

RYAN / COOPER

READINGS IN EDUCATION

NINTH EDITION

Kaleidoscope Readings in Education

Ninth Edition

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Preface

When we were children, one of our favorite toys was the kaleidoscope, the cylindrical instrument containing loose bits of colored glass between two flat plates and two mirrors so placed that shaking or rotating the cylinder causes the bits of glass to be reflected in an endless variety of patterns. We chose *Kaleidoscope* as the name of this book because it seems that education can be viewed from multiple perspectives, each showing a different pattern or set of structures.

Audience and Purpose

This is the ninth edition of *Kaleidoscope: Readings in Education*. It is intended for use either as a supplemental book of readings to accompany any “Introduction to Education,” “Foundations of Education,” or “Issues in Education” textbook, or as a core textbook itself.

Today is a time of unprecedented educational debate and reform in the United States. It is our hope that this collection of seventy-five high-interest selections will help readers participate in these national discussions in a more informed way.

The book’s wide range of sources and writers—from the classic John Dewey and Carl Rogers to the contemporary TedSizer, Diane Ravitch, Linda Darling-Hammond, and James Comer—makes it highly flexible and responsive to a broad variety of course needs.

The material we have selected for *Kaleidoscope* is not technical and can be understood, we believe, by people without extensive professional backgrounds in education. The articles are relatively brief and come from classroom teachers, educational researchers, journalists, union leaders, and educational reformers. Some selections are summaries of research. Some are classic writings by noted educators. Some are descriptions of educational problems and proposed solutions. And, we hasten to add, we agree with some articles and do not agree with others. Our aim is to present a wide variety of philosophical and psychological positions to reflect the varied voices heard in education today.

Coverage

Kaleidoscope is divided into nine parts. Part One concentrates on teachers, with articles ranging from personal reports by teachers to an article about what constitutes great teaching. Part Two contains selections about students, dealing with topics from the changing nature of childhood in the United States to child abuse. Part Three looks at schools and describes some of their current problems as well as a number of recent recommendations for developing more effective schools. Part Four examines curriculum issues and deals with the classic question: What is most worth knowing? Part Five focuses on instruction and includes selections on cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, constructivist learning, and research on effective teaching. Part Six contains articles on the foundations of education that discuss the historical, philosophical, and psychological roots of contemporary education. Part Seven contains articles on contemporary educational reform efforts in the United States. Part Eight examines various aspects of how educational technology is affecting or is likely to affect teaching and learning. New to this edition, Part Nine focuses on various elements of how diversity is affecting education in the United States today. Selections in Part Nine address ethnic and linguistic diversity as well as gender issues and special education inclusion efforts.

Features of the Revision

Given that over 25 percent of the selections are new to this edition, *Kaleidoscope* covers current topics such as student multicultural education, standards-based education, professional development, teacher reflection, technology, emotional intelligence, brain research, inclusion, school reform, and curriculum reform.

New Diversity Section In previous editions, we have often included several articles on diversity. It is apparent to us, however, that the many forms of diversity in our society and schools warrant additional coverage and a separate section devoted to the topic. The selection of articles in the new Part Nine examine such topics as multiculturalism, inclusion, learning styles, and bilingual education.

Beginning Teachers' Web Site This brand-new web site accompanies *Kaleidoscope* and *Those Who Can, Teach*, ninth edition, and will offer several articles from

Kaleidoscope—annotated and enhanced with links and critical thinking questions. Also included on this site are interactive activities and self-tests to supplement learning.

Special Features of the Book

To facilitate understanding of the selections in this book, the ninth edition of *Kaleidoscope* includes a number of especially helpful features.

- Each of the nine major sections is introduced by a section-opening overview to help put the readings into a broader context.

- At the end of each reading are our Postnote and several Discussion Questions. The Postnote comments on the issues raised by the article, and the Discussion Questions prompt readers to do some additional thinking about the major points made in the reading.

- A glossary of key terms—especially useful to those students taking their first course in education or those using this book as a primary text—and a detailed subject index appear at the end of the book.

- The Article Review Form, found at the end of the book, will help you analyze and discuss the articles in the text.

- The Student Response Form, also at the end of the book, gives you the opportunity to comment on each of the readings and to suggest new readings or topics for the next edition. We sincerely hope that you will take the time to complete this form and mail it back to us. Your comments will be invaluable to future students and us as you help us select the best readings.

- The Correlating Table, arranged alphabetically by topic, relates each *Kaleidoscope* selection to specific chapters in both *Those Who Can, Teach*, ninth edition, by Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, and *Foundations of Education*, seventh edition, by Allan Ornstein and Daniel Levine. We hope this chart will serve as a handy cross-reference for users of these books. This chart is printed on the inside covers of the text for easy reference.

Acknowledgments

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In addition, we would like to offer a special note of thanks to the many users of this book who have been kind enough to share with us their impressions of it and their suggestions on how we might improve it in subsequent editions. We hope this tradition will continue as you complete and return the Student Response Form or send us your comments via the Houghton Mifflin web site (<http://www.college.hmco.com>).

Kevin Ryan
James M. Cooper

Kaleidoscope

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Part One

Teachers

Being a teacher today has special drawbacks. It is difficult to be a teacher in an age that mocks idealism. It is difficult to be a teacher without the traditional authority and respect that came with the title in the past. To be a teacher in the midst of a permissive time in childrearing, when many students are filled with antiauthoritarian attitudes, causes special strains. It is punishing to work at an occupation that is not keeping up economically. It is painful to be part of a profession that is continually being asked to solve deep social problems and to do the essential job of educating children and then regularly criticized for its failings. A good case can be made for discouragement, even for self-pity.

This negativism, or at least acknowledgment of the negative, obscures the fact that teaching is one of the great professions. These passing conditions ignore the greatness that resides in the teacher's public trust. Many adults struggle with the question: Am I engaged in significant work? Teachers always know that they are engaged in crucial, life-shaping work.



The Influence of Teachers

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
and Jane McCormack*

The ordered pattern of human energy that we call a social system can run into trouble in many different ways. It can, for instance, be broken up by the invasion of more numerous and desperate people, as happened to innumerable civilizations from the Sumerians to the Romans. Its economy can be made obsolete by the discovery of new trade routes, as happened to the Venetian Republic when the Atlantic became the main avenue for commerce; or by the development of a new technology, as when plastics undercut the production of leather, on which the affluence of Uruguay depended. Powerful nations have been destroyed by natural catastrophes, by changes in the ecology, or by epidemics that decimated the population and sapped its will to live.

In addition to such external dangers, every society faces an internal threat to its continuity. Appearances to the contrary, such seemingly powerful and enduring entities as “state,” “nation,” and “culture” are in reality quite vulnerable. If just one generation of young people were to grow up rejecting the language of their

parents, the values of their community, or the political commitments of their elders, the nation to which they belong would be changed in irreversible ways. A social system can survive only as long as people are willing to support it.

If there is such a thing as “America,” with its peculiar dreams, its unique political and economic patterns, its values and habits of lifestyle, it is because generation after generation of fathers and mothers have passed on to their sons and daughters some distinctive information that makes these offspring think and behave differently from youngsters growing up elsewhere. If this information were no longer transmitted successfully, “America” as we know it would no longer exist. Neither words carved in stone nor constitutions and laws written on paper can preserve a way of life, unless the consciousness of people supports their meaning.

At first glance, it might seem that such a “danger” is too far-fetched to worry about. After all, how likely is it that a majority of young Americans in a given generation will turn their backs permanently on the example of their elders? Moreover, a certain rebelliousness in adolescents is normal, even desirable. We expect teenagers to reject the ways their parents dress and talk, to despise the music their parents enjoy, and to ridicule the values their parents hold. But this is only a passing phase. By the time these youngsters move into young adulthood, they retain—in the guise of new lifestyle fashions—only the most superficial traces of their former rebelliousness. In all important respects, children end up repeating the pattern of their parents’ lives.

All of this is true. But there are also times when, instead of disappearing in the course of maturation, the customary rebelliousness of adolescence leads to permanent changes in the ways young people see the world. The outcome is often an irreversible transformation of the society. The young people of most “underdeveloped” nations are obvious examples; fascinated by the miracles of western technology, they are no longer interested in learning the traditions of their cultures—which, as a result, will eventually become extinct.

At the time this article was written, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago, and Jane McCormack was a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago. “The Influence of Teachers,” by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jane McCormack, *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1986, pp. 415–419. © February 1986 by Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Reprinted by permission of authors and publisher.

Many western sociologists and psychologists consider this a positive trend. The spread of “modernization” through education is, they believe, a welcome advance over the superstitious nonsense on which preliterate traditions were based. To a certain extent, they are right—for, without constant experimentation and change in ways of living, human society would become rigid and closed to the possibility of further evolution.

On the other hand, it is also clear that not all change leads to improvement. Sometimes a population gets used to an easy way of life and forgets the technological or moral skills that allowed it to survive in the past. If conditions then take a turn for the worse again, that population may no longer be able to cope with the challenge. Some scholars claim, for example, that the Appalachian settlers once had a vigorous and complex material culture. They were masters of many crafts and technologies that were state of the art in the 17th and 18th centuries. But by now the memory of those skills has decayed, and the way of life in Appalachian communities today is more primitive than it was a few centuries ago—not only in relation to the rest of the world, but in absolute terms as well. Why did this regression take place? We could list many reasons, but one factor was clearly essential: over time, young men and women no longer felt that it was worthwhile to learn what their parents had known.

Indeed, if we were to look at history from this point of view, we might discover that many of the great changes that have befallen the human race had as their source an erosion of belief, or will, or interest that undermined the younger generation’s inclination to follow in the footsteps of its elders. Sometimes this reluctance to follow the elders yields positive outcomes; liberating new ideas can arise out of a stagnating culture. But probably more often, when youths reject the messages passed on to them by their elders, important information that has proved its value in helping the society to survive is lost as well.

A timely example is the so-called “sexual revolution” of the last 30 years. During this period messages concerning the physical dangers of sexual promiscuity were quickly discredited. It is

true that the “wisdom” of the elders on this score was quite garbled and often hypocritical. Yet their moralistic warnings were based on thousands of years of experience with disease and psychic disintegration. They may not have had a scientific understanding of the situation, but they had a pretty clear idea of what eventually happens to individuals who indiscriminately satisfy their sexual needs.

Yet entire cohorts of young people dismissed the warnings as “repressive victorian morality.” With the hubris of a generation that believed itself to be emancipated from the weakness of the past, that felt in control of its destiny because it was privy to the magic of science, the sexually liberated stepped boldly into a new world of ultimate self-indulgence—only to discover there some of the ugly realities that had forced their ancestors to counsel self-discipline. It was not ignorance that made the Victorians praise sexual restraint after all, but knowledge of the dangers of venereal diseases and of the dislocations prompted by illegitimate births. As it turned out, our liberated contemporaries were the ignorant ones—ignorant of the painfully accumulated experiences of previous centuries.

It is bad enough when a culture fails to communicate to its youngster those facts (such as the need for sexual restraint) that bear on its chances for physical survival. But a more subtle and dangerous loss of information occurs when the elders cannot pass on to the young convincing goals that make living worthwhile. When this occurs, the younger generation is left in an emotional morass. Without meaningful goals, the behavior of young people can easily become self-destructive.

This lack of meaningful goals most likely accounts for the unprecedented surge of social pathology in the U.S. over the past 30 years. The worst explosion in teenage suicide (a 300% increase in barely a generation) has occurred among white, middle-class boys—the privileged heirs to the richest society the world has ever known. Vandalism, crime, drug use, and venereal diseases all show similar gains. Clearly, the material affluence of suburbia is not enough to

make young people happy. It is not even enough to make many of them want to go on living. What youngsters need, more than anything else, is purpose: meaningful goals toward which to channel their energies.

But how does one learn about meaningful goals? The simple answer is, “from other people.” Certainly, books that enshrine past wisdom help. And personal experiences might move us to confirm our purpose. But the most pervasive and effective information about what makes life worth living comes from older people with whom children and adolescents interact—assuming, of course, that the elders have some useful information to impart. In any given instance, they may not. By and large, however, it is safe to assume that the older generation—simply by virtue of the fact that it has weathered the hazards of existence—can help those who have less experience to set worthwhile goals.

If this is the case, the hitch in transmitting information between generations these days becomes readily apparent. Typical American adolescents spend only five minutes a day alone with their fathers, and half of this time is spent watching television. Moreover, typical American adolescents spend only about 40 minutes a day alone with their mothers, an hour a day with both parents, and about 15 minutes a day with other adults—for a total of about two hours a day in the company of mature individuals. But almost all this time is spent unwinding from the tensions of school or work and in such repetitive maintenance activities as eating, shopping, or cleaning. Very little information of any moment is passed on in these routine interactions.

By contrast, the same teenagers spend more than four hours each day with their friends. This is time spent outside of school and beyond the influence of elders, and it is during this time that most of the information vital to teenagers’ lives is exchanged. But values and goals that develop in peer groups—exciting and novel though they may be—have not passed the test of time and thus are of unknown survival value. To round out the picture, most teenagers spend from four to five hours each day alone, left to their own devices—and

perhaps two additional hours with the media, which essentially means “in front of the television set.” Although scholars have argued that television is a conservative socializing influence, we have not found a single youngster in the course of our research who claims to have derived a meaningful goal from watching television.

Of course, in describing the network of relationships that define adolescence, we left out a crucial element: the roughly three hours each day that teenagers spend with their teachers. This is the single most important opportunity for them to learn from adults in our culture—a culture that has essentially delegated the upbringing of its young to educational institutions.

Unfortunately, the transmission of adult goals in classrooms takes place under far from ideal circumstances. In the first place, teachers, tend to be out-numbered, by a ratio of at least 20:1. Second, regardless of how much real or theoretical authority teachers have, they are isolated and cannot participate in the kinds of spontaneous interactions that generate internally binding norms and values. Thus the values of the peer group become real to the students, because those are the values that they help to develop and are able to experience directly.

Moreover, because school attendance is compulsory, the school cannot count on the loyalty of students. Our research shows that, of all the places teenagers hang out, the school is the one place they least wish to be. Moreover, when they are in school, the classroom is the one place they most strongly wish to avoid. They far prefer the cafeteria, the library, or the hallways.

Since the audience is a captive one, the teacher’s task of passing on the central goals of the culture (and thus a sense that life has meaning and worth) becomes exceedingly difficult. In fact, when they are listening to teachers’ lectures, students’ levels of alertness and motivation are about as low—and their levels of passivity are about as high—as they get all day.

Yet, despite these obstacles, teachers do manage (almost miraculously) to make a positive difference in the lives of many students. When we

asked teenagers to tell us who or what influenced them to become the kinds of people they are, 58% mentioned one teacher or more. However, 90% mentioned their parents, and 88% mentioned peers.

At first glance, these figures do not seem to give teachers a great deal of weight. That 30% more teenagers should mention peers than teachers as having shaped their lives is a thought-provoking commentary on the relative influence of the two groups. Moreover, these students saw only about 9% of all the teachers whom they had encountered in the course of their school careers as having made a difference in their lives. In other words, at least 91% of the teachers left no memorable mark. But, considering the difficult circumstances under which teachers usually struggle, even these meager figures inspire some hope.

What distinguishes those teachers who, despite all the obstacles, are able to touch students' lives, giving them shape and purpose? Or, to phrase the question in more general terms, What makes an adult an effective carrier of cultural information?

Psychological theories of modeling, which describe how young people imitate and internalize the behavior of their elders, suggest that, for a teacher to have an impact on the behavior of students, the teacher must be perceived as having control over resources that the students desire. According to social learning theory, an influential teacher is one who can reward and punish or who has outstanding command of a particular field of knowledge. Because adolescents wish to identify with adults who have status and power, they will choose as models those teachers who are strong, powerful, or extremely skilled.

Our interviews with adolescents, however, suggest that this picture of what motivates a teenager to let a teacher influence his or her life is much too simple. Clearly, an adult who attracts the attention of a young person strongly enough to make a difference must possess a "resource" that is attractive to the young. But this resource is not what psychologists have assumed it to be. The obvious traits—power and control, status

and expertise—do not move most teenagers. When adolescents try to explain why particular teachers have helped to shape who and what they are, this is the kind of thing they say:

Mr. R. has really interesting classes because he's so full of pep and energy when he's teaching. It's not like the boring lectures you get in other classes when you listen to some guy drag on. He really gets into it, he's interesting, and it's fun to learn that way. It's easy to learn, because you are not bored.

Most often, the teenagers described influential teachers in terms of their ability to generate enthusiasm for learning through personal involvement with the subject matter and skill in teaching it. Such responses far outnumbered mentions of power, status, or intelligence. Adolescents respond to teachers who communicate a sense of excitement, a contagious intellectual thrill. When excitement is present, learning becomes a pleasure instead of a chore. Thus teachers' involvement with subject matter translates into effective learning for students.

But involvement with subject matter does not come at the expense of involvement with the students. On the contrary, teenagers see influential teachers as exceptionally approachable—"easy to talk to" and ready to listen when students have difficulty understanding the material.

Mrs. A. was the best teacher I ever had. . . . When you had problems, you could always go to her. Other teachers just yell at you when you don't understand something; they tell you to bring a note home to your parents.

Mr. M. has the ability to create an atmosphere where you don't feel scared to ask a question. Even if you *feel* dumb, he doesn't make you look dumb by asking the question in class or by saying, "I really don't understand."

Mr. N. was a teacher you could really talk to. He *listened* to you, and he helped you to learn because he didn't shoot you down when you asked a question.