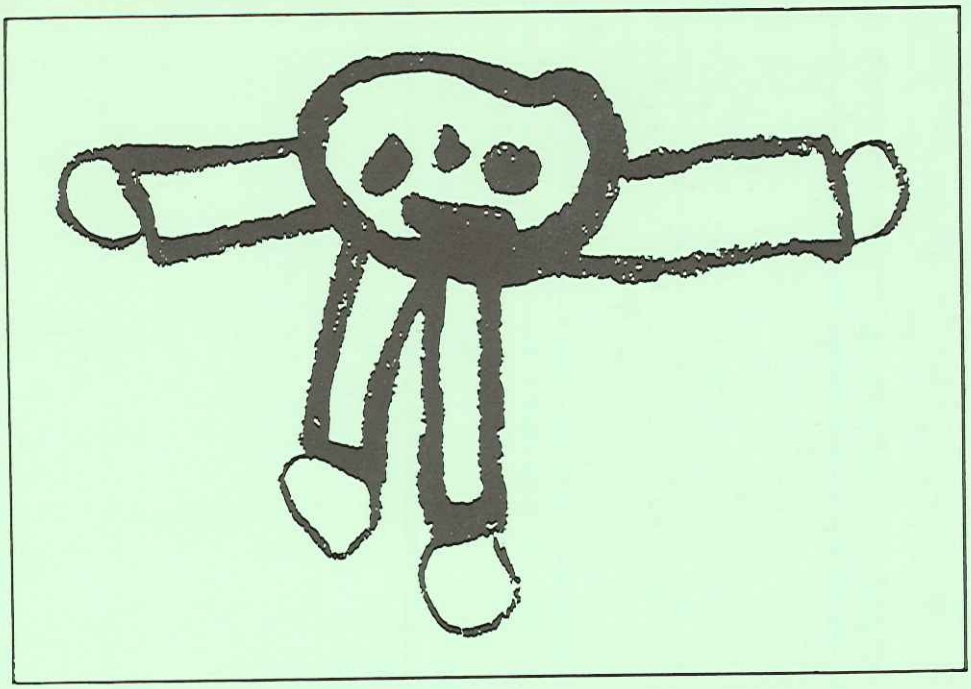
North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation



Edward Yeomans

WHEN THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER IS HEARD IN THE LAND

In November 1972, educators from several parts of the United States met at the University of North Dakota to discuss some common concerns about the narrow accountability ethos that had begun to dominate schools and to share what many believed to be more sensible means of both documenting and assessing children's learning. Subsequent meetings, much sharing of evaluation information, and financial and moral support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have all contributed to keeping together what is now called the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation. A major goal of the Study Group, beyond support for individual participants and programs, is to provide materials for teachers, parents, school administrators and governmental decision-makers (within State Education Agencies and the U.S. Office of Education) that might encourage re-examination of a range of evaluation issues and perspectives about schools and schooling.

Towards this end, the Study Group has initiated a continuing series of monographs, of which this paper is one. Over time, the series will include material on, among other things, children's thinking, children's language, teacher support systems, inservice training, the school's relationship to the larger community. The intent is that these papers be taken not as final statements--a new ideology, but as working papers, written by people who are acting on, not just thinking about, these problems, whose implications need an active and considered response.

Vito Perrone, Dean
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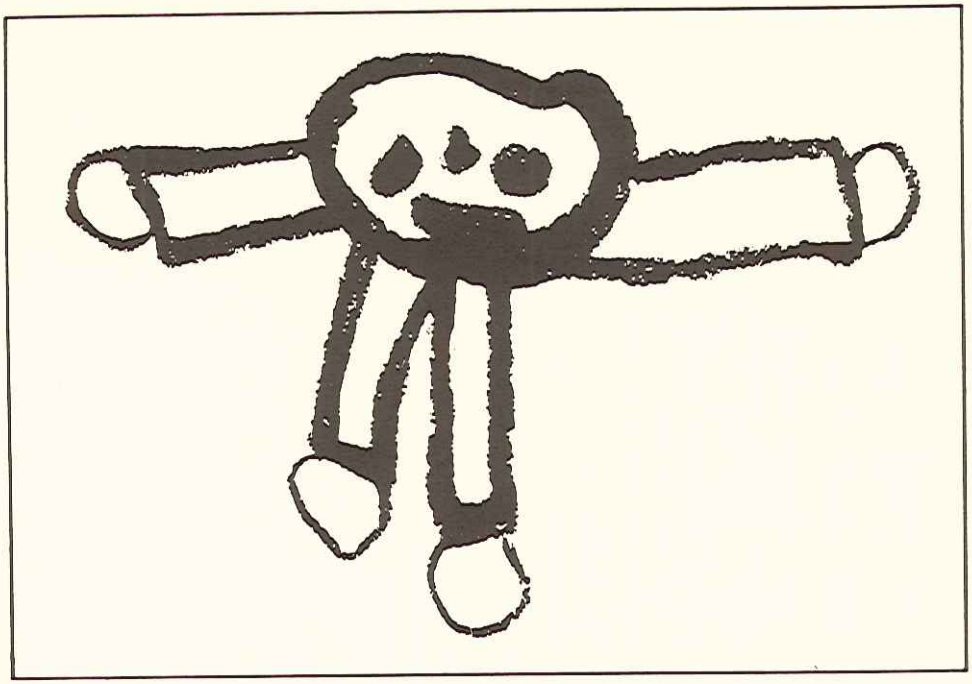
North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation



Edward Yeomans

WHEN THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER IS HEARD IN THE LAND

with material by Adelaide Sproul and Lillian Weber

Center for Teaching and Learning
University of North Dakota
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Looking Into History: The First Era, 1896-1942

Edward Yeomans was a teacher at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, Mass., during the 1930s. Following that he accepted a position at the University of Georgia to train teachers for community-service in rural schools. This led to an assignment in education for cooperatives in the National Farmers Union.

He returned to Shady Hill in 1949 as headmaster and director of the school's apprentice-training program. He was called to the Peace Corps in 1962 as a training-officer, based in Puerto Rico. In 1964 he became a staff member of the National Association of Independent Schools under whose auspices he directed the teachers' workshops and the Greater Boston Teachers Center, as described in this pamphlet.

Mr. Yeomans has written several pamphlets on British primary schools, published by NAIS, and two books: *Shady Hill School: The First 50 Years* and *A Teacher's Odyssey*, both published by the Windflower Press.

I have been reading some of the reports on "what's wrong with American education" by distinguished professors, deans and former headmasters. I can applaud much that I have read, for I have great respect for the experience of the writers and the scholarship of their respective staffs. The thing I miss in these volumes is the voice of the teacher: the working classroom teacher who has not become a professor, a dean or the head of a school, who is too busy teaching to write very much about education, more's the pity, and who sees his or her experience as far too limited to be applicable to the national scene. Yet this is the very person by whom any ideas of reform of education must be implemented. Without the willing, even enthusiastic, participation of this individual, all of the argument and rhetoric are as sounding brass.

I don't blame the authors of the reports for this oversight: all of them were teachers once, they are in touch with many people who still are, they sincerely believe that they have represented the working teacher or school administrator by means of interviews, questionnaires and their own observation of classrooms in action. But the person looking in, by whatever means, can never see inside the real person of the teacher to the concerns, the convictions, the feelings that guide that human being in his or her daily behavior, including the activity of teaching. The privilege of that kind of insight is reserved to close friends and colleagues who share a point of view and want to do something about it. Whenever teachers have found ways of pooling their skills and feelings about teaching and learning, something quite magical can take place -- energy emerges, imagination soars and understanding grows. This matrix must be present in order for any valid change in education to take place.

One of the authors,* recognizing the omission of the voice of the teacher from his and other studies, has invented a composite high-school teacher named Horace Smith to be his central character. Horace has known what it is to be a good teacher, to love his subject, to get positive feedback from his students and colleagues, but he has been drained to the point of exhaustion. He survives in his job by making an unwrit-

*Theodore Sizer, *Horace's Compromise*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

ten pact with the students to pass them if they will refrain from hassling him. To Sizer, after much investigation, this tragic compromise appears to be endemic in American high schools. If he is right, it is a wonder that these schools are as good as they are. *Other-directed* efforts at reform, once this malaise has set in, will fail to reach the problem of Horace, for by now he has lost the will to be creative.

The key question is, how can *inner-directed* methods for reform be provided to classroom teachers while they are still educationally healthy? Questions of what to teach and how to teach it belong in this category. So do opportunities for participation in educational policy decisions, questions of attitude and behavior among students, standards and expectations. Unless the voice of the teacher is heard frequently in these and all other aspects of the educational process, the owner of that voice will become drained, as Horace Smith was, and the fatal compromise is made.

One way to approach the question of inner-directed reform is to look into history at three periods when the voices of classroom teachers were loud and clear on major educational issues. The first of these periods was that of the progressive education movement beginning with the John Dewey School in the 1890s, described by two of its teachers, Katherine Mayhew and Anna Edwards,* and extending to World War II. Many schools that were founded during that period grew from a mingling of the desires of parents and teachers. Among this group are Francis Parker, North Shore Country Day, Lincoln, New Trier, John Burroughs, Park School of Baltimore, Tower Hill, Dalton, City and Country, Walden, Ojai Valley, Little Red, Beaver Country Day, Shady Hill and Cambridge School of Weston among the private schools. Several public school systems as well were deeply influenced by progressive thinking. These included the schools of Winnetka, Illinois, Denver, Colorado and Scarsdale, New York. All of them were distinguished for their imaginative, energetic, sometimes iconoclastic teachers who stimulated one another and were in turn stimulated by dynamic principals (or superintendents) and parents. Communication was nearly continuous, by means of faculty meetings, committee assignments, parents' councils and student government. The curriculum belonged to the faculties in whose hands it was created, adapted and refined. Science appeared for the first time in elementary school catalogs. Music, drama and the arts assumed a central role at all levels. Community studies supplemented history, creative writing joined literature, handwork supplemented verbal and numerical work, problem-solving took the place of rote learning, the style and ordering of life at school were subjects of

*Katherine Mayhew and Anna Edwards, *The Dewey School*, New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1936.

ongoing discussion among teachers, students and parents.

At no time in the history of this country has such energy, such imagination or such searching for knowledge been brought to the learning process by classroom teachers. To be sure, leadership came from educational philosophers and administrators: Francis W. Parker, John Dewey, William Heard Kilpatrick, George S. Counts, Harold Rugg, Charles W. Eliot, Carleton Washburne, John R. P. French and Perry Dunlap Smith among the men, and an array of extraordinary women including Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Marietta Johnson, Caroline Pratt, Charlotte Winsor, Helen Parkhurst, Hilda Taba, Flora Cooke, Katharine Taylor and Carmelita Hinton, who challenged the capacities of established classroom teachers and trained new ones to fill the ranks. Reform in education was no less needed in the 1920s than it is today, for the typical public school of that day reflected the factory system which had served industry so well in producing nuts and bolts and interchangeable parts, but was less successful with growing children. Similarly, the private schools of that time were designed to provide classical training to an elite minority in the manner of English grammar schools. Rigidity was the problem in both types, to be challenged by fresh views of the learning process among children at every level. When, to the momentum of a growing number of progressive schools was added the network of the Progressive Education Association in the 1920s with its weekend and summer workshops and its magazine,* a movement took shape which brought about unprecedented reforms in American schools and even some colleges.

**Progressive Education*, founded in 1924.

Traditionalists complain that the changes brought about by the progressive education movement were less matters of reform and more of destruction of cherished academic values. There was indeed abuse of the ideal, as Dewey took pains to point out. Change will always produce excesses and must be governed by the wisdom of moderation. The important point is that teachers began to see children, as well as one another, as learners engaged in a common enterprise called education. This was a new vision in the world of schoolteaching and an exciting one to those engaged in it, as any back issue of *Progressive Education* will attest. Here were found the most cherished hopes of parents, teachers and administrators for developing a more humane environment in schools. The growing knowledge of the learning process was reported together with the special characteristics of children at various stages in their growth. Teachers shared the details of successful curriculum plans, parents discussed community problems as they might affect, or were affected by, the schools. Administrators worried about the training of teachers who would be competent to handle the array of

responsibilities required by the more individualized teaching methods. It was a time of general ferment which gave to classroom teachers a respected voice in the community of parents and educators and to students an experience of adventure in learning.*

Confidence in the soundness of progressive education was reinforced by the report of an extensive investigation known as the *Eight Year Study*.** This idea took shape in the Commission on the Relations of Schools and Colleges of the Progressive Education Association whose members were concerned about rigid requirements for college entrance. The Carnegie Unit, originally designed as a measure of classroom teaching hours for use in retirement plans for college teachers, had become the measure of class time spent by high-school students in designated subjects. For example, a course in English which met five times a week in 45-minute periods and required a stated minimum of homework or library use would qualify for one Carnegie Unit on the student's transcript. The subjects thus quantified were limited to a group of academic fields including history, mathematics, science, and classical and modern language, including English. While a school could offer courses in music and the arts, for example, the students' freedom to select was limited by college requirements which did not credit those fields, or quantify time spent in studying them, or examine student proficiency in them.

As secondary schoolteachers began to look more closely at the different needs and capacities of their students, and increasingly to offer to their students opportunities for many kinds of intellectual and artistic exploration, such rigidity became intolerable. Accordingly, the committee devised a plan, presented to some 200 colleges, by which the graduates of a number of secondary schools -- both public and private -- would be exempted from the standard subjects and examinations used for college entrance. Instead, the teachers of those schools would be free to develop such courses in any field as they believed to be most useful to their students, to establish their own method of evaluation of success or failure and to accompany their recommendations for the promotion of each student with a comprehensive written record as well as a transcript. When this proposal became accepted by the colleges and 30 secondary schools had volunteered to take part in the experiment, the committee sought and obtained funds from the General Education Board to launch a major study.

It was called the *Eight Year Study* because the records of students enrolled in the 30 experimental schools would be seen as subjects for study during four years in preparatory schools and four years in college. Meanwhile the activities of another group of students

*For a thorough documentation of the work of numerous individuals and schools in this period, see Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, New York: Random House, 1961.

**Wilford M. Aiken, *The Story of the Eight Year Study*, New York: Harper, 1942.

enrolled in secondary schools which did not wish to modify their courses or college entrance procedures would be studied as well, and the records of the two groups would then be compared. An attempt was made to match the members of each group according to certain economic, geographic and I.Q. criteria. There were some 3,000 students in all.

When the actual Study began in 1936, new courses, new groupings and new methods of evaluation began to appear in the 30 experimental schools. Faculty conferences, inter-school workshops, teacher-student planning sessions, and parent meetings proliferated, many of which were reported in *Progressive Education*. Curriculum consultants moved about from school to school, assisting in the work, encouraging the reluctant, restraining the over-zealous.

An important part of their mission was to help each faculty to define its goals, beginning with the needs of a democratic society, of the various groups within it, and of each particular school. They helped teachers to think about the curriculum as related to these goals and needs rather than as a separate compartment of student life. Together they looked for ways to draw students into the process, not only of planning the curriculum, but of organizing the school community in ways that were consistent with their goals for the larger community.*

Among the many courses described in the report are projects in music and the arts, in community work of various kinds, in school government, in off-campus and vacation experiences, in foreign language usage, social sciences and applied science, side-by-side with the familiar offerings in academic subjects. None of the experimental schools abandoned the classical curriculum. All of them developed ways of supplementing it and then counseled students in the making of wise choices.

New kinds of faculty meetings emerged in the experimental schools: meetings to examine basic premises; to consider the particular characteristics of adolescents; to make the school a more democratic, less authoritarian community; to plan better sequences year-to-year in the academic curriculum; to integrate the teaching of art, music history and literature of the Renaissance, for example, rather than teach these subjects in isolation. Visits were arranged to visit city halls, factories, hospitals and coal mines. Students interviewed people, made surveys and wrote lengthy reports of these experiences. A New York school sent classes for two weeks at a time to study the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In their summer workshops, teachers struggled with ways to evaluate student initiative, sensitivity to others, problem-solving ability, social concern.

*The roles of the curriculum consultants are described in Volume 2 of the report of the *Eight Year Study: Exploring the Curriculum* by Giles, McCutchen and Zeckiel, New York: Harper, 1942. This volume is supplemented by Volume 5: *The Thirty Schools Tell Their Story* by Chamberlain, Drought and Scott.

Difficult though this task might be, the teachers wanted to agree upon methods of assessment that reached more facets of student achievement than did the letter grades and rank-in-class generally in use at that time.

At length a panel of judges, headed by Professor Ralph Tyler of the University of Chicago, was selected to study the evidence and make a finding. It was their opinion that the graduates of the 30 experimental schools had excelled the records of those from the matched schools in practically every measured respect, from academic achievement to citizenship and initiative over a range of activities. Apart from whatever weight should be given to the Hawthorne Effect in any comparative study of human behavior, the *Eight Year Study* demonstrated that there can be many effective roads to college entrance and success in college thereafter. Of even greater significance was the discovery that schools which gave their teachers a dominant voice in the total work of the school produced superior records among their students, and that students who took part in planning and evaluating their work were especially well prepared for success in college.

2

Reform in English Primary Schools: The Second Era, 1945-67

Prior to World War II the curriculum and standards of tax-supported primary (elementary) schools in England were determined by the so-called 11-Plus Exam, a national achievement test required of every student at the age of eleven, more or less. Students who passed could go on to grammar schools and academic universities. Those who failed moved into comprehensive schools having at that time a vocational emphasis. Teachers were sometimes paid in accordance with their students' success on the 11-Plus Exam. After the war, growing dissatisfaction with this arbitrary arrangement led the managers and directors of certain education authorities (equivalent to our school districts) to abolish the 11-Plus Exam and seek other means of evaluating student achievement. Teachers in these districts, being free of the requirement of coaching their students for a subject-based examination began to look at children as individuals. They were encouraged in this point of view by the work of such leaders as Molly Brearley, Nathan and Susan Isaacs, Lorna Ridgeway and Sibyl Marshall among teachers, and Stewart Mason of Leicestershire and Sir Alec Clegg of the West Riding of Yorkshire who were outstanding county administrators. Without ever giving up an inborn appreciation for good order in the classrooms and corridors, teachers in a growing number of districts invented alternative ways of teaching reading, mathematics, science and history as experience rather than by rote, and students, even in classes of 30 or more, often in mixed-age groups, began to show greater energy and imagination in learning. Classrooms came to be provisioned with a wealth of aids to learning: *hands-on* materials for creative work as well as large numbers of attractive books.*

As part of this development, advisors were provided to go among the schools, visit classrooms, bring materials and encourage teachers. Teachers' centers grew in every district where books and other materials were available for borrowing and where teachers could meet to share experiences. Some centers became quite elaborate with accommodations for weekend visits and an agenda of topics mailed out to teachers for their approval. Some centers initiated record-keeping and research projects with help from university people.**

*Valuable descriptions of primary classrooms during the reform period may be found in Joseph Featherstone, *Schools Where Children Learn*, New York: Liveright, 1971; Stewart C. Mason, *In Our Experience*, London: Longman, 1970; Vincent R. Rogers, *Teaching in the British Primary School*, New York: Macmillan, 1970.

**See *Teachers Centres*, edited by Robert Thornbury, New York: Agathon Press, 1974.

Like the *Eight Year Study* in this country, the English had their national study as well. Popularly known as the Plowden Report,* it encapsulated observations, interviews, tests and records compiled by a large staff working under the direction of a distinguished committee among a cross-section of primary schools around the country. The committee showed much interest in the changes taking place in many of the districts and in individual schools. They examined the performance of children who had gone on to more conventional high schools or grammar schools, and had high praise for the teachers and their colleagues, the "heads," the advisors and the directors who had brought about the changes. The Plowden Report was an impressive source of encouragement for change in traditional ways of teaching, and it stimulated continuing assessment of classroom methods and teacher education.

**Children and Their Primary Schools*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967.

The education of teachers for service in postwar English primary schools, and the supportive configuration in which that education is embedded, has been well described by Lillian Weber,** professor of Elementary Education at the School of Education, City College of New York. She was the founder of the City College Workshop Center for Open Education and its director from 1972 to 1984. While initially Professor Weber was interested mainly in British infant schools, corresponding roughly to our kindergartens, her observations apply equally to primary, or elementary, schools. Her term *informal education* would be equivalent, at older age levels, to *the integrated day*. The following long excerpt is quoted with her permission:

*The Infant School Entity**/ Lillian Weber*

**This material appeared originally in Lillian Weber, *The English Infant School and Informal Education* (Prentice-Hall, 1971).

The common idea of informal education existed without specific prescription from public authority. Heads I had met in the United States and England regarded, almost with horror, the idea of a *fixed* or *prescribed* syllabus, the idea of all schools functioning in the same way. The headmistress felt free of control and free even to interpret aims in her own way. It was not only the *feeling* of freedom that she had experienced but also the fact of freedom, acknowledged in government reports. As the Plowden Report stated it:

"The only uniformity of practice that the Board of Education desire to see in the teaching of public elementary schools is that each teacher shall think for himself, and work out for himself such methods of teaching

as may use his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and conditions of the school. Uniformity in detail of practice (except in the mere routine of school management) is not desirable, even if it were attainable. But freedom implies a corresponding responsibility in its use." [1918 Code] *This passage was reprinted in the preface to the 1937 edition of the Handbook. In 1944 the Code, which had become increasingly permissive, finally disappeared, and in the 1944 Education Act the only statutory requirement that remained was that children should be educated according to "their age, ability and aptitude."*

The freedom, as commented on by Plowden, coupled with an existing concept of desired result and a standard of evaluation, made it possible for heads to experiment and develop their own patterns, which later could become the models for the future long before they had won general acceptance. Both concept and standard were, of course, still evolving, but at least they were already somewhat formulated in the common history that heads had inherited and shaped. In fact, the culture of the educational world in which the headmistress lived and was educated was rooted in this history. Through her relationship to this history -- which is basic to the development and operation of all the other factors -- the infant school entity was disseminated.

The mechanisms that influenced her were the teachers' colleges, the Institutes of Education, the inspectorates, local and HMI,* and the in-service training. All of these operated in a reciprocal relationship with the head. And all, in their turn, gained reinforcement from the history of the development as embodied in the literature and in the reports produced by the Department of Education and the Institutes.

*Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

The Teachers' Colleges and Institutes of Education

The head's first experiences as a student learning to be a teacher in a teachers' college would appear to be a major mechanism of the spread of a common idea. Certainly the colleges of education *maintain* the wide spread. But while teachers gained some of their ability to function informally from their experiences at teachers' colleges, good practice sometimes even preceded the development of supportive programs in the colleges. Examples of good practice, in fact, were sought out by the colleges. And even now good practice in the schools is ahead of some of the training in the teachers' colleges, while the very goals set by the colleges for the education of teachers, and the criteria used for evaluating their qualifications, have come from the analysis of examples of good practice.

In qualifying teachers, the Department of Education and Science accepts these criteria rather than imposing its own standards. In any case, the criteria for good practice and the implications for education and qualification of teachers are developing rather than static criteria. They are examined and reexamined, and as little as possible is defined externally by the Department of Education and Science, while as much as possible continues to develop within the schools, the professional organizations, the colleges of education and the Institutes of Education. Inevitably then, the process of influence is a reciprocal one.

The Education of the Teacher

For the English, teacher education is broken down into three major areas: the study of children, practice and curriculum, and a self-chosen individual exploration in some field of study. Emphasizing the continuity of a child's development, the program is multilevel, including experience on the level preceding the chosen area of concentration and on the level following. Inherent in this training is the acceptance of variation in children's development, an individual approach, and the assumption of responsibility for preparing the environment and for providing varied and multileveled material.

Child study is at the core of the integrated three-year course, which is offered as a unit, not as separate credit courses, and in which theory and practice are interwoven. In each of the three years the student has a block of practice. The Hadow Report had pointed out that child study was the basis of good teacher education, that the best teacher would be one who had made a careful study of the physical and mental development of children. So much importance is given to child study that the student is encouraged to work with babies in private homes, in institutional settings, etc., either prior to entrance into college or at some point along the way.

The area of concentration stresses the students' individual exploration and personal development, and this emphasis becomes a significant part of their own experiences as students, highlighting as it must the lecturer's relation to them and expectation from them. The students are treated as individuals, develop individual projects, and learn in their own way how to appreciate individual work and the depth to which this can develop. It is hoped that they apply this understanding to their teaching of children.

In her final teaching practice (approximately five weeks), a student takes over an infant school

class and is expected to function independently with responsibility for all aspects of the class, including the preparation of varied material that can be used on many levels. The student can even change things about -- physical arrangement, content, method. The class teacher accepts this independent role but permits the student teacher to call on her for help if needed. (For continuity the class teacher also maintains daily contact with her children.) The headmistress, as always, plays a strong supportive role, and college supervision of the student teacher is close -- twice a week, and often more -- since the student can be supervised by subject tutors as well as education tutors.

This close supervision may be diluted, at least temporarily, by the current expansion of teachers' colleges. But various ways of keeping this supervision a real and vital part of the training are being explored, such as the Plowden recommendations for increased use of the cooperating teacher and headmistress. Expanded use of the practice school's teaching force to train teachers is logical. After all, it was the pioneer experiments in the infant schools that were turned to originally by those in the training colleges who were convinced that this kind of education best maintained a child's drive to learn. And even though methods, theories, and aims of informal education can be studied in teacher colleges, it is still recognized that the young teacher is lucky to work under a head in whose school "informal" has real meaning, in an atmosphere of a successful model. If the young teacher does not get this experience in her practice, it is hoped that she will be lucky enough to get it in her first year of teaching.

The first year of teaching is one of probation, in which the young teacher works under careful supervision, and is assessed very seriously at least twice by the LEAs.* The latter also receive reports from the school heads, which have been shared with and signed by the probationer. While there exists a strong obligation to make that year successful, and sometimes an extended probation in a more sympathetic situation is recommended, not all young teachers pass their probation to receive final qualification.

*Local Education Authorities.

The Institutes

The twenty Institutes of Education attached to the universities act as "area organizations" coordinating facilities. This responsibility is delegated by the Department of Education and Science. The Institutes are responsible with the colleges for the system of external assessment and examination -- an evaluation of candidate teachers by those outside the college --

which insures interpenetration of viewpoint and aims. The Department of Education and Science now qualifies teachers for their first teaching post only after recommendation by the Institutes. The Department also confers final qualification at the end of the probationary year.

Some colleges were early pioneers, exploring the implications of the ideas of informal education for teacher education, but the idea is no longer limited to any one college. Naturally there are variations in colleges and, more seriously, in supervisors, but the programs of each college are discussed in consultation with its Institute. The views of the Department of Education and Science are taken into account and have influence on the college programs. But each Institute, working with a college in its area, has the last word on how that college program develops. Thus, the differences in emphasis and even in nuance and philosophy in the Institutes and in the colleges are maintained, if for nothing else, as encouragement to variation and experimentation. These variations and the variations in school practice met by student teachers in their assignments to schools are a constant inducement to reexamination.

Gardner, D. E. M., *Education Under Eight.* London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1937.

At the Institutes of Education, prospective teacher trainers and prospective heads take advanced courses. Such courses are not meant to constitute steps in a continuous, uninterrupted sequence proceeding from the initial education of the teacher; they are taken by teachers after they have taught awhile. It is usually after at least five years that mature teachers (or heads) can be released by their LEAs and given grants, after admission, for courses leading to advanced diplomas in child development, etc. Those who will educate teachers are themselves inducted into deeper understanding of their field (child development) but they also concern themselves with the question of how "informal" teaching can be conveyed. In fact, the difficulties involved in conveying informal education were under continuous discussion in all teacher education circles while I was in England. It was felt that the "formality" of secondary education and its effects on the minds of the entrants to teachers' colleges were a major source of these difficulties. As Susan Isaacs had observed, commenting on these entrants, "Nor have they any ability to think or observe independently. Their life has so far been dominated by a narrow series of examinations." At the Institutes, the question was asked: Can informal, or activity, or individual methods be conveyed to students who, coming out of the formal education of the grammar school, are immersed in the passive formality of a lecture room? The laboratory approach of the main course, in which individual exploration and an individual response were expected

from the student, was part of the attempt to answer this question.

Grappling with the problem in an earlier period, Gardner described experiences in a play center that, in addition to providing teacher practice, could help student teachers gain a better understanding of informal education. These experiences with mixed-age and large groups were experiences in "bending" environmental circumstance. Gardner considered these a very necessary part of teacher training.

Gardner, D. E. M., *The Children's Play Centre*. New York: Agathon Press, Inc., 1970.

The experience of ages given in school practice is necessarily very limited, and it is in Play Centre that a Senior teacher can get first-hand experience of the behaviour of little children (which is so necessary for a real understanding of older ones), and a Junior teacher can realize clearly the later stages to which her children are developing. . . .

The students' attitude to discipline is often greatly helped by Play Centre experience. They become leaders rather than authorities, and we often find that after a period of leadership in a Play Centre gang, or of organizing a Play Centre department, the student has developed tremendously in her power of inspiring children in their classroom activities. She has learnt not to be afraid of having children moving about, employed on various constructive activities, instead of sitting quietly, all occupied in one way. . . .

We have found very often such instances of development in the power to handle large numbers of children. . . .

Another quality which seems to be developed is that of tackling difficulties with enterprise, instead of acquiescing in bad conditions. Students who have painted play rooms and furniture, and extracted from the changing conditions through which Play Centre has passed all possible opportunities for the children's advantage, do not submit willingly to school conditions which tell them it is impossible to carry out creative work.

Inservice Courses

In the general revision of all primary education towards "informality," much of the needed education and reeducation of teachers has been and continues to be conducted outside the colleges. Heads who were ready to experiment wanted far more reeducation than could be serviced by the colleges. They came to depend for their professional growth on the many inservice courses offered, some of them organized directly by the inspectors. Certainly the HMIs and local inspectorate con-

ducted inservice training all the time, just by their advice and by sharing the good programs they had seen. But regular inservice courses were given by the LEAs, by the Department of Education, by the Nursery Association, by the Froebel Institute, by the Institutes of Education and teachers' colleges, and more recently, by the Nuffield Foundation. These courses were always oversubscribed even though no increment was given for attendance. Even educational magazines and unions (National Union of Teachers) ran courses.

Whenever the Department of Education or any of the other educational agencies felt methods had changed, courses were given to assist in retraining, and schools in trouble were aided financially in order to get teachers or even the headmistress released to participate. Every newspaper carried accounts of courses offered by the LEAs. Moreover, the education authorities supported the spread of particular ideas by publishing accounts of these ideas, by offering courses and releasing teachers and heads to attend the courses, by setting up or helping to set up trial situations. Thus a great many Nuffield Math and Science experimental groups were set up in the schools, even though the Nuffield Foundation existed outside the official structure. In almost every school, the headmistress spoke of conferences, special weekend courses, special leaves granted to teachers to take advanced courses at the Institutes of Education. She frequently referred to a teacher out for a special course, a teacher on leave for special training, or an extra, mature teacher working in the school as part of a retraining course. Some LEAs owned old mansions set very pleasantly in the country where they kept weekend or longer courses in constant session. All of this had official sanction. In addition, the Nuffield Foundation ran week-long or weekend residential courses at Teachers Centres or residence halls of colleges all over the country, demonstrating and giving teachers experience in their approach to science and math by involving teachers in working with the materials as would children. The Teachers Centres served to bring together learning materials, publications, and reports of current research. They were often laboratories, giving teachers a chance to become directly acquainted with learning materials, immersing them, workshop fashion, in direct trials of new methods.

The Bristol Teachers Centre, for example, staffed with personnel from the Nuffield Junior Science and Mathematics Project, consisted of several rooms fitted out as environmental workshops for exploration of almost anything. Teachers came in groups on certain afternoons, with 20 sessions planned for each teacher. The plan was eventually to include *all* the teachers in the Bristol primary schools.

The Plowden Report has much to say about inservice courses, but even more interesting is the effect of the Report itself in stimulating study prior to and since publication. Working groups assigned to study the Report have been set up by many LEAs as well as by teachers' colleges. Studies initiated for the Report and recommended by it to continue have been continued. Other studies recommended by the Report are underway.

Thus, variety -- experiment, model situations, trial situations -- seemed to be built into the process. The 1964 London County Council Report to the Central Advisory Committee on Education described two trial model schools built for the study and evaluation of many new ideas in education. An HMSO* publication describes one of these, the Eveline Lowe School, spreading further the study of the new organization.

Eveline Lowe Primary School, London: HMSO, 1967.

*Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Any new ideas gained by the head through attendance at institutes or courses were very easily spread to the teachers in her school. The spread followed from the very nature of her function in the school. She was herself always sharing, and teaching teachers by the the example of her own teaching. And the open school, where teachers could be influenced by contact both with other teachers and the head, and could see what took place beyond their own classroom, fostered this sharing and this dissemination through example. The Plowden Report, describing the prevalence of such training, strongly recommended that heads continue to teach: "The fact that the head continues to teach raises the whole status of teaching."

The Inspectorate

The participation of the inspectorate in the careful processing of applicants for headships has already been described. The inspectorate also functioned as one of the institutionalized safeguards around the practice of freedom. But perhaps more important than either role, the inspectorate helped maintain, *after* employment of the head, the *quality* of the initial selection. This relationship accounts for at least some of the heads' astonishing performance and for the widespread acceptance of the *idea* behind this performance.

In this role, inspectors helped the continuing growth of concept. They made sure that communication remained open so that information and ideas could circulate. They aimed their efforts at maintaining a receptive atmosphere. They made suggestions by releasing teachers for courses, visits, and conferences, and teachers were persuaded. By sharing all the good examples they saw, they stimulated a constant process of new implementations of the common idea. In short, they were very much part of the mechanism for spreading the

idea of informal education and a significant force creating similarities within the freedom of practice.

The inspectorate had the same professional background as the heads and the college teacher trainers, but they had the additional perspective of their varied work experiences. Prior to appointment, they may have been heads and then lecturers at colleges. Whatever the case there was movement back-and-forth in these assignments. Their influence seemed incomparable. They encouraged the work of the headmistress, supporting experiments to further clarify and implement the basic idea. They fostered the trying-out of interesting variations of the idea, carrying news of all this work in their reports and in conversations with heads. The experiments themselves served as models which inspectors then suggested to others for visits and observation.

In this setting, which allowed heads freedom of action and developed an encouraging but noninterfering relationship, experiments had time to achieve depth. Isolated experiments of heads, developed within this freedom, became models for the spread of a concept that molded all infant education. Moreover, news transmitted by the inspectors in their unstructured manner could be accepted as suggestion, not prescription, and tried out with new variations and further experimentation. The Plowden Committee described this process:

Advances in education or practice are often surprisingly local and often owe much to local inspectors and advisers. They can be made widely known by H.M. Inspectors.

As an institutional safeguard within freedom, the inspectorial function more and more restricted itself to a suggesting, advising, persuading role, even when inspectors had doubts (as certainly was sometimes the case in the early pioneering days). If the provision for good living clearly existed and the life of the school was rich, inspection served not to produce a narrower, restricted, defined usage, but to encourage ingenuity and variation towards maximal development.

Public discussion by teachers associations and by HMIs more than ever favors interpretation of the inspectorial role as adviser, suggestor, disseminator. The principle of inspection (derived in the 19th century from the need to supervise the expenditure of public money) has not, however, been discarded. Thus, the Plowden Report says:

Assessment of a school is a necessary preamble to giving relevant advice. . . . Very occasionally children and the public still need to be protected. . . . Yet we welcome the growing stress on the role of adviser

rather than of inspector. . . . The more informal the schools become in their organisation and relationships, the more informal ought to be the routines of inspection.

Reports and Literature

A series of remarkable government reports at the turn of the century helped set the direction for the development of English infant schools. The reports had a style and a method that are, perhaps, the very essence of the spread of a common entity within freedom. They became the pivotal points of the infant school's evolving unity of concept. Used at the time of their issuance to buttress experimental action, they are still studied in the teachers' colleges. They are studied not as prescriptions but as suggestive *illustrations* derived *from* the schools, and they reflect the interaction of stimulation between the practice and such reports of practice. They have been the texts, not to be separated from the major educational literature, for the study of educational practice. Their unique role goes far beyond legislative acts or administrative rulings. All succeeding literature from the Ministry (now the Department of Education and Science) reflected this evolving unity of concept and served, in turn, as the instrument of further unity.

Thus, case studies were published describing experiments of practice in particular schools without trying to generalize or to pronounce absolutes. Each case was allowed to stand on its own and the generalizing and application were made independently. New reports arose from these independent and various applications.

I had thought of my observations in the schools as discoveries, and that I as an outsider had noticed things taken for granted or overlooked by the English, only to find, when I started delving into the literature, *all* my discoveries in the Hadow Report and in other reports and government publications (though *not* with the same emphasis I had given them). The reports reflected very specific and concrete knowledge of the schools. They summarized the current situations and described the best of what they had seen. For example, by reporting the best, the Hadow Report influenced the spread of the best into other schools. It urged the acceptance of variation of level. It suggested that the limitations imposed by buildings could be broken down. Speaking for individual work, it pointed out that whole-class teaching organization was no longer appropriate.

The primary school should not . . . be regarded merely

as a preparatory department for the subsequent stage, and the courses should be planned and conditioned, not mainly by the supposed requirements of the secondary stage, nor by the exigencies of an examination at the age of eleven, but by the needs of the child at that particular phase in his physical and mental development.

Along with summaries from Hadow, this handbook reports:

In many schools, the hall, the corridors and other spaces outside the classroom are used almost as fully as the rooms or playground and garden, and almost everywhere in the building children may be seen hard at work at their different employments.

The same handbook suggests that materials should be available throughout the day. It reports family grouping in some schools. The head as teacher and leader is discussed in just the way I had understood from my observation. Such handbooks had been published from 1905 on and represented a distillation of the inspectorate's experience in the schools.

The Ministry published illustrative examples supporting ideas that came from schools not in expectation of their being copied in detail but -- as elsewhere -- in the hopes that they would stimulate specific concrete solutions and thinking. The pamphlets it published describing new ideas from the schools were, in effect, a distillation from the many, many good ways observed, and each pamphlet was prefaced by an account of a child's way of learning. A permissive atmosphere was created for experiments that would further break through the old classroom structure. Similarly, the Nuffield Junior Science Project *Teacher's Guide 2* continued the tradition of publishing, without generalizing, case histories and specific examples from the teacher's work in the classroom.

On the adult level, this approach, stressing experiment, was consistent with the methods of English infant education. Just as a child is allowed to ask his own questions, so an adult, presented with a case history of another teacher's work, can ask *his* own questions, select what is pertinent, and decide whether or not to apply it.

Underlying all inspectorate reports, drawing from them and then adding to them in new statements, are the Parliamentary Committee reports. These reports collect examples of current practice as a base for their conclusions and spread descriptions of the best of these as widely as possible. Thirty years or more may come between reports of a Parliamentary Committee (as the Hadow Report, 1933, is the report on primary education directly prior to the Plowden Report of 1967),

but the committee, when it has reported, has really drawn on the experience of the whole current scene, from schools, training colleges, the university Institutes of Education, HMIs and LEAs to doctors, psychologists, teachers, heads, and parents. An examination of the list of those giving testimony to the Plowden Committee reveals this widespread involvement. A Parliamentary Committee report thus embodies the most serious thought and aims of each period and serves as a guide for their dissemination. The descriptions of practice in the report are, in effect, its recommendations, and they influence, guide, and stimulate change for a long time to come. When the changes themselves, as well as societal change and the new knowledge, suggest new accommodations, or when the logic of implementation has resulted in new forms that no longer need the accommodation, it is the time very often for a new report.

In England, there has been only minimal legislative prescription of practice. As a consequence, the reports have a dimension and a significance for English education that cannot be weighed in terms of enacted legislation or administrative ruling. Their influence is as synthesizer and collector of the best existing practice in the schools, and such reporting constitutes recommendation, creating the permissive frame for further extension of exploration. In addition, as mentioned, the preparation for the report is itself a stimulating process, helpful in perfecting the method, and not merely a process of passive collection.

Thus even during its preparation the Plowden Report informed heads about more successful ways of doing what they wanted to do, which they then tired out. Based on three years of study, on research reports especially prepared for it, the Plowden Report stimulated new syntheses by stimulating study, stimulating research, and stimulating new experiments among groups and individuals preparing statements of testimony for the Committee.* Moreover, just as the Hadow Report is still studied and restudied in teachers' colleges, the Plowden Report has come under examination, eliciting arguments and defense, with a new Education Act the likely result. The Report will be text and source and touchstone for years. Even without legislative implementation it is the inspiration for further surveys and studies suggested in the Report, which are meant to prepare for the implementation of the recommendations. Some of these -- on home and school, on the NNEB, on teacher education -- are completed or in preparation. The Report has stimulated the Schools Council to prepare curriculum bulletins that can serve as suggestion for further experimentation. LEAs are preparing reorganization plans for changed entry ages. Since the Report's publication the decision on age of transfer has

*An example of this is Michael Young and Patrick McGeeney, *Learning Begins at Home* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1968), sponsored by the Institute of Community Studies.

largely been left to LEAs, and age of transfer is no longer the same in every area.

Furthermore, the Report has already had an effect because so much of it requires neither lesiglation nor funding. Within the freedom for experimentation in English schools, much can be done if the head is convinced, and the Plowden Report convinced many heads to move towards greater inclusion of parents and towards a change of method in junior schools. Such changes need support, and the Plowden Committee addressed itself to this point by involving the parents and the public, not merely the profession. Thus, programs that followed on radio, ITV (Independent Television), and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), and the discussion in newspapers and magazines, have drawn *all* of English society, parents as well as professionals, into a vast discussion on the Plowden recommendations, on the Plowden description of how children learn. The BBC's follow-up on the Plowden Report is most illustrative. It prepared short filmed case histories of good practice, of new methods, and of how children learn. At the time of this writing, the BBC had completed ten on "Discovery and Experience," six on "The Mother Tongue," and six (for parents) on child development, entitled "The Springs of Learning"; another ten programs on the primary schools were being prepared and LEAs and colleges of education had ordered 250 prints.

It was not only in official reports that experiences were collected. Studies sponsored by the Institutes also gathered and synthesized and evaluated the experiences of the schools and described the ideas on which these experiences were based. Gardner, for instance, from her position as head of the Child Development Department, Institute of Education, University of London, distilled the good practices observed by her and described to her, synthesized the common analysis on child development, presenting comparative evidence on results of practice, and wrote books that were both theoretical and practical, sharing all her experiences, as well as the work and experience of the many heads she knew. Her research on results bulwarked the defense of experimentation and gave needed encouragement to further experimentation.

The heads also told their own story as shapers and inheritors of their history. Freedom had resulted in experiments, and the teachers and heads wrote of them, contributing to the collection of experiences from which others were free to select. *Play in the Infant School* by E. R. Boyce was one such early and influential sharing of a very fully developed experiment. (This description of East End London children, in fact, brings to mind many analogies with American ghetto children. In the free atmosphere of

the school, children were encouraged in their spontaneous talk about everyday life at home and on the street, and much of the book is about communication.) The descriptions of good practice accumulated because many heads, actively participating in the process of dissemination, shared their experiments. The process was two-way. The heads acted and were acted on. Experience collected from schools and heads was given back in the reports and in the literature disseminated to the heads. Reported experiences were tried, extended, reworked into new variations, and then tested again. It is no wonder that the similarities of practice are so great, even without prescription.

In America, as the English pointed out, research was brought to the teacher from the university. In England, so the analysis went, teachers who wanted to make things better did so, and then the researchers evaluated the effort. It was not quite like that, but close enough. It was rather, as I've described, a reciprocal influence, and teachers were much influenced by their reading and by the research reported in their reading. A Plowden statement of how the heads influence and are influenced, of how the mechanics of dissemination work, makes a similar point:

A deliberate change in the curriculum has been brought about not by the issue of programmes by states or universities as is often done in the U.S.A., but by pioneer work by teachers, clarified and focused by advisory services to teachers, and diffused on a national scale by in-service training in which self help has played a major and essential part.

And at another point, the Report again gives the credit for change to the teacher: "The willingness of teachers to experiment, to innovate and to change has been one of the mainsprings of progress in the primary schools." □

3

The Greater Boston Teachers Center: The Third Era, 1968-75

In the late 1960s I was one of a number of American teachers who were reading the early reports of reforms in English primary schools and who then decided to see some of them at firsthand. I was so impressed by what I saw that in 1968 I decided to arrange to bring teachers and school-heads from those schools to train our teachers during the summer. My position at the National Association of Independent Schools made it possible to interest a number of our member schools to be hosts for summer workshops lasting six weeks. Each host school was expected to raise part of its budget, and the modest tuition fees paid by participants provided the remainder. The schools recruited groups of 20 to 50 teachers from public and private schools. The director of the workshop was assisted by local teachers, some from the faculty of the host school, on the basis of their special interests and skills. In the early 1970s when these workshops were held, interest in the English reforms became widespread among our teachers. There was the hope, felt in many quarters, that the integrated day might restore some of the best aspects of progressive education. For a few years it looked as though this might happen.

When summer workshop participants complained that, after the excitement of the summer, it could be lonely in subsequent months with no structure available to assist them, the Teacher Training Committee of the NAIS responded by establishing the Greater Boston Teachers Center, which drew upon the English experience for its emphasis, program, advisory services and schedule. As director of the Center, I submitted the following review of this undertaking to the NAIS Board in 1976:

The Greater Boston Teachers Center came into existence in the fall of 1971 at the request of a number of teachers who had attended summer workshops held in Cambridge since 1968 under the auspices of the Teacher Training Committee of the National Association of Independent School. The workshops* were directed by head teachers from English primary schools assisted in each case by a staff of local teachers from the host school. Other summer workshops, similarly sponsored and diected and enrolling approximately equal numbers of

*The story of this adventure in teacher education has been told in the pamphlet, *Preparing Teachers for the Integrated Day*, by Edward Yeomans (NAIS, 1970), and in several reports published by the separate host schools. (See *Box Breaking* by John Harkins, Friends Committee on Education, 1969; *Quiet Turbulence* by Samuel B. C. Jackson, Cleveland Council of Independent Schools, 1971; and article by John Harkins in *Supporting the Learning Teacher*, edited by Marilyn Hapgood, Agathon Press, 1975; and *The Wellsprings of Teaching* by Edward Yeomans, NAIS, 1969.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS ON THE INTEGRATED DAY, July 5 to July 27, 1973 (except as noted)

1. BROOKLYN FRIENDS SCHOOL, 112 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. (718) 858-9397. Host and Director: John Darr. (Tentatively scheduled for August)
2. THE CHILDREN'S CENTER, 38 Franklin Street, Tenafly, NJ 07670. (201) 871-2233. Host and Director: Mrs. Suzanne M. Spector. July 30 to August 17.
3. COLORADO ACADEMY, P.O. Box 1177, Englewood, CO 80110. (303) 986-1501. Host: Mrs. Manon Charbonneau. Directors: John and Janet Lancaster. St. Mary's College, Cheltenham, England.
4. THE TEACHERS CENTER AT GREENWICH CONVENT OF SACRED HEART, 1177 King Street, Greenwich, CT 06830. (203) 531-6500. Hosts and Directors: Celia Houghton; Sister Voncile White.
5. FAR HILLS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL, Mine Brook Road, Far Hills, NJ 07931. (201) 766-0622. Host: Elton H. Knutson. Director: Hazel Sibley, Leicestershire, England.

teachers from public and private schools, took place during those years in 20 cities.

From questionnaires and interviews conducted in 1970 among participants by evaluation teams from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of Connecticut, one recommendation emerged from every center, namely that teachers who had been stimulated by the summer workshop to change their teaching style must be supported on some continuing basis. The isolation of one or two people in a school who make significant changes in room arrangement, schedule and curriculum can be a very defeating experience.

Spurred by this request, the Teacher Training Committee raised the necessary funds to invite people from each center to attend a special "Workshop for Graduates" in the summer of 1971. The purpose of this conference was to prepare the participants to become advisors in their own localities and eventually to set up teachers' centers which would be adapted from those which have made such a contribution to the English primary schools. The Greater Boston Teachers Center was among the first of a number of such enterprises that were opened at that time. It was established as a division of the NAIS with an Executive Committee consisting of representatives of the NAIS, two universities, independent schools and public schools. It opened its own office in Cambridge in February, 1972.

Preliminary Experiences -- The Newton Workshop

A good many teachers from the Newton Public Schools had attended the NAIS summer workshops on the integrated day, and some of them had made a good beginning towards greater flexibility in their own classrooms. During the winter of 1971 the Newton Superintendent's office asked the staff of the summer workshop to provide a one-week session in May for three teachers from each of ten elementary schools. These people -- and they included principals and supervisors as well as teachers -- were freed full-time for the week to give their undivided attention to the workshop. Equally important, a school library and auditorium were found which could be used day after day without the need to pack up each afternoon for some other use the next morning.

Here was a challenge for a staff whose previous experience had been primarily that of a four-weeks' summer session: how to telescope enough experience into five days to accomplish at least some of the objectives of this kind of teacher education.

We began by asking the group to stretch the time to the extent of giving an evening for orientation and a Saturday for a field trip (in advance of the week).

6. FAYERWEATHER STREET SCHOOL, 74R Fayerweather Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 876-4746. Host and Director: Christopher Stevenson. June 25 to July 3.

7. FRANCIS W. PARKER SCHOOL, 330 Webster Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614. (312) 549-0172. Host: Katie McConnell. Director: Roy Illsley, Leicestershire, England.

8. FRIENDS SELECT SCHOOL, Parkway & 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. (215) 568-4111. Host: Mary Chapple, Friends Committee on Education, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Directors: Sybil Marshall, Ewert Oakshott, Reginald Buck, Peter Dixon, Hugh Jones; Sussex University, England.

9. GREATER CLEVELAND TEACHER CENTER, HAWKEN SCHOOL, Clubside Road, Lyndhurst, OH 44124. (216) 382-8800. Host: Penny (Mrs. Harvey) Buchanan. Directors: Ray Long and Ted Tattersall, Yorkshire, England.

10. ROEPER CITY AND COUNTRY SCHOOL, 2190 N. Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013. (313) 642-1500 Host and Director: Annamarie Roeper.

At the evening session the group was shown slides of children working in integrated day classrooms, and of teachers involved in similar workshops.

Luckily, the day of the field trip turned out to be warm and bright. A bus took us all -- staff and participants -- to Plymouth and the Plimoth Plantation where arrangements had been made with the Curator. Half of the group set out to explore the natural environment with our ecologist: the plants, birds and animals of fresh water ponds, streams, salt marsh and ocean beach. The other half were taken to one of the digs where they helped to bring to light the remains of 17th century implements and utensils and then to identify them in the laboratory.

Both groups visited the restoration of the Pilgrim village, while some chose to study the replica of the *Mayflower*, others the archives in the museum.

A hospitable member of the Newton Superintendent's office invited the whole group to have their picnic lunch at his house nearby, and then the visiting was reversed for the afternoon.

This field trip set the tone, and provided raw material, for much that followed during the subsequent week. Numerous drawings and paintings emerged, and several photographic records. There were collections of shells and stones to be labeled and presented in attractive ways. A lamprey eel which had been caught was dissected. The rhythms, shapes and patterns of the seashore found their way into collage, into music and into dance-movement. Meanwhile, participants having more historical interests made use of the experience by designing new units for their curricula in colonial American history and life with material that now began to have a firsthand relationship to their particular interests.

This experience had the effect of greatly enlarging the environment of a school, and of calling out from that larger environment experiences and skills that, when appropriately selected and implemented, can be educative. The typical museum trip, as all teachers know who have taken children on such trips, can become a morass of too much to see and no time to digest. There must be provision for a variety of interests, then there must be focus upon a limited assortment of activities, then time to do something communicative -- perhaps creative -- with the experience after it is over.

Teachers need more than experiences in the environment, however. They need to see ways in which such experiences can be extended so that communication takes place, and academic skills are strengthened. Language, numerical, scientific and problem-solving skills must be employed and strengthened deliberately, not wishfully or haphazardly. The efficient use of classroom

11. SPRINGSIDE SCHOOL, Cherokee & Willow Avenues, Philadelphia, PA 19118. (215) 247-7200. Host: Ann Witman. Directors: Lester Horner, Don Marriot, Janet Baines: Yorkshire, England. July 9 to August 3.

12. WORKSHOP FOR LEARNING THINGS, 5 Bridge Street, Watertown, MA 02172. (617) 926-3491. Host and Director: George Cope. July 9 to July 27.

materials, of space, of time and of school resources played a conspicuous part in the discussions and demonstrations of subsequent days. Ways of grouping children were considered. The function of the specialist teacher in the integrated day was examined. Housekeeping and record keeping received particular attention because the neglect of these duties could undermine an otherwise successful classroom.

During mid-week the participants were divided into groups of five for visits to a number of interesting local schools. Impressions from these visits were discussed with the staff in afternoon sessions. The opportunity to spend a morning in another classroom comes infrequently to most teachers, and when such classrooms are carefully selected, much stimulation can take place. The materials and techniques, the teachers' records, the samples of children's work, in short, all of the practical details required in the structure of open education were examined, compared and discussed. These concerns occupied the final hours of the workshop.

The experiences gained from this week in Newton have been as useful to the staff as to the participants. All agreed that a school system needs the kind of teachers' center that one school provided for the week: a room that has no other use, but in which can be housed a library, suitable films and slides, materials of all kinds which can be borrowed or used there, a chance to talk to and work with other teachers and advisors who possess the skills that are needed in the open classroom.

The one thing missing from this otherwise very successful experience was any form of follow-up. Ideally, the workshop staff should have been asked to visit the participants in their classrooms during the spring term and help them with whatever curriculum projects or room arrangements they wished to undertake. Again ideally, the whole group should have been called together again for two or three weeks during the summer in order to design their curricula for the coming year. This would have added substance to the excitement of the week which we all shared.

In spite of this omission, it is rewarding to observe that in the schools of Newton which have developed open classrooms at various levels there can be found teachers who took part in this first workshop.

A Pattern Develops

Our first plan was to find a suitable facility in Boston or a suburb which we could rent and convert to a teachers' center. We were encouraged by the interest of two foundations, both of which were searching for ways to improve the in-service education of teach-

ers. Greater Boston covers a large area, having a great variety of schools within the public schools systems as well as among the independent and church-related schools, and there are numerous community schools, day care centers and nursery schools as well. How could one teachers' center possibly serve such a large and diverse community?

Obviously, it could not, but the more we looked for advice and possible sites, the more we realized that parts of the area were already being well served by competent people, working in a variety of interesting situations. There was an Education Development Center in Newton with its film facilities and an experienced staff working with Headstart Follow Through. There was the Store Front Learning Center in Boston's South End where teachers from neighboring schools would come, sometimes with children, to learn the possibilities of books and materials not ordinarily available in their classrooms. The Children's Museum in Jamaica Plain, with its Resource and Recycle Centers, was providing a similar service to teachers from all parts of the city.

There was a resource center in operation at Wheelock College and another one at the Advisory for Open Education in Cambridge. The Workshop for Learning Things in Watertown was developing a center of its own with special opportunities for building with wood and tri-wall, for work in photography, in mechanics and in book-making.

Then there were the museums, each with a strong education program: Plimoth Plantation, The Museum of Science, Mystic Seaport, The New England Aquarium, Old Sturbridge Village. And finally the schools that were following the philosophy of the integrated day: Habitat School of the Environment working with high-school students; Cambridge Friends, Shady Hill and Charles River, each of which has developed open education in the elementary grades and is now in the process of extending those patterns to the junior high-school levels; Fayerweather Street, which has been a kind of mirror for open education from the time of its founding in the 1960s; Franklin and Fiske in Lexington, Angier in Newton, Parmenter in Arlington.

Others could be included -- in each category -- for open education has many friends in Greater Boston. The significance of our discovery was that, first of all, a great deal of excellent teacher education was already going on in converted warehouses, museums and schools; that to duplicate the resources and skills of these existing centers in one central facility would be impossible financially and professionally; that the differences among them are, in fact, assets that might be lost in any attempt at consolidation. Thus the problem became one of connecting teachers in the field with op-

portunities that could be provided by each center.

This required more than mere publicity. We negotiated with each center the possibilities for materials and activities that could be offered to groups of 20 teachers, after school once a week, or Saturday mornings, for a period of six weeks. We chose this unit of time because it seemed to be manageable: we could finish a series, stop, assess the results and make changes before starting up a new one.

Two principles guided us: teachers, parents, and administrators from any kind of school would be invited to enroll in the weekly workshops, and the only charge to them would be the cost of materials used. We wished to start by offering once-a-week workshops, free of all problems of expense or graduate credit, in order to find out what the response would be. Our announcement, mailed to 1,000 names gleaned from various lists, brought an enrollment of 300 during the first series. Two-thirds of the participants came from public schools, one-third from private schools of various types.

This response encouraged us to launch a second series in the spring, similar in most respects to the first. The chief difference was a financial one: we asked each superintendent or headmaster whose teachers had enrolled to participate in the cost to the extent of $25 per person per series. Some agreed, others refused, but the enrollment of teachers did not depend upon an agreement to pay tuition. We enrolled 287 in this series, and received about $1,000 in payments from schools.

We mailed a brief evaluation form to each participant during each of the two series. The information thus provided became the basis for three excellent meetings of workshop directors. Many of these people were unacquainted with one another, yet all were bound by a similar philosophy. These meetings inaugurated a plan of regular gatherings of the group in a different center each time.

Meanwhile, a beginning had been made with advisory services. Not having a full-time staff, we made arrangements with three people on a part-time basis to respond to invitations from teachers to visit classrooms. The advisors were introduced at workshops, or they were actually directing them, and they let it be known that they were available occasionally to visit and assist. There was a steady demand for their services. They brought with them experience in implementing open education in a school setting, and this, to many teachers, had become a matter of some urgency.

Some participants indicated on their evaluation forms that graduate credit would be desirable if it could be arranged. Accordingly, two discussions were held with the representatives of four teacher training

colleges: Simmons, Wheelock, Lesley and Tufts. The obvious complications of administering graduate credit for off-campus experiences by non-matriculated students seemed formidable, but these were offset by a genuine desire to involve colleges in new relationships with schools and with teachers. There was hope that something could be worked out which would include opportunities for graduate students to enroll with teachers in the workshops and for both groups to make use of college facilities and personnel.

By the end of its first year (summer, 1972), the Greater Boston Teachers Center had developed a certain pattern of action: an office that was just an office, not a resource center; agreements with museums, shops and schools for weekly, after-school workshops, based on three series of six weeks each, fall, winter and spring; a mailing list of 1,500 names; advisory services by part-time people; informal consortium of colleges interested in new forms of teacher education. We were still dependent upon foundations for our existence, and our first try at self-sufficiency had not worked. Other and better approaches would have to be used if we were to demonstrate our belief that schools will find means to finance a share of the cost of in-service teacher education from an outside agency if they are convinced that the experience will lead to better teaching.

Advisory Services

By the fall of 1972 we were able to employ four full-time advisors: John Arnold, who came from Sidwell Friends School with experience as principal of the middle school there; Adelaide Sproul, who had been head of the art department of Shady Hill School for many years; Priscilla Erlich, a former advisor in music for Head-start Follow Through Program at EDC; and Susan Powers, from the same program, with experience in the primary grades. Each advisor, besides leading a series of workshops in his own field, visited as many of the others as possible and accepted invitations by participants to visit classrooms. Some of these visits led to more formal arrangements with school systems for regular advisory services on a paid basis. We began to hope that we might become self-sufficient before our foundation grants would terminate. More importantly from an educational viewpoint, we discovered the power of combining workshop experiences with advisory services. Evidence began to mount showing that a given teacher who has an intense experience of exploratory learning during the summer, followed by after-school workshops during the school year are interspersed with

advisory help in her own classroom from time to time, if he or she has a desire to change from traditional teaching, will in fact be able to make a successful beginning. Obviously it takes longer than a year to make the change complete, especially if the individual has built up much experience and success in a traditional classroom. Had funds been available to provide such comprehensive support to teachers who voluntarily were leading the change to open education, many failures and frustrations could have been prevented and higher levels of proficiency would have been reached.

We added Brenda Engel to our staff the following year under a special grant to develop a technique of documenting and evaluating the open classroom. She worked in two schools in the Cambridge public school system and devised a shorthand, graphic method to record the various activities and use of time of individual students in open classrooms. Her first report, *An Alternative School Evaluation*, is a documented study of the Cambridge Alternative Public School.*

*Much of this material was published in 1975 by the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation under the heading: *A Handbook on Documentation.*

Meanwhile, Susan Powers continued to work part-time at Central School, a private day care center in Cambridge whose parents would shortly become catalysts for change in the public schools -- and part-time as an unpaid advisor at the Cambridge Alternative Public School and other schools in the Cambridge system. A year later Susan was hired by the Cambridge School Department to work as an advisor to primary grades teachers.

We had been asked by the Principal of the Champlain School, a mostly black elementary school in Boston, if we would be able to give some help to his teachers. We agreed because we were not in touch with an inner-city school, we wanted the experience, and we had great respect for the principal. With the backing of a foundation, Adelaide worked at Champlain once a week for two years, spending a full day in classrooms with an hour's gathering after school. These gatherings became extended in time until they began to take place over supper at Adelaide's home in Cambridge. Two years later, the group of 10 or 12, now scattered among several schools, continue to come there once a month for sociability and ideas.

This experience led to an application from the principal and teachers of another Boston school, the Rochambeau, for State funds to enable them to employ consultants for in-service training after school. We were chosen for the assignment. Credit was arranged at Lesley College. We conducted in their school a 15-week "course" on language arts which not only proved to be useful to the 20 participants, but which earned three graduate credits as well for those who wished to pay an additional fee to Lesley. We gave similar courses in four other communities that year and the next, hoping

that we had found a way to earn our daily bread. Unfortunately, most courses of this type in subsequent years began to suffer from reduced school budgets and we lost a principal means of earning our way.

Worcester has been our steadiest source of advisory work over the four years, particularly at the junior high level where John Arnold has given courses with credit from Worcester State College, including extensive work in classrooms. Other communities in which we have worked on contracts requested by teachers for extended periods of time are Scituate, Hull, Brookline, Medford, Beverly, Franklin, Shirley, Hopkinton, Somerville and Boston. Susan Powers' and Brenda Engel's work in Cambridge has already been mentioned.

Teachers' Workshops

Our workshops reached their peak in enrollment during the second year when 790 people enrolled in 47 *courses*, most of which ran for six weeks. An equal number of public and non-public schools were represented. Since that year attendance has declined steadily as other centers, agencies and colleges began holding similar workshops. Although disappointed by the steady decline, we were pleased at the extent to which the combination of advisory work with workshops had penetrated the community of teacher educators.

Perhaps the most unique among our offerings was that of a group of teachers on the faculty of a given school who became instructors of groups from other schools. We have had highly successful experiences of this kind in three or four public schools and an equal number of independents. There is something quite authentic to a group of teachers who occupy the seats in a classroom recently vacated by children, and who then compare experiences and insights with the teachers of the host school and with one another. It is not a glorified teachers' room conversation because ten or more schools may be represented in the group. Furthermore, there is a plan for the two hours, and books and materials are available to be used. Neither is it a lecture, or *class discussion* such as might take place in a bare college classroom. Instead it can become an exchange of ideas and techniques about children's learning among the people who are closest to it, with equal benefits to those who prepared and led the presentation and those who participated.

We kept in touch with the workshops by visiting them on a regular basis, by sending questionnaires to the participants and by calling the directors together for periodic evenings of discussion. This Collaborative, as we called the growing group of people who scheduled their own teacher training sessions as well

as ours, became a forum for stimulating exchanges of experience and plans for adapting our work to the needs of participants. To these meetings occasionally came the deans of the four colleges who had agreed to extend graduate credit to participants in our workshops: Lesley, Tufts, Wheelock and Simmons. Their interest in the kind of in-service education that we were offering had an influence upon the work that was done subsequently by their own institutions.

Summer workshops of two to four weeks continued to be held in Cambridge and in most of the other cities in which the practice had begun, notably Greenwich, Connecticut, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Denver and San Francisco. We relied less upon our English friends as directors, for many local teachers were moving into that role and were performing it very well. Nevertheless, we missed the example, the wisdom and the warm human qualities that we had come to respect so much in the English school people who came to us each summer. Their contribution to American education at a critical period was enormous, and it will increase with the passing of time.

Teachers as Researchers

The weekly seminars with one of our colleagues, Bill Hull, grew from a workshop series that we announced, but the participants became so fascinated by the work they were doing under his direction that they wanted to keep on, and have done so, some of them for two or three years.* As some dropped out, others took their places. Soon there were more requests than could be accommodated by one group of ten, so a second and then a third group was formed under the direction of Sara Hull and Kathleen Raoul, respectively, a fourth in California under Kathe Jervis.**

The one requirement is that teachers observe their children closely, record examples of significant problem solving and learning strategies, put these records into readable prose and bring the material to the next weekly meeting of the group. As reports are read to the group, they are taped. There is discussion of each one. It then falls upon the director to transcribe the tape with whatever editing and interpreting he wishes to do, and to provide participants with this version of their meeting.

A wealth of material has by now accumulated which is unlike anything in the research literature on cognition because it comes straight from the classroom experience without the distortion that accompanies a research design with tests and controls. Furthermore, the teachers who participate in the gathering and dis-

**Teachers' Seminars on Children's Thinking: A Progress Report* by Bill Hull. Monograph series, North Dakota Study Group.

***Children's Thinking in the Classroom* by Kathe Jervis. Monograph series, North Dakota Study Group.

seminating of this information say that their teaching is being influenced continuously by the insights that are developed.

The Training of Advisors

The advisory staff of GBTC has been made up of career teacher-educators, plus the two who came from the classroom for a year as mentioned. Nevertheless, we all agreed that additional training along the way would be desirable. For this purpose we brought together Pat Carini of the Prospect School Adjunct Services in Bennington, Vermont, and Ted Chittenden of Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, in hopes that they together might work out a procedure. Fortunately, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which had helped to start a number of the unattached teachers' centers including GBTC, became interested in this next step. Accordingly, sessions were scheduled at Bennington during summers and again during the year to which advisors were invited. The agenda might have been called A Professional View of Open Education, for the work -- and it was very intensive -- dealt with reading, spelling, mathematics and the other skills, from the standpoint of record keeping and documentation as well as from that of curriculum design. In addition to the practical help received, the advisors from teachers' centers around the country could meet and exchange experiences: a valuable activity in a very new profession.

National Outreach

With the growth of teachers' centers around the country there came a desire among the directors and staff members to meet one another, compare experience, and consider various forms of mutual assistance. Accordingly, a conference was called by the Advisory for Open Education, one of our colleagues in the Collaborative, which was held at Education Development Center, Newton, during the fall of 1974. It is a relatively short step from this gathering to the founding at about the same time of the Teachers Center Exchange, with its newsletters and other publications, under the auspices of the Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development of the National Institute of Education.

From our experience we have learned that there are better ways of providing professional opportunities to teachers than those which are commonly used. These include a series of practical workshops in which the learning by adults is seen as a metaphor of desirable

learning among children, and this experience is combined with advisory attention to individuals in their classrooms. We also have learned that a central, or local, teachers' center, with its materials, tools and curriculum suggestions, can be supplemented by a community-based arrangement in which many people are enlisted in the total effort of bringing fresh experiences to teachers. Each of these techniques has an important contribution to make to a teacher's skills and personal growth, and these are the qualities which are essential to any successful process of change in education.

Mondays

MAKING MATERIALS FROM RECYCLE & OTHER SOURCES. Children's Museum, Jamaicaway, Boston. Directors: Robin Simons and Diana Hanson. Nine Mondays, 4:30 to 6:30.

INTRODUCTION TO HUMANISTIC EDUCATION. 123 Park Street, Newton. Director: Paul Nash, Boston University. Nine Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

THE USE OF ART MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM. Boston YWCA Workshops, 140 Clarendon St., Boston. Director: Fazal Chowdry. Nine Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

CHILDREN'S THINKING. Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Rd., Cambridge. Director: Tim Barclay. Nine Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

Tuesdays

MAKING A "REAL" BOOK. Workshop for Learning Things, 5 Bridge St., Watertown. Directors: Phylis Morrison and George Cope. Nine Tuesdays, 4:30 to 7:30.

LEARNING THROUGH MUSIC AND OTHER ARTS. E.D.C. Conference Room, 55 Chapel St., Newton. Director: Priscilla Ehrlich. Nine Tuesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

*This report was originally published in *Essays on Teachers Centers*, edited by Kathleen Devaney, Far West Regional Laboratory, National Institute of Education.

4

The Voices of Teachers

Looking back over the list of workshops that were offered three times a year from the winter of 1972 through 1975, I am struck by the variety in content, the appropriateness of the material for use by working teachers, and the excellence of most of the workshop directors. Among them were working principals and classroom teachers, artists and craftsmen, a poet, university professors, museum instructors, all willing to share their skills and interests with teachers on a limited time-basis, for reasonable compensation. I am struck, too, by how fortunate we were in being able to attract such experienced and gifted advisors, each of whom had come directly out of classroom teaching, understood the problems, and knew how to visit classes, meet with individuals or groups, and initiate appropriate forms of support and stimulation. The work of the advisor, and the attendant problems and rewards, were well described by Adelaide Sproul who was a mainstay of the staff from 1972 through 1975:

From An Advisor's Notebook/ Adelaide Sproul*

An account of my four years of advisory work starts logically and somewhat prosaically with a list of communities whose schools I have visited -- Dorchester, Needham, Newton, Winthrop, Scituate, Worcester, Roxbury, Belmont, East Boston, Marshfield, Hull, Somerville, Cambridge, Lexington, Franklin, Holliston, Medford. Eighteen communities, but of that number there are six whose schools I have known well over the past four years.

The most continuous and in many ways the most absorbing piece of work was carried out in Dorchester at the Champlain School. My first visit was on November 2, 1972 and I worked regularly in this school until it closed in June 1974. Champlain, forgotten by everybody, was a small school for kindergarten through fifth grades housed in an old building which was furnished with the barest necessities of school life. When I arrived the last desks had just been unscrewed from the floor and the teachers were wondering how to think of rooms that had this possibility of flexibility. As we started to look at the space and move a few desks one

(Tuesdays cont'd.)

TEACHING FOR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GROWTH. Fenn School, 123 Monument St., Concord. Director: Robert Hawley, Education Research Associates, Amherst. Nine Tuesdays, 7:00 to 9:30.

Wednesdays

CONSTRUCTION WITH PAPER. Spaceforms, 5 Bridge St., Watertown. Director: Jim Bottomley. Nine Wednesdays, 4:00 to 7:00.

WOODWORKING IN SCHOOLS. New England Craftsmanship Center, 5 Bridge St., Watertown. Director: Tom Waring. Nine Wednesdays, 3:30 to 6:00.

RESOURCES OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT. Store Front Learning Center, 90 W. Brookline St., Boston. Directors: Eloise Barros, Linda Stern, Anna Rivera, Marlene Stevens. Nine Wednesdays, 3:30 to 6:00.

RECORD KEEPING AND EVALUATION IN THE OPEN CLASSROOM. Angier School, 1697 Beacon St., Waban. Directors: Roland Barth, Joan Sclar, Helen Herzog, Kathy Moe. Nine Wednesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

teacher said, "Rearranging the furniture makes me wonder about ways of teaching, and changing the way you teach makes it necessary to change room arrangement. I wonder which comes first?" This question came up many times as this group of teachers who were at the very beginning of change seesawed between the two points of departure. Our seesaw was often put into further movement by the circumstances of violence and uncertainty that surrounded the school and were part of the daily life of the children. There were many days when we were barely hanging on as the violence in the city echoed audibly through the children's behavior. My role was often just to listen -- to teachers, to the principal, to the children. Sometimes I took a child out to the hall to let him draw or try to read a few words, sometimes I taught a group, or a whole class, an art lesson, but always as soon as the children left for the day the teachers, the principal and I gathered for a working session. We explored ideas and materials and from time to time a colleague with special expertise would join us. These sessions were completely voluntary on the part of the teachers; they received no stipends or credits and since there was no money to pay the custodian to stay overtime, we always left precipitously as he blinked the lights at four.

This experience with some of the most deprived children in Boston was an important start for me as a full-time advisor. Its effects have been lasting and vital. The Champlain teachers became a strong and mutually supportive group as we struggled together with all of the learning and social problems of battered and bewildered children. It was hard to get enough done in our after-school sessions, and so in the winter of 1973 we met occasionally in the evening at my house for a potluck supper, saving hard problems for these longer, more relaxed times. Toward the end of my second year in the school we began to see some real progress and were making plans for the next step ahead when the Champlain School, as we knew it, was closed. By this time our identity as a group was strong enough to stand without the school and, in spite of the fact that the teachers are scattered in various schools, we gather periodically to eat good food and talk and worry, trying to support one another through these times in which teachers seem to have been forgotten in the melee of politics. Some of my notes from this work fill out the details --

Nov. 30. Long talk with Bill Wright about the complete lack of motivation of all these children. He told me about three children in the school who saw their father shoot and kill their mother. He then left the children locked up in the apartment where they and their dead mother were found two days later. We ruminated about

Thursdays

PLANNING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT FOR PRIMARY GRADES. Wampatuck School, Tilden Road, Scituate. Directors: Henry and Anita Olds, Walter Drew. Nine Thursdays, 7:30 to 9:30.

LANGUAGE IN RELATION TO CREATIVE ARTS. Fayerweather Street School, 74R Fayerweather St., Cambridge. Director: Betsye Sargent. Six Thursdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP. Habitat School of Environment, 10 Juniper Rd., Belmont. Directors: Bill Phillips, Chris Burnett, Clare Walker. Nine Thursdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

Mondays

TEACHING BLACK HISTORY IN BOSTON. Storefront Learning Center, 90 W. Brookline St., Boston. Directors: Eloise Barros and Laura Cooper, Storefront Learning Center; Byron Rushing, Museum of Afro-American History. Nine Mondays, 3:30 to 6:00.

MATH AND SCIENCE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (K,1,2), Central School, 43 Essex St., Cambridge. Director: Susan Powers, Advisor, Greater Boston Teachers Center. Nine Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

how to combat the hostility which develops from these lives of shock, stabbings with scissors, etc. While we were talking Bill was trying to persuade a small child to eat his cereal and a kindergarten teacher came in with two very small children to have Bill taste the applesauce they had just made. Room 103 completely changed, desks rearranged in a semi-circle, a reading corner of sorts in use and children painting at their desks. Block corner in use.

Dec. 19. Printing with Grade 1, a noisy, messy success. 2:30-4 Plans for after Christmas. All of the teachers have now visited the Underwood School and have lots of ideas from seeing those classrooms.

Jan. 4, 1973. An ice storm and a fire in the subway made the 3rd Grade teacher late, so I took her class until she arrived. They drew and worked on a spelling lesson. Observed a 2nd Grade phonics lesson conducted from the blackboard. One teacher, 25 kids, some of whom can't read, one boy simply hid under a desk from frustration. This teacher has brought a small carpentry bench in and is teaching the children to saw. They cut lengths of 1' x 2" to make blocks and then sand them. He has taken away the reading corner because it didn't work, but the block corner goes on. Watched a 1st Grade phonics lesson, very confusing to a number of children -- ee, ea sounds.
They don't care.
Back to Grade 3 to watch afternoon choice time. The children were playing games, building with blocks, experimenting with Cuisenaire rods and reading.
2:30-4 Discussion with teachers about my observations, suggested working more with children's own, immediate vocabulary. We planned to work with stories they dictate. Bill Wright offered to take an occasional class so teachers can work with small groups.

Jan. 15. Took in a load of cardboard tubes, helped 1st Grade teacher make cubbies with them. Also helped her to organize a reading space.
2:30-4 Tim Barclay gave a Math workshop.

Jan. 22. School very upset. Lots of problems with children vs. their families. Painted with a 2nd Grade, good splashy work.
2:30-4 More work with puppets and a long discussion about the children's problems and their lack of interest.

Jan. 29. Slushy snow, lots of flu, only 14-15 kids per class. Bill Wright sick for the first time anyone can remember.

Tuesdays

MAKING MATH MATERIALS. Workshops for Learning Things, 5 Bridge St., Watertown. Directors: Frieda Ployer and John Merrill of WfLT Staff. Nine Tuesdays, 4:30 to 7:30.

Wednesdays

OPEN POSSIBILITIES FOR ADOLESCENTS. Bigelow Junior High School, 42 Vernon St., Newton. Directors: Charity James, formerly of Goldsmiths' College, London University, and John Arnold, Advisor, Greater Boston Teachers Center. Nine Wednesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

VIDEO WORKSHOP. Advisory for Open Education, 90 Sherman St., Cambridge. Directors: Cornelia Voorhees and Allan Leitman, AOE Staff. Six Wednesdays, 7:00 to 9:30.

Thursdays

MAKE-IT-YOURSELF CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT. Wheelock College Resources Center, 26 Pilgrim Rd., Boston. Director: Neil Jorgensen, Wheelock. Nine Thursdays, any time after 3:30 to 6:30.

Mondays

ANIMALS IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT. 20 Maple Avenue, Cambridge. Director: Katharine Aldrich, teacher of natural sciences. Six Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

Worked with 7 boys on writing a story (shades of Sylvia Ashton Warner!). When asked to *make up* a story, they quoted their favorite book -- one about counting things. Eventually I got things going with a wild sentence about a purple velvet bear. (They like to think about the zoo.) BUT they see absolutely no reason to play with words and ideas. If you write, it is a word on a spelling list. If you read, it is pages in the book you have been assigned. I suspect their free painting is possible because it is not hitched to anything "important" or markable. There is also a great and sad depth of inertia, they don't respond to an idea -- why bother is the attitude. You can make them do things, but it is hard to get them to think about things. This is not just my observation. The teachers worry about this all the time. They feel it is the result of rote teaching and restricted living. Where is the life? It leaks out, of course, around the edges in all sorts of oblique "unacceptable" ways. But one feels (particularly these teachers) that the essential spark has been squelched. The dilemma: How do you help children to choose and satisfy their curiosity, whose curiosity is never allowed out and whose choice-making can't be exercised in real life? We concluded that you start with easy, limited choices. It is not a question here of "open classrooms" but of finding viable ways to the kids, to where they are at. Once we get them caught up in something because they like it, we will begin to move toward open classrooms.

Mar. 14. The plan was to work in the 2nd Grade room with those who chose collage. As I entered the room there were loud protests and groans, "Do we *have* to do art?" "We don't want to do art." Much talk and explanation from the teacher and an incident with a small boy who had a knife. We took the knife away and he was distressed because he didn't want his mother to know. He leaned against me and said, "Please, please, please, please, Mrs. Sproul, turn your eyes blue." Me: "My eyes are blue." Boy: "No, they are black." Me, after pause: "What color is my face?" Boy: "Black." That was all. Eventually things calmed down and Eva stayed with me to paint (still no collage) while everyone else went out to play. Small boy arrived from Pam's room with wood constructions to show. We photographed them and also Eva and two others who gave up play -- nice. 2:30-4 Reading workshop with June Cvijanovic.

Mar. 29. Wild. One of the 2nd Grade kids was beaten up by his uncle in front of the class because he went to the store at recess, really beaten with a heavy belt and not allowed to cry. Later I tried to help him read. He couldn't sit still but wanted to be near me. He couldn't read really, seems to have memorized the

Thursdays

POETRY WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM. Pierce School, 50 School St., Brookline. Director: Nina Nyhart, Poet/ teacher, formerly with Artists in Schools program, Mass. Council of the Arts & Humanities. Six Thursdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

Fridays and Saturdays

READING WORKSHOP. Fayerweather Street School, 74R Fayerweather St., Cambridge. Directors: Patricia Carini and Jessica Howard, Adjunct Services Program, the Prospect Schools, Bennington, Vermont. Friday, 10/18, 4:00 to 9:00; Saturday, 10/19, 9:00 to 1:00; Friday, 11/08, 4:00 to 9:00; Saturday, 11/09, 9:00 to 1:00.

Mondays

CREATIVE DANCE AND DRAMA FOR TEACHERS. Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Road, Cambridge. Director: Priscilla Sanville, Carroll School, Lincoln (formerly at Shady Hill School). Six Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

THE MULTI-AGE CLASSROOM. Angier School, 1697 Beacon St., Newton (Waban). Directors: Deborah Horwitz, Sandra Porter-Englehart, John Roche, Judy Smith, Angier School. Nine Mondays, 4:00 to 6:00.

ARTS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM. 21 Parker Street, Cambridge. Director: Adelaide Sproul, Advisor, GBTC. Eight Mondays: (monthly).

book. Listened to a 3rd Grade boy try desperately to sound out some words. He looks at W and says anything that comes into his head but W.

In May the teachers began to use a beautiful new playground a block and a half away from the school. I went too, taking crayons and paper and we made rubbings of the textures there. The 2nd Grade teacher took out math work and also devised a wonderful series of obstacle races for children on the climbing equipment. In this playground the children's behavior was noticeably different from anything any of us had seen in school. They loved climbing over, through and around the equipment and being timed. A group of powerful girls spent two hours playing house. We felt we had seen the real children, for the first time in many cases, and were so exhilarated that a trip to the park has become a regular part of each day.

It was through members of this first group that my next involvement in Dorchester schools developed. In early 1975 a proposal written by me and the teachers of the Lucy Stone and the Rochambeau schools was funded by State funds. Judy Higbea and I spent a day a week in these two schools working with children and teachers and conducting workshops in the afternoons. We worked intensively on language arts extensions trying to strengthen the existing reading and writing program through such activities as printmaking, photography, puppetry and book-making which we related to the immediate lives of the children and to various ways of using words. It was an exciting and successful spring. The teachers used every workshop as a springboard for work in their classrooms and we watched the children grow in their use of language.

Examples of specific projects are varied, but they seem to always come back to book-making, flow charts and poetry. For two sessions the teachers made books. The designs were varied, but most of them ended up in classrooms filled with children's writing. This started great interest in book-making everywhere. The little children made simple folded books using colored construction paper for covers and newsprint or lined paper for pages. We used a long-armed stapler to put these books together and for weeks I never appeared in these schools without this piece of equipment. The children loved it. My notes for April 10 in a first grade:

"Albert made book after book, piling up the scrap paper and folding it and bringing it up to be stapled with a grin. He made a mask too out of purple scrap. No doubt about their interest in writing."

Tuesdays

MATHEMATICS FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES. Shady Hill School Math Lab, 178 Coolidge Hill, Cambridge. Director: Robert Lawler, Shady Hill School. Six Tuesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

HOW TO FACILITATE LEARNING AND GROWTH IN A K-2 OPEN CLASSROOM. Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Road, Cambridge. Directors: Nancy Langstaff, Bisse Bowman and Tim Barclay, Cambridge Friends School. Six Tuesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

MAKING LANGUAGE ARTS MATERIALS. Workshop for Learning Things, 5 Bridge Street, Watertown. Director: George Cope and others, Workshop for Learning Things. Five Tuesdays, 4:00 to 7:30.

Wednesdays

NEXT STEPS: WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE? Fayerweather Street School, 74R Fayerweather St., Cambridge. Director: Betsye Sargent, Fayerweather Street School. Six Wednesdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

Thursdays

MAKING THE SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM WORK. Children's Museum, Jamaicaway, Boston. Director: Kim Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. Six Thursdays, 4:00 to 6:00.

This class wrote small stories, their names, their friends' and sisters' and brothers' names, people's telephone numbers, and then read the results aloud to whomever would listen. The teacher of this first grade and I noticed how difficult it was for the children to aim the staples and get them on a straight line. Some had very little sense of the proper direction for them to go in relation to the fold. It seemed to me that sewing would help this idea of aiming and direction and get at some of the problems the children were having with writing, and so when I came in the next week I brought brightly colored burlap and yarn and big needles. For weeks this class sewed, keeping their projects in their desks and struggling to thread needles and make stitches. On the last day of the course their teacher brought in a big patchwork hanging made of all the sewn designs commenting that it had been a good project, calming to all as well as a help in sorting out various kinds of control.

Other projects were puppet making which included writing short plays for the characters the children created, printmaking based on textures and found objects which were often hitched to descriptive words, and for the last three sessions, simple photography. The unit on photography brought all of the course content into focus. We did a lot of work with blueprint paper as well as taking pictures with small, inexpensive cameras and developing and printing them on the spot. Judy Higbea organized this part of the course and helped the teachers to introduce the technicalities to their children.

A fifth-grade teacher asked me to help her introduce blueprinting to her children. When I arrived the children were all cutting shapes from construction paper which they carefully arranged on the blueprint paper. The next step was to expose the designs to the bright sunlight, so everyone marched solemnly out to the playground (no sun in this room) with papers held firmly to their chests for protection, then back again to the developing tank. As we were working, a child said, "This is a reading period; I wonder why we are doing this?" Someone else suggested that it was logical because they had read the directions first. This brought us to the idea of writing out directions for the process for the next class to use.

The teachers of the Rochambeau and the Lucy Stone were anxious to continue this work during the academic year of 1975-76 and in early October we submitted a proposal for State funds which, as far as we can tell, has never been read by the School Committee.

The Scituate schools were an interesting counterpoint to this inner-city involvement. After meetings with the School Committee, parents and teachers of the five elementary schools in Scituate, the Greater

Boston Teachers Center was hired to support those teachers who were to change to open classroom techniques. The plan was to offer one open first, second and third grade in each of the elementary schools. This meant scheduling time with individual teachers in the various schools and conducting or planning for a series of workshops to be held in Scituate. The plan also included attendance at our summer Fayerweather Street School Workshop. In this manner I was in and out of five schools from September 1973 to May 1975. I worked in classrooms with teachers and children and the progress made was encouraging. However, toward the end of the second year of the assignment the difficulties inherent in this model for change became apparent. To place two or three teachers who were working for change in large traditional schools made for criticism and divisiveness, and since most of the principals had never given the program more than lip service, the administration ceased to support our work. However, the original group of teachers who worked hard to make their classrooms stimulating learning centers continue the good start they made, carrying on alone although they feel the need of further support.

The pattern of work in Scituate was a reflection of the needs of individual teachers, and in order to keep up some kind of continuity I wrote notes for each teacher after a visit and discussion of what we had done. This method helped to keep a dialogue going with these somewhat isolated people. The notes describe some of the projects we worked on.

A trip to 3rd Cliff to dig clay. At last, this trip we had talked about since last July came off and it was a great success. Forty children (Jane Poole's class, too) and assorted adults. A gay bus load, full of purpose. Waiting for the bus was no problem for these children; they simply kept busy until it was time to go, another side effect of independence. The trip down the steep cliff had worried us all a bit, but the children were well organized and efficient. When we reached the bottom they knew exactly where to dig and went right to work. Lots of looking, feeling, comparing. Back at school we talked quietly about the trip and then everyone experimented with their clay for about twenty minutes after which water was dumped into buckets of clay and a mighty stirring took place. "Pea soup." Slip. We strained the slip (a small part of it) into a plaster drying bat and watched the edges harden. Sticks, stones of all sizes, even a worm were found as the children worked the rough stuff and these were washed and arranged on clean paper to study later.

Comments: I like the open, friendly atmosphere you have established in your room. The children are able to take suggestions and use them independently.

Suggestions: This clay episode has a lot of content that you can explore with the children. More about the geology of clay. Lots of weighing and measuring, such as -- How much does clay shrink when it dries? How much does it weigh at various stages? What kind of stones did we find in the clay? Some experiments with a stream table to see how the heavier clay particles settle out. Lots of things to read about Indian pots, etc. As you get tables and more display space, think about using the new furniture to define the various areas in the room more clearly.

October 16 and 17 in Scituate. I have now spent some time with each teacher in the program and visited all the rooms. All the teachers have been friendly and welcoming and in each instance have tried to follow up on suggestions.

The trip to Third Cliff to dig clay last week with Ginny McCallum's and Jane Poole's second grades was a tremendous success. The children loved the trip which took about an hour and dug with a will. Both Ginny and Jane have started to extend the work into a study of sand, and all kinds of soil, and the children have made wonderful pictures of the trip. They are now ready to make some small ceramic objects and I am on the trail of a volunteer potter who may be able to oversee the beginning techniques.

All of the classrooms are in a state of struggle and change, but the teachers are adding and clarifying all the time and seem in good spirits. There is a great need to come to an agreement about how much the prescribed reading series is to be used. Nancy McC. will work on this with the teachers and with the administration. Most of the teachers feel they must have reading groups steadily. Rose Collins is the only one who seemed to be using the reader creatively.

Administration aloof but supportive, at least verbally. Nancy McCormack very available and helpful. It is due to her efforts that this group is not being exclusive and special, but reaching out wherever possible to other teachers. The young teachers who are the only ones in a building that are trying to change are often upset and threatened by their colleagues who aren't always kind. Parent attitudes, as reflected in parent meetings, are becoming more positive.

Notes for Peggy Potter and Rose Collins. October 23, Wampatuck School, Grades 1 & 2. This was a good, lusty, experimental morning spent working with both classes in shifting groups in the space outside the rooms. The session was inspired by a recipe for play dough brought in by a child after watching "Zoom." We had a table with play dough ingredients (flour, salt, cooking oil), a table with plastecene, and a third ta-

ble with pottery clay. The object was to let the children experiment and compare the properties of the three mixes. The children came from their classes, three at a time; each table had space for six children. There were books handy for recording and some things did get down about the play dough. (The children called it King Arthur because of the flour label.) But as soon as everyone became occupied with the material there was too much excitement about its feel and behavior to stop and write. Most of the children spent about half an hour working with one substance before switching to another table or going back to the classroom. As one child got tired and left he picked someone else from his class to take his place.

Some of the things I noticed:

Great competence in following the play dough recipe. They loved the measuring and mixing aspect of the play dough.
Someone discovered that play dough that is too wet will pull like taffy candy.
Children working with clay went wild with the mess aspect and there was much smear, smush, bang, poke, roll. They were much more interested in the feel than in a product.
One child made a whale (standard procedure), but he made the whale with an open mouth down which one could look at the whale's tonsils! A new thing in my experience, never seen a kid do just that.
One boy became interested in weighing the various substances and comparing them. This started some others on a few comparisons, picking up random objects and hefting them in one hand against the other hand which held clay.
After a short time the plastecene table was pretty much deserted.

There were many words and lots of acting and interacting. This is the sort of free stuff that must go on until the children get the hang of a material. It would be a great mistake to expect these kids to sit sedately and produce nice little things. They need to push and bang and smear and mix, bringing to the activity their own vigorous feelings. From this dedicated play they will develop a firm understanding of the demands of the material and eventually some really good, true products. At this stage there should be someone near to ask a question, suggest a new approach or lend a hand, but not to interfere unless the situation gets out of hand -- I consider throwing clay out of hand.

Some extensions of this activity might be:

Comparing by weighing different kinds of substances,

wet and dry clay.
Comparing the shrinkage rate as clay and play dough dry.
Does plastecene change if left out in the air?
Can you build a higher structure with clay, play dough or plastecene?
Which substance makes the longest coil?
Feel, a whole vocabulary of words can grow from the way these things feel, good for a book.
The geology of clay, the Second Grades at Jenkins and Hatherly can explain some of this to these children.
What things does clay make besides pots?

During all of this time there were shorter but just as intense stints in Somerville, Hull and Worcester, in each instance, trying to help teachers move toward more informal methods while they contended with the pressures of children's lives and the demands of parents and administrators for better reading scores and evidence of "real learning."

Writing of all these situations I am impressed with how pointless some of it sounds: the Champlain School closed (it is now a middle school); Scituate lost much of its official steam to keep going; no one paid attention to our proposal to continue a good project in Dorchester; Hull is contending with the increasingly reactionary School Committee; and the cities in general are awash in the problems of race and crime. And yet, looked at from the point of view of lives touched, human values reinforced and just plain friends made, it has been the most satisfying and exciting four years I can imagine. It has also been a time of stretching and learning in the midst of great human trouble and therefore satisfying beyond the rewards that come from staying in a safe, predictable classroom.

Of things learned, or more accurately reinforced, the most important is the great need our schools and children have for some settled, predictable system. Everywhere I heard of "that program we had last year; it was good but it only lasted a few months. Just as the children were getting used to it the people went away." School supply closets are full of things bought for a shining purpose and never used. The waste of our society is laying waste the lives of our children in this over-experimentation with phoney-intellectual zeal for "studies" that end up on shelves and in locked closets. The real work which gets real results is only accomplished by quiet, persistent effort that stays on schedule. Over a stretch of several years this kind of commitment is more fruitful than any number of quick attempts. My memories of situations that have been continuous are full of the imagery of growth. Getting to know a school is a growing, evolving process and I am constantly startled at the changes one's perceptions go through. It is this pattern which makes advisory

work so satisfactory and which I can see beginning to evolve again as I look forward to a newly developing relationship with yet another school system, that in Franklin.

For several years the Boston papers have been zealous in their reporting of integration troubles in the city. There has been much hand wringing about low reading scores but very little is said about the teachers who work in these schools. Hard-working and with few exceptions conscientious, not always especially gifted and often badly trained, these are sincere people who care about children and who are trying to do a good job -- "the run of the mine teacher." It is these people I have come to respect and to count on as I work in schools, and they are the ones in the long run who will point the schools toward excellence. Brilliant teachers will always find a way just as brilliance in any field finds its path to leadership. But the burden really falls on those of us who slog along every day on schedule, pedestrian maybe, but steady, predictable. Bringing some excitement and adventure to this dailiness is rewarding, and I am constantly surprised at the simple, almost casual, things that made the difference to a teaching situation. The other day I was watching some children, fifth-graders, work on a social science project which involved copying a map of Italy freehand. They had no clues about how to think about the shape, no way of relating one bump in the outline to the next one. I casually suggested the use of a grid and helped one child set one up. Light dawned! For two weeks these children have been enlarging maps with the aid of grids and they don't want to stop. Their teacher is delighted and is beginning to think of mapping in much more creative ways. I am building on this small spark now to help her think of a social studies curriculum which will have more immediacy than the arbitrary shape of a country that has very little reality to the children. In another room in this same school a teacher whose room is sterile and unimaginative began, with some help, to move the desks into more interesting patterns. The change brought others to look with admiration and this timid person is basking in his colleagues' appreciation. He is on the way to becoming the local expert in room arrangement. A third teacher reluctantly attended my workshop in weaving because her principal required it. She became fascinated by weaving, persevering, in spite of the jeers of her friends, with an original design. At the end of the session I was invited to come to her room to help start the children on some weaving.

These gains are very modest and it is this that makes them sound, but there is another important ingredient -- the moves come from the teachers' own experience, not from a set of guidelines. No matter what

happens these teachers (and many more whom I know like them) will never be the same. *Someone has cared enough about them as people to join them where they are and light a small fire from their own humanity and warmth. This is what good teachers always try to do with children and it is what almost never happens to the teachers.*

School administrators spend lots of money on fancy machines, they "buy into" the latest reading scheme and send their faculties to condescending, boring lectures at considerable expense in the name of in-service training and think they have done enough without any personal effort. It is all very neat and no one needs to bother about anything but opening the auditorium for that day. Not long ago I was scheduled to run an in-service day for the teachers of a big school with whom I had worked for a number of months. After the plans had been made we were told that we would have to start our workshop an hour late because the teachers were to go first to a lecture on reading. Predictably, the teachers were an hour and a half late and when they arrived they were completely mad and frustrated. They had spent the time being lectured at, condescended to and generally bored. We served coffee and doughnuts and launched into an active, fulfilling time, feeling under-appreciated and underpaid and hoping that the administrators would at least come and see what was happening, for there had been mutterings of an evaluation and questions about what the teachers had been doing, but no one had looked. Again, predictably, we were left severely alone until it was just time to clean up when one person rushed through, saying, "It's great!" Well, it was great, but he didn't see what was so great -- teachers working with love and enthusiasm to make the lives of the children in their classrooms happier and more productive. □

Here is the voice of the teacher, amplified somewhat by a sensitive advisor, but clearly heard. New teaching aids, electronic or otherwise, will not help teachers in any significant way, expecially when last year's devices are relegated to the closet to make room for something newer. As Adelaide says, it is the steady day-in, day-out support of those people -- teachers -- who are doing a hard job, that makes the difference. Something has to offset the mindless activity that schools demand of teachers, that eventually leads to their leaving the profession or compromising their idealism and dedication to children.

Advisors, however competent, cannot do the job

alone: teachers need each other in settings in which adult voices and interests take the place of the daily involvement with children. The teachers' center can do for teachers what schools are supposed to do for children, that is, provide them with those "visions of greatness," in the words of Whitehead, which are the basis of all true learning. Teachers need to have access to people who can open their eyes to expanding possibilities in their work with children; who can help them understand the complexities of the learning process; who can offer them creative skills and interests and a sense of participation in the larger educational enterprise. Not all of the teachers' centers in England or in this country achieved this ideal, but many did, and teaching was transformed around them.*

As a nation, our view of education has become too narrow, framed as it is by a pre-emptive concern for measurable academic skills. We seem to want our tests, our readers and textbooks, our expectations of student achievement to be standardized, teacher-proof (what a travesty in that concept!), devoid of controversial material. We are bureaucracy-bound, conditioned by vested interests in publishing, teacher-training and curriculum-design. There is less scope now than there was in the periods I have described for originality in teaching, less appreciation of the gifted individual who could be inventive and demanding at the same time.

My thesis in this response to studies of American education is not another theory of learning: it is rather a view of the human condition as I have seen it in educational settings of various types. I have seen run-down rural schools in Georgia transformed into centers of beauty, health and community cooperation by teachers who were encouraged to use the community's needs as a base for the curriculum.

I have seen color and hopefulness begin to enter the dreary rooms of inner-city schools where teachers were given modest amounts of help and large amounts of respect.

I have seen teachers in suburban public and independent schools shake off the apathy of a prescribed curriculum with workbooks and teachers' guide, and find the courage to open their classrooms to one another, to collaborate, invent and learn from close observation of their students. In each case the children were the ultimate beneficiaries of their teachers' new-found vigor.

I have seen a coal-town in the West Riding of Yorkshire where rows of identical, sooty houses marched up the sides of steep streets wrapped in a dank fog. But to pass through the door of the school, so unprepossessing on the outside, was to enter a paradise of children's activities. There was light and color everywhere, including bright murals, carefully tended

*See Kathleen Devaney and Larraine Thorne: *Exploring Teachers Centers*, 1975, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development.

bulletin boards, studies in design and texture exhibited on walls, carpets on floors, cupboards crammed with tools and materials, shelves of books, corners for reading, others for puppets, pets to care for, records to listen to, compositions to read. That such eager, friendly, active children could have come out of those dreary houses that morning and would return to them that afternoon was, to me, a miracle of education.

This is not a new view, by any means. It should be well understood by now after having proven itself in the ways that I have described. Happily, I begin to sense a turning of the cycle: an urging by teachers and parents away from the competitive, standardized structures of education toward a more progressive, a more individualized view. A few of our schools have begun to identify themselves as *progressive* after years of apologizing for what, in fact, was the most distinguishing aspect of their work. We have had conferences on Progressive Education at City College and at Miquon School. Others will be held at Putney School, Bank Street College and Cambridge School. A periodical called *Pathways* invites contributions from teachers who see their work in a progressive light. All of this is hopeful.

If those who influence public policy are sensitive enough, they will listen to the voices of teachers past and present. Perhaps this pamphlet will remind them how true and valuable those voices can be. By doing so they may reach Horace Smith while he still believes in something, including himself, and help him build on that belief. Thus buttressed, he will have no reason to make the fatal compromise.

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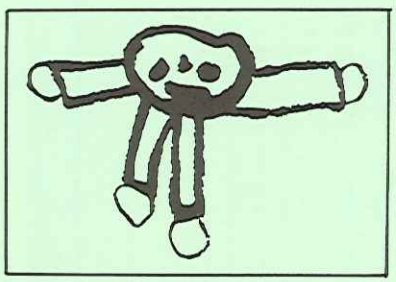

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