Editor's Note

by Linda O'Neill

Forecasting the future is a perilous business. While it's easy and often dangerous to be wrong, it can be just as risky to be right. Even when predictions are based on solid experience and scrupulous research, there are pitfalls. Visionaries may rely too heavily on projections from the present situation. They may allow optimism to blind them to very real dangers. They may let their fears obscure precious opportunities.

Some futurists predict that over the next few decades genetic engineering, pervasive interactive technologies, and intelligence-enhancing drugs will transform the educational landscape. Reacting to the exponential growth of electronic communications and envisioning interlocking networks designed for lifelong cycles of learning and work they endorse education for understanding and controlling technology. Those who foresee massive changes in instructional goals, delivery, and infrastructure urge teachers to become "students of the future" in order to better serve their learners in this period of dramatic change.

In *Between Past and Future* (1968), Hannah Arendt suggests that, contrary to what we might expect, the past "does not pull back but presses forward" while the future "drives us back into the past." It was indeed the "future" that prompted the editorial board of *Thresholds in Education* to revisit a 1979 issue entitled "To... Year...2000." For that issue twenty years ago a group of intrepid educators crafted predictions for the millennium and launched them into the uncharted waters of the 1980s and 1990s. We have retrieved some of these predictions and invited responses from original authors, as well as other educational leaders.

Those who foresee massive changes in instructional goals, delivery, and infrastructure urge teachers to become "students of the future" in order to better serve their learners in this period of dramatic change.

Before describing his personal educational priorities for "the year 2000 and beyond," Lowell Horton, editor of the 1979 issue of *Thresholds*, wrote:

> We have lost our innocence and are in danger of replacing it with apathy and cynicism which comes after bruises, batterings, and scars. We have learned that the good guys don't always win, that our country – right or wrong – is as often wrong as right, and that increasingly sophisticated technology is not always progress. We have changed and it remains for us as educators to help make sense of who we are now and who we are likely to become.

The educators who answered Horton's call in 1979, attempted to "make sense" of potential civic, legal, and technological changes they anticipated for the end of the century. They explored needs and possibilities related to content, methodology, curriculum, and instruction. They expressed their fears as well as their hopes for the future of education.

Charles W. Fowler, then Superintendent of Schools in Fairfield, Connecticut offered one of the most sweeping visions in "Toward the Year 2004," the first article to represent the 1979 issue of *Thresholds* here. Donna L. Wiseman, Morgridge Endowed Chair in Teacher Education and Preparation at Northern Illinois University's College of Education at Northern Illinois University and Howard S. Smucker, Associate Professor at Aurora University's School of Education provide distinctive counterpoints to Fowler's vision.

In a plea for "clarity and communicability" two decades ago, Mary Louise Seguel proposed a return to the following core questions: What should we teach? How should we teach it? How should we organize for teaching? How should we evaluate learning and teaching? How can we improve learning and teaching? "Toward Year 2000 –

Method: A Promise of Things Actual" serves as the point of departure for responses from Northern Illinois University Professor Emeritus Seguel and 1998 Illinois Teacher of the Year, Steven Isoye.

In 1979 Earl E. Hoffman posed the question: "Will the courts return to sanity?" In this issue he asks, "Have You Been Sued Yet?" Hoffman concludes that "the courts and the legal system will continue to make life very interesting and frustrating for those still toiling in the education field."

This issue would not be complete without at glance back and a look ahead at *Thresholds* itself. Former Executive Editor Byron Radebaugh provides a history of *Thresholds* from its inception to 1993. To conclude this issue, Executive Editor Wilma Miranda offers her vision for its future.

References

Arendt, H. (1968). *Between past and future: Eight exercises in political thought*. New York: The Viking Press.

Fowler, C.W. (August 1979). Toward the year...2004. *Thresholds in Education*, *V* (3), 30-31.

Horton, L. (August 1979). Toward the year 2000: Curriculum priorities. *Thresholds in Education*, *V* (3), 12-15, 18.

Toward The Year...2004

by Charles W. Fowler

Superintendent of Schools, Fairfield, Connecticut

There is a genre of literature of prognostication into which such epics as **1984, 2001 Space Odyssey,** and **Future Shock** fit, to say nothing of the myriad of prophecies contained in the **Bible** and other religious writings. Educators tend to be so preoccupied with the challenge and dilemmas of the "here and now" that even a five-year budget or program projection poses itself as an obstacle infranchisable. Such a state of affairs within the profession constitutes an anomaly of dramatic proportions inasmuch as our responsibility to the young rests not solely on passing along the culture and wisdom of the civilizations past, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in preparing our progeny for what the future holds.

As a practicing school administrator, my perceptions are most sensitive to matters within the social and political sciences. In the following paragraphs I hope to take you on an educational odyssey to the year 2004. Paul Mart, renowned professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, completed a series of studies on educational innovation in the first part of this century. One of the concepts which he annunciated was that of "lag time"—the time it took for an educational "innovation" to spread through the entire nation's schools from its first acceptance or use to the point where it was relatively commonplace. He described a number of examples of this phenomenon for which the lag time was as much as forty years. I strongly suspect that the pace of education and cultural change has increased so dramatically that my choice of a look at schools a quarter-century from now is well within reason.

Public schools or school districts do not exist and have not since the late 1980's when they were phased out as a part of a massive reorganization of government and taxing practices in the nation. Instead, each citizen is provided an "Education and Training Certificate" in varying denominations by the megapolis government.

Travel with me now to the year 2004 and to the megapolis of Chiqaukland, a 150-square-mile area bordering Lake Michigan with a population of 30,000,000. This megapolis is one of four in the country which are independent of any state, have their own representatives in the U.S. Congress, and together account for 60% of the nation's population and a higher percentage of the gross national product. The hub of most non-employment activities is the Cachment Area, a massive housing and community center where the majority of the population resides. Few own their own property and most pay rent based upon their income levels. The community center contains shopping, banking, medical, and entertainment facilities, as well as educational and recreational centers.

Public schools or school districts do not exist and have not since the late 1980's when they were phased out as a part of a massive reorganization of government and taxing practices in the nation. Instead, each citizen is provided an "Education and Training Certificate" in varying denominations by the megapolis government. The denomination of the Certificate varies according to age, handicap, or giftedness of the individual, as well as the scores attained on government administered proficiency tests. The higher value Certificates tend to be issued to persons between the ages of five and twenty-one (a throwback to the ages in the former public school-college systems), but chil-

dren under five and persons over twenty-five also qualify.

These E & T Certificates can be redeemed for programs in a variety of places, including government-sponsored "education centers." The Certificates are also redeemed, however, at education centers operated by churches, non-profit cooperatives, and entrepreneurs engaged in education for profit. The education centers vary as to the scope and level of programs offered, but most go through the levels associated with the former community colleges. Beyond this, Certificates are redeemable at megapolis-sponsored, senior universities. Only the most heavily endowed, private colleges survived the economic and political upheaval of the last two decades of the twentieth century; and attendance at these institutions requires a significant, supplemental payment by the individual or by the scholarship committee established by the megapolis.

Once a citizen has demonstrated proficiency in basic skill areas on the government-administered examinations, he or she is eligible to apply the Certificate to a variety of job-specific training programs operated in a few instances by the government education centers, but in most cases by private business and industry. On-the-job training now accounts for approximately ten percent of the typical business's or industry's expenditures, and the revenue from its employees' E & T Certificates significantly offsets those expenditures. It is also possible to accrue Certificates over a period of years, thus allowing a worker involved in a major career change to undertake an intensive training program, sometimes under a paid-training, leave provision of the employer's union contract (something akin to the "sabbatical leaves" in educational organizations years ago).

Public and private education centers also honor the E & T Certificates for adult counseling and recreation programs. Much of what in earlier years was called "adult education" is now conducted by public as well as private, church, or social groups with support from the revenues from E & T Certificates.

While the government-sponsored education centers are subject to extensive regulations and requirements, the private recipients of E & T Certificate proceeds must meet only minimal organizational standards, which include the licensing of employees. However, the government-sponsored programs are administered in accordance with the requirements of the megapolis public employees union—the national union conglomerate which encompasses forty percent of all workers in America. The employees involved in E & T programs in business and industry are part of and subject to those union contracts, while the small religious or profit education center employees tend not to be included in bargaining units. This factor, coupled with the freedom from extensive government regulations, makes these centers far less costly to operate and more attractive to many citizens. In order to deal with the equal protection ideology, however, all centers permitted to redeem the E & T Certificates must accept **any** applicant who meets reasonable and approved standards of age and performance, and the institutions must use a lottery system if there are more applicants than the center can accommodate.

Only one dwelling in four in Chiwaukland has anyone between birth and age 21, and the average citizen's age is 52. There is an equally small number of automobiles since few can afford the gasoline or propane power and most people can work, shop, attend classes, and receive medical or dental care within five miles of their residence. In seventy-five percent of the families, both adults work; and in thirty percent of families, one adult holds two jobs. Private or government-run child care facilities operate in most large residential centers with costs covered by E & T Certificates, except if formal education programs are desired, which must be covered by a supplemental payment by the parents.

In this final paragraph the author wishes to make clear that what he sees for teaching and learning in 2004 is not his prescription or preference, but is what he anticipates.

Education centers utilize a variety of approaches to teaching and learning depending upon the philosophy of the sponsoring organization and the desires of the parents and/or child. Several employment categories exist within most centers with the highest salaries going to those who prescribe learning activities based upon regular testing of achievement levels. Most teaching takes place in small groups, with a good deal of learning being undertaken independently under the supervision of learning monitors (paid half the salary of the master diagnostic prescriber). Social interaction occurs principally in the recreation part of the program under the supervision of recreation specialists. Most education centers operate year-round programs, with staff and students taking "leaves" according to employee contract provisions and family preferences. Involvement in

some form of learning is mandated from ages three to eighteen; although from age fourteen beyond, the learning experience can occur within the context of one's employment. Proficiency testing is the controlling variable in all educational activities for it prescribes the level of learning activity and controls the dollars available to the individual for learning activities.

In this final paragraph the author wishes to make clear that what he sees for teaching and learning in 2004 is not his prescription or preference, but is what he anticipates.

Reprinted from *Thresholds in Education*, volume 3, 1979.

Glancing Back, Looking Forward: Tea Leaves and Technology

by Donna L. Wiseman

Donna L. Wiseman is the Morgridge Endowed Chair in Teacher Education and Preparation, College of Education, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. Her interests include school-university partnerships, teacher education, and the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

In 1979, Charles Fowler, the superintendent of Schools in Fairfield, Connecticut proposed a view of education for the year 2004. His ideas provide an opportunity to glance back and learn from a futuristic view derived from the culture of the 70's, contemplate what is happening today, and look forward to some possibilities for the future.

Glancing Back

Several 1970's popular science fiction texts such as *Space Odyssey*, *Future Shock*, *1984*, and *2001*, provided Mr. Fowler a blueprint for 2004. His futuristic view centered on a large megalopolis bordering Lake Michigan, three times the size of Chicago, as we know it today, and populated with an aging citizenry. Since cars were very expensive and not widely used, individual communities within the megalopolis were self reliant, well planned population residence..." with shopping, banking, media, and entertainment facilities, as well as educational and recreational centers" (Fowler, 1979, p. 30).

Fowler's educational system of the future did not include public schools and universities, but instead citizens earned "Education and Training Certificates" that were issued primarily on the basis of scores attained on government administered proficiency tests. Without the public school and university systems, centers operated by churches and non-profit cooperatives engaged in educational endeavors. Certificates could be earned throughout a learner's life and focused on job-specific training most of which occurred in the workplace. Testing was an important component in the learning process. Fowler described "Proficiency testing is [as] the controlling variable in all educational activities for it prescribes [d] the level of learning activity and controls [ed] the dollars available to the individual for learning activities" (Fowler, 1979, p. 31).

Expanding Options

Some of Fowler's predictions are far-fetched, some ideas dimly reflect our lives today, and others are impacted by innovations he could not have dreamed about at the time. The large megalopolis located near Lake Michigan is not the 30,000,000 he predicted, but a mere 11,000,000. Most who live in the area could only dream about a time when few people drove cars. The population's average age is not as old as Fowler projected. The baby boomers of today are producing a large number of aging citizens, but there is at the same time a constant source of learners and educators demonstrating an immense energy for life-long learning.

Fowler's predicted demise of schools and universities was premature. Most of us who read this article are still in some way connected to the traditional aspects of an educational system whose doom he forecasted. As he guessed, today's churches do play an important role in education, but usually offering traditional curriculum and instruction in parochial schools. There are several attempts at independent and for profit learning institutions—home schooling, entrepreneurial enterprises, (e.g. Sylvan Learning Centers) and private-for-profit schools (e.g. Edison Project). Even so, most organized learning is sponsored, planned, and implemented by public schools and universities.

There is an important aspect of education in 2004 that Fowler did not pick up on as he read the 1970's fiction. What he missed impacts the present and will continue to mold the future. Mr. Fowler didn't speculate about technology. He couldn't predict that the massive, somewhat crude computers of the 1960's would impact 1990's educational processes and present teachers and learners with increased options. He

had no way of knowing that technology would speed up the forty-year lag-time between the onset and implementation of innovations that he described in his forecast. Nor could he guess that technology and other advancements would contribute to an information explosion that would make teaching and learning more complex.

Virtual reality provides opportunities to feel and sense experiences once only available to the learner through written expression. Only the imagination of teachers and learners limits the access to information across time and space when technology is part of the educational plan.

Technology has the potential to change both public schools and universities. We have already seen differences in the way that some universities are offering course work. Students do not necessarily have to visit a university; instead, they simply log on to their internet courses. Today on-line, internet educational experiences move instruction closer to being totally student centered and self selected (Barone, et al., 1996).

Time and space are re-defined with technology assisted learning. It is possible for a learner to wake up at 2:00 a.m., log on to a computer, and hear an instructor's lecture delivered the previous day. The instructor may be located near or far away, even in another time zone, country, or historical period. The voice of John F. Kennedy can be available for learning about the history of the 1960's. The Nobel Prize Winner, Norman Borloug, can lecture high school students about ecology, food sources, and the Green Revolution. An honored artist from Japan can explain the connections between folk art and culture. Virtual reality provides opportunities to feel and sense experiences once only available to the learner through written expression. Only the imagination of teachers and learners limits the access to information across time and space when technology is part of the educational plan.

There are other ways modern technology increases options. Consider the following example. You are a high school student and your teachers, located thousands of miles apart—in a different location from you, use the internet to provide you with creative and innovative classes. You don't come to class for one-hour segments or at regular times, in an assigned classroom, but instead you log on to the computer and meet your class at your own convenience. Your teachers provide you with problems to solve or you and your classmates take part in a carefully orchestrated on-line written discussion. This classroom is not out of an episode of Star Trek, but a description of a Virtual High School launched in Concord, Massachusetts during the past year. There have been internet-based classes before, but this is the first time a program has linked schools from different parts of the country. The students in the virtual high school can take classes from 28 schools in ten different states.

The Education and Training Certificates described in the 1976 article could be a part of technologically assisted learning plans. With such a variety of ways of learning, successful students may be asked to demonstrate their learning through testing and other accountability measures. A successful business, Cicso Corporation, has established educational Networking Academies that offer on-line curriculum developed by engineers and educators. The course tracks students' learning patterns with a finely tuned assessment process and strategically re-routes the learner through lessons and curriculum to improve their learning. Teachers contribute to the lessons, assist with transitions and support systems, and provide follow-up, but the basic instruction is offered on line and the student moves through the process by successfully passing a series of tests. Just as Fowler suggested, individualized learning encouraged by technology increases the desire for common standards and accountability. The Networking Academies hint at the future of learning standards, testing, and individualized pacing.

Looking Forward with Caution

One does not have to read the tea leaves to realize that the educational options and choices of the future brought on by technology will change teaching and learning. There are many technological examples that help us to understand what the future holds for teachers and learners. Ways of integrating technology into the educational system appear to be almost unlimited. The opportunities must be balanced with cautions that emerge as we consider the impact of technology on the future of education.

Some see technology as an anchor to learning strategies and others see it leading to different forms of learning. New learning strategies and modes will most certainly be a part of teaching and learning processes as we continue to integrate new technology. It is clear that technology will play an important role in how we deal with ever-changing and widely expanding information systems. But we don't yet understand how to best teach future learners to manage these information systems and the ever-expanding knowledge bases.

One caution is for the well being of schools as we go into the new century. Many agree with Fowler that in the future schools and universities are vulnerable. Technology will, at the least, provide competition to existing processes. The competition may not be bad. Multiple options may provide students with choices not available in the past. It may be that traditional educational institution suit some learners while others excel by learning on their own from technological sources.

Another caution involves the importance of making accommodations for diversity among learners. Differences in culture, language, experiences, age, socio-economic status add to the increasing complexity of teaching and learning. Technology can both enhance and contribute to efforts designed to foster connections between students with differing backgrounds and their learning processes. Integrated technology will help meet individualized learning needs, but it also has the potential to widen the gap between the learners who have access to technology and those who do not. No matter how technology evolves, the challenge of the future is to keep the playing field level for all students. All learners—not just the privileged—must access technology.

Educators should approach technological options by remembering the reasons that public schools were established. Schools were established to socialize and prepare children and young people to exist in a democratic society (Wiseman, Cooner, & Knight, 1999). Can that purpose be maintained as we consider technologically assisted learning that encourages independent, individualized learning? The basis of democracy is connections and shared learnings that help us work together for the well being of all our citizens. If there is no common core, no shared educational experience, how will citizens be able to connect to each other? If the future dismantles traditional education, we risk becoming a nation of isolated, uncaring individuals with no shared way of connecting into the democratic process. In many ways Fowler was prophetic as he looked toward the future. He described a different view of education and identified several important trends that we are currently experiencing. But, he didn't get it all. As we stand at the beginning of a new century, it is possible to extend and embellish his predictions. Current predictions cannot avoid the impact of technology. It is safe to say that technology will impact the future of education. But, it is more difficult to predict how and what technology will change with respect to teaching and learning.

Some see technology as an anchor to learning strategies and others see it leading to different forms of learning. New learning strategies and modes will most certainly be a part of teaching and learning processes as we continue to integrate new technology. It is clear that technology will play an important role in how we deal with ever-changing and widely expanding information systems. But we don't yet understand how to best teach future learners to manage these information systems and the ever-expanding knowledge bases.

One does not need to be a futurist to understand that educational systems which succeed as we move into the next century will be those with educators who take risk, accept change, and encourage experimentation. Educators of the future must be ready to accept challenges that we can only dream about today. They will need to change at the drop of a hat and be flexible enough to facilitate learning in new and exciting modes, locations, and settings. As change occurs and options increase, educators should be aware of the overall purpose of education. No matter how technologically integrated our learning environments become, good educators must continue to focus on assisting all learners to learn and help them access a richer life through learning. It will take all educators working together to turn that goal into a reality during the next twenty-five years.

References

Wiseman, D. L., Cooner, D. D. & Knight, S. L. (1999). *Becoming a teacher in a field-based setting*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Barone, T., Berliner, D.C., Blanchard, J., Casanova, U., & McGowan, T. (1996). A future for teacher education. In J. Sikula (Ed.) *Handbook on Research in Teacher Education*. 1108-1149. New York: MacMillan.

Fowler, C.W. (August 1979). Toward the year...2004. *Thresholds in Education, V* (3), 30-31.

What Will it Take?

by Howard S. Smucker

Howard S. Smucker, Ed.D. is Associate Professor, School of Education, Aurora University and Interim Superintendent of Schools, Naperville Community Unit School District #203, Naperville, Illinois

Twenty years ago, in the 1979 issue of *Thresholds*, Dr. Charles W. Fowler, former Superintendent of Schools of the DeKalb Community Unit Schools and then Superintendent of the Fairfield, Connecticut Public Schools, offered his vision for education in the article, "Toward The Year 2004." He took the reader on a trip to Chiquakland, a 150-square mile area bordering Lake Michigan with a population in excess of 30 million. Dr. Fowler's described Chiquakland as one of four major independent metropolitan areas in the U.S. with its own representation in Congress. In 2004 Chiquakland accounted for 60% of the nation's population and an even a higher percentage of the GNP.

Dr. Fowler's educational odyssey through Chiguakland is thought provoking and should be required reading for all of us in the educational arena.

Dr. Fowler's educational odyssey through Chiguakland is thought provoking and should be required reading for all of us in the educational arena. Although speculating on the future is always hazardous, Fowler had the courage to look ahead twenty-five years and to describe what he saw for teaching and learning. It would be interesting if each *Thresholds* reader took the time to write a similar essay entitled, "Toward The Year 2025."

As we look to the future, perhaps we need to develop more open dialogue between public/ private schools and colleges/ universities to address some of the hard realities surrounding our communities today. What are the hard realities? I suspect that the parents, students, and faculty at Columbine High School could identify some of them. The list includes increased drug use, suicide, vandalism, and violence in our schools. In addressing these hard realities, it is imperative that school leadership better understand that the essential agents of change are our classroom teachers.

Twenty years ago, as he explored educational issues related to change, Dr. Fowler referred to the work of Paul Mart, a distinguished professor at Teachers College, Columbia University who introduced us to "lag time." Studying the time it took for a new idea to spread through our educational institutions, gain wide acceptance, and become common place in our daily school instructional programs, Mart found that "lag time" was often as long as forty years. Dr. Fowler predicted that the pace of education and cultural change would have accelerated enough by the year 2004 to move the "lag time" from forty plus years to twenty-five years.

I would suggest that we haven't responded to the cultural, educational, and technological changes that swirl around us and that our "lag time" is still around forty years. This lack of response is not due to the fact that public school and university leaders are unaware of the hard realities accompanying these changes. We are all aware of the changing student population. We realize that, as educators, we are now expected to take on tasks for which we have never before been held responsible. We expect our teachers to be social workers, psychologists, and family counselors. In addition, core curricular studies are being squeezed from all sides by state and national mandates.

Most current research on organizational dynamics indicates that the rate of change in the business world is not going to slow down. Related studies in education suggest that typical twentieth-century public school organizations do not operate well in a rapidly changing environment. Dr. Phillip C. Schlechty, author of *Inventing Better Schools: An Action Plan for Educational Reform*, contends that "Educators must invent a system of education the likes of which have never been seen anywhere in the world: A system of education that provides an elite

education for nearly every child" (p.15). Are we ready to design schools that look very different from those we now serve in order to provide students with the skills they need for employability and effective citizenship in an "information society"? Should not our vision for the 21st century include something as dramatic as extending the school day and the school year?

Dramatic change requires versatile, responsive, dynamic leadership. The next generation of school leaders will need to be capable of generating a sense of urgency in their institutions as John P. Kotter explains:

> Major change is never successful unless the complacency level is low. A high urgency rate helps enormously in completing all stages of the transformation process. If the rate of external change continues to climb, then the urgency rate of the winning twenty-first-century organization will have to be medium to high all the time. The twentieth-century model of lengthy periods of calm or complacency being punctuated by shorter periods of hectic activity will not work. (p. 162)

We are all preparing for the new millennium. Re-reading "Toward The Year 2004" should prompt all of us to be part of meaningful discussions that focus on personal renewal – renewal that includes invention and risk taking – as we thoughtfully examine cultural change and the structure of our educational systems in order to better prepare our students for what the future holds.

References

Fowler, C.W. (August 1979). Toward the year...2004. *Thresholds in Education, V* (3), 30-31.

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading Change.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Schlechty, P.C. (1997). *Inventing Better Schools: An Action Plan for Educational Reform.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Toward Year 2000 – Method: Promise of Actual Things

By Mary Louise Seguel

Mary Louise Seguel is Professor of Education-Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Northern Illinois University

Walter Lippman once suggested that "the living zone where the present is passing into the future is the region where thought and action count." This unfolding present is not so far behind that there is nothing but memory, nor so far ahead that there is nothing to but dream. One of the forces which educators might extricate from the professional world as we find it today is the lively and vigorous interest in teaching method. We would do well to surround this force with criticism and suggestion so that we may be most creative in its development.

Professional attention to method per se was strong in the twenties. In another paper I have called attention to the spate of educational literature on method in this period and the coining of a rich vocabulary to discuss it. This interest languished partly because of attention to the concept of the curriculum and curriculum development which was comprehensive in its integration of content and method, and partly because of the influence of the ideas of Dewey and others on the primacy of learning. For whatever reason, method as a term has been replaced by others more fashionable, the current favorites being model and strategy. And the rich lore of methodological suggestion has been largely relegated to dusty, unused shelves in libraries.

Beginning in the thirties, it is my thesis that a number of events have contributed to a shift away from attention to the core questions in the direction of the peripheral ones.

In the last decade, however, a renewed interest in teaching has emerged. There has been a general social unease over documented inadequacies in basic skill performance, linguistic and computational, of youth coming out of schools and entering colleges and the work force. Flaws in the product have led to questions about the procedures used to secure the product. As a result professional educators have shown a growing awareness of the lack of clarity, precision, and predicability in the way in which the teaching act is conceptualized. Borrowing from medicine, with its exclusive emphasis on pathology, the profession has been searching for more predicable and precise diagnosis and prescriptive procedures in education. Whether education is rightly concerned with only pathology is less important than is the fact that educators are beginning to demand greater conceptual control over the teaching act itself.

This development has been a reaction to the nature of the field of curriculum. The curriculum concept is an integrative one. The curriculum is thought of as the instrument by which the school as an agent of society accomplishes the major socialization tasks for all its members. It is my thesis that curriculum-makers answer two sets of questions, one set of peripheral questions which are not in the main answered by professional educators, and the other set of core questions which are: Examples of peripheral questions are, "Who teaches?" (persons certified by the state not by the professional directly), "Who is taught?" (all persons of a certain age, not clients selected by the professional), "Who pays?" (the society through taxes, not the individual through professional fees). Examples of core questions are, "What to teach?" "How to teach it?" "How to organize for teaching?" "How to evaluate learning and teaching?" "How to im-

prove learning and teaching?" Although answers to each set of questions are interactive, and educators influence peripheral questions and other social groups influence the core questions, in the main there is the division of labor I have suggested.

Beginning in the thirties, it is my thesis that a number of events have contributed to a shift away from attention to the core questions in the direction of the peripheral ones. First, psychologists over decades have analyzed the nature of the learner and those aspects of human development which affect learning. Sociologists and anthropologists have analyzed the context of learning, that is the school as an institution in a particular society, identifying the various institutional factors which affect learning. Professional educators themselves have analyzed the nature of knowledge and its basic characteristics as they influence learning. Although there have been other influences, these appear to be important ones.

Each set of factors has come to the attention of the educator accompanied by a set of prescriptions for teaching. Often these prescriptions show a serious ignorance of the nature of teaching. Piaget describes the growth of child logic, but teachers are advised both to let that growth occur naturally and to plan teaching which will foster it. Sociologists describe the school as a gigantic, social sorting mechanism, but teachers are counseled simultaneously to teach the higher-order mental processes to future leaders and concentrate on the basics for future workers, without any way of knowing which will be which. Curriculum theorists outline the explosion of knowledge today but teachers are urged both to teach the structures of the various fields and to teach that detailed information relevant to survival in contemporary culture.

The graduate comes out of teacher education with a head full of the implications of the various factors, psychological, sociological and epistemological which condition the teaching act. Such awareness is all to the good, but the same graduate has been grievously undersold on the detailed, predictable, and clearly communicated details of his craft.

As a result, the teaching profession today appears to suffer a severe information overload on answers to the peripheral curriculum questions, and starvation on answers to the core questions. Since the teaching profession has relatively little power to affect answers to the peripheral questions, we would be better advised to concentrate on answers to the core questions over which the profession has a very great deal of control, and for which it is held responsible by society. The education of the pre-teacher in schools of professional education reflects this bias away from the core questions. The graduate comes out of teacher education with a head full of the implications of the various factors, psychological, sociological and epistemological which condition the teaching act. Such awareness is all to the good, but the same graduate has been grievously undersold on the detailed, predictable, and clearly communicated details of his craft. The graduate doesn't get it because it doesn't exist, and there is a growing awareness that the important task right now is to forge it. A vital element in such a body of knowledge would be those reliable procedures and techniques which might be thought of as basic method.

What might the profession do to develop greater predictability and control? We have had available for some time a taxonomy of educational objectives which is a useful tool in approaching the answers to the question, "What to teach?" Another useful tool would be a taxonomy of method, developed with attention to clarity, communicability, and precision. Such a taxonomy, if well made, would give the profession a common set of concepts with which to study method. Attempts to discover which methods are most frequently in actual use in practice demand some standardization of concept and language. Controlled research on the success or failure of selected linkages between method and outcome also absolutely demands such standardization. Only if such a standardization exists can prescriptive methods begin to be codified with some expectation of predictability and control and be made available both as a guide to teacher preparation and to school practice.

In sum, we as a profession should surround this growing force for clarity and communicability in method with criticism and suggestion and strengthen professional impetus toward greater precision and control of teaching. Our culture respects this professional attitude. Those who cry "but teaching is an

art" may still use codified knowledge in creative and expressive ways. If the day ever comes, and I think it may sooner than we think, that teachers operate as autonomous professionals relating to a self-selected clientele as do doctors and lawyers today, we should be ready with as well a validated body of method as we can muster.

Reprinted from *Thresholds in Education*, volume 3, 1979.

Method: A Promise Revisited

by Mary Louise Seguel

Mary Louise Seguel is Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois

In the twenty years that have gone by since I wrote a plea to the profession for "greater precision and control of teaching" we don't seem to have moved much toward this goal. The rich lore of past methodological suggestion together with new inventions in method during these twenty years, still seem to be ignored by most of our profession although used by some. As a profession we are still largely telling, asking questions that have standard answers, requiring memorizing and massive rote repetition. Our students still spend most of their time at their seats using texts, answering questions posed by the teacher and in general giving back to the teacher vast quantities of received knowledge in verbal form.

I said little in 1979 about the inadequacy of this kind of learning and teaching for success in the twentieth century. I should have said more and now on the brink of the twenty-first I must be more forthright. Our nation's economy is no longer the major contributor of basic manufactured products to the world. The great strength of our economy lies now in the fields of organization and communication. We no longer need only a "trained" factory force which follows orders but rather are moving in the direction of a work force which knows how to identify and solve problems, capitalize on ambiguity, cooperate in organizations - in short, thinking individuals. Our culture, as befits a free people, is highly dynamic and

The kind of education befitting the coming century is far more rigorous and much harder than the old fill-in-the blanks kind. It requires the learner's full attention and the use of all his or her capacities.

we need to prepare our children and youth for it in ways that strengthen and empower them to think, plan, evaluate, originate. If we don't do this we are wasting their time. It is possible that the youth themselves sense this and are impatient with the time-serving demanded of them in schools. In reality, here and there are bright spots... schools that have met the challenge and are using both stimulating and demanding classroom methods. The kind of education befitting the coming century is far more rigorous and much harder than the old fill-in-the blanks kind. It requires the learner's full attention and the use of all his or her capacities.

It is my contention that teachers need to alter their methods to meet this challenge. Method refers to what teachers and students do all the time in school. It encompasses such things as how students spend their time, what things they need to learn from, where they study, who talks and who listens, and so forth. For example, rather than spending time sitting at desks, students should be working in labs, on stages, in libraries, and in the community. Rather than listening they should be exchanging information, asking questions, sharing knowledge, and defending points of view. I argued then and I argue still that even the teachers are sold short since the profession doesn't seem to know how to prepare them for the new challenges. My suggestion then was the creation of a kind of scheme of method similar to the brilliant scheme of outcomes suggested sixty years ago by Bloom. I argued for a taxonomy (really just a fancy word for a plan) which would first group together the kinds of goals we are striving for, then group under each goal the particular kind of method which showed promise of reaching that goal, and describe that method with enough detail so that teachers could recognize it, try to use it, get help in perfecting it from mentors and share their experiences.

For example, it might be suggested that at least a quarter of school time needs to be spent on received knowledge since without this storehouse, clear thinking is stalled. Another quarter might need to be spent on concepts, those general notions that are the pegs on which information is hung. Another

quarter could be spent on intellectual processes, the major ones being reading, mathematical reasoning, and experimentation, with some others such as speaking, listening, writing, historical method, artistic creation. And the rest of time could be reserved for such sundries as personal growth, motor skills, and group experience.

The foregoing is only a suggestion of the way we should be thinking about method. Notice that it begins with naming those kinds of learning we are striving for. This is our first job. Notice also that these kinds of learning differ from each other considerably. Memorizing data is not at all like penetrating a concept, and neither of them resembles such slowly developing processes as reading and mathematical thinking. As a result, the methods the teacher uses to achieve each kind of goal should also differ. Current workbooks and computer programs achieve memorization admirably. They are of little use in developing concepts which requires highly labor intensive work by the teacher as the students work out their complexities. And the lab work needed for the intellectual processes is very different from either of the above. Even motor skills require their own particular kind of monitored demonstration. The sad fact is that although admirably conceived methods abound for each kind of learning described above experience shows that they are not widely used. They are bypassed in favor of the old methods of telling and pencil pushing.

In the thirties Ernest Melby suggested that we might consider our students as clients rather than cohorts. If we did, we would design experiences for them that would include both individual study and group work, both in school and out, and we would take a long range view of their growth and learning.

If we, as a profession, would work for this kind of clarity, then the preparation of teachers in teachers colleges would be in harmony with the practice in the classroom and the supervision offered there. I don't see us doing anything like this. I see a public which believes in our schools, but which is perplexed at the apparent inability of our graduates to take hold of their jobs and fill them competently. I see the workplace in a rough and demanding way requiring our graduates to learn those things that the schools somehow failed to teach them. I see students feeling alienated and disaffected from a culture that in reality is an astounding place of freedom and opportunity. It is almost as though we shut our children and youth up in a school to keep them away from what is going on in the world and then wonder why they seem so inept when they get out in it.

I know I sound like a Jeremiah but I was asked to respond to the conclusions I reached in my initial article in 1979. If I could be a visionary I would like to suggest that the factory model of the school is outmoded...classes like platoons given standardized experiences. In the thirties Ernest Melby suggested that we might consider our students as clients rather than cohorts. If we did, we would design experiences for them that would include both individual study and group work, both in school and out, and we would take a long range view of their growth and learning. At heart, I believe in my culture and live in hope that we will pull up our socks and attack this challenge head on.

Constructing New Knowledge

by Steven Isoye

Steven Isoye is Science Department Chair, Highland Park High School, Highland Park, IL. He is the 1997 Milken Award Recipient and the 1998 Illinois Teacher of the Year

Teaching is a fluid process. No longer can we, as teachers, assume that all children learn the in same way. No longer can we emphasize only content or provide only step-by-step processes. As professionals, we need to adapt our teaching to ensure that all students learn. Does this mean an extreme change in the way we have been teaching? Not necessarily—but we may need to rethink our philosophies of teaching. Now that we are at the doorstep of the 21st century, all teachers should revisit their philosophies of education and evaluate them in light of current research. A personal philosophy should be the driving force for classroom practice, reflecting current knowledge and ensuring that all students incorporate what they learn into who they are as people.

As a teacher, have you ever found yourself wondering what the students learned before they got to your class? It's a frustrating experience, indeed (even keeping in mind that the teacher with our former students may be thinking the same thing). There must be a way to better help students learn and retain material. I believe a constructivist approach is one of many things a teacher can do to help students learn and not just perform. The constructivist approach to teaching has allowed me to have success with my students and to honor my students' interest, excitement, and need for relevance. Constructivism allows students to be in charge and see relevance as they construct their new knowledge. This, in turn, leads to a greater retention of the subject matter.

Now that we are at the doorstep of the 21st century, all teachers should revisit their philosophies of education and evaluate them in light of current research. A personal philosophy should be the driving force for classroom practice, reflecting current knowledge and ensuring that all students incorporate what they learn into who they are as people.

The constructivist approach takes into consideration the fact that when students enter the classroom, they already have definitions and explanations about the world around them. By using students' prior knowledge, a teacher can help students build upon their existing experiences, challenge the student's definitions, and encourage them to rethink their ideas. When students make the link with their own experiences, the subject is no longer a separate entity, but a part of who the students are and how they see the world.

Does this mean that a teacher has to provide individualized instruction for all thirty students in the classroom? Not at all — but the teacher must examine each instructional approach and develop questions that allow students to make the links necessary for learning to take place. For example, imagine what would happen if I dropped a piece of paper with one hand and a telephone book with the other at the same time. When I ask students to predict what they will see, they all say the phone book will hit the floor first. When I ask why, most believe that the book will hit the floor first because it is heavier. When I drop both objects, students can verify their initial explanations about falling objects. If they get it right, I have reinforced their explanation (whether it is right or wrong). In this process, I am allowing students to work with their own prior knowledge.

In order to check their explanations further, I pose new questions that will challenge their original

thoughts. By asking the questions that I ask, I am working to link each experience to prior knowledge. I ask the students predict what will happen if the paper is placed underneath the book. Most students believe that the book will push the paper down since the book is heavier. Once again I drop the objects and confirm their thoughts (whether right or wrong). Then I place the paper on top of the book. This causes some discomfort. Based on their prior explanations, the book should fall faster than the paper, leaving the paper behind. Some students think this might happen, while others begin to have second thoughts. When students realize the weakness of their prior knowledge, they begin to construct new knowledge. After I drop the objects, students notice that the two travel together. I then follow this with more examples. In the end, the students who thought the heavier object would fall faster must revise their explanation. Eventually students conclude that all objects fall at the same rate; however, air resistance is a factor to be considered. This new knowledge is now a part of the students who have reached inside, pulled up their own explanations, checked for accuracy, and made appropriate modifications.

It must be understood that the paper and book activity has been around for years. Consider this alternative for the same activity: First, explain how all objects fall at the same rate of 9.8 m/ sec/ sec; then, follow-up the definition by giving students examples of falling objects and a clear explanation for each occurrence. In this method, instead of learning what happens, students are told what happens. Students have a "classroom" experience. In other words, the explanation or definition works in the classroom. Unfortunately, students will most likely reference their prior knowledge (which has been untapped), not this "classroom" knowledge once they are out of the classroom. Dropping a book and paper is not by itself a constructivist approach; it is the way in which the activity is presented. Teachers can take most existing activities and transform them in a fashion that allows students to construct their own knowledge.

All teachers should work to get away from "classroom" definitions and instead integrate their subjects into the lives of their students.

Asking thought provoking questions is one way to encourage students to construct their own knowledge. Visualizations (demonstrations, pictures, poems, etc.) can also provide links to prior knowledge and serve as anchors for those with little prior knowledge. In addition, student-generated stories can be used to help relate personal experiences to current topics. Using their own stories, students can begin to relate to the material as it relates to them.

The constructivist way of teaching may improve what students learn; however, improving process is not enough by itself. As we enter the 21st century it makes sense for educators to reevaluate the need for an agrarian calendar. The summer is a fun time, and families have traditionally used this time for vacations; however, educators can help the "flow" of learning by adopting a calendar that distributes vacation time more evenly. Given shorter breaks over the course of the year instead of long separations between school years, students can use their knowledge more consistently. When students have ongoing opportunities for reinforcing what they are learning, there is less need for an extensive review of prior content at the beginning of each new year. As for family vacations, more and more families take vacations during the school year because plane fares or gas prices are often more affordable off-season. Spreading vacations throughout the school calendar allows parents to take vacations at a variety of times throughout the year without disrupting their children's education. The overall objective is to increase learning by minimizing the time away from school.

I have only mentioned a few things that educators may want to consider as we move into the 21st century. Whether a teacher decides that a constructivist approach is appropriate or not, I feel that all teachers should revisit their philosophies of education and examine their reasons for teaching the way they teach. All teachers should ask themselves what it means to learn. All teachers should work to get away from "classroom" definitions and instead integrate their subjects into the lives of their students. Teaching is hard, yet incredibly rewarding when you know that your students have learned and incorporated your passion for knowledge.

Toward the Year – 2000: The Courts Will Return to Sanity?

by Earl E. Hoffman

Dr. Earl E. Hoffman is professor of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

The legal system has been established to assure a degree of orderly activity within our society and its institutions. This system may, at times, lead the thinking of its members. At other times, it may be influenced by the desires and needs of the people for whom it designs and interprets acceptable modes of behavior. During the last two decades, the legal system has faced a myriad of social problems as it has attempted to prevent chaos within and among our social institutions. Perhaps the next decade will find the legal system refining the great issues of the recent past and returning again to a semblance of sanity.

Courts do not create laws. Courts interpret laws which have been made. When a decision has been made based upon a law and certain circumstances, members of the society can generally feel assured that in another situation with similar circumstances, the decision will be the same. The courts operate on precedents to lend stability to decisions. However, it is possible that when social needs genuinely change and legislation has not kept pace with that change, courts may overturn a precedent and, in a landmark opinion, establish a new direction in law. An example of such a change occurred in 1959 when the Illinois Supreme Court was faced with an issue related to the responsibility of a school district for the negligent acts of an employee. Precedent had been established in American law that the state and its created subdivisions such as school districts had tort immunity. That is, the school district was not legally responsible for injury to individuals which might have been caused by its negligence or by that of its employees. In this famous decision the Supreme Court overturned that precedent when it stated:

We conclude that the rule of school district tort immunity is unjust, unsupported by any valid reason, and has no rightful place in modern day society.[1]

The major litigation that has occurred during the last decade or two has been concerned with the "rights" of individuals and organizations. These rights have been discovered as the result of new or different interpretations of several amendments to the Constitution, notably the First and Fourteenth. The First Amendment phrase that has generated most concern states that "Congress shall make no law ...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press...". A more lengthy section of the Fourteenth Amendment involving newly described rights guarantees that no state shall:

...deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Unfortunately, these rights which have been uncovered by the courts have often been directly construed as responsibilities for school districts. Legal conflict has been the result.

An area where it appears that greater sanity may appear in the next decade is in the requirement for curriculum and equal opportunities for the handicapped and/or minorities. One important curriculum change was initiated by *Lau v. Nichols* in San Francisco in 1974. Approximately 1800 children of Chinese ancestry who could not read, write, or speak the English language, were enrolled in the school system. The U. S. Supreme Court ordered the district to develop programs whereby these children would be taught the English language so as to be able to receive the benefits and opportunities of a free public education. Even though the decision was not based on the Fourteenth Amendment but on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and because H.E.W. guidelines required

correction of language difficulties in order for the district to receive any federal funds, the result was the same. The Court noted:

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.[2]

Consequently, legislation in the various states has developed wide ranging, bilingual, bicultural programs supplemented by Federal monies. Universities have developed programs to train special teachers for that new curriculum effort. But while the Lau decision sought only an education in English for the children, it seems to have been interpreted by some educational leaders to mean programs for not only education in English but also in the maintenance of the particular language and culture where much of the general curriculum continues to be taught in the native language without an intent of transition. In reality, a dual system has been developed in these school districts. A petition in the Ninth District Court of Appeals recently requested a curricular program which would have Mexican-American and Yaqui Indian children instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve such that these children would become competent and functional in both English and Spanish.[3] It was rejected by court reaffirming the original intent of Lau and restraining the further development of dual programs. The Wisconsin statutes, which created programs for bilingual instruction in that state, speak succinctly on the point:

...the ultimate objective shall be to provide a proficiency in those courses in the English language in order that the pupil will be able to participate fully in a society whose language is English.[4]

In the early 1970's, sentiment was rising for the appropriate education of handicapped children. The decision in *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*[5] gave impetus to that movement. The intent of the action was admirable, but the manner in which programs have been established, mandated, and administered throughout the nation has resulted in one of the most wasteful displays of finances, personnel, and materials in public school history. Based upon court decisions, legislation, and sentiment, these inappropriate uses of resources will be challenged and faced in the next decade to again restore some balance and sanity to school programs and to every child's opportunities.

While it is not politically expedient to vote against appropriations for handicapped children, more legislators and parents will become aware of the great inequity in funds for the education of various classifications of children.

In the Pennsylvania case, parents of retarded children who could not be enrolled in the public schools sought relief from the courts on the basis of the equal opportunities' concept of the Constitution and the free education clause in the Pennsylvania constitution. A U.S. District Court ordered state schools to implement educational programs for all mentally handicapped children by September 1, 1972. It summarized its deliberations by noting:

(H)aving undertaken to provide a free public education for all its children, ...the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may not deny any mentally retarded child access to a free public program of education and training.[6]

A similar decision resulted in Washington, D.C. shortly after the Pennsylvania case where only 4,000 of more than 16,000 handicapped children were being served by the school district.[7]

While these two decisions relating to handicapped children had no legal influence on other parts of the nation, the precedents and social pressures were enough that states began to develop their own mandatory programs for handicapped children. The federal *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* culminated this movement with requirements for mainstreaming and individualized educational programs for each child. The result has been a great expansion and development of programs at a great cost in financial expenditures. These costs have been borne mainly by the local school districts since the federal and state mandates for such programs neglected to fund them appropriately from those levels.

There seems to be little argument that the programs established are, in the long run, beneficial to most of the students involved and to society in general. However, rumblings are being heard that the priorities for expending school monies have tipped too far in favor of the handicapped at the expense of the 'average' and 'gifted' students. For example, Illinois state aid to school districts was determined primarily upon a basic foundation level of $1310 per child in 1978-79 for average daily attendance. The Illinois Office of Education reports that state

appropriations for the gifted programs in Illinois were $3,630,000 while total funding made available for the handicapped, including transportation, was approximately $220,000,000.

While it is not politically expedient to vote against appropriations for handicapped children, more legislators and parents will become aware of the great inequity in funds for the education of various classifications of children. One such case, *Irwin v. McHenry (Il) C.C. Sch. Dist. 15,* has already been filed alleging the failure of the school district to provide adequate education for Irwin's son who has a measured I.Q. score of 169. Additional cases such as this are certain to be filed in the next decade, and the plaintiffs will find sympathetic ears among the jurists. The courts will modify priorities which the legislative and executive branches of government are unable or unwilling to make.

Judicial changes and modifications will also be made in the next decade in decisions related to the general 'rights' movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the last decade, students and teachers have sought additional rights provided by the courts when those rights were challenged or were infringed upon without the higher quantum of due process recently uncovered by the courts. Perhaps the most important case related to school children was *Tinker v. Des Moines Comm. Sch. District* in which the U.S. Supreme Court recognized children as 'persons' in the eyes of the law rather than as objects or things to be used and manipulated by parents, schools, and society.[8] The First Amendment's protection of free speech was provided to children, and the symbolic armbands worn by the Tinker children became the basis for a multitude of cases involving school children and oral, symbolic, and written speech. Cases involving leather jackets, long hair, no ties, appropriate dress, school newspapers, school reading materials, and obscene language inundated the courts' dockets. Space does not permit a listing and discussion of cases illustrating each of the issues, but several may demonstrate a change in attitude of the courts toward a more rational interpretation of freedoms and rights and a greater reverence to established authority.

Student speech and publications have been given practically free reign through court interpretations of the right to freedom of speech. However, there are an increasing number of reports appearing in newspapers indicating that, more often than in the past, school boards are successfully monitoring books and other reading material available to students. While these actions could possibly be fought in the courts, many times it is not being done.

The early landmark decision relating to newspapers circulated in the schools was *Scoville v. Board of Education of Joliet Twp. H. S. Dist. #204.*[9] In this underground newspaper, the editors urged students not to deliver communications from the school to their parents and "...in the future to either refuse to accept or destroy upon acceptance all propaganda that Central's administration publishes."[10] They also criticized an article describing a racial breakdown of the student body and concluded that the senior dean had a sick mind. It was suggested that oral sex might stop tooth decay. A subsequent issue outlined the quiet take-over of the school and the quick dispatching of the superintendent, principal, secretaries, and certain deans. The publications also contained attempts at serious poetry as well as comments and essays, usually related to sex or the sick society, which would be revolting to more sensitive readers. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the rights of the student to publish and distribute the paper since the effort did not disrupt the educational programs of the school, and freedom of speech and press was a right of students even though the contents might be critical of programs or individuals.

A rash of newspaper cases followed in which decisions were rendered allowing students to publish almost anything they wished within the bounds of general journalistic responsibility even though it included such controversial topics such as Viet Nam, birth control and abortion, or nuclear power. However, a recent case has tempered that movement when the Second Judicial Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the right of a school board to refuse to allow students to allow students to distribute a sex survey in the school and to publish the results. Considering the potential, psychological harm to students, the court agreed that "...the school authorities are sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable concerning these matters which have been entrusted to them by the community."[11]

The rights of teachers and of their manner of dress have also been given wide parameters by the courts. A change may be coming in this area as well since two court decisions recently have limited those individual rights in favor of the desires and authority of local school boards. The same Court of Appeals above ruled in favor of the Town of East Hartford Board of Education in the dismissal of a teacher over school dress. The teacher claimed freedom of speech, albeit symbolic speech, by not wearing a necktie while teaching his English classes which was contrary to board regulations. The court demonstrated an apparently growing attitude that some issues between employer and employee are best settled locally and are not worthy of constitutional balancing. The court wrote:

> If the teacher has any protected interest in his neckwear, it does not weigh heavily on the constitu-

> tional scales. ...By bringing trivial activities under the constitutional umbrella, we trivialize the constitutional provision itself.[12]

Similarly, on March 26, 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear a case and thereby let stand an Appeals Court decision involving a teacher who refused to shave his beard according to directions from his Board of Education. Gene Ball, a junior high school teacher in Kerville, Texas, pursued his legal rights through a myriad of courts for ten years, but the final decision was that he had failed to show "...a constitutional question worthy of a federal court's attention. His claim to a deprivation of liberty was 'wholly unsubstantiated and frivolous'."[13]

The foregoing illustrations do not cover all of the facts of controversy related to school affairs. In fact, such issues as unisex athletic programs or quota enrollments and assignments were not mentioned even though they will also continue to bring cases to court dockets. However, there do seem to be some indications that the judiciary is attempting to place decision-making back into the hands and control of those who are elected to make those decisions. Perhaps a summary of future directions of court opinions related to schools and education would include the following:

1. The courts will more quickly quash nuisance cases thereby enabling quicker decisions on weightier cases.
2. Constituted authority will be given greater latitude in making decisions without fear of constant legal involvement.
3. Priorities in the support for equal educational opportunities will be reevaluated.
4. The rights movement will continue, but modifications will occur in the implementations of changes approved in the last decade.
5. A greater stability in school law will evolve, and the courts will embark upon a period of relative sanity during the 1980's.

Notes

[1] Molitor v. Kaneland Comm. Unit Sch. Dist. No. 302, 163 N.E. 2d 96.

[2] Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 565

[3] Guadalupe Organization v. Tempe Elm. Sch. Dist. #3, 587 F. 2d 1022.

[4] Wisconsin Revised Statutes, Chapter 115.95 (5)

[5] Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 334 F. Supp. 1257.

[6] Ibid

[7] Mills v. Board of Education of Washington, D.C., 348 F. Supp. 866.

[8] Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Comm. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503.

[9] Scoville v. Board of Education of Joliet Tp. H.S. Dist. #204, 425 F. 2d 10.

[10] GRAS HIGH, student publication sold at Joliet Central High School on January 15, 1968.

[11] Trachtman v. Anker, 46 LW 2157.

[12] East Hartford Education Association v. Board of Education of the Town of East Hartford, 46 LW 2135.

[13] Ball v. Board of Trustees of the Kerville Independent Sch. Dist., U.S.

Reprinted from *Thresholds in Education*, volume 3, 1979.

Revisiting 1979 Predictions: Have You Been Sued Yet?

by Earl Hoffman

Earl Hoffman is Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois

For this issue of *Thresholds in Education*, I have been asked to look back and critique the predictions I made in an August 1979 article entitled "Toward the Year 2000: The Courts Will Return to Sanity?" I predicted that the Bulls would not win 50 games in 1998, and earlier, that Bakalis would have no chance to be elected State Superintendent (some of you remember). I could not see Carol Mosely Braun losing her Senate race. I have a reputation for predictions to uphold.

Twenty years ago I did predict fewer school cases related to curriculum issues and teacher behaviors. I think that has occurred. Teachers either dress more appropriately now or their clothing and hairstyles are ignored. School newspaper rights and responsibilities are reasonably well recognized and followed. There seem to be few questions about the rights of handicapped or impaired children to a meaningful education.

In the 1970's, we began establishing classes for all types of "handicapped" children including Educationally Mentally Handicapped, Hearing and Sight Impaired, and Behavioral Disorders. More recently the trend has been to reintroduce and integrate these children into the regular school classroom. In cases where this change has been carefully planned with input from parents, teachers, principals, and psychologists, and physicians, reintroduction has been beneficial. Too many school districts have, however, simply plopped special needs students into regular classes to the detriment of the special needs students themselves, their peers in the regular classroom, and teaching effectiveness.

I feel that the plethora of television programs depicting an attitude of disrespect to parents, teachers, and law enforcement officials, have had a direct impact on the direction of court cases involving schools and school people.

Teachers and psychologists have also diagnosed a number of other problems known by various acronyms including the relatively new ADD. These diagnoses have been quietly accepted without the agony of long and expensive legal wrangling. This squares with my predictions that fewer cases related to students' "rights" to an education would go to court.

Over the past two decades, attention has been diverted from basic curriculum needs and practices to a wider range of societal needs and problems. In the late '60's and early '70's, school officials and community leaders were less likely to be concerned with drugs in the school, guns in the school, computers in the school (with total internet access), and the constant horror of shootings, fighting, and general mayhem on movies, television and videos. I feel that the plethora of television programs depicting an attitude of disrespect to parents, teachers, and law enforcement officials, have had a direct impact on the direction of court cases involving schools and school people.

One example is the growing number of schools establishing policies for periodic drug testing for those involved in extracurricular activities. Another example is litigation related to school safety. In 1970, few students entered schools through metal detectors. Today, administrators may spend more time on student safety than on curriculum development. One wonders about the mental condition of a Charlton Heston when he suggests that an armed guard at the Littleton

High School could have prevented the slaughter of students on that fateful day. (There was a guard on duty). When the dust finally settles on various school shootings, how much energy and cost will have been expended by school personnel in suits claiming alleged negligence in maintaining a safe school environment?

In 1979 I observed that people's needs as well as their desires influence the legal system, adding that "when social needs genuinely change and legislation has not kept pace with that change, courts may establish a new direction in law." The following changes in direction may affect local school districts as well as higher education and the public at large.

Did Joe Camel really convince young children to begin smoking? Whether we can answer this question or not, public and social pressures succeeded in removing the misshapen ruminant from all billboards. The *New York Times* has changed its policies and now refuses any advertisements for cigarettes. All sizable restaurants have nonsmoking areas or, like McDonalds, have prohibited smoking altogether in their establishments.

Since Title IX was established as law to create greater equality of opportunity in sports activities for women, public pressures for adherence to the letter of this law have resulted in a number of different methods for compliance. At Miami University in Ohio, Athletic Director Joel Maturi has directed the elimination of three men's sports "to meet gender equity." The university abandoned men's tennis, soccer, and wrestling in order to comply with Title IX. Maturi explained, "We did not have the funds to become gender equitable and to be competitive in all sports."

Will the courts return to sanity by the year 2000? The answer is probably in the affirmative if the 1970 issues are considered. However, when the public views the issues of the present day, it would appear that in many cases common sense was abandoned at the time of the forced retirement of the mimeograph machine.

Providence College this year eliminated its oldest sport—baseball— after its most successful season ever. Despite a lack of interest, the college is now recruiting women ("at least five feet ten inches tall, solidly build and between 155 and 210 pounds") to establish women's crew as an NCAA sport for the sake of Title IX compliance. Similarly, Northern Illinois University is adding women's track to its crowded athletic program in order to comply, even though enthusiasm and excitement among women students has been under whelming. I do not believe this is what proponents and developers of the law had in mind.

Over the past twenty years, concerns about various types of harassment have grown significantly. In a recent United States Supreme Court decision (Davis case), Justice Sandra O'Connor wrote the majority opinion (5-4) in a suit involving harassment of a fifth grade student by a classmate. Last year the court ruled on a case of alleged teacher harassment of a student. Justice Kennedy, in his dissent, worried that the ruling could "breed a climate of fear that encourages school administrators to label even the most innocuous of childish conduct sexual harassment." He was referring to the suspension of a six-year-old boy who quickly kissed a favorite classmate and found himself involved in political and administrative nightmares.

Schools must be vigilant in all areas of harassment. The court's ruling requires that the school authorities know about the harassment and are "deliberately indifferent" before they become liable. That phrase can be a bonanza to the legal profession, and Justice Kennedy noted that "There will be no shortage of plaintiffs to bring such complaints."

Will the courts return to sanity by the year 2000? The answer is probably in the affirmative if the 1970 issues are considered. However, when the public views the issues of the present day, it would appear that in many cases common sense was abandoned at the time of the forced retirement of the mimeograph machine. One certainty remains. The courts and the legal system will continue to make life very interesting and frustrating for those of you still toiling in the education field.

A Brief History of Thresholds in Education

by Byron F. Radebaugh

Byron F. Radebaugh is Professor, Educational Foundations, Department of Leadership and Educational Policy Studies, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois and Executive Editor of Thresholds in Education.

As one of the "founding fathers" of the professional educational journal *Thresholds in Education*, I offer here a brief history of its creation in recognition of its 20th anniversary.

The first issue of *Thresholds in Secondary Education*, Volume I, Number 1, was published January/ February, 1975, and was entitled, "Sex Role Changes." In the Editorial of this issue, Dr. Robert J. Maple, Managing Editor, described how the concept to publish *Thresholds* began and Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot, Editor, described why the name "Thresholds" was chosen for this journal.

Editorials

How Thresholds Began

In the summer of 1973, several professors from the Department of Secondary Education at Northern Illinois University discussed the need for an education journal that related specifically to the field of secondary education. They talked about problems, experiments, research, and new developments. Questions were raised such as: "Who would be interested in launching such a project?" "What would be the sources of financial support?" "When could this endeavor get started?" and, "What would the journal be like?"

This group, under the leadership of Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot, proceeded to elect a board of directors, establish a non-profit foundation, solicit charter members, elect a managerial staff, and set the wheels in motion for a long-range goal of publishing the first issue in February, 1975.

We intend to explore ideas and viewpoints which indicate possible paths to the future, without losing sight of the values of present and past knowledge and experience.

In October, 1973, the departmental members responded to a questionnaire which solicited ideas, suggestions, and a willingness to pick a topic and work as an editor or assistant editor for a *Thresholds* issue. Ideas were offered for issue topics such as: legal education, continuing education, sex biases in secondary education, humanism in education, peace education, transpersonal psychology and its implications for secondary education, dealing with the causes of misbehavior, development of creativity and several others. Many of our professors, with years of experience in teaching in the secondary schools as well as in teacher education, have volunteered to assume the responsibility of developing a specific issue.

Four issues per year will be published. The first is to printed in January and distributed in February with subsequent issues published in May, August, and November. An editorial board with broad representation is being organized, and secondary schools are being asked to be contributing members and to help form the advisory committee for the Foundation.

The Thresholds in Education Foundation Board and members are excited about the prospect of establishing a journal specifically for personnel in secondary schools or other professionals who work with adolescents. We are enthusiastic about the prospect of contacting the best known authorities for specific journals. We sincerely believe that, by developing a quality journal with secondary school topics of special interest, we may help ourselves and others to understand better techniques of motivating the secondary school student; the journal may stimulate teachers with ideas on developing creativity; thoughts will be expressed on reducing the causes of misbehavior as compared to treating the symptoms; and ideas will be generated towards humanistic methods for development of high interest, good attitude, and increased appreciation of the learning process.

Robert J. Maple, Managing Editor

What's in a Name?

The name "Thresholds" points the direction for this new journal in secondary education. We intend to explore ideas and viewpoints which indicate possible paths to the future, without losing sight of the values of present and past knowledge and experience.

It is hoped that "Thresholds" will stimulate thinking, influence educational practices, and inform. Each issue will feature articles by scholars and thinkers as well as comments and criticism from practicing educators, students, and lay persons. Innovative programs and activities in selected secondary schools will be presented regularly. Books and materials pertinent to secondary education will be reviewed.

We think secondary educators and students are interested in the application of theory and knowledge. What is found in "Thresholds," whether theoretical or applied, should be meaningful in some significant way to our readers.

In Justinians day and now, men have questioned whether "the time is ripe" for launching their enterprises. Even though economic signs for 1975 are discouraging, members of Thresholds in Education Foundation are optimistic in pressing ahead with this publication. They believe that secondary teachers, other secondary professional personnel, college professors, students in secondary education, and even lay persons may be well served by this journal.

Why do we need another educational publication? (Why should a million flowers bloom?) New ideas deserve a fair hearing. Actually, there are fewer good publications in secondary education than one might at first think. It is important that a forum be provided for new ideas and new secondary practices. In addition to dissemination of ideas, there should also be vehicles for criticizing, evaluation, and refuting ideas.

America's changing sex roles, the subject of one of the articles in this first issue, is discussed by Mueller and Frerichs who present the views of a number of eminent writers and thinkers in the field of human development. The article is both timely and provocative. Secondary educators everywhere should find this and the accompanying articles stimulating.

Equally important topics such as "education for peace" and "humanizing the high school" will appear in subsequent issues. We invite you to join us in our explorations. Yours RSVP's are anticipated.

Leonard L. Pourchot, Editor

It is of interest to note that the idea to create a new journal called *Thresholds* originated in the minds of several professors in the Department of Secondary Education at Northern Illinois University during the summer of 1973 at a Departmental retreat held at Lorado Taft campus. The original name of the journal was *Thresholds in Secondary Education*. The leadership for its founding came largely from Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot, who served as its first editor.

The members of the first Board of Directors of Thresholds in Education Foundation (a not-for-profit Illinois corporation) were:

Thresholds in Education Foundation

Board of Directors

LEONARD L POURCHOT

Chairman and business manager

ROBERT J. MAPLE

Vice chairman and managing editor

ARTHUR HOPPE

Secretary

ROY L. BRAGG

JOSEPH R. ELLIS

JOHN D. STARKEY

Alternates

WESLEY F. AMAR

ALTON HARRISON, JR.

BYRON F. RADEBAUGH

Contributing Members

Sheila Wilson, Don Ring, Ed Fischer

Township High School District 214

Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

Copyright, manuscript submission, subscription information, and advertising rates for the first issue were:

Manuscripts. Submit manuscripts to Editor, *Thresholds in Secondary Education*, 327 Graham Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115. Suggested length, 500-5000 words. Typed, double spaced. Include author's vita. Bibliographic entries should be listed alphabetically by author's last name and should be numbered. Footnoting would utilize the

number of the reference: Ex. "one author (9) states...".

Subscription Information. Subscription rates are as follow: One year, $8.00; two years, $15.00; three years, $21.00. For foreign subscriptions, other than Canadian, add $2.00 more per year. Send to: Editor, *Thresholds in Secondary Education*, 327 Graham Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.

Advertising Rates. 1 page ad, $200; half page ad, $110.00; classified ad: up to 50 words, $8.00 and 51-100 words, $15.00. Address: Business Manager, *Thresholds in Secondary Education*, 327 Graham Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.

I was a member of the first Board of Directors and an editorial assistant for issue number one. In November, 1980, Dr. Joseph R. Ellis and myself were elected Executive Editors of *Thresholds*; and in August, 1981, I was elected Chair, Board of Directors. Dr. Ellis retired in August, 1988.

In February, 1992, *Thresholds* celebrated its seventeenth birthday with the publication of issue number sixty-eight, "Leadership in Education for the 21st Century," Dr. Robert C. Morris, Dean, School of Education, University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Indiana.

Dr. Leonard Pourchot served as Editor and Chair, Board of Directors, until August, 1981. Dr. Pourchot retired in August, 1985. The following recognition of his contributions to *Thresholds* appeared in Vol. XI, No. 3, August, 1985.

In recognition of founder of *Thresholds in Education*, Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot

The Board of Directors, Thresholds in Education Foundation, wishes to recognize the many contributions made by its founder, Dr. Leonard L. Pourchot, recently retired Professor of Education at Northern Illinois University. His dedicated leadership as first Chairman of the Board of Directors of Thresholds in Education Foundation, creative planning as editor of several issues of *Thresholds*, and his tireless attention to the details of publishing a professional educational journal, has permitted *Thresholds* to reach and celebrate its tenth anniversary. We thank him for this effort, and wish him well in his retirement.

The 1985-86 Board of Directors

Thresholds in Education Foundation

Following the retirement of Dr. Joseph Ellis in 1988, the following recognition of his contributions to *Thresholds* appeared in Vol. XIV, No. 4, November, 1988:

In recognition of Dr. Joseph R. Ellis, one of the founders of *Thresholds in Education*

The Board of Directors, Thresholds in Education Foundation, wishes to recognize the many contributions made by one of its founders, Dr. Joseph R. Ellis, recently retired Professor of Education at Northern Illinois University. As a member of the original Board of Directors, Associate Editor of Volume I, No. 1, February 1975, Issue Editor of several issues of *Thresholds*, Co-Executive Editor of twenty-eight issues, planner and organizer of many professional educational conferences sponsored by the Foundation, and in his role as "spark-plug" of the Foundation, Joe has permitted *Thresholds* to reach and celebrate its thirteenth anniversary. We thank him for his effort, and wish him well in his retirement.

The 1988-89 Board of Directors

Thresholds in Education Foundation

Beginning July 1, 1991, Thresholds in Education Foundation and the College of Education, Northern Illinois University, entered into a new relationship for co-publishing *Thresholds in Education*. The College of Education agreed to increase its financial support of *Thresholds* in return for an option of proposing the topic for one issue per year and receiving 700 copies per year. The copyright of *Thresholds in Education* is now jointly held by the College of Education and Thresholds in Education Foundation.

Beginning in 1992, *Thresholds* was indexed in ERIC with the *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE), thanks to the efforts of Dr. Frank P. Bazeli, who incidentally, wrote an article, "The Desegregated High School as a Social Laboratory," published in Vol. I, No. 1, January/ February, 1975, in *Thresholds*.

Thresholds in Education Foundation

The current mission statement of Thresholds in Education Foundation is:

Approved 10-18-88

Mission Statement

The purpose of *Thresholds in Education* is to inform reflective educators about trends relating to the issues, research, and practice in education. Its audience is composed of teachers, educational administrators, teacher educators, educators in non-traditional environments, students of education, and interested

lay persons. *Thresholds* is oriented to contemporary issues and future trends in the many fields of education that represent lifelong formal and non-traditional learning. Of special interest are the applications of research to practice; analysis of current organizations, policies, and relationships with the profession; and reflections on major issues affecting education world-wide.

The Thresholds in Education Foundation conducts several types of activities. Among these are the publication of a quarterly journal entitled *Thresholds in Education* and the sponsorship of annual conferences and practitioner institutes on topics of interest in education. Support for these activities is developed through a marketing program that includes private, corporate, school organization, and foundation donations and grants; individual and organizational memberships; advertising fees; sales of copies of journal issues and other publications; conference registration fees; and other promotional and fund-raising efforts. Priorities are as follows: (1) to establish and maintain a sufficient annual budget for the publication of the journal with profits used to support additional foundation activities and (2) to continue self-supporting conferences and institutes for regional professional populations.

We invite you to join us in this exciting publication effort by becoming a member of Thresholds in Education Foundation. Just fill out the attached membership application and include your membership dues.

Reprinted from *Thresholds in Education*, XIX, 1993.

A Brief Glimpse into the Future of Thresholds in Education

by Wilma Miranda

I found myself unexpectedly moved by Dr. Radebaugh's understated "A Brief History of *Thresholds in Education*." The real history, it seems to me, speaks to us from the gaps between the various quoted material he chose to include. From behind the excerpts from editorials, testimonials to colleagues, and matter-of-fact statements of manuscript criteria, emerges a fervent but fragile vision of professional community. Radebaugh makes it clear that *Thresholds* founders envisioned a journal that could serve as a forum for fresh ideas and innovations. Professional and lay groups concerned with the quality of American schools would find in it a place where ideas would receive a fair hearing. I had read this account, of course, when it first appeared in 1993. But at that time I was virtually immune to the nuances of the story. After Byron's retirement in 1995, and I succeeded him as executive editor, I earned many hard-won insights into the demands of sustaining such a vision. What most impresses me in reading it now is the personal modesty and clarity of collective purpose it expresses. The founders aimed to construct an educational community centered in northern Illinois through which educators could both publish and critique "issues, research, and practice in education."

The founders aimed to construct an educational community centered in northern Illinois through which educators could both publish and critique "issues, research, and practice in education."

The practical achievement of this goal proved more elusive than its rational conceptualization. By the time the first issue of *Thresholds* was published in 1973, the Deweyan conception of teacher education assumed by the founders was rapidly giving way to an academic cult of individual expertise. Personnel policies were already imposing "publish or perish" demands on young professors, where to be published meant to have one's work appear in refereed journals read by other academics. This created serious disincentives to address educational problems through collaborative research with K-12 colleagues. It is a testament to the durability of the older tradition, and to the dedication of the *Thresholds* board members themselves, that the journal survived 20 years against the grain of these academic imperatives. No proprietary knowledge claims were made by the founders. No expectation was held that an achieved expertise could be dispensed for the edification of the journal's audiences. Instead, *Thresholds* would provide a forum within which to share and test all the discoveries generated by educators where ever they worked, including K-12 institutions, community agencies, or colleges of education. Byron's short history evokes in me a nostalgia for the innocence that fueled their original confidence. For while *Thresholds* has survived, the Foundation has yet to flourish as an independent enterprise which genuinely includes a range of educational constituencies. Only a revitalized sense of purpose can assure it will flourish in the future.

The poignant question raised by the journal's editor in 1973 can be raised even more pointedly today. Do we really need another small journal in education? Given the explosion of information technology with its multiple sources of data generation and dissemination, what purposes can such a vehicle serve? Twenty-six years ago, the founders of *Thresholds* concluded that there were far fewer good journals in professional education than might appear on the surface. For them, a "good" journal was one that could serve as a forum to address the specific problems and real concerns of parents and educators. I think they were right on both accounts. No doubt they intended shared information would improve practice. Today, we can no longer assume that information from the social sciences can provide direction. To the contrary, we are bombarded by so

much contradictory information that it is difficult for educators even to begin assessing or applying it to our problems. The future of education itself will depend on new habits of communication and reflection. Professional communities of interest will be necessary to provide the opportunities for genuine reflection and action. I believe that a revitalized educational localism can serve as a counterweight to the overwhelming massification of educational ideas and strategies. We can use advancing technologies to extend our reach to a broad reading public and yet remain centered in the concrete realities of our local, state, and regional endeavors.

My optimism resides in the fact that the teacher education tradition assumed by the founders is newly resurgent in all the calls for collaboration and partnerships.

I recall a comment I read some years ago in a biography of Thomas Jefferson, that the great 18th century cosmopolitans were also the great provincials. I think this speaks to how we might see ourselves as we face present educational challenges. What we are learning in our own classrooms, investigations, and conferences must receive their expression and fair hearing in vital professional communities. Small foundations like Thresholds in Education may serve an important function in providing one avenue toward the building of such communities. Sustained reflection and debate must be grounded in local innovation and reform effort. My optimism resides in the fact that the teacher education tradition assumed by the founders is newly resurgent in all the calls for collaboration and partnerships. We should take this moment of opportunity to restate and extend the conception of partnership to include intellectual reflection on innovations informed by our beliefs and commitments. There remains an important place for a renewed journal in education dedicated to the specific interests of education. As Dr. Radebaugh well knew, success will require the long-term engagement of educators in community.