MEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?—Page 4
ON TEACHING FRESHMAN ENGLISH
by David Honick

"Freshmen, the principal victims and detractors of the study of grammar, do carry a freight of garbage to college. . . ."

Editor's note: David Honick is an associate professor of English at Lesley.

The study of traditional grammar is flogged as useless. And with validity: Chaucer and Shakespeare defy Mrs. Murphy's seventh grade exercises in parsing and diagramming. Samuel Langhorne Clemens transmuted the diction of an illiterate adolescent into a work of literary genius. "Misspelling" rages epidemic. With good cause: English orthography is chaotic.

Contrariwise, freshmen, the principal victims and detractors of the study of grammar, do carry a freight of garbage to college: Thou shalt not begin a sentence with a conjunction. Conclude not thy sentence with a preposition. Be wary lest thou overuse the first person singular pronoun. In a recent class on topic sentences, students felt vaguely uncomfortable with "Snow makes beautiful," ungrammatical indeed if we insist that 'beautiful' is an adjective or that highly abstract concept usually preceded by the definite article. They were better pleased with "Snow beautifies," grammatically correct, but (at least to the ear of this writer) stilted.

Given on the one hand the irritability of the student with grammar and even Aristotelian rhetoric, given her I-could-care-less attitude toward spelling, and given on the other hand a mass of poorly taught and even poorly apprehended injunctions, taboos and prohibitions, where is the teacher of freshman English to undertake his task?

"Clean the air!" is the cliche that first occurs, and that metaphorical ecological imperative may serve. First, help the student to know that of all environments language, next to the air itself, is the most pervasive, most subtle, most life-supporting. John Keats wrote (somewhere?!), "English has got to be kept up." From the sure grasp of language as environment we may move to maintenance and to extension. Use language to state as clearly and economically as possible your intent. Choose that structure which serves your purpose best, but choose or develop a structure. Be bold, be audacious: coin the needed term, catch the rhythm of speech and the infinitude of its sounds—always remembering that a reader (auditor) has a need to perceive and to translate into intelligence. Stretch the convention that is, push it to its periphery, but remember that we do communicate within a convention, within a social context.

Trust your senses: know what you see and hear and touch and taste and smell, and know that there are words already and words yet to be invented to relate the experience to another soul.

And never, never forget, as either utterer or perceptor, the thing being said. One of the ultimate nonsequiturs by which this writer lives was spoken to him by his mother in the dim immemorial days, "Son, you may know something about Shakespeare but your old lady knows something too!" The teacher of freshman English or any discipline does well to know what he knows while respecting what his student knows and assessing what she does not.
14-4-14 PROGRAM ADOPTED

Having now completed its pilot phase, the Lesley College January Program will be expanded in the 1972-73 academic year to include all students in the College, according to a proposal approved by the Lesley faculty during its March 7 meeting. The proposal was brought to the faculty by the College’s Curriculum Committee after it completed a series of questionnaires and interviews with freshmen and faculty involved in the program this past January.

The new proposal, called a “14-4-14 program” to indicate the proposed breakdown of weeks in an academic year, is to take effect this fall, pending approval by the Board of Trustees.

The wording of the proposal as approved read: “The Curriculum Committee recommends to the faculty of Lesley College that a ‘14-4-14’ program be built into the planning for the entire college to take effect, if possible, for all classes in the fall of 1972; and that the Curriculum Committee, in cooperation with the College administration, be charged with the task of working out the details and administration of the program for the coming year."

One of the plan’s most immediate effects was noted by William Perry, dean of graduate studies, who said the current 16-week fall and spring semesters would have to be restructured to accommodate the four-week January Program.

The Curriculum Committee said it would pay particular attention to ten factors during its January Program planning: faculty assignment; work load and remuneration; quality control of student experiences; enrichment of the Lesley January Program in relation to the variety of opportunities both off and on campus and at other schools; the significance of field experience in relation to the total educational mission of the College; calendar and scheduling considerations; consequences of working with a dual calendar; lead time for thoughtful consideration of planning; consideration of credit values; establishing and clarifying necessary and appropriate administrative procedures, and clarifying the meaning of free choice for a January experience.

The Curriculum Committee said its freshmen interviews and questionnaires indicated nearly 100 percent interest in continuing the program. Peter Siegle, who presented the proposal to the faculty on behalf of the committee, said comments on the program by students with controlled off-campus projects were generally positive. Many on-campus students described the January Program as “exhilarating” and “exciting” but also “boring” because there was too much free time.

The projects of those who left campus ranged from work in rehabilitation centers and hospitals, studies of juvenile courts in another state, and specific teaching experiences to study/travel throughout the U.S., London and Copenhagen. Alumnae participated in several projects.

Siegle said response from education faculty who evaluated the January Program during interviews was “more measured” than the freshman response. They expressed some belief that the program was an attempt to “goose up” the Lesley curriculum to make it more attractive.
MEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Even though the idea of men in the early elementary school classroom is hardly new these days, there are still those who conjure up the Disney image of Ichabod Crane at the mention of male teachers of small children. Heaven forbid they should verbalize such a mental picture. But if they do, you might attempt the gentle argument that Washington Irving’s superstitious Yankee schoolmaster, with beak nose, prominent Adam’s Apple, stringy pigtail, skinny knee britches and face pressed into a book is hardly a fitting image for today’s pre-school classroom...

Maybe you could point out the growing communal interest in raising children and educating them, the sharing of that so-called woman’s responsibility. Or perhaps you could suggest that there is an apparent need for a male influence in pre-school programs so that children can associate learning equally with men and women at the earliest possible point in their classroom education.

Or maybe you could suggest that the doubters make a trip to Lesley College’s Lesley-Ellis Pre-School in Cambridge and visit Roland Stern, who thinks it’s “just common sense” for youngsters to be exposed to both men and women in the classroom.

Roland, whose height nearly doubles that of most of his young pupils and whose long hair and full beard bear little resemblance to an Ichabod, is the school’s full-time teaching assistant. He has been working with the otherwise all-female staff since last fall, surrounded from Monday through Friday mornings with the noise and exuberance of young artists (ages three through six) at work with wood and clay, letter cards and sandbox construction, squeaky guinea pigs and paint brushes. Nothing is awfully unusual or unique about Roland’s role in the classroom in relation to the other teachers except that he is not a full-fledged instructor and, in the words of Marie Louise Scudder, the school’s coordinating teacher, “he has a beard.” Mrs. Scudder quite rightly finds it difficult to accept the presence of a male teacher in the school as anything but natural.

Despite the relatively few men in early childhood education, Roland doesn’t see his job as part of a growing trend in education so much as he views it as a learning experience for Roland Stern. With an admittedly self-centered viewpoint, Roland says that by watching children, he has gained insight into his own upbringing and the development of his own values. “Working with children provides a lot of self-perception,” he says. “Knowing that a lot of the influences on their lives are the same ones I had on mine at that age, I often see how and why I think and act the ways that I do.”

I also see that a lot of the things I’d like them to learn are things I want to learn myself—how to relax more with others, to be warmer and more open.”

The evolution of Roland’s interest in kids began early last year with the formation of a commune of 10 adults and five children under the age of five. The primary goal of the commune was to share the responsibility of the children equally between the men and the women so the women could, as Roland puts it, “get up from under” the load of child raising. “We wanted to work out the hang-up that raising kids was a responsibility particular to the woman,” he says.

The work of the commune developed into the operation of a day-care center for the children with whom the commune shared a food cooperative. Roland was involved with the center for four months and “for the first time I really got into little kids and the whole concept of day care.”

One of the problems of Roland’s job: “Sometimes I feel like I’m helping to bring up other people’s kids, and I don’t know what their (the parents’) values are. In the commune, I knew the parents and I think I only ran into a value conflict once when a mother objected to a certain way I handled a situation involving her child. For that reason, I think the communal situation was better—I wish there were more parental involvement at Lesley-Ellis.”

As for being the only man in an all-female teaching situation, Roland finds “no hassles—we all enjoy
“Our whole culture traditionally deprives men and young children of each other’s company.”—President Don Orton

The desirability of having men in early elementary school classrooms seems to go without saying. But attracting men to those classrooms makes desirability and possibility two different things entirely. The Research and Development Office of the Massachusetts State Department of Education reported that in the school year 1970-71, there were a total of 4,099 male teachers in the state’s elementary grades—kindergarten through grade six and in some cases, through grade eight—as compared with 23,051 female elementary school teachers. Of the 380 part-time teachers in the lower grades, just 62 were men.

Reaction to enrolling men at Lesley College is generally very favorable among faculty and administrators, not to mention students. Lesley would be an all-around stronger college if it could attract men,” Don Orton, president of the College, said. “We need them. But the national experience regarding recruitment of men to colleges like Lesley has not been encouraging. The restraints against a man teaching early childhood education are great: the jobs are typically underpaid, and the sexual status, although unfortunately disproportionate, is a determining factor. Elementary teaching has traditionally been a woman’s job. And in fact, our whole culture traditionally deprives men and young children of each other’s company.”

Dr. Orton indicated that current statistics make infeasible an active attempt at recruiting men to Lesley. “I wouldn’t mind a slow integration process here, starting with a few men and increasing their numbers each year,” he said. “But I think we need to have reasonable assurance that those numbers would increase. If we had a good chance of getting a significant number of qualified male candidates for enrollment, I’d be very much for it.” He added that enrolling only a few men at Lesley would amount to tokenism.

Lesley has had male participants in summer education workshops in the past, although it has never enrolled and graduated a fulltime undergraduate man. The graduate school fares better: there are seven men in fulltime graduate degree programs, five parttime and 14 who are taking graduate courses.

“I’d like to see the undergraduate student body consist of a good 25 per cent—ideally 50 per cent—men,” Dr. Orton said. “It’s a great deal more realistic in terms of living and learning situations and I think the profession itself would be strengthened.”

Although Lesley has done no active recruitment of men at the undergraduate level, Dr. Orton said he expected the issue to be discussed in detail this year by the College’s new Curriculum Study Committee and the trustees’ Committee on Institutional Planning.

Each other’s company, solve problems together as a group and don’t dwell on the male-female distinction.”

Before coming to Lesley-Ellis, Roland, who is also taking a course in the Lesley Graduate School, worked with Urban Planning Aid in Cambridge. After doing extensive work with southern voter registration, the Commonwealth Service Corps (similar to VISTA) and UPA, “I just got tired finally of organizing around other people’s problems.” He responded to an ad last fall in a local paper calling for a “moonlighting carpenter to work with children” at the Lesley-Ellis School.

Roland is not the first man to teach at the school. Last year, Jim McMahon was teaching assistant. He started the job with a few reservations: “I guess there was a kind of basic paranoia about working, and also explaining to others that I was working, in a pre-school. My initial fears turned out to be much worse than the reality of it.”

Jim said that he, unlike Roland, felt a certain hesitation at first on the parts of the women teachers at the school. “I was definitely in an independent position there,” Jim said, “and there were times I think the women were reluctant to tell me what I should do, give an order. But it became clear later that I wasn’t so unique after all; I do think it was unclear though for a while.

“I think that fact is that it is different having a man in the classroom. The message a kid gets is that the classroom is a place for men as well as women. When there is no man, the message may be that education is more strictly feminine, perhaps that education is particularly for women. And maybe that’s a reason for the evidence that boys often get lower grades as a group than girls do.”

Jim speculated on why early elementary teaching has been a job traditionally particular to women. “I think that in this and some other cultures, it’s more acceptable for women to be with children. The preschool is a kind of extension of the home and therefore a place where it was natural for women to be.”

Jim and Roland both noted that cultural conditioning has a great deal to do with the lack of men in early childhood education. Roland: “Fathers generally seem to spend relatively little time with their children, and so it follows that they probably aren’t going to be spend-
Nineteen seventy-one
Judith Barbara Mandell is teaching at the Thornton Dorovian School in New Rochelle, N.Y.

Nineteen seventy
Diane Glucksman Byrne writes that she gave birth to a daughter, Deborah Anne, October 10, 1971. She and her husband Gene live in Manchester, Conn., where Gene owns an American Handicrafts store in West Hartford. § Roberta Ilene Crafin is studying for her graduate degree in adult and higher education at Boston University where she holds a graduate assistantship. § Sharon Coyne Karp is teaching third grade at the Fletcher School in Cambridge, and her husband Charles works with Zayre Corporation in Framingham.

Nineteen sixty-nine
Dora-Ann Romano, who became Mrs. Richard Carroll last August, is presently teaching retarded children in Trumbull, Conn., where her husband is also a teacher. They are living in Fairfield, Conn.

Nineteen sixty-eight
Annalee Tozier was married to David Arthur Pease on December 18, 1971. They are living in Cumberland Foreside, Maine. § Ann Sigler Wilcke informs us that she and husband Ron are the proud parents of their first child, Lori Ann, born September 14, 1971.

Nineteen sixty-seven
Jane Becker Fine's note said she, husband Charles and one-year-old Marni Eve now live in Woodbury, Long Island. Jane taught in New York City for three years before her daughter's birth. § Lynn Kaplan Jacobson launched a successful career as an interior designer after graduating from Parsons School of Design and N.Y.U. Proof of her talent: the Jacobson's New York City apartment won the Burlington Industries Award for "Best Dressed House of 1971." She and her husband Steven have one son, J. Joseph, born in July, 1970. § Phyllis

Anita Menkes is teaching in the Cambridge Public Schools.

Nineteen sixty-five
Carole Orgel Einstein and husband Walter live in Wellesley Hills, Mass. and are the parents of three children: Julie, four, and twin daughters, Nancy and Amy, nine months. § Martha Grossman Sholes lives in Cranston, R.I. with husband Richard and their two children, Michael, born last June 26, and three-year-old Nancy Lynn. § Living in Kailua, Hawaii, while her husband Ben is stationed at the Kanehoe Marine Corps Air Station, is Patricia Jones Tebbault and their three-year-old son Jason Lee.

Nineteen sixty-four
The Peabody School Committee has elected into membership Joan L. Clampa. She has taught in grades two and three and has substituted in special education classes and classes for emotionally disturbed children.

Nineteen sixty-one
Golda Siegel and Tom Doyle were married last December in New York where the couple is now living.

Nineteen sixty
Saralee Fineman Gordon teaches junior high school reading and physical education at Penn Hall Academy in Pittsburgh, Pa. She, husband Larry and two sons live in Churchill.

Nineteen fifty-nine
Mary Penwick Rockford represented Lesley College at the March 4 inauguration of John Herrick Chandler as president of Salem College, Winston-Salem, N.C. § Marilyn Young is teaching third grade in Somersville School, Enfield, Conn. Before joining the school staff, she taught first grade at Kibbe-Fuller School from 1959-66.

Lesley Alumnae who would like to share news, please write to the Current (Class Notes), Lesley College, 29 Everett St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

GENEVIEVE WILSON

It is with great sorrow that we record the passing of Gen evieve Wilson on February 25, 1972. She was associated with Lesley College since 1965 and was appointed director of residencies in 1971.

Ginny's understanding and devotion to others was captured in the comments of one student who wrote, "She really helped me get through Lesley and find myself. She was such a good judge of people."

The Friends of Genevieve Wilson have established a fund with which they will select an appropriate memorial on the new campus. Contributions should be sent to the Lesley College Building Fund in care of Dean Ritvo.
Alumni Currents? In the midst of the contemporary struggle for women's rights, the Lesley College Alumnae Association has proposed changing its name to the Lesley College Alumni Association. The proposal, approved at the March Board of Director's Meeting, is one of 11 constitutional changes to be voted on at the Alumnae Association Annual Meeting on April 29. This major revision has been considered since the Graduate School first admitted men in 1954. Perhaps the change underscores a necessary and slowly developing trend for men in early childhood education.

The Alumnae Association will present a scholarship to an incoming senior at the homecoming luncheon on April 29. The scholarship committee, chaired by Joanne Lipsher Goodman '66, is hoping to increase the size of the scholarship (currently $500) this year. Committee members will review the applicants in early April. They are: Susan Wilcon Etelman '63, Ellin Leventhal '70, Ruth Zulcfsky Nadol '66, Trudy Vernon Magid '42, Gail Roberts Dusseault '60, and Roz Heifetz Abrams '67.

The profits from the April 9 Academy Cinema Theatre Party in Newton Center will go to the scholarship fund. More than 200 people are expected to attend. Coordinating the party is Patty Nesson 'G69. Following the movie, social hours will be held at the homes of: Mr. and Mrs. Luster Delany (Marguerite Shamson '50), Chestnut Hill; Dr. and Mrs. Albert Schilling (Barbara Barron '50), Waban; Mr. and Mrs. Milton Holzman (Barbara Paul '55), Newtonville; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosenthal (Cynthia Shepattin '60), of Chestnut Hill, and Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Tanzer (Marjorie Stone '64), Needham.
PROFESSIONALISM COURSE?

In a letter to President Orton, Sally Galway ’62 expressed concern over the professional status of teachers today. Miss Galway suggested that Lesley offer a course in “professionalism,” which would include: “an in-depth look at teacher organizations and their goals; requirements to attend school board meetings and local teachers’ meetings; time to consider the impact of legislative rulings and speakers representing sides in educational issues.” If you have any thoughts about this, please write to the Current.

KIRK PUBLISHES NEW BOOK

Dr. Samuel Kirk of the University of Arizona, the recipient of an honorary degree from Lesley in 1969, has written the new second edition of “Educating the Exceptional Children” to include all the recent major advances in theory and practice in special education.

The book, which is available in the Lesley Library, introduces the concept of “intraindividual differences” or discrepancies in growth within the exceptional child in order to clarify and unify the concept of exceptional children.

According to Dr. Kirk, “The application of the concept ‘intraindividual differences’ to various kinds of deviating children supplies an integrating element which gives meaning to both the deviating characteristics of the children and the resulting suitable modifications of educational practice.”

Dr. Kirk, the author of more than 130 books and articles on exceptional children, is an internationally recognized authority in the field of exceptional children.

LESLEY STAFF CONDUCTS WORKSHOP

Five Lesley College staff members are conducting courses during the spring semester at Saul Lewenberg Junior High in Mattapan for 80 teacher aides in Boston. The program, which results from a Title I contract between Lesley and the Boston Public Schools, potentially serves as the beginning of a new educational career development program for the participants. Many of the aides, who receive 3.5 credits per course, are expected to continue towards a bachelor’s degree.

Teaching courses are the following Lesley people: Jennifer Page, instructor of education—mathematics workshop; Dr. Lenore Parker, assistant professor of education—reading workshop; Dr. William L. Perry, dean of graduate studies and continuing education—foundations of education; Laura Nemeyer and Sandra Sokolove, lecturers in education—human growth and development.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Elmer E. Van Egmond, dean of general education, was group discussion leader at a three-day conference February 21-24 in Harrisburg, Pa., sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Division of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Two hundred state employees participated in discussions about improving welfare programs.

At the invitation of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Dr. George Miller, vice president for academic affairs, is a participant in a three-week study tour in Europe during March. The program is sponsored by the International Council and Department for Teaching in cooperation with the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Department of Education in England and Wales. Following a study tour of British schools, the study group will attend a UNESCO conference in Paris.

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