The Bermuda Triangle Of American Education:

Pure Traditionalism, Pure Progressivism, And Good Intentions

The pendulum has been swinging back and forth between traditional and progressive educational approaches for more than 100 years, but we still haven't figured out how to reduce the learning gap. In this first article in a two-part series, Mr. Pogrow suggests fundamental policy changes and argues for finding ways to combine the best of the philosophical traditions to produce substantially better schools.

BY STANLEY POGROW

PURE traditionalists are brain dead. Pure progressives live in a fairy-tale land. And while good intentions are better than bad intentions, relying primarily on their power is not effective.

Pure traditionalists feel that everything is a linear, predictable process that can easily be systematized and manipulated. They feel that anything worth teaching can and should be systematized and tested, and that as long as there is an assembly line of clear objectives with consequences for failure, a renaissance of achievement will result. Their primary management strategy is to get everyone on the same page — figuratively and literally. Competition and increased involvement of the private sector are believed necessarily to produce better schools and results. There is no place for subtlety or complexity, no place for children's growth spurts or emotional disturbance. In this world, students and teachers are rats in a maze that has no cheese, and students never whine and are never too hungry or fearful to learn. If students' development is naturally delayed, they need to be retained. There is no understanding of or respect for the complex nature of learning and teaching, nor is there any comprehension of how those processes differ from producing widgets. Learning is a "pound it into them" process. Those who disagree are wimps.

I suspect that most *Kappan* readers have been enjoying this article so far. Now for the hard part.

Pure progressives have high ideals, intentions, and goals — all supported by poetic visions and lofty rhetoric. They have a Thoreauvian view of the nature of learning and a Dewey-eyed perspective on children, teachers, and administrators. They feel that all children will learn spontaneously at very high levels as long as you use individualized, "child-centered" approaches. All teachers want to design their own curriculum and are successful as long as they are given the flexibility to teach whatever and however they want. All principals and schools are effective when given maximum freedom to design the curriculum and instructional strategies.

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There is unlimited time available in the day for teachers and administrators to figure things out, unlimited wisdom to tap, and unlimited tolerance for ambiguity. No one is uncaring, cheats, or is incompetent. Teachers and students magically figure things out when they need to. Students understand and retain content as long as it is learned in context and the school has the right philosophical heart. Postmodernism is extolled, and anything systematic is considered to be artificial and is avoided at all costs. Science is seen as a misleading basis for deciding how to educate or for knowing whether learning has occurred. No value is seen in rote learning or automaticity of skills, and worksheets, textbooks, standards, formal phonics, tests, texts, scripted programs, etc., are viewed as evil. There is no understanding of what is involved in scaling up ideas and making them work in complex systems — or even that public education is in fact a large system. Those who are not true believers are the enemy.

Good intentions are a strength of our profession, and the vast majority of us really do care. However, while bad intentions certainly inhibit learning, there is no evidence that good intentions increase learning beyond a certain basic level. Yet the notion that if you believe that students can do well they will do well is so pervasive that, when we approach students with good intentions and they still fail, we attribute it to factors beyond our control, such as poverty or hormones. It is never the fault of weak teachers, bad schools, or inappropriate, ill-defined methods. Belief in the power of good intentions causes us, like lemmings, to jump aboard the bandwagon of pop-psychology-generated reforms that common sense says cannot work and for which there is no real evidence, such as the self-concept movement of the 1980s and the buy-in movement of the 1990s. It seems to be the caring thing to do. (I have documented other caring pop-psych fads in my earlier writings in this journal.[1])

Illustration: Michael Sierson

While we would never consider having caring nurses perform heart surgery, we believe that caring paraprofessionals can perform the equally sophisticated task of accelerating Title I students. A reliance on good intentions discounts the skills and sophisticated approaches needed to produce high levels of learning in any student — and particularly in disadvantaged students. The protagonist of Michael Crichton's recent novel, *State of Fear*, notes that the combination of good intentions and bad information is "a prescription for disaster."[2]

THE DANGER OF EXTREME IDEOLOGY

The problem is not progressivism, traditionalism, or good intentions. All are essential components of good education. The problem is that influential groups seeking to es-

tablish their philosophical dominance invariably take their ideas to illogical extremes. For example, valid opposition to racial tracking morphed into an absolutist anti-tracking movement in the late 1980s that pressured schools to never differentiate instruction or allow homogeneous instruction. Silly! It took a decade to work through that extreme position, and it only recently became politically okay to talk again about differentiated instruction.

There are two problems with the extreme philosophical positions of pure traditionalism and pure progressivism. The first is that both are wrong in their conceptions of how teaching and learning occur for the vast majority of students. There are indeed some students who need everything to be structured and presented in a linear fashion. I have also been in purist progressive schools that were amazing places, with students who had been unable to function in a traditional setting clearly flourishing. However, the vast majority of students do not function or learn best with either a purely structured or purely unstructured approach.

"Ms. Gordon's morning art class and, of course, Ms. Gordon's afternoon art class."

As a result, both purist approaches fail — but in different ways. Almost all important new ideas in education come from the pure progressives. During progressive periods, education is awash in such interesting ideas as distributed learning, leadership, whole language, restructuring, thinking outside the box, new paradigms, etc. But things become totally disorganized and chaotic. Falling test scores and general disorganization lead to a takeover by the pure traditionalists. Traditionalist periods tend to see rising test scores — for a while, at least — which then stabilize at low levels. The stagnation leads to disenchantment, and progressive periods reemerge. This has been going on for more than 100 years. In addition, I have the general impression that the cycles are becoming shorter, with the rhetoric of each side becoming more simplistic.

Education has seesawed back and forth between two extremes that do not work, with each climbing back into power as the failure of the other becomes increasingly apparent. Pure progressives wasted virtually all of the $500-million Annenberg grant. And the current traditionalist approach is widening learning gaps despite claims of success emanating from Washington, D.C., from some state capitals, and from some professional associations. Structuring everything around basic skills to meet standards and achieve adequate yearly progress is spawning an emerging scandal of failure. As this latest failure to reduce the achievement gap becomes increasingly apparent, pure progressives will become increasingly emboldened. The "new" movement will probably call for throwing out all "scripted" programs and creating highly decentralized schools. The problem is that decentralization and underspecified curricula produced a mess in the previous cycle, which was one of the reasons for the emergence of the current pure traditionalist era.

In the end, both extremes are wrong, have failed,

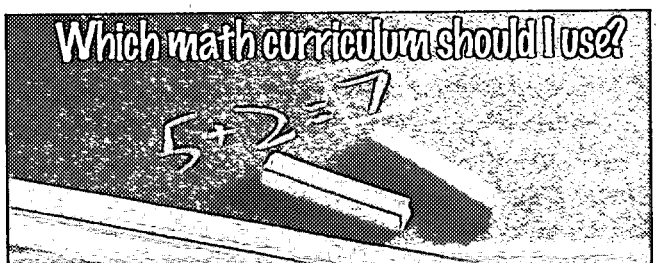
and will continue to fail. As a lifelong educator whose work spans both traditions, I have never understood why the leaders of our profession are so intolerant of one another's views. Why do we have reading and math "wars"? Warfare is not characteristic of professions! In addition, while it is easy to look at the past and say how a prior movement was obviously destined to be a fad, we do not seem to learn from history. Again and again, we leap into the next "fad to be."

For example, I do not understand the current rabid opposition of the reading community to "scripted" curricula. Scripting is one of the major literary traditions. I had an opportunity to discuss the matter over lunch with two friends who happen to be gurus of the whole-language movement. No sooner had we ordered than they started railing against the encroachment of scripted programs. The main problem for them seemed to be that scripting stifled individual creativity. I asked if they enjoyed going to the theater and whether they thought it was a creative experience for the actors and themselves. They said "yes." I then asked if they enjoyed going to the ballet and whether the dancers and productions were creative. They again answered "yes." Then I reminded them that the actors and dancers that they admired were all using scripts and that creativity in the performing arts is enhanced and preserved because of the use of scripts. The response of the first was, "I am philosophically in favor of the use of scripts in the performing arts but not in the classroom." The second replied, "Actors and dancers do not use scripts." Hmmmm!

How does one respond to such assertions — the first totally egocentric and the second totally unreal? I tried to explain that what they were really opposed to was not scripted materials but materials that took away all professional discretion — that there were good scripts worth replicating that encouraged, even stimulated creativity and that there were bad scripts that had the opposite effect. I argued that performing artistry was a key element of great teachers and added that, as professors of literacy, they should use the right words. I then confessed that I used scripting techniques from the theater for the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Supermath programs that I have developed.[3] If they visited classrooms using these programs, I told them, they would see highly creative forms of teaching and student interaction — and, most important, unusually high levels of student achievement. Indeed, I had even applied some of their whole-language concepts within the scripting system. I told them I resented lumping my work, which is highly progressive, together with programs using inflexible forms of scripting. They looked at me as though I were from a different planet. I think they stayed for the rest of the meal because I was buying.

In one sense this episode is funny. In another it is dismaying, because this delusional perspective will be an influential part of the next reform wave, and thousands of educators will be swept up in it. This stance is not really about helping kids. Adults are fighting a historically significant philosophical battle by using the rhetoric that will enable them to recruit the most foot soldiers. Neither my lunch mates nor any of the other advocates of pure whole language with whom I have spoken seem willing to give up the rhetoric of bashing "scripts," because it is such a powerful rallying cry — even though their argument belies the major literary and artistic traditions they claim to represent. In addition, they, as well as any other pure progressives, cannot accept the possibility, let alone the reality, that some elements of creative and advanced pedagogy can be systematized in ways that produce dynamic learning environments. So they, and we as a profession, are locked into a self-fulfilling prophecy because no one attempts to develop better, more creative systematic approaches.

The recycling of extremist perspectives has prevented the development of more appropriate philosophical perspectives and reforms. We are unwilling to consider that the unfettered use of something we agree with philo-



School districts, you are invited to participate in an important new study of early elementary math curricula, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The study will evaluate several curricula that use varying approaches to develop math skills, in order to identify programs that are more effective at improving student math achievement.

The benefits of participating are:

- Free curriculum materials for your teachers and students
- Free teacher training and follow-up support on the curricula
- Obtain research evidence based on your own district

The goal is to implement the study in a geographically diverse group of districts with Title I eligible schools.

For more information, please contact the study at (866) 869-3187.

MATHEMATICA
Policy Research, Inc.

sophically could do more damage than the measured use of something we disagree with, and we do not know how to create synergies by combining philosophical traditions. We talk about the need for balance, but there is virtually no research about *how* to achieve balance. In addition, while teachers struggle to maintain some sense of balance, and some get very good at it, the world around them tries to push them toward one extreme or the other. Whether whole-language advocates try to remove basal readers from their classrooms or monitors try to make sure they are on the appropriate page in the structured reading curriculum, teachers are pushed into the corner by extremist advocates who control the dialogue, the press, and the funding. As a result, we merely pay lip service to balance and go on looking for the ideologically driven fix.

Those of us who try to create a science of balance find that there is no constituency for the knowledge generated. For example, in the September 2005 issue of the *Kappan*, I reported a set of findings as to the conditions under which thinking development accelerates the performance of disadvantaged students. I reported that 35 to 40 minutes a day of Socratic dialogue to develop "understanding" produces substantial gains in test scores, even as it increases thinking and social interaction skills. I argued that such general thinking development must precede thinking in content for disadvantaged but not advantaged students.[4] Such knowledge is critical for figuring out how to blend the best of the competing perspectives. However, pure traditionalists are not interested, because they *know* that any time devoted to thinking development is a waste. Pure progressives reject the knowledge as disguised tracking and because they *know* that better thinking comes about by integrating thinking development into all content areas all the time. Those who rely on good intentions find such knowledge "complicated." As a result, the pendulum keeps swinging to the same dysfunctional points, fueled by a debate cast in concrete.

SO WHERE IS THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY?

A vibrant research community could be a buffer between the contending extremes of the ideological divide by providing key impartial knowledge. Unfortunately, that does not happen for two reasons. First, the research community and its organization, the American Educational Research Association (of which I am a member), are themselves highly ideological interest groups. Second, the research community does not know how to tell if a program or reform is actually "working" the way its constituents would understand the term.

For example, after a $7-million study, the developer of Success for All, Robert Slavin, and a former employee, Geoffrey Borman, claimed once again to show that students in this program did better. No less an authority than Russ Whitehurst, director of the Institute of Education Sciences and so the top educational research official in the U.S., applauded this as a "sophisticated study that uses everything the evaluation field has come to recognize as high-quality."[5]

At the same time that this study was released, the U.S. Department of Education released the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for a small group of urban districts. Atlanta is the urban district that relied most heavily on using Success for All for its minority students in its high-poverty schools. The 2005 NAEP results for reading found that the learning gap in *fourth-grade* reading between white and black students in Atlanta was approximately *four years*.[6] Sadly, that is not a typographical error.

In a sense, Whitehurst's extolling research that shows Success for All to be effective in 2005 is like George Bush's proclaiming that FEMA director "Brownie" was doing a "heck of a job" in responding to the Katrina crisis. And in the wake of this research, the black elementary students of Atlanta are experiencing "intellectual segregation" in how they are taught and what, as a consequence, they achieve. Intellectual segregation is as damaging in this economic era as the Jim Crow laws were in the past. But the current segregation has been put into effect unwittingly by black leaders with good intentions making use of bad information. Michael Crichton was right.

The bottom line is that in its current state the research community cannot serve as a mechanism to smooth out the oscillations of the pendulum swings. It has to get its own house in order.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF EXTREMIST CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION REFORM

If we are going to break the cycle of pendulum swings that inhibit our success, we must make three changes that go against some of our most fundamental strategies, practices, and beliefs.

First, we must be honest about what we know how to do so that "the truth can set us free." We do not

know how to reduce the achievement gap beyond what it was in 1988. As I have noted elsewhere, medical practitioners and researchers get additional funding when they say they do not know how to cure something, while educators try to get additional monies by arguing that they know how to substantially reduce the gap but have insufficient funds to fix the problem.

While education's strategy has worked well in the past, it's getting increasingly difficult to maintain the appearance of knowing what to do as more disappointing data are released and as successive generations of low-income students fail to progress as promised. To some extent, the passage of No Child Left Behind was a signal of bipartisan frustration with our failure to live up to our promises despite large increases in funding. What is going to happen when the recent results in Atlanta, described above, and other places like it become known?

In addition, maintaining the appearance that we know how to reduce the learning gap severely limits what we as a profession are willing to consider. It puts a premium on conformity to inadequate professional norms and makes us susceptible to the shibboleths of the philosophical purists. The pendulum swings are needed to maintain the appearance that a dramatic change will fix things. Our professional associations keep on churning out new buzz words to keep up their workshop revenues. What is the hype this year? Learning communities, improving school culture, or astrology? We cannot keep on stuffing this golden goose.[7] It may be about to explode.

In a way, the arguments of the three B's, Berliner, Biddle, and Bracey — that we cannot improve education until we eliminate poverty — are an admission of failure on our part to live up to our promises. These critics are right in the sense that the level of child poverty in this nation is a disgrace. However, I think they are wrong in that we can make substantial progress in improving high-poverty schools — but not the way we are currently operating. Indeed, children born into poverty respond to appropriately enriching forms of education. Asa Hilliard has found that minority students who have access to high-quality teachers three years in a row make outstanding progress. My work with terrific teachers all over the U.S. in providing focused thinking development for disadvantaged students has produced dramatic success. I have also had the recent good fortune to work on reforming the Communist-developed dogmatic education system in orphanage schools in Ukraine. (Welfare children in this country are wealthy compared to the children in those schools.) I trained some teachers last year in some basic questioning techniques, yet I had little hope of success. I recently went back for a conference of orphanage educators from all over the country to see the results. There I sat, jet-lagged and all, watching in utter amazement as I saw some of the best teaching and student responses I have ever seen. The children were poetic and thoughtful. Teachers earning $60 dollars a month were masters of their craft.

To provide these types of opportunities consistently to disadvantaged students, we need to start by admitting that our existing professional structures, ideologies, and colleges are not getting the job done and may not be able to. Once we let some of the stuffing out of the golden goose, new imperatives and possibilities open up. Instead of simply doing more research around existing practices and databases, we will realize the need to create and test a variety of new practices. We will need to develop a generation of tinkerers to invent new learning environments and more powerful tools.

We can also start to think differently and more creatively about training teachers and administrators. For example, the success of any new teacher who has been thrown into a high-poverty school is a function of his or her ability to fascinate and intrigue students. Yet I am not aware of a single teacher education program that requires teachers to take a course in drama. As a result, colleges of education keep on turning out teachers who do not know how to avoid boring their students. When I asked the student teachers whom I was supervising to do a drama lesson, the cooperating teachers in the schools started to give me low ratings for "unfairly" asking student teachers to do something that none of the teachers in the school were doing. However, while my approach lasted, the lessons put on by these student teachers were nothing short of great, and the response of their students was amazing.

There isn't a single course in colleges of education that trains students how to design new schools or programs. Nor do I know of a single course or project on how to harness the potential of artificial intelligence.

There is so much that we can start doing to explore new approaches. However, none of the suggested ideas fit into existing dogma, practices, traditions, political conveniences, or philosophical conceptions, and none of it will come to pass if we continue to act as though we know what the solutions are. Invention can begin to occur only when the profession admits to being sty-

mied. It is indeed easier to blame poverty than to acknowledge our own inertia, and it is easier to swing on the pendulum than to improve practice in substantive ways.

A second measure we must take if we are to break the cycle of extremist reforms requires us to equalize access to the best teachers and stop the current system wherein the more money we spend the less equalized such access is. There is no point in increasing and equalizing spending if, in the end, it does not buy what produces the biggest gains for low-income students — access to very good teachers. However, a dirty little secret of our profession is the inequitable way we allocate high-ability teachers within districts. There are many great teachers working in inner-city schools, but not nearly enough of them. And low-income students are far less likely to have access to such teachers, even in states that have equalized funding between districts. This inequity contributes to the perpetuation of the achievement gap and renders most staff development and reform initiatives little more than palliatives whose ineffectiveness becomes apparent over time.

The likelihood that children in high-poverty schools will have access to three very good teachers in a row in our increasingly segregated public schools is virtually nil. In addition, the situation appears to be getting worse, and higher spending seems only to exacerbate this inequity.

There are two district-level fiscal mechanisms that allow this instructional inequity to happen and that perpetuate it.

1. *Class-size reduction.* States are now in a race to reduce class size. In some cases, this is hugely wasteful, disequalizing folly. For example, California passed a major spending bill to reduce class size in grades K-3 that is costing $1.7 billion a year.[8] The two primary results of this legislation are that 1) there is no evidence of real improvement and 2) the additional positions created in the suburban communities reduced the percentage of experienced teachers in high-poverty schools.[9] Shortly after this bill passed, I spoke with a principal of an inner-city school who told me that she did not have a single certified teacher on her staff. Deborah Stipek, dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, noted that this initiative may have done more harm than good for children in low-income communities.[10] So what started out as an effort to help minority students ended up disadvantaging them by reducing their access to experienced teachers. This is yet another example of taking research showing that an approach helps disadvantaged students and using it to generate large amounts of new monies that end up being spent in a way that further disadvantages those students.

Even with this counterproductive expenditure, California is still widely believed to have a funding crisis. Many believe that the state has the second-largest class size in the country. In reality, California has an average class size of 21 students.[11] I would have been thrilled to have had such small classes when I was teaching in New York City, as well as the salary that California's teachers earn, which is among the highest in the nation.

At this point, the class size seems reasonable, but the political pressures within the profession and from unions, parents, colleges of education, and professional associations are all in the direction of continuing to increase the numbers of teachers and classrooms and reduce class size. Consider that 40% of new teachers are leaving the profession within five years and that many of our best teachers are nearing retirement age. Furthermore, the percentage of those going into teaching who scored in the top 10% of their high school classes has dropped by two-thirds since the 1970s.[12] And we already have quality problems, so increasing the number of classrooms at this point makes as much sense as trying to reduce our dependence on foreign oil by providing incentives to buy SUVs. This churning is good for colleges of education, but reducing class size dilutes the pool of very good teachers, and the dilution is done in an inequitable fashion. In other words, the more you reduce class size under current conditions, the less likely it is that a child born into poverty will have a very good teacher. The monies spent on class-size reduction would be much better spent on increasing salaries or providing bonuses for teachers who voluntarily move from high-income schools to high-poverty schools.

2. *Personnel equalization.* Most districts allocate personnel to schools based on a ratio of teachers to students. Then they allocate the dollars to pay those teachers. I try to avoid sports metaphors, yet such a comparison is the best way to illustrate the disequalizing effects of this approach to personnel budgeting. Education has chosen Major League Baseball's inequitable method of equalizing personnel between teams as opposed to the far more equitable practices of the National Basketball Association and the National Football League.

Think of a sports league as a district and each team as a school in the district. All sports leagues require that all teams have the same number of players. This

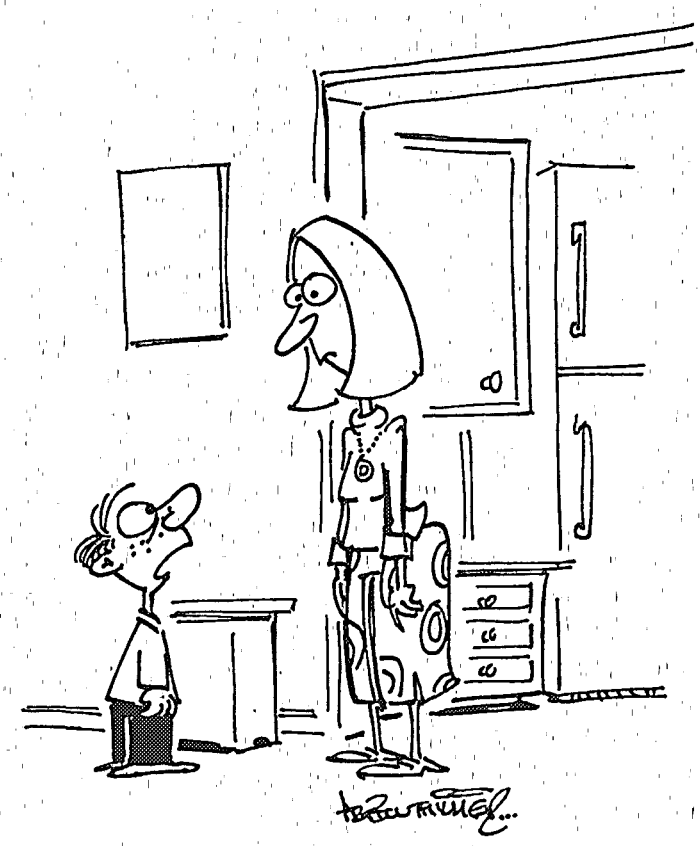
is equivalent to a district's requiring each of its schools to have the same ratio of teachers to students. However, baseball does not equalize what each team can *spend* for players. Each baseball team spends whatever it wants. So a big-market team like the Yankees has a payroll of $195 million, while the Florida Marlins spend just $15 million for the same number of players. Money does not guarantee success, but the Yankees can suck in almost any player they covet, while the small-market teams are at a major disadvantage. In addition, as overall revenue increases, this inequitable gap gets bigger.

Education's budgeting process is equivalent to baseball's model because only bodies, not dollars, are equalized. High-income schools are able to attract more experienced teachers and thus spend more for the same number of teachers — even when the formal budget shows equal expenditures.[13] Marguerite Roza has shown the large inequities between schools in the same districts. She found a high-income school in which actual expenditures per teacher were 50% higher than for a high-poverty school in the same district and another district in which one school received more than three times the per-pupil expenditures of another.[14] In Houston, the lowest-funded school received only 46% of the average staff expenditures per student for the district, while the highest-funded school received 291% of the district average.[15] Just as the baseball model affects team recruitment, this spending inequity combined with the fixed salary schedule places high-poverty schools at a terrible disadvantage in recruiting high-ability teachers within the same district.

On the other hand, the National Football League and the National Basketball Association equalize both the number of players and the amount of money that each team can spend for them. Revenues go into a central pool and are then reallocated to each team to fund the same maximum amount, or cap, that each team can spend for all of its players. This method voluntarily reallocates star players in an equal fashion across the teams, as no team can afford to have only stars. Any team has an equal chance to win. At that point, leadership in selecting the right mix of players and in building a team culture becomes the key to success. The equivalent practice in education would be for a district to equalize each school's *actual* per-pupil expenditure for teachers.

The federal government could promote such a shift. Title I funds are supposed to supplement district funds that have first been allocated equitably, rather than supplant them. However, Roza points out that the federal government considers a district to have equalized its schools if it equalizes only the ratio of teachers to students — i.e., the baseball model. Requiring districts to equalize personnel dollars per student for all its schools — i.e., the football and basketball approach — before being eligible for Title I funds would create a lot of interesting dynamics that in time would produce a more equitable allocation of good teachers.

If we are serious about reducing the gaps, equalizing access to good teachers is critical. Vague talk about how all students should have access to wonderful teachers all the time is a nice sentiment, but it is just that. In the real world, access to excellent teachers is highly unequal, and district funding mechanisms exacerbate this situation — regardless of revenue levels. At the very least, Congress and state legislatures should be required to file a "teacher equalization impact statement" for every proposed education initiative, just as environmental impact statements must be filed for proposed



"I just heard that life begins at 40. What am I supposed to do between now and then?"

development activity. Such a process might have reshaped California's disequalizing small-class-size initiative.

Unfortunately, trying to do something about the inequity of personnel distribution may be the third rail of education politics. So we are left in a Catch-22: the strongest incentive to attract the best teachers to high-poverty schools is to make them great schools.

Third, in our efforts to stop the pendulum's swings, we must tap into the best of traditionalist and progressive ideas while shedding the ideological baggage. Even better, we must figure out how to optimally combine the best of both to improve schools in a systematically balanced fashion.

Education cannot live by either progressivism or traditionalism alone. Both philosophies are right; each possesses important pieces of the puzzle for creating better schools. Without progressivism, schools would be grim places. Without traditionalism, we could not have built the large system of public education that we have today or created the bedrock system of standards, basic curricula, and grading systems.

Can we move beyond the oscillating versions of hyped certainty to a more modest goal of inspired invention? Can we actually design significantly better schools on a large scale? The last funded effort to design new public schools was the New American Schools project. Unfortunately, the designs did not work very well, in part because they were mostly built on a single philosophical framework and a single form of pedagogy. More recently, the charter school movement has also spawned some new designs. The jury is still out both on how different these schools really are and on their effectiveness.

But real change is possible. Next month, in a follow-up to this article, I will provide one example of how high-poverty elementary schools can be redesigned by combining the best of the two philosophical traditions. I will describe the Hi-Perform School design for restructuring high-poverty elementary schools. This new design combines the three most effective interventions that I could find in the literature on implementing traditionalist and progressive ideas. It promises to yield effective, systematic, child-centered, creative schools, where children born into poverty perform at very high levels on tests, yet enjoy coming to school. Stay tuned.

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1. See Stanley Pogrow, "Reforming the Wannabee Reformers," *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 1996, pp. 656-63. Keep in mind that, when I wrote this earlier article, people were as passionate and as strongly in favor of the reforms described there as we are today about buy-in and other well-intentioned reforms.

I wish to acknowledge David Ackerman, "Taproots for a New Century," *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 2003, pp. 344-49, for inspiring parts of the current article.

2. Michael Crichton, *State of Fear* (New York: Avon Books, 2004), p. 531.

3. For a description of the HOTS program, see Stanley Pogrow, "HOTS Revisited: A Thinking Development Approach to Reducing the Learning Gap After Grade 3," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 2005, pp. 64-75. For a description of the Supermath program, see Stanley Pogrow, "Supermath: An Alternative Approach to Using Technology to Teach Math," *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 2004, pp. 297-303.

4. Pogrow, "HOTS Revisited."

5. Debra Viadero, "Long-Awaited Study Shows 'Success for All' Gains," *Education Week*, 11 May 2005, pp. 3, 15.

6. The actual scores for whites and blacks were 253 and 194, respectively. This gap was 60% to 70% higher than for nine of the other 10 urban districts measured. While there is not yet a direct way to convert differences at a given grade into grade equivalents, students generally gain 40 points between the fourth and eighth grades, so the growth is approximately 10 points per grade level. In that context, a gap at the fourth grade of 39 points appears to represent approximately four grade levels.

7. Michael Kirst of Stanford University described trying to stuff knowledge into students through ongoing remediation in basic skills as "Stuffing the Duck." When referring to continually adding money to an inequitable system, I like the image of the "golden goose."

8. *2006 Resource Cards on California Schools* (Mountain View, Calif.: EdSource, 2006).

9. EdSource, "Clarifying What We Have Learned About K-3 Class Size Reduction in California," September 2002, available at www.edsource.org. There were two factors that led to the decline in the percentage of credentialed teachers in inner-city schools. The first was that teachers left to take jobs in the suburbs, and the second was that low-income schools could not compete for the limited pool of available qualified teachers to fill their open positions. Another negative effect of the class-size reduction was a reduction in the number of special education teachers and teachers of English-language learners.

10. Deborah Stipek, "Scientifically Based Practice: It's About More Than Improving the Quality of Research," *Education Week*, 23 March 2005, pp. 33, 44.

11. Stephen J. Carrol et al., *California's K-12 Public Schools: How Are They Doing?* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005).

12. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Opening Classroom Doors," *New York Times*, 30 April 2006, sec. 4, p. 15.

13. In their published budgets, districts tend to use the same average salary for each staff member, so it looks like each school is getting the same amount for each staff member. However, individual teachers are actually paid not the average, but what they are eligible for on the salary schedule. So schools with more experienced teachers actually spend more.

14. Marguerite Roza, "Many a Slip 'tween Cup and Lip: District Fiscal Practices and Their Effect on School Spending," paper prepared for the Aspen Institute Congressional Program: The Challenge of Education Reform — Standards, Accountability, Resources and Policy, 22-27 February 2005.

15. Karen H. Miles and Marguerite Roza, "Understanding Student-Based Budgeting as a Means to Greater School Resource Equity," Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington, Seattle, 2004. K

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