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A Framework for Improvement of Classroom Functioning

Dr. Robert E. Chasnaff, New Jersey, and Dr. Maurice J. Eash, Indiana.

How is my classroom functioning? Within the answer to this question undoubtedly lies the key for the improvement of classroom teaching. Why is it on one day the children seem so responsive, eager to learn, well behaved, whereas, on another day, when to all outward appearances the situation is similar, the students appear to the teacher to be engaged in an organized plot against learning? Not uncommonly the classroom teacher classified these as "good" and "bad" days in teaching. However, if the classroom teacher is to tip the balance in favour of "good" days in her classroom, the generalized evaluation of "good" and "bad" days are not useful in providing information in helping understand children's behaviour during these times.

In past efforts to promote teacher understanding of children's behaviour, considerable time has been spent in training teachers how to write objective anecdotal records about individual children's behaviour in the classroom. Fundamentally, the same procedure can be followed in observing a class, treating the group as an organic whole reflecting particular repetitive patterns of behaviour which indicate the personality of the group. Within this process is contained a key to a teacher developing a method of really seeing a

group and using his perceptions to improving instruction. If teachers are to study the functioning of the class, an orderly, objective, systematic way of describing the class's operation must be developed. What questions, then, must classroom teachers ask themselves? What information is needed?

Basic Considerations in Group Behaviour

In order to formulate the appropriate questions, two basic considerations of group behaviour are involved. First, groups evidence universal sets of activities if they are to remain as organized wholes; secondly, groups combine the universal activities thus accounting for each group's own uniqueness. The universal activities necessary to group functioning can be observed in such diverse groups as nations, work groups, social clubs, athletic teams and classrooms. These universal activities permit an aggregate of people to function as a group, maintain identity as a group and work toward desired goals. The following list of activities unite a collection of individuals into a functioning group. These groups of activities provide a teacher a framework for analyzing and understanding the functioning of a class. Broadly, the five categories of activities are:

1. Activities to get the work done. Groups are formed to gain particular goals, the classroom group cannot be an exception to this. Examples of work in a classroom are the organization of the specific lessons, what the teacher does, what the children are responsible for. Important in work activities are whether the children see these activities in a broader perspective of having a definite purpose, as being meaningful to them, as leading to a desirable goal. That is, do children understand the work activities as related to particular ends?

2. Activities to perpetuate the group. These are activities which keep the group functioning by supplying ideas and materials. In a classroom examples of perpetuation activities would be organized planning by the group for classroom work, making sure that the class has adequate materials to engage in the planned lesson, developing the necessary skills and abilities to successfully carry out the organized activity.

3. Activities to identify the group. Groups need to have a feeling of identification and undertake activities to express and enhance the feeling of identity. In a classroom, examples of these activities are modes of behaviour that are peculiar to this group, ways of speaking and other standard forms of behaviour which are acceptable in this particular classroom. These activities create a feeling of belongingness in the individuals and enhance the cohesiveness of the group.

4. Activities to provide for individual participation. Aggregates of individuals become groups when they participate in a common task directed toward attaining particular ends. Examples of activities to provide for individual participation in a classroom are the development of assignments tailored for individual differences, the shifting of classroom's responsibility for different tasks which routinely require attention and the utilization of specific skills of students in the lessons.

5. Activities to evaluate the work of the group. If a group is not to engage in aimless, time-wasting efforts, evaluation activities must be provided for. In a classroom examples of evaluation activities are the class and teacher discussing a lesson they have completed, the teacher grading papers and using the information to plan future lessons, and any other activities which establish what activities will be undertaken by the class and what activities will be terminated or ignored. The sum total of evaluation activities should leave the student with a positive attitude toward the task and increase his understanding of how the task relates to a goal.

Application of Universal Categories of Activities to Analyzing a Classroom

Using the analysis of the groups of activities universal to the functioning of groups, a teacher may gather systematic data on her classroom operation. In gathering information on her classroom using the analysis of group activities, the teacher will be aided by heeding this question: How is my classroom group carrying out the universal activities of groups? Using a combination of specific episodes composed of single lessons or discrete parts of the day, a teacher can ascertain where in these episodes the activities appear to be inadequate, inappropriate, or absent in the work directed toward accomplishing the overall goals established for that episode.

The episode used to illustrate the use of the universal set of activities to catalogue the behaviour of a class focuses upon sixth grade class involved in a social studies unit. At the time when this episode was observed, the class was engaged in small group work, about six children in a group, for the purpose of further investigation of topics which were of interest to them. Reports for class presentation were to be prepared. The class had been engaged in small group work for two days. The episode represents a time span of approximately 90 minutes. The episode has been analyzed according to observed activities.

Activities to get the work of the group done. The work activities during the episode were mutually directed by pupils and teacher. When the class began, the teacher had the six recorders summarize yesterday's work of the small groups and then prepare a brief outline with the children's assistance on the broad general objectives that each group would be working toward that day. The outlining of work activities consumed 10 minutes of the class time. The outline was put on the chalkboard by the teacher. In this episode the work activities were comparatively simple: total class planning for ten minutes, small group organization and planning, individual work and the work period culminating with a total class evaluation and planning period. Through this series of activities the work of the class was given specific direction.

Identification Activities. Several types of identification activities were evidenced in the teacher's comments in the total class planning when he re-emphasized some points of conduct in the small group's operation. In his statements he prefaced his remarks by saying, "In our small groups we.....", "As we work together in our classroom....." Several children's helpful cooperative actions were praised as exemplifying a responsible attitude toward their classmates and the group.

Some children contributed to the discussion at this point as they cited how group members had assisted them. One girl said, "Jane came over to my house and gave me a very good book for my report." Another boy expressed his appreciation of Robert's assistance in showing him how to grid off a map in order to reproduce it. The reader will note that the teacher and children's remarks reflected some of the norm of a group, primarily, mutual respect, courtesy, and helpfulness, cooperation.

Activities to Provide for Individual Participation. Provision was made for individual participation activities in the total class session which came both at the beginning and end of the episodes, and in the small

group work. During the total class session individual participation was encouraged by the directed questions of the teacher. "What should group two do as their next step?" "Is any one in the group experiencing difficulty with their part of the group report?" "What are some of the phases of the group operation we need to pay particular attention to as we work today?" "Does anyone wish to ask anyone else who is in another group for assistance?" Through use of these questions the teacher was allowing individual participation. Of special significance is the last question which illustrates making provision for individual participation activities in utilizing special skills of individuals.

Small group work of course, is an excellent way of tailoring assignments to abilities and maximizing individual participation. During the small group work the teacher moved from group to group to assist individuals. However, the individual participation activities were part of a total effort and the teacher was observed discussing with individuals how their individual efforts contributed to the total group effort.

Activities to Perpetuate the Group. By beginning the class with a summary of yesterday's activities as reported by the records, building the work activities for the present class period and then finishing the work period with each recorder making a short report on the small group's plans for tomorrow, the teacher was systematically building perpetuation activities.

Moreover, in these reports the teacher received information on materials which groups needed to maintain their work activities. All perpetuation activities were not initiated by the teacher. Perpetuation activities were also observed among the small groups; one boy was seen showing one of his fellow group members how to use the *World Almanac*. Numerous examples of perpetuation activities of this nature could be cited.

Activities to Evaluate the Work of the Group. Evaluation activities were involved most directly in the total class session which began and ended the episode. When the recorders reported, students were invited to evaluate their progress for the day, and comment on their group process, both of which are important to evaluate. The teacher reported that he frequently passed out slips which contained questions on the group's performance and had them filled out at the end of a work session. Typical evaluation comments were: "My project is so large that I'm not going to be able to finish on time." "We have two sources which disagree, how do we decide which is right?" "Would a circle or bar graph show this information better?" "I believe our group is spending too much time talking at the beginning of a work period." To the observer evaluation activities appeared to be the least systematically organized and goal-oriented of the universal activities. The above comments to some extent reflect the far-ranging, unfocused aspect of the evaluation activities. Due to the hurried completion of the ninety-minute work period, the evaluation activities were limited.

From this one episode, a teacher could make some tentative hypothesis concerning his group's functioning. Undoubtedly the reader can even from this fragmentary report derive some hypotheses which would lend themselves to investigation: for example, if I improve the focus of my evaluation activities, the children will have a more productive work period. Other similar hypotheses can be derived by the teacher which will give direction to efforts to improve classroom functioning and enhance learning.

This article has sketched a framework for teachers to use in analyzing the dynamics of their classroom. A universal set of activities have been described which manifest themselves in an organized group's functioning. The task of a teacher is coordinating and developing these activities within his classroom in such a manner that they enhance the learning process. The brief framework which has been described and briefly illustrated is a tool by which teachers may observe, gather data systematically, hypothesize, and test their efforts to improve the classroom potential for learning by improving the functioning of the group, as they carry out the universal activities which characterize groups.

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OUR AGENT

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Secondary Education in U.S.A.

Shamsuddin

Secondary School education in the United States of America consists of six years of schooling by the students. It includes training of the Junior as well as Senior High School. Before entering the High School one has to complete six years of Elementary school education. Most of the youths of America are compulsorily trained up to the High School or the Secondary grade. The state of Massachusetts took the lead and started public high schools. Later "Public High School Law" came in force and a number of schools were started throughout the state. These schools were opened by the people for the benefit of the people, and they served as a great stimulus for the speedy increase in the enrolment of the schools. In fact, the demand continued till a number of privately managed high schools came into existence. The position still remains unchanged, in so far as demands on secondary education are concerned, and the Government is faced with a problem to be solved without much delay.

In the United States, education is managed and controlled by states with occasional assistance from the Federal Government where and whenever necessary. Besides, there are educational institutions solely managed by private bodies. Thus secondary education is mainly a local affair controlled by local authorities. Out of every dollar spent on education, $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents is paid by the Federal Government, 58 cents by the state Government, and the rest is paid by the local school district from the local taxes collected from each individual. This has given rise to some of the special features of secondary education in the U. S. A. First of all, people there realize their sense of duty and responsibility with regard to the education of their children. Every parent happily and willingly contributes money in the form of taxes for education. Then he also remains alert and careful to watch whether his

child is getting proper education or not. He has full right to choose a particular line of training for his child.

The system of local control has resulted in one more important characteristic of secondary education, i. e., it is framed according to the needs of the local conditions and situations. In fact, every secondary school has its own curricula, system of organization and administration as per needs of the students of that particular school. Changing needs of the society find their due place in the flexible pattern of the system of secondary education. Again, the tuition being free for all, there is no distinction of class and wealth. Every child in the U. S. A. has a right to get education up to the elementary and secondary stages. Compulsory attendance for all children under a specified age limit is required in response to the laws framed by the states.

Another important characteristic of secondary education in U. S. A. is that a large majority of students enter secondary schools and complete their education after getting diplomas. Thus the aim of secondary education is to provide sound general training to the future citizens of America. It does not specialize students for particular vocations or prepare them for college education, though, of course, many of the students go for specialized study or university education after completing their secondary education. The purpose is just to lay a good foundation for future preparation of life.

In the U. S. A. there are few specialized High Schools. A typical High School is open for all boys and girls of a particular age and from all social and economic backgrounds. To meet the variety of needs of a large majority of pupils, as many as three hundred courses have been instituted in American secondary schools. They

include academic, general, commercial, industrial, household arts, crafts and so on. Besides basic courses in language, mathematics, social science and physical training, which every one has to offer, there is a wide range of subjects which the students select after proper guidance by school teachers and parents from the point of view of their future career. It is interesting to note that in some places these courses include problems of the government, automobile motors, cooking, public speaking, craft and manual skills. Thus thousands of students passing from the High Schools either prepare themselves for further studies at the college level or embark upon any one of the thousands of careers open for them in the United States of America.

The daily routine of the secondary school is divided into seven periods of fifty minutes each. Every subject is taught by specialized teachers, and students are required to move from room to room in different periods. There is one period for extra-curricular activities. During evening hours, some of the students, who are specially good at particular games, are given practice on school grounds, while some others, after the close of school hours, run down to do part-time jobs for meeting their expenses of education. Among the extra-curricular works, the activities of the "Student-Council", a body of students elected by themselves for carrying out student activities, deserve special attention. The representatives to the student council are generally elected twice a year from their classes. The number depends on the strength of students of the school. These elected persons in their turn elect their office-bearers. This council enjoys much authority in so far as the discipline and other important affairs of the student body are concerned. The council at times raises funds and distributes them among students. It also assists and helps the school authorities in the execution of their plans and projects carried out both in the school as well as in the society outside. Besides, the organization, administration and control of the student

council offer valuable experience and real training to the students in the democratic working of government.

The student council also brings out annually the year-book of the school by which real literary experience is provided to the students. This book, besides articles and essays, includes a report on the outstanding events of the year, photographs of the graduating class, school times, class sessions and reports of work done in community projects. Besides this annual number, the school magazine is published at short intervals. It contains news articles about the school and its day to day important events in the fields of sports, social service and other achievements. Apart from these, the extra-curricular activities of the school also include the band and the orchestra, the debating club, stamp and coin collection clubs etc. All these are run by students themselves. The teachers come only where their help and advice are called for by the students.

Most of the High School buildings of U. S. A. are well built and well equipped. The school building includes a dining room, a library hall, a gymnasium, an auditorium, in addition to a number of class and subject rooms. Some of the bigger schools have their indoor swimming pools and playing fields. In modern times, a number of audio-visual aids are utilized in schools to make education more effective and useful. An expert teacher through Television can benefit a large number of students at a time.

To estimate the value of secondary education in U. S. A., the proper way is to examine its ultimate goal. In the words of American teachers, "An educated person is an integrated personality, with skills and knowledge in readiness for intelligent action with an understanding of his own powers as related to the needs of the times and with good habits of health and character". With this goal in view, the secondary schools of U. S. A. are successful in developing the individual's talents and preparing him for modern life.

Public Education and the New Society

Y. Afanasenko, Minister of Public Education, Russian Federation.

The Soviet school embarked upon its new term of studies on September 1. In what way does it differ from last year's?

First of all, in that all the Soviet republics are to introduce universal compulsory eight-year education, instead of the former seven.

In the Russian Federation alone, more than 10,000 seven-year schools have been turned into eight-year schools.

Universal eight-year education is an important milestone on the way to communism. The transition to communism implies the education and training of highly cultured and intelligent people capable both of physical and mental work, of active participation in diverse fields of social, governmental, scientific and artistic activities. Such is the task that the new Programme of the CPSU is setting before the school.

After introducing universal compulsory eight-year education, within the next decade, universal compulsory secondary and polytechnical eleven-year education, and eight-year education for young people engaged in the national economy who have not finished school for one or another reason, will be effected.

During the next decade, all citizens will be provided the opportunity to receive a complete secondary eleven-year education.

How will the Soviet school go about fulfilling these tasks?

One of the most important social problems of communism is the elimination of the existing differences between mental and physical labour. A harmoniously developed man of the new society will

easily be able to switch from one type of work to another. He will control complex machines and automatic lines, enrich the world's treasurehouse of culture and art with new works of art, take part in the management of society and make new inventions.

The people who satisfy these demands are already growing up in the Soviet Union. The school is called upon to promote the education of the younger generation in correspondence with the lofty ideals of communism. For it is the younger generation that is called upon to build the radiant and happiest society on earth.

Beside raising the level of teaching, the first and foremost problem confronting the school is the skilful combination of education with productive work.

More than half of the secondary schools of USSR give the boys and girls industrial professions. The number of these schools is growing from year to year. The training of diverse mass professions associated with the electrification of agriculture will be included in the curriculums of the secondary schools.

The great plan of expansion and qualitative growth of the system of education is guaranteed by the suitable conditions being created in the schools.

In the USSR, and the Russian Federation in particular, thousands of new standard-type school buildings and boarding schools are to be built, and equipped with gymnasiums, rooms for the school amateur art circles, and of course, up-to-date study workshops, and experimental farming plots. Many principals and teachers of schools are already making clever use of educational films in the schools. The new school

buildings will have their own film projects and T. V. sets, and radio facilities. The Soviet people know what a great rôle the school plays, in the life of society, and show it every concern. The collective farms, for instance, render extensive aid in the construction of schools. They have helped to equip schools accommodating hundreds of thousands of pupils.

Apart from teaching children and juveniles, the Soviet school is also drawing greater numbers of youths and girls working in production and adults. The number of students of the evening schools in the Russian Federation will reach 1,500,000 during the 1961-1962 term. That is, 225,000 more than last year.

As for the boarding schools and schools with prolonged days, their number will be also increase considerably.

Special attention is being shown to the boarding schools. The schools of the

future will be modelled upon them. In them the children are able to get a harmonious education; they are constantly within the bounds of the collective and under the observation of qualified teachers. Therefore, they have many more advantages over the schools of the ordinary type. The boarding school does not separate the children from their families, however. The pupils of boarding schools spend their Sundays at home. Their parents and relatives take part in the boarding-school activities.

Close contact between family and school is an important factor in the education of the new generation, facilitating the speedy formation of the man of the communist society.

The people entrust the teachers with their most precious property, their children, and consequently the future of the country. The Soviet teachers are anxious to justify this trust.



Will TV and 'Teaching Machines' Transform the Classroom?

Daniel Behrman.

Will the day ever come when your child will step into a booth, put on a pair of earphones, watch a television screen flashing a programme from outer space, answer questions asked by a computer—and step out of the booth with an added bit of education?

Probably not, because no one has yet invented a more effective "tool" for education than a good teacher. But research is now being conducted in many parts of the world to develop new educational devices aimed at making good teachers more effective and enabling them to teach a larger number of pupils.

The most familiar of all these techniques, of course, is television. The same

process that brings a news event or a variety show into millions of homes, can also be used to bring courses into classrooms. Educational television, either beamed over ordinary channels at certain times, or used in "closed-circuit" systems serving a single school or a school system, is very much a going concern today. It broadens the horizons of the classroom and the child's mind, aiding teachers by offering, for example, science experiments or geography lessons with a wealth of material that no single school could afford.

Teaching Satellites

But the horizon of television itself is limited by...the horizon. Programmes

must be relayed an expensive process which also limits its educational use. For the present an answer has been found to the problem in the United States where educational TV is beamed over an area of three states from a high-flying converted airliner. For the future, the answer, which has already been termed technically feasible, may lie in a communication satellite relaying programmes to the entire world from outer space.

In the case of the satellite, technical problems are not the only ones awaiting a solution. For example, who would control the use of such a satellite? Who would decide what programmes it would re-transmit? And who would allocate channels to it? At this stage, one answer seems evident; some form of international co-operation would have to be devised in which national interests could be reconciled.

The impact of television on education can easily be imagined by anyone who has ever watched TV—and that includes just about everyone to-day in a goodly number of countries. But less is known about another new technique which is arousing interest among educators.

This is the "teaching machine", to use an incorrect name which everyone uses because it is more vivid than such terms as "self-instruction" or "self-tutoring" devices. Basically, the teaching machine is a new approach to the process of learning. It consists of a device which imparts information to a pupil, obliges him to answer questions as he learns and permits him to continue learning only after he has answered the questions correctly, controlling his progress step by step.

In one of its simple forms, it can be a page with information and questions on one side and the answers, under a card-board shield, on the other. When the pupil answers a question, he moves the shield to check his answer and then goes on to the next question.

But what prevents him from peeking? Nothing...and that is why more sophisticated versions of the teaching machine have been developed. These devices can be worked by handles or levers, and they do not allow the student to go ahead until he has found the right reply. Some machines even provide an explanation if he chooses the wrong answer.

At a higher level there are even electronic machines which "remember" at the end of a lesson which questions were answered incorrectly and drill the pupil in them.

Not A Universal Panacea

Proponents of the "teaching machine" are the first to warn against the temptation of considering it as a panacea for the chronic shortage of teachers. They claim, however, that it can relieve the teacher of many time-consuming tasks such as question-and-answer drills or correcting examination papers. Another advantage of the machine is that it enables each pupil to learn at his own pace without bright children being forced to wait for the laggards.

In the United States, teaching machines are used in varying extents by a dozen universities as well as in secondary and elementary schools on an experimental basis. They are "teaching" such subjects as algebra, trigonometry, French, arithmetic or spelling.

Teaching machines, television, radio and films, all have one aspect in common: they set out to enable a single teacher (who may become a telecaster or a writer of "programmes" for machines) to reach a larger number of pupils. The goal, of course, is to find a way out of the present worldwide educational dilemma: to reach a mushrooming school population with a relatively fixed number of teachers and buildings. School buildings on a mass scale are expensive; so are teachers and they are "produced" far less quickly.

There are risks involved, of course. Despite the warnings of educational researchers, technological devices often seem very tempting in their possibilities. In fact, they are too tempting; many people are eager to use these shortcuts without knowing where they lead.

French Resolution

To take stock of these problems, Unesco is calling a meeting of international experts next March to study the development and use of new methods and techniques of education. This meeting stems from a resolution sponsored by France and adopted by the Unesco General Conference last year which recognized the need for a world approach to the new frontiers of education

and called for international action to achieve the objective of education for all.

To many a thoughtful person, there is something almost horrifying in this prospective attempt to reach children's minds by teaching machines or courses televised from outer space. And yet the possibilities offered by science cannot be allowed to go wasted.

A world in which nearly half the population is illiterate and in which hundreds of millions of children are unable to go to school is much more horrifying, and it is our own world, not a prospective one.

(UNESCO)

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WORLD TEACHERS ON EDUCATION

Edited by

T. S. Avinashilingam & K. Swaminathan

The Souvenir, prepared and published to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, presents the thoughts on Education expressed by some of the Great Teachers of the World. Besides the utterances of the Masters, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, passages from great books like the Upanishads, the Gita and Tirukkural have been included. It will be too much to claim that this compilation is either exhaustive or is the best selection that could be made. All we dare to hope is that this effort will be found useful and inspiring to those interested in Education.

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The Teacher in the Making

N. S. Padmanabhan, B.A., B.T., Ammapet (Tanjore District).

To say that a teacher is, like an artist or a poet, born and seldom made, can only be a half-truth, inasmuch as we require thousands of them in our bid to educate, instruct or at least make literate the teeming millions of our country. Living in an age marked by vast strides in science and technology, power and politics, and a variety of arts that have the commonest appeal, we cannot wait for teachers to be born. There must necessarily be the machinery and environment to produce the best type of 'made' teachers, who can well-nigh rise to occasions and exert their beneficial influence upon young minds put under their care and thereby shape them into fit citizens of tomorrow's social order.

Viewed in this perspective, can we take it for granted that the various teachers' training institutions get candidates of noble outlook and high ideals? Do these service centres contain in themselves the proper stimuli for the maintenance and improvement of professional standards? Do those who leave their portals have that 'spark' in them to sustain themselves against the daily work and drudgery, despite unenviable service conditions? These are of course questions that demand our concentrated attention.

There is no doubt that, by and large, the ills that confront us mainly centre round the mental make-up of the majority who enter this profession. It is nowadays an open secret that, right from the lowest cadre to the highest one, every one looks with disfavour, if not with contempt, on the calling that is deemed as 'the noblest'. The status of the preceptor who had once been acclaimed as one among the 'devas'—Acharya devo bhava runs the sacred text—has now dwindled into discredit. The cream of the graduates and matriculates go to fill the jobs of desk work which are at once better

salariated and better esteemed. Teaching was rated among the least in the pantheon of professions under British rule. Even those driven by destiny make a Hobson's choice and are ever on the look-out for better avenues. This could only be stemmed by affording emoluments on a reasonably high level and offering such service conditions and security as are obtainable by the other Government employees. The teachers' associations should take upon themselves the onerous task of impressing the powers that be the potential danger involved in further dallying and disowning tactics. There is no doubt that material advancement will, to a great extent, stem the rot that has already set in or is about to set in.

Quite in keeping with the increased emphasis on a better deal for teachers, the training that a raw matriculate or a graduate receives needs attention. If need be, the whole programme must be thoroughly analysed and reoriented. The duration of the training course claims our foremost attention. While it may be admitted that a matriculate could have a two-year course with advantage, the one pertaining to the graduate is open to question. A former Chief Minister of Madras, at a teachers' college forum, once wondered how a teacher who is to handle more subtle objects than an engineer or a doctor, could be produced in a year or less, when the latter needs four to five years of training. Apart from the joking, is there not something of a constructive suggestion in it?

Turning to the curriculum of studies in a training institution, it is desirable that at least as far as the languages are concerned there should be a prescribed text book of a comparatively higher standard than the required general qualification. This will help to place the trainee in a firmer position as regards command of the

language. This suggestion, I venture to make not for casting aspersions on any present incumbent of our profession, but in view of the teacher's own wellbeing and status. The basic equipment he needs is the mastery of the subject he deals in. In the post-secondary school training, the malady is more pronounced, and hence the need for immediate attention.

The teacher, it is said, is an eternal student. Unless he is so and has this humble approach to anything that he comes across, he cannot be the 'Acharya' par excellence. The osmosis that takes place when a teacher and the taught are engaged in their daily routine is likely to take away the profundity of the former's scholarship in due course. The right use of a good teachers' library need not be over-emphasised in this connection.

But, at the same time, a communion among teachers of the same grade and at times of different ones, such as is contemplated by the seminars and teacher-refresher courses is of vital importance and the managements should voluntarily arrange them. The extension services of the Education Department of the Universities do plan and hold such assemblies, but it is a pity they cannot throw the mantle over the entire personnel. The Government would do well to think of a plan by which they could make a teacher participate in a refresher course once every 10 years through subsidy, grant of permission on duty and other such technical concessions.

These are days, when a teacher, besides his lessons on psychology and methods of instruction, has to learn about sociology and sex. In a country where a considerable number of the high schools and colleges are non-residential, where schooling is offered without reference to either sex, and

where modern teaching aids are conspicuous by their absence, problems governing the practice of education are varied and many, apart from being complicated. The inclusion of subjects like Health Education and Citizenship in the training course in recent times, has indicated the way for their solution, and the degree of benefit we derive from out of it directly corresponds to the increase in the area of their application.

Of course, the refashioning of the Public and Grammar Schools of England would pave the way for a clearcut objective to be put before the teacher. It is regrettable, if not tragic, that the teachers and the taught are at present engaged almost in aimless pursuits, much to the detriment of the nation's talents and wealth. At least, till such a time as that essential and eventual metamorphosis happens, those who are at the helm in the field of education would do well to formulate a scheme of training that is wholesome and effective. The basic pattern of the training course now conferred on the matriculates has yielded less than satisfactory results, and has in the main repulsed the bright and enthusiastic young minds. The salient features of the Basic scheme could be incorporated with suitable adjustments in the type of course now offered, but it will indeed be open to question if it can be taken in toto as the panacea.

In all, it is the making of the teacher that has to be given prominence, if we mean creating an energetic, enthusiastic band of teachers feeling themselves secure, fit and proud to discharge their duties. Upon which rests the edifice of the strong and noble nation of our dreams, they being the pride of yesterday, the pleasure of to-day and the privilege of tomorrow.

National Integration

Principal J. Labiri M.A., B.T., Dip. in. Ed (London) T. C. (Cantab) W.B.S.E.S. (Retired) Chirimiri.

Recent events in India have shown that there are many fissiparous tendencies at work in our national life which must be checked, diverted to socially useful channels or sublimated in the interest of national integration. These disruptive forces have always worked to the detriment of our national unity in the past, though they were less evident before independence, because they had not broken out into explosive acts of violence in the form of language riots, as they are doing now.

Linguism or an aggressive form of language-awareness or what may be called "linguistic nationalism" has raised its ugly head in certain States, which are about to undertake legislation with a view to declaring the regional language, spoken of by the majority, as the medium of administration, without giving due consideration to minority claims. This form of language awareness which India is experiencing today, is a by-product of our struggle for freedom. The leaders of the freedom movement demanded the reorganisation of provinces, created by the British for administrative convenience only, on the basis of linguistic homogeneity. This was about the time President Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of self-determination for reorganisation of States in Europe after the first World War gave birth to new national and linguistic States (such as Finland, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia etc.) out of the ashes of poly-national States. The idea was that, if States in India could be thus regrouped, people speaking one language could get the opportunity of perfecting its own system of law, civilisation and culture, so as to be able to contribute its best to enrich the total stock of Indian cultural heritage. Imbued with this idea of nationalism, the people of Bengal stoutly resisted the partition of Bengal (a single linguistic area) during Lord Curzon's regime.

After independence, Andhra was the first State to be reorganised on a language basis after the death of Shri Ramulu who faced death on this issue to force the hand of the government. The formation of 14 newly formed states and 6 centrally administered ones on 1st November, 1956, on the basis of, the recommendation of S. R. Commission was hailed as an event of great national importance, which the President described as the natural outcome of the process of integration and consolidation. But, in actual effect, this step only "tended to blur, if not obliterate, the feeling of national unity by the emphasis it placed on local culture, language and history". It strengthened the barriers between the States. For the first time in the history of India it sought to convert cultural frontiers into political frontiers. The regional Universities also made the regional languages the media of higher education in place of English, thereby developing regional exclusiveness and interstate unintelligibility. It also meant less social and spatial mobility among all sections of society throughout the States, and tended to exalt the regional idea at the expense of national unity.

Thus rank and unabashed separatism, based on regional languages, complicated by the economic issue of domination of the State language group over minor ones and consequential social disparities between them, now began to express itself in a violent form of group prejudice and conflicts in Assam riots, resistance to Hindi in Southern States, West Bengal, Assam and Orissa, irrational prejudices against Urdu (a purely Indian language with a highly developed literature) in U.P. Bihar etc., and prejudice against Bengali in Bihar, Orissa, etc. All these outbursts of irrational prejudice go to prove that we have yet to learn the values of rationality, tolerance, fair play etc. essential to maintain a cohesive society.

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It is a fact that India has never been a united nation in the long course of her chequered history, in spite of whatever some of the finest minds of her people may maintain that, behind the diversities of race, language, classes, castes, religions, different degrees of cultural development, customs, food habits and different institutions in different parts of the country, there has always been a sense of fundamental unity in diversity which has given us a general feeling of Indian-ness transcending all these apparent differences and distinctions. Marshal Stalin has pointed out that of the five essential requirements that constitute a "nation" viz., territorial integrity, economic life, historical and cultural continuity, language and psychological make up, if any one is absent, it will prevent the growth of a nation. If this view be accepted, one has to admit our multinational status, because of the presence of many languages.

Yet the fact of the fundamental unity of India is more than apparent in the long cultural background and the common outlook on life arising out of a mixture of popular philosophy, tradition, history, myth and legend etc. Thus, although on the surface there may be a good deal of difference among the different nationalities in India, there is no doubt that they will react similarly to similar problems, because they have inherited a cultural heritage. The essence of Indian culture and civilisation is this principle of "unity in diversity" which may be called in modern political phraseology as the "Principle of Federalism", giving the greatest latitude for development as between classes, communities and regions.

In ancient and mediaeval India this principle worked well in practice because in those days cultural bonds had far more importance than now. But in the present condition of things the risks of fragmentation are greater in a linguistic State, unless a determined attempt is made to indoctrinate the Indian people with the basic and fundamental unities of the country and strengthen them on an intellectual level

through the nation's schools, colleges and universities. A sense of fundamental unity on the cultural plane, based on emotion alone, cannot any longer stand the test of time in the present age, unless our attempt at emotional integration is founded on the solid bedrock of intellectual apprehension of our cultural heritage by the nation's youth.

We have already seen how linguistic nationalism as a great cohesive factor, does unite, elevate, develop, seek to preserve and promote all that is best in a nation. We have also seen how under such conditions of perfect freedom of development each state may be in a position to contribute its quota to the common stock of our cultural heritage. But this is not the whole story, for while linguism attracts to itself like groups, speaking the same language, it repels groups that are unlike. It evokes a separatist tendency towards isolation. It sometimes reveals itself in a kind of parochial patriotism. It evinces a tendency to a kind of imperialistic domination over other language groups whose language is not recognised as the State language. It attaches an exaggerated importance to local culture, institution, history and language at the expense of national unity. Besides, this kind of nationalism on a language basis is no longer an adequate force in the modern world. Again, it has to be considered that if a State is organised on language basis, it may soon develop into a multi-lingual State, when another demand will come from minor language groups for further re-organisation according to the language formula, leading to an unending balkanisation of India.

In contemporary history, we see many multilingual nation states like Switzerland, Canada, the Soviet Republic, Yugoslavia, etc., each of which consists of many communities speaking different languages and profession different religions. But in spite of these diversities, these nations are proud of their national unity, because they have effected a complete psychological integration, i. e., a feeling of belong-

ing to one nation having a common cultural heritage though their universities do not pay any attention to the language or culture of the different language-groups in the country. This is in startling contrast to the position modern European languages occupy in different universities in Europe even though these universities do not belong to one nation-state.

Although in the political field the Government of India have taken steps to check disruptive tendencies, 'as by the framers of the Indian Constitution creating a strong centre in a federal structure, through including in it many features that go to make the constitution unitary in character and through introducing Hindi as a common language to be used as the medium of intercommunication, much remains to be done in the intellectual field through the educational system. The idea of a single State language for a multi-lingual country like India, has always smacked of a kind of imperialistic domination. The Moghuls tried Urdu for the same purpose, but it never became the language of the people. There should, therefore, be no insistence on one language only, i. e., Hindi, as the common language for all the States of India, especially in this transitional stage, when Hindi is not sufficiently developed, but English should continue as such. Likewise the linguistic States should not be dominated by a single language within their regional boundaries, because it is spoken by the majority, but, as far as conditions permit, languages of important minorities should co-exist with it.

Universities and Colleges, under them should play a pivotal role, acting as a kind of "catalytic agent for the syntheses of cultures on an intellectual basis", so as to evolve in the minds of our potential leaders a common consciousness of oneness. Universities can also help by forming associations which cut across the barriers of language, religion and community through such means as inter-University debates, youth festivals, competitive games, seminars, comparative study of the

languages and cultures of other regions; teacher and student exchanges, inter-university staff appointments, inter-state travel, etc. Every university must consider itself at its post-graduate and research level as a national rather than a regional institution. Different Universities must establish Departments of Modern Indian Languages as far as practicable, provide for research in the same so as to establish common origins and current identities and embark on translation schemes of the best text-books in their own regional languages besides encouraging three common scripts, one each for (1) the Indo-Aryan group (2) the Telugu and Kanhada group and (3) Malayalam and Tamil groups of languages. All these steps will promote entry into each university of selected groups of students from other regions and language groups in the country and also ensure teacher-exchanges. Schools both at the primary and secondary level can also play their part effecting the emotional unification of India.

In the Junior Basic Stage (6 to 11) the following items should be stressed in the curriculum:

- (a) Folk-tales collected from all regions of India embodying different ways of life and thought in India;
- (b) Biographies of heroes from each region, founders of religions and religious leaders with interesting episodes in their life, together with simple accounts of all religions (common fundamental principles);
- (c) Simple human geography of each region;
- (d) Simple accounts of the heritage of each region in arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, dance and drama;
- (e) Simple accounts of the social life of the people of each region and the progress achieved since independence;

- (f) A simple account of the cultural heritage of India in each walk of life, viz., flora, fauna, shrines, pilgrimages, historical manuments, beauty spots, industries, fine arts. etc.

In the secondary stage also, more detailed accounts of the above may be given besides the following.

- (1) Accounts of scientific and industrial developments in India, past and present, in the context of world developments and containing our own contributions in this behalf;
- (2) A book on Indian culture containing a study of regional differences, divisions and diversities of Indian life (e.g. of classes, religion, castes, races, habits, ways of life, customs, dress, etc.) and also similar varieties (e.g., in outlook, cultural background, popular philosophy, tradition, myth, legend, history, values of life, etc.) may be prescribed for study. A reorientation of the teaching of Indian history with a view to fostering the ideas of national unity may be made.

- (4) Best books in different languages of India should be translated into the regional languages for rapid reading.
- (5) A social history of the Indian people may be introduced. Denominational institutions should have no place in a secular democracy. All college, school and University hostels should be run on an entirely non-community, non-caste and non-communal basis for obvious reasons. If students belonging to different groups, regions, communities and castes reside together and are thrown into social relationship with one another, many of the prejudices, now preventing free communication between them, can be overcome.
- (6) Lastly, during the transition period, the medium of higher education at the University stage should be English, which has played a significant role so long, but those regional languages, which are sufficiently developed and fit to be used as such, may also be used as media when conditions permit, side by side with English.

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Tiruppavai—An English Rendering

M. R. Sampatkumaran, M.A., and M.A. Srinivasan, B.A., B.L.

Tiruppavai is a Tamil poem of thirty stanzas by the poetess and saint, Andal or Kothai, attributed to the 8th century. It belongs to a class of poems called 'Pavai' poems, which celebrate a vow observed by young unmarried girls in the month of Margasirsha (December-January) or Paushya (January-February). The context of the *Tiruppavai* is that the maidens of Gokula observe the 'Pavai' vow to get timely rains for their crops and Sri Krishna as husband for themselves. It must be presumed that Sri Krishna, who has to help them in their vow, is then staying in Gokula, after killing Kamsa and marrying Nappinnai.

1

(Girls who have woken up earlier invite others to join them.)

In this month of "Margazhi" (Margasirsha) on this auspicious full moon day, dear girls, maidens bedecked with pretty jewels, fortune's darlings of fertile Ayarpadi, those of you who desire to bathe, please come along and participate in this festival so that the world may praise us. He who is the son of Nandagopa possessing a sharp spear and doing stern deeds, He who is the lion's cub of Yasoda of beautiful eyes, He who is dark of body and red of eyes, with face shining like the rays of the sun and the moon, He is Narayana, and on us who trust Him, He will bestow the drum for our festival.

2

(Some requisites of the vow are described).

Hearken, you happy denizens of the blessed earth, to the rites we have to perform to carry out our vow! We shall sing about the feet of the Lord who sleeps gently in the milky ocean; and bathe in the early morn. Alms we shall give to the utmost; ghee and milk we shall not taste; yes we shall not paint black with collyrium nor shall speak evil, nor follow the path

shunned by elders; thus we shall follow with joy the path of salvation.

3

(The vow will not merely reward the maidens but bring prosperity to the land).

If we sing the glory of the Supreme Being who towered beyond all bounds and measured the world with His mighty feet, and bathe, saying that it is for our vow, then the entire country will be rid of all ills and the rains will shower thrice a month. Fish will leap amidst tall and rich, red paddy, and in the buds of water lilies, the spotted bees will slumber. The big generous cows, milked tirelessly by pressure on their udders, will flood the pots with milk. Thus, unceasing wealth shall fill the land.

4

(The god of rain is invoked).

Oh! god of rain majestic as the ocean, stint not anything from us. Diving into the sea, taking its waters and rising into the sky uproariously, you darken your body like that of the Primeval Lord. May you shower your rains at once to bless the world. You will then resemble the Lord of powerful arms, who has a lotus for his navel. You will flash (in lightning) like His conch, and shoot down drops of water like the shower of arrows from His unfailing bow.

Let us also feel happy and take the ritual bath of Margazhi.

5

(Past sins will not hinder the observance of the vow.)

If we approach, in a state of purity, the wondrous Prince of North Madhura, worship Him by offering sacred flowers, sing aloud (His glories) and meditate (on Him) in mind, then all past sins and those that may be committed in future will perish as

ashes in fire. For He is the Lord of the ferry on the great and holy Yamuna, the jewel-light of the cowherds and the gracious Lord who purified the womb of His mother and bore cheerfully on His stomach the impression of the ropes with which she bound Him as a child.

(Stanzas 6-15 are individual addresses to ten different maidens. In this verse, a novice in devotion to God is awakened).

6

Wake up, innocent child. Listen. Birds have begun to chatter. Have you not heard the loud sound of the white conch which summons for worship in the temple of the Lord of the Bird (Vishnu who rides on Garuda)? Sages and yogins are slowly rising up, meditating in their minds on the Seed of the Universe who sleeps on a serpent-bed in the sea, who kicked and destroyed the treacherous (demon in the shape of a) cart, and who sucked poison from the breasts of a she-demon. And (as they rise), the sound of "Hari" uttered by them gathers in strength. Let it enter your mind. Rejoice.

7

(The person here addressed is one, who, in the intoxicating love of Sri Krishna, has become insensible to everything else.)

You wicked sprite, have you not heard the shrill and intimate chatter of birds? Nor the noise of curds being stirred by the churn by cowherd girls with fragrant tresses and with their necklaces jingling? O! princess among women! Are you lying on the bed, even when Kesava, who is none other than the Lord Narayana, is being sung? Radiant one, open your doors.

8

(The maiden summoned here is so high in Sri Krishna's favour that others are content to gather before her.)

Maiden in ardent rapture, the eastern sky is becoming white. The buffaloes have spread out in the dawn, grazing dew-

sprinkled grass. We have stopped others from going and are standing here calling for you. Get up, please. If we sing to the accompaniment of the drum, and worship the God of Gods, who split the mouth of the horse-demon and killed the champion boxers (of Kamsa), He will consider our prayer and shower His grace on us.

9

(The maiden called here is indifferent about rising up, leaving it to Sri Krishna to meet her when He pleases.)

Uncle's daughter, you are sleeping on a cosy pillow in a mansion made of flawless gems, with lights burning all around and fragrance of incense in the air. Open the jewelled doors. Will you not please wake her, dear aunt? Is your daughter indeed dumb or deaf or exhausted by fatigue, spell-bound, or enchanted into deep sleep by potent charms? Let us sing the various names of the Lord as the Wondrous One, the Lord of Lakshmi and the Lord of the Heaven of Vaikunta (to wake her up).

10

(Here is described a maiden of such perfect devotion that Sri Krishna Himself will rush to her.)

Languid lass! Precious jewel! Lady entering the paradise you have been striving for with vows and austerities! May not those who do not care to open the doors, at least reply? Ha! Kumbhakarna, who fell into the jaws of death once upon a time, through our Lord Narayana whose head is adorned by fragrant *tulasi* leaves—has Kumbhakarna given you his great slumber after acknowledging defeat at your hands? Come, trim and alert, and open the doors.

11

(One who is noble in birth, beauty and virtue is here awakened).

Lucky darling! You are the golden creeper of the faultless race of cowherds, who milk young earling cows and who fight victoriously against their enemies. Wild peacock of the woods, your hips are

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like the serpent's hood. Wake up, please. Your friends and relatives have all entered your courtyard and are singing the name of the Lord who is dark like a cloud. Yet you neither stir nor speak. Wherefore do you sleep? For what purpose?

12

(A maiden whose brother is never separated from Sri Krishna is the subject of this stanza).

Little sister of the righteous lord whose mansion is charged to mire and mud by the milk dripping out from the udders of young buffaloes, which low and yearn after their young calves! We are all leaning against your threshold, with the dew falling on our heads. And we are all singing about the Dear One, sweet to our hearts, who destroyed, out of His anger, the King of Lanka in the south. Yet you won't even utter a word. Get up at least now. What is this supersleep? Everyone in every house around knows you are still sleeping.

13

(A girl with eyes so lovely that she is confident that they will drag Sri Krishna to her side is requested to wake up.)

Lovely statue! Girl with eyes like lotus flowers with bees! The girls have all reached the place of the vow, singing the glories of the Lord who split the beak of the demon-bird and plucked off the life of the wicked Ravana. Venus has arisen. Jupiter has set. Birds have begun to twitter. Must you lie in bed instead of diving in the ice-cold waters on this happy day? Give up your pretence and join us with all your heart.

14

(One who has overslept, breaking her promise to awaken others, is roused in this stanza).

Perfected lady, wake up. In the pond in your back garden, the morning flowers are blooming and night lilies are drooping. The ascetics with white teeth and orange robes are proceeding to their temples to sound the conchs for the morning worship. You were talking, shameless one, about waking us up (but never did so). You are mighty indeed in talk. Come forth and sing with us about the Lotus-eyed One, whose powerful arms bear the conch and the discus.

(To be continued).

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EDITORIAL

Nationalisation of Text books

The bee of nationalisation is still buzzing in the bonnets of our rulers, from the highest downwards. Recently, Mr. Nehru himself declared his support for it. In our State, the Minister for Education reiterated his faith therein. Amidst all this high-powered support for an essentially anti-democratic measure, it is a relief to find the Estimates Body of our Legislature questioning the wisdom of the State preparing text-books on grounds that go to the roots of democracy.

Time and again, men of goodwill and friends of freedom have protested against all attempts to regiment the minds of citizens by the State. State text-books are a powerful instrument for such regimentation, and are a characteristic feature of totalitarian States. The arguments advanced in favour of nationalisation cannot get away from this basic fact.

Such arguments include the plea that publishers of text-books are repacious exploiters and that the people should be saved from their clutches. Of course, text-books are published for profit, and not for philanthropy. The only question is whether the profits earned are unreasonable. In India the prices of text-books are equal to or less than the maxima fixed for them by text-book committees; obviously there can be no exploitation, unless the Government through the committees countenance it.

It is also urged that the standards of text-books both in matter and form are low. Assuming for argument's sake that this is so, does it necessarily follow that Government text-books would be automatically higher in quality. With no

competition to face and no external check or restraint, it is unreasonable to hope for high standards from nationalised text-books.

The real argument in favour of nationalisation probably is that it is an easy method of indirect taxation, promising ever higher returns from the continuous expansion of education. This consideration may make it attractive to our planners; but the threat of regimentation is so serious to the basic functioning of democracy that the Government should be urged to abandon it. As our legislators have suggested, it is always open to the Government to prepare text-books of high quality and compete with private enterprise.

Welcome Gifts

Mr. Subramaniam's last (interim) budget provides a few amenities and concessions to teachers, which should be gratefully acknowledged, though their main grievance still remains to be dealt with. The pension scheme is now extended to teachers in aided colleges. Families of teachers who die in harness prematurely are to be given some benefit under the pension rules. Such a scheme has been operating in Ceylon for many years, and our teachers' organisations should ask for relief on that scale. Provision has also been made for interest-free loans to sons of teachers undergoing expensive technical training. While this is welcome as far as it goes, why should not the children of teachers be entitled to free education, whatever courses they may study? The State Government has also agreed to participate in a Union scheme to establish a trust fund to make grants to teachers in special distress. Thanks for the gifts, though the teachers' problem is still a long way to being solved.

BOOK REVIEW

ESSENTIALS OF LIGHT by F. G. H. Dibdin, Cleaverhume Press Ltd., London W. 8; pp. 240. 15 sh.

This volume is from the series, 'Essentials of Physics' which has books on Heat, Electricity and Magnetism, Sound and Properties of Matter. It is intended primarily for students preparing for advanced level Physics for the General Education Certificate (GEC) and similar examinations in England. The level of attainment expected is higher than for the Pre-University class and less than for the B. Sc. in India. It may approximate to our Pre-Professional standard. The book under review will be very useful for our B. Sc. students too.

The plan of the book assumes very little previous knowledge of the subject and of mathematics beyond elementary algebra, trigonometry and geometry, and develops all its points from first principles. Occasionally, phenomena and laws which are simple to state but difficult to prove are merely stated. (For example, Malus's theorem, Planck's constant). Some phenomena like the Compton and Raman effects are not even mentioned, probably because they are not required by the syllabi prescribed for the examinations held in view.

The emphasis is throughout on practical applications, including many recent ones. This makes the treatment interesting and concrete. Another valuable feature is the many worked examples. At the end of every chapter, there are questions, many of them involving calculations. Largely they are taken from the question papers of several public examination bodies in England. The diagrams and pictures are clear and helpful.

Teachers of Physics in our colleges, and pre-professional and B. Sc. students will find this book helpful.

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