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Response to Dr. Bernard J. Shapiro

My response to Dr. Shapiro's paper will be in three parts: first, an abstract of his argument and recommendations; secondly, my analysis and recommendations regarding scholarship within Faculties; and thirdly, some observations and suggestions as to the administrative reorganization of Faculties of Education.

I

Dr. Shapiro gives his discussion a general social context by claiming that "a general questioning of the institutional and political arrangements upon which the always ambiguous social contract is based has caused general dissatisfaction with universities." Wish it were so! I would submit that a more reasonable interpretation of the questioning of the value of universities results from a negative public reaction to what is perceived to be the undermining of social and political values by university professors and students. Such profoundly reactionary and defensive attacks are also linked to a general desire to get on with one's career.

Dr. Shapiro then describes the nature of the university as entailing a fundamental commitment to the intellectual cultivation of its members and to the advancement of the society's intellectual capital through research and scholarship. These objectives are to be attained through general education, professional training, and research. Thus, Shapiro's university combines the functions of research and instruction — with the assumption that instruction must take place in a framework that provides for the initiation of students into the disciplines and scholarly enterprises professed by university staff members. On the learning side, Shapiro argues that "university educated men and women will act creatively in society and, therefore, will be a moving force within it."

Dr. Shapiro next considers the place of professional training in the university. Having characterized a profession as having some social good as the objective of its practice, as being founded on an essential body of knowledge, and whose members are committed to the maintenance and advancement of the theoretical disciplines underlying the professional practice, Dr. Shapiro asserts that professional training can only lay claim to university status to the extent to which it "bridges the gap between professional practice and the relevant body of theoretical knowledge existing for its own sake, and . . . provides a part of the future professional's general education." Denying that professional training is parasitic, he claims that practical problems posed by the human concerns of professional schools can motivate and stimulate "the process of basic research in related disciplines." It is in regard to the possibility of linking research knowledge and the world of the practitioner that Dr. Shapiro notes a substantial failure in Faculties of Education. This failure is exacerbated by the fact that Faculties of Education are not congenial places for Dr. Shapiro's teacher/scholar and that staff members do not define themselves as teachers/scholars.

At this point, Dr. Shapiro claims that teacher training — a fundamentally undergraduate enterprise — "cannot be undertaken — by either faculty or students — independent of scholarship," that is, without "a commitment to and involvement with scholarship in the extension of professional knowledge." Arguing an intellectual version of the fortunate fall, Shapiro postulates that

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educational scholars, because they lack either a "central core of knowledge or a central paradigm of inquiry," are free to employ "a whole variety of methodologies and models of inquiry borrowed . . . from other disciplines." It is at this stage that Dr. Shapiro makes a rather amazing assertion, namely that "academic disciplines . . . are all 'bootstrap' operations in which one is always having to pull oneself up from within"! Since the disciplines are communities of discourse, one rarely has to "pull oneself up from within." Such a perception says much about the isolation or parochialism of educationists in Faculties of Education.

Dr. Shapiro cautions against a colonial mentality which seeks validation by recruiting academics from the "real disciplines" in the Arts and Sciences. Since "scholarship in faculties of education should, in general, be focussed on education as a first-order question," the presence of such staff contributes to the general ineffectiveness of educational research. Moreover, Dr. Shapiro cites the low status of practical research in education as the major cause of the shortage of "scholars with a commitment to improving practice based upon research." Finally, Dr. Shapiro exhorts us to make better use of our human resources and to forego the temptation "to whine about the problems that beset us"!

Despite Dr. Shapiro's moral fervor, one feels far from satisfied with his prescriptions for advancing the scholarly concerns of Faculties of Education. Such a dissatisfaction is, of course, hardly surprising given both the historical problems of teacher education and present controversy over the purpose and effectiveness of public education in North America. To say this is only to recognize the endemic dilemma of Faculties of Education as members of the university community and as suppliers of trained staff for schools and related educational agencies and the concomitant problem of relating intellectual training and general education to the needs of educational practitioners. To come to grips with the dilemmas and to propose ways out of our situations calls for radically rethinking the nature of the academic purpose and of the professional obligations.

II

The title of this conference, "the Right Blend," points to the fact that the issue of theory and practice in education is a true problem and not a puzzle. As a problem, it forces us to reorder our activities within Faculties of Education and with other educational agencies. Moving from this position, I would like to propose some changes that will make Faculties of Education both a more congenial place for Shapiro's scholar/ teacher and more at home in the university community.

Although it is possible to separate post-secondary education into instructional and research activities, the point of the present conference is to deal with the "leading institutions" for the education and training of teachers and other educational personnel, that is, with institutions providing graduate instruction and research training. Scholarship is a *sine qua non* for full and effective membership in such university communities. It is useful to acknowledge that *scholarly teaching* can and does occur without teachers being engaged in research and publication. To have mastered a body of literature, to keep up with the new, and integrate old and new both for one's own understanding and for one's students clearly represent a form of scholarship. To recognize such scholarly interests and teaching, however, does not answer the *larger purpose of university work*, namely that research and publication are essential duties of staff members.

The requirement of such activities at "leading institutions" illustrates a persistent misunderstanding on the part of school personnel who receive their training and legitimization by universities. Practitioners in elementary and secondary schools, almost without exception, have two roles to perform, i.e., teaching and service. There is virtually no requirement for research and publication.

Indeed, one would venture to say that a scholarly minded teacher or administrator by not fitting the popular and professional image would be an embarrassment. The persistent attempt by teachers and school personnel to assimilate university staff and Faculties of Education has seriously undermined their effectiveness as members of the university community. The obsessive demand that university staff prove their skill in elementary and secondary classrooms makes no more sense than if universities demanded school practitioners to publish in scholarly journals.

Such demands suggest that a redefinition and a redivision of the training of school practitioners are gravely needed. As Professor Harry Broudy argued in his paper, the view that all teachers are professionals should be rethought. If Broudy is correct, perhaps a more defensible position is that the great bulk of teachers are really paraprofessionals and should be well trained in the basic knowledge and skills requisite for their work. A much smaller group of professional teachers would be responsible for the general supervision and management of the schools and their instructional and socialization efforts and would in conjunction with interested university staff members undertake practice-based research.

This bifurcation is recommended on the grounds that Faculties of Education have a major responsibility for the initiation and fostering of professional socialization at two levels. First, the university program must assist school personnel, paraprofessionals and professionals alike, to identify with teaching as a collective activity with societal and ethical dimensions, although the culmination of this socialization must occur in the work place and with one's colleagues. Second, the university program must bear primary responsibility for inculcating at least a profound respect for and hopefully a commitment to the life of the mind. The latter responsibility is crucial since teachers are in essence the guardians and first public advocates of that life. It is too obvious for lengthy explication that the university staff and the Faculties of Education must be worthy models of that life if they are to have any positive influence on the intellectual development of their students.

Given their two fold responsibility, Faculties of Education and their staff are compelled to severely limit their authority and responsibilities to defensible areas of intellectual competence. Indeed, one of the notable characteristics of education as a university pursuit is its tendency to assimilate more and more topics. The attraction of such topics lies in their closeness to core interests of education as an university discipline or field of study. In brief, many of the new (and often old) demands on Faculties of Education are *not* unreasonable on the surface. A reason for this assimilative tendency is highlighted by Dr. Shapiro's observation regarding the shortage of "scholars in Faculties of Education with a commitment to improving practice based upon research." In contrast to Shapiro's view that the low status accorded work on practical problems turns staff away from such research and development, I sense that the reasons are more personal and intellectual than most of us would care to admit. If practice-based problems were "interesting" and "stimulating," I doubt that low status and "the contaminating world of practice and training" would deter us.

The "real world" is composed of many smaller real worlds, each with its own values, central activities, and ways of life. Each real world attracts and recruits, in general, those who are compatible with its characteristics. If an essential function of the university is intellectual cultivation (here I agree with Shapiro) then we should not be surprised if university staff — including educationists — are fundamentally interested in *intellectual problems* and that they desire, indeed need, to follow their intellectual inquiries where ever they lead. Finally, since university staff train the guardians and proponents of the life of the mind for children and adolescents in public

institutions, it follows that intellectual interests must dominate the values and activities of professors of education. Faculties of Education are compelled, therefore, to encourage the widest intellectual development of their staff while severely controlling the expansion of programs and institutionally sanctioned field endeavors. At the same time, they may further the intellectual and professional development of their clients by fostering cooperative work on practice-based problems by bringing together university staff and professional school personnel.

Moving to the undergraduate program which is a central concern of even leading institutions, it is clear that if universities essentially exist for the intellectual cultivation of their members, then Faculties of Education must insure that their pre-service programs provide for such cultivation. Indeed, I have already asserted that teachers *ought* to be the guardians and advocates of the life of the mind and university staff have a professional obligation to insure that teachers are in a position to meet their obligations. A basic element in intellectual cultivation of teachers-in-training is an intellectually sound core program with a consistent content, which is adequately instructed and evaluated. The core program should introduce students to a broad and rigorous examination of education in its social, political, and moral settings. In its earliest stages, the core should be the professional counterpart of a basic liberal education. For those training to be paraprofessional, the program should offer a basic core of practicum related courses and the appropriate training in carefully defined teaching majors. Professional teachers need first a sound liberal education including professional courses that go beyond the initial induction provided paraprofessionals, specialized training in their major areas of instructional duties, and an externally set practicum provided by school boards and teachers organizations.

In the broadest sense, Dr. Shapiro was correct in calling for a basic commitment to education and teaching on the part of university staff. The error is to assume that such a commitment is limited to practice-oriented issues. Rather, it is clear that the problems that beset teachers and their organizations, school boards, provincial and state governments, parents, and the media, are policy and ethical concerns. Moreover, the most mundane questions of classroom practice are eventually cast into enduring matters of choice and justification. On these grounds alone, professional teachers require a board based liberal education that must include the perennial issues of educational and pedagogical concern.

III

It is my belief that a fundamental prerequisite for reforming teacher education is a reorganization of Faculties of Education as administrative units. Despite the size of many Dean's Offices (DOs), the support available to staff members remains woefully inadequate. It is obvious that as with other public sector agencies the modernization of centralized administrative offices is essential to effective use and control of resources. Although at many universities the first steps in automated office systems are being taken, relatively speaking most university Faculties are still in the first industrial revolution.

A fully modernized Dean's Office would do much to set the standard for efficiency. Leadership in the Dean's Office includes more than the old fashioned work with staff development, although it continues to be a central responsibility. Given the need to conserve and marshal economic resources, the DO requires new personnel such as administrative systems experts to devise new means for using computer technology in administration, instruction, and student programs. Computerized administration of student programs uses staff time more effectively and makes students more responsible for their programs. Financial control of Faculty budgets requires new support staff who can effectively analyze and manage budgets and economic resources.

The Dean's Office should also be the intellectual centre of the Faculty. What is needed is an educational "brain trust." Such a mobilization of staff expertise would be used to advise on and deal with significant recurrent and topical issues by describing and defining them adequately, identifying the pertinent literature and research studies and appropriate approaches. Instead of the cumbersome system of committees which tie up deliberation, individual assignments should be used to deliver the concise reports and advice needed. A conference such as this points the way to another major benefit that could come from the "brain trust." Administrators and administrative structures need to be "informed" by scholars and researchers. Too often existing and static systems and structures hang like albatrosses around the necks of our most creative scholars. An obsession with existing conditions can force administrators in Dr. Shapiro's situation of "having to pull oneself up from within." At the same time, if creative scholars are forced to confront practical issues in order to achieve positive changes, is it not reasonable to hope that their scholarship will become more alive and rewarding?

Staff in Faculties of Education generally carry heavier load of teaching duties than their counterparts in the humanities and social sciences. Part of the responsibility for the imbalance must rest with the staff who play the school teacher role. By this I mean the tendency to assume that Faculties of Education are extensions of the public school system and that professors of education are teachers with higher degrees. As argued earlier, such a view is mistaken and counter-productive. Expectations for university staff are framed in terms of the purposes and activities of the institution. It is ridiculous to argue for teaching loads that would be rejected by secondary teachers and that limit the scholarly activities of university staff.

During the expansive 1960s, the need for staff allowed for a lowered expectation of scholarly activity and a belief in never ending expansion of resources. It is more imperative than ever that Faculties of Education model themselves on the best of the university rather than aping the worst excesses of the anti-intellectuals within it. In practical terms, the Faculties must work with what human resources are available, which means that differentiated staff responsibilities are probably inevitable. Staff who have active research programs should have the same teaching loads as their counterparts in related faculties. Non-research staff who are effective teachers and keep current with their fields should be assigned appropriate teaching loads. Moreover, Faculties of Education, and this really means the DOs, must devise suitable standards for rewarding productive careers both as research scholars and scholarly teachers. In brief, there is every reason to establish promotion criteria that serve both career patterns. Claims of master teaching must be based on effectiveness. Proof of instructional success must be objective in the same manner as that for publications, namely if research is demonstrated by publication in appropriate vehicles then teaching must be judged by student learning in terms of skills and knowledge.

In conclusion, the problem of scholarship in Faculties of Education is two sided. First, we must rigorously define the nature of scholarship and energetically promote its achievement. Much of this could be described as staff development and requires the honest and committed intervention of the chief administrative officer of the faculty. Second, the Dean's Office needs to reflect the most effective and innovative use of economic and human resources. This means recognizing that new roles and new kinds of support staff are required. In times of crises the inadequacy of old ways of doing things become more apparent and the need to act more imperative. As Dr. Shapiro has observed, we should stop whining about our problems and seize the opportunities for rebuilding our Faculties, careers, and programs.