A SHORT HISTORY OF UNITED STATES' EDUCATION 1900 to 2006

1900 to 1919

In 1900, the notion of kindergarten was already thirty years old, but only 7% of children in the United States were enrolled in it (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 66). The school year consisted of 99 days, but only half of the school-age population was enrolled (p. 21). Maria Montessori produced a new teaching method ("American Cultural 1900 – 1909", n.d., para. 12.) Eight percent of enrolled students actually graduated from *high school*, a term that often meant "just another room added to a graded elementary school" (p. 48). Although it was inferior to the education of white students, education for blacks "was more accessible than in years past" (Engs, 1987, p. 15). One example was Mary McLeod Bethune's Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls that opened in 1904 (National Park Service, n.d., para. 2).

Between 1900 and 1919, half of the student population [did not] achieve eighth-grade status (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 69), and many of those who were enrolled were "left behind each year" (p. 70). For example, in 1910, only 35% of 17-year-olds were in high school (Conant, 1959, p. 6). Seller (1978) showed that "by 1917, women constituted a clear majority of all high school students" (p. 2).

Cook (1977) noted that the "official beginning of literacy education [for adults] in the United States was Cora Wilson Stewart's moonlight schools of Kentucky" in 1911 (p. 13). Attempts to create high schools for factory workers failed (p. 15). However, a 1913 experiment in New York City to hold "elementary education for adults" was successful (p. 17). Before 1920, seven states were conducting "factory classes" (p. 17). Immigrant education programs sponsored by the government prevailed only from 1915 to 1917.

After that, immigrants were left to fend for themselves in this regard (p. 19). Although they applied to only some adults, more than 150 state normal schools existed by 1900 (Eisner, 1983, p.6.).

Struggle

At the turn of the century, America realized "that public education was a necessary social investment, that popular aspirations and national social and economic well-being demanded that is also be universal" (Clifford, 1978, p. 166). Education for the masses was the defining issue in American education during the two decades (Clifford, p. 117). Edward Thorndike, (1914) one of the most influential educators since 1900, captured the surprise of the new era: "Even today such an ideal for the education of the three quarters of a million children in New York City's schools seems a little absurd" (p. 33). Why bother wasting time to train Jews and Negroes the same way (p. 32); after all, one cannot expect different races to have the same capabilities (p. 68). Almost no one in the mass "could, even with the most advantageous training, discover new truth" (p. 37): How fruitless and ridiculous it would be to pass along what one knows to just anyone who happens to be seated in a chair (p. 41).

Relief

But pass it along, educators did. Cook (1977) reported that prior to World War I, "a spirit of reform flourished and affected almost every aspect of American life" (p. 10). Tyack and Cuban (1995) reported that Teddy Roosevelt's creation of the Panama Canal inspired Administrative Progressives to "develop a blueprint for educational progress" (p. 17). From 1900 to 1950, Administrative Progressives "shaped the agenda and implementation of school reform more powerfully. . . than any other group has done

before or since" (p. 17).The Progressive Education Movement in full force during the first two decades of the century consisted of two branches: John Dewey's "child centered wing" and "mass education wing (sometimes called administrative)" often associated with Edward Thorndike (Levin, 1991, p. 71). Dewey believed in "creative self-expression" (Cremin,1968, p. 183) while Thorndike and his followers at Columbia University believed in the "'science' of education" (Levin, p. 71).

Dewey hoped to "change American society through educational reform" (Lagemann, 1989, p. 205). One way to begin this process was through the continued use of the Laboratory School, established in 1896 at the University of Chicago (p. 196). The purpose of such a school was to "'exhibit, test, verify, and criticize theoretical statements and principles . . ., to add to the sum of facts and principles in its special line.'" Dewey argued that scientists cannot operate without labs, so the same is true of educators (p. 197). Progressive educators attempted to make schools "as pleasurable and failure-free as possible" (Clifford, 1978, p. 182). As Tyler (1987/1986) noted, Dewey's 1913 "Monograph on Interest and Effort in Education" was one of the five greatest curriculum events of the twentieth century: In it, he announced that students who are interested in a topic tend to learn more than their peers (p. 37). Using this new information about students promised to lead to better practice in the classroom (Clifford, p. 118).

In contrast, representatives from the scientific management period, at its height from 1900 to 1925, (Getzels, 1978, p. 498), changed the educational world in other ways. In 1909, five years after Dewey left the University of Chicago, Charles Judd took over the education program there (Lagemann, 1989, p. 204). Dewey had had hopes of changing society while Judd successfully changed the face of education. Judd's goal was

to “change education through professionalization” (p. 205). Judd separated education courses at the University of Chicago from the philosophy department: Suddenly education took up residence as a science, and courses such as history of education disappeared from the curricula (p. 206). But Judd could not promote the new science of education alone: By rallying colleagues, he formed the Judd Group of whom William S. Gray, the first president of the International Reading Association, was a member (p. 207). The Judd group lent itself well to the “increasing bureaucracy in schools and universities” (p. 209). This was also the period when there was discussion about forming a Department of Education (Cook, 1977, p. 10).

Judd, however, was not the only authority in the Progressive Era devoted to the notion of the “’expert’” (Seller, 1978, p. 11). In 1909, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (NCMH) emerged. These “reform-minded academicians, social workers, physicians, and psychiatrists” including William James (Cohen, 1983, p. 125), believed that mental illness was the plaguing the nation (p. 126). For several decades to come, they would be successful in making the American school the location of treatment for social problems.

Beyond Judd and the NCMH, other experts became highly influential. School administrators began to implement Francis Taylor’s scientific management for industry. Efficiency was the name of the game. Suddenly,

> teachers were regarded as workers to be supervised by specialists who made sure that goals were being attained, that teachers were performing as prescribed, and that the public who paid for the schools were getting their money’s worth. The task was to get teachers to follow the one best method, a method that scientific

management of education would prescribe. (Eisner, 1983, p. 7)

As Clifford (1978) noted, nearing the end of the second decade of the century, "more than half of America's elementary-school teachers had two years or less of academic and professional training beyond high school. In this context, textbooks often functioned as undeniable crutches" (p. 158).

But why was efficiency needed? Edward Thorndike believed that "creat[ing] a better, more predictable world" was the goal. For the next seventy years, Thorndike's scientific management would be an example for the world to follow (Eisner, 1983, p. 6). Thorndike was a firm believer in control and in testing. Since children were commonly regarded as ''empty organisms'" whom teachers had to fill (Getzels, 1978, p. 489), two things needed to be controlled: teachers and students. Teachers would need to determine what had to be learned; therefore, classrooms needed to be set up in such as way as to permit this control (p. 490). Testing was a large part of Thorndike's repertoire. As Clifford (1978) shared,

> In December 1910, E. L. Thorndike appeared at a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers of Mathematics and Natural Science to talk of objective (quick-scoring), standardized tests. The subject aroused interest among [many] educational groups, and samples of the 'new type' tests were reprinted in the *Journal of Geography* . . . early in 1912." (p. 114)

The period of 1900 to 1919 saw the onslaught of intelligence testing for Army recruits (Levin, 1991, p. 73)—an activity in which Thorndike participated.

Efficiency was also needed to address the problem of mass education. Levin (1991) noted that "from 1890 to 1918, . . . secondary school attendance increased 711

percent. . . " (p. 72). Kindergarten in itself was a type of reform intended to "rescue" entire families of immigrants and fashion them into Americans. Poverty and ignorance proving to be a dangerous combination, kindergarten would provide respite (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 66). Dewey's notion of individualized instruction was left behind as "urban school populations were growing faster than classrooms could be built" (Seller, 1978, p. 12). One-size-fits-all became the theme.

1920 to 1929

In the 1920 to 1929 period, the schoolhouse received much attention. In fact, Tyack and Cuban (1995) noted, "the schoolhouse was to America in the 1920s what the cathedral was to the Middle Ages. . . " (p. 16). Twenty percent of 5-year-olds were enrolled in kindergarten (p. 66). For most of the nation, compulsory schooling until age sixteen became the norm (Cook, 1977, p. 22). By the end of the 1920s, people were talking about the formation of junior high schools, and only a very few already existed (Tyack & Cuban, p. 71). Students began to be promoted by age, rather than test score (p. 72). Since child labor experienced a reduction, more children stayed in school (p. 71), but in 1920, only 17% of those who stayed in school actually graduated (p. 48). By 1925, "state departments of education managed to 'standardize' more than 40,000 schools" (p. 20).

Struggle

Many of the struggles from 1900 to 1919 persisted. Dewey was still struggling to be heard. Adult education was still needed. Mass education continued to present problems. Textbooks, however, became the object of censorship (Clifford, 1978, 159). The 1925 Scopes Trial was a struggle of historic proportions. High school biology teacher John Scopes was "charged with illegally teaching the theory of evolution" ("State v. John Scopes," n.d., para. 2). This was one example of the "chaos" of the decade: "Traditionalists. . . worried that everything valuable was ending" (para. 1).

The Twenties saw heated debate about testing students (Cremin, 1968, p. 191), and new national concern about mental deficiency developed (Cohen, 1983, p. 128). The United States Office of Technology Assessment (n.d.) reported the following:

> Some believed the emphasis on intelligence testing was bordering on the obsessive and extreme. Chief among these critics were Progressive educators who . . . were among the earliest and strongest supporters of testing. In 1920s, [Walter] Lippman wrote a series of articles for the *New Republic* in which he stressed the danger of using intelligence tests for purposes other than that for which they were created. He warned that intelligence testing was leading to an 'intellectual caste system in which the task of education had given way to the doctrine of predestination and infant damnation.' (as cited in Caruano, n.d. p. 12).

Relief

Administrative Progressive reform was still going strong (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 17). In 1922, Dewey argued that "even the most limited member of the citizenry had potentialities that could be enhanced by a genuine education for individuality" (Cremin, 1968, p. 191)—a notion that failed to survive in the mass-education movement. Dewey,

however, was not completely lost in the shuffle. Others would develop reforms based on his advice. Helen Parkhurst, for example, developed the Dalton Plan (Tyack & Cuban, p. 94) that operated on the theory that "any student could learn if given enough time" (p. 95).

Others would overshadow Dewey: Judd and Thorndike

> dominated the two largest graduate schools of education in the [U.S.] throughout the formative decades of the 1920s and 1930s, when the basic structures of a mass 'meritocratic' education system, built around the professionalized university and the bureaucratic school, were fully elaborated and confirmed. (Lagemann, 1989, p. 212)

During this period, news developed on several fronts. Toward the end of the decade, Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, and Woody's (1928) *Adult Learning* announced that "adults can learn rather easily and rapidly, and probably could learn much more than they do" (p. 107). The same text provided reasons for adults' general lack of learning: lack of interest, fear of ridicule, and lack of awareness regarding their own abilities (p. 125). In 1928, adult education occurring in public evening schools, education departments of the YMCA, "other philanthropic agencies," and correspondence schools was "training workers to use new machines and new methods, training recruits in times of war, and self-educat[ing] individuals" (p. 1).

Other news broke. The 1927 Yearbook of the National Society of the Study of Education declared curricula was "an area of professional practice" (Tyler, 1987/1986, p. 37). Acknowledging that the current curricula in public schools was inadequate, this group of authors agreed that the time had come

> to develop a cadre of professionals who could work on the curricula in the schools of every city and state in order to fulfill the American dream of an educational system that would help all young people develop into responsible, productive, and happy citizens. (p. 37)

In 1925, a Human Relations movement entered as an opponent in the scientific-management ring. Getzels (1978) explained: "In human relations everyone's opinion counts" (p. 499). Teachers were instructed to be more democratic toward students, and administrators were instructed to be more democratic toward teachers (p. 501).

What to do with "'misfits'" became a national concern. By 1930, 551 schools for the handicapped were formed (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 21). In the 1920s, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene "came into its own in the field of education and launched a drive to make personality development the guiding principle of American education" (Cohen, 1983, p. 125). What had begun as a campaign to prevent mental illness in the work place, courts, and prisons (p. 126) extended into the schools. By the end of the decade, textbooks and teacher training were influenced by the personality-development mission (p. 137). At the root of the mission lay "control of behavior" (p. 128).

1930 to 1939

In the poverty-stricken 1930s, only half of those between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were attending school (Clifford, 1978, p. 174). Teachers were losing their jobs: In New York City alone, 7,000 teachers were unemployed (Roosevelt, 1932, May 22, para. 6). In 1933, U.S. unemployment was 25%, but for the rest of the decade, it hovered between 15 and 20%. Throughout the decade, New York City black unemployment was 50% (Illinois Labor History Society, n.d., p. 25). Some students dropped out because they

had no clothes to wear school and no supplies to take with them ("American Cultural 1930 – 1939", n.d., para. 15). Those teachers who still had work often endured reduced wages. The school year was cut back (para. 6), and the concept of the junior high school was slowly catching on (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 72).

Struggle

Inside the classroom, other troubles existed. Lack of funds permitted textbooks to remain in disrepair, and censorship of textbooks continued (Clifford, 1978, p. 159). More significantly, Tyack and Cuban (1995) report, in 1938 programs for the disabled were for "less than 1% of all pupils" (p. 25). The testing controversy that hits its peak in the 1920s was beginning to die down (Cremin, 1968, p. 191) as educators began to grow accustomed to all things scientific.

Relief

Much of the educational reform of the 1930s was a continuation of the reform of the 1920s. The Human Relations movement continued to ask teachers to be democratic with their students (Getzels, 1978, p. 501). By 1930, "test-score based student segregation and academic tracking were nationwide" (Levin, 1991, p. 73). Gaining momentum in the 1930s, the Mental Hygiene movement continued to ask schools to focus on students' personality development (Cohen, 1983, p.137). The Depression seemed to be a perfect backdrop for a movement aimed at the mental health of teens (p. 136). As a result, textbooks such as Paul Witty and Charles Skinner's *Mental Hygiene in Modern Education* (1939) (p. 138) began to appear in abundance (p. 137). Cohen (1983) noted that "mental hygiene was an insistent theme in American educational thought" (p. 138) quite possibly as a result of the approval of other substantial organizations such as

the National Education Association, the Educational Policies Commission, and the American Council on Education (p. 138).

Much of the reform of the 1930s involved new philosophies, methods, and one organization in particular. Getzels (1978) noted that "the business of a child as a 'social organisim' crept up," and this led to studies of "group climate" (p. 492). As part of a 1932 Work Relief in Education program, unemployed teachers were hired to teach other unemployed people (Cook, 1977, p. 39). Through the Carnegie Corporation Study in 1931, William S. Gray concluded that adults would not necessarily benefit from the instructional techniques used for children (p. 38). In 1930, twenty men decided to form the Society for Curriculum Study, which eventually merged with the Directors and Supervisors of Instruction group of the National Education Association to form the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) (Tyler, 1987/1986, pp. 37-38). In 2006, ASCD remains a powerful force in professional development.

Perhaps the most significant instance of 1930s reform stems from the Progressive Education Association's Eight-Year Study. Conducted between 1933 and 1941, this "major attempt to reform secondary education . . ." (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 98) benefited both teachers and students. Teachers had the opportunity to work together, instead of in their usual isolation (p. 102). Students could experience courses that "crossed departmental boundaries," and they could devote more time to the arts, get involved in community projects and the school environment, and help to plan activities (p. 99). The study also informed colleges and universities that "they could find among high school graduates who had not met specific subject requirements many who would succeed in college work" (Tyler, 1987/1986, p. 38). In addition, the study developed

something called an “in-service workshop” (p. 38). Tyack and Cuban note that the Eight-Year Study faded away in part as a result of World War II and the Cold War that “caused a concern for more authoritarianism in schools” (p. 100).

1940 to 1949

As late as 1948, the United States still had “over 75,000 one-room schools” (Williams & Laurits, 1954, p. 39). More than three million of those aged fourteen and over were not attending school at all (Cook, 1977, p. 51). By 1947, over eight million of the same age group had only a fifth grade education at best (p. 52). By 1940, students were sent on to the next grade “until they entered trade or commercial courses and dropped out of school to work” (Clifford, 1978, p. 174). Also in 1940, “30% of city dwellers had completed high school compared with only 12% of farmers” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 23). After World War II, high schools began to absorb high numbers of new students (p. 71), the public believed that teachers were doing an acceptable job, most believed that their children were “getting a better education in school than [they did]” (p. 13), and “dropping out was more of a senior high problem than an elementary or junior high problem” (p. 71).

Struggle

Getting and imparting an education was often a struggle due to economic conditions and lack of opportunity. In poverty-stricken areas such as the South, the Dust Bowl, and Appalachia, access to quality education was restricted. Teachers also had their own struggles. Half of Black teachers had gone no further than the high school level (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 23). Some believed that teachers in general had “been so held

down and oppressed by nonsensical rules that they . . . lost their spirit" (Irwin, 1954, p. 187).

The most significant educational problem may have been the problems with the physical nature of the school. Both one-room schools and city schools had serious safety issues (Weinstein, 1954, pp. 76-79). In poorly constructed one-room schools (p. 78), teachers performed all duties such as shooing unwanted snakes and other pests and scrubbing floors (p. 79). Among other nightmares, teachers and students were subjected to substandard drinking water (p. 79).

Wienstein (1954) reported some of the serious issues facing city schools including "fire traps[;] inherent structural defects. . . [;] inadequate or nonexistent health offices, kindergartens, auditoriums, shops, libraries, and gyms. . . ." Some city schools were without hallways, and traffic literally passed through classrooms (p. 76). To make matters worse, after World War II, classrooms became overpopulated (p. 80).

Relief

Movements and philosophies begun in earlier decades persisted throughout the Forties. The Administrative Progressives would flourish until the mid 1950s (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 17). The Human Relations movement pushed on (Getzels, 1978, p. 499). The aftermath of World War II was a perfect "climate" in which the Mental Hygiene Movement could thrive: Suddenly, proponents had a more serious reason to focus on the mental health of its people (Cohen, 1983, 139). Teaching methods continued to focus on the "'group dynamic'" (Getzels, p. 492).

New reforms became practical in the 1940s. In 1948, the National Commission on School District Reorganization produced a plan to eliminate the one-room schoolhouses

and increase educational opportunity: “The country’s 115,000 school districts [could] be merged into 5,000. Not only could thousands of inefficient and overlapping districts be eliminated—at a huge saving—but educational opportunity could be equalized by wiping out most of our educational slums” (Weinstein, 1954, p. 79). Through this plan, districts with more funding could save the day for the less fortunate (p. 79).

New ways of looking at learning also evolved. The Eight-Year Study became impractical as post-war America looked for ways to insert “more authoritarianism in[to] the schools” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 100). Although in-service workshops continued in the decades following the 1930s, much of the steam generated by the Eight-Year Study was lost. The side-to-side activities involved in the study such as teacher collaboration were replaced by a top-down approach: Surrounded by World War II’s threats to American power, schools paid less attention to teacher sharing and creative curricula and more attention to strengthening the sense of top-down authority in the schools. In a 1948 study by Hilgard, America learned a new lesson: Learning “may also be an end in itself” (Getzels, 1978, p. 493).

1950 to 1959

In 1950, children spent 158 days a year in school (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 21). Thirty-eight percent of 5-year-olds were in kindergarten (p. 66). At least in the early part of the decade, almost half of elementary teachers had no college degree (Williams and Laurits, 1954, p. 39). Most teachers were female, but women had no opportunity to become administrators (Tyack & Cuban, p. 25).

Early in the decade, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare formed (Cook, 1977, p. 62), and in 1950, eight percent of those eligible were enrolled in high

school (Williams & Laurits, 1954, p. 32). By 1959, the percentage of students in grades eleven and twelve doubled, and in the same year, seventy percent of 17-year-olds were enrolled in high school (Conant, 1959, p. 6). Staying in school meant a better chance to achieve a dream (p. 7). Also in 1959, two types of high schools existed: "specialized" city schools and "comprehensive high schools . . . found in communities of all sizes" (p. 12).

In contrast with the four percent of students who attended college at the turn of the century, thirty-five percent were attending in 1959 (Conant, 1959, p. 6). At that time, most suburban students intended to go on to college (p. 94). Not all adults receiving an education were in college: Cook (1977) noted that prison schools were operating during the 1950s (p. 71). Now that the Office of Education established an Adult Education section in 1955 (p. 73), perhaps adult education would attract more attention.

Struggle

The 1950s can be called the era of re-examination in education. School criticism that would spread tentacles into the rest of the century began here (Cohen & Barnes, 1999, p. 20). Who was doing the criticizing? Some believed that "criticisms attract attention and give the critic a type of prestige" (Scott & Hill, 1954, p. 397). Other criticism comes from "well-intentioned, if often misinformed or uninformed people" (p. 397). Still others may have been "vicious people" whose "opposition to the schools is part of a subversive movement to discredit all democratic institutions" (p. 398). Others are suspicious of anything that varies from what they know (p. 402).

This criticism had several causes: fear, memories of hard times, devaluation of the dollar, military spending, (Scott & Hill, 1954, p. 392) and "social unrest" (p. 399). The launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik sent Americans into a panic (Cremin, 1968, p.

185): Could the United States compete with the scientific advances of other nations? World War II shook Americans' steady faith in peace, (Scott & Hill, p. 392) and fear often leads to aggression. In the 1950s, many Americans could remember the devastation of the Depression and turned careful attention to whether or not the schools were solid. An overall uncertainty about the security of the nation prompted citizens to worry about the shrinking value of the dollar and the fact that the government was spending so many of those dollars in an effort to protect them (Scott & Hill, p. 392). "Social unrest" about the decline of morality inspired some to look to the schools as a source of the problem (p. 399).

But what were critics shouting about education? Teachers need to re-invent themselves but why? Tyack and Cuban (1995), noted that "reformers attacked 'mediocrity' of academic performance. . . poor discipline and lax teachers" (p. 53). Some argued that students permitted to waste time in class were becoming lazy (Wood, 1954, p. 74). In 1952, Schreiner (1954) noted, "many top educators . . . feel that at least 10% of the 33,121,000 pupils in our schools are wasting time" (p. 73). Anderson (1954) captured some of the frustration of the times: Schools were accused of ignoring the basics, becoming too easy, becoming too permissive, offering insignificant courses, "leading the young toward 'socialism,'" failing to get students ready for college, and poorly preparing students for the job market (p. 272).

If teachers needed to re-invent themselves, what were they to do? Critics envisioned an expanded definition of the word *teacher*. Some called for new attention to an old problem: mass education. Now that more "slow" students were in class, teachers needed to make their classroom materials more accessible (Mallinson as cited in Clifford,

1978, p. 174). Since so many students were present in the 1950s schools, some suggested teachers "learn how each can find greatest profits in the schools" (Williams & Laurits, 1954, p. 32). This was the advent of remedial courses in reading, spelling, and grammar that began at the high school and college level (Smith, 1954, p. 65). Teachers, then, were struggling with all of the voiced complaints, with all of the challenges that mass education brings, and with the pressure of having to re-examine their roles.

Relief

Some 1950s school reform was merely a continuation of what was happening in earlier decades. The Human Relations movement, for example, continued to ask teachers to be more democratic with students (Getzels, 1978, p. 499). The National Committee for Mental Hygiene not only persisted but achieved permanent victory following the 1950 White House Conference. Cohen (1983) explained:

> The culmination of the NCMH's efforts to make children's personality development the guiding principle of American education was also reached in 1950 at the historic Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth. The conference took as its slogan 'A Healthy Personality for Every Child' and ratified the hygienists' decade-long contention that the school is basically an institution to develop children's personality and that personality development of children should take priority over any other school objective. [This conference's] significance lies in the fact that it marked the emergence of the national consensus of the role of personality development in American education. . . . (p. 139)

Teachers must have felt some relief when James Conant's (1959) study reported that the definition of the high school must change. What he proposed was a "prescription

for good schools" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 61) in which "a graduating class of at least 100" would be needed in order for a school to be effective (Conant, p. 14). Smaller high schools needed to become a thing of the past (p. 40) since they did not provide enough opportunities for efficiency (p. 78). He proposed reducing "the total number of high schools. . . from 21,000 to approximately 9,000" in order to improve education (p. 81). His research would soon cause new features to appear in the new high school: summer school would be offered (p. 68), and the day would have seven or eight "periods" of approximately 45 minutes each (pp. 64-65).

Other landmarks in educational reform occurred during the decade. The launching of Sputnik sent the nation on a quest for more rigorous academic programs (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 52). In 1956, America learned of something called the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives that made "educators aware of the range of cognitive processes used by learners" (Walberg & Haertel, 1992, p. 10). With the Cooperative Research Act of 1954, the federal government began "to establish a research component for education" (Getzels, 1978, p. 477). In 1954, Baxton, Heron, and Scott showed that "the human being seems to require an optimal level of stimulation and an opportunity to seek out problems for solution. . . [in order] to function effectively" (as cited in Getzels, p. 495). Teaching machines pioneered by Skinner appeared on the scene in 1958. These machines "broke the instructional content into manageable small steps [and] required learners to make an observable response. . . " (Walberg & Haertel, p. 10). Perhaps nothing had more of an impact than the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education case that began to move the United States away "from state-sponsored racism" (Cohen & Barnes, 1999, p. 21).

1960 to 1969

In the 1960s, Headstart was just beginning (Barbe, 1967, p. 114). Elementary and secondary school enrollments skyrocketed (National Center For, n.d.). Depending upon which source one reads, between twenty and twenty-four million Americans went only as far as the seventh or eighth grade (Clifford, 1978, p. 111; Cook, 1977, p. 82). In 1960, sixty-nine percent of the population graduated from high school (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 48). Educational programs for inmates continued (Cook, p. 94).

Struggle

Several types of student disenchantment plagued the decade. Student unrest was, no doubt, influenced by teacher unrest, as Melbo and Martin (1967) explained (p. 330): Morale of teachers could be improved if we increased their pay, let them teach, "treat[ed] . . . [them] as experts and free[d] them to innovate, experiment, and modify programs within their classrooms" (p. 337). Administration's lack of attention to teacher capability and teachers' own lack of faith in their own abilities combined to produce a black cloud over the classroom. Educational equality came to the forefront. The white community was joining the nonwhite community in the battle (Engs, 1987, p. 16). Ethnic and other groups were taking a stand: "Blacks, Hispanics, women, the handicapped, and other groups too long ignored in educational policy demanded a say in shaping secondary education" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 53). After all, Cook (1977) indicated, not much had changed for Black students since the Brown vs. Board of Education since "only sixteen percent of the black students were attending desegregated schools" (p. 79).

Clearly, America did not understand the "educationally retarded and disadvantaged" (Barbe, 1967, p. 97). But who were they? Barbe noted that these were the students with low IQ and those who were "less interested and motivated who are doing

work below grade level" (p. 99) or those who were culturally deprived (p. 100). Some signs of their presence included "negative attitudes toward school, inability to achieve. . . success in academic work, irregular attendance, [and] lack of motivation" (p. 101). Barbe believed that these students would not perform well on standardized tests, although he admitted that many students who did not fall into these categories would also do poorly on the same tests (p. 105). Melbo and Martin (1967) believed that these students felt like "inferior aliens" (p. 346).

The drop-out problem was a nationwide concern in the 1960s (Schreiber, 1967, p. 211). In fact, in an August 1963 news conference President John F. Kennedy urged the nation to get its children back to school, and in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson noted the severity of the problem (p. 212). In the past, the drop-out rate had not been so high because "there was almost always a large demand for unskilled or semiskilled labor which the dropout youngster filled . . . " (p. 213). Schrieber indicated that in the 1960s, no one would hire anyone without a high school diploma (p. 213). As Barbe (1967) noted, "The school dropout highlights the inability of many schools to cope with the educationally retarded . . ." (p. 101). The new 1964 definition of *drop-out* was anyone who left school before graduating or transferring elsewhere (p. 216). For the most part, drop-outs were male (p. 217), and they believed that teachers did not care about their progress. Often, Schrieber noted, they were correct (p. 232). Tyack and Cuban (1995) reported that in 1967, "almost one third of black high school students across the country dropped out" (p. 27). Perhaps the new large high schools helped to perpetuate the feeling of "anonymity" and "alienation" (p. 61).

Relief

Educational reform of the 1960s had two origins: the government and the schools themselves. Some of the fervor derived from Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society War on Poverty that indicated that the "'answer to all our national problems comes down to a single word 'education'" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 2). With his Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Johnson hoped that schools would prevent poverty (p. 27). A National Teacher Corps was formed to train teachers to help educationally deprived students (Cook, 1977, p. 85). The Adult Basic Education Act of 1966 "recommended that . . . more emphasis be placed on reaching persons 16 through 25 in urban areas" (p. 86). Project 100,000 "assist[ed] in upgrading the educational level of the disadvantaged" although this project pertained to the military (p. 94). In the 1960s, the government began to allocate resources for programs for adult education (p. 103). James Coleman produced a government-sponsored 1966 Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey that is "usually seen as the first major effort of a scientific sort" to study the effects of schooling (Cohen & Barnes, 1999, p. 22).

In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson urged the field of education to pay attention to research, and for the first time, it listened (Getzels, 1978, p. 477). The schools were full of attempts to change this and attempts to change that. Dillon (1976) reported that school districts began to push professional development to try to alleviate some of the disenchantment (p. 167). Issues of the day included new systems of instruction such as Bolvin and Glaser's 1968 Individually Prescribed Instruction (IPI) and Keller's 1968 Personalized System of Instruction (Walberg & Haertel, 1992, p. 10). During this decade, cognitive theory "began to overshadow not only the factor-analytic theories of the 1940s but also behavioral theories of learning. The processing of information became the focus

for understanding complex behaviors. The cognitive perspective featured the 'active learner' concept. . . " (p. 12).

Attempts to change attitudes became popular. Alleviating boredom was a cause for action (Spiegler, 1967, p. 205); raising self-esteem, another (p. 188). Educational materials featuring integration of the races were popular at this time (pp. 188-189). Changing teacher attitudes about the "educationally retarded and disadvantaged" was revolutionary indeed (Davis as cited in Barbe, 1967, p. 114). Suddenly, teachers became aware that part of their job involved seeing and assisting these students who were, in fact, capable of doing more than anyone knew (Spiegler, 1967, p. 187). Suddenly, educators were realizing that dismissing students based on their IQ scores was no longer acceptable (p. 185): The "once-silent voice of the disadvantaged [could then] be heard" (p. 209).

1970 to 1979

In the 1970s, Cook (1977) noted, "approximately 39 million people . . . 14 or older. . . [did] not have a ninth grade education" (p. 105). Elementary and secondary enrollment were declining (National Center For, n.d.). Sixty percent of 5-year-olds were in kindergarten (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 66). This was the decade of mandatory busing ("American Cultural 1970 – 1979," n.d., para. 12).

Struggle

The 1970s was a period of turmoil for teachers and students. Since people were trusting the government less and less because of the Watergate Scandal, that lack of trust began to filter into other areas such as education. Tyack and Cuban (1995) reported that

“confidence in public schools” certainly reflected the times (p. 30). Schools were called “mediocre,’” while teachers were blamed for letting students down (p. 53).

On the way to school and inside the schools, there were other struggles. Districts trying to achieve integration bused students to different neighborhoods, a situation that turned quickly into violence (“American Cultural 1970 – 1979,” n.d. para. 12).Teachers were not quite sure what they were supposed to be doing during staff development (Dillon, 1976, p. 169) and did not want to attend (p. 170). Curriculum standards became a concern in 1976 (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 32). Only “ten percent of children were covered by federally funded programs for children with special needs” (p. 25). Teachers wanted to hang onto their old ways: Any new programs that did not fit their past experience were met with resistance (Parish & Arends, 1983, p. 63). School reform was not working (p. 62).

Relief

Some of the educational reforms from the 1970s were continuations of the 1960s, some reflected criticisms specific to the 1970s, and some reached back even further to a return of scientific management. As in the 1960s, high schools continued to be the focus of equality in education, and ethnic and other groups continued to insist on being heard (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 53). Staff development began to reflect public criticisms and expectations of schools. Students just were not achieving all that they should have been achieving (Dillon, 1976, p. 165). Since schools were to become panacea for social problems, teachers needed training in those areas. Lack of discipline was significant enough to warrant staff development in that area (p. 166). Staff development was becoming more localized: Schools would decide for themselves what they needed to

cover, and staff development would become more side to side, rather than top down. Teachers and school administrators would conduct their own sessions, rather than depending on college personnel to fill their supposedly empty vessels (p. 167).

Finally, the 1970s saw a return to scientific management . *Efficiency* became a watchword (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 115): The word "'businesslike' became almost synonymous with 'scientific'" (p. 114). Back to basics began to take hold (p. 32). Surely the business community could rescue education (p. 117). This was the decade of mass marketing of educational materials intended as "ready-made . . . solutions . . . " (p. 114). Through the Office of Economic Opportunity, President Richard Nixon went as far as to "sponsor performance contracting experiments in which 31 companies competed for performance contracts in eighteen selected school districts . . . " (p. 119).

1980 to 1989

In the 1980s, elementary and secondary education enrollment declined (National Center For, n.d., para. 4) as did vocational education ("High School Facts," 2005, December 14, para. 5). The high school drop-out rate was fourteen percent in 1980 vs. twelve percent in 1985 (National Center For, para. 3). Depending upon which source one reads, the 1980 graduation rate was seventy-one percent (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 48) or sixty-nine percent ("High School Facts," para. 6). Fifty percent of African American students had high school diplomas (National School Boards, n.d., p. 119). The achievement gap between African American and white students that had begun to decline in the 1970s continued to do so ("High School Facts," para. 3).

Struggle

Teachers in the 1980s had many reasons to be anxious. Anxiety over job security was only part the cause (Duke, 1986, p. 27). How to deal with troubled students was another disturbing issue: "Trying to help troubled students can expose teachers to an emotional roller coaster" (p. 30). Not knowing what to do especially when troubled students were having a "'bad day'" was compounded by the usual uncertainty of the school day: frequent disruptions from assemblies, testing, and field trips (p. 27).

The nature of education was changing. Suddenly competing with Japan became an issue (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 44). After the appearance of *A Nation at* Risk in the mid 1980s, teachers felt "a decreased reliance on their professional judgment in instructional matters, increased time demands, more staff reassignments, greater pressure, more paperwork, and heightened concern about liability. .., but not better results for students as a result of all the stress" (p. 79). In 1989, pressure compounded when President George Bush initiated national standards (p. 44, 81). Teachers had a feeling of being "caught in the middle" (p. 81). Teaching to the test became popular (p. 62).

More pressure came from the public's low opinion of American education. In 1981 teachers reported that they would not choose teaching if they had a second chance (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 33). The public's low opinion "bothered them more than anything" (p. 131).Teachers were perceived as "lazy" and/or "incompetent" (p. 37).

Clearly a disconnect between children and school was occurring. The 1989 Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development explained: "Today, as young adolescents move from elementary to middle or junior high . . . , their involvement with learning diminishes and their rates of alienation, drug abuse, absenteeism, and dropping out begins to rise" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 73). Some believed that a surface education was all

students were getting (Eisner, 1983, p. 9), a phenomenon not necessarily directly related to teachers. More teenagers had jobs; consequently, their school performance suffered (Mackey & Appleman, 1983, p. 30). When jobs emphasize "'practical knowledge,'" school knowledge becomes less attractive (p. 31). An even more pronounced disconnect can be traced to what Engs (1987) called "miseducation . . . a schooling experience that alienates" African Americans (p. 17). Engs reported that the "road" to integration was still full of ruts (p. 16). Lower expectations for attendance and class performance and ushering students along to failure seemed prevalent (p. 13).

The 1980 publication of *The Reign of ETS: The Corporation That Makes Up Minds* commented on a similar yet more far-reaching form of disconnect. The book declared that standardized testing offered through the Educational Testing Service has succeeded in barricading a nation. Only those who pass the tests can be admitted to the promised land of college admission where opportunities abound. Those with unsatisfactory test scores "saw their hope kept within reasonable bounds" (Biggs, 1987, p. 212). The book added that the very tests that determine who gets an opportunity for an education and who does not are not, in fact, valid and do discriminate against minorities (p. 213).

Relief

Relief appeared in two categories: morale boosts for teachers and classroom improvements for students. Improving teacher pay was a start ("American Cultural 1980 – 1989," n.d., para. 17). Perhaps the time had come for teachers to obtain "peer reinforcement and advice" (Duke, 1986, p. 31). Some believed that administrative assistance was a part of the solution: If administration would remember to treat teachers

with dignity (p. 31), maintain more of an interest in student progress, place less "stress on test scores," and stop allowing the "school day to become fragmented," (p. 32) teaching would be more meaningful and less chaotic. Some argued that education needed to mean more to students. That would involve giving up the "overseer" mentality and providing variety. As things stood, students had

> become anesthetized, tired of notes, words, and tests, of all the passive, dull verbal experience that relate students only minimally to the world outside their cell-like classroom. As the words, words, words pile up over the years, more of our youth will 'burn up' as more of our teachers will 'burn out.' (Robb, 1983, p. 50)

1990 to 1999

In the 1990s, elementary and secondary enrollment increased and hit a new high in the middle of the decade (National Center For, n.d., para. 2). The decline in vocational education continued ("High School Facts," 2005, December 14, para. 5). School achievement was approximately the same as in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Stedman, 1995, p. 80). The gap between African American and white students increased ("High School Facts," para. 3). By 1990, nine out of ten youths aged five to nineteen were enrolled in school (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 21). Between 1990 and 1999, the high school drop-out rate was between eleven and twelve percent (National Center For, para. 3), and eighty- three percent of adults aged twenty-five and over had a high school diploma (National School Boards, n.d., p. 119).

Struggle

In the last decade of the century, struggles came in two forms: teacher anxiety and

a general state of disrepair that encompassed characteristics of urban schools, neglect of minority students, and school violence. The public feared that school improvement was not working (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 30). American students, some feared, were not measuring up to students in other nations (Cohen & Barnes, 1999, p. 21). Public anxiety filtered down to teachers who had already had reason to worry. Theobald and Mills (1995) explained:

> A struggle has ensued as a result of . . . growing polarization over the question of accountability. That struggle shows up in the battles between teachers and administrators, between rival factions of teachers, between teachers and school boards, between superintendents and school boards, between groups of community members and school boards, and so on. During the 1990s the question of accountability seems to have brought an intensity to these struggles that is unequaled in the history of education in this country. (para. 5)

When the government "continues to standardize learning and to specify the subjects and methods of public education," teachers feel the pressure (Moffett, 1994, para. 44).

In the 1990s, certain levels of disrepair existed. Urban schools needed serious improvement (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 31). Across America, African American boys were left behind in the educational system: They did not do well in school and did not have the opportunity to be connected to success (Biggs, 1992, p. 11). Teachers generally failed to realize that someone's differences are not necessarily "deficits" (p. 14). With "time and opportunity to demonstrate to themselves that they can learn," these students may become high achievers (p. 15). Finally, school violence was an epidemic: Between 1996 and 1997, "77 percent of high schools reported a criminal incident to police . . .

including a serious violent crime or . . . weapons, theft, or vandalism" ("High School Facts," 2005, December 14, para. 9).

Relief

Some reformers called for paying more attention to students. More access to technology might save students (Hancock, 1993/1992, p. 85). Others called for accepting students' differences. As Biggs (1992) noted, "while racism may remain, the response to it can change—from avoidance to acceptance of the challenge to achieve" (p. 15). Connectedness, Biggs reported, can change the field of education (pp. 11- 16). Moffett (1994) complimented teachers on their ability to solve problems but lamented the fact that the state of education in the 1990s did not permit them to use those skills:

> It is simply not true that change in education awaits new ideas or higher goals or more information. What we know to do far exceeds what we are free to do. Neither more research, nor assessment data, nor bright ideas, nor money will improve public education if we can't act on what we already know. The blockages are the key. Unless you analyze and remove obstacles, educational reform is impossible. (para. 41)

2000 to 2006

In 2000, enrollment in grades nine through twelve was ninety-four percent ("High School Facts," 2005, December 14, para. 2). Early in the decade, almost eighty percent of African Americans over the age of twenty-five had graduated from high school

(National School Boards, n.d., p. 119), and the overall graduation rate was eighty-four percent ("High School Facts" para. 6). Some believe that public secondary school enrollments will continue to rise until the end of 2007 and then plummet (National Center For, n.d., para. 3).

Struggle

So far, this seems to be a decade of concern over students with "grown-up problems" (Rooney, 2005, p. 85) and high schools that are still "broken" (Perkins-Gough, 2005, p. 88). Homelessness is one instance. Students who are homeless may not have association with a particular school and may have poor attendance. With homelessness often comes abuse, mental illness, and learning issues (Holloway, 2003, p. 90). Employers and college-level instructors report that students are not prepared for success in the work place and in higher learning (Perkins-Gough, 2005, p. 88). "Broken" may also apply to the disconnect between students and school: "'By high school, as many as 40 or 60 percent of all students—urban, suburban, and rural—are chronically disengaged from school'" (Klem & Connell as cited in Blum, 2005, p. 16). In the period that is sometimes referred to as the "'blurring of the 2000s,'" at-risk students are everywhere, not just in city schools (Scherer, 2005, p. 7). Children appear to be more and more passive (Csikszentmihaly as cited in Scherer, 2002, p. 14). Student engagement with computers is high; but with history, low (p. 14).

Relief

Although it may be decade of "'blurring,'" opportunity exists to wipe off the educational windshield and see clearly what educators need to do for their students, for themselves, and for society. In this "testing culture," we might do well to rise above test

scores and remember that success is more than that (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Scherer, 2002, p. 13). Educators need to create their own ways to make sure that no one is left behind. This may involve the creation of "flow": "Flow describes the spontaneous, effortless experience when you have a close match between a high level of challenge and the skills to meet the challenge" (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Scherer, 2002, p. 14). Support programs and learning communities for freshmen can be started (Phillip as cited in Phillip, Krajewski, Aguirre, & Bailey, 2005, p. 15). "Stimulat[ing] and reinforce[ing] curiosity and build[ing] on the strengths of the child" can lead to community spirit (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Scherer, 2002, p. 16); allowing students to take initiative can have the same effect (p. 17). Demonstrating the relevance of course material would go a long way toward progress (p. 15). Having "higher standards and tougher courses" can help, cited Perkins-Gough (2005, p. 88) as can "restor[ing] value to the high school diploma" (p. 89)

To foster a sense of community spirit, educators may get involved in "cleaning up [their] image, clearing the slate, pulling in the same direction, enhanc[ing] community support, repair[ing] and clean[ing] the school and work[ing] on changing [the] mindset [of the school]" (Aguirre as cited in Phillip, Krajewski, Aguirre, & Bailey, 2005, p. 16). Blum (2005) encouraged teachers to help students see "positive and respectful" relationships between teachers and students (p. 17). Schools that give teachers a chance to collaborate are generally more successful (Chrisman, 2005, p. 18).

Perhaps as the decade progresses, the educational community will seize its opportunities and begin to believe that "whether the topic is bugs or stars or singing, there are connections" (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Scherer, 2002, p. 15).

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