vidual. Let’s see what an individual can do alone, as well as in a group.

We need to put the brakes on our herd tendencies in education and to strike out in as many directions as we need to explore to find more satisfactory answers to the acute problems we face in education today. The movement must be forward—not backward. We need to demonstrate by our actions our ability to respect the dignity of every human being, to provide adequate resources for him to realize more fully his capacities. We need to understand that what we discover as a partial answer today may be totally inadequate for tomorrow’s problems.

If we could eradicate the educational epidemics that continually sweep this country, we might not have a formula to propagandize, but we might develop a more integrated, intelligent, functioning individual who does not apologize for independent thought, who is not ashamed of the fact that he reads good books, who does not despair if he finds himself daring to take exception to the ultimatum of the group, who does not feel that the magic answer to all questions is psychoanalysis, and who is not terrified at the prospects of being alone occasionally. In fact, it is quite possible that the day has come in the field of education when all the teachers should be inoculated against fadism and groupitis and with their newly acquired immunity, from both within and outside the profession, would be free to seek out the truth for themselves—wherever it might lead.

JOHN U. MICHAELIS

Educating Children for Change

“Let us help children develop creative persistence in continuing to try to resolve conflicts that appear at the present time to be irreconcilable.”

FOUR FACETS of education for change have been singled out for consideration in this statement. Certain points about the child’s frame of reference for reacting to change are made first. This is followed by attention to selected aspects of two interrelated processes involved in dealing with change. Illustrative concepts related to change as found in basic sciences are summarized next. Finally, a few pitfalls and related challenges are noted. Because definitive research is not available, only tentative inferences and general suggestions can be made.

A fact that must not be overlooked is that children are actually living change in a day by day complex of experiences. They are a part of it and they interact with change via TV, radio, the press, experiences in school, community activities, and experiences in a variety of non-school educational agencies. What may seem like a dramatic change to an elderly person is really just life today for the child. For example, in the 1920’s an expression of great speed was “going like forty” which later was changed to “going like sixty” and still later to “going over a hundred.” Recently the writer heard children say as they engaged in dramatic
play with jet planes, “Okay, let’s try for three machs.” This is indeed a change for the person accustomed to “going like forty.” Yet for the child it is life today which will become his frame of reference for considering change tomorrow.

Thus an individual born in a world of jets, TV, nuclear fission and fusion, automation, social welfare programs, international agencies, and the like builds a background for thinking about change quite different from that of an individual born in an earlier generation. Both a great challenge and a difficulty arise because of this. The great challenge is to nurture the child’s developing background in such a way that he becomes truly at home in the world today—finds a role to play, is aware of the effect of change upon one’s role, learns to deal with change-producing forces, senses the emerging nature and direction of change, and is not frightened by change. The great difficulty is to develop a creative and inquiring sensitivity to changes needed in non-material phases of our culture to meet problems created by changing from “going like forty” to “let’s try for three machs.”

Changes within children themselves cannot be overlooked since they condition the child’s view of change and of others as they react to change. Expert guidance is needed as children move from dependence to independence, from a me to we to me-we-other concept of human relations, from gangs and cliques of one sex to heterosexual groups, and from self-centered to in-group centered values to broader values and ideals vital in democratic living. Acceptance and understanding of changes within children should be coupled with experiences designed to enable children to understand and cope with changes within themselves and within their groups. The child’s changing self-concept needs special attention so that a wholesome self-concept emerges as he moves from a me to we to me-we-other approach to others. Key outcomes are reasoned self-understanding and self-acceptance which are related to understanding and acceptance of others.

Basic Processes

Children need to become increasingly self-directive in dealing with change. A variety of competencies are needed ranging from first level communication skills to a high level of critical-creative thinking. Two interrelated processes which combine a multitude of competencies are problem solving and the making of choices.

A dimension of these processes needing systematic attention is that composed of feelings and attitudes. This element is of crucial importance because of the emotional involvement created by change. In any given personal or social problem of real interest and concern, feelings and facts are intertwined and decision making typically is based on both. Preferences, interests, tastes, likes, dislikes very properly enter the thinking process. The problem is not to rule them out, or to ignore them, but to recognize them as a part of the process. It may well be that the feelings of the group, or of individuals within the group, will be of first importance in reaching a decision. Or it may be that once feelings and facts are both considered the decision will be based primarily on facts, and plans will be made to eliminate or control insecurities or threats to individuals because of the feelings involved. In either event,

JOHN U. MICHAELIS is professor of education, University of California, Berkeley.
growing competence in handling both feelings and facts should be a primary outcome of problem-solving experiences that entail emotional involvement.

Related to this are the competencies needed to reap maximum benefits from mass media and non-school educational agencies which present current changes in an unsystematic way. Analysis, synthesis and some organized consideration of changes in light of values and current problems are necessary if effective understanding and action are to be achieved. High order skills are involved. For example, skills in critical and evaluative viewing and listening are needed to detect and share change-in-process and problems created by change as they are portrayed on TV and radio. Critical and selective reading abilities enable the child to note recent and long-term changes reported by the press and in resources found in libraries. Critical observation and research skills can be used on study trips to museums which offer concrete opportunities to develop insight into changes whether they are related to inventions, race relations, intercultural contributions, or to other human problems. Similarly, participation in youth groups and activities of civic and welfare agencies, and analysis of materials produced by various groups bring children face to face with new developments and proposals for meeting change. Competence in evaluating conflicts, sifting out critical elements, making choices and working with others to further common goals are brought into play.

Because change forces individuals and groups to make choices, the process of making choices in light of sound values becomes increasingly important. Involved are such elements as predicting the consequences of various choices, clarification of pertinent values, reconciling conflicts of values where possible or understanding and appreciating conflicting values where reconciliation is not possible, using mutually acceptable values as guides to choice making, balancing adherence and flexibility in applying values in new situations, and continuing evaluation and revision in light of acceptable values. While some choices will be primarily an individual matter, increasingly the trend is toward the making of choices in a group context. Here the individual needs to learn to work within a group-value frame of reference with sensitivity to individual variations. Fundamental attitudes of cooperation, concern for others, respect for the individual, and open-mindedness can be brought to bear directly upon specific choice options. Without such specific application these broad attitudes do not yield maximum returns to the improvement of choice making in a group setting.

Basic Concepts Related to Change

Concepts related to change as developed in the basic sciences and the humanities need to be considered systematically in planning and revising the curriculum. Such concepts are helpful to school workers in their own search for a better understanding of change and as a possible dimension of learning experiences for children if pertinent to a given problem. In order to keep ourselves up-to-date we need the continuing counsel of experts in the various disciplines. The following examples are illustrative of concepts related to change in different areas of human activity.

How people react to change is conditioned not only by physical factors in their environment but also by factors in their culture and subcultures. Likenesses and differences here and in other places need to be explored to points of under-
standing and appreciation in light of multi-factor rather than single-factor causation.

Change is an imperative condition of human society, but may or may not be progress. As value systems change, cultures change and the desirability of change is appraised in light of values. Change has accelerated in the recent past in some areas of human activity and not in others with resultant dislocation and strain.

Use of the method of free inquiry is essential to the making of decisions in light of change and to the appraising of rightness and wrongness of action. Decisions and actions are right if they lead to a better way of life; they are wrong if detrimental to the individual or to society. Each individual needs to fashion a framework of values for such appraisal and each individual is ultimately responsible for ethical matters in his own life. Through religion and philosophy man seeks and expresses values, and tries to relate his life to value-producing and personality-producing forces in the universe.

Increasing interdependence coupled with the struggle to achieve a better life in widely varying social-physical environments accentuate the need for teamwork in meeting human problems resultant from change. Needs, conflicts, tensions, hopes and aspirations need to be considered in light of varying human values and in light of varying means employed to deal with them.

Social groupings develop and change to meet individual and social needs. In varying degrees groups condition individual behavior, induce conformity, tap individual uniquenesses, and conserve individual and group integrity. Group values are strong motivating forces, they differ greatly in various cultures and sub-
cultures, and frequently are obscured in conflicts and tensions. What may appear to be nonconformity to one group is really conformity in light of another's values. Effective communication between and within groups is essential to progress in coping with change.

Demands and problems created by change have forced individuals to resort to group action in an increasing number of situations. Loss of individual identity in groups has altered not only the roles that individuals play, but has created new concepts of group action essential to the achievement of both individual and group goals. New challenges and responsibilities face each individual as steps are taken to maintain personal integrity and individualism in certain spheres of activity while an all out group effort is made in other activities.

Governments exist and change to serve the people and to regulate certain activities in the public interest so that security, justice, welfare and freedom may prevail. An increasing sense of brotherhood and concern for others is being expressed at home and in other places through changes in laws and institutions. Great civilizations have declined because of the failure to meet changing conditions through institutional adjustments. A belief in progress appears to be basic to the improvement of government.

Changes in a given culture are due to cultural inventions of other times and places as well as to inventions of the given culture. Invention, accumulation, diffusion and adjustment are processes in cultural evolution. Increasing cultural interaction has accelerated these processes, increased interdependence, and led to the development of new institutions.

Rate of change in both material and non-material aspects of culture varies greatly among cultures and subcultures.
Isolated groups change slowly. Individuals in isolated cultures have little or no opportunity to move from a me-we to a me-we-other concept of human relations.

A dual stimulator-perpetuator role for schools and certain other institutions has emerged in connection with the rapidly changing material aspects of our culture and the slowly changing non-material aspects. On the one hand schools utilize and pass on material change to youngsters; on the other hand they conserve and pass on certain basic values of long term importance in our culture. Education is expected to stimulate technological and scientific change in line with material needs, yet must perpetuate and pass on many traditions, customs and norms in social areas, some of which may be out of line with emerging human relations needs. Material changes transmitted through schools by mandate of the people constitute a stimulating and changing influence in our culture. Social norms transmitted through schools by mandate of the people constitute a conservative, stabilizing influence. The great challenge here is to note needed changes in social norms and to use reasoned persuasion to bring about their inclusion in the instructional program.

To Be Avoided

There are several pitfalls or dangers that should be avoided in our efforts to educate for change. One of the most serious is the tendency of some adults to become alarmed by change. If we do become alarmed and reveal anxieties we may create a real psychological problem for children as well as for ourselves. Inevitably children take on some of our worries and anxieties. They may even become frustrated, as are many adults, by rapid changes that are taking place.

On the other hand if we adults do not become alarmed by change, or do not reveal anxieties, if we can ride the changes as children do when they interact with secure persons, we can make a real and immediate contribution to the education of children for change. This calls for a high level of self-discipline because experiences in our past are vastly different from experiences in the present. If we exercise such self-discipline and endeavor to develop it within children they will be better equipped to accept and to deal with change in the future when present-day experiences become their past and when changes crowd into their lives as adults. And in our teaching about change let us avoid the creation of fears about the future and attitudes toward change that are based on hopelessness, futility, and inevitable determinism.

A second pitfall is that of stopping short of helping children to generalize about change and to find a role to play as changes occur in home, school, community, or in the broader environment. It is one thing merely to perceive change; it is quite another to move on to develop generalizations and plans of action to meet change. Generalizations about change should be developed by children to enable them to meet and understand change in a variety of situations and to bring order to their thinking about change. Plans of action should be developed where appropriate to help them work out a role to play. The challenge is to help children move from a level of mere awareness of change, to understanding and generalizing about change, to finding a role to play in dealing with change.

A third pitfall is the belief held by some that non-material elements of a culture should change as rapidly as material elements. What psychological and social
chaos we would have if certain basic values and ideals found in the home, church and other institutions were to change as rapidly as have certain technological elements of our culture! Stability, security and a steadying frame of reference are needed to deal with change. Frustration, anxiety, insecurity, poor choice making, and unintelligent problem solving can be expected in any situation in which there are no stabilizing factors, no operating values in which individuals have confidence, or no sound ground rules for action. The plea here is not for the maintenance of archaic institutions. Rather, let us make those modifications in non-material elements needed to deal with change and at the same time identify and utilize the steadying, security-giving elements needed to enhance individual and group welfare.

A fourth pitfall is the tendency of some to “chuck the old and grab the new” and to take on an attitude of unreasoned skepticism regarding a given cultural heritage. Change for change’s sake emerges as their mode of operation. Let us recognize that any brand of authoritarianism is inimical to education for change whether it be based on either a status quo or on an anti-status quo approach. The tendency of some to desire pat answers derived through exclusive consideration of externals must be supplanted by a consideration of all the factors both internal and external that are related to a given problem created by change.

A fifth pitfall is the tendency of some to lose sight of the individual. The emergence of groups as power elements in all phases of our culture, and subgroups as power elements within large groups, quite properly has focused attention upon group processes. And group approaches will be used increasingly to meet problems and to deal with change. But what about the individual? Is maximum self-realization neglected? There need not be inconsistencies and neglect, provided consideration is given to both individual and group dynamics in a given situation.

A sixth pitfall is the introduction of conflicting values which children cannot handle without developing serious anxieties and frustrations. Home-school, majority-minority, and child-adult values are conflicting in a variety of individual and group situations. Many conflicts will arise even though we would wish otherwise. But let us not add to this burden by introducing conflicts of value resultant from change which are far beyond the child’s ability to handle. The challenge here is not to avoid conflict, rather it is to avoid the introduction of conflicts which lead to hostility and threats to integrity. The second challenge is to help children develop competence in maintaining emotional balance and integrity in the face of what appear to be irreconcilable conflicts of value of a given moment. And thirdly, let us help children develop creative persistence in continuing to try to resolve some of the conflicts that appear at the present time to be irreconcilable.