

would be so necessary in producing education as an experience. In other words, he would be available to the student, on an individual and/or small group basis, to deal with the reactions, frustrations, impediments which the cognitive part of his course is causing.

8. Lastly, education will not be restricted to classroom courses.

No longer would it be necessary to develop a set of semester hours credit, but rather it would become important to demonstrate mastery or competence in a particular area. It is possible that many of the things now being taught in the classroom can be learned much better at home, in the dormitory, the library, watching a sunset, listening to a symphony, rubbing shoulders on the job with people of different values and backgrounds. Utilizing the same modern technology mentioned above, people will be able to teach themselves through much the same method, provided we become secure enough to allow this to happen outside the conventional classroom.

There are probably other areas of heuristic value for consideration of education in the future; however, I feel that those mentioned above provide the basis for genuine improvement (indeed, revolution!) in education. These are not so far out or wild ideas as it may seem at first glance, since practically everything that has been mentioned here today is already in progress on a pilot or experimental level.

The critical need for reassessing our educational systems can be best illustrated by the experiences of Lynn Tornabene. Perhaps all of you have seen the TV commercials for a hand soap or lotion in which thirty-four-year-old mothers are being transformed into teenagers. Mrs. Tornabene actually passed as a teenager at a high school which she entered as a junior and went unnoticed by everyone in the school.

She wrote a book about her experiences called *I Passed as a Teenager*. Many of her experiences were somewhat comical and make an interesting story. The part which I feel should not be overlooked by our society, particularly those of us interested in the education of our people, is where she discusses the impotency which she felt as a teenager. I grant that we have been talking primarily about college students, but if you can transfer this impotency from that age to the increased frustration which capable college students are also feeling, I think you will get a flavor of the impact.

She contrasts her feeling as an adult with the impediments she felt as a sixteen-year-old thusly:

That's what I am that they are not. I am potent. I can make myself felt. I can hold up my hand and say "Wait a minute!" I can say "No, I won't" and "Yes, I can." I can say "this is me. See me. I am a person. These are my limitations. These are my potentialities. You may not like me, but that doesn't mean I have to change. I don't have to submit. I don't have to repress. I can pack and go. Or, better yet, I can suggest that you pack and go."

... I have seen their special world, and let me tell you I am not worried about whether today's teenagers are familiar with a dozen intimate positions. I am worried about the kinds of teachers they are exposed to, the kind of environment they go into when they leave home in the morning.

I didn't go to Urban High looking for this worry. I didn't go to a high school to learn about high schools. I went to high school because that's where the kids were. I didn't want to get involved in problems of education. That's for *Admiral Rickover*. I didn't want to let myself think when I got in the middle of the cafeteria mayhem or heard a political lecture in English class. But I got involved, and now I can't forget the anger and exhaustion I felt at the end of each of my days.

... STOP THREATENING ME! That's what I wanted to shout in my classrooms. If you don't cover this book by Wednesday... if you don't have your homework written on lined paper... if you don't keep quiet... if you don't stop... if you don't start... you'll be punished.

Good God, there must be some other way.

I hope that you people, no matter what your position in our society, will want to become involved in the making of our society in your own way and would give serious consideration to these comments today. To paraphrase the eulogy given to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy by his brother: "Some people see what is happening in education and ask why. I see what is not happening and ask why not."

<sup>1</sup> Farson, R. E. "The Education of Jeremy Farson." Prepared for the State of California, State Committee on Public Education. March, 1967.

## Encouraging Wrong

MAX S. MARSHALL  
405 Davis Street, Apt. 1604  
San Francisco, California 94111

Our methods of teaching cause us to encourage apt students and to nag at weaker performers. We should be smart to reverse this, encouraging the laggards and needling the ones near the top.

Some teachers think that we should encourage all students, but an equally strong case can be made for encouraging none. Enthusiastic and soft-hearted professors believe that, by encouraging everybody, teachers bring forth full development. More realistically, such teachers glow in the mutual pleasures of giving praise. They find the occasional need for censure most distasteful. Tough teachers, on the other hand, look upon their able students as normal, deserving no special praise. They think of their laggards as rather hopeless, deserving of no special attention except for a few stern warnings.

Professors in general, however, mix some of the milk of human kindness with the pride they have in their own standards. Asked offhand, they are likely to say that they should encourage students when such is appropriate or earned, and stir to action those who lag behind. This answer is too casual. The placement and displacement of encouragement is a real factor in teaching.

Our society is currently dedicated to a scale of schooling which transcends anything ever seen before. We began three centuries ago with public schools; now we seek to provide college training for everyone who wants to go to college. Whether or not the goal is possible or reasonable, the present trend has to be faced as it is. For the professor, the students with whom he works have to be the ones who come to him.

From the graduate assistant up, among teachers, and from the students in high school up, among students, the fact that teachers put high values on their estimates of the worth of students is well established. Equally apparent is the fact that disagreement among teachers in the estimates of worth is

notoriously frequent. Any grade book will support this and attendance at any meeting at which scholarships or honors are decided will prove it. Estimates are personal *and varied*.

Professors who praise their top students are merely boasting of their preferences. The cold facts are that the professor is too self-assured in thinking that he can pick a winner and that he does not have the claimed privilege of designating winners.

Since the chances are that the top student, for his part, knows well how to please his teachers, praise or encouragement from them is of little value, possibly excepting the diffident and hard working fellow who discourages himself by his own criticism and is lifted by a kind word. To the student who is unduly sure of his own great worth, encouragement simply aggravates the fault. If such a student is unpopular, praise stirs antagonisms among those around him: should he be popular, then envy, jealousy, disappointment, and discouragement are certain to be engendered among some. The total damage done exceeds the value of the encouragement. The effect of encouragement on students is as likely to be an impediment as a benefit in teaching.

At the other end of the scale, the tremendous compost heap of words which have been spent in discussing grades of C and below testifies to the tremendous power for nagging which is usurped by professors. The extent to which such grades are dispensed shows how viciously this power is used. The nagging effect produced by a succession of C and D grades, given day in and day out throughout the long successions of days in school needs no amplification here. Any employee so treated would leave in a week. Any wife or husband so treated would soon join the divorced crowd.

Whether or not these marks of mediocrity include specific personal words or acts of nagging or discouraging, the effect is precisely that. Yet the student who gets such treatment is only

one of those who does not particularly please his teachers. Perhaps the student does not care about his obligations. He needs a warning which, if unheeded, leads to discontinuance. Another student may be slow, in which case both guidance and carefully limited encouragement are genuinely in order, certainly not nagging. A third may attempt too much work or play outside, in which case advice and warning may be in order. A fourth student may be in love; and what was the effect on you when someone nagged when you were in love? A fifth may be a nonconformist, late, absent, papers not in, and so on. Specific discipline is in order, but nagging will only make matters worse and tend to turn him toward perversity or to convince him that he really is mediocre.

Or, he may be just Joe Doakes, average student, that faceless fellow whom unimaginative professors uphold in defining the C. Professors who hold this view always regard themselves as well above C's, though searches of records oftentimes prove otherwise, as is demonstrable with former students who attain high — and often deserved — positions on the faculty.

Every student and every person has to find a niche which will enable him to hold up his head. He has to live within himself as an individual for a lifetime. No form of social organization will change this. Accordingly, to have some mogul breathing down your neck and suggesting day in and day out that you are nobody is nefarious discouragement.

It is not true that all students need encouragement: far from it. And the only student who deserves discouragement is the cocky type who persistently scorns his opportunities. He can be helped only by taking him down a peg. He is not using an elaborately offered opportunity, the only reason for his

presence. Unless he heeds a simple warning, the only proper move on the part of his college, he should leave. In a world which has a long waiting list third chances are out.

Though forms of help are beyond our present thesis, to speak in terms of help rather than of encouragement would be safer. Those students who get along smoothly in college rarely need encouragement. For every such student there are scores of students among those perniciously classified as members of the general herd who warrant help and encouragement.

Though a rule saying that we should encourage the weak and needle the strong would be better than the present one, nagging the weak and applauding the strong, the generalization is too broad. Maudlin teachers are likely to encourage slow students, who need help rather than encouragement, to a point from which the ultimate inevitable failures become a shock. To encourage students who decline to work is obvious misguidance. To the apt student to whom less than praise is a jolt, encouragement may block his potential progress, since he is giving satisfaction as he is.

Could we but eliminate the seemingly inevitable and certainly overworked ratings that professors worship, or to which they succumb because of authority or custom, the menace in misplaced encouragement would be clearer than it is now. Unless such boosting is specifically and validly needed for the morale and improvement of the student concerned, it is out of place. The selected few who need it may be either at the top or bottom of the class under the beloved ranking system, but they are more likely to be down than up.

And, be it wife, horse, husband, or student, for the love of Pete don't nag with grades, words, or looks. Say your piece specifically when you must and mean it, and then shut up.

## Internship — A Tool for Upgrading and Maintaining Proficiencies Required by Experienced Agriculture Occupational Teachers

Thomas R. Stitt, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, Department of Agricultural Industries, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

The joint committee of the United States Department of Education and the American Vocational Association<sup>1</sup> stated that agriculture programs should "develop agriculture competencies needed to engage in agricultural occupations other than farming" as well as "an appreciation for a career opportunity," and "develop abilities in human relations in agricultural occupations." These objectives were an outgrowth of the 1963 Act.<sup>2</sup> The wisdom of the committee is constantly reasserting itself, as illustrated by the report of the 1968 Illinois Manpower Needs in Agricultural Occupations. Of 16,737 persons needed, 2,205 would be required for production agriculture. The majority, 14,532 persons or 86.8 percent<sup>3</sup> will be needed in the agricultural related occupational area. This is supported by the 23 state study conducted by The Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational and Technical Education.<sup>4</sup>

Teacher specialization within an agricultural occupation area offers an excellent solution to the problem if, when, and where sufficient number of students with the same occupational objectives can be identified and grouped. Teacher specialization will be able to serve only a small percentage of the students interested in agricultural occupations.

The teachers involved in the new high school programs may have had only limited occupational experiences. The 1966 Agricultural Occupations service report indicated that the



Milton Jung, right, agricultural occupations teacher of Shawnee Community Unit at Wolf Lake, Illinois, received some pointers on problems confronting mechanic Cletus Jansen on the Schneider Equipment Company, Inc., Cape Girardeau, Missouri, regarding problems of transmission overhaul.

average number of years experience teaching vocational agriculture in Illinois is 12.25 which makes it conceivable that teachers having experiences in agricultural occupations prior to their entry into teaching (there are no current figures on the number who did receive this experience) received it over twelve years ago. In view of the rapid changes in the area of