

Editorial

Good Teaching

In this issue we may be viewed by readers as "washing our dirty linens in public" because we are opening up for public examination questions and issues that most people outside the field of education would assume had been answered and agreed upon long ago. It seems that there is little, if any, consensus on what is good teaching, how to supervise teachers, and what criteria determine the content of the curriculum.

Can teaching be improved? And, furthermore, should we even have the audacity to suggest that people "learn how to teach"? Questions like that can cause professional educators to deliberate about their **raison d'etre**. Prof. James Sanders questions the value of much of the research on teacher effectiveness and its impact on teaching practice. Could it really be, as he says, that if **effective teaching** is both a "mundane capacity and a rare ability," we have been testing for and theorizing about an elusive behaviour too nebulous to be gathered under one concept or construct? And have we overlooked, in our research, the distinct variables of nature and nurture as key components of teacher effectiveness?

If we define effective teaching, we are then confronted with the problems inherent in the approach to the supervision of teachers. What does a supervisor actually supervise? asks Prof. Thomas J. Ritchie. How do we answer the critics who say that just as "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," good teaching is also a personal preference because it often is defined in terms of the supervisor's political base, personal image, or public relations agenda? Is "good teaching" simply that which meets the individual supervisor's criteria?

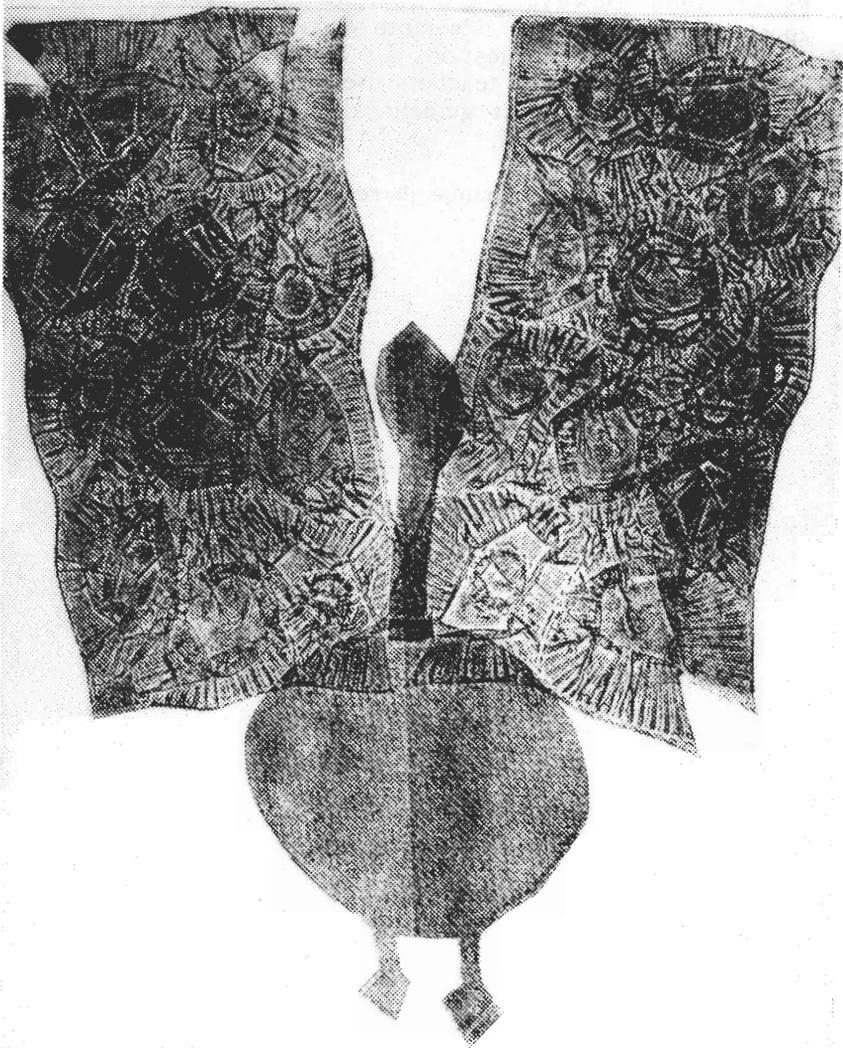
And, finally, how shall we decide the curriculum content? In a society assailed by economic turbulence shall we permit the

curriculum to be dominated by "practical" market-place subjects? But, on the other hand, can we justify a curriculum that caters primarily to students' interests and imagination? Prof. John P. Portelli attempts to bring a balance to these two views that are purported to be so much in opposition to one another.

When one considers the countless volumes of theory and research that have been published on these topics just since the days of John Dewey, one is almost led to exclaim how preposterous it is that in this ninth decade of the 20th century we are still asking such questions as: What is effective teaching? What does a supervisor of teachers use as a criterion measure of good teaching? and, What guidelines do we use to justify the content of the curriculum?

Maybe the answers change in relation to the times.

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Embroidered