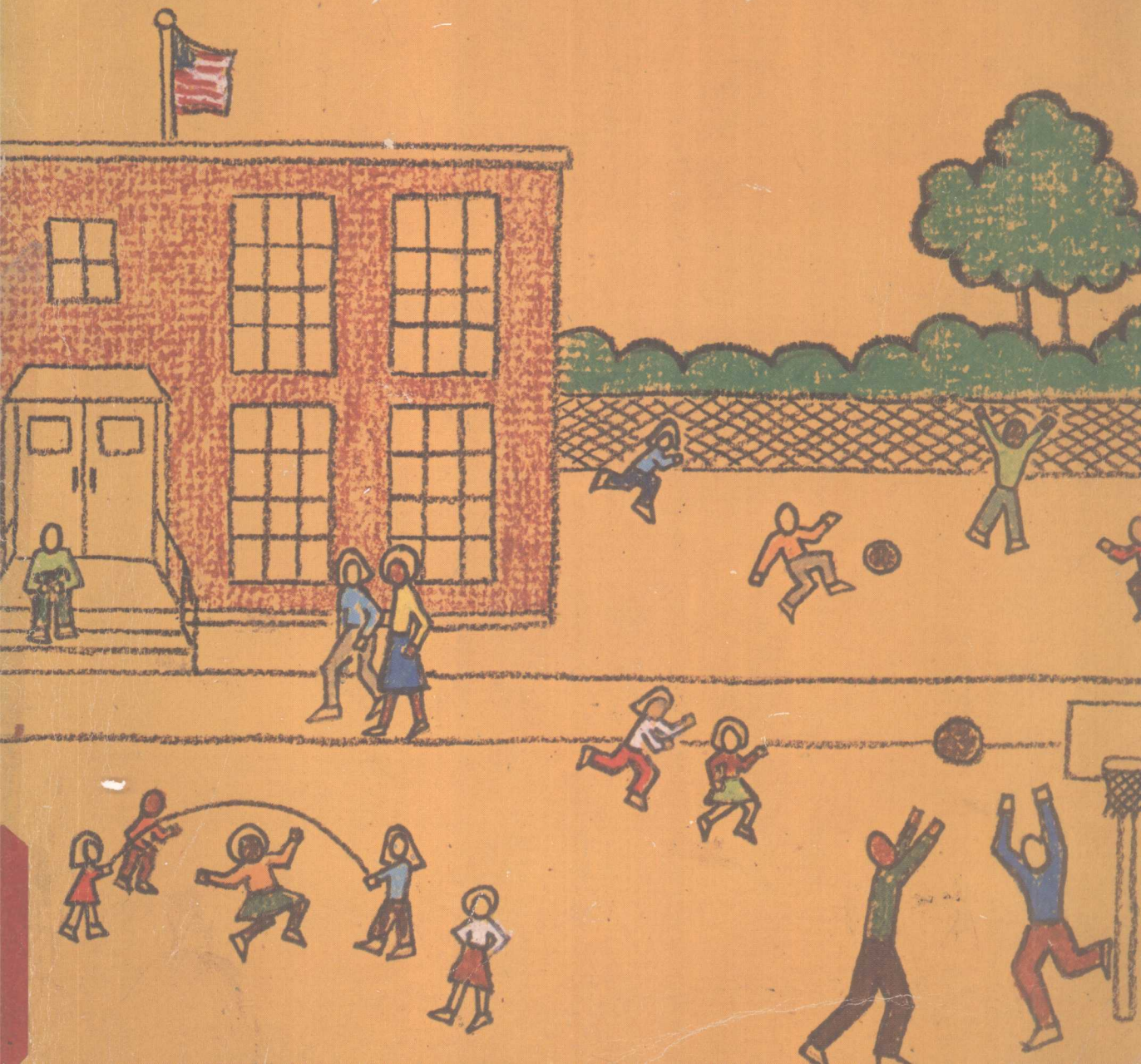


Teaching in America

Fain/Shostak/Dean

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Teaching in America

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Teaching in America

**To Our Families for Their Support
Our Students for Their Questions
Our Teachers for Their Inspiration**

PREFACE

Every endeavor has a beginning, and this introduction to teaching may well be yours. All professionals must be thoroughly familiar with their working environment, and *Teaching in America* will introduce you to the world of your chosen profession.

This book has been designed to bring you, the student of education, face to face with the basic issues confronting today's teachers. We have linked the past with the present in order to provide you with a more complete understanding of your future role as an educator. This important link between past and present has been supplemented by the inclusion, throughout the book, of twenty-five selected readings that reflect the attitudes and ideas of a variety of historical and contemporary educators.

We have written this text in a straightforward, personal, and concise manner. In Chapter One, the need for quality professionals in education is made clear. Chapters Two, Three, and Four present the traditional educational foundations of history, philosophy, and psychology in a direct and contemporary way. Chapter Five introduces the concept of the curriculum as evolutionary, and Chapter Six focuses on the students themselves, their cultural differences and exceptionalities. Chapter Seven reveals the nature of the school organization, while Chapter Eight addresses the very practical matter of preparing to find employment as a teacher.

Any good text leaves you wanting more, and we hope *Teaching in America* will do just that, thus leading you into a significant career. We recognize that, for many, education may be a vocation, but we believe that teaching is a way of life. The day-to-day challenges are finite; the rewards are infinite.

We are indebted to many for the inspiration, guidance, and support we received as this book evolved: Sharon Barton, Louise Sheldon, and James Romig of Scott, Foresman who deserve credit for keeping watchful eyes on the project; to Nick Elks, Sherry Springer, Ilba Rey, Karol Dean Hicks, and Kathie Heine, all of whom provided significant help in preparing the final manuscripts.

Finally, we must express our gratitude for the support we received from our families: Judi, Tina, and Peter Fain; Jan, Elene, and Joseph Shostak; and Katherine and Brian Dean who provided criticism, support, and time. For this and more, we thank them.

Stephen M. Fain
Robert Shostak
John F. Dean

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Chapter One

The Teaching Profession

Do You Have What It Takes?

Be a Teacher!

What Makes an Effective Teacher

Interpersonal Relationships

Subject Matter

Method

Planning

You Are Responsible for Your Own Wake

Summary

Discussion Questions

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Readings:

Jean E. Mizer *Cipher in the Snow*

State of California *Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession*

In the beginning education was a collage of stories told to the young for there was no other way to transmit the culture. The best teller of stories became the teacher. Parables were memorable; the lessons meaningful; and the culture became real to all who sat at the feet of the storyteller. So we begin, with the story of Cliff Evans.

JEAN E. MIZER

Cipher in the Snow

It started with tragedy on a biting cold February morning. I was driving behind the Milford Corners bus as I did most snowy mornings on my way to school. It veered and stopped short at the hotel, which it had no business doing, and I was annoyed as I had to come to an unexpected stop. A boy lurched out of the bus, reeled, stumbled, and collapsed on the snowbank at the curb. The bus driver and I reached him at the same moment. His thin, hollow face was white even against the snow.

"He's dead," the driver whispered.

I didn't register for a minute. I glanced quickly at the scared young faces staring down at us from the school bus. "A doctor! Quick! I'll phone from the hotel. . . ."

"No use. I tell you he's dead." The driver looked down at the boy's still form. "He never even said he felt bad," he muttered, "just tapped me on the shoulder and said, real quiet, 'I'm sorry. I have to get off at the hotel.' That's all. Polite and apologizing like."

At school, the giggling, shuffling morning noise quieted as the news went down the halls. I passed a huddle of girls. "Who was it? Who dropped dead on the way to school?" I heard one of them half-whisper.

"Don't know his name; some kid from Milford Corners," was the reply.

It was like that in the faculty room and the principal's office. "I'd appreciate your going out to tell the parents," the principal told me. "They haven't a phone and, anyway, somebody from school should go there in person. I'll cover your classes."

"Why me?" I asked. "Wouldn't it be better if you did it?"

"I didn't know the boy," the principal admitted levelly. "And in last year's sophomore personalities column I note that you were listed as his favorite teacher."

"Cipher in the Snow" by Jean E. Mizer, *TODAY'S EDUCATION*, NEA Journal, November 1964. Reprinted by permission of the author and the National Education Association.

I drove through the snow and cold down the bad canyon road to the Evans place and thought about the boy, Cliff Evans. His favorite teacher! I thought. He hasn't spoken two words to me in two years! I could see him in my mind's eye all right, sitting back there in the last seat in my afternoon literature class. He came in the room by himself and left by himself. "Cliff Evans," I muttered to myself, "a boy who never talked." I thought a minute. "A boy who never smiled. I never saw him smile once."

The big ranch kitchen was clean and warm. I blurted out my news somehow. Mrs. Evans reached blindly toward a chair. "He never said anything about bein' ailing."

His step-father snorted. "He ain't said nothin' about anything since I moved in here."

Mrs. Evans pushed a pan to the back of the stove and began to untie her apron. "Now hold on," her husband snapped. "I got to have breakfast before I go to town. Nothin' we can do now anyway. If Cliff hadn't been so dumb, he'd have told us he didn't feel good."

After school I sat in the office and stared bleakly at the records spread out before me. I was to close the file and write the obituary for the school paper. The almost bare sheets mocked the effort. Cliff Evans, white, never legally adopted by step-father, five young half-brothers and sisters. These meager strands of information and the list of D grades were all the records had to offer.

Cliff Evans had silently come in the school door in the mornings and gone out the school door in the evenings, and that was all. He had never belonged to a club. He had never played on a team. He had never held an office. As far as I could tell, he had never done one happy, noisy kid thing. He had never been anybody at all.

How do you go about making a boy into a zero? The grade school records showed me. The first and second grade teachers' annotations read "sweet, shy child"; "timid but eager." Then the third grade note had opened the attack. Some teacher had written in a good, firm hand, "Cliff won't talk. Uncooperative. Slow learner." The other academic sheep had followed with "dull"; "slow-witted"; "low IQ." They became correct. The boy's IQ score in the ninth grade was listed at 83. But his IQ in the third grade had been 106. The score didn't go under 100 until the seventh grade. Even shy, timid, sweet children have resilience. It takes time to break them.

I stomped to the typewriter and wrote a savage report pointing what education had done to Cliff Evans. I slapped a copy on the principal's desk and another in the sad, dog-eared file. I banged the typewriter and slammed the file and crashed the door shut, but I didn't feel much better. A little boy kept walking after me, a little boy with a peaked, pale face; a skinny body in faded jeans; and big eyes that had looked and searched for a long time and then had become veiled.

I could guess how many times he'd been chosen last to play sides in a game, how many whispered child conversations had excluded him, how many times he hadn't been asked. I could see and hear the faces and voices that said