

New draft

TEACHING IN AMERICA

**Remarks by
Ernest L. Boyer
President**

**The Carnegie Foundation for
the Advancement of Teaching**

**The Dedication of
The Richard and Edna Salmon Center for Teaching**

**Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island**

May 6, 1989

Introduction

I'm delighted to participate
in the Dedication of
The Richard & Edna Salomon Center
for Teaching

The Renovation of this historic
building

- at the very Heart of this
university's progressive campus

Reaffirming the commitment of the
university's institutions to
indicate Edward

and to Excellence in Teaching

~~Both of which should~~ honored & be with
all again, I'm deeply
your truly.

~~INTRODUCTION~~

Since 1985 we at the Carnegie Foundation have been looking at the undergraduate experience in the United States. During this study we surveyed 5,000 faculty and 5,000 students. We traveled to campuses from Maine to California. And we spent thousands of hours

- visiting classes
- eating in the cafeteria
- listening to bull sessions in the Rathskeller late at night
- talking with administrators, faculty, and students

Throughout this study we were struck time and time again

1. by the great diversity of American higher education,
2. by its openness to ideas, and
3. by the intellectual freedom on the campus which we should never take for granted.

← (2)

And we concluded--in the Carnegie Report--that the American system of higher learning is, in fact, the envy of the world.

- At the same time--during our study--we found points of tension on the campus--especially regarding the undergraduate experience.
- And this morning--at ^{the} ~~this~~ elegant dedication--I'd like to focus on 4 priorities that must be vigorously pursued if we are to achieve excellence in collegiate education and affirm ^{- most urgently -} the centrality of teaching.

~
the elegant Center for
Teaching & Learning

I. LANGUAGE

We begin the Carnegie Report by giving top priority to language. We insist that the most essential goal of the undergraduate experience is to help all students

- think critically, and
- become proficient in the written and the spoken word.

When I was a small boy, 100 years ago, we used to say sticks and stones may break our bones, but names will never hurt you.

- What nonsense.
- I'd usually say this with tears running down my cheeks, thinking all the time, "hit me with a stick, but for goodness sake, stop those words that penetrate so deeply and hurt so long."

I'm suggesting that

- Our sophisticated use of symbols sets human beings apart from all other forms of life--the porpoise and the bumble bee, notwithstanding.

- And that it's through this miracle of language that we are connected to each other.

Consider the miracle of this very moment.

- I stand here vibrating my vocal chords.
- Molecules go "skittering" in your direction.
- They touch your tympanic membrane.
- Signals go scurrying up your 8th cranial nerve.
- And there is a response deep in your cerebrum that approximates, I trust, the images of mine.

What an audacious act—~~which we simply take for granted!~~

*the majestic use of signals
• which — like breath, itself
we simply take for granted.*

THE PROBLEM IS THAT TOO MANY STUDENTS
COME TO COLLEGE LINGUISTICALLY UNPREPARED

AND 65% OF THE FAMILY WE SURVEYED
SAID THEY WERE TEACHING STUDENTS
THE READING-WRITING AND THINKING SKILLS
THEY SHOULD HAVE LEARNED IN SCHOOL

ITS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE RECOMMEND
IN THE COURSE REPORT THAT

ALL COLLEGES SHOULD WORK WITH
TEACHERS IN SURROUNDING SCHOOLS
TO IMPROVE THE
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS

~~Colleges (not to) more than
Remediation Centers~~

1000 0000 9427 (5R)
We ALSO RECOMMEND - in THE CORNIE REPORT
THAT

COLLEGE
ALL FRESHMEN ~~BE~~ COMPLETE A COURSE
in EXPOSITORY WRITING

SINCE ITS THROUGH CLEAR THINKING
THAT Clear Writing Can Be Taught

AND we URGE THAT WRITING ~~WRITING~~ BE A PART
OF EVERY CLASS

FROM BUSINESS & LITERATURE

TO SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS

- which ^{includes} is itself a
universal language

In the Report we also suggest
 that ALL seniors - Before they
 Graduate from College

Be Asked to write a
 Paper on a Consequential Topic

which ~~finally~~ is the Best
 College Assessment instrument I know

many College Authors
 are more multiple choice test
 measure that
 which pattern best

"integrate ideas"

29. d

~~And then~~ ^{Don} we make a rather brash proposal.

- We suggest that all colleges introduce ^{consider} a "Senior Colloquium Series" on campus--a "modern" version of the old-fashioned ~~declaration~~ ^{Don't} in which a half-dozen members of the senior class would be asked to present their "final papers" in a public forum such as this.
- It even occurred to me--as a rather "pernicious" proposition--that the student speakers might be "selected randomly" from all members of the graduating class.

Let me state, then, my conviction quite directly. I'm convinced that if after 16 years of formal education--undergraduates

- Cannot write with clarity.
- Cannot read with understanding.
- Cannot communicate orally with precision.

Then we should close the college doors and start again!

Before leaving "language," I have one further observation.

Good communication means not just clarity of expression, it means integrity as well.

- And students must learn--not just to speak honestly, but to listen ~~carefully as well.~~

too

The problem is that we scurry about so fast and we're so much in the thick and thin of things, that we fail to communicate authentically with each other.

While Chancellor of the State University of New York, I was about to speak to faculty from across the state when several hundred students

- moved in with placards,
- chanting slogans,
- demanding that I help free a group of students who had been arrested on another campus.
- The microphone was grabbed and for almost an hour, we went back and forth.

Finally, after an hour, I concluded we weren't listening to each other--slow learners.

- The meeting was in shambles. Even worse, I was talking not to people, but to a faceless mob.

I concluded

I left the platform and walked into the crowd.

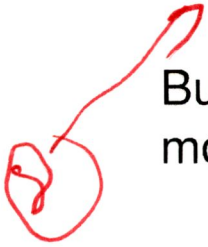
- I began talking to a single student.
- I asked her name.
- I asked about her family.

Soon several others joined us. To make a long story short, the session ended, a compromise was reached, and, in the process, I'd learned to know some most attractive students.

Wayne Booth of the University of Chicago has written that

All too often our efforts to speak and listen seem to be "vicious cycles" spiraling downward.

29



But Booth went on to say that we have all experienced moments

- when the spiral moves "upward"
- when one party's efforts--to speak and listen--a little bit better.
- produced a "similar response"
- making it possible to move on up the spiral to "moments of genuine understanding."

what Booth describes is -

This then is the goal of the undergraduate experience

- to teach students to think critically and to communicate with precision.
- But quality also means teaching students that language is a sacred trust.
- And that "truth" is the obligation we assume when we are empowered with the use of *words* ~~symbols.~~

II. CURRICULUM

This brings me to priority number two.

In the Carnegie Report, we say that

- Beyond proficiency in language,
- All students should complete a core curriculum to put their learning in perspective

In 1972, I was sitting in my office in Albany, New York.

It was a dreary Monday morning and, to avoid the pressures of the day,

I turned instinctively to the stack of 3rd class mail I kept on the corner of my desk to create the illusion ~~that I was busy~~ *of being very busy — it's an old wheeler trick.*

On top of the heap was the student newspaper from the university in the west.

The headline announced that the faculty, in a burst of creativity, had introduced a required course in western civilization after abolishing all requirements three years before (1972).

~~-1 discuss-~~
The students were mightily offended by the faculty initiative and in a front page editorial declared that

a required course is an "illiberal act"

The editorial concluded by asking rhetorically:

How dare they impose "uniform standards" on "non-uniform people."

Frankly, I was startled by that statement.

I was startled that some of America's most gifted students, after fourteen or more years of formal education, still had not learned the simple truth that

while we are "non-uniform" we still have many things in common.

These students had not discovered the fundamental fact that while we are autonomous human beings, with our own aptitudes and interests, we are at the same time, deeply dependent on each other.

Today, almost all colleges in the United States have a requirement in general education. *to help students gain perspective*

But all too often

the ^{is} so-called "distribution sequence" is "little more" than a "grab bag" of isolated credits.

Students complete their required courses *- "get them out of the way" - is the way to put it*

But what they fail to see are connections that would give them a more coherent view of knowledge

↳ and a more authentic, more integrated view of life.

now say

Barbara McClintock--the Nobel Winning Geneticist--said on one occasion that "everything is one." "There is," she said, "no way to draw a line between things!"

- I wonder if Professor McClintock has looked at a college catalogue in recent days.

Frank Press--the President of the National Academy of Sciences--captured this same spirit when he recently suggested that the scientist is, in some respects, an artist, too.

- Dr. Press went on to observe that "the magnificent Double Helix--which broke the

genetic code--was not only rational--it was beautiful as well. [CAPE KENNEDY]

And when the physicist Victor Weiskopf was asked, "What gives you hope in troubled times," he replied, "Mozart and Quantum Mechanics."

But where in the college curriculum do students discover connections such as these?

now p 58 Today's students live in a world that is economically and ecologically connected.

And, yet, I worry that education in this country is parochial at the very moment the human agenda is more global.

When I was United States Commissioner of Education, Joan Ganz Cooney who was the brilliant creator of Sesame Street came to see me one day.

- She wanted to start a new program in science for junior high school students.
- It subsequently was developed and its called 3-2-1 Contact.

As In doing background research for the program, Children's Television Workshop, they asked junior high school students such questions as:

- "Where does water come from?" and a disturbing percentage said "the faucet."
- They asked, "Where does light come from?" and they said, the "switch."
- And "Where does garbage go?" "Down the chute."

Don suggest - in an interconnected world -
The point is that we need a curriculum which goes beyond the isolated facts and helps students put their learning in perspective.

new page
More than 40 years ago, Mark Van Doren wrote that the "Connectedness of Things" is what the Educator contemplates to the limit of his capacity.

Van Doren went on to observe that

- The student who can begin early in life to see things as connected has begun the life of learning.

This, it seems to me, is the goal of general education.

III. TEACHING

This ^{by my} ~~lead~~ me to the central theme of my remarks today. ✓

A college can ^{- The Centrality of Teaching} ~~teach good~~ language and have a curriculum with coherence. ^{give proof to}

But in the end it's the teacher in the classroom who

- integrates ideas,
- and inspires students to study on their own.

Several years ago, I couldn't sleep and instead of counting sheep I counted all the teachers I had had. I remembered, rather vividly, 15 or more outstanding individuals--in college and in school who had touched me and truly changed my life.

First, I thought about Miss Rice, my first grade teacher, who, on the first day of school, said to 28 frightened, awestruck children, "Good morning class, today we learn to read."

It was Miss Rice who taught me language and learning are inextricably interlocked.

I then recalled Mr. Wittingler, a high school history teacher, who one day said quietly as I passed the desk, "Ernest,

~~III.~~

New page

Several years ago I couldn't sleep. Instead of counting sheep I counted all the teachers I had had.

*at I must confess that
there were*

I remembered "rather vividly" fifteen or more--few nightmares in the bunch.

thought
But I then tried to think about the great teachers the truly outstanding individuals--in college or in school--who had touched me or truly changed my life.

First I thought about Miss Rice, my first grade teacher, who first day of school said

- Good morning class. Today we learn to read.

It was Miss Rice who taught me language and learning are ~~unextricably interlocked~~.

connected.

I then recalled Mr. Wittingler, a high school history teacher, who ~~one day~~ said quietly as I passed the desk.

ask me to see me after class
as I passed his desk Mr. Wittingler said

Ernest, you're good in history--you keep this up and you'll get an A. You're doing very well. ←

That was the first time a teacher had said that to me directly. Suddenly I thought I just might be a student.

And I remembered Dr. Joseph Smith, a literature professor who loved to have us read Shakespeare aloud.

Professor Smith laughed and cried--even though he had read King Lear and MacBeth a thousand times before.

I then asked myself what made these teachers truly great. Why did these three people stand out from all the rest? ~~What are the characteristics of excellence in teaching?~~ ^{great} As I reflected on these ~~teachers~~, three conditions came to mind:

- o First, ^{true} great teachers are ^{true} knowledgeable and informed. ~~That is, they have a message to convey;~~ ^{there} ~~there is something there to teach.~~ So, ~~while we're thrashing about, let's agree that teaching involves something to be conveyed.~~ We need substance.
- o Second, ^{true} ~~great~~ teachers can communicate at a level students

understand. ~~That is, they can take their knowledge and connect it with the reality of their student' lives.~~
They not only know their subject, they know children.

During research for High School, I visited a junior high school in New Haven, Connecticut and walked into a sixth-grade classroom, unannounced. At first, I was appalled because thirty students had crammed up against the teacher's desk. I really thought the teacher was suffering some kind of physical abuse.

Then I observed that something truly remarkable was ~~happening~~. The students were crowding the desk, not in anger, but in enthusiastic engagement with the teacher. They were reading Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist together and discussing whether ~~Oliver Twist~~ could survive in New Haven. This teacher had brought the urban jungle of London to New Haven, and little Oliver was ~~their hero~~. They knew the good and the bad guys, and ~~they weren't sure that Oliver could make it in New Haven.~~ Here was a brilliant teacher who not only knew nineteenth century literature, he knew twentieth century New Haven and children as well.

he was Henry's life.

But there was a third characteristic that one to mind.
 Great teachers know their stuff. My friend said that. But

Finally, and most importantly, great teachers shape lives because they are authentic and believable human beings. There is something about their relationships with others that students automatically understand. They not only know their subject and their students, they are able to reveal themselves as believable human beings as well. In addition to teaching subjects, these teachers teach themselves.

Re met
 many
 teachers I
 have had who
 also
 grow

In the end, I believe that great teachers are viewed as good and trusted friends.

I suspect that everyone in the audience today can remember at least one great teacher you have had -- a Miss Rice who changed your life forever.

There was an
 emphasis
 on being in
 their presence
 and in addition to

taught

as the child learns it - they also

who

During our study of undergraduate education, we found outstanding teachers on every campus.

I met her you that
But we also found

great "passivity" in the classroom

We found ~~that~~ students ~~were~~ eagerly taking notes, ~~cramming~~ for their finals.

And when they did speak out in class, the most frequent question asked was: "Will we have this on the test?"

What we need today are ~~great teachers in the classrooms.~~

~~We need~~ mentors who can inspire students

- to move from conformity to creativity.

~~We need students who~~

- ~~self~~ learn to cooperate with each other, rather than compete. — *since most of the* consequential

problems of one time will be resolved not only as he works together

↑
pgs 9-12
go here
p.73

In ~~the~~ common higher education we ~~do not~~
have great research -

How, then, do we balance teaching and research?

But we need great teaching too. ~~And~~

In the Carnegie Report we urge that the definition of scholarship be expanded.

~~we stop only that~~
teaching was ~~research~~ - ~~And state fully what it means to~~

- We say that scholarship means, of course, the "discovery" of new knowledge"--as in research. ~~be a scholar.~~
- But we also conclude that scholarship means the "integration" of knowledge"--that ~~it means~~ is, the ability to put new ideas in larger context.
- We say that scholarship means the "application" of knowledge"--as in the great land-grant tradition.
- And we conclude that scholarship, at its best, also means the "transition" of knowledge"--through great teaching in the classroom. ~~transition~~ ~~terms missing~~

What we need, in ~~in colleges today~~ ~~on one~~, is a mosaic of talent--an arrangement in which all four dimensions of scholarship--are honored and rewarded.

- discovery,
integration,
application
transition -

At the 200th anniversary of Columbia University, Robert Oppenheimer argued vigorously that the role of the scholar is, in fact,

not complete,
until he is engaged actively
in teaching what he has observed.

Oppenheimer put the matter this way. He said that--

- it is "the proper role" of the scientist that he not merely find a new truth and communicate it to his fellows at large,
- but (it is also the role of the scientist) that he teach--
- that he try to bring the most honest and most intelligible account of new knowledge to all who will try to learn.

And this means teaching future scholars in the classroom.

I'm suggesting that ~~all of us are where we are today~~
~~because of an exciting teacher.~~

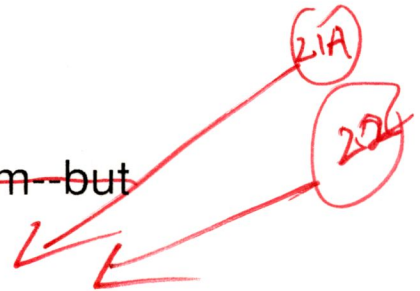
- ~~And~~ if colleges do not recognize good teaching,
- if they do not reward those who spend time with students,

Then scholarship will decline and ^{all he} talk ^{is about} about excellence will be simply a diversion.

IV. CAMPUS LIFE

Before closing, I'd like to say a word about the quality of campus life--

- since great teachers ^{may EXTEND} ~~extend their~~ influence--not just in the classroom--but beyond the classroom, too.



In the award-winning Broadway play, Fiddler on the Roof, the peasant dairyman--who raised 5 daughters

- with considerable help from scriptural quotations,
- many of which he himself invented,

says that the things that make life tolerable to the hard working Jewish family are

- the old laws,
- the old customs,
- and the feasts that are handed down from one generation to another.

Without these--the dairyman declares--life would be as shaky as a Fiddler on the Roof.

STUDENTS CAME TO COLLEGE
EXPECTING SOMETHING SPECIAL

27

214

And yet, during our study of colleges we found that

- About 50 percent of today's students say they "feel like a number in a book."
- About 40 percent do not feel a sense of community on campus.
- And about 2/3 of today's students say they have no professor who is interested in their personal lives.
- We also found that 20 percent of today's students say they never use the library.

we also find
a group of
careers

→ with ~~Renowned~~ ~~Ronald Tardous~~ = "Data Age"

→ And even a ~~Signature~~ ~~Signature~~ between
what called the Regular Students

And The Group Now of
Data Age & OLD DEE STUDENTS
in THE Camps

2 WORKS

In targeted Segments in or culture →

MANAGER MEMOR
GONG & OLD
Institution
mission
Guidance

So it is with college. While professors teach and do research, and while students study on their own, life for most of us, is still made possible--

- by shared rituals and traditions,
- by informal learning outside the classroom,
- and by a sense of community on campus.

Today's ^{independent} ~~students~~ ^{clearly} cherish their independence. ^{of} They're pleased that in loco parentis has ^{truly} ^{firmly} been abolished.

But undergraduates like the rest of us

- still want the guidance of great teachers.

One student captured this "ambivalence" when she said

- we don't want the university to be involved in our lives,
- but we would like someone to be concerned occasionally about our lives,
- and at least make freshmen feel that they belong.

CONCLUSION

Here, then, is my conclusion.

American higher education is the ~~energy~~^{envy} of the world. ~~And it's crucial that scholarship persist.~~

~~But undergraduate education is crucial, too.~~

~~And~~^{BUT} to effectively serve students--

- We must affirm both the centrality and integrity of language.
- We must have a curriculum with perspective.
- Also, ~~we~~^{ask about me} all must give recognition to great teaching. ~~whose~~^{whose inspiring new ends.}
- ~~we must~~^{we must} Strengthen the spirit of community on campus.
- And, in the end, help all students understand that to be truly human, one must serve.