

EDITORIAL

IN SIMPLE TERMS — SCHOOLING

It appears that there is general agreement that one characteristic which the successful teacher must possess is a good sense of humour. Therefore, it would seem reasonable that we might remember to laugh at ourselves once in awhile and stop taking everything so seriously. Our failure to do this may have contributed to the hysteria which seems to surround education today.

Those of us who are concerned with the process of education eagerly turn to journals such as this one hoping to find ideas that will help us to improve the programs offered to children in schools. Therefore, it is unfortunate that we have either forgotten that we are concerned with schooling or we believe that people will take us more seriously if we talk about education. It is not possible that we view the terms as synonymous and have forgotten that education is a much broader concept which involves one's entire lifetime. However, we have produced an unfortunate emphasis which borders on the mystique. Since we have preferred to talk about education rather than schooling we have fallen into the trap of taking ourselves too seriously. In fact there are times when it appears we believe the lie that the schools can be all things to all people.

The schools today are better than ever but society expects the schools to do more with every passing year. This is not wrong if the schools have the resources to undertake the new and varied programs. Our problem is that neither society nor the teaching members of society who had the responsibility to say no if the task was impossible, have asked the questions that must be asked in the future.

It would probably be useless to ask why we have adopted a posture of being miracle workers. However, we must decide if we can continue to give the impression that we can add anything and/or everything to our programs. We must also re-examine the miracle worker syndrome that has given the impression that educators can change methods and techniques at the drop of the hat. No group or level in the education fraternity has been more at fault than any other for perpetuating these myths. We have not been led to accept the myths by con men. We have conned ourselves. For whatever reasons, we have felt obligated to add to programs and change techniques without ever asking if the time and resources necessary to make the changes would be provided.

Perhaps it is too simplistic to state that we have taken ourselves so seriously that we wanted to be miracle workers. However, we are aware that somewhere and somehow a trend developed where all teachers became educators and the use of the term schooling became rare. In spite of the trend nothing has changed. We teach. Therefore, we are teachers. The process in our schools (yes, even our universities) is schooling and it is only a part of the lifelong education process.

If we are ready to face the fact that blind acceptance of change may not have helped our students, (In fact it may have produced a poor learning climate.) then we are in a position to build a better system. We begin to improve the system by recognizing that schooling cannot be expected to provide all that people need to round out an education. Therefore, we must do what we can do well and refuse to jeopardize that process by accepting additional tasks unless we are pro-

vided with the resources to do those tasks well. We must also be given the time to learn new methods and techniques before they are used.

We will continue to search for new ideas and to read our educational journals because a sense of humour is often the partner of a sense of optimism. Therefore, we will want to continue to dream of a world where schooling can be improved by the addition of new and timely courses and by the adoption of improved techniques and methods.

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