

expectedly who can participate in their activities. This hit-or-miss process of finding out-of-school teachers may be the beginning of a better-planned program because it does help the teacher to see that the school program can be enriched tremendously by outside persons. One cannot depend upon this process, however, to discover such people nor feel that it is a guarantee that the special abilities brought to light will be used after they are found.

To achieve the best use of out-of-school teachers, the school must keep an up-to-date record of its resources. The teachers and pupils must know of the resources and plan their program carefully to use them at the most appropriate time. Above all, the administration must be committed to this point of view and work cooperatively with the teachers and others in evolving a program which will meet the needs of the community.

## A Teacher's **Dilemma**



ELIZABETH P. STEIN

AFTER EIGHT YEARS of teaching, I am beginning to reap dividends in the form of a reversion of pedagogical techniques. The children are now teaching me. With the volubility of their discourse on P-38's, Flying Fortresses, Liberators, et al.—I am getting so inflated with information that I ex-

pect to take off any day. It is taking a global war to make me realize how stodgy I had become—and to make me appreciate the perspicacity of pupil *versus* teacher.

Before this renaissance, I had begun to despair. I was continually conscious of trying to "bring down" my mentality-level to that of my 7- and 8-year-old pupils. But, like the proverbial hare, I fell asleep by the wayside and they are now surpassing me.

It was not without reason that I had so long doubted this budding intelligence. I recall many of the *faux pas* they made, their incorrect, and tragically humorous responses on examination papers.

Now, I do not contend that my

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*This delightful story about a modern teacher's troubles comes from Elizabeth P. Stein, second grade teacher in Maple Shade, N. J., and is reprinted here through the courtesy of the New Jersey Educational Review. Judging from Miss Stein's experiences—and her own confessions—there is no limit to what a teacher can learn from her students. "Life itself is a continual process of learning," believes Miss Stein. "We learn from our children—and from all humanity."*

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present-day pupils are the epitome of intellectuality by any means. They still resort to the primitive methods of drawing a hundred dots a minute to represent rain, of placing a grinning sun and a one-inch sky in their masterpieces, of calling "was" "saw," and of saying "busted" for "burst." But they do seem so much more generally informed. Perhaps it is one of the vicissitudes of war.

It looks as if it is time for me to make a few revisions in my curriculum. If I am to make provisions for their expanding interests, it seems I should have a constructive plan in mind. I might make a detailed study of aviation, navigation, logistics, mechanized warfare, with a little clairvoyance thrown in so that I could make intelligent predictions as to when this war will end. I might give some parachute-jumping demonstrations, or outline some techniques for hand-to-hand combat. Or, I might take into account some postwar planning, e.g., the glorification of the soy bean, the Age of Plastics, the doleful demise of the demoniac-dictator.

This brings me to the crux of the matter. Shall I change from my antediluvian ways? Shall I endeavor to become a supreme know-it-all in these fields in which I am the prize know-nothing? How far shall I go in keeping abreast of the times and how much should I streamline my teaching techniques? Are the three R's still considered essential? Shall I strive to develop character with an eye to producing one-term presidents or ought I make it strong enough for four? Is it up-to-date to foster the belief in Santa Claus or shall we give out the pure, unadulterated truth?

The more I think about it, the more bewildered I become. The problem grows in proportion as I consider scores of other fields contiguous with the education of the modern generation in this changing world. Jitter-bugging, for instance. Should we encourage it to be abhorred, ignored, or adored? Swoon-kings and name-bands; an appreciation of same? Modern art, what is it? Criterion for judging best movies-of-the-month? Comic books or classics—which shall it be? Functions of wing skids and other airplane parts? How much to follow and what not to "swallow" in current commercials? Rib-sticking meals or concentrated tablets—pros and cons? How to become a quiz kid in six easy lessons? Interpretation of twentieth century slang, with addenda of expressions created by the war? One world—how to make it a big happy family? A universal language—why not Igpay Atinlay? Et cetera, et cetera.

Educating this modern generation is a challenge; hence, my apparent dilemma. But if anyone accosts me with that "well, what-are-you-going-to-do-about-it" look in his eyes, I am going to stare right back and say (to myself, if it's a superior):

*I admit this century  
Brings changes much too fast for  
me.  
Oh, dullard that I am—no bliss  
Can come of ignorance like this.  
But, nichevo? If I become  
Completely renovated,  
Then, in a few years hence I shall  
Again be antiquated!*

—From *New Jersey Educational Review*, December, 1943.

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