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EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

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In recent years I have reluctantly been coming to the conclusion that we have more or less abandoned citizenship as a goal of education, in our haste to turn schools into training grounds for the new global economy. A few years ago in 1991, for example, the Manitoba Department of Education, now revealingly called Education and Training, explained its new policy direction in these words: "*The workforce will demand highly skilled and adaptable workers who have the ability to upgrade existing skills and develop new skills, who can help and participate in a climate that encourages entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth, and who can understand the complex dynamics of a competitive global environment.*" [1] These particular words come from Manitoba, but they reflect the sentiments of every department of education in the country, regardless of political party.

They are the visible tip of an agenda which seeks to convert education into career preparation, to turn the schools into vocational training centres, to define students and parents as customers and clients. It is an agenda, which says nothing about citizenship, indeed which sees citizenship as an obstacle to its plans and priorities, for citizenship gets in the way of the imperatives of the global marketplace. Citizenship, after all, presents us with other imperatives than those of economic rationality. It raises questions of identity, loyalty, tradition, heritage, community, that run counter to the corporate forces that are seeking to reshape the global economy. What price Canadian citizenship in the north-south world of the North American Free Trade Agreement? What price Canadian citizenship in a world where national governments find their sovereignty shrinking? What price Canadian citizenship when all the provinces will accept Quebec's distinctiveness only on condition that they receive whatever special powers might be needed by Quebec?

These are more than rhetorical questions. They are affecting the ways in which we think about government, what we do in health care and social services, in cultural policies, in taxation policy, in economic development. They are also exercising a real impact on the way we think about and run our schools. Last fall, for example, my local newspaper featured submissions from thirty-nine candidates running for election to surrounding school boards. Of the 39, the great majority spoke of computers, high-tech, the global economy, excellence, and all the other buzz-words of contemporary educational reform. Only two even mentioned the word citizenship, and of those two, only one put the concept in any kind of meaningful context, with the other waving it merely as a slogan. In his 1987 report on Ontario drop-outs, George Radwanski described education as "the paramount ingredient for success in the competitive world economy" and as essential to "our very survival as an economically competitive society." [2] It seems that we have taken his words all too literally.

I am not rejecting the idea that education has some part to play in economic development, though I do believe that the relationship is much more complex than is suggested by all those people who see education as the magic key to jobs and economic success. Nonetheless, parents and students reasonably expect the schools to prepare students for the world of work and to equip them for the best possible jobs they can find.

Historically, in Canada as elsewhere, schools have been expected to serve a triple function: to help students make the most of their lives in all directions; to prepare them for citizenship; and to train them for the world of work. Traditionally, they were often described as the cultural, social and economic functions of schooling. Today, however, we seem to be neglecting the first two in order to concentrate on the third. This is why we see moves around the country to reduce the time devoted to such subjects as art, music, history, social studies, and even physical education, in order to create more space for computers, for career preparation, for so-called life skills, for cooperative education and job training. A few years ago, for example, I was part of a small delegation lobbying the then Manitoba Minister of Education to reconsider a decision to remove Canadian history from the provincial Grade 11 programme. In the course of the

discussion the Minister told us that he saw literacy as all-important. Our delegation agreed, and what better subject, we asked, to promote literacy than history, with its heavy emphasis on reading, writing and discussion? The Minister, however, told us that we misunderstood him. What he wanted was what he called "pure literacy," which, so far as I could gather, meant the ability to read and write reports, to understand instructions, to explain oneself clearly and so forth – all laudable objectives, but if stripped of context open up a world where it does not matter what one reads provided that one reads something. It is a world where education is sacrificed for training and where values are displaced by skills. It is a very different world from that in which the poet, literary critic, and school inspector, Matthew Arnold, famously described education as an initiation into the best that has been thought and written. [3]

There was a time when things were very different. Public education in Canada, as in other countries, began as preparation for citizenship. In 1916, when introducing compulsory school attendance, a decision that was not popular in all parts of the province, Manitoba's Minister of Education could not have been clearer. "*Boys and girls,*" he said, "*the citizens of the future, must be qualified to discharge the duties of citizenship.*" [4] In 1925, in British Columbia, an influential Royal Commission on education voiced similar sentiments: "*The development of a united and intelligent citizenship should be accepted without question as the fundamental aim of our schools.*" [5] I could provide you with many other such quotations, all making the same point, that the primary purpose of public education was the development of citizenship. Just about every subject in the curriculum was defended in terms of its contribution to citizenship: not only in the case of such obvious subjects as history, language, and literature, but also gardening, art, music, nature study, physical education, health, science, and on and on. Lest you think I exaggerate, here are a couple of examples. First a statement from 1907: "*The moral influence of a properly conducted school garden cannot be estimated too highly.*" [6]. Again, this time from 1920: "*... music is going to do more for the nationalization of the country than any other single agency.*" [7]

Thus, I am very pleased, more pleased than you might realize, to see a meeting such as this dedicated to citizenship and what it means for education, to return, in a sense, to an old and venerable Canadian educational tradition.

Citizenship, however, is a deceptive word. Philosophers describe it as a concept that is "essentially contested," that is to say whose meaning can never be once and for all decisively fixed, but which will always be the subject of debate and disagreement. [8]

Using the terms in their generic sense and not as party labels, conservatives define citizenship largely in terms of loyalty, duty, respect, tradition, of accepting change slowly and even grudgingly and only when absolutely necessary. They put social stability and order ahead of individual rights, or rather believe that these rights can only be properly secured when the social order is given priority. Liberals, on the other hand, define citizenship above all in terms of civil liberties and individual rights. For them, to be a citizen is to be the bearer of rights, of freedom of belief and expression, of freedom from arbitrary arrest and so on, and no one or no thing is to be allowed to abridge or infringe upon these rights except for the most compelling reasons, and sometimes not even then. And if this means that social order or the general peace is put at risk, so be it. Socialists for their part traditionally rejected citizenship entirely as a propaganda smokescreen behind which those in power cloak their real interests, or, more recently, define it in terms of social justice, equity, the redistribution of wealth and power, and are, or were, perfectly prepared to accept, indeed to welcome, whatever social reforms are needed to achieve them, to the extent of revolution if necessary. Beyond and around these three major divisions, circle assorted feminists, communitarians, libertarians, anarchists, marxists, neo-conservatives, neo-liberals, and others, all of whom have their own ideas about what constitutes citizenship.

In the real world these distinctions are blurred. Few of us are pure conservatives, liberals, socialists, or whatever. We combine, or try to, elements of each position in our definition of the social good and what has to be done to achieve it. And, no matter how pure our principles, when we come to deal with concrete problems in the real world we find ourselves forced to come to terms with the messy reality of everyday life in which compromise and second-best are often unavoidable. I used to teach my high school history students Osborne's first law of politics: to any political problems there are two solutions: one is bad, the

other is worse. My point was simple enough. If a problem can be solved easily, it is unlikely ever to be a political problem. It will be administrative, technical or managerial. But it will not involve fundamental divisions of beliefs and values, which is the very essence of politics and which makes citizenship so important if we are to manage political problems reasonably.

I am suggesting that citizenship is not only an essentially contested concept, it is also fundamentally political, in the broad sense of being inextricably connected with questions of governance and social living. This is especially so in any society which aspires to be democratic, where citizens have a voice in deciding the shape of their society and how they are governed, where ideally they, in fact, govern themselves. As Aristotle put it over two thousand years ago, to be a citizen is to know both how to be ruled and how to rule — and how to do both in ways that are respectful and tolerant of all other citizens, even those with whom we fundamentally disagree.

This, in part, is why, when we instituted compulsory public education in Canada roughly a hundred years ago, citizenship was seen as so important. In a country where most men, and eventually women, had the vote, the very least that needed to be done was to ensure that they would vote intelligently, as the popular phrase went. This required, for example, that voters could read and think well enough to understand the issues they faced, were independent enough to resist attempts to manipulate them, were interested enough in public affairs to follow politics between elections (perhaps even become involved in political life themselves), and to live with political disagreement, conflict and ambiguity.

Since voting did not take place in a geographical vacuum, but in a defined locality (in our case Canada), voters were expected to identify with their country, to see themselves not as citizens in the abstract but as citizens of Canada. They were expected to be willing and able to cast their vote and form their opinions in terms of what was best for the country, with due regard for the rights and interests of other countries and of the world as a whole. In other words, they needed to have a sense of national identity, (better yet, of patriotism), which meant knowing something of their country's history and heritage, of visualizing its geography, of cherishing its culture, while also being able to think of the world of which it was a part.

All this represented an ideal of citizenship that often exceeded the realities of political life. Initially, in the years before and immediately after the First World War, citizenship was often seen in harsh and coercive terms. It was in the name of citizenship, for example, that First Nations' children were sent to residential schools, where the use of their native language was forbidden and their indigenous culture was brought under attack. Only in this way, it was argued, could they be turned into good Canadian citizens. Linguistic and religious minorities similarly found the school being used against them in the name of citizenship, as in the case of Mennonites, Hutterites, Doukhobors, Roman Catholics, Francophones and most immigrant groups. For them, citizenship meant assimilation into the dominant culture, which was defined largely in Anglo-Canadian terms, centring upon command of the English language, loyalty to Canada as a nation of British heritage, commitment to Canada's British traditions, and pride in Canada's membership of the British Empire.

In reality, however, though policy-makers lauded the school as the great agent of Canadianization and citizenship, they simultaneously starved it of the resources it needed to do its job. Outside of the big city school systems, with their reasonably adequate tax base and their growing professionalism, teachers were minimally trained and worse paid, faced with the task of teaching an overcrowded curriculum with minimal resources and often hindered by the suspicions of communities who were not convinced that anything beyond the most basic education was all that useful anyway. Also, despite all the talk of Canadian citizenship, no province was willing to cede its control of education to the national government. In the 1890s, for example, there was considerable talk to the effect that Canada needed a national history curriculum. As Ontario's Minister of Education put it in 1892:

I have perused with great care the various histories in use in all the provinces of the Dominion, and I have found them merely to be provincial histories, without reference to our common country...Can't we agree upon certain broad features common to the whole of this Dominion with which we can indoctrinate our pupils, so that when a child takes up the history of Canada, he

feels that he is not simply taking up the history of Canada, such as the old Canada was, but that he is taking up the history of a great country? [9]

In this spirit the Dominion Education Association sponsored a competition to produce a truly national history textbook. Even though a winner was found, only half the provinces adopted it. No matter how much they wanted a national citizenship, the provinces were not prepared to give up their control of education. Their solution was to rely on the teachers. As Manitoba's Minister of Education put it in 1920: "*A teacher should be a teacher, not for one province only but for all Canada. Our schools should not be Manitoba schools, but Canadian schools located in Manitoba.*" [10]

A large part of the problem was to decide just what a national history, and in larger terms a national citizenship, entailed. Most English-speaking educationists were convinced that Canada was one nation, or was well on the way to becoming one, and what made it such was its British heritage and English language. Citizenship therefore consisted of the imposition of what some historians describe as "Anglo-conformity." As I have noted, this meant riding roughshod over the sensibilities of the First Nations and of assorted minorities. Equally important, it was, for obvious reasons, unacceptable to Quebec, which, with considerable justification, saw all the talk of citizenship in English-speaking Canada as a threat to its distinct identity. Quebec had entered Confederation on the agreement that its language, culture and heritage would be respected. Indeed Confederation would protect it better than would any other political arrangement. It was not, therefore, prepared to agree to a vision of citizenship that seemed predicated on the absorption of Quebec into a British Canada. In the 1904 words of a leading Quebecer, who saw no necessary contradiction between Quebec nationalism and a certain kind of federalism, Henri Bourassa:

The fatherland, for us, is the whole of Canada, that is to say a federation of distinct races and autonomous provinces. The nation that we wish to see developed is the Canadian nation, composed of French Canadians and English Canadians, that is to say, two elements separated by language and religion, and by the legal arrangements necessary for the conservation of their respective traditions, but united in an attachment of brotherhood, in a common attachment to a common fatherland. [11]

This was not, however, a position that appealed to most English-speaking educationists, who saw Canada as a nation-state along conventional American and European lines, united by a common language and a common culture.

This question of the nature of Canadian nationalism and of what it means for education remains unanswered. Indeed it is part of the distinctiveness of Canada that any attempt to arrive at a definitive answer would be far more divisive than unifying. This is, after all, why we have commonly thought of Canada as a mosaic and not a melting-pot, why we have adopted the maxim of unity in diversity, and why, since the 1970s, we have made bilingualism and multiculturalism part of the official definition of Canada. In education, the debate has taken many twists and turns. We have spoken variously of appreciation of Canada, of patriotism, of the Canadian identity, of limited identities, of hyphenated Canadianism, of knowing ourselves, of pan-Canadian understanding, and, a term I have seen most recently, the Canadian spirit. It is this debate that, for me, makes the teaching of Canadian history so important in our schools, for if we are serious about citizenship surely we cannot avoid history.

My solution to the question of the Canadian identity, is not to try to fix on one particular definition of it, but to introduce students to the debates surrounding it, both past and present. This can really only be done through history. Citizens will, if they take any interest in public issues at all (and surely as citizens they should), face the question constantly: what kind of country are we and do we want to be? Is government too big or too small? What should be the balance between the private and the public sector? What level of taxation is desirable? What should we do about medicare and the social services more generally? What should be done to correct the historical injustices inflicted upon the First Nations? What should we do to change the constitution? Is the justice system too soft on crime? How do we reconcile multicultural diversity and provincial authority with national unity? These and a host of other questions confront citizens. The way they are answered defines the nature of Canada. They cannot be answered in the

abstract but only in the context of Canada's past and present reality. They can be settled best, or at least lived with, through a process of considerate, tolerant, and open public debate. Dialogue and discussion are the essence of democracy and Canada's historical record is better than most in this regard. If, then, we are serious about educating citizens, we must prepare students to engage in this dialogue. It cannot be done without a serious study of history, which is so much neglected at present.

Historically, citizenship education in Canada has included, as it must, more than this. I have already described how from the 1890s through the 1920s, the dominant thrust of citizenship education was assimilation to a certain conception of Canada as a British nation. After the First World War, but even more noticeably after the Second, this assimilative push approach weakened. The First World War had demonstrated the consequences of unchecked nationalism and by the late 1920s a certain anti-war sentiment had crept into Canadian education. The First War, after all, had been, in H.G. Wells's phrase, the war to end war. Canadian educators began to include an international spirit in their vision of citizenship. Between the Wars, this took the form of explicit teaching about the League of Nations, and after 1945 about the United Nations. More important than any particular institution, was the idea (now widely accepted) that any approach to citizenship had to see Canadians as citizens of their own country and of the world.

Between the wars, citizenship education was also defined in terms of character and service, to use two words that were much used at the time. Men and women of good character, it was argued, would more or less automatically do the right thing, and the right thing was defined in terms of "mutual service." In the words of Manitoba's Minister of Education in 1920: *"Citizenship means service that we must do for the community - something over and above what one does for oneself."* [12]

In part, this emphasis on service and character arose from the War. It was based on the conviction that the enormous sacrifices of the War could be justified only by building a better society for those who survived. The War had also shown what was possible when people worked together in a common cause. In the words of the popular novelist, Ralph Connor, who as the Reverend Charles Gordon had served as a military chaplain: *"I believe that here lies the solution of many of our present problems, that we should try to insert into our common everyday affairs that marvellous thing that held our men together on the front line, that life-bond that made them one - comradeship."* [13]

In part, also, this emphasis on service and character and comradeship was seen as ensuring social stability. The post-war years saw a good deal of social turmoil and protest in Canada, of which the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike and its associated sympathy strikes across the country were only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, the Russian Revolution of 1917, followed by Mussolini's seizure of power in Italy in 1922, opened the prospect that foreign models might appeal to those who were dissatisfied with Canadian capitalism and parliamentary democracy. As the President of the University of Toronto, Sir Robert Falconer, told a national audience in 1919: *"Extremists among the manual toilers have got a taste of the fascination of power and are pressing for drastic measures such as the dethronement of the rich employer and director, who, in their judgement, arrogantly use their influence for their own selfish interests."* For Falconer and others like him, the solution was clear: *"... to educate our people together into a community spirit beginning with the children, teaching them that they constitute one body and have reciprocal duties to one another."* [14] As a Manitoba school trustee more candidly put it: *"If Canada is a nation of intelligent and educated people, we need fear neither the Bolshevist nor the reactionary. Education is the best national insurance."* [15]

These last quotations reveal to us another aspect of citizenship education. Not only is it essentially contested and fundamentally political, it also tends to be conservative in nature. As a form of socialization to the status quo, it can hardly be otherwise. Citizenship is not designed to overthrow the existing order of things, but to preserve it. This is why, for example, it was subject to often fierce attack in the early decades of this century from critics on the left. Feminists saw it as perpetuating the subordinate status of women, for if the ideal of the good citizen was active participation in public affairs, this automatically worked against women so long as conventional sex-roles confined them to the home and so long as the home was defined as part of private life and thus safe from public regulation. In a very real sense, the

political activity of men depended on the behind-the-scenes and unacknowledged activity of women. Men's contribution to public life was contingent upon women's confinement to the private sphere. In their heyday, the farmers' movements, especially in the West from the 1890s through the 1920s, were equally critical. Opposed to what they saw as the division of society into have's and have-not's, and to the competitive principle of the capitalist marketplace, the farmers envisioned a society based on cooperation and equality. They called for the schools to emphasize the principle of cooperation, to show students the way the political system really worked as opposed to how it was supposed to work, to open their eyes to the evils of the world around them, for example, by teaching a more realistic version of history. Socialists and trades unionists agreed. They repeatedly condemned what they saw as the class bias of the schools, and called for education to contribute to the building of a new and more just social order. Pacifists, for their part, rejected what they saw as the militaristic tendencies of the schools. They called for the revision of curricula, especially in subjects such as history, literature and music, to emphasize peace rather than war, or at the very least to de-romanticize war.

All these were more than paper arguments. Critics of citizenship education, as conventionally defined, won election to school boards. They obtained jobs as teachers. They organized pressure groups. They were active in political parties. The historian, Norman Penner, tells a revealing story about his school days in North-End Winnipeg in the 1930s. The son a Communist city councillor, Penner found himself picked on by a teacher for his political views and complained to the principal. When the principal asked him what the problem was, Penner explained that he was being victimized because he was a Communist. On hearing which, the principal closed his office door and said: "*So am I.*" [16] The story might be apocryphal, but it is worth remembering that people like Agnes Macphail, Canada's first female Member of Parliament and a left of centre activist; Dick Johns, one of the organizers of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike and a militant socialist; M.J. Coldwell, the leader of the CCF after J.S. Woodsworth's death; and William Aberhart, the Social Credit leader of Alberta; and others like them; were all teachers at some time or another. It seems unlikely that their political ideas did not in some way influence their teaching.

All of which is to say that, though citizenship education is essentially conservative by definition, it is not monolithically so. If it prepares people for the status quo and provides insurance against unwelcome social change, it also offers a promise of democracy and change. If it once threatened assimilation to a narrowly defined version of Canadian nationality, it also opened up the possibility of exploring alternative visions of what it meant to be Canadian. If it taught conformity to the status quo, it made it possible to question conventional wisdom. All the people who were excluded from the tent of citizenship at various times – the First Nations, women, trades unions, minorities of various sorts, political dissenters – were able to use the language of citizenship to press their claims. Citizenship education has never totally been the stabilizing force that its more conservative advocates have hoped it would be. Like citizenship itself, it was and is an arena in which competing beliefs and interests meet. As historians remind us, the rights of citizenship have not just grown of their own volition, nor have they simply been handed down from on high. They are the result of struggle and conflict. What we now take for granted as our birthright as citizens had in times past to be fought for – sometimes literally so. Indeed, the most important purpose citizenship education should serve is to introduce students to the questions that lie at the heart of Canadian citizenship, give them the knowledge to understand them, the skills to pursue them, and the values and dispositions to do so in ways that respect the processes and commitments of democracy.

Whatever the disagreements over the nature and content of citizenship education, over the years it has come to be accepted that it consists of seven elements. We can and do disagree over just what these elements contain and how they should be taught, but we generally agree that they comprise the programme of citizenship education. They are:

1. a sense of identity;
2. an awareness of one's rights and respect for the rights of others;
3. the fulfillment of duties;
4. a critical acceptance of social values;
5. political literacy;
6. a broad general knowledge and command of the basic academic skills;

7. the capacity to reflect on the implications of all these components and to act appropriately.

All of these elements of citizenship education are open to interpretation and debate. In the case of identity, for example, just what vision of Canada should education promote? Can we define our national identity in a way that would be acceptable to all citizens of Canada? Are we one nation, or two, or three, or even more? Is John Ralston Saul right when he says that we are not a nation-state in the conventional sense? [17] Should we perhaps be content with the concept of "limited identities" in the spirit suggested by Cook and Careless some years ago? [18] And is identity enough, or should citizenship education be explicitly organized to promote national unity and national pride? Moreover, should we not also be teaching students to identify, not only with Canada, (however defined), but with the whole human race and the planet, so that citizenship education comes to include the promotion of a sense of global identity? The elements of citizenship rights and duties raise similar questions, especially since the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What are and should be our basic rights? Is health care a right? Or a job? Are rights best protected by the state or by the marketplace? Where should the balance be struck between individual and collective rights? Are political theorists like Guy LaForest right to see the Charter as a threat to the collective rights of Quebec? Is Richard Gwyn correct when he suggests that we have fallen victim to a "rights frenzy"? Has our pursuit of rights outweighed our concern for the fulfillment of duties? And just what are and should be the duties of citizenship anyway? Are communitarians like Amitai Etzioni correct when they argue that we should think and act much more in terms of the good of the community than of the interests and rights of the individual? [19]

The element of social values is no less controversial. In any country citizenship is obviously an intensely value-laden concept, entailing not just knowledge and skills, but behaviour and action based on values. Such values will differ according to the political system in which they are rooted. Here in Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms might well come to serve as the basis of a set of Canadian social values. Even without such written documents, citizens come to accept, often without realizing it, a set of values and beliefs that they see as characteristic of their society. In his work with the Citizens' Commission, for example, which was set up in connection with the Charlottetown Accord, Keith Spicer identified the following as core Canadian values: equality and fairness; respect for minorities; consultation and dialogue; accommodation and tolerance; compassion and generosity; respect for Canada's natural beauty; and respect for Canada's world image of peace, freedom and non-violent change. [20] Some political theorists speak explicitly of "democratic values," or "virtues," and argue that they be taught as part of citizenship education. Carol Gould has described what she calls "democratic character," as consisting of reliance on reason; reciprocity in dealing with other people; receptivity to diverse opinions and viewpoints; respect for human rights; mutuality; flexibility and open-mindedness; commitment and responsibility; cooperativeness and a concern for community. [21]

Political literacy is defined in terms of participation in the political process and is a relatively new arrival on the agenda of citizenship education. It has always been accepted that good citizens should play their part in the public affairs of the community, but this was usually seen as little more than casting an informed vote at election time. There were always a few teachers who went beyond this and who taught their students that it was their right and duty as citizens to participate directly in the political process. Only in the last twenty or thirty years has it become orthodoxy to say that citizenship education should prepare the young to participate directly in the political process in ways other than voting. In the classroom, this has taken the form of teaching students about the real world of politics, not only about the ideals of civics, but also about how decisions are really made, who holds power and who does not, how public opinion is shaped, and so on. Outside the classroom, it takes the form of engaging students directly in the political process as students, even in the elementary grades, and not treating politics as something that is reserved for adults only. Thus, students work in environmental campaigns, in elections, and on social issues of various kinds. [22]

These elements of citizenship education are, as I have tried to show, open to debate. They are not simple verities, but contestable propositions, especially when they have to be applied to concrete cases. Thus, the seventh element of citizenship education consists of the capacity to reflect upon the other six and to act appropriately. In other words, an essential component of citizenship is dialogue, a willingness and an ability to enter into discussion with fellow citizens on matters of common concern, no matter how divisive

they might be. Fortunately this should not present any particular problem for education since it draws on abilities and skills that have long been central to educational theory, if not always honoured in educational practice. The most obvious are critical and reflective thinking; problem solving; working cooperatively with others; discussion; empathy with other people. To the extent that schools are able to teach such skills, and they obviously can, they make an important contribution to citizenship.

In terms of the curriculum, the main vehicle for citizenship education has traditionally been history and social studies, which usually also included some specific teaching of civics. For obvious reasons, history and social studies were seen as the most effective way to teach students about their own country, its past, and the issues it faced in the present. Coming a close second to history was literature and language. The study of English (or French in Quebec) was far more than a functional exercise in learning to read and write. Well chosen fiction was believed to teach valuable moral lessons, inculcate ideals of character and behaviour, and convey much valuable incidental information about Canada (and until the 1940s about the British Empire as well).

Occasionally it was suggested that citizenship itself be explicitly taught as a subject, a suggestion that has recently been revived in the United Kingdom. Apart from occasional lessons here and there, or special events such as Empire Day or Remembrance Day, this was rarely done in Canada. Overwhelmingly, educators saw citizenship as something that was best taught through the conventional subjects of the curriculum, not as something that needed its own slot on the timetable. The advantage of this, of course, was it made no extra demands on an already overcrowded timetable or on hard-pressed teachers. The drawback was that it was all too easy for citizenship to fall through the cracks, especially when it was not subject to examination.

Though the word "citizenship" was seldom used, by the 1970s a variety of subjects dealt with topics that were relevant to the education of citizens. History, for example, was increasingly abandoned for courses organized around contemporary problems, all intended to rouse students' interest in the issues of the day. In a similar spirit, units of study or whole courses were introduced in human rights, native studies, law-related education, Holocaust studies, environmental problems, media literacy, and other citizenship-oriented topics. Science courses also departed from a pure science approach to take on more of what was called a science-in-society orientation. Literature was oriented to contemporary concerns of obvious citizenship application, among them questions of racism, sexism, war and peace, and the like. From the 1970s onwards all subjects were increasingly approached in a multicultural framework that had obvious implications for some aspects of citizenship.

In Canada, as elsewhere, these developments have attracted some criticism, both from those who see them as not going nearly far enough, and from those who think they have already gone too far. Among the former are some Native Canadians who see the schools as still too assimilationist and too neglectful of Aboriginal culture and tradition. Some Afro-Canadians have voiced similar concerns, and have also accused the schools of failing to take systemic racism seriously. Some advocates of multiculturalism have further criticized the schools for taking only a song-and-dance approach to ethnic and cultural diversity, thereby failing to address more fundamental issues. Among the latter are those who regret what they see as the lowering of academic standards as schools move from academic to social priorities; who level charges of so-called "political correctness" against the schools; who are uncomfortable with the abandonment of familiar traditions, such as the observance of specifically Christian festivals; and who most recently, want to see the schools take a much more active stance in the promotion of national unity. Thus, the curriculum has become, perhaps more than ever before, the subject of considerable debate. For the most part, however, this debate has not involved any serious discussion of citizenship, except in the most indirect way. It has been about whether the curriculum is adequately inclusive, whether it is sufficiently rigorous, whether it properly prepares students for the high-tech global economy, but rarely about whether it effectively prepares young Canadians for citizenship. There has been serious public debate about the teaching of history in a variety of countries, but, to date, it has left Canada largely untouched, though the publication of Jack Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History* in 1998 might change this state of affairs. [23]

No matter what the curriculum contains, how it is taught cannot be ignored. Students learn important

lessons from how teachers teach, as well as from what they teach. Teachers' choice of teaching strategies and their general approach to students play some part in the kinds of citizens that students become.

Some theorists maintain that a one-to-one relationship exists between democratic citizenship and democratic classroom methods, with these latter being defined in terms of student-centred teaching, activity-based learning, student participation in classroom life, and so on. There is obviously something to this. Students who are taught to be critical, to use their minds, to ask questions, to think for themselves, to expect a voice in decisions, and so forth, are likely to carry these attitudes outside the classroom. However, the argument can be pressed too far. Process alone is inadequate. To take an obvious example: whether an activity-based project fosters democratic citizenship or not depends upon the nature of the project and the way it is organized. Students can learn more about democracy from a careful reading of the classic texts than from any amount of apparently democratic classroom discussion. We need to remember that the most powerful democratic theorists, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, T.H. Green, and the rest, all had decidedly non-democratic educations in terms of process. What they did have was a deep acquaintance with history, philosophy, and literature, and the capacity to pursue the ideas they gained from their knowledge. As Newell and Emberley have argued, a good liberal education still has much to offer in terms of a preparation for citizenship. [24]

At the same time, teaching strategies do matter. They have an impact on students and on how they interact with the world. They can learn that they know nothing and that their task is to remember and repeat what their teacher tells them, Gradgrind fashion. Or they can learn that they have ideas of their own, that they know how to ask intelligent questions, to think for themselves.

It needs to be added that this kind of question-raising, critical, open-ended teaching is good for all students. There is worrying evidence that, as things stand, it is too often reserved for those students who are thought to be academically bright and gifted. All too often there are unacceptable differences in the teaching given to middle class students compared to that given to their working class counterparts. Middle class students are taught to question, to inquire, to participate and in the process they learn that they can control, or at least influence, their world. Working class students, on the other hand, especially if they are also poor, receive a less demanding level of teaching. Rather than learning how to question, they learn to fill in the blanks. They learn that the world is an arbitrary place over which they have little control. Thus, they do the rational thing and withdraw from it. In effect two different kinds of citizenship education are in operation: middle class students are taught to be active, to participate, to take charge; working class students are taught to follow instructions. [25]

Researchers are now suggesting that teaching methods also affect boys and girls differently. There is now plenty of evidence that boys generally dominate classroom life. They get more than their share of teachers' attention. They are more competitive than girls. They demand more of their teachers' time. We also know that there can be an unacceptably high level of sexual harassment in schools. Some researchers are suggesting that many girls have a different learning style than do boys, but that this learning style is undervalued and under-utilized in many classrooms. Thus, for example, we now see a small but significant trend to all-girls classes in some schools, and some researchers are suggesting that single-sex schools might be better for many girls. Thus, there is a gender dimension to teaching strategies which affects boys and girls differently, and might go some way to explaining why men have been so heavily over-represented in politics. Boys, especially middle class boys, are taught to become active citizens; girls, at least until recently, for the most part are not. [26]

The classroom is not the only place where learning occurs in school. Indeed, it might be argued that some of the most important school learning takes place outside the classroom not in it. This, after all, is why schools have long organized extra-curricular programmes and special events for students. From the early days of compulsory schooling in Canada, educationists have been well aware of the power of this kind of learning for citizenship education. In the early 1900s, for example, Prairie school inspectors promoted the value of school gardens, school fairs, field days, and school outings for promoting a sense of citizenship in children. Across the country schools organized special events with an explicit citizenship purpose. Empire Day was one. Others were Arbor Day, Goodwill Day, Remembrance Day, special

occasions such as the sixtieth anniversary in 1897 of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, or the fiftieth, sixtieth and one hundredth anniversaries of Confederation in 1917, 1927 and 1967. School sports, music programmes, student clubs of all types, have also long been seen as important contributors to citizenship. Students learn both to compete and cooperate, to deal graciously with both victory and defeat, to set and surpass personal goals, to put aside personal gain for a common cause—all valuable citizenship lessons. Other forms of extra-curricular activity are aimed specifically to involve students in the world outside school and thus to teach lessons in citizenship. Such was the motivation between the Wars, for example, for the Junior Red Cross, the 4-H movement, the Canadian Girls in Training, and today of countless environmental clubs, international development projects, peace groups, and the like, all of which are designed to show students that they can indeed make a difference in the world. Finally, citizenship education has, from its beginnings, been seen as carried out through the whole corporate life of the school. As the School Superintendent of Brandon, Manitoba, put it in 1918:

Through such subjects as history, civics, literature, hygiene, opportunities will occur to teach the principles underlying democracy. It is folly to imagine, however, that we can transform a people merely by talking or teaching... I would like to say with all the conviction that I am capable of expressing, that the spirit of democracy can only be made a part of the lives of our children when it becomes the prevailing spirit of the school itself, and I might also add, of the home and the church." [27]

Schools see themselves as communities and do what they can to teach their students to act as responsible community members, however defined. Hence the emphasis on school spirit, on school traditions, on standards of behaviour, from dress codes to students' bills of rights.

Over the years, however, there has often been a gap between the rhetoric of citizenship and the practice of our schools. Citizenship has been emphasized in statements of aims, in curricular preambles, in official pronouncements, but it has been absent from the actual courses of study. Often the citizenship impulse has been diverted or diluted, or simply overtaken, by other, allegedly more practical purposes, most often passing examinations, preparing for jobs, or simply covering the course of study. Even when citizenship was more than a matter of rhetoric, the lessons that students actually learned often differed from what schools thought they were teaching, in part because the concept of citizenship was itself left too vague and undefined. Often schools depoliticized the concept, equating the good citizen with the good person. There is, however, more to being a citizen than this. Ever since the Greeks, the essence of citizenship has been seen as involvement in the public life and affairs of one's society. As Pericles famously put it in the Funeral Oration:

Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well; even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics—this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all. [28]

This political dimension of citizenship has too often been submerged in a concern with the shaping of personality and character. Here, for example, are the categories used on a 1936 school report card, which were described as constituting the "habits and attitudes desirable for good citizenship": obedience; courtesy; thrift; promptness; initiative; reliability; self-control; good sportsmanship; service; industry and workmanship; cleanliness; good judgement. Each of these qualities is admirable in its own right, but what is most obvious about this list is what is omitted. With the possible exception of "initiative," which is further described as "Ambition to know and ability to do the right thing without being told. Leadership."—it says nothing about the qualities that fit citizens for participation in public life in a democracy. Indeed, despite their individual merits, taken collectively this list of qualities presents a very passive view of citizenship. [29] It is not, however, untypical of the way we have seen citizenship education over the years. As a further example I offer "assertive discipline," which enjoyed a certain popularity in some school systems a few years ago. Its rules ran as follows:

1. Students will follow the directions of all teachers and superiors the first time.
2. Students shall be on time for class.

3. Students shall have all equipment and supplies at all times.
4. Students will keep their hands, feet and other objects to themselves.
5. Students will practise good citizenship and courtesy to all students and to each other.

These rules were posted prominently in classrooms and around the school generally, leading me to wonder what impression was created on students who were thus told, right from the first, that they were not to be trusted, that their job was to do as they were told, no questions asked, and that "citizenship" was above all a matter of obeying orders.

It is not that I object to the intent of any of the rules in themselves. I certainly want students to be on time for class, to respect others, to have their equipment with them (though at appropriate, not at "all" times), and so on. But I worry over what seemed to me the overwhelmingly negative tone of the rules. I have wondered ever since why we do not experiment with some other rules. Why not, for example, display rules such as these in our classrooms?

1. Students will think for themselves whenever possible.
2. Students will be as creative as possible at all times.
3. Students must always read more than their textbook.
4. Students will ask original and provocative questions.

And so on. Moreover, once these rules are posted, they must be enforced. I have fond visions of a worried principal phoning parents to complain that their son or daughter has not had an original idea or asked an interesting question all week, and telling them that they had better come to the school for a meeting to discuss what disciplinary measures might be taken. It presumably says something about our views of schooling, that whenever I have floated this idea past audiences of parents and teachers, it has always been treated as a joke and never as a serious possibility.

What I found most striking about assertive discipline, however, was that few people saw it as anything more than a method of keeping order in the classroom. It was only ever discussed in restricted terms: was it worth the time and effort involved? How did students respond to it? Did parents like it? Above all, did it work? No one saw its implications for citizenship education. When I tried to raise some questions about what it said about our vision of education, I was brushed aside by being told either that it did not work anyway, or that teachers did not take it seriously, or, in some cases, that there were no problems because it worked successfully. But if it did indeed work, I argued, then it was even more worrying than I feared, for it embodied a narrow and distorted view of what schooling should and could be.

What we need is a conception of citizenship which is rich enough to include its many dimensions but also simple enough to be of practical service to teachers, so that they can easily judge the extent to which their everyday activities are consistent with the kind of citizenship we need. Just as when we drive we know more or less automatically that there are certain things we must do, such as staying on the proper side of the road, without consciously thinking about them, so teachers need to govern their teaching by an internalized conception of citizenship. Elsewhere I have suggested that such a conception might best be thought of as the "twelve C's" (with the C's being used purely for mnemonic purposes), as follows: The first C is **Canadian** and it asks whether their schooling teaches students enough about Canada—its history, geography, artistic, scientific and other achievements, and its current problems—to help them understand and to participate in the continuing debate that is so quintessentially Canadian: what kind of country are we and what kind of country do we want to be?

The second C stands for **cosmopolitan**, in the traditional sense of the world. It asks whether their schooling teaches students that they are citizens not only of Canada, but of the world. Do they think not only of their own country or their own group, but also of the world as a whole?

The third C stands for **communication**, and asks whether schooling gives sufficient emphasis to teaching students to communicate effectively, in all the different forms that communication can take: speech,

writing, numeracy, graphics, and so on.

Since the ability to communicate cannot be separated from the content to be communicated, the fourth C stands for **coherence** or **content**. Does schooling give students adequate command of a broad body of subject matter, representing the spectrum of human endeavour, the humanities and social sciences, mathematics and science, the expressive arts, and so on?

This leads to the fifth C, which stands for **critical**. It asks whether schooling teaches students to think critically, and whether teachers approach knowledge not as sacred dogma, but as invitation to inquiry and reflection. Acquiring knowledge but never using it is of little benefit since it does not lead one to think and to improve one's reasoning powers.

Criticism, however, can be little more than a reactive process, and education should involve more than simply responding to the ideas of others. Thus, the sixth C represents **creativity**, which is something that all people possess in one form or another, and it draws attention to the extent to which schooling actively seeks to foster creativity in students, not only in the arts but also in all subjects.

Creativity goes hand in hand with **curiosity**, which is the seventh C, representing the willingness and the capacity to ask questions and to continue learning.

Creativity and curiosity do not exist in a vacuum. They draw upon, while also going beyond, and sometimes reacting against, the work of others. They draw their inspiration from what Robert Hutchins has called the "great conversation," the continuing dialogue that has existed for centuries in all civilizations concerning the meaning and nature of life. Thus, the eighth C stands for **civilization**. It asks whether schooling seeks to convey to students an adequate understanding of the heritage of civilizations (in the plural) of which they are both the heirs and the trustees for the future.

Civilization is a collective, cooperative enterprise, and this leads to the ninth C, **community**. It raises the question of whether and to what extent schooling seeks to prepare students to become informed, participating and involved members in their various communities, local, national and global.

This in turn leads to the tenth C, which stands for **concern**, and asks whether and how schooling creates in students a sense of concern, and a readiness to act on that concern, both for other people and for the environment which makes life possible.

The eleventh C is **character**. The development of character used to be described as one of the key goals of education, but we do not use the word much these days. It stands for the commitment to do what is right, to follow one's conscience, and to balance one's own interests and concerns against the rights and welfare of others.

Finally, the twelfth C is the sum of the previous eleven, and stands for **competence**. It asks how effective schooling is in playing its part in preparing students to be effective and competent citizens, workers and human beings.

All this may seem overly ambitious, but not when it is spread out over twelve years of schooling. The list is not intended to be applied to one particular lesson but to the whole range of a school's activities. In their schematic way, the twelve C's represent the whole of schooling. If attained, they will equip any student for citizenship. Equally important, they will contribute to the shaping of the kind of community in which individual success derives from and contributes to social purposes. More specifically they can help us focus on just what it is that we expect from our schools. In the words of the 1992 Newfoundland Royal Commission on Education, *"to strengthen the links between each part of the system, parents, teachers, administrators, and policy-makers need a common vision."* [30] This common vision is best provided by a conception of citizenship.

Such a conception has recently been offered by an international project in citizenship education, which describes it as "multidimensional" citizenship. The argument here is that citizenship is best thought of as comprising four dimensions: the personal, the social, the temporal and the spatial. The personal

dimension is described as the "personal capacity for and commitment to a civic ethic characterized by individually and socially responsible habits of mind, heart and action." Such personal qualities, however, while important, are not enough in themselves. Citizens are social beings, not hermits. They must be able to interact with other people in a variety of settings, to engage in public debate, to participate in public life, and to contribute to the many forms of civil society that underlie effective democracy in the public sphere. This kind of involvement takes place within, and is conditioned by, a tradition of beliefs and assumptions, so that citizenship also contains a temporal dimension, requiring that citizens, while being understandably concerned with the problems they face in the present, never lose sight of the connections that the present has with both the past and future. Citizens need a rich knowledge of history and an awareness that their present actions will have an impact on the future, in order to act accordingly. Finally, the spatial dimension of citizenship recognizes that it is not one single locus of identity; citizens are members of various overlapping communities, local, regional, national and global. [31]

This level of abstraction might seem to be a long way removed from the daily realities of the classroom, but it can readily be translated into terms that even young children can handle, as shown by this example. A class of Grade 7 students was studying world geography and the particular lesson that I observed was devoted to the Brazilian rain forests. The students had already learned something of the value of rain forests as climatic regulators and as homes of all types of flora and fauna. They were also learning that rain forests were being destroyed at a rapid rate and, with the certainty of thirteen-year-olds, quickly concluded that the people responsible were either stupid or thoughtless, or both. What they did not take into account was that people were cutting down the rain forests because they had little choice in the situation they faced. Poverty, the need for land, patterns of international trade, economic pressures of various kinds, shaped the attack on the rain forests, not silliness or ignorance. The students were led to consider that Canada had destroyed much of its forest cover since the beginning of European settlement, and was continuing to do so. They were also asked to put themselves in the position of Brazilian peasants facing a range of equally difficult choices. It was suggested to them that, if the rain forests were indeed important to the world as a whole, and if one of the problems Brazilian peasants faced was that patterns of international trade worked to their disadvantage, then perhaps people in rich countries such as Canada, should be prepared to pay a small surcharge, say a penny or so on every cup of coffee, which would be used to protect the rain forests. The idea is not far-fetched, being only an extension of the fair trade and fair price practices that some social justice agencies now sponsor. And what was central to the lesson was not the financial or economic practicalities of the proposal but rather the idea that rich consumers should be expected to help poor producers whose products they were consuming.

In this particular case, the students were not especially enthused about the proposal, but the point of the exercise was not to convert them to some political position but to lead them to think in ways they would otherwise have ignored. In the process, they were beginning to learn a lesson in multidimensional citizenship. They were led to think about the present in the context of past and future; to see how their personal lives connected with a broader problem, to note how Canada was involved with other parts of world, and to consider a wide range of alternatives and viewpoints. Obviously, one lesson by itself will achieve little, but if the kind of teaching described here were to be undertaken across the curriculum and throughout a student's stay at school, the cumulative effect could be considerable. And this kind of teaching can be easily accommodated within the most conventional curriculum. It is neither especially innovative nor unorthodox, though perhaps more unusual than it ought to be. Indeed, it embodies the problem-posing, critical-thinking, reflective, open-ended, approach to teaching, which has always been taken to characterize true education. It also provides valuable citizenship education.

Today, however, citizenship seems to have vanished from the educational agenda. Since about the mid-1980s schools have directed their energies largely to economic ends. Policy makers have demanded that schools focus on the basics, meaning not only the traditional three R's but such contemporary additions as computer literacy, competitiveness, entrepreneurialism, and skills. In curriculum terms, the emphasis is placed on mathematics, science, literacy and computer science.

As we approach the twenty-first century, perhaps the most urgent task facing us is to restore citizenship to its place in educational debate. In 1937 the Principal of McGill University made this statement: *"The path to a better community lies before us, open but not clear. As I see it, the task of education is to give*

us the wisdom to see that path, hope to believe in our goal, and will to pursue it." [32] It is a vision of education, and of citizenship, that is far more attractive and far more worthwhile than our present preoccupation with training workers who can adapt to the imperatives of the global economy.

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A GARDEN PATH? INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Judith M. Newman, Ph.D.

Have you glanced at any curriculum documents lately – particularly those dealing with information technology? If you haven't, you should. There's interesting reading there with a lot of hype of which teachers ought to be wary.

Here for example, is part of the "Vision" statement from the Manitoba IT policy document Technology As a Foundation Skill Area: A Journey Toward Information Technology Literacy:

The use of information technology will help enable all students to solve problems, improve their personal performance, and gain the critical and abstract thinking skills necessary to become lifelong learners and contributing members of their communities.

To achieve this vision, all Manitoba students will

- *use information technology to structure inquiries, solve problems, and gather, organize, validate, and communicate information on a local and global scale*
- *manage information technology by making creative, productive, and efficient technology choices for the tasks at hand*
- *understand information technology and reflect upon the ethics and impact of its use, synthesizing new insights and making reasoned decisions as information technology evolves (p. 7).*

You get the feeling from this policy paper that information technology will cure all of education's ills. Manitoba's document isn't alone here. A comparable Nova Scotia document promises the same wonderful outcomes. Information Technology, it says—

facilitates the development of communication, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities; facilitates students' formulation of complex questions as they manipulate information to discover patterns and relationships, and reach conclusions in the pursuit of knowledge...

The Nova Scotia document promises even more—"(information technology) allows (students) to develop and maintain a competitive advantage in the Global Information Economy." Heady stuff, indeed.

However, information technology can't produce marvelous outcomes if the classroom environment doesn't provide opportunities for communication, decision-making and real problem-solving to occur. The electronic resources available today do permit communication with the world. But if we use these new tools no better than we've used more traditional instructional technologies, we're guaranteed to be disappointed. Like more traditional information technologies (such as books, pencils and paper, overhead projectors, blackboards, slide and film projectors, telephones and fax machines, etc.), computers and internet connections are only a means of achieving some end. What matters ultimately is the experience that learners have and what they make of that experience.

There are several aspects to the problem of marrying information technology and education. For a start, in spite of what many people believe, nothing about information technology is neutral—all software packages have biases about learning built into them. A number of tools I've worked with recently, specifically designed for use in education settings, clearly embody a "transmission" model of learning.

Take, for example, the courseware package I was supposed to use to "deliver" a web-based graduate course. The deeply embedded transmission bias inherent in several components of that software created

a host of frustrations for me. My teaching flows from an "interpretive" or "constructivist" paradigm. The design of the web authoring tools assumes that teaching is an uni-directional activity—from teacher to learners. As teacher I can edit messages submitted to a "forum" but students don't have access to one another's submissions; so no collaborative writing. While it's possible to submit lengthy reflections, you can only see the first ten lines of a message you're replying to; so forget about a thoughtful sustained discussion of substantive issues. The website is set up for students to submit assignments to the instructor via an "evaluation" module—in other words, no communal dialogue here. Quite clearly, a definite distinction is made between "chit-chat" and "serious" work. As instructor, I can't post a note in the "evaluation" module saying, "just e-mail me your thoughts on the readings"—I can only create a "test" or "quiz." Just little things like that, which make this software much less effective than an ordinary listserv for communicating and building a collaborative learning community. I tried discussing my problems with the software developers but they thought I was nitpicking. "A listserv," I was told "that's old technology," they weren't interested in the biases built into their web tools and the barriers they erect for the decentralized, complex, dynamic and collaborative learning community I wanted to create.

In the process of infusing schools with technology there are also a host of complex decisions about how to help teachers become proficient users. It flies in the face of reason to expect teachers and other school staff to use technological tools without giving them access to those tools and helping them use them effectively. However, in my geographical area, as in many other locales, school districts are hiring expensive outside consultants to do batches of one-day inservice sessions or courses offering "nifty tips." I was approached by one outfit to "teach" their course—what I was handed was a thick black binder with fifteen scripted sessions. The sessions systematically ran the teachers through ten different computer applications: wordprocessors, data bases, web browsers, etc. These tools were being "taught" in a vacuum, no opportunity to explore how they might be useful for engaging in some kind of classroom investigation. Just "here's this tool, here's how it works."

Realistically how much can anyone learn about the ins and outs of a particular application in three hours? It took me over three weeks to get a reasonable handle on PowerPoint. Even after several years using Microsoft Word I'm still learning how to do new stuff and when the next upgrade becomes available I'll have to learn the program all over again. Can you imagine the information overload after fifteen three-hour sessions in which you learn "everything you need to know about...". We can't expect teachers to "teach" using these tools when they're not proficient and comfortable with them. It takes time, a lot more than a fifteen-week "tips" course to achieve that. Nor can we expect teachers to see the instructional potential if they haven't personally experienced using these various tools for learning something useful. And we certainly can't expect teachers to see the theoretical biases built into software if they've never had an opportunity to use IT resources for community building.

CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY: An Alternate Vision

Built in software biases and teachers' lack of experience aren't the only problems associated with bringing information technology and education together, but they are two major ones. I was confronted with both of them a year ago when I developed and taught a two-week graduate course Literacy, Curriculum & Technology attended by thirty teachers.

The focus of the course was on learning and investigation. While I was planning to help the teachers learn about wordprocessors, e-mail, databases, browsers and browsing, web page construction, and so on, it was all going to be done in the context of learning something they wanted to know. Unlike the consulting firm with the thick black binder of scripted lessons, I was planning to have the teachers participate in a collaborative investigation so they might discover, first hand, how various information technology tools can come into play in a comprehensive, supported and collaborative learning environment.

We started off the first morning with a discussion of several articles I'd asked to teachers to read in preparation for our meeting; following this we listed on a whiteboard some tentative inquiry topics people were considering. We spent that afternoon becoming acquainted with the computer setup in the new

high-tech junior high school where the course was being held.

Generally, the first tool most people have a use for is a word processor. That was certainly the case in this situation. We needed to write and share thoughts and questions arising from the collaborative investigations and to reflect on the readings. Most of the teachers knew how to use a word processor; a few were familiar with more than one. We spent a bit of time that first afternoon familiarizing ourselves with the two word processors available on the network. I didn't conduct a formal class showing people how to use these word processors. I didn't need to. There were plenty of experienced word-processor users about. Any instruction I might have provided for the whole class would have bored silly these knowledgeable users. They, in fact, were busy exploring browsers, trying out sticky notes, as well as other tools on the system. So the few people who did need some help logging on, locating a word processor, and using it, had help from me, from the computer teacher (a fellow student in the class) and anybody else who was willing to assist. By the next morning everybody had a written reflection to share. We ran into trouble on the second afternoon. We'd again spent the morning discussing new readings and sorting through the list of potential inquiry topics. We finally agreed on five and the teachers formed working groups. Now it was time to visit the Internet to see what we could find on our topics.

Easier said than done. As often happens with high-tech equipment, we ran into a major obstacle. A month before our course began, the new high-tech junior high school where we were meeting had been hit by lightning and the entire computer network, including server access to the Internet, had been wiped out. The technicians were attempting to restore the system but hadn't quite managed to reconnect to the Internet. We improvised. We used the afternoon for groups to talk about what information they might look for, where they might find it, and who they might interview. The next morning I sent the teachers off to browse the Internet anywhere they could log on. Some of the teachers used facilities at the local community college. Some went to other schools. Others met in homes with modem connections. However, we really needed a computer lab and some space where small groups could meet and talk. After a few phone calls I was able to make arrangements with the local community college to use one of their computer labs for two days. So we moved to the community college.

For two days, we surfed the Internet, actually locating many useful sites. I had an opportunity to ask questions and share strategies with individuals and small groups when it was helpful to do so. From time to time the class as a whole met in the cafeteria where we set up a classroom for ourselves. We discussed reading and browsing strategies, what we were learning about the structure of the Internet, and the value of different sites. At the end of the two days each group had collected useful information, done telephone and personal interviews with relevant informants, checked out newspaper and other print sources, and so on.

The teachers spent the second week sorting out what they'd learned. Now they were faced with the problem of creating web pages. Many of the teachers had no real idea what a web page was like, so I sent them back to the Internet to examine carefully some of the sites they had found. I roamed among the groups helping people see the various ways in which web pages are constructed: some relying more on textual information; others using graphic and picture elements. The teachers needed to figure out how to present what they'd learned in some sort of concise, yet interconnected, fashion. I wanted them to see that they would need to consider how to segment the information, link the segments, and link to other sources.

Here's where the teachers discovered the value of dividing up the work.

It took some planning on their part. Once each group decided what information it wanted to present, the teachers had to create it in a form that could be used for their web pages. Some people began producing written text using a word processor. Others created elements using graphics software. Still others learned how to scan photographs and print materials. Toward the end of each day I met with each group to discuss what they'd accomplished, problems they were dealing with, decisions they were making, etc. I wanted the teachers to discover that "writing" for this medium is not a linear process—they needed to create separate elements before they could think about how to assemble them in a way that made sense; they would not, for example, be able to construct an opening page until they had sorted out everything

else. This, however, was not how most of the teachers were used to writing. Many of them were uncomfortable because they didn't have a detailed outline to follow. I wanted them to see how a plan would emerge as they developed materials for their pages.

Tuesday afternoon we began using a web-authoring package. I showed a few people how to import word-processing files, graphics and pictures. Once someone in a group understood the process, I moved onto another group. I showed people how to create links. A couple of the teachers knew about importing backgrounds and helped their groups add that element. In the meantime, some group members were rechecking web addresses, making sure they were correct. Others were busy transcribing interviews, formatting them so they could be included.

As Wednesday afternoon came to a close, it was clear to me, and to the teachers themselves, that we would succeed—the web pages, although still rough, would be completed. Most of Thursday was spent putting final touches on pages. One group finished during the morning; those teachers helped others, showing them refinements, assisting with technical details, making sure links worked. During this time, I had managed to create an entrance to the site. All I needed, now, was to download the collected pages onto my computer so I could link to each group's work.

Friday morning we viewed all the web pages. There were still glitches, but everyone was able to see just what we'd accomplished. [Literacy, Curriculum & Technology](#) was now a website. We spent the rest of the day debriefing—talking about what the teachers had learned about learning, about literacy, about technology, and about curriculum.

This teaching experience certainly made me much more aware of the tensions teachers face today in this frantic rush to get on the information highway. It made me think about how to help people learn enough to be of assistance to students and to know about the biases built into software.

HELPING TEACHERS LEARN

I shouldn't be, but I am, surprised by the number of teachers who still have little or no computer savvy. Of the thirty teachers in the course, only a handful had experience with more than e-mail and a word processor. Two were complete novices. The rest were at varying levels of proficiency—not unlike a typical public school classroom. The challenge, for me, therefore, was to create a context in which everybody would be able to contribute productively to the learning enterprise.

I am familiar with the initial "not-learning" that takes place when folks begin a journey such as this. So the teachers' discomfort at the start wasn't unexpected; I know resistance is an indication of tension when confronting anything so totally new. Not only were these teachers embarking on a new exploration, one which generated considerable anxiety—learning about information technology, but they were also unsettled by a whole new way of engaging as learners, too. One teacher wrote "you said let's get the grade out of the way, but I kept thinking to myself, ya right, and when will the shoe drop?" The teachers had no reason to trust me; I knew the only way to diminish their anxiety and distrust was to keep going. Another teacher wrote "this must be unsettling for you because it looks as if we don't need you now." That was precisely the place I was trying to reach—where my contribution becomes invisible. In Tracy Kidder's book "The Soul of a New Machine" the production engineers have a hard time at the end of the project describing the contribution made by Tom West, the project manager; but in fact, as Kidder documents, "it was West's role to make their work possible by negotiating conditions that keep them from being hassled and allowing them to get on with the job of inventing a new computer. He set up the opportunity and he didn't stand in anyone's way. He wasn't out there patting people on the back...He never put one restriction on me. Tom allowed me to take a role where I could make things happen." I knew the collaborative investigations would create opportunities for the teachers to teach themselves and one another how to use whatever technology tools they required in order to achieve a reasonable product they could share with "the world."

I was apprehensive, especially when I learned we would be designing webpages. Initially I kept waiting for the classroom instruction to begin so I would have all the notes and

know which buttons I had to press and when. What I realized, though, was that this approach would have been useless; all of us were at different levels of learning. The only time information would have been useful to me was when I needed to know it; I wouldn't have been ready for it before that. I had to ask questions and make mistakes before the "knowledge" was meaningful. This really proved to be an eye-opener for me about learning and teaching. (Maggie Wainright, final reflection)

Critics may point to the fact that everybody didn't become proficient with every application. And it's true, they didn't. But it's an illusion to think that fifteen sessions of "nifty tips" leaves people any better off. What's important is that these teachers did learn about the tools, in ways that make it more probable that they will explore their use in their own teaching. At the very least they now understand what is possible and although they may not be able to do everything themselves they know what resources are available and where to go for help.

What we did reinforced my belief that students should learn how to use information technology tools, not in isolation, but as they need them to do something useful. When a tool is introduced in an authentic learning experience, students will be more likely to remember how something is done and use what they've learned. (Susan Cowling, final reflection)

The teachers learned other things that in the long run will prove useful for creating a context that can take advantage of information technology tools in a way that "nifty tips" instruction can't.

I now see why it is important to constantly touch base with the groups, helping direct them to resources, providing information about what and where they may find materials, asking questions to help students reflect on what they're doing and to help them refocus: Where are we now? What just happened? How do you feel about that? How can I help you? (Elsie Shannon, final reflection)

The enormous challenge facing every school district and school today is how to help teachers get up to speed. The task is monumental. There is pressure for teachers to learn more and faster but people can only make sense of so much at any one time. I believe it's crucial for teachers to be creative in their own classrooms, where they're not intimidated by the complexity of what they have to learn, where they have time to experiment and mess around, where they don't feel they have to learn it all at once, all by themselves.

TECHNOLOGY'S HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Michael Apple argued a decade ago that we have to pay attention to the hidden curriculum of computers. He describes how the drive for much more standardization of curriculum and testing is pushing teachers and students away from relationship building that is at the heart of any kind of meaningful sustained learning. Furthermore, he contends, the pressure to incorporate technology into this process is making it even more difficult for teachers to keep students and learning in the forefront of their decision-making. Heather-jane Robertson reiterates Apple's concerns and adds many more. Many Canadians may not see the connection, but the link between education restructuring and computer technology tantalize people in some sectors. An item in the Ottawa Citizen reads: "Minister wants \$4 billion to give each student a computer." A report distributed to Canadian investors claims that the education industry is about to replace health care as the next hot sector....

Welcome to ed.com, where global money and globalizing technology will determine the future of Canada's schools, where no exaggeration is too extreme, no promise is too expensive, and no downside is too steep. Thoughtful reflection on technology and school reform has become unfashionable. Debate is now limited to what brand of technology should be purchased and how fast it can be adopted (Robertson, 1998)

Robertson describes, in great detail, how the alliance between business and government has set the agenda for education. She examines the costs of wholesale adoption of information technology in schools. She documents how funds have been diverted from the arts and humanities, as well as programs to support minority and special needs students, to the purchase of technology. What neither Apple nor Robertson point out is how the biases built into software, particularly educational applications, shape how teachers and students interact and learn.

I discovered a lot about the constraints on the teachers and me as we used the high-tech facility at the new junior high school. For example, the interface was unlike anything I'd encountered before. There were no words; just a graphic of a room with several items: a desk with drawers, a garbage can against a wall, a bulletin board, a bookshelf, and a door. (Somebody obviously believes junior high students can't, or don't read, or needn't!) There was nothing to indicate that I could, or should, click anywhere. Not even a question mark (the standard convention for help) in sight. I sat there stymied; I had to ask for help. Turns out that to access a word processor, I needed to click on the bookshelf—that finally brought up another graphic of books in a bookcase. (It's ironic that "books" is deemed a suitable icon for these newer information technologies). Buried in the second row I recognized a familiar word processor. Why had this particular interface been adopted? For the security options, I was told. It made managing the server from a remote location easier, not because it had sound instructional ramifications.

There were other barriers, too. Teachers were limited to a single log-on which frustrated me on more than one occasion. There were many times when I was working on one machine but needed to log onto another in order to help someone access a tool available only from the Windows platform beneath and found myself locked out. Another frustration—not being able to easily create a mailing list (one which I could then share with the teachers) made e-mail on the LAN practically useless. While I could send sticky notes to the teachers, and they could reply to me, we couldn't establish a public conversation of any sort. We quickly abandoned efforts to write collaboratively; it was simply too difficult to set up. Then, the particular "full function" word processor on the system did have all the bells and whistles, but it was configured in such a way that I had a hard time finding the functions I wanted. Anyone familiar with WordPerfect or Word found this wordprocessor very unpredictable—another unnecessary frustration. The information technology tools, in other words, created barriers for us; instead of making communication easier, they often made it more complicated. The software's built-in biases created serious obstacles for me as a teacher. Instead of facilitating a free flow of conversation, the system impeded open sharing and the building of a collaborative community of learners in a significant way.

SO WHAT?

The new high-tech junior high school where the course was being held had new computer equipment, a lot of instructional software, and some technical support, but what about the majority of schools in Nova Scotia, and elsewhere, that don't? The teachers commented frequently about how they couldn't do what we were doing in their own schools; they just didn't have equipment or software or technical help. The Nova Scotia government has gone on a building spree—it is in the process of building thirty-one new "high tech" schools. Because these new schools all have business "partners," they will have the latest computers and other electronic gizmos. This infusion of information technology at such a pace looks like a step forward but there are significant problems. Nobody has thought about the cost of technical support to maintain the systems in operating order or the costs of continuously upgrading equipment and software. There will now be two tiers of schools—the "have's" and the "have not's" since there are no provisions to upgrade electronic facilities in the "old" schools to match those in "new" buildings. There are practically no funds for new books and periodicals—all eggs are being put into the technology basket. There has been very little money set aside to help teachers in the new schools learn how to use all this stuff. What teacher development is being done by those business enterprises which deliver "nifty tips"? Nobody, it seems, is going to help teachers think about using these new IT resources for building interactive curriculum and teaching differently. Nobody will encourage them to think about the biases inherent in the software and the political ramifications of their instructional choices.

"Instruction is typically thought to have clear, prespecified learning objectives, teacher-determined activities and instructional strategies, and clear boundaries in space and time." (Wilson, Ryder, 1998)

But what if learning really isn't like that? What if something altogether different happens when people (both young children and adults) engage in making sense of the world?

As I reflect on all the things I've learned these past two weeks, I'm forced to ask myself "how was this possible?" There was no formal instruction, no reams of notes to copy, and the "knowledge" did not come solely from the teacher. In retrospect, though, I can see how it was done. I was put in charge of my own learning. Simply put, I learned from others and, much to my amazement, I found myself helping others who knew less than I did. (Morgan Jossey, final reflection)

The constructivist movement in education is challenging instructional systems designed to meet prespecified learning outcomes. As long ago as John Dewey we have had coherent and persuasive arguments and evidence in support of curriculum as conversation.

In truth, the debate about technology in education is really a red herring. Technology isn't the issue. The way in which we choose to use various technological tools is based on what we believe about learning in the first place. All the important questions really are about curriculum and instruction. (Barnes, 1976) Today, I see Canadian teachers swamped by a tide of curriculum documents from the provincial departments of education, all of which focus on the selection and ordering of subject matter and skills. The people in charge of writing these policy documents are obsessed with identifying hundreds of "key outcomes"—strong evidence of their conviction that teaching is solely the transmission and testing of knowledge.

We can't expect students to "develop communication, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities" when their teachers are panicked about "covering" a mountain of key outcomes. We can't hope to use information technology tools to "facilitate students' formulation of complex questions as they manipulate information to discover patterns and relationships, and reach conclusions in the pursuit of knowledge" when prescriptive outcomes are driving everything that happens in classrooms. All the talk about developing communications, decision-making, etc. is really rhetoric. We could do that without sophisticated information technology. It's not accidental that information technology is being incorporated into this clearly defined transmission world. The reason for incorporating these new high-tech tools is really to make it much easier to control teachers and curriculum.

Technology isn't necessarily a bad thing, though. These new sophisticated information tools do offer a potential for creating exciting learning opportunities for students. Unfortunately, the way we're going about it looks awfully like being led down a garden path.

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MARKET-DRIVEN EDUCATION

Derwyn Davies

An idea whose time has come! An injection of reality into the sheltered cloister!

Partnering education and the market is the obvious and logical step to bring our children's development into harmony with the central and dominant ethos of our consumer society, and the central concept of our mediated information age. It resolves the tension between a problematic public education and an increasingly privatized world. We, the educators, cannot fail to understand that our governments and school boards will not in future be able to pour tax money into the drain of education, at least not to the extent needed.

The alternative is to develop entrepreneurial skill in seeking ways to increase the funds available to schools. It is also quite obvious that the vast profits of the banks and corporations, the \$1 trillion a day spent in currency speculation in the global casino, and the burgeoning national and provincial economies are factors which do not and should not impinge on non-market items like public schools. The market after all has an insatiable need for money, which has to take priority. That automatically reduces the money available to our governments and school boards. We, the beneficiaries in the protected arena of public education and the recipients of lavish tax allocations, must, therefore, take up the slack. We must show the will to do what needs to be done to value our children, the learning they can achieve, and the kind of society we want them to inherit.

There are signs of progress. Advertising on school buses is a possibility, which has been raised. We can go even further: there are hectares of bare walls in hallways, auditoriums, even classrooms, just going begging for bright, invigorating advertising. This would fit in with the steps already being taken to guarantee exclusivity to some generous corporate benefactor. This has been done in Toronto, where a soft-drink corporation has negotiated a monopoly for itself in the schools of that city. YNN is ready and willing to bring twentieth-century media into the classrooms, no doubt with the expectation that the paltry two minutes per day advertising can gradually be increased. These examples of the free market in practice in our schools are a small step, awaiting the giant step for greater consumer choice, or at least

greater consumption.

A modicum of ingenuity will break the education market wide open. Why should principals and parent councils not move beyond the sale of chocolate bars and compete for corporate sponsorships for their school. The Burger King school or the Microsoft school would add an irresistible cachet. Then teachers could be required to seek sponsors for lessons or courses.

"Today's geometry class is brought to you by -----, the only prism-shaped chocolate block on the block!" This term's language course is sponsored by -----, which is generously providing ten points for the top mark in every test. Accumulate just 50 trillion points for a chance to win an all-expense paid trip to ----- world, for the fantasy of a lifetime!"

Sponsors' fees could go directly into the school budget, obviating the need for tax dollars for such trivialities as instructional materials, building maintenance, or even salaries. In this market-driven educational world, the best teachers would attract the biggest sponsorships, so it would be easy for parents to tell which are the best teachers for their children.

Then there are the textbooks – very expensive and lavishly produced these days. There are a number of possibilities here. Although the publishing companies (all American) compete to some extent already, they could reduce their textbook costs enormously by incorporating advertising into the texts. The Jumblies would do admirably to promote a steamship line owned by a member of the Canadian government. The Pied Piper of Hamelin is an object lesson of the importance and value of contract lawyers. Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day? is a natural for the cosmetic industry. (I could go on if any ad agency would call me.)

Then there is the text-book selection and approval process. This involves immense amounts of time and person-hours: lunches at textbook salespersons' expense; endless meetings of teacher committees and curriculum consultants. Surely it would be simpler to have textbook publishers tender to supply the whole province with so many thousand copies of texts for particular subjects. After all, there is very little real difference between the various texts on the market; they all tend to require lavish, highly-coloured illustrations and jazzy lay-outs to foster the illusion that they are as interesting as Much Music and equally devoid of literary merit.

From this it is but one short, logical step to full integration in the market economy. Schools should jettison all the old-fashioned texts. Instead, the market should be the guide for such texts as are needed. For instance, instead of out-of-date works by out-of-date writers like Shakespeare (who couldn't even spell well), we could have our students study the current best sellers – with suitable advertising inserts, of course, and special rates negotiated with the publishers. The leading works of fiction would be studied for literature; Readers' Digest, National Geographic and Scientific American would undoubtedly be able to provide up-to-date, essential information texts on every subject under the sun, with the sexy bits removed, of course. Thus would students be certain to encounter the best of contemporary writing at minimal expense at all times.

While the above advantages are readily apparent, they are not the only ones. The greatest problem in education today, as a quick perusal of newspapers and magazines will confirm, is the question of "quality". The problem with quality is that it is difficult and/or expensive to measure. This is why so much money is lavished on those high-tech tests to such little effect. Inserting the market into the classroom will immediately and automatically simplify the process of identifying quality in teaching and learning. This is because education will then operate as does our society, on the principle that what attracts the greatest share of the market, in sales or advertising is, by definition, of the highest quality by the straightforward measure of money.

As this new thinking and these market-driven values take effect, we can also look forward to real improvements in our communities. Instead of relying on chance interface between children and the market, we can plan rigorously and relentlessly to have the market monopolize - sorry, occupy - every child's every waking thought. The result: solidarity beyond anything Lech Walensa dreamed of; a

corporate-oriented, consumer-driven learning population in our schools, striving to become the avid consumers of tomorrow.

I must confess that it used to bother me when I witnessed the ill-mannered behaviour of many children toward their parents, their teachers, any adult who happened to get in their way. I now realize how wrong I was. Such children were doing what is right and proper in struggling to be competitive in their demands, in expecting efficiency and speed in the satisfaction of their desires. I even realize how I misjudged those young people who happen upon an exciting sport vehicle and take it for a drive; they were only giving laudable rein to their competitive, aggressive, acquisitive instincts – surely the essence of market-driven consumerism. As for that increasing number of children entering kindergartens with severely impaired language, what does it matter? They will be able to cruise the Internet without having to speak to or interact with any real person. They will undoubtedly score well on the standardized tests! We owe it to our children to rally in support of this extension of the market. It is the market, after all, from which all blessings flow, and which will make everything for the best in the best possible world, from subsidized politicians to conforming consumers.

I would, however, ask that we be honest and not refer to it as a "free" market.

HOLDING ACCOUNTABILITY ACCOUNTABLE

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The notion of educational accountability is not a new one. The term itself has been in widespread use at least since the early 1970s, but the underlying premises of accountability have been around in spirit for much longer. Indeed, the idea of holding educators responsible for their performance has reappeared many times throughout the history of education in North America, propelled by the understandable desire of the public to have its tax monies used as wisely as possible. In these resurfacings accountability has taken on various forms, but in these few pages I want to suggest that most current approaches to educational accountability ironically and inadvertently defeat the very purposes for which they are instituted.

In the United States (from where I write) one central theme in today's accountability movement -- the quest for efficiency in education -- was preeminent in the first three decades of this century. This was during the so-called "Age of Progressivism," a time in which an infatuation with science, business, and technology led to the development of a new system of industrial management known as "scientific management."

Scientific management was the brainchild of one Frederick W. Taylor, a social engineer who believed that the basic problems of industry stemmed from poor organization and control of the work process. He contended that science could provide relief from these problems through careful studies that would determine the most efficient method for doing each job in a factory. "Taylorism," as the scheme soon became known, was introduced into the realm of education by Franklin Bobbitt, who contended that the tasks of teachers, as the equivalents of workers on an assembly line, could be similarly analyzed. Indeed, schools were to be run like businesses in a strictly literal sense, with managers/administrators who would analyze, plan, and control the entire schooling process in great detail. One result was an emphasis on standardization in every area of the school system -- standardized planning, records, conditions, operations, instruction, and schedules. And perhaps most importantly, there was to be standardization of learning outcomes in the educational equivalent of the raw materials/finished product of the manufacturing process -- the students.

For Bobbitt schooling must begin with precise standards for each stage (i.e., grade level) of the educational manufacturing process. Scales of measurement were required to determine "whether the product [i.e., the student] rises to standard." (Callahan, 1962, p.81). And, fortunately for the members of what Callahan called "the cult of efficiency," such scales were made possible by apparent advances in the measurement of educational achievement from the newly emergent field of educational testing. Standard scales were developed for measuring skills and knowledge in a variety of areas, and Callahan reports that the members of the "cult" saw no limits to the benefits they provided:

Teachers would know instantly when students were failing. Principals would know when teachers were inefficient, and they could easily determine how their school compared with others schools, . . . precisely and absolutely [emphasis mine]. And superintendents would benefit most of all for by glancing over the number of units of results obtained by each teacher in each building in his city, . . . he can . . . see . . . what building principals are doing a superior grade of work, what ones relatively poor work. . . . With this system neither students, teachers, nor principals could offer lame excuses for inferior performance, for with everything so definitely recorded there would be no place to hide and responsibility could be fixed. Furthermore, this would be done (as Taylor claimed it would be done in the machine shop) . . . not arbitrarily but scientifically. (Callahan, p. 82-83)

For a variety of reasons the activities associated with the social efficiency movement waned during the 1940s and 1950s, even if, in general, the citizenries of North America grew ever more comfortable with the notion of governmental institutions relying on science for guidance in making social policy decisions. In the United States the 1960's War on Poverty initiatives, including those related to school achievement, enabled policy-oriented social science to take a giant leap forward. In the 1970s educational accountability based more or less on the scientific management model became fashionable once more, and especially in times of economic stringency, has maintained a strong presence ever since.

This bedrock of science -- or is it scientism? -- upon which the accountability movement has rested is so solid as to seem impenetrable. Kliebard (1995) has noted how certain features of scientific management are (for better or worse) in fundamental accord with elements of our modern North American culture. These exams have appeal because they are (relative to most alternatives) cheap, quick, and inexpensive, their numerical findings offering the virtues (and in some cases, the illusions) of objectivity, precision, concision, and comparison-friendliness.

But ever since the 1920s critics of the social efficiency movement have refused to view accountability as a panacea for the ills of education. I am one of those sceptics who harbours serious doubts about the wisdom of the practice, being especially fearful of the deleterious consequences that can result from a reliance on the technologies of educational assessment for determining educational quality. Despite technical advances in educational test-making, several elements of the rationale that supports their use remain as problematic as ever. I have space to address only four of these features here.

First, standardized exams remain extremely narrow in the range of outcomes that they measure. Focused almost exclusively on certain kinds of cognitive content and skills, they ignore student emotions, values, interests, character, habits of mind, personal experiences, as well as any abilities and forms of intelligence (e.g., kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, artistic) that are not amenable to measurement by a pencil and paper exam. Educational institutions are thereby held less accountable for development of these human attributes. The assessments provided by standardized exams are, therefore, inevitably partial and incomplete. They are actually, in that regard, selective, and therefore subjective.

Second, they are short-sighted. Inhabitants of an impatient modern culture, we demand immediate information about the short range consequences of schooling experiences. Unfortunately, however, standardized exams can tell us very little about which learnings will be lost in the hours following the exam and which have burrowed themselves into the souls of students, there to reside for a lifetime. Is it fair and wise to hold educators accountable for the transient, but not the permanent, outcomes of schooling?

The third objection is hardly the least significant, even if it is the most often heard. As I have noted, the use of standardized exams is based on the premise that student cognition can be measured much like any manufactured product. But such a practice ignores the fact that educators (especially in public schools) do not have complete control over the "raw materials" they initially receive. And while this objection is accommodated somewhat within more sophisticated accountability systems that employ "gain scores" of students over a period of time, public schools are still not the kinds of "total institutions" in which all external influences are eliminated. As human beings, students are infinitely more complex than inanimate, manufactured, physical objects. Moreover, they interact with each other in highly intricate and fluid social environments both within and outside the school setting. Families, peers, the mass media, socio-economic conditions -- these are a few of the many "confounding variables" whose presence will inevitably raise doubts about the credibility and fairness of test-based forms of accountability. Fourth, the aims of standardized exams are easily subverted. Smith (1989), for example, has described the various categories of test preparation strategies -- including "teaching to the test" -- that are, and inevitably will be, used by professional educators. These educators often resort to such practices because they believe strongly and sincerely (and rightly or wrongly) that exams fail to measure the outcomes of learning that are most significant for the lives of their particular students and do not take into account the host of external environmental influences mentioned above.

Most importantly, a strong case can be made that the kinds of "high stakes" testing inherent in most accountability schemes is not merely a benign practice. Our knowledge and awareness of the sinister "hidden curriculum" of testing, its incidental side-effects, is growing. It appears that when grades on a test become the primary motivators for student learning, the entire educational process is distorted. Not only are important non-tested (and non-testable) outcomes of learning marginalized and ignored, but the acquisition of knowledge is disconnected from meaningful life experiences in favour of the narrow practice of test-taking. In other words, narrow notions of accountability based on standardized assessment instruments may be self-defeating, undermining the very educational process they are attempting to measure and ensure.

Many evaluation experts have already recognized this quandary and championed the development and use of portfolios, processfolios, and various forms of "authentic assessment." My own research into the long range effects of good teaching has taken the form of biographical essays of former high school students, composed a decade after graduation (see, for example, Barone, 1997). In data gathering interviews, the students were asked to describe the most significant effects of an outstanding teacher on their own life narratives. From their enormously complex responses, delivered in the form of life stories, I extracted a list of long range "actual learning outcomes," some intentionally transmitted by a teacher, others the result of serendipity. They include enduring abilities, important life choices, personal attributes, habits of mind, social skills, multicultural literacy, character traits, and so on -- evidence of all of which would (and did) elude any net cast by standardized exams. Indeed, these stories offer detailed descriptions of how good teachers promote in students (including those who do not "test well") various sorts of success in life after graduation.

The stories I am collecting capture what numerically-based instruments cannot: a significant portion of the amazingly complex biographical residue of the experiences young people undergo in public schools. They represent, in my judgment, a responsible and sensible alternative to the misleading test score data gathered within most accountability schemes. But because they offer alternatives to the well-established features of standardized exam scores, this and other novel approaches to educational evaluation swim against the prevailing cultural currents. They are neither number-based, cheap, immediate, nor narrowly focused, and because they honour the individual goals of particular students, do not lend themselves easily to comparisons. Their acceptance would require deepened understanding on the part of the general public, and therefore leadership on the part of educators and statesmanship on the part of policymakers.

Indeed, acceptance of these evaluation approaches would require a shift away from the metaphor of teaching and learning that undergirds the deceptively reassuring one favoured by Franklin Bobbitt and his present day disciples. Instead of teachers being analogized as workers on an educational assembly line,

they would be viewed as potential leaders of a democratic classroom community, one in which the whole personal and social being of every student is fully engaged. In that sort of educational metaphor the best available knowledge about what is truly being taught and learned is knowledge that is intimate, local, idiosyncratic to the individual student and teacher.

Most vexingly, this shift in evaluation paradigms would mean abandoning the quest for absolute certainty about important learning outcomes, for knowledge of them remains to some degree hidden until years after the students have graduated to the larger democratic community. Of course, this fact does not foreclose the possibility of gathering the best available evidence for making evaluative judgments about educational quality. It does mean however, that the "instruments" for gathering such valuable evidence must consist of non-standardized personal knowledge and professional judgments.

Finally, we must recognize that new approaches to educational evaluation practices that avoid the negative, punitive aura surrounding the old notion of accountability, are more effective ways of providing teachers with useful information about the ultimate impact of their efforts. Thoughtful reflection on this information by educational practitioners should result in improvements in their teaching, rather than in the subversion of a process that is an ironically inefficient misuse of public funds. In this manner the process of accountability is itself held accountable to its fundamental purpose, ensuring that taxpayer money is used as wisely as possible.

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