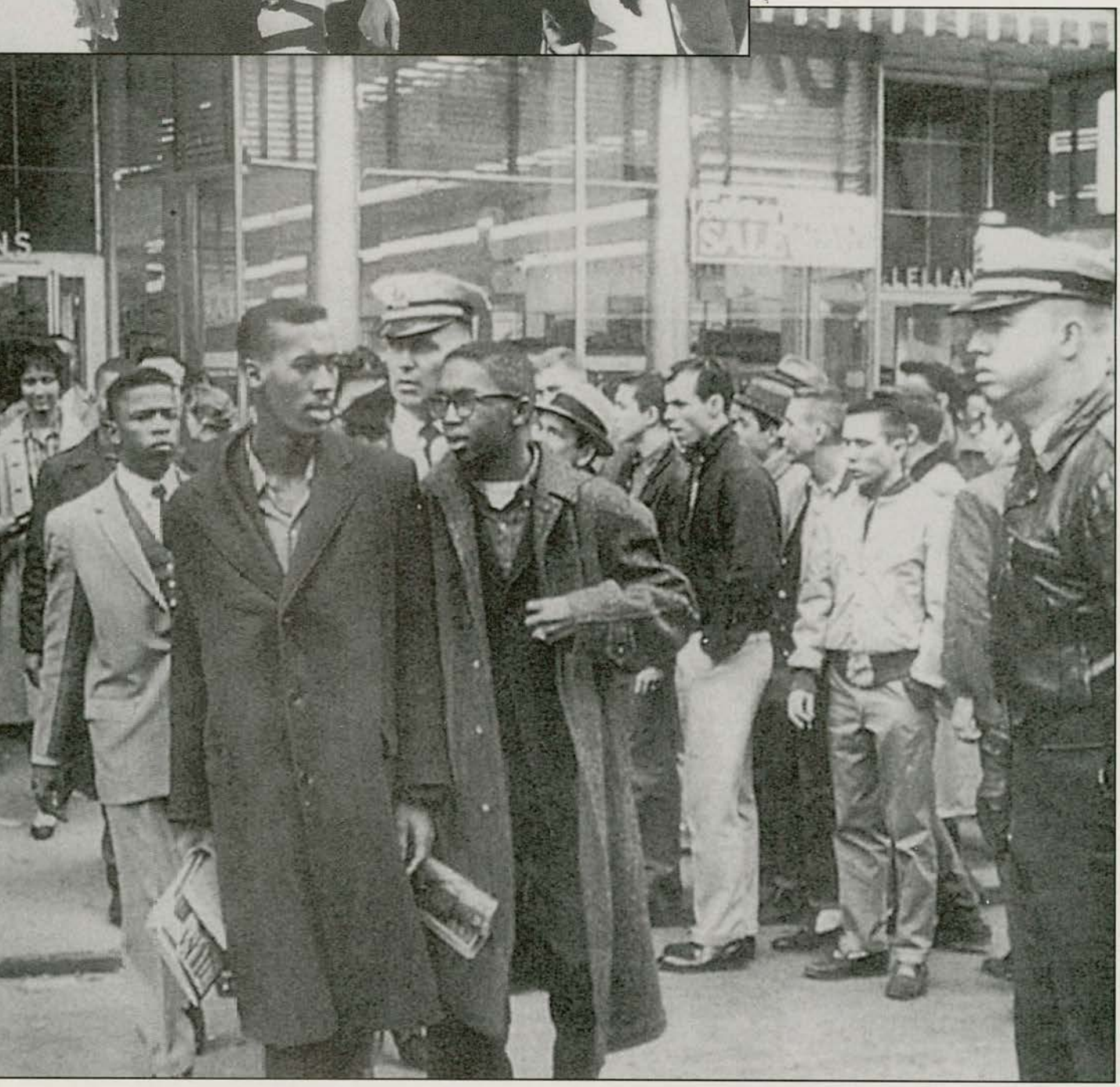
The leaders of the Nashville lunch-counter sit-ins in 1960 were not much more than children, but they achieved what most of their seasoned elders hardly dared to contemplate. They insisted that African-American patrons of Nashville's downtown five-and-ten-cent stores receive the same service as white patrons—and they won. The combination of courage, self-discipline, and innocent idealism that led to this victory also led many of these young people straight into the heart of the developing battle for civil rights. John Lewis, who tells his story of the Nashville sit-ins in the article that follows, went on to become one of the heroes of the movement. As a Freedom Rider, he took part in the often dangerous efforts to desegregate interstate buses in 1961; he was a principal organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and shared the podium with A. Philip Randolph and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lewis was in the thick of efforts to register black voters in Mississippi during the summer of 1964—and saw the hopes of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, born that summer, dashed at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. And he was nearly beaten to death during the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965. Through all this—and through his subsequent career as an elected political leader—John Lewis has remained constant to the principles of justice, equality, and love that animated him as a young man in Nashville. That's why his story is so worth reading and why we are proud to reprint a part of it here.
—Editor

WE WALKED out of the church, 124 of us, two abreast, quiet, solemn, into the snow and toward downtown Nashville. Passersby didn't know what to make of us. They thought it might be some sort of Saturday morning parade. Or maybe a funeral.

Several city blocks away we arrived at a place called the Arcade, an old mall of sorts, an open-air marketplace built back in the 1920s. The building was a couple of stories high, but the ground floor was open at both ends. You walked in one end, past vendors and small shops, and when you came out the other side, you were on Fifth Avenue, Nashville's busiest shopping street. Kress's, Woolworth's, McClellan's—all the five-and-dime stores were right there on Fifth Avenue.

JACK CORN, NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN

(Left) The climax of the Nashville sit-ins, April 1960: Students Diane Nash and Bernard Lafayette (right) and clergyman C.T. Vivian head a protest march that culminated in a meeting with Nashville's mayor at which he supported desegregating the lunch counters. (Below) John Lewis (at center in light suit and vest) in front of McClellan's five-and-ten-cent store in Nashville, February 1960: A few moments later, he was arrested for taking part in the lunch-counter sit-ins.



NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN, *STAFF PHOTO*

My group headed to Woolworth's. As we entered we drew looks from the shoppers inside but nothing more. No comments. No confrontations. No one there had any idea what was going on. No one knew how to react.

There were two lunch counters, one on each of the store's two floors. Our target was upstairs.

The first thing we each did was make a small purchase—a notebook, a handkerchief, whatever. No one tried to stop us.

Then we went up. The counter ran along one mirrored wall. Behind the long row of seats was a railing over which you could look down on the first floor below.

As we took our seats, we were careful to leave empty stools among us. This allowed regular customers an opportunity to be served and to sit beside us if they so chose.

A few people were already there eating lunch. No one got up. No one said anything. A waitress came out from the kitchen, stopped when she saw us, then picked up a cloth and began wiping the counter. She didn't say anything, but the next waitress who came out stopped dead in her tracks.

"Oh my God," she said to no one in particular, "here's the niggers."

These were middle-aged women, pleasant enough in their white uniforms and delicate hairnets. There was no anger in them, just bewilderment, nervousness, and maybe a little bit of fear.

As that day's designated leader, I asked if we could be served.

"We don't serve niggers here," one of the women said. A couple of the customers left then. The others soon followed.

Then a woman came out from the back with a sign in her hand, a crude, handwritten sign: "Counter Closed."

Minutes later, the lights in that section of the store were shut off, and the waitresses left. And there we sat, in semi-darkness, alone.

There was natural light enough to read by, and that's what some of us did. Others pulled out schoolbooks and binders and did their homework. Every once in a while I got up and walked the length of the counter, asking everyone if they were okay, making sure everyone stayed calm.

The afternoon passed. Groups of shoppers downstairs gathered and stared up at us, whispering among themselves. One witness later told a reporter it was like a scene from a science fiction movie, where a stunned city is laid siege by aliens or giant grasshoppers.

As the hours went by there were some taunts from a group of young white men who came upstairs and stood behind us.

"Niggers," they said. "Go home."

"What are y'all *doing* here?" one of them asked.

We kept our eyes straight ahead. No response. Those men soon left. And then, finally, at about six that evening, word came that it was time to go. We had set up a system of runners to deliver messages from the church to the groups in the stores and to bring news back to the church about what was happening downtown. When our runner said it was time to go, we stood and walked out in as orderly and silent a fashion as we had arrived.

IT COULDN'T have gone any more smoothly. When we got back to First Baptist, it was like New Year's Eve—whooping, cheering, hugging, laughing, singing. It was sheer euphoria, like a jubilee. The other sites had gone just as well as ours. Kress's had closed just like Woolworth's. McClellan's took a little longer but wound up shutting down its counters as well. Diane [Nash, a Fisk University student and sit-in leader] described watching a jittery waitress drop dish after dish on the floor. Two girls from another group told how they left to use the "Whites Only" ladies' room and walked in on an elderly white woman who exclaimed, "Oh! Nigras, Nigras *everywhere!*" before fleeing.

No one wanted to leave the church. Everyone was so up, so elated and eager to keep going. What next, they wanted to know. What do we do next?

Next was that Thursday, the eighteenth. This time there were close to two hundred of us. My group went to W. G. Grant's. Again the counter was closed. Again we stayed the afternoon, this time about four hours. Again there was minimal response from employees or onlookers. White Nashville was just not ready for this. It had never had to deal with black people this way. These waves of well-dressed, well-behaved young black men and women were something no one had seen before.

We *wanted* them to see us. We planned each sit-in to begin around lunchtime because we wanted people to be there when we arrived. We wanted white people, everyday citizens, everyday customers to be exposed to us, to see us as we were, not as something in their minds, in their imaginations. We wanted them to watch how we responded to the people who refused to serve us. And we wanted them to watch those people as well. Among so many other things, this was about education, pricking consciences, teaching one race about another, and, if need be, about itself. If some of these white onlookers went back to their own homes, their own jobs, their own churches and began talking about this in heartfelt terms, about what they had seen, then we had achieved one of our main objectives.

Two days later, on Saturday, the twentieth, we marched, 340 strong, to the same 4 five-and-tens we'd been to before. We also added Walgreen's to the list. Now there were hecklers inside the stores and small angry crowds outside, complaining to reporters that they now had no place to eat lunch.

The stores were now beginning to counterattack. The managers at Kress's and McClellan's ordered employees to stack goods—wastebaskets, blankets, lamp-shades,

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John Lewis has been Representative for the Fifth U.S. Congressional District of Georgia since 1987. This article is excerpted from his book, Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement, *copyright 1998, which was named a* New York Times *Notable Book this year. It is reprinted with the permission of Simon and Schuster. (*American Educator *readers can buy* Walking With the Wind *at a special discount. See page 47 for the discount coupon.)*

pots and pans—on the lunch counters to keep us from studying. There was no violence, but temperatures were rising. This could not go on forever. Sooner or later the city would have to respond in one way or another.

That night the store owners asked for a moratorium, promising to come up with a response, what they called a proposal. Jim Lawson [a clergyman, disciple of nonviolence, and mentor of students participating in the Nashville sit-ins] met with us, the central committee, and we agreed to wait. But by the end of that week, when we'd heard nothing, we said *enough*. Saturday we would sit in again.

Walking With the Wind

John Lewis begins his memoir with this story of his childhood. It is also a parable of the civil rights movement, and Lewis believes that it describes what people of good will must do whenever any kind of catastrophe threatens their society or nation. That is undoubtedly why he told the story during the December 1998 impeachment hearings in the U.S. House of Representatives.

THIS IS a simple story, a true story, about a group of young children, a wood-frame house and a windstorm. The children were my cousins: Roy Lee and Jinnie Boy, Naomi and Leslie and Willie Muriel—about a dozen of them, all told—along with my older sister Ora and my brothers Edward and Adolph. And me, John Robert.

I was four years old at the time, too young to understand there was a war going on over in Europe and out in the Pacific as well. The grownups called it a world war, but I had no idea what that meant. The only world I knew was the one I stepped out into each morning, a place of thick pine forests and white cotton fields and red clay roads winding around my family's house in our little corner of Pike County, Alabama.

On this particular afternoon—it was a Saturday, I'm almost certain—about fifteen of us children were outside my Aunt Seneva's house, playing in her dirt yard. The sky began clouding over, the wind started picking up, lightning flashed far off in the distance, and suddenly I wasn't thinking about playing anymore; I was terrified. I had already seen what lightning could do. I'd seen fields catch on fire after a hit to a haystack. I'd watched trees actually explode when a bolt of lightning struck them, the sap inside rising to an instant oil, the trunk swelling until it burst its bark. The sight of those strips of pine bark snaking through the air like ribbons was both fascinating and horrifying.

Lightning terrified me, and so did thunder. My mother used to gather us around her whenever we heard thunder and she'd tell us to hush, be still now, because God was doing his work. That was what thunder was, my mother said. It was the sound of God doing his work.

But my mother wasn't with us on this particular afternoon. Aunt Seneva was the only adult around, and as the sky blackened and the wind grew stronger, she herded us all inside.

Her house was not the biggest place around, and it seemed even smaller with so many children squeezed inside. Small and surprisingly quiet. All of the shouting and laughter that had been going on earlier, outside, had stopped. The wind was howling now, and the house was starting to shake. We were scared. Even Aunt Seneva was scared.

And then it got worse. Now the house was beginning to sway. The wood plank flooring beneath us began to bend. And then, a corner of the room started lifting up.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. None of us could. This storm was actually pulling the house toward the sky. With us inside it.

That was when Aunt Seneva told us to clasp hands. Line up and hold hands, she said, and we did as we were told. Then she had us walk as a group toward the corner of the room that was rising. From the kitchen to the front of the house we walked, the wind screaming outside, sheets of rain beating on the tin roof. Then we walked back in the other direction, as another end of the house began to lift.

And so it went, back and forth, fifteen children walking with the wind, holding that trembling house down with the weight of our small bodies.

More than half a century has passed since that day, and it has struck me more than once over those many years that our society is not unlike the children in that house, rocked again and again by the winds of one storm or another, the walls around us seeming at times as if they might fly apart.

It seemed that way in the 1960s, at the height of the civil rights movement, when America itself felt as if it might burst at the seams—so much tension, so many storms. But the people of conscience never left the house. They never ran away. They stayed, they came together and they did the best they could, clasping hands and moving toward the corner of the house that was the weakest.

And then another corner would lift, and we would go there.

And eventually, inevitably, the storm would settle, and the house would still stand.

But we knew another storm would come, and we would have to do it all over again.

And we did.

And we still do, all of us. You and I.

Children holding hands, walking with the wind. That is America to me—not just the movement for civil rights but the endless struggle to respond with decency, dignity, and a sense of brotherhood to all the challenges that face us as a nation, as a whole.

That is the story, in essence, of my life, of the path to which I've been committed since I turned from a boy to a man, and to which I remain committed today. It is a path that extends beyond the issue of race alone, and beyond class as well. And gender. And age. And every other distinction that tends to separate us as human beings rather than bring us together. □

This time, though, the city was set to respond. Late that Friday afternoon, we got word from Nashville's chief of police, a man named Hosse, that anyone involved in further protests would be arrested for disorderly conduct and trespassing. There were also rumors of planned attacks by groups of young whites, attacks which the police would do nothing to stop.

This was what we had prepared for. That night Bernard [Lafayette] and I let ourselves into the ABT [American Baptist Theological Seminary, where Lewis was a student] administration building—as a janitor, I had my own set of keys—and "liberated" a ream of mimeograph paper. Though many of the students who would be sitting in the next day had been trained, our numbers were swelling so fast that there were hundreds who had not. So I wrote up a basic list of dos and don'ts to be distributed the next day:

DO NOT:

1. Strike back nor curse if abused.
2. Laugh out.
3. Hold conversations with floor walker.
4. Leave your seat until your leader has given you permission to do so.
5. Block entrances to stores outside nor the aisles inside.

DO:

1. Show yourself friendly and courteous at all times.
2. Sit straight; always face the counter.
3. Report all serious incidents to your leader.
4. Refer information seekers to your leader in a polite manner.
5. Remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Love and nonviolence is the way.

May God Bless Each of You

The next morning there were fewer than a hundred of us gathered in the pews at First Baptist as we listened to Will Campbell, a white minister, warn us of the danger waiting for us downtown. He'd heard from some of Nashville's white community leaders that the police did indeed intend to make arrests that day. He said there might be violence as well, attacks from onlookers.

There was no question we would continue, no debate, no protest from any of the adults. We knew that sooner or later the stakes would be raised. It was a natural step in the process, a step we had practiced and prepared for. Our workshops had been like little laboratories in human behavior and response to nonviolent protest. Now we were seeing real humans respond in almost exactly the ways Jim Lawson had taught us they would. The danger waiting for us this day was to be expected, which didn't mean I wasn't a little bit nervous. But by now I was so committed deep inside to the sureness and sanctity of the nonviolent way, and I was so calmed by the sense that the Spirit of History was with us, that the butterflies were gone by the time we left the church and headed downtown.

As soon as my group entered our target store, Woolworth's, we were confronted with a group of young white men shouting, "Go home, nigger!" and "Get back

FROM THE ANGELINE BUTLER "VOICES OF A SIT-IN" COLLECTION

Violence at McClellan's, February 1960: Paul LaPrad, a participant in the sit-ins, has just been pulled from his stool at the lunch counter and beaten by the angry crowd.

to Africa!" They jabbed us as we passed and chided us for not fighting back. "What's the matter? You *chicken?*" they teased, trying to force the situation onto terms they were comfortable with—fists and fighting.

We weren't playing by those rules, of course, and that infuriated them even further. No sooner did we take our seats at the upstairs counter than some of these young men began pushing the group at the downstairs restaurant off their stools, shoving them against the counter, punching them.

We immediately went down to join our brothers and sisters, taking seats of our own. I was hit in the ribs, not too hard, but enough to knock me over. Down the way I could see one of the white men stubbing a lit cigarette against the back of a guy in our group, though I couldn't tell who it was in the swirl of the action.

I got back on my stool and sat there, not saying a word. The others did the same. Violence does beget violence, but the opposite is just as true. Hitting someone who does not hit back can last only so long. Fury spends itself pretty quickly when there's no fury facing it. We could see in the mirror on the wall in front of us the crowd gathered at our backs. They continued trying to egg us on, but the beating subsided.

At the same time, we would learn later, the same thing was happening in the other stores. Yellow mustard was squeezed onto the head of one black male student in Kress's while the crowd hooted and laughed. Ketchup was poured down the shirt of another. Paul LaPrad, being white, attracted particularly brutal attention over at McClellan's. He was pulled off his stool, beaten and kicked by a group of young whites with the word "Chattanooga" written on their jackets—a reference to recent white-on-black attacks in that city that had followed a series of sit-ins there.

A television camera crew was at McClellan's, recording the scene as LaPrad's attackers spent themselves. It filmed Paul—bloody and bruised and silent—pulling himself back on his chair. When the footage aired that night on national television, it marked one of the earliest instances where Americans were shown firsthand the kind of anger and ugliness that the peaceful movement for civil rights was prompting in the South. Many viewers were sickened by what they saw. They would see more in the years to come.

We didn't sit there long before the police, conspicuous by their absence during the attacks, arrived. I didn't imagine they had come to arrest anyone for assault, and I was right. As the young men who had beaten us looked on and cheered, we were told that we were under arrest for "disorderly conduct."

IT WAS strange how I felt as a large, blue-shirted Nashville police officer stood over me and said without emotion, "You're under arrest." A lifetime of taboos from my parents rushed through my mind as the offi-

Bayard Rustin: A Builder of the Beloved Community

BY JOHN LEWIS

I FIRST SAW Bayard Rustin the summer of 1959 when he was speaking at the Institute for Nonviolent Resistance to Segregation at Spelman College. This was the summer before a group of us in Nashville began our own nonviolent resistance with the lunch-counter sit-ins. But it was not until 1963, when I became chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a founding chairman of the March on Washington, that I came to know and ultimately to admire Rustin.

Bayard was truly awesome. He was far more complicated as a person and an activist than any other civil rights leader I had known. A philosopher and sophisticated strategist, he had the capacity to analyze each situation objectively before reacting. Yet he had a strong and principled core. He was a brilliant organizer and a great showman, who was nevertheless content to help other leaders from behind the scenes. And he moved easily among grass-roots blacks, rich white Quakers, and everyone in between.

So imagine my surprise when I was asked to write about a children's biography of Rustin. I didn't believe that his life and his ideas could be written about in a way that young people would understand. Happily, James Haskins' *Bayard Rustin: Behind the Scenes of the Civil Rights Movement* (Hyperion Books for Children, 1997) proves me wrong. Haskins does full justice to Bayard's pivotal role in the March on Washington, but he doesn't stop there. Young readers will also hear about Rustin's Quaker childhood in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and his early experience with the many forms that bigotry can take. They'll hear how he adopted and practiced the Gandhian techniques of nonviolence, and how, in later life, he worked to help oppressed people all over the world, whether they were South African blacks suffering under apartheid or Cambodians being butchered by their own countrymen of the Khmer Rouge or Jews attempting to escape from Soviet Russia.

James Haskins has won the 1998 Coretta Scott King Award for this book, and he deserves it. To examine Rustin's life and work is to learn about virtually all of the major movements for social justice in the twentieth century. More important, Bayard's life will teach children a lesson that we cannot repeat too often—that all human beings deserve to be treated justly and that all oppression—even of one's enemies—must be opposed. As a bearer of that message, Bayard did more to create the beloved community than any other twentieth-century protest leader. □

cer gripped me by the bicep of my left arm. *Don't get in trouble. Stay away from Love Street. Only bad people go to jail.*

I could see my mother's face now. I could hear her voice: *Shameful. Disgraceful.*

But I felt no shame or disgrace. I didn't feel fear, either. As we were led out of the store single file, singing "We Shall Overcome," I felt exhilarated. As we passed through a cheering crowd gathered on the sidewalk outside, I felt high, almost giddy with joy. As we approached the open rear doors of a paddy wagon, I felt elated.

It was really happening, what I'd imagined for so long, the drama of good and evil playing itself out on the stage of the living, breathing world. It felt holy, and noble, and good.

That paddy wagon—crowded, cramped, dirty, with wire cage windows and doors—seemed like a chariot to me, a freedom vehicle carrying me across a threshold. I had wondered all along, as anyone would, how I would handle the reality of what I had studied and trained and prepared for for so long, what it would be like to actually face pain and rage and the power of uniformed authority.

Now I knew. Now I had crossed over, I had stepped through the door into total, unquestioning commitment. This wasn't just about that moment or that day. This was about forever. It was like deliverance. I had, as they say in Christian circles when a person accepts Jesus Christ into his heart, come home. But this was not Jesus I had come home to. It was the purity and utter certainty of the nonviolent path.

When we got to the city jail, the place was awash with a sense of jubilation. With all these friends, these familiar faces piling out of those wagons, it felt like a crusade, as if we were prisoners in a holy war. We sang as we were led into cells much too small for our numbers, which would total eighty-two by the end of the day. Cubicles built for three or four prisoners were jammed with fifteen to twenty of us each. The police could hardly keep up with the waves of students who were replacing one another back at those lunch counters. No sooner would one group be arrested than another would take its place. Once word spread back to the campuses about what was happening downtown, students arrived at First Baptist literally by the hundreds, angry, outraged, and ready to put their own bodies on the line.

Meanwhile, those of us in jail faced the issue of bail. The NCLC [Nashville Christian Leadership Council] had now raised more than $50,000 in bail money for us—a mind-boggling leap from the $87.50 they'd had in their treasury two weeks earlier. The police, wanting nothing more than to be rid of us, dropped the bail from the required $100 per person to $5 apiece. But it didn't matter. We weren't about to pay bail. We were in jail because of racial segregation in Nashville. Until that segregation was ended, we had nowhere else to be—we *belonged* nowhere else—but in those lunch-counter seats or behind bars.

We were happy to be in jail for this cause. We welcomed it. If the authorities chose to release us, fine. We would walk out freely and resume the task at hand. But we were not about to *pay* our way out. We were not about to cooperate in any way with a system that allowed the discrimination we were protesting. Instead, we sang. We sang and we chanted: "Jail without bail!"

It didn't take Nashville's powers-that-be long to realize it was fruitless to try forcing us to pay our way out. At eleven that night, after about six hours behind bars, we were released into the custody of the president of Fisk University, Dr. Stephen J. Wright. With him were reporters and about two hundred cheering students.

We were exultant. Those six hours had been an act of baptism for all involved. We felt as if we'd won a huge victory. We felt that way the next day when we saw newspapers trumpeting the violence and arrests with huge headlines. A rally was staged late that morning, Sunday morning, with more than a thousand students from across the city jammed into Fisk Memorial Chapel to hear President Wright wholeheartedly endorse what we were doing.

Dr. Wright announced that morning that he and many others in Nashville's established black community were with us. He was the first black college president in the country to take such a stand. We were euphoric.

The next day we went to court—the eighty-two who had been arrested, along with more than two thousand supporters. We marched as a group from First Baptist to the downtown Davidson County Courthouse. With us walked Z. A. Looby, the attorney. He, along with his partners, Avon Williams and Bob Lilliard, had offered to represent us, free of charge, of course.

What we faced that day was almost as predictable as what we had faced in those downtown lunchrooms. The judge, a man named Harris, began by announcing his intention to try us in groups of half a dozen or so each. Part of his aim was to demonstrate a conspiracy on our part. Looby immediately objected, making a motion that we be tried individually. Harris would have none of it. He hardly seemed to be listening.

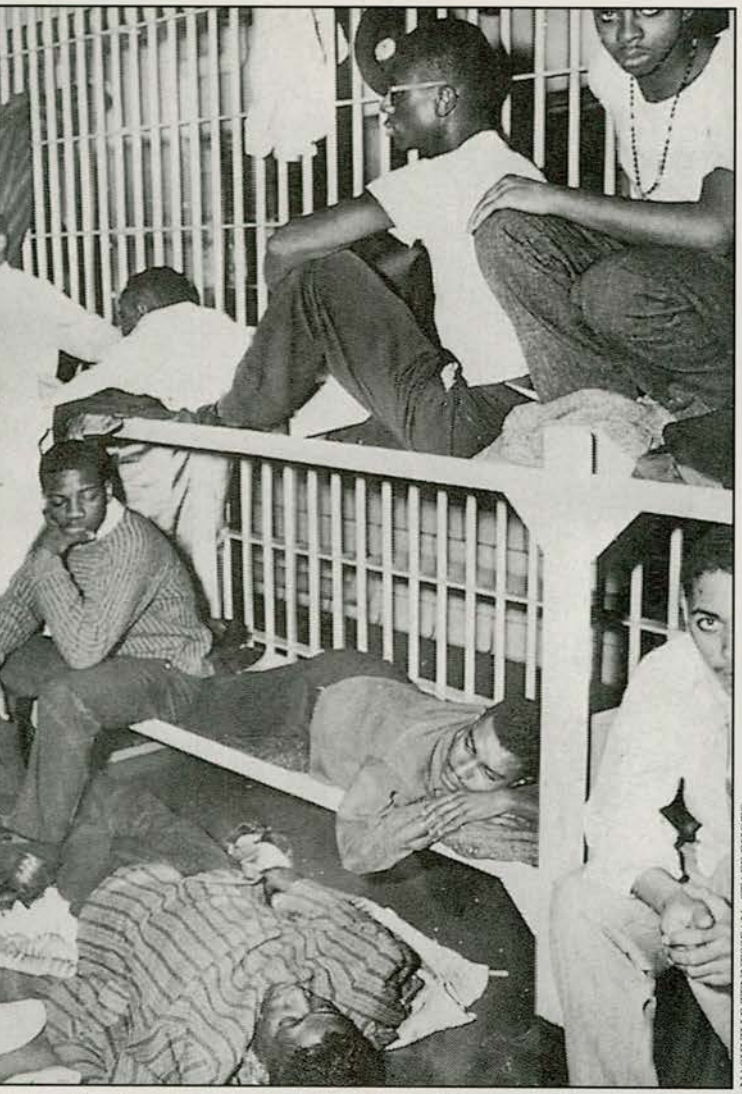
So we were tried group by group. Looby—dark-skinned, in his early sixties, a Trinidad native with a captivating West Indian accent—stood to make our case. He explained that far from disturbing any peace, we had been completely peaceful customers completely compliant with the laws, that it was the mob that had moved in and beaten us and had disturbed the peace. Not only did Harris appear not to listen, he actually turned his back on Looby, swung his chair around and faced the wall as our lawyer made his argument.

Finally Looby threw up his hands. "What's the *use!*" he said, cutting short his comments and returning to his seat.

The judge then found us all guilty. He gave us the option of paying a $50 fine each or serving thirty days in the county workhouse.

That's when Diane Nash stood and spoke for all of us.

"We feel that if we pay these fines," she said, "we would be contributing to and supporting the injustice and immoral practices that have been performed in the arrest and conviction of the defendants."



NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN, *STAFF PHOTO*

Student protestors in the Nashville city jail, February 1960: Cells designed to hold three or four prisoners were jammed with fifteen or twenty young people who had been protesting the segregated lunch counters.

This was big. This was historic. It wasn't just Nashville that was looking on. The whole nation was watching as we were led back to jail.

It seemed that almost every move the city made backfired. No one had ever had to deal with this situation before. There was no model, no map, no blueprint for the Nashville authorities to follow. They had to make their own mistakes, and they were making them. The sight of many of Nashville's—many of the *nation's*—finest young men and women being led off to jail was bad enough. But when the city followed through with its workhouse routine, sending these students out into the streets to shovel snow and pick up trash, it prompted outrage from all over the country. Telegrams of support arrived from Ralph Bunche, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Harry Belafonte.

The following day, March 3, the mayor of Nashville, Ben West, ordered our release. Like the city itself, he had a relatively progressive reputation on race. He seemed a pleasant enough man, always wearing a bow tie. You often heard the phrase "a friend of the Negro" used with his name—which could simply have meant he was not as openly hostile to blacks as many of his counterparts in other Southern cities. It did not necessarily mean he was ready to reach out and risk his job and his reputation to help.

What West did was name a biracial committee to study the situation of segregation in the city. He asked us to halt the sit-ins while the committee looked into the problem, and we agreed.

Nashville's department store lunch counters continued operating as always while the mayor's committee kept meeting. By the last week of the month, we decided we'd waited long enough. On the twenty-fifth, a Friday, more than a hundred of us marched from First Baptist to nine downtown stores, dramatizing our displeasure with the slow movement of the mayor's group. There were no arrests. When footage of that day's protest aired on national television, Tennessee governor Buford Ellington was irate. "These sit-ins," he told reporters, "are instigated and planned by and staged for the convenience of the Columbia Broadcasting System."

But there was no way the governor or the mayor or anyone else could complain that outsiders had anything to do with the stories being written almost daily by a young *Tennessean* reporter named David Halberstam. When we had first begun, he had been the only one covering us. This was his beat, and we always made sure he knew what we were doing. We realized from the beginning how important media coverage was. We knew we needed the press to get our message out, and early on this tall, skinny guy with his big brown eyeglasses *was* the press. The *Tennessean* was, by Southern standards, a moderate, even liberal newspaper, and Halberstam was allowed by his editors to cover us fairly and accurately.

No one could accuse David Halberstam of being an outside agitator. And no one could say outsiders had anything to do with the next stage of that spring's siege to desegregate Nashville—a black community boycott of all downtown stores.

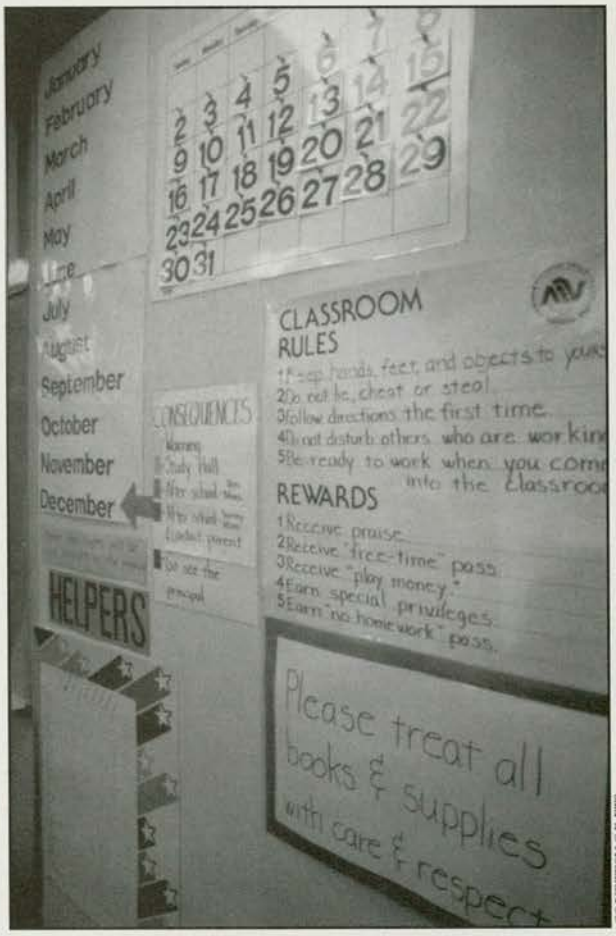
IT HAD begun quietly, almost invisibly, in late March. No one knew quite where it started, but it became organized and communicated through the churches. "Don't Buy Downtown" was the simple slogan, and it was amazingly effective. Estimates were that black Nashville spent as much as $60 million a year in the city, a figure which meant even more to downtown merchants who had seen many of their white customers move to the suburbs in recent years and were depending increasingly on the black buyers who remained.

By the beginning of April, those stores stood virtually empty. One leader at a local black Baptist church asked every person in the congregation who had not spent a penny downtown in the previous two weeks to stand. Everyone in the room rose.

White people, too, were staying away. Some were wary of the violence and disturbances caused by the sit-ins. Others joined the boycott as a sign of support for our cause. A few white women went down to their favorite Nashville stores and made a visible show of turning in their credit cards as their own act of protest.

(Continued on page 46)

BEYOND ASSUMPTIONS



COURTESY OF ETS

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE is an overwhelming concern for many of us—and not only because of the deadly violence that occasionally breaks out. For too many students and teachers, a daily, low-level nastiness and disorder turn schools from communities into obstacle courses or even combat zones. Of course, there are plenty of reports and position papers seeking to analyze and interpret the problem and propose solutions. It's surprising, then, that so much of what we believe about disorder in the schools—both effects and remedies—is based on untested assumptions.

That's where "Order in the Classroom: Violence, Discipline, and Student Achievement," a recent report from the Educational Testing Service, written by Paul E. Barton, Richard J. Coley, and Harold Wenglinsky, breaks new ground. In addition to discussing the prevalence of school disorder and talking about what policymakers are trying to do about the problem, it tests some of the assumptions about what works using longitudinal student data and information about policies in the schools the students attended. Some of the conclusions confirm what we already know, but others are a big surprise. And the report presents, for the first time, evidence supporting something that teachers have always known in their bones is true: the link between school disorder and student achievement.

The data that statistician Harold Wenglinsky uses come from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), a nationally representative sample of twenty-five thousand eighth-graders. NELS includes demographic information and information about students' disciplinary records, as well as scores from tests in mathematics, reading, social science, and science. At the same time as the student data were gathered, teachers and principals were questioned about school disciplinary policies and school size. NELS followed these students, surveying and testing them again in 1990 when they were sophomores and in 1992 in their senior year in high school, so Wenglinsky is able to examine the relationship between student misbehavior, school policies, and student achievement. The study compares the delinquency and achievement levels of students in schools that employed a variety of disciplinary policies, from zero tolerance of gang activity to restricting student movements during the school day. In looking at the data, one needs to keep in mind that they do not include twelfth-graders who dropped out or transferred to other schools. This reduces the numbers by nearly one-half (from 25,000 to 13,626). As a result, Wenglinsky notes, the group is somewhat atypical, and its members were probably less likely to be rule-breakers.

Student Delinquency

The data revealed two levels of "delinquency" (the word consistently used in the report). Relatively large numbers of students reported that they came late to class (73 percent), got "into trouble for breaking school rules" (42 percent), and cut or skipped class (34 percent). But relatively few broke rules that subjected them to severe penalties like out-of-school suspension (5 percent) or transfer for disciplinary reasons (1 percent). And students themselves distinguished between misbehavior they considered more or less acceptable and behavior that was beyond the pale: A relatively large number (29 percent) said that it was "sometimes" or "often" okay to be late to class or copy homework; 16 percent said the same thing about talking back to a teacher; but only 1 percent considered it acceptable to steal school property, use drugs in school, or "abuse" teachers.

Wenglinsky found considerable uniformity among

Table 1:
School Disciplinary Policies—Most Common Punishment

Offense	*Modal Punishment*	*Students in Schools That Invoke This Punishment*
Cheating—1st time	Detention	79%
Cheating—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	58
Skipping class—1st time	Detention	55
Skipping class—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	59
Skipping school—1st time	In-school suspension	60
Skipping school—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	65
Injuring student—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	82
Injuring student—2nd time	Expulsion	60
Alcohol possession—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	79
Alcohol possession—2nd time	Expulsion	60
Drug possession—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	73
Drug possession—2nd time	Expulsion	76
Drug sale—1st time	Expulsion	72
Drug sale—2nd time	Expulsion	91
Weapons possession—1st time	Expulsion	64
Weapons possession—2nd time	Expulsion	90
Alcohol use in school—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	78
Alcohol use in school—2nd time	Expulsion	69
Drug use in school—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	72
Drug use in school—2nd time	Expulsion	78
Smoking in school—1st time	In-school suspension	47
Smoking in school—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	71
Verbal abuse of teachers—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	66
Verbal abuse of teachers—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	65
Injuring teachers—1st time	Expulsion	80
Injuring teachers—2nd time	Expulsion	92
Theft of school property—1st time	Out-of-school suspension	75
Theft of school property—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	62
Class disturbance—1st time	Detention	67
Class disturbance—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	68
Profanity—1st time	Detention	58
Profanity—2nd time	Out-of-school suspension	71

N=13,626

Source: Harold Wenglinsky, unpublished tabulations derived from National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88)

the security measures schools employed: Ninety-eight percent required visitors to sign in; 91 percent had a dress code forbidding what might be gang-related attire; 83 percent required hall passes; 78 percent forbade students to leave school during the day; and 78 percent banned gangs from school. There was also a relatively high degree of agreement about punishment for serious offenses. For example, 90 percent of schools expelled a student for second-time offenses in these areas: selling drugs, bringing a weapon to school, injuring a teacher, or injuring a student. And 80 percent gave out-of-school suspensions to students who injured another student or possessed or used alcohol (see Table 1).

Correlations Between Student Delinquency and Other Factors

For the purposes of his study, Wenglinsky divided discipline problems into three categories: drug offenses (use of marijuana or cocaine and binge drinking); nonserious offenses (for example, skipping class and getting "into trouble"); and serious offenses (ones that led, for example, to in- or out-of-school suspension, transfer for disciplinary reasons, or arrest).

Wenglinsky looked at student achievement and disciplinary records in eighth, tenth, and twelfth grades and correlated this information with school disciplinary policies (see Table 2). He found that twelfth-graders were more likely to be guilty of drug offenses if they had had any kind of disciplinary problems in tenth grade. There was also a positive correlation between drug offenses and being male. But Wenglinsky found that twelfth-graders who were members of minority groups were less likely than nonminority classmates to be guilty of drug offenses. And the likelihood decreased for all students if they attended schools with severe penalties for drug offenses. Wenglinsky found no correlation between socioeconomic status and drug offenses. In other words, rich, poor, and middle-class twelfth-graders in the study were equally likely (or unlikely) to be guilty of drug offenses.

When Wenglinsky looked at nonserious offenses among twelfth-graders, he again found that kids were more likely to be guilty of them if they had a history of rule-breaking in tenth grade and if they were boys. There was a greater likelihood that minority students would be guilty of nonserious offenses, but here socioeconomic status also came into play: Affluent students were more likely to commit nonserious offenses than other students.

In terms of school policies, students in schools with security arrangements such as hall passes and a ban on leaving school during the day were less likely to commit nonserious offenses. However, they were more likely to commit this type of offense if their school had a zero tolerance policy in regard to gangs.

With serious offenses, there was again a correlation between a history of rule-breaking and being a boy. Socioeconomic status was again a factor, but this time Wenglinsky found that there was also a greater likelihood that students of lower socioeconomic status would commit serious offenses. However, these offenses were likely to be less of a problem in schools with discipline codes that penalized them severely.

Table 2:
Relationship Between School Policies and School Delinquency

	Drug Offenses	Nonserious Offenses	Serious Offenses
School policies			
Punishment severity	–	–	–
Security		–	
School uniforms			
Gang Ban		+	
School Size		+	
Student characteristics			
SES		+	–
Prior delinquency	+	+	+
Minority	–	+	
Male	+	+	+

N=13,626

Source: Wenglinsky, unpublished tabulations derived from NELS:88

Delinquency and Achievement

The study's findings also suggest that reducing the levels of rule-breaking will result in higher student achievement. As Table 3 shows, lower levels of student delinquency were associated with higher levels of achievement in ten out of twelve cases. Serious and nonserious offenses were negatively associated with gains in achievement between eighth and twelfth grades in all four subject areas tested—mathematics, reading, social science, and science. Drug offenses were negatively associated with achievement gains in two of the four areas—mathematics and science—but not with social science and reading. The effect sizes indicated in the table translate, roughly, into losses of 3 to 4 percentiles.

Table 3:
Relationship Between Twelfth-grade Delinquency and Academic Achievement Gains Between Tenth and Twelfth Grades

Offense	Mathematics Achievement	Reading Achievement	Social Science Achievement	Science Achievement
Drugs	–			–
Nonserious	–	–	–	–
Serious	–	–	–	–
Total effect size	.146	.155	.111	.165

N=13,626

Source: Wenglinsky, unpublished tabulations derived from NELS:88

Policy Implications

Wenglinsky's findings support the assumptions behind some policies for improving order in the classroom, but they call others into question:

- Security measures, especially those that restrict student movement, are apparently effective in reducing levels of nonserious offenses. As Wenglinsky observes, "This should not be surprising, given that most of these offenses involve students not being where they should be (late for or cutting class) and that security measures limit student opportunities to misbehave by controlling their movements during the school day."
- Security measures do not seem to have any effect on more serious offenses, such as drugs and violence, "suggesting that if students are inclined to engage in these behaviors, they can evade most security measures."
- Tough discipline codes apparently reduce serious offenses, and schools should take advantange of this fact: "A majority of schools have strict policies in place for serious offenses. A significant minority, however, do not. This analysis indicates that these less strict schools suffer from high levels of serious offenses and drug offenses and that to reduce these levels such schools need to adopt stricter policies."
- School order is closely tied to student achievement: "The consequence of student disorder is not merely more disorder; disorder also erodes the learning environment for all students as indicated by lower student achievement gains.... This finding suggests that disciplinary policy is not a side issue, distracting educators from more academic goals; rather, a sound disciplinary policy is a prerequisite for a sound academic policy."
- The study found no correlation between school uniforms and student behavior. So although school uniforms might be useful in creating school solidarity or minimizing socioeconomic differences among students, they cannot be counted on to reduce student misbehavior or delinquency.
- A policy of zero tolerance toward gangs does not seem to be effective. In the drug and serious offense categories, schools with a zero tolerance policy toward gangs did not have levels of delinquency significantly different from schools that did not have such a policy, and in the nonserious offense category, schools with the anti-gang policy had higher levels of delinquency. It should be noted that this finding does not include other zero tolerance policies.
- Finally, the notion that small schools reduce delinquency was only partially supported. Attending smaller schools, Wenglinsky found, can reduce nonserious offenses but not serious offenses or drug and alcohol use.—*Editor* □

Copies of the full report can be ordered for $10.50 from Policy Information Center, Mail Stop 04-R, ETS, Rosedale Rd., Princeton, NJ 08541-0001; tel. (609) 734-5694; or via e-mail (pic@ets.org).

Room To Learn

By Greg Michie

"Okay, who can tell me what a bill is?"

According to the clock above the door, sixth period had already been under way for five minutes, but my class of eighth-graders was still milling about, looking for materials, finishing up hallway conversations. I stood between them and a chalkboard on which I had written, "How a bill becomes a law."

"Ervin, how about it? What's a bill?"

Ervin turned around in his chair. "A what?"

"A bill."

"A bill?"

"Yeah, a bill."

"Like a phone bill?" Ervin offered jokingly.

"Not exactly," I said, willing to play along. "A different kind of bill."

"A cable bill?" asked LaRhonda with a knowing smile.

"Come on, you know what I mean. Another whole use of the word *bill*."

"It's a name," said Tasha. "A white name. You know how white boys have them real short names? Bill, Frank, Tom—"

"Jim," Raynard called out.

"Jack," said someone else.

"Bob!"

"George Bush!"

"Yeah!" Tasha said. "They got them boring names!"

"Okay, okay. I get the point," I said. "I have one myself. But what I want to know is how the word *bill* relates to how laws are made. Remember what we started talking about yesterday?"

"Oooh, Mr. Michie! Mr. Michie!" Tobias' hand shot up like a flare. An excitable kid who was at times hot-tempered, Tobias loved to distract me from my planned activities. He'd wait just long enough for me to pick up steam on a topic and then quickly figure out how he could best derail the train.

"Tobias?"

"You know what Ms. Tucker did today?" Tobias asked me.

"Oooh, yeah," Tasha hissed. "That lady make me sick."

"She bugged out," added Raynard.

"Wait," I said. "Does this have anything to do with what we're talking about?"

"Yeah, she got a husband named Bill," a voice from the back of the class piped in.

"Nah, it don't really have nothin' to do wit' it," admitted Tobias, "but look at what she done—"

"You know how we can't eat or drink or chew gum or nothin' in class, right?" Tasha inserted.

"Well, today she was eating a big cream doughnut right in front of us," said Tobias, continuing the story. "And drinking a 16-ounce pop—a diet Dr. Pepper—right there in the class! Now, that ain't right, Mr. Michie. You know that ain't right."

Yeah, I knew it. It wasn't right. But it was beside the point, at least at the moment. "Look," I said. "I'm trying to help you guys get ready to take this Constitution test. And I don't think there're gonna be any questions on there about Ms. Tucker, diet Dr. Pepper, or cream doughnuts."

Greg Michie teaches seventh and eighth-graders at Seward Elementary School in Chicago. This article is drawn from his forthcoming book, Holler If You Hear Me: The Education of a Teacher and His Students, *copyright 1999 by Teachers College Press, and is reprinted with the publisher's permission. Some of the names in the article have been changed.*

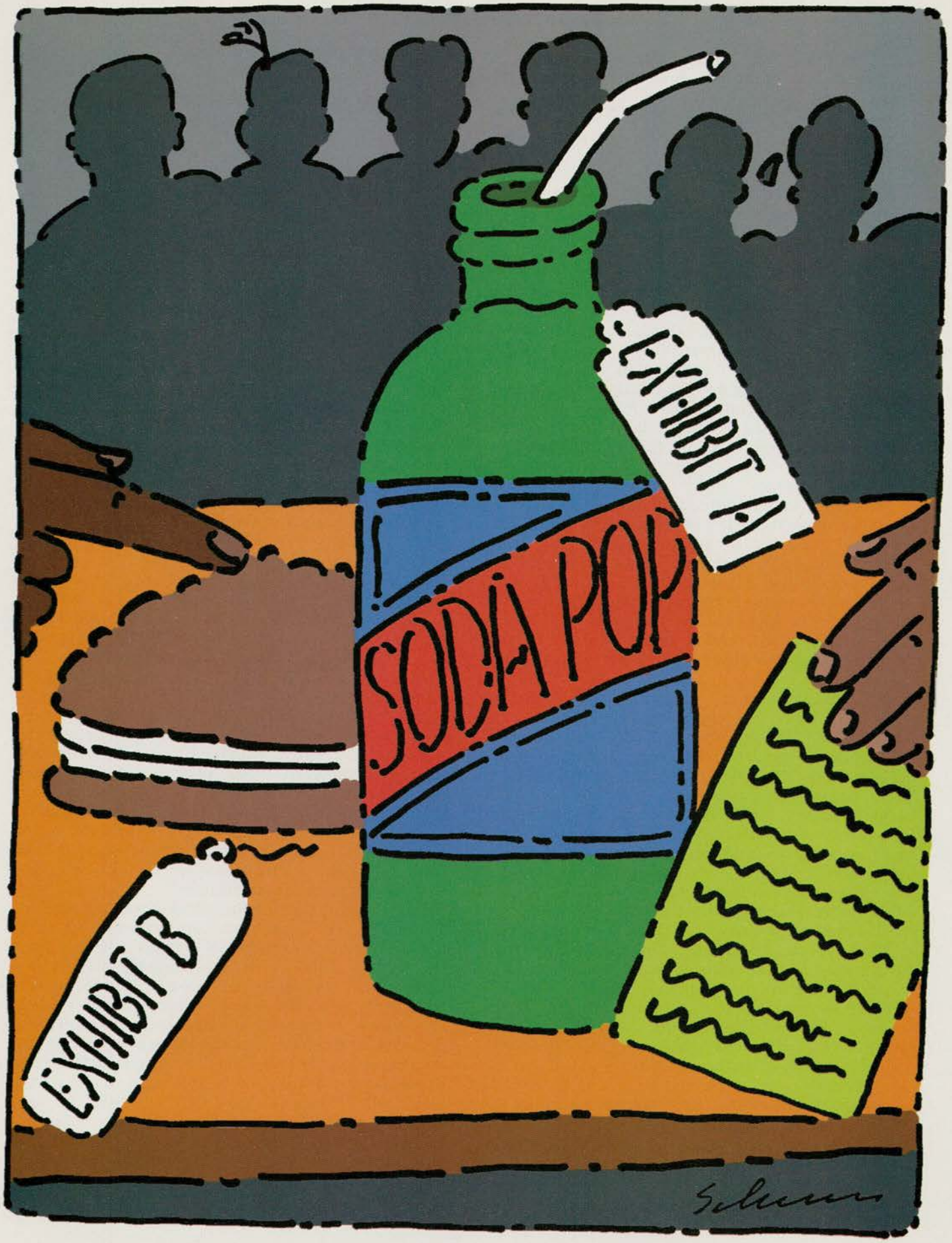


EXHIBIT A
SODA POP
EXHIBIT B

"But y'all ain't fair," added LaRhonda. "Y'all can drink whenever y'all want to and we gotta be up in here all sweatin' and hot."

"Y'all?" I shot back. "What do you mean, *'y'all'*?"

"I mean y'all," LaRhonda said. "Y'all teachers. You know—you all?"

"And how many times have you seen me drinking anything in class?" I asked, trying to separate myself from the ranks of the enemy.

"But you eat them teacher lunches, don't you?"

Busted. I looked over to my right. Vincent's pudgy body was hanging halfway out the window. "Vincent!" I yelled out. He pulled his shoulders and head back in and looked at me as if he had no idea why I'd called his name. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"Nah, I thought I heard somebody outside sayin' my name," Vincent answered.

"It was probably Bill," said another voice.

"Could you sit back down, please?" I asked. Vincent hesitated. "Vincent, sit down! C'mon, I'm not playing! Let's go!" I was raising my voice again. Which meant I feared I was losing control again. It was nothing new. Sometimes it seemed like that's all my first year in the classroom had been—one long fight for control.

* * * *

I grew up in a middle-class family in Charlotte, North Carolina, the oldest of three children. As a kid, I collected baseball cards and memorized lyrics to Partridge Family records. At school I was fascinated with dinosaurs and was co-captain of the crossing guards. I spent summer nights in the backyard playing neighborhood games of Kick-the-Can, and, when I was lucky, got to stay up late to watch Johnny Carson. My childhood, in many ways, was typical, white-bread Americana.

But there were differences. Charlotte in the early '70s was a place of court-ordered desegregation but also a place of tentative reconciliation between blacks and whites. I spent my elementary school years in a neighborhood that, due to a sudden outbreak of white flight, became integrated almost overnight. I walked to school and played ball with as many blacks as whites, had plenty of friends of both races, and sang gospel music in a biracial Presbyterian church from the age of five. Because of these early experiences, I considered myself somewhat well-informed on issues of race and class—more so at least than the average white person. Then I came to Chicago.

What I found, at least on first impression, was more separation and racial mistrust than I remembered ever experiencing in the "backward" South. Although Chicago was certainly one of the nation's most diverse cities, it was also arguably the most segregated. In many sections of the city, ethnic and color lines clearly marked one neighborhood from the next. Poverty seemed both more severe and more widespread than anything I'd seen before. So it was not surprising that many of the city's public grammar schools were essentially single-race institutions, with almost all of their students coming from poor or working-class families.

I began subbing in the fall of 1990 at Ralph Ellison Educational and Vocational Guidance Center—a euphemistic mouthful that really meant *School for Seventh and Eighth-Graders Who'd Been Booted Out Someplace Else.* My first day there I was assigned to a rowdy but jovial group of eighth-graders who, for the first hour or so, didn't even seem to notice there was an adult in the room. They calmed down only when I offhandedly mentioned that I'd gone to college with Michael Jordan. It didn't matter to them that I hadn't actually known him. They wanted to know the details of every occasion we had even crossed paths. After class, I heard some of them in the hall telling friends, "Hey, that man know Michael Jordan." In subsequent years I would use the MJ connection often as a last-ditch means of regaining control of a classroom. It never failed and even took on a life of its own. Once a kid at the park tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Hey, did you really used to play on the same team with Michael Jordan?"

I didn't think I had turned in a particularly Jordan-like performance that first day at Ellison, but apparently getting subs to come there wasn't easy. When the principal saw that I wasn't making a mad dash for the exit at the end of the day, she asked if I'd like to return to sub again the following morning. I said I would. The same thing happened the next day and the next, until soon I became a familiar face at the school.

In early November, Ellison's reading lab teacher abruptly resigned. A matronly, kind-hearted Polish woman of about fifty, she had taught for years at a local Catholic school before deciding the previous summer that she needed a fresh challenge. The challenge she chose was the Chicago Public Schools, and she regretted it almost immediately. The kids at Ellison ran her over like a steamroller on wet asphalt. It was the first time I'd seen someone's will totally broken by experiences with children. It wouldn't be the last.

That afternoon, the principal asked if I'd be interested in taking over the reading lab. She felt I'd begun to develop a rapport with the kids and that my stepping in would be an easier transition than bringing in someone unfamiliar. I wondered aloud if there was a set curriculum for the class—all I'd seen the kids bringing out of there were spelling lists. She explained that the intent of the course was to provide extra practice in reading and to build comprehension skills. Since many of Ellison's students were below grade-level in reading—whatever that meant—the lab was intended to serve as a place for remediation.

I didn't know the first thing about teaching reading. Thinking back on my own early experiences with books, I couldn't even begin to piece together how the process worked. I remembered my parents and grandmother reading to me, I remembered loving certain books, and then—poof!—I remembered reading on my own. It seemed more like magic than anything else. Yet as I mulled over the thought of having my own classroom, I knew I didn't have any tricks up my sleeve. Because I had done no education coursework, I would still be paid as a day-to-day substitute. I'd have all the responsibilities of a fully certified teacher for $54 a day. But there were also obvious advantages—I'd have steady work, I'd have my own space, and I'd get more of a feel for what it was really like to be a teacher. The thought of it was scary, but I'd been saying I wanted to teach, and here was a chance to do it

staring me right in the face. I decided to give it a shot.

The principal allowed me one day to prepare. I arrived early that Monday to rummage through the lab's available resources. Opening the doors of a large metal supply cabinet, I peered inside, hoping, I suppose, to stumble upon some kind of lesson-plan jackpot. Instead, it looked and smelled more like a musty attic, stuffed with outdated equipment, aging materials, and other assorted junk. One shelf was full of the clunky tape recorders and headache-inducing plastic headphones I remembered from the language labs of my youth. On a higher shelf were—literally—hundreds of purple ditto masters and worksheets. The copyright date at the bottom of the pages I examined read "1972." Above those was a boxed set of the Mastery Learning series, a reading program I'd heard rode a brief wave of popularity in the mid-seventies before dying out just as quickly. Other odds and ends lay about randomly: an old sweater, a broken trophy, a whistle, a rolled-up American flag. Disappointed, I closed the cabinet's doors and decided to go to Plan B: I would plunge in and rely on instinct, trusting it to carry me through until I came up with something better.

The next day I had the students in my lab classes complete a questionnaire that covered a wide range of home, community, and school-related topics. Many wrote that they disliked, even hated, to read. To the question, "What kinds of things do you most enjoy reading?" many replied: "Nothing." I decided that my initial goal would be to try to spark the kids' interest in reading. I knew this would be nearly impossible to accomplish with moldy dittos or workbook pages, so I brought in as many outside sources as I could. We read excerpts from Malcolm X's autobiography and Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land.* We read up on African Americans of note, from Marcus Garvey to Mary McLeod Bethune to Charles Drew. We explicated poems of Gwendolyn Brooks and Langston Hughes alongside rap songs by Boogie Down Productions and A Tribe Called Quest. We studied the censorship controversy then surrounding the rap group 2 Live Crew and used that as a starting point for examining the Bill of Rights and how it affected the kids' lives. Of course, those were the good days. Good days occurred maybe once a week.

The rest of the time, I was fighting for survival. Of the five classes that came to me each day, none was easy, but one eighth-grade group had become a particular problem. I found the students to be bright and energetic; they seemed to genuinely like me. But I often found it impossible to maintain control of the classroom. While most of their other teachers ran extremely tight ships, I wanted my classes to be relaxed, open forums. But it usually only took about ten minutes for relaxed and open to turn into wild and loose. The sudden freedom I dumped at the kids' feet proved too much to handle. They didn't know what to do with it, and I failed to give them much guidance. On several occasions, things had gone so completely awry that I just sat down at my desk, frustrated and angry, and waited for the storm to pass. Sometimes it did.

I never broke down and cried in front of those students, though there was a time or two when I came

close. I fought back the tears because I knew crying would only make my job harder—it would make me appear weaker in their eyes, and that was the last thing I needed. Some of the kids already considered me a poor excuse for a man. One day I had come to school with a bandage on my hand. When I began writing on the board, a student noticed.

"What happened to your hand, Mr. Mitchell?" Several of the kids had settled on the more familiar "Mitchell" as the preferred pronunciation of my name.

I stopped writing and showed the bandage to the group. "Oh, I broke a glass last night washing dishes. Just cut it a little bit."

"Washing dishes?" one of the male students asked incredulously. "Why you washing dishes? Ain't you got a woman to do that?" This led to a period-long discussion of gender roles and relationships, but despite my attempts at feminist rhetoric, few of the guys budged in their positions. As they were leaving, one kid just looked at me and shook his head. "Washing dishes," he kept repeating with disgust. "Washing dishes."

The class wanted me to take a stronger hold, to become more authoritarian. That was the style of discipline many of them were used to, and they respected it. It felt safe. Raynard, a tall and witty kid who was one of the group's natural leaders, often lingered after class to serve as my mentor. He could tell I was floundering and had a sincere desire to help. "You gotta be meaner, Mr. Michie," he would say. Then, as if he was no longer one of them, he would add, "That's what

these kids understand." I knew what Raynard meant, and sometimes I'd act on his advice. I'd get so fed up with the class' behavior that I'd blow up on them and then make them do busywork for a couple of days. They'd sit silently, mindlessly copying down words from the dictionary, and I'd play overseer at my desk, my power restored. But inside I was hating it, and I knew there had to be some middle ground, a better way.

* * * *

So there I stood, trying to get through my introductory remarks on "How a bill becomes a law." It was the third week of May. An oscillating fan buzzed beside me, ineffective in the stifling air. As Vincent finally made his way from the window back to his seat, Tammy stood up and turned to face Carlton, who was sitting behind her. "Boy, you better give me back my pen!" Tammy said with a snake-like roll of her neck.

"Tammy—"

"I want my pen back!"

"Carlton, could you give her the pen back?"

"I ain't take no pen! She musta lost it."

"All right," I said. "Tammy, how about if you sit down, and we'll figure out what happened to your pen after class?"

Amazingly, Tammy obeyed. "But I better have my pen back 'fore we leave up outta here or I'mo pop that boy in his lip!" Tammy had once threatened to pop me in the lip also, so I knew how Carlton was feeling.

"Okay—" I was momentarily at a complete loss as to what I'd been talking about. "Where were we?"

Tobias again raised his hand.

"Does this have to do with how a bill becomes a law?"

"Kinda," Tobias answered.

"What do you mean, 'kinda'?" I was irritated; we were getting off track. I could tell I was about to lose the kids, if I hadn't already.

"Look, Mr. Michie, I think this is what we oughta do," Tobias explained. "The teachers around here, they not being fair, right? They telling us we can't bring food in the school, but yet and still they eating and drinking in class, right? Well, this is what I think we oughta do. We oughta put this school on trial. The students versus Ellison. We oughta hold a trial right here and charge them with unfair rules."

It was as if the idea had an electric current running through it. The entire room was spontaneously energized. Students who seconds earlier were lifelessly slumped over their desks were now out of their seats and animated. Within minutes the class had agreed on the proposal, decided on a case to try, and begun to assign roles. I folded up my notes and marveled as they excitedly worked out the details. The plan was to put the school administration and teachers on trial for what the students considered unfair double standards: Despite a school rule forbidding food or drinks in class, several teachers apparently thought they were above the law. In addition, the kids noted that teachers were served different, higher-quality lunches than the students. They wanted the rules changed to allow students to bring food, candy, and pop into the building.

I loved the idea. Throughout the year I'd talked with

the kids about the importance of speaking up intelligently about matters that concerned them. Of course, I'd had in mind some of the larger problems that affected them—discrimination, police brutality, erratic city services. Equal access to pop and cream doughnuts didn't seem quite as noble a cause, but to the kids, the bottom-line issue was essentially the same: unfair treatment.

After spending a few days discussing courtroom roles and procedure, preparing arguments, and arranging testimony, we were ready for our day in court. Seven judges—all students—and a small gallery looked on somberly as Marvin, the first witness, was sworn in by placing his right hand on a dictionary. Nathan, a playful and gangly teen who was to serve as the students' lawyer, got the proceedings started.

Nathan: I heard that some teachers be eating and drinking in the classroom. Is that true?

Marvin: Yep.

Nathan: Well what do you feel about that?

Marvin: I think they should let the kids bring it, too.

Nathan: Thank you, sir.

It was a brief interrogation, but then again we were just getting started. It took most kids a few minutes to warm up. But it didn't take Tobias any time. Though he had originally wanted to play the role of the prose-

cutor and had lobbied for the part, he lost out in a class vote to the more popular Nathan. Now, as the defense attorney for "the other side"—the administration—Tobias vaulted from his chair and hit the ground running.

TOBIAS: Isn't it true that every day in the lunchroom, you eat the school food?

MARVIN: Yeah.

TOBIAS: Then why should the students be allowed to bring candy and stuff when you eat the food?

MARVIN: 'Cause. . . . well, not food but we should be able to bring pop.

TOBIAS: Don't they serve you milk?

MARVIN: Yeah. So?

TOBIAS: What's the matter with the milk?

MARVIN: It's spoilt.

TOBIAS: So you're saying every day when you go downstairs to eat lunch the milk be spoiled—every time?

MARVIN: Not every time. Sometimes.

TOBIAS: And when the milk is spoiled, have you ever tried to make an effort to go back and get another one?

MARVIN: No.

TOBIAS: No more questions, your honor.

As Tobias walked back to his seat, I sensed a shared thought running through the mind of every kid in the room: This thing was serious! Tobias had destroyed the students' first witness, and the determined look in his eyes said it was no fluke. The students looked to Nathan, hoping he was up to the challenge. Nathan called the next witness. It was Carlton, a slightly built, rambunctious child who wore a patch over his right eye.

NATHAN: Carlton, do teachers drink in the classroom?

CARLTON: Yes.

NATHAN: What do you think about that?

CARLTON: That's wrong. Students should have the right to eat and drink just like the teachers.

Mindful of Tobias's previous attack, Nathan decided to proceed by confronting head-on the issue of students willfully eating the school's food.

NATHAN: Do you eat the food in the lunchroom?

CARLTON: The only thing I eat is the nuggets and the pizza.

NATHAN: Ain't it nasty?

CARLTON: Not the nuggets and pizza, but the rest of the stuff taste like dog food.

NATHAN: Don't the teachers have better lunches than you all?

CARLTON: Yes, they have roast beef sandwiches and other stuff.

NATHAN: Well, I think we should be able to bring food if we want. What do you think—

TOBIAS: Objection! The lawyer is not on the stand here.

Tobias recognized that Nathan was making arguments and leading his witness. The objection sustained, Tobias took over the questioning a few minutes later, walking in slow circles around the witness chair.

TOBIAS: Is it true that you've brought chips and candy in the school?

CARLTON: Yes, we can bring chips and candy in some classes.

TOBIAS: So that's true that you can bring chips and candy in the school?

CARLTON: Yes, in some classes. But you can't bring pops.

TOBIAS: Have you ever brought pops in the school?

CARLTON: Yes.

TOBIAS: Even though you were not supposed to, but you did?

CARLTON: Yes.

TOBIAS: No further questions, your honor.

Tobias was ripping apart witnesses like they were flimsy paper dolls. The next in line to testify for the students was Tianna Johnson, an outspoken and expressive girl whose comments were always eagerly anticipated by the others. I wondered if she could save the day.

NATHAN: Ain't it right that everybody should be treated equal in the school?

TIANNA: Yes, it is. Teachers be drinkin' pops, and I don't think it's right, because if we can't drink pops, why should the teachers?

NATHAN: Yeah, true. And don't it be hot in those classrooms?

TIANNA: Yes. It be so hot Ms. Sanders make me stand in the corner, 'cause I fall asleep.

NATHAN: So don't you think we should have some pops in there?

TIANNA: Yes, 'cause it be too hot in those classrooms.

Tobias knew Tianna would be a tough witness. He approached her cautiously and waited a few seconds before addressing her.

TOBIAS: Miss Johnson, you said teachers were allowed to bring pops in the school. Wouldn't you think they were a little more responsible than the students were?

TIANNA: No I do not. 'Cause, see, we know how to drink our pops just like they do.

TOBIAS: All right. Miss Johnson, you say you were sleeping in the classroom?

TIANNA: No, I had my head down on the desk, but this don't have nothin' to do with the pops—

TOBIAS: No, no. You said Ms. Sanders made you stand

up in the classroom because you were asleep.

TIANNA: But this don't have nothin' to do with the pops. I'm up here—

TOBIAS: Answer the question, Miss Johnson. You said she made you stand up because you were sleeping in the classroom. Is that true?

TIANNA: I said it didn't have nothin' to do with it.

TOBIAS: Your honor, would you make her answer the question?

STUDENT JUDGE: Answer the question.

TOBIAS: Were you sleeping in the classroom?

TIANNA: Yes.

TOBIAS: Well, how can you be responsible when you come in the classroom and you go to sleep?

TIANNA: I don't be asleep, I had my head down!

TOBIAS: No further questions, your honor.

TIANNA: Wait! Wait a minute!

STUDENT JUDGE: Order! Order in the court!

I then testified as a witness for the administration. I was fully on the kids' side, but I tried to play my part with conviction. Keeping a straight face wasn't easy. "We strive to make our food meet two standards," I said. "Delicious and nutritious!" The students groaned. Most of the food kids brought in, I alleged, was junk. Nathan objected: "The kids say the cafeteria food is rotten! It's no good!" The highlight of the final witness, Shaundra's, testimony was when she claimed she had never brought food into the school. Nathan broke out laughing. "Ooooh-eeeeee," he said, "you tellin' a story." Tobias objected, saying Nathan was putting words in the witness's mouth. Cedric, who was serving as chief judge, knew he had to rule on the objection but couldn't remember the correct terminology. "Enclosed!" he shouted. The entire class burst into laughter. Cedric searched his brain some more. "Exclosed!" Kids were falling out of their seats, rolling on the floor. The judge next to Cedric whispered something to him. "Overruled, I mean!" Cedric bellowed, smacking the desk with a makeshift gavel. "Overruled!"

When all the testimony had been completed, the seven judges were granted time to make their decisions. We had agreed that, as with the Supreme Court, majority would rule. Though I had hoped the students' side would emerge victorious, after witnessing the proceedings, there was no question in my mind who had won. But I wondered if the kids saw it the same way. And even if they did, would they vote with their consciences or their stomachs? A short while later, the judges informed us that their opinions were ready to be delivered. Everyone took a seat. One at a time, the judges stood and read their opinions. The final tally was 6-1 in favor of the administration. Tobias's skill at discrediting witnesses and laying bare lame arguments had stolen the show. Still, some in the class weren't pleased.

"See, man," yelled Carlton. "This here fixin' to help us in the future for havin' pops and stuff and y'all mess it up!"

Lonnie, a judge who had just read his opinion, responded tersely: "Hey, y'all didn't have y'all's stuff together!" They might not have admitted it at the time, but I think everyone in the class knew Lonnie was right.

* * * *

That summer, thinking back on what I had accomplished over the course of my first year in the classroom, I held the trial up as the highlight of my teaching, a shining moment among dozens of dark days. It was the one experience I could point to with some sense of certainty and say, "There. That's how I think school should be." Yet it was clear that my involvement in the trial's conception, planning, and execution was only peripheral. Not that my presence wasn't important. I was there to facilitate, to guide, to keep things on track—but the kids' were the real decision makers, from the genesis of the idea all the way through to its completion. It was a powerful realization for me.

From the beginning, I had hoped to create an "open" classroom where kids' ideas were sought out and valued. But questions of discipline soon demanded the bulk of my energy and attention. Other teachers at Ellison, sensing my struggle, repeatedly told me that I was too soft, that I gave the kids too much freedom, that I should clamp down, get tough. After all, they would say, that's the way we handle things, and the same kids who raise holy hell in your class don't say a word in ours. Gradually their words began to take hold and, before I knew it, the quest for control became my primary focus. I began classifying days as good or bad solely in relation to how quiet and obedient the class had been. Other concerns, such as whether the kids had learned anything of value, lessened in importance. On the worst days, they didn't matter at all.

It was an easy trap to fall into. I became so obsessed with establishing control in the classroom that once I did—fragile as that control seemed—I was afraid to let go. I began to feel that I always had to be the center of attention, the imparter of knowledge, the setter of agendas and bounds. But the positive energy that sparked the trial reminded me that it doesn't have to be that way. Letting go doesn't have to mean a loss of control. It is possible—even desirable—to step aside and let the kids take control.

Stepping aside can be a difficult thing for a teacher. A few years back I was attempting to teach something at the blackboard of a tiny closet-sized classroom, and the kids weren't getting it. I thought I was explaining things clearly, but they weren't following me. I couldn't understand why. Then Santiago, a kid who always sat in the seat furthest from me, said, "If you'd get outta the way so we could see what you're doing, it might help." I hadn't realized it, but my body was partially blocking their view of the board. I moved over and things cleared up quite a bit. Sometimes that's what being a teacher is. Knowing when to crumple up your plans, get out of the way, and give the kids room to learn. □

Videotape Study

(Continued from page 7)

2. Lesson Scripts

The videotaped lessons revealed a clear distinction between the "script"—the underlying pattern or template—used by Japanese teachers as they create a lesson and the scripts used by German and U.S. teachers. These different scripts follow from the different instructional goals, and they are probably based on different assumptions about the role of problem solving in the lesson, the way students learn from instruction, and what the proper role of the teacher should be.

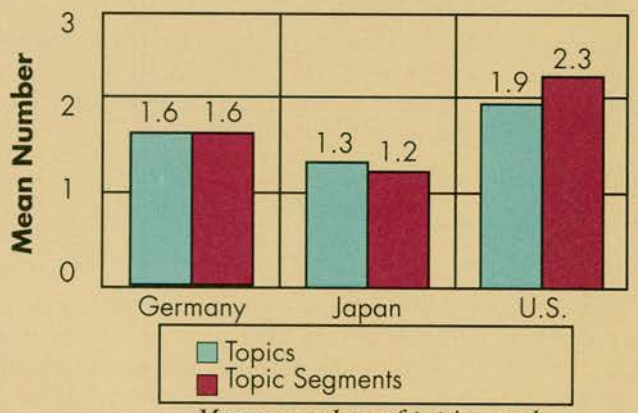
U.S. and German lessons tend to have two phases. In the first or acquisition phase, the teacher demonstrates and/or explains how to solve a sample problem. The explanation might be purely procedural (this is what most often happens in the U.S.) or it might include developing concepts (this is more often the case in Germany). Still, the goal in both countries is to teach students a method of solving the sample problem. In the second or application phase, students practice solving similar examples on their own while the teacher helps individual students who are having difficulty.

Japanese lessons generally follow a different script. Problem solving comes first, followed by a time in which students share the methods for solving the problem that they have found on their own or in small groups. So while students in U.S. and German classrooms are expected to follow the teacher as she leads them through the solution of a sample problem or problems, Japanese students have a different job. They must invent their own solutions and then reflect together on those solutions in an attempt to increase their understanding of various ways to approach a problem.

3. Coherence

Students are more likely to make sense of a lesson that is coherent. When we compared U.S. lessons with those in Germany and Japan, we found the American to be less coherent by several criteria. First, American lessons contained significantly more topics than Japanese lessons, and significantly more topic segments than both Japanese and German lessons.

FIGURE 2



Mean number of topics and topic segments per lesson

Second, when changing from one topic or segment to another, American teachers were less likely than Japanese teachers to make a transition linking the different parts of the lesson.

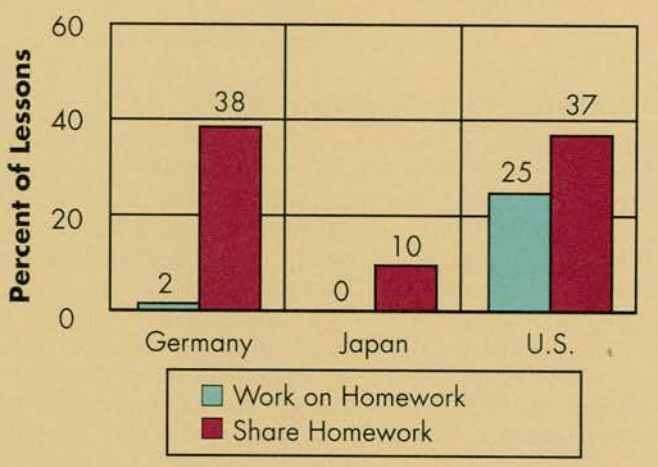
Third, American teachers devoted significantly more time during the lesson to irrelevant diversions such as discussing last night's rock concert or an upcoming field trip than German or Japanese teachers. Depending when these diversions occur, they can weaken the coherence of the lesson.

Finally, American lessons were more frequently interrupted by outside events, such as PA announcements or visitors. Lessons were halted by such interruptions in 28 percent of American lessons, 13 percent of German lessons, and zero percent of Japanese lessons.

4. Homework During the Lesson

Another cross-national difference revealed by the videotaped lessons was in the role of homework. The graph below shows the percentage of lessons in which students reviewed and shared homework in class and the percentage in which they worked on their homework for the next day.

FIGURE 3



Percentage of lessons in which class worked on or shared homework

Japanese students never worked on the next day's homework during class and rarely shared homework results. Both German and American students shared homework frequently, but only American students commonly spent time in class working on the next day's homework. When we calculated the total percentage of time during the lesson that was devoted to assigning, working on, or sharing homework we got a similar result: Only 2 percent of lesson time in Japan involved homework in any way, compared with 8 percent in Germany and 11 percent in the United States.

The Kind of Mathematics Taught

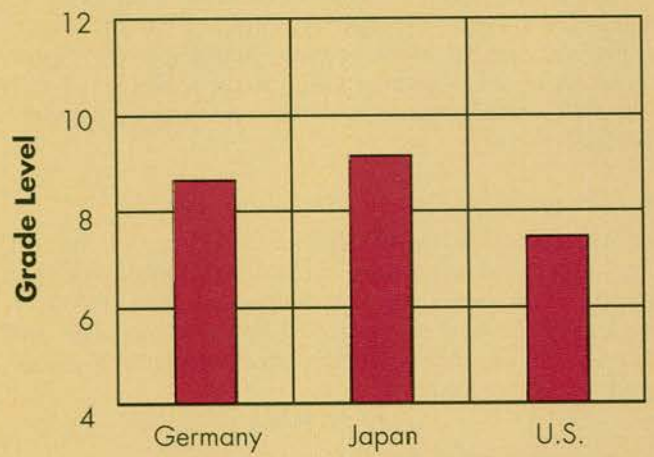
1. Level of the Mathematics

Although it is not possible, a priori, to say that one mathematical topic is more complex than another, looking at where a topic appears in mathematics curricula around the world shows how advanced the topic is generally considered to be. This is what ex-

perts from forty-one countries did in order to establish a TIMSS math framework.

When we coded our videotapes, we used the TIMSS framework and were thus able to compare the topics taught with the international average. By international standards, the mathematical content of U.S. lessons was, on average, at a seventh-grade level, whereas German and Japanese lessons fell in the high eighth-grade or low ninth-grade levels.

FIGURE 4

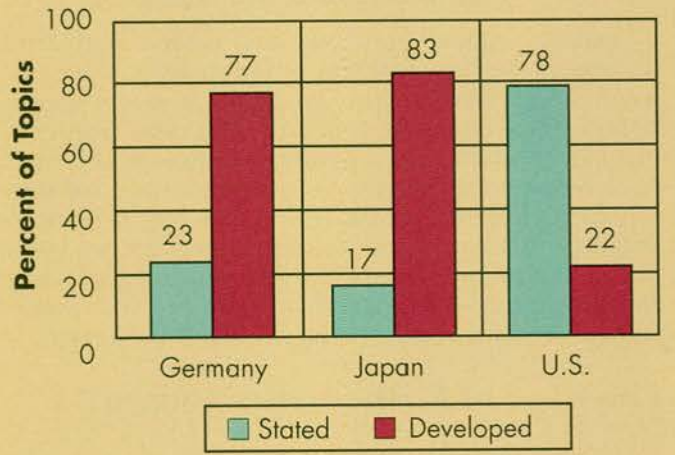


Average grade-level content of lessons

2. Nature of the Mathematics

The videotaped lessons also revealed that the nature of the content differed across countries. For example, most mathematics lessons include some mixture of concepts and the application of those concepts to solving problems. How concepts are presented, however, varies a great deal. They might simply be stated, as in "the Pythagorean theorem states that $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$" or they might be developed and derived over the course of the lesson. The graph shows the percentage of topics in each lesson that contained concepts that were developed and the percent that were only stated.

FIGURE 5



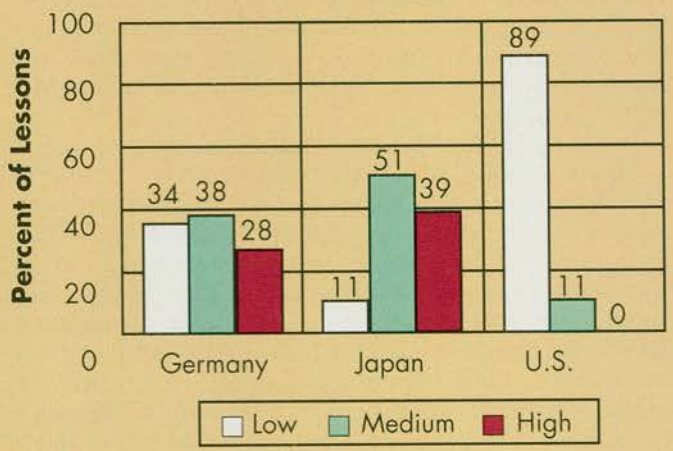
Average percentage of topics per lesson containing concepts that were stated and concepts that were developed

Although constructing proofs and reasoning deductively are important aspects of mathematics, American students lacked opportunities to engage in these kinds of activities. None of the U.S. lessons that we videotaped included proofs, whereas 10 percent of German lessons and 53 percent of the Japanese lessons included proofs.

3. Quality of Mathematical Content

As part of the video study, we asked an independent group of American college mathematics teachers to evaluate the quality of mathematical content in a representative selection of the video lessons. Basing their judgments on detailed written descriptions, they examined thirty lessons from each country. In order to decrease the likelihood of bias, we deleted information that might identify the country in which a lesson took place. The group's judgments are summarized in the following graph.

FIGURE 6



Percentage of lessons with content of low, medium, or high quality

Whereas 39 percent of the Japanese lessons and 28 percent of the German lessons received the highest rating, none of the U.S. lessons received the highest rating. Furthermore, 89 percent of U.S. lessons received the lowest rating, compared with 11 percent of Japanese lessons.

Students' Thinking

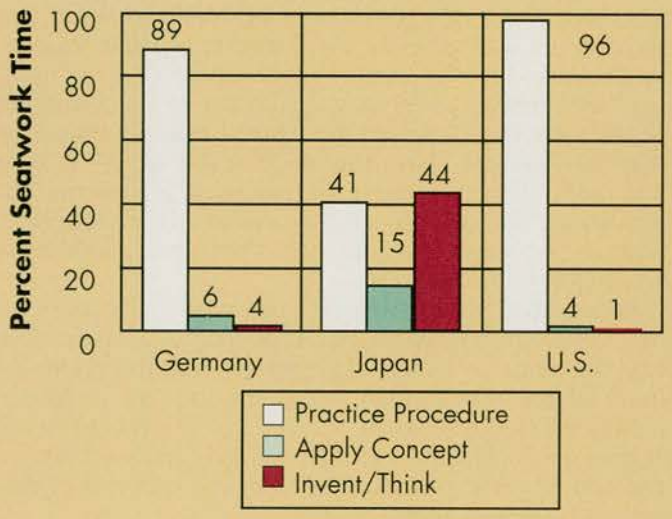
1. Tasks During Seatwork

When we examined the kind of work students engaged in during the lesson, we found a strong resemblance between Germany and the U.S. Three types of work were coded in the video study:

- Practicing routine procedures
- Applying concepts to novel situations
- Inventing new solution methods/thinking

Approximately 90 percent of student working time in Germany and the U.S. was spent in practicing routine procedures, compared with 41 percent in Japan. Japanese students spent nearly half their time inventing new solutions and attempting to grapple with mathematical concepts.

FIGURE 7



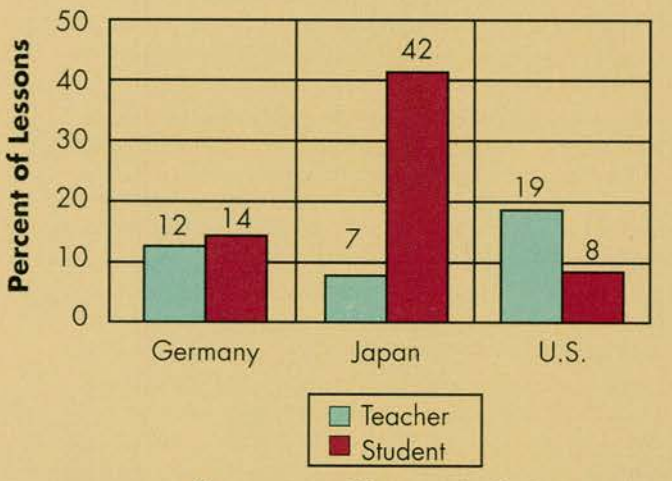
Average percentage of seatwork time spent working on three kinds of tasks

2. Alternative Methods for Solving Problems

We also were interested in the frequency with which students were exposed to alternative methods of solving problems. We distinguished two types of alternative methods—those presented by the teacher, and those generated by the students.

As shown on the graph below, 42 percent of Japanese lessons contained student-generated alternative methods, more than twice as many as German (14 percent) or U.S. (only 8 percent) lessons. The percentage of teacher-presented alternative methods did not differ significantly in the three countries.

FIGURE 8

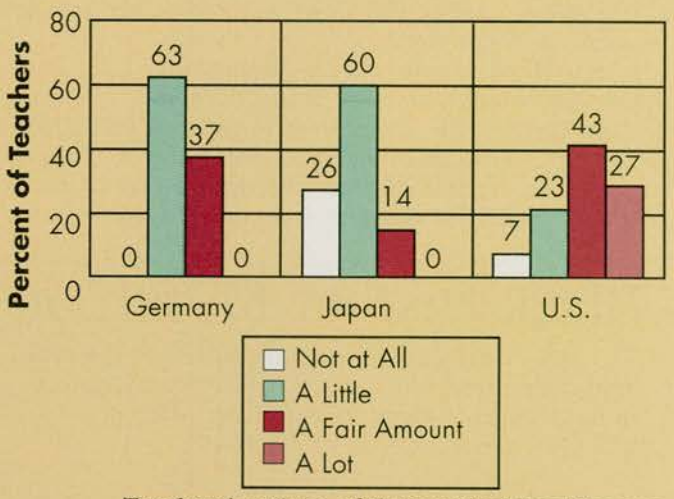


Percentage of lessons including teacher-presented and student-generated alternative solution methods

Teachers' View of Reform

U.S. teachers believe that they are implementing current reform ideas in their classrooms. When asked specifically to evaluate their videotaped lesson, almost three-fourths of the American teachers rated it as reasonably in accord "a lot" or "a fair amount" with current ideas about the teaching and learning of mathematics. They were more than twice as likely to respond this way than either the Japanese or the German teachers.

FIGURE 9



Teachers' ratings of their videotaped lessons in terms of current ideas

Teachers who said that the videotaped lesson was in accord with current ideas about the teaching and learning of mathematics were asked to justify their responses. Although the range and variety of responses to this question were great, the vast majority of American teachers' responses pointed to surface features, such as the use of real-world problems, manipulatives, or cooperative learning, rather than to the deeper characteristics of instruction such as the depth of understanding developed by their students.

The findings of the video study suggest that written reports that are disseminated to teachers may have little impact on practices in the classroom. One reason for this may be that teachers do not have widely shared understanding of what such terms as "problem solving" mean, leading to idiosyncratic interpretations in the classroom. Video examples of high-quality instruction tied to descriptions of what quality instruction should look like may help, in the future, to solve this problem.

Of course, not all teachers in these three countries follow the "script" sketched here, and not all lessons take the forms we have described. But what is striking, viewing the videotapes, is how many of the lessons display common national—or perhaps we should say cultural—patterns. □

Nashville Sit-in

(Continued from page 31)

Easter was approaching, normally a boom time for the clothing stores. Everybody wants to get a new outfit for Easter. A new dress, a new hat, a new pair of shoes, something to show off at church on Easter morning—it's a tradition, certainly among the black community. But black Nashville's motto that month was "No Fashions for Easter," and it had its effect. One downtown store owner stood staring out his door at the deserted sidewalks and said to a reporter, "You could roll a bowling ball down Church Street and not hit anybody these days."

It was those empty streets—and empty cash registers—that brought an offer from the mayor's committee on April 5. The downtown businesses had agreed to set up a system of "partial" integration, a three-month trial period during which they would serve blacks separately in designated sections of the formerly whites-only restaurants.

We couldn't believe that *this* was their proposal. All it showed was how little they understood what we were doing and why we were doing it. Their suggestion smacked of the "separate but equal" doctrine that had been struck down six years earlier by the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board* decision. Couldn't they see that this was not about sandwiches and salads? It was not about being allowed to sit separately at a counter. It was about nothing less than being treated exactly the same as the white people with whom we shared citizenship in this country.

Worse than the inability of the white members of that committee to recognize that "partial" integration was the same as partial *segregation* was the endorsement of the proposal by the committee's two *black* members—Fisk president Wright and the president of Tennessee State University, W. S. Davis. This felt like a betrayal of sorts to us, evidence of the differences between the generations.

Black History Month on the Internet

Here is a sampling of Internet resources on the civil rights movement and other aspects of black history and the African-American experience. Internet addresses are accurate as of Jan. 6, 1999.

http://www.auaa.org/timeline/index.html: Americans United for Affirmative Action timeline of people and events, 1776-1991.

http://www.seattletimes.com/mlk/movement/Seatimeline.html: Focus on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Topics include: The Man, The Movement, The Legacy, The Holiday, Electronic Classroom. From the *Seattle Times.*

http://www.pbs.org/weta/apr/aprprogram.html: A. Philip Randolph and the PBS documentary about his life and achievements. Ordering information for video.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/OneAmerica/transcript.html: PBS's "Dialogue on Race." President Clinton and eight others, representing various minority groups discuss questions such as "unfinished business," "class vs. race," and "the roots of racism." Links to other discussions connected with the President's Initiative on Race, listener comments.

http://www.lccr.org/lcef/div.html: Tips on talking to children about diversity and racism, with links to sites on civil rights and hate crimes. Sponsored by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html: "The African-American Mosaic," the Library of Congress's online exhibition about black history and culture. Includes sections about colonization, abolition, the migration of African Americans to the North and the western U.S., and WPA projects pertaining to African Americans.

http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/flashbks/black/blabisin.htm: Historic articles from *Atlantic Monthly* magazine by W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington about how African Americans can best achieve equality. Links to other *Atlantic Monthly* collections of articles about race.

http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/History/Maritime_History/Ships/Amistad: Links to Amistad-related texts, materials, and projects, both historical and contemporary.

http://www.fred.net/nhhs/project/civrts.htm: Collection of civil rights projects created by ninth-graders at North Hagerstown (Maryland) High School.

http://www.4littlegirls.com/museum.html: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute's description of its permanent exhibits. Site includes civil rights timeline and information about obtaining and using Spike Lee's documentary about the Birmingham Church bombing, "Four Little Girls."

http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/AfroAm.html: Five Black History Month activities using Internet sites as resources.

http://www.afroam.org/children/children.html: Synopsis of current African geography and politics, country by country. Also, African games. Very little on African-American history.

http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/multicultural/sites/aframdocs.html: Writings by and about African Americans, mostly focusing on late nineteenth, early twentieth century and links to other similar sites.

http://tlc.ai.org/rightidx.htm#LP: Human and civil rights web-site including guides to African-American studies, South Africa, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., slavery; also, civil rights lesson plans and links to sites of numerous organizations and institutions concerned with civil and human rights. From the Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

http://www.ket.org/Education/IN/blackhistory.html: Links to sites about Amistad, MLK, lesson plans, African-American history, the arts, etc.

http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst: Study guides and lesson plans based on the New Orleans civil rights movement, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, and "Eyes on the Prize."

http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights: National Civil Rights Museum. Overview of African-American history, with short bios of selected individuals and events.

http://shop.pbs.org/products/A1451: Source for "Eyes on the Prize" video and accompanying softcover book of the same name by Juan Williams. To order by phone, call 1-800-645-4PBS. To order by mail or fax, contact PBS Video, Customer Support Center, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314-1698; (703) 739-5269 fax.

Easter weekend—a conference organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Councils' (SCLC) Ella Baker was held at Shaw University in Raleigh. The organizers expected about a hundred or so students to show up. Three times that many arrived. They listened to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., urge them to become part of the SCLC, but his request didn't get a lot of enthusiasm from this young crowd seeking a new direction. Jim Lawson's words were more to their liking.

The gist of his speech, summarized in a subsequent student report on the conference, was that the movement had moved beyond traditional avenues. Laws had been changed, but society—at least in the South—was not responding. "Unless we are prepared to create the climate," the report stated, "the law can never bring victory."

Baker herself, in a speech titled "More Than a Hamburger," praised our success so far but warned that our work had just begun. Integrating lunch counters in stores already patronized mostly by blacks was one thing. Breaking down barriers in areas as racially and culturally entrenched as voting rights, education, and the workplace was going to be much tougher than what we had faced so far. She had another warning as well: Don't let anyone else, especially the older folks, tell you what to do. Think and act for yourselves. Hold onto your energy and your vision. Keep it pure. Keep it real.

The weekend ended with the creation of a formal student-run group that would coordinate and organize the entire sit-in movement, as well as whatever lay beyond. The name they gave themselves—*ourselves*—was the Continuations Committee, which was shortly changed to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC. Or, as we quickly came to pronounce it, simply *snick.*

Diane and the others got back to Nashville late Sunday evening. I couldn't wait to hear what had happened. Monday morning I was up early, preparing to head over to Fisk for our 6:30 a.m. central committee meeting.

I was just heading out when the hall phone rang. To this day I can't recall who was on the other end of the line. I guess that's because I was so stunned by the message.

There had just been a bombing. At Mr. Looby's house.

At five-thirty that morning someone in a passing car had thrown dynamite at the Looby home. The blast blew away the front of the house and shattered 147 windows at Meharry's Hubbard Hospital a block away. Mr. and Mrs. Looby, whose bedroom was in the back, were miraculously unharmed. No one was injured.

The intent was clear. At first we students had been a target. But there were too many of us.

If the blast was meant to scare us, however, it had the opposite effect. By noon, nearly two thousand students, faculty, and townspeople had gathered at Tennessee State to march on city hall. We—the central committee, along with Lawson and C. T. Vivian [a clergyman and civil rights activist], who had hurried over at first word of the bombing—had decided that morning to march and had sent the mayor a telegram telling him we were on our way.

I had never seen anything like the scene as we moved toward city hall that day. The nation had never seen anything like it. This was the first such mass march in the history of America, the first civil rights assault on such a scale. People kept coming and coming. The newspapers said there were three thousand of us, but I think that figure is low. I'm certain the number was closer to five thousand.

Diane and C. T. Vivian were at the very front. I was a row or two back from them. When we reached city hall, Mayor West, in his bow tie and hat, came down the steps out front to meet us.

Vivian spoke first, saying how outraged we were that such a thing could happen in this city. The crowd exploded with applause at that. When West began to respond, Vivian cut him off and the two argued for a minute or two. Then West made a plea with us to be peaceful.

"You all have the power to destroy this city," he said. "So let's not have any mobs."

He went on to say he would enforce the laws without prejudice, but that he had no power to force restaurant owners to serve anyone they did not want to. Then he said, "We are all Christians together. Let us pray together."

To which one of our students shouted, "How about *eating* together?"

Then Diane stepped forward. She held a typed list of questions, which we'd come up with that morning. When she asked West if he would use "the prestige of your office to appeal to the citizens to stop racial discrimination," his answer was succinct.

"I appeal to all citizens," said the mayor, "to end dis-

AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Backlash against another kind of sit-in: The first bus filled with Freedom Riders protesting interstate bus segregation was firebombed by the Ku Klux Klan in Anniston, Alabama, May 1961.

crimination, to have no bigotry, no bias, no hatred."

Then Diane asked the million-dollar question, pushing the mayor to be specific.

"Do you mean that to include lunch counters?"

Now West was rankled.

"Little lady," he said, "I stopped segregation seven years ago at the airport when I first took office, and there has been no trouble there since."

Diane didn't budge.

"Then, Mayor," she said, boring in, "do you recommend that the lunch counters be desegregated?"

"Yes," said West.

The crowd exploded, cheering and applauding.

"That's up to the store managers, of course," West added, a little awkwardly. But those words were drowned out. All anyone had heard was the word "Yes." That's the word that rang out in the next morning's *Tennessean,* which ran a front-page banner headline: "Integrate Counters—Mayor."

The downtown store owners, most of whom were tired of the sit-ins and ready to open their lunch counters but none of whom wanted to go first, read that headline. Now they could make the move and put the blame on the mayor.

A measure of the importance of that march was the arrival of Dr. King in Nashville the next night. When I heard he was coming, I felt a rush inside. The last time I had seen him was in that basement office in Montgomery two years earlier, when I'd met with him and Abernathy and Gray. Now he was coming here to salute us.

Again the Fisk gym was packed. Loudspeakers were set up outside for the hundreds who could not get in. I was inside, squeezed in the crush of the crowd, when an announcement was made that the gym had to be cleared. There had been a bomb threat.

It took a long time for everyone to move outside, and even longer to move back in. But nobody left. No one wanted to miss this. And Dr. King did not disap-

MAGNUM PHOTOS/DANNY LYON

A nonviolent demonstration in Cairo, Illinois, August 1962: John Lewis (left) and some Cairo residents kneel and pray to protest a segregated swimming pool. This photograph was later used as a recruitment poster for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee with the appeal, "Come Let Us Build a New World Together."

point. He called our movement, "the best organized and the most disciplined in the Southland." It was like a dream, really, hearing this same voice I'd listened to on the radio as a boy, now praising Diane, Bernard, Bevel, me and all the others for the work we'd done.

"I came to Nashville not to bring inspiration," he told the crowd, "but to gain inspiration from the great movement that has taken place in this community."

The place erupted.

"No lie can live forever," said King as he drew to a close. "Let us not despair. The universe is with us. Walk together, children. Don't get weary."

Twenty days later, after several meetings with city officials and store owners, we agreed on a carefully orchestrated series of test servings downtown. We would arrive only in small numbers, on specified days, at specified times. The press agreed to limited coverage. No one would claim victory, which was no problem for us. A fundamental principle of nonviolence is that there is no such thing as defeat once a conflict is justly resolved, because there are no losers when justice is achieved.

At 3:15 on the afternoon of May 10, 1960, the six downtown Nashville stores we had marched on, sat in, and been arrested at during the previous three months served food to black customers for the first time in the city's history.

This, of course, was just a beginning. We still had miles to go before Nashville could be called a desegregated city. Sit-ins, marches, arrests, and beatings would continue for the next four years as our student movement turned to hotels, movie theaters, and fast-food restaurants across the town. I would be part of many of those demonstrations, but there was something else waiting in my immediate future, something that would carry me far beyond Nashville and even deeper into the movement.

That something else was a bus. □

Research Lessons

(Continued from page 17)

often classroom teachers, but they may also include principals, district resource teachers, university professors, and policymakers. When such people observe research lessons, they get instant feedback on how students and teachers are grappling with new subject matter, or with vague new national goals such as "initiative" and "autonomy." For example, one invited commentator at the solar energy lesson was an elementary school principal who had served on the Ministry of Education committee that added solar energy to the national curriculum. At research lessons, he could see how this new content area was actually brought to life in the classroom, hear teachers' questions and concerns, and see how students were dealing with the new content. He could share this information with individuals in a position to shape curriculum and textbooks, and he could spread word of exemplary techniques. Well-known teachers and principals may be invited to dozens of research lessons every year as commentators. They see how new approaches and topics are being implemented and understood in many different schools across Japan. In effect, this amounts to a system of "formative research" in which policy can be informed by actual classroom education.

7. Honoring the Role of Classroom Teaching

As is undoubtedly clear, research lessons acknowledge Japanese teachers' central position in Japanese education. Teachers are not expected to be passive recipients of whatever new reform comes along; they help to shape and change classroom education. Japan's national educational guidelines underscore the idea that policy is created in the classroom, not on paper. These guidelines are remarkably terse. The entire Japanese *Course of Study for Elementary Schools* takes up just 122 pages of a 6 x 8 ½ inch booklet. The additional volume provided for each subject area is also brief and does not specify the particular teaching materials to be used. (The volume for all of elementary science, for example, covers 116 pages of a 6 x 8 ½ inch booklet.) The changes made to these documents—about once a decade— are often brief, abstract descriptions of new goals: "autonomy," "initiative," "desire to learn," "problem-solving capacity." When we first began our research, we found that goals this vague—provided without accompanying concrete examples—were frustrating. Yet they probably reflect an underlying assumption that policymakers cannot define good classroom practice; rather, research lessons provide a systematic way for teachers to bring policy to life, thoughtfully and collaboratively, in the classroom.

Research lessons also provide a way for Japanese classroom teachers to rise to national stature while remaining in the classroom. Although teachers do not receive increased salary or position because they conduct research lessons, they do, in some cases, become known throughout Japan, often publishing books and articles about their lessons. As we have interviewed teachers in various regions of Japan about the influences on their science teaching, we've had the odd experience of hearing them talk about teachers whose lessons we have also observed: "I don't know him, but I saw his research lesson nine years ago, and I realized I had seen a real student discussion for the first time," said one Nagoya educator, about a Tokyo teacher whose lessons we had both seen, albeit eight years apart. The research lesson system provides a route to become nationally known that does not lead inexorably out of the classroom. It encourages teachers who have attained a high level of proficiency to remain in the classroom where they can continue to refine their craft and guide others who seek to become skilled teachers.

Research Lessons: What Are the Supporting Conditions?

Though it is difficult to isolate all the conditions that have made it possible for this extraordinary system to take root and flourish, here are several features of the Japanese educational landscape that have clearly played a part:

1. A Shared, Frugal Curriculum

The Japanese have a national curriculum, and by U.S. and world standards, it is very spare. As TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study) researchers found, Japanese eighth-grade science textbooks cover just eight topics, compared to an average of more than sixty-five for U.S. eighth-grade textbooks (Schmidt et al., 1997). Japanese textbooks are all brief, so there is substantial time to cover each of the small number of topics they study. For example, Japanese fifth-graders are expected to spend twelve science periods studying levers, although there are just a few pieces of knowledge that they are expected to take away. This allows plenty of time for hands-on exploration of how the force needed to lift an object differs depending on where the fulcrum is placed. Since Japanese teachers have a relatively large number of class periods to help students master a relatively small amount of science content, teachers can devote time to studying the most effective ways to present it, rather than to wading through massive textbooks to figure out what's really important to teach (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997, 1998; Stigler & Hiebert, 1997). The education standards, which are in the works in most states, could make U.S. science curricula more manageable but only if the people putting those standards together are willing to make some tough choices.

2. Collaboration Among Teachers

Collaboration is routine for Japanese teachers, so even without research lessons, teachers would not be isolated from one another as they commonly are in the United States. Japanese teachers plan lessons together as well as thirty or more days per year of schoolwide activities; they work together on many schoolwide committees; and since substitutes are not hired for short-term absences, they cover classes for one another. (Lewis, 1995; Sato, 1996; Sato & McLaughlin, 1992; Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996; Shimahara & Sakai, 1995). Accounts of Japanese elementary school life suggest that collaboration among students is emphasized and competition avoided (e.g., Lewis, 1995). And teacher collaboration is undoubtedly part of the same cultural attitude. Electing a "teacher of the year" is, for example, an American practice that surprises many

Japanese teachers who visit the U.S.

The oft-noted finding that the Japanese attribute success to hard work rather than ability (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992) is not limited to students. Teachers also believe that they can improve their teaching if they work hard at it, and collaborative study of lessons is seen as an important way of doing this:

> Our textbooks are very thin, with few explanations. . . . Teachers have to fill in the blanks between the lines in the textbook. That is why we have to study about lessons. . . . Unless you improve your own skills, you can't do a good lesson even with a good lesson plan or good textbooks. Precisely because of this belief, we all do open lessons and try to improve our teaching skills. If you isolate yourself and do whatever you wish to do, I don't think you can ever conduct good lessons.

Japanese teachers do not feel that collaboration is antithetical to developing one's own ways of doing things. Far from it, as two Japanese teachers indicate:

> Even if you copy someone else or are copied by someone else, I don't think anything can be absolutely the same. So, I think it is all right to copy others.

> If you shoot for originality too early in your development as a teacher, you're likely to fail. Initially, you must take a lot from others. But ultimately, to move to a higher level of teaching, your lesson must become your own original thing, not simply imitation of others. But it's through imitating others' lessons that you create your own authentic way of teaching.

It is *not* the case (despite accounts to the contrary) that Japanese elementary teachers have more time for collaboration than their U.S. counterparts; daily time with students is comparable or longer in Japan (see Lewis, 1995). However, general support for teachers and for their professional development activities may be greater in Japan (U. S. Department of Education, 1987). For example, Japanese parents expect that children will return home early on the regular occasions when teachers meet to discuss research lessons or attend research lessons at other schools.

3. Self-critical Reflection

Within Japanese schools, as within the larger Japanese culture, *hansei*—self-critical reflection—is emphasized and esteemed (Lewis, 1995; Rohlen, 1976). Teachers and students both set goals for self-improvement in a "quest for character improvement [that] is close to being a national religion" (Lewis, 1995; Rohlen, 1976, p.128). At the same time, there is much less emphasis on external evaluations (merit reviews, checklist evaluations, etc.) of teachers, and this undoubtedly creates a greater feeling of safety about revealing one's weaknesses (Bjork, unpublished; Heine & Lehman, in press). Criticizing oneself has a decidedly different emotional meaning when it is established and valued, as it seems to be in Japan. Indeed, identifying one's shortcomings and gracefully accepting criticism seem to be ways of showing competence, not failures to be avoided. Nor is a critique typically focused on a single individual; collaborative planning of research lessons means that criticism is generally shared with several colleagues.

4. Stability of Educational Policy

Although some Japanese educators complain that Japanese education is slow to change, (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995; Horio & Platzer, 1988), overall stability may make it easier to concentrate on policy changes that do occur. The comments of a Ministry of Education official suggest a surprisingly long timetable for change:

> We change the *Course of Study* about every ten years. But the truth is that ten years is too short a time to change classroom education. If we greatly changed the *Course of Study* every ten years, teachers would be turning their heads this way and that so often that their necks would break. So we make major changes in the *Course of Study* only every twenty years or so, and in between it's just fine-tuning.

Epilogue

On day two of the research lesson, Mr. Ohara begins science class by asking students to report the results of the previous day's experiments. As students volunteer their results, he records them on the blackboard and then regards the findings with a puzzled expression: "From these results here, I can't say at all what we found—if we found that [variable] A, B, or C, was important. Here it says A alone; here it says C alone. . . . What should we do? . . . Different groups found different results." Students comment that some students changed weight at the same time as length, and several students offer the opinion that everything but the variable under study needs to be kept the same. Students then suggest crossing out the experiments that don't meet this criterion. When this is done, a pattern suddenly emerges: The properly controlled experiments show that the length of the pendulum, but not the weight, was important. As students see that the controlled experiments give clear results on two of the variables, the feeling of "aha" in the classroom—not just among students, but among the observing teachers—is almost palpable.

For us as observers, the second day's lesson was stunning. Believers though we were in the power of student-centered instruction, we never imagined that the sloppy experiments of the prior day could be salvaged, let alone turned into such a powerful "aha." Although much remains to be learned about the nature and impact of research lessons in Japan, we felt no doubt about its dramatic impact on us: Mr. Ohara's lesson pushed us to think, in ways large and small, about the nature of good teaching, about how good practices are honed and spread, and about how teachers can be recognized and supported as they reinvent policy in the classroom. □

This article is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. REC-9355857. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Science Foundation. The initial phase of the authors' inquiry was supported by a small grant from the Spencer Foundation and by the Abe Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership.

(Continued on next page)

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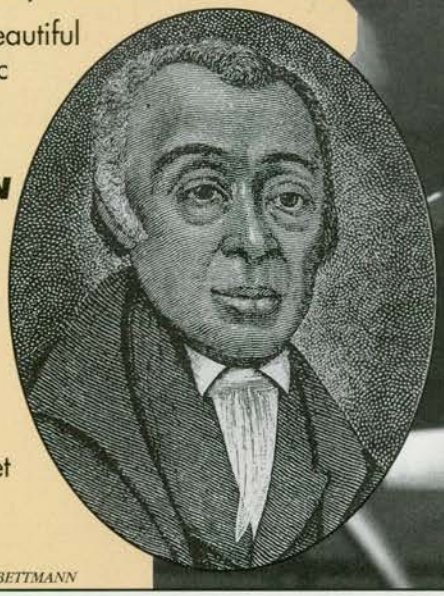

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