

Professor Fisher Suffers Slight Case of Misplaced Inherency

By ROY BEDICHEK Director Emeritus

(Editors Note: This is the third of four articles on the questions raised by a recent attack on interscholastic competition.)

PROFESSOR FISHER apparently considers "inherency" of first importance in the recommendations of the contest Committee of North Central Association.

Here is the test the committee sets up, according to Professor Fisher, which should guide school administrators in making selection of subjects and activities into which it is pedagogically permissible to introduce contests.

The survey may begin at the bottom of the ladder with a recitation in one of the lower grades. The teacher propounds a query in sound Socratic fashion and asks for a show of hands.

If the suspense is prolonged, one or another of the contestants is apt to blurt out, "Let me tell 'em, teacher." The teacher has produced here a situation which is sternly frowned upon by the contest Committee.

LET THE READER visualize a lively recitation in any grade or even the college classroom, in which there is the give and take of discussion, assertion and counter-assertion, of criticism, retraction and re-statement, all in the stimulating atmosphere of controversy, held firmly, however, in the frame of a co-operative endeavor to attain to some nearer ascertainment of truth.

Returning to the simplified version, i.e., to the three third graders who are bidding for the approval of the teacher in order to advance their distinction among their fellows; is there competition in this situation or not?

This emotion in more formal competitions is referred to as the "pride of victory." On the other hand, is the little fellow who thought he knew but didn't, a mite taken aback, and is not this perhaps akin to the "humiliation of defeat"?

If "YES" is the answer to these questions, the teacher who stages such a recitation is guilty of bad pedagogy, in the opinion of the contest Committee, as interpreted by Professor Fisher. These are "peripheral rewards," hence, an illegitimate device, unless, indeed, the "contest element is inherent" in the subject matter of the recitation.

Supporters of the winning performer bask momentarily in the glory of their champion's triumph. Supporters of the defeated ones participate mildly and for the instant in their humiliation.

Is ambition fired in any breast to prepare the next lesson more thoroughly and so outshine the sluggards? Is this kind of thing competition or not? If so, is it good or evil? Is the class generally interested or amused with the battle of wits in which one of their number has now been declared victor?

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the possession of this knowledge by a goal not "genuine" and not "meaningful," to quote Professor Fisher?

Perhaps even the most passive member has been fed a little morsel of information while his attention was fixed upon the subject through a natural interest in how the contest would turn out.

"Still sits the school by the road" which a certain poet remembers across 40 years as the scene of one of those contests in which he suffered the humiliation of defeat.

"His cap pulled low upon his face Where pride and shame were mingled." He remembers, also, the sympathetic words of the victor, "I'm sorry that I spelt the word I hate to go above you."

Maybe he remembers, also, after the lapse of 40 years, how to spell the word.

IN ASSAYING this sample recitation to determine the presence, if any, of what Professor Fisher might call "contest-contamination," we have carefully avoided design-

ating the subject matter thereof, as "reading," "writing," or "arithmetic," because it makes not a particle of difference; and no member of the contest Committee of the North Central Association would say that it does. Is the "contest element inherent" in any of these subjects? The Committee says "no," and the Committee is right. The "inherency" of which so much is made in Professor Fisher's article would seem to be in the child rather than in the subject.

Children are competitive; subject matter is not; "activities" are not. The great English Schoolmaster, Sydney Smith, said, "I'd as soon try to make bread without yeast as conduct a recitation without competition." Why? Because children are naturally, instinctively, joyously competitive—some of them more so than others, of course—and to ignore the response in a child to a competitive situation, or to suppress his impulse to engage in rivalry, is to forego the strongest incentive to effort in the whole arsenal of motivations.



PAMPA A CAPELLA CHOIR—This A Capella Choir is an auditioned group of singers, made up primarily of juniors and seniors who became eligible for the choir by at least one year's experience in high school mixed chorus.

Director of the choir, and Choral Supervisor in Pampa public schools is Kenneth W. Baumgardner. Under his jurisdiction are this choir, three mixed choruses, a freshman girls' glee club, a senior and a junior sextet and a boys' quartet.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

September 1, 1949-September 1, 1950

GENERAL FEE ACCOUNT RECEIPTS. Table listing receipts including membership fees, tournament receipts, and other income for the year.

DISBURSEMENTS. Table listing expenses for various categories such as rebates, travel, and administrative costs.

CITY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT Fort Worth, March 10 and 11, 1950. Table listing receipts and expenditures for the tournament.

STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT Austin, March 2, 3, and 4, 1950. Table listing receipts and expenditures for the state tournament.

FOOTBALL ACCOUNT RECEIPTS. Table listing receipts for football activities.

DISBURSEMENTS. Table listing expenses for various categories including rebates, travel, and administrative costs.

MUSIC MATTERS

By F. W. SAVAGE Director of Music Activities

TEACHER CERTIFICATION This column has received one letter in response to last month's comments which (we thought) merited consideration. As you will remember (perhaps), the proposition was that proposed teacher certification regulations take into consideration whether or not teachers of music are "well-balanced individuals."

"How then, can we best provide teachers who are socially and emotionally well-adjusted? It appears to me to be primarily a matter of selection and guidance, not only after the student reaches the teacher training institution but also before he enters his professional training. The public school music teachers throughout the state should be on the lookout for students who feel have the inclination and ability to become successful teachers and suggest that they pursue a music education degree.

"With such an informed student entering college, there is less probability that a socially maladjusted student would want to enter a teacher training program. The college advisers should be alert to the social and emotional, as well as to the musical maturity of the student. Cumulative records should be kept for each student and periodic conferences between student and advisor should be held. If the student appears to be emotionally or socially immature, objective tests such as the Bell Adjustment Inventory (social adjustment), Guilford - Martin Gamlin (emotional adjustment), or Guilford-Martin O, Ag, and Co. (objectivity, agreeableness, cooperativeness) should be administered early in his training.

"It is impossible to set up a curriculum that will reflect all the attributes we want to see in a teacher even if we doubled the length of the training period. Now that the gap between supply and demand is steadily closing, we can afford to place greater emphasis on the selection of the students we admit to the teacher training program. With greater help from

Texas Audio-Visual Program Lagging

Lack of teacher training in the use of audio-visual materials is hindering the visual education program in Texas schools, surveys conducted by University of Texas Faculty members B. F. Holland, H. Oliver Holt, and J. M. Lannon indicate.

Data compiled from questionnaires answered by 100 school superintendents showed only 17.2 per cent of teachers in Texas schools have adequate training in audio-visual education. A computation of equipment to number of students disclosed the following situations: one standard slide projector per 944 pupils; one record player per 413 pupils; one sound motion-picture projector per 556 pupils; and one miniature projector per 2,570 pupils. On the basis of requirements recommended by the American Council on Education's Committee on Visual Aids in Education, the equipment owned by Texas schools is far below minimum standards.

The researchers reported that school journeys and public museums are two often-overlooked types of visual aids.

Hawaii Has Openings For Grades Teachers

Hawaii needs kindergarten and elementary teachers for the 1951-52 school year, Dr. Hob Gray, University of Texas Teacher Placement Service director, reports.

Teachers for kindergarten and the first three grades are most in demand, with only a limited number needed in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, Dr. Gray said. Only US citizens will be employed. Preference will go to applicant's with masters' degrees. Next in line will be applicants with bachelor's degrees and one year or more of successful teaching experience. Practice teaching and a minimum of 18 hours in education are required. Teachers will receive their initial appointments to rural consolidated schools.

For further information, interested teachers may contact Dr. Gray at Box 2138, University Station, Austin, Texas.

Summary table listing various expenses and receipts for music activities.

