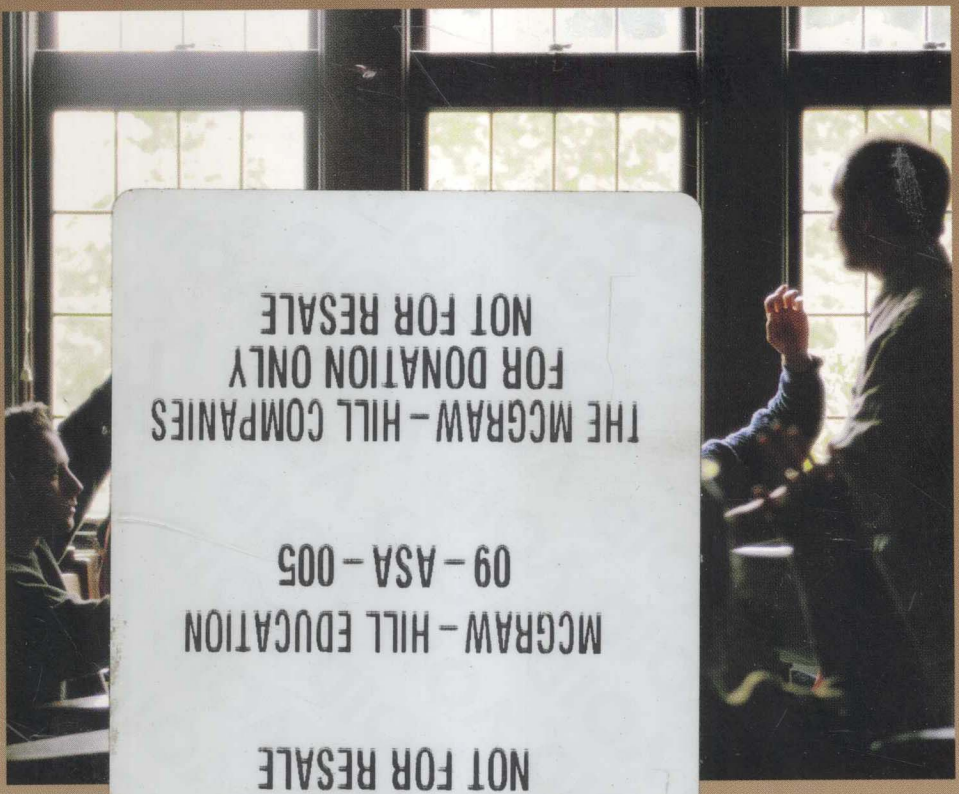
TAKING SIDES



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Dennis L. Evans

TAKING SIDES

Clashing Views on Controversial

Issues in Secondary Education

Selected, Edited, and with Introductions by

Dennis L. Evans
University of California–Irvine

McGraw-Hill/Dushkin
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To my love and best friend Kris and the family's best writers, Mark and Suzy

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Preface

It risks tautology to suggest that education evokes controversy. And while controversies in any field often involve conflicting values and belief systems; it is the fact that the lives of our children are so singularly impacted by the quality of what transpires in the schools that generates the vehemence and volatility characteristic of controversy in education. The volume of voices regarding what should or should not happen in our schools speaks well of our commitment and our concern regarding our most precious commodities. Also contributing to the heritage of controversy in American public education is its democratic structure both in terms of governance and the reality that it deals with "all of the children of all of the people." Controversies created by our democratic approach to public schooling are controversies worth having.

Plan of the book This volume contains 20 issues in secondary education, supported by 40 selections that are presented in a pro-con format. These issues represent dichotomous, or at least widely divergent, viewpoints on important educational issues. While a particular focus is placed on issues in secondary education, most such issues are also found in other levels of education and, thus, this book can inform anyone interested in the state of schooling in America.

Part 1 of the book presents five topics that generate conflicting views regarding the fundamental purposes of secondary education: universal compulsory education, citizenship education, education through a common core curriculum, ethnocentric considerations, and education for the workplace. Part 2 focuses on seven contemporary educational policy and/or legal/organizational issues: religion in the schools, school uniform policies, zero tolerance policies, achievement level grouping, high stakes standardized testing, merit pay for teachers, and the school principalship. Part 3 deals with eight controversies related to curricular and instructional practices: block scheduling, homework, grading practices, the role of technology, service learning, globalization as an emphasis in the study of history, the role of the classics in the English curriculum, and high school athletics.

Considerable care has been taken to not only select issues that are of current interest (although many of these have long histories of controversy), but also to provide selections that are representative of the divergent views on each issue and that are authored by a full panoply of those who care about education: advocates, critics, philosophers, practitioners, commentators, political/historical figures, and provocateurs.

The format for each of the 20 issues involves an *introduction* that outlines the controversy, the presentation of the opposing articles, and a *postscript* that summarizes the arguments and presents related views and works. Additionally, at the beginning of each of the three parts, *(Purposes, Policies, and Practices)*, there is an *On the Internet* page that lists pertinent Internet resources. At the

back of the book, a listing of the *contributors to this volume* provides information on the authors whose views are debated in this volume.

Given the format of the book, it can be used for many purposes: combined with the *introduction* it can provide an excellent foundation for the study of issues in secondary education; it can serve as a text for educational leadership and philosophy courses; it can be used in administrator preparation and continuing development programs; it can provide the basis for school faculty professional growth and in-service activities; and it can be used by PTA and other parent organizations in their educational programs.

A word to the instructor An *Instructor's Manual With Test Questions* (multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher for the instructor using *Taking Sides* in the classroom. A general guidebook, *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom*, which discusses methods and techniques for integrating the pro-con approach into any classroom setting, is also available. An online version of *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom* and a correspondence service for *Taking Sides* adopters can be found at `http://www.dushkin.com/usingts/`.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Secondary Education is only one title in the Taking Sides series. If you are interested in seeing the table of contents for any of the other titles, please visit the Taking Sides Web site at `http://www.dushkin.com/takingsides/`.

Acknowledgments My sincere appreciation goes to Theodore Knight, list manager, and Juliana Gribbins, developmental editor, of McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, who shepherded me through this entire project. I am also grateful to the many individuals who provided me with contacts regarding possible sources.

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Introduction

Sources of Controversy in Secondary Education

Dennis L. Evans

Origins and Governance

With over 15 million, or 95 percent, of current 13–17 year olds in the United States involved in some form of public or private schooling, it is important to note that, from a historical perspective, universal secondary education is a relatively recent development. The emergence of the concept as an important feature of schooling in America coincided with the Progressive Era of 1890–1920, which was also period of enormous increases in immigration into the United States. At the beginning of that dynamic sociopolitical period, the number of adolescents of high school age who were in school was approximately 200,000, or slightly less than 7 percent of the age group. Thirty years later in 1920 the numbers had increased to 2 million, which was approximately 32 percent of the age group. Obviously, the rate of individuals who completed at least a high school education also grew with the increase in enrollment. In 1890 only 6 percent of adults 25 years and older held a high school diploma; that figure grew to 16 percent by 1920 and has continued to increase up to today's figure of approximately 83 percent.

The history of secondary education in the United States is a history of controversy. Indeed, disagreements regarding the very appropriateness of such "advanced" education arose early in colonial America. In 1647 the "Old Deluder Satan Act" was enacted in Massachusetts with the accompanying language supportive of education:

> *It being one chief object of that old deluder,* Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the scriptures,... It is therefore ordered, that every township... after the lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders... shall... appoint one within their town to teach all children as shall resort to him to read and write. It is further ordered, that where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families... they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university.
>
> —As cited in *History of Education in America* by John Pulliam and James Van Patten (Prentice Hall, 1994)

In 1671 Sir William Berkeley, the Colonial Governor of Virginia, expressed his disdain for the idea of widespread and advanced education with this statement:

> I thank God that there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years, for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government.
>
> — Also cited in *History of Education in America*

Controversy also arose over what the purposes of any education beyond reading and writing should entail. As can be seen in The Old Deluder Satan Act and later in 1749 in Ben Franklin's treatise, *On the Need for an Academy,* schooling that went much beyond the rudimentary subjects was considered to be only important for those "fitted for the university." From colonial days until the end of the nineteenth century, secondary education was fundamentally only for the wealthy elite, only for those who would benefit from such an education and who would then attend a university in order to move into the "learned professions" of law, medicine, and the clergy.

Even as late as 1893 the tradition of the high school existing only for the purposes of university preparation was articulated by the National Education Association's (NEA) Committee of Ten, chaired by President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University, which prescribed that high schools offer only a college preparatory curriculum obviously aimed at the needs of the small proportion of students who could benefit from it and whose parents could afford to send them on to the university. However, by 1911, consistent with the radical shift in thinking about secondary schooling that was occurring at that time, the NEA issued a new report highly critical of the Committee of Ten's recommendation. This report, issued by the Committee of Nine, stated that high schools had responsibilities much broader than mere pre-college work, especially since so few students matriculated to the university. (In 1910 only slightly more that 2 percent of the U.S. population 25 and older had graduated from college.) Such responsibilities included preparing students for participation as citizens and as contributors to the workplace and the economy.

This clash over purposes led to a compromise document, which was to become the guidepost for secondary education in the United States. That document, issued in 1918 by the NEA's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, charged high schools with the responsibility to provide a *comprehensive* curriculum that could accomplish both college preparation and preparation for life and thereby meet the needs of the entire high school age population. The document described the mission of secondary education as involving Seven Cardinal Principles. Those principles were:

- Health
- Command of fundamental processes
- Worthy home membership
- Vocational preparation
- Citizenship

- Worthy use of leisure time
- Ethical character

These cardinal principles reflected the notion of educating the "whole child" and led directly to the notion of the *comprehensive secondary school,* which continues to be the prevailing model of secondary education in the United States.

In spite of the democratization of the American high school, which occurred during the Progressive Era, secondary education continued to lag far behind elementary education in terms of the public's perception of its importance and thus the public's willingness to support it. While all of the then 48 states had enacted compulsory attendance laws by 1920 (pushed by Horace Mann, Massachusetts was first in 1852; Mississippi was last in 1918), as noted earlier only slightly over 16 percent of the population aged 25 and older had completed high school by that year, but 78 percent of that same group had at least five years of elementary schooling. For many years compulsory attendance requirements for secondary school-aged children were generally not viewed by the public as worthy of obeying, and it was not until well after World War II that high school graduates finally exceeded dropouts among adults over the age of 25. It took the combination of societal forces such as massive immigration, urbanization, industrialization and unionization, child protection laws, court decisions, and increased access to college to finally provide the momentum to cause secondary education to become truly compulsory.

The historical reluctance to embrace secondary schooling as an integral part of public education is exemplified by the fact that although taxation for the support of elementary education had its origins and public acceptance in colonial days and fueled the Common School Era for several decades beginning in 1830; the issue of tax support for public secondary schools was not resolved until the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1874 in the case of *Stuart v. School District No. 1 of the Village of Kalamazoo.* In the *Kalamazoo* case the Court ruled in favor of the right of state legislatures to enact legislation allowing local communities to levy taxes for the support of public secondary schools. This belated lack of resolution regarding tax support combined with general public apathy, if not antipathy, toward public secondary schooling (there were many private academies for college preparatory work) resulted in the very slow growth of the number of public high schools in existence in the United States during the early nineteenth century. The first public high school, the Boston English Classical School, was established in 1821 (renamed the English High School in 1824) to serve the needs of noncollege-bound boys. By 1860 only an additional 300 had appeared nationally, one-third of those in Massachusetts. The *Kalamazoo* decision along with other societal forces dramatically increased those numbers so that by 1900 nearly 6000 high schools existed. The number stands at approximately 17,000 today. (Sources for this statistical information are The National Center for Educational Statistics and `infoplease.com`.)

Another source of controversy regarding public schooling emanates from the type of structure by which we govern our schools. Flowing from our revolutionary heritage and a concomitant antipathy toward a strong, central govern-

ment, the Founding Fathers initially designed in 1783, by way of the Articles of Confederation, a national government so bereft of power that the newly formed nation quickly teetered on the brink of chaos and collapse. It became apparent that some concession had to be made with respect to granting greater power to the central government. That realization led to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the eventual drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

But in spite of the crisis mentality which had motivated the Founding Fathers to scuttle the Articles of Confederation and create a new federal system, there was still great resistance to any suggestion that the national government should have substantive power over the daily lives of the people. That fear of centralized power, which was entirely reasonable given the colonists' recently concluded struggles with Great Britain and King George III, resulted in demands that a Bill of Rights be added to the new Constitution. Indeed, for many, the only way they would agree to ratify the Constitution was with assurances that the Bill of Rights protecting the civil liberties of the people from governmental encroachment would be enacted.

That enactment, which took place in December of 1791, curtailed central government power in areas that were directly related to the daily lives of citizens. In their wisdom the Founding Fathers not only enumerated some of these areas such as speech, religion, the press, and due process, but also, through the 10th Amendment, protected other unspecified areas from the power of the central government. The 10th Amendment states that, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." With this one sentence the power to control public education, since it is not mentioned in the Constitution, devolved to the individual states and to the people. Thus it is that in the United States there is no national control over public education. Certainly the federal government is involved in many aspects of education (some would suggest too many), but the constitutional authority is held by each of the 50 states. It is accurate to say that public education is a national interest, a state power, and a local responsibility. Obviously such a decentralized governance structure defies tight organization, consistency of operation, and agreement regarding the purposes of schooling. Advocates of our approach to the governance of public schooling might say that it fits the description of democracy attributed to Winston Churchill: "It has been said that Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." Critics of the approach suggest that many of the problems facing public education are attributable to the "messiness" of the governance structure.

As noted earlier, constitutional authority over the public schools is vested in each individual state. Each state has created local school districts and delegated authority to the local governmental entities such as school boards to govern those districts (the only exception to this approach is Hawaii, which governs its schools as one state-wide district). A fundamental feature of this governance structure is the local lay school board. The origin of citizen control over the schools predates nationhood and goes back to the colonial era when town elders would periodically check on the local school marm or master to

make sure that the particular religious orthodoxy of the township was being duly recognized and respected.

The National School Boards Association makes the following statement regarding the role of school boards in governing American public education:

> The National School Boards Association believes local school boards are the nation's preeminent expression of grass roots democracy and that this form of governance of the public schools is fundamental to the continued success of public education.

Critics would suggest that the lay local school board is an anachronism that has outlived its purpose and that its role in governing the schools undermines the professionalism of educators and thwarts reform.

The concept of *grass roots democracy* means that school board members are in close proximity to the people they represent and thus are more subject to public opinion and pressures than are other public officials who serve from more distant venues. This can be both a vice and a virtue. Local school board members know their public and their public knows them. They can be quickly responsive to local issues, but they can also be susceptible to local emotions and orthodoxies. Citizen governance of local schools means that school board members may be elected (or not) because of their stance on certain issues facing local schools. They are also likely to be subject to recall elections more than any other type of public official. Certainly the concept of local school board governance is very consistent with the American heritage of distrusting distant government.

Philosophical Differences

The myriad controversies regarding purposes, policies, and practices in secondary education and the emotions that those controversies engender are testimony to the importance afforded to that level of education by today's public, pundits, and politicians. That was not always the case, and thus we should view such controversies as a healthy sign that secondary education is considered a vital issue on the nation's agenda.

As noted earlier, both the history and the governance of public secondary education make their own contributions to controversy, but beyond those contributions many of the issues dealt with in this book reflect the profound differences that good and honest people can and do have regarding fundamental questions about the nature of and the interrelationship among humankind, society, and education. These are philosophical and value issues and thus can be the source of conflicts and disagreements that are very difficult to resolve. Some of the major philosophical systems that impact secondary education include the following:

Idealism

This is better thought of as "idea-ism."

Essence Ideas are the only true reality; man must search for knowledge and truth; man is capable through thought and revelation of attaining philosophic wisdom.

Educational goals and characteristics Self-realization of each individual attained by developing reverence for ideas and the ability to think holistically. Education should focus on heritage and culture, reading and writing, intelligence and morality.

Key thinkers and works Plato (427–347 B.C.) and Socrates (469–399 B.C.), *The Republic;* Augustine (354–430), *Confessions;* Rene Descartes (1596–1650), *Discourse on Method and Mediations on the First Philosophy;* George Berkeley (1685–1753), *Principles of Human Knowledge;* Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), *Critique of Pure Reason;* Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), *Philosophy of Right.*

Realism

Essence Reality, knowledge, and value exist independent of the human mind. The forms of things, the universal properties of objects, remain constant and never change.

Educational goals and characteristics Providing students with basic and essential knowledge; true understanding requires the ordering and classifying of knowledge; rigorous inquiry based upon observation and experimentation are crucial. Science and scientific principles are pre-eminent.

Key thinkers and works Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), *Politics and Ethics;* Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), *Summa Theologica;* Francis Bacon (1561–1626), *Novum Organum;* John Locke (1632–1704), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education;* Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), *Science and the Modern World;* Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), *Principia Mathematica* (coauthored with Alfred North Whitehead).

Perennialism/Essentialism

These are later manifestations of Idealism/Realism.

Pragmatism (Progressivism)

Essence Seek out processes and do things that work best to achieve desirable ends. Inductive thinking, importance of human experience, humanism, and relationship between science and culture are important elements.

Educational goals and characteristics Education is, like growth, a necessity of life. It provides people with renewal of knowledge and skills to face problems encountered through interaction with the environment. Education is not preparation for life, but life itself. Individuals are social beings and education should

help people direct, control, and guide personal and social experience. Motivation, interests, and prior experiences, including knowledge of consequences, are crucial to learning. School as a "laboratory."

Key thinkers and works Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), *Emile;* Charles Darwin (1809–1882), *On the Origin of Species;* Charles Peirce (1839–1914), *How to Make Our Ideas Clear;* William James (1842–1910), *Talks to Teachers on Psychology;* John Dewey (1859–1952), *Experience and Education.*

Behaviorism

Essence Behavior is caused by environmental conditions. What is real is external, factual, and observable and is thus capable of being known. A "technology" of behavior is possible through conditioning. Humans are part of, not above, nature. A "good" culture can be designed and created.

Educational goals and characteristics Children's behavior is "programmed" long before they come to school. Primary aim of education is to change behavior and point it in more desirable directions. Change is brought about by reinforcement (aversive or positive) of specified behaviors. Immediate feedback is important. Small, incremental steps are helpful in learning a new task. Machine learning is utilized.

Key thinkers and works Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), *Leviathan;* Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), *Conditioned Reflexes;* John Watson (1878–1958), *Behaviorism;* B. F. Skinner (1904–1990), *Beyond Freedom and Dignity.*

Existentialism

Essence Man, alone, estranged and alienated, is caught up in a meaningless and absurd world. Human existence is characterized by anxiety and a lack of certainty. Individuals are confronted with life choices that only they can make and for which they must accept total responsibility. The individual's freedom to choose is daunting. Through thoughtful choice and action the individual can bring about change.

Educational goals and characteristics Each student is an individual and must be allowed to take the major role in his/her education. Schools should be places of freedom where students do the things they want to do. Schools should provide many options and choices. Every teacher is a student and every student is a teacher. The humanities and the arts are significant in the existentialist curriculum. Individual "sensemaking" is a basic goal of schooling. Differences are to be celebrated.

Key thinkers and works Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), *Attack on Christendom;* Martin Buber (1878–1965), *I and Thou;* Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), *Being*

and Time; Jean Paul Sartre (1905–1980), *Being and Nothingness;* Maxine Greene, *Landscapes of Learning.*

Postmodernism

Essence Not really a belief system, but rather an iconoclastic challenge to claims of universality; a rejection of objective certainty. Traditions of knowledge (canons), scientific laws, or first principles are challenged as forms of domination. Traditional knowledge is not to be ignored but to be studied or "deconstructed" to see how it elevates some segments of society to power and affluence at the expense of others.

Educational goals and characteristics Postmodernism in education or critical pedagogy has as its common objective the empowerment of the powerless to overcome inequities and injustices. It challenges the way schools support dominant power and maintain inequities. It envisions schools as places where self and social empowerment can be enhanced. Curriculum is successful when it empowers people and transforms society. Students should explore their own individual histories, including self-reflection on race, gender, and class issues. Teachers are both scholars and practitioners and their role is to help students see the ideological and political interests that curricular knowledge may serve.

Key thinkers and works Michel Foucalt (1926–1984), *The Order of Things;* Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology;* Henry Giroux, *Border Crossings;* Peter McClaren, *Life in Schools;* Cleo Cherryholmes, *Power and Criticism;* Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

Other Systems

The previous selections are presented to provide an overview of various ideas, influences, and competing complexities that have impacted and continue to impact schooling in our country.

The selections obviously do not represent all of the various philosophical or belief systems that deal with education. Other systems such Marxism, empiricism, phenomenology, reconstructionism, analytic philosophy, Eastern religions, etc., have also influenced educational thought. Also, the views and actions of historical/political figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Horace Mann; sectarian religious considerations; socio/economic realities; and other circumstances and individuals associated with the American experience have combined to create the unique character of our educational system.

Note: The source of much of the above material is Howard A. Ozman and Samuel Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 5th ed. (Prentice Hall, 1995). As they point out, the various labels or titles given to the philosophies are arbitrary and not universally agreed upon, thus you may find that other descriptors are used in other works.

Given the profound differences that exist between and among these different belief systems, it should not be surprising that conflicts and controversies

abound in secondary education. One way that secondary education has survived these "philosophical wars" has been through the creation of the *comprehensive* high school, which has allowed elements of several of the philosophies to become a part of the high school curriculum and program. Manifestations of different philosophies can be seen in such secondary school features as the study of history and the literary canon, science laboratories, electives, service learning, student government, programmed learning, multiculturalism, and the provision of counseling services.

Criticism of the Schools

With so many contrasting viewpoints vying for primacy in terms of what occurs in the schools, it is inevitable that much criticism will be directed at school purposes, polices, and practices when they are perceived to run counter to a given philosophical position. Criticism is also leveled at the schools when outcome measures such as Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) scores, international test comparisons, and readiness for college do not measure up to expectations. Schools are also criticized for what some see as a breakdown in citizenship, morality, and respect for the law.

Much of the contemporary criticism of schools can be traced from the launching of the Soviet space satellite, Sputnik I, in 1957. This event led to stinging criticism from eminent Americans such as former president of Harvard James B. Conant and Admiral Hyman Rickover, both who bemoaned what they perceived as a lack of intellectual rigor and excellence in the nation's high schools. The turmoil and trauma of the 1960s brought criticism to the schools from both sides of the political fence. Many suggested that the protest movements on college campuses signaled how poorly high schools were doing with respect to instilling patriotism, loyalty, and traditional values in the nation's youth; while others such as Paul Goodman in *Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized Society* (Vintage Books, 1960), John Holt in *How Children Fail* (Dell 1964), and Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner in *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (Delacorte Press, 1969) asserted that the school curriculum was no longer relevant, failed to provide for individual needs, and thereby alienated students.

The 1970s continued that theme with a spate of searing indictments of the condition of secondary schooling in America, stating particularly that schooling failed to address the realities of modern life as experienced by many students. Writer/critics of this genre included Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (Vintage Books, 1970); Ivan Ilich, *Deschooling Society* (Harper Collins, 1971); John Holt, *Freedom and Beyond* (Dell, 1972); and Jonathan Kozol *Free Schools* (Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education signaled the shift of criticism of the schools from the sociological perspectives of the 1970s to concerns regarding the quality of American secondary schooling vis-à-vis the nation's ability to remain competitive on the world scene. Much of the reform literature of the 1980s and early

1990s focused on shortcomings of secondary school curriculum and organization. Influential works from this era include Mortimer J. Adler's *The Paideia Proposal* (Macmillan, 1982); John I. Goodlad's *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (McGraw-Hill, 1983); Ernest Boyer's *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (Harper Trade, 1984); Theodore Sizer's *A Study of High Schools* (1984) and also from Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Houghton Mifflin, 1984); Jeannie Oakes's *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (Yale University Press, 1985); a report from the Carnegie Task Force, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Forum, 1986), E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Houghton Mifflin, 1987), and John Goodlad's *Teachers for Our Nation's School* (Jossey-Bass, 1990). Several of the above references and others can be found in an excellent summary of recent education critics in John Pulliam and James Van Patten's *History of Education in America,* 6th ed. (Prentice Hall, 1994).

These insistent calls for educational change and reform combined with continuing concerns regarding the performance of American students on measures of academic performance especially with respect to international comparisons (Gerald Bracey, in his 1993 report on *The Condition of Public Education,* was one of the few voices suggesting that evaluative data regarding student performance was being misinterpreted and that American schools were not failing) created a political momentum that resulted in the 1990s becoming the decade of standards, accountability, and high-stakes testing. With presidential candidates and other political leaders stressing the importance of education, proposals such as school choice, vouchers, and the charter school movement have become part of the educational lexicon. Their future impact remains to be seen.

The Challenge

Given the irreconcilable and irreducible differences that arise over questions regarding the fundamental purposes and processes of schooling, it becomes obvious that while there are many answers to such questions there is no exclusively "right" answer. What emerges from that realization is the irony that great value can accrue from asking questions even if there is no "right" answer to them. It is important for those involved with the educational enterprise to realize that important questions need to be continually asked and that the divergent and even the diametrically opposite positions that well-meaning and thoughtful individuals will take in attempting to provide answers can become valuable stimuli for reflection and progress. Faced with questions that have many answers but no single correct one, the contemporary educator needs to possess or to develop a tremendous tolerance for ambiguity. To go beyond reactive survival and engage in proactive effectiveness educators must be prepared to face a myriad of questions, none of which have "a right answer." It will be through processes such as the development and articulation of a professional philosophy, self-reflection, and the analysis of the views and values of others that the thoughtful educator will best address such questions.

Some may believe that the various controversial issues that seem to characterize education are symptomatic of the contentious nature of contemporary society. But that is simply not the case. Here is one educator's response to a controversy over the relative merits of home versus public schooling:

> But even if great [large enrollment] schools are to be avoided (a position to which I cannot assent, if numbers flock to a master on account of his merit), the rule is not to be carried so far that schools be avoided altogether. It is one thing to shun schools entirely, another to choose from them.

This response is from "On the Early Education of the Citizen Orator," Book I of *The Institutes of Oratory,* by Quintilian (ca. 95 A.D.). Since we who are engaged in education cannot avoid controversy, we should find ways to learn, and thus benefit, from it.

On the Internet . . .

Infoplease.com

The Infoplease Web site has numerous data and information regarding compulsory education laws.

http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0112617.html

The National Council for the Social Studies

One of the position statements of the National Council for the Social Studies promotes a common unified civic culture while respecting the cultural values and experiences of the many individuals who are making their new homes in the United States. Explore this site for more information.

http://www.ncss.org

Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

The Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota is dedicated to examining public issues and shaping public policy at the local, state, national, and international levels. This site includes a history of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs as well as research materials.

http://www.publicwork.org

Civic Practices Network

The Civic Practices Network describes itself as a collaborative and nonpartisan project dedicated to bringing practical tools for public problem solving into community and institutional settings across America.

http://www.cpn.org

Africana.com

The Africana.com Web site features comments and links related to rationales for an Afrocentric curriculum and other issues.

http://www.africana.com