INSTRUCTION IN CRITICAL THINKING AS A FORM OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

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During the last decade, an impressive number of packaged programs have been produced to help teachers improve students' critical thinking skills. Most of these programs have been developed using the curriculum model associated with the Tyler rationale. Teachers are presented with a curriculum they are expected to install in their classrooms. These packaged programs offer carefully developed behavioral objectives, classroom activities to match the objectives, and evaluation procedures to demonstrate student progress. They provide attractive ways to respond to the widespread criticism that public schools have insufficiently nurtured students' intellectual maturity.

We believe, however, that something is seriously awry in how the authors of these programs have framed their task. Although there are important differences among the most widely used critical thinking programs, all the programs converge in at least two debatable assumptions. (1) that critical thinking is a discrete set of intellectual skills students can learn (through direct, sequenced instruction) and (2) that we can easily apply generic thinking strategies in various academic and nonacademic settings.

We must severely question these assumptions. Although we do not agree with Schrag's extreme assertion—"There is no set of skills which can be identified with the skills of thinking"—we believe that instruction in critical thinking becomes trivial when we reduce it to teaching a series of thinking strategies. Programs attempting to teach thinking skills do not sufficiently acknowledge that styles of reasoning are always relative to particular subject

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2 This is certainly the situation in most of the programs analyzed by Paul Chance, Thinking in the Classroom (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).
3 Francis Shrag, "Thoughtfulness. Is High School the Place for Thinking?" National Center on Effective Secondary Schools Newsletter 2 (Spring 1987). 2-4. From our perspective, Shrag sacrifices precision of language for rhetorical flourish. Any cognitive act can be analyzed in terms of constituent skills, so Shrag is incorrect when he claims that critical thinking is not so constituted. Nevertheless, his larger point is correct. He argues that the critical thinking movement should direct its energies toward nurturing thoughtful individuals and that thoughtfulness is not best conceived as a set of skills. This point is pedagogical, not empirical.
matters or contexts, therefore, we cannot teach reasoning skills outside their various contexts. These programs do not show how instruction in skills contributes to teachers’ attempts to develop a consistently critical spirit in their students’ approach to various domains of thought and action. The programs do not help teachers understand how their own (and their students’) preexisting reasoning styles affect how collaborative inquiry occurs in the school. The programs do not promote sensitivity to how ethnic or racial identities affect thinking in the classroom. Just as bad, the programs frustrate intellectually serious teachers by encouraging them to consider academic areas as vehicles for developing abstractly conceived skills.

The purpose of this article is to set forth theoretical propositions developed in the four-year-old Critical Spirit Project at the Thirty-Second Street School in central Los Angeles, California. The main contention of team members in this project is simply that students learn to reason critically as they are initiated into school communities that grant importance to critical reasoning—as they are socialized in classrooms where their ideas are respected; where there is sensitivity to what constitutes good thinking in the spectrum of academic and nonacademic domains; and where a flexible, questioning culture generally prevails. The Critical Spirit Project, then, is trying to build a curriculum model that has everything to do with the self-images and values of teachers, students, and administrators. Indeed, its model-in-the-making ultimately treats instruction in critical thinking as a form of character education.

PROPOSITIONS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

1. The purpose of instruction in critical thinking is to nurture a character trait—a critical spirit. Thus, we must regard instruction in critical thinking as a form of character education. To be blunt, we are uneasy about using the term critical thinking at all because the term is curiously abstract, suggesting a cluster of higher-order thinking skills that we should either teach as a separate area of instruction or as a set of strategies to apply across the curriculum, or both. This flawed view, however, has led to frustrating, nonproductive, even absurd classroom practices.

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4The project began in 1986. The project team consisted of a curriculum theorist, a social philosopher, two teachers (one at the 3rd grade level and the other at the 6th grade level), and the school principal. The curriculum theorist and the social philosopher, both members of the faculty at the University of Southern California, helped elaborate on and test their alternative model in the teachers’ own classrooms. The small scale, they believed, allowed the teachers to become researchers in their own workplace and allowed team members to observe with intensity and complexity the experience of a limited number of children. Team members of the Critical Spirit Project thought of themselves as qualitative action-researchers, and like many who use qualitative methods, they did not hesitate to draw normative generalizations about what they observed.

At times we have wondered whether the public school community would benefit if someone would simply prohibit the critical thinking movement forever—for the good of everyone concerned. In the world-as-we-have-it, however, that benevolent gesture is impossible. So we have decided at least to register a good-willed protest. We have stopped speaking about critical thinking and have instead begun to use the term critical spirit because at least this term connects with one fundamental mission of educational institutions at all levels—the development of thoughtful people who habitually avoid capricious analyses of situations, who exhibit a questioning orientation in various domains of life, and who are willing to examine situations creatively and flexibly. Schools should exist to nurture these character traits or critical habits; that is almost a truism, at least in the American setting, where the Enlightenment and Romantic values of intellectual self-development historically have had such an influential presence.6

To assume our point of view, educators must develop a more profound concept of character education than that often found in public schools. Sadly, in recent years, under the spell of Lawrence Kohlberg, public educators have programmatically isolated character education, just as public educators, under the spell of the behaviorists, have tried to isolate instruction in critical thinking. Character education has usually been identified as a separate subject area concerned with developing increasingly abstract modes of moral reasoning, with fostering values associated with good citizenship in a democratic society (e.g., justice, responsibility), and with helping students identify and evaluate their own individual moral choices.

Surprisingly absent is an awareness that schooling, to fulfill its mission, requires students and teachers to develop foundational character traits (e.g., a critical, questioning spirit, truthfulness, a sense of fairness, a willingness to take intellectual risks). The traits must be present if the educational enterprise is to proceed, even minimally, not simply because they are morally admirable, but because their absence constitutes a corruption of teaching and learning. Schools have a responsibility to promote such traits.

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6 We are aware, of course, that these Enlightenment and Romantic values belong to a highly idealized vision of the American public school tradition and that a strong case could be made for asserting that American schools have mainly functioned as a source of social control. See, for example, the intriguing interpretation of public school reforms (1969–1984) in Ira Shor, Culture Wars (Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986). See also John I. Goodlad’s discussion of the absence of critical thinking in many public school classrooms in A Place Called School (New York McGraw-Hill, 1984).

One could even argue—convincingly, we believe—that much of what has proceeded under the banner of the critical thinking movement in the last decade has been culturally conservative, at least in the sense that critical thinking programs have not generally encouraged students to question authority or to devote their critical energies to analyzing flammable issues. Our wistful observation that public schools should exist to nurture the critical spirit does, however, come straight out of the Jeffersonian understanding of education’s role in a free society, and it is strongly affirmed in public education’s broad progressivist movement.
In identifying the critical spirit as a character trait, we believe we are speaking in a way consistent with the arguments of natural learning theorists. Gee, for example, asserts that learning is best understood as an experience of being socialized into "discourses"—the ways of thinking, speaking, and acting that establish the character of meaningful human associations. To model these ways of thinking, speaking, and acting is, from the point of view of participants in an association, to be "virtuous"—to have the kind of habits or character traits that are valued as foundational in that association.7

Simply stated, we claim that the public school tradition is a meaningful human association, with stylized ways of thinking, speaking, and acting. In this association, the critical spirit is a foundational virtue.

2. Critical reasoning is context-bound. Thinking is always about something; thinking always occurs in a context. Good thinking in artistic production, for example, differs from what occurs in the study of literature, and both differ from what occurs in the study of chemistry or in attempts on a playground to settle an argument. Therefore, believing that we can identify and exercise a set of context-free thinking skills is a mistake. We cannot regard critical thinking as an independent subject area. Our discussion of intellectual virtues (habits, character traits) must always relate to specific contexts in school environments.8

The American schooling tradition does require a particular set of character traits, which students have to acquire when they walk through the door of the kindergarten classroom. But, using Gee's vocabulary, schooling is not composed of a single discourse—a single way of speaking, thinking, and acting. Students come to school to be initiated into a whole variety of discourses associated with academic disciplines and with various nonacademic situations. For example, students learn quickly that there is one appropriate way to think, speak, and act when they are engaged in the arts, and another different way when they are doing arithmetic. There is also a distinctive style of argument when students try to resolve personal conflicts.

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7James Gee, "What Is Literacy," Teaching and Learning 2 (Fall 1987): 3. Gee's concept of a meaningful human association, in turn, draws on the sociological theories of Emile Durkheim, and before him, Georg Hegel. Both of them insisted that human associations are best conceived as organisms, not as collections of people loosely bound together for specific functional reasons. Human associations are constituted by broad agreements about values, and people flourish as they internalize these values. Likewise, people experience alienation insofar as they are cut off from participating in meaningful human associations.

8We agree with David N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon's comments in "Are Cognitive Skills Context-Bound?" Educational Researcher 18 (January–February 1989): 16–25. They claim that arguments between specialist and generic concepts of cognitive skills are oversimplified and that a synthetic position is more appropriate. Their comments are extremely helpful, but they are peripheral to a sociological model of instruction in critical thinking, which emphasizes "literacy" as a product of being socialized into "discourse communities."
Thus, we must encourage teachers to think of the school's teaching and learning agenda as a series of overlapping socialization events when teachers try to initiate children into the ways critically spirited people reason, write, and speak when they are involved in particular spheres of activity. Teachers function as stand-ins, or representatives, of the natural science community, the arts community, the social science community, and whatever other communities gather around activities pursued in the school. Their task is to know enough about how these communities work to act as mentors or role models—at least at the most rudimentary level. The same function applies in the school's various informal contexts—on the playground, teachers are critically minded representatives of the larger democratic community whose concepts of justice are normative here.

When we think of teaching and learning contexts in this manner, our understanding of what constitutes development in students' critical spirit becomes clear:

- Students progress as they are initiated into the ways of critical thinking, writing, speaking, or producing that characterize the various discourses represented on the school's agenda.

- Students progress as they are able increasingly to deal critically with issues, problems, or forms of production that we regard as sophisticated or demanding in these discourses. Students progress by doing well the things that interest and challenge people in the various sectors of human culture.

Generally speaking, we have been uneasy with what appears to be an increasing use of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* in moral educational theory. The concept of a social practice developed in *After Virtue* is insightful, however, and it suggests the need for one important refinement in our argument here.

MacIntyre argues that virtues are relative to the social practices in which they are exercised. By social practice, he means something specific:

... any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.

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Applying this definition to the issues at hand, we can easily identify dodge ball and baseball as social practices. So are the various arts and sciences. So is citizenship. Playground activity probably is, too. Each has its own internal standards of excellence that we can use to assess someone's critical reasoning. When we argue that critical reasoning styles in the school are always relative to particular social practices, we are saying that, to perform them well, various academic and nonacademic practices in the school require different ways of thinking, speaking, and acting.

So far, MacIntyre's discussion of social practices does not differ much from Gee's discussion of discourses. MacIntyre, however, proceeds to make a distinction, which introduces a normative element that natural language theorists like Gee (and Krashion, Smith, and Goodman) hesitate to embrace. He distinguishes between goods internal to a practice and goods external to a practice. Internal goods, MacIntyre says, can be achieved by performing well, as judged by the standards that define a given practice (e.g., being able to hit a home run in a baseball game, being able to write a sensitive poem within the restrictions imposed by iambic pentameter). External goods can be achieved for reasons having little or nothing to do with a practice's internal standards of excellence (e.g., fame, social approval, awards, money, status).

Of course, students can win external goods—Kiwanis Club awards, parental approval, and popularity—by performing well in practices like creative writing, dodge ball, and chemistry. But students can often achieve these external goods by being docilely cooperative, by being a teacher's pet, by having a doting uncle who chairs the Kiwanis Club award committee, or by craftily knowing how to cheat.

Teachers' own preoccupation with external goods also can hinder their students' ability to achieve internal goods in a social practice. Teachers can confuse excellent student performance with classroom orderliness or with the neatness of assigned work. They can interpret a student's creative idea as a challenge to their own intellectual authority. They can conduct classroom activities in a manner that attracts student admiration for their own performance or charismatic leadership.11

In fact, the unsavory pursuit of external goods (e.g., grades and rewards such as pencils, candy, and special classroom privileges) often swamps and redefines the social practices of elementary schools, just as the off-putting preoccupation of professional associations with money and monopoly often swamps and redefines the practices of law and medicine.

MacIntyre's distinction is useful. Under his tutelage, we recognize that teachers have to learn how to distinguish among practices in their classrooms.

11These powerful messages that teachers sometimes unknowingly communicate and students intuitively learn are part of the implicit curriculum. For a further discussion of the implicit curriculum, see Elliot W. Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1985).
that have been overtaken by the attraction of external goods and practices that proceed as relatively ideal embodiments of the standards of excellence in various domains. Translated into the language of Gee’s discourse theory, teachers have to learn what elements can corrupt the discourses that they are trying to initiate their students into. Standards of excellence (albeit changing standards) are associated with the discourses represented on the school’s agenda, and teachers have to judge how these standards can be and are being subverted. These judgments, of course, do not differ much from the ones that sophisticated artists, professors, poets, and doctors—who insist on distinguishing between the standards of excellence in their practices and their colleagues’ current quality of performance—must make.

3. By and large, students acquire critical reasoning habits in the context of interesting, demanding activities. Learning about these habits is a secondary activity. To explain this proposition, we must distinguish between acquisition and learning. Teachers do not often make this distinction, which is associated with Krashen’s language-acquisition theory, but it has become common coinage among literacy theorists and whole-language educators.

The following is Gee’s rendering of the distinction:

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching. It happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquirer knows that he needs to acquire the thing he is exposed to in order to function and the acquirer in fact wants to so function. . . .

Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher. This teaching involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter.

Most of what we learn after our initial socialization as an infant, Gee argues, involves a mixture of acquisition and learning. He recalls, for example, that he first learned to drive a car by instruction, but after that, most of his driving habits were acquired. In other situations—when learning language—people acquire most of what they know through acquisition, then depend on learning mainly as a way of interpreting what they have done. According to Gee, then, “we are better at what we acquire, but we consciously know more about what we have learned.”

Students learn how to reason critically in various teaching and learning contexts, mainly through acquisition, as they model their own styles of

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14Ibid., p. 6.
argument and reflection after their teachers and more advanced peers, who, for the moment, represent or embody the values and behaviors of people who actively are involved in various academic discourses.

When teachers actively engage their students in the concrete issues, problems, or forms of performance that constitute the life blood of academic discovery—not when their students perceive them as slavish followers of instructional programs—teachers most effectively promote the acquisition of critically spirited habits among their students. Like clergy and politicians, teachers are best when they are charismatic, or at least when they try to create moments in the classroom in which students get a glimpse of the excitement that social scientists feel when they recognize interesting connections among events or that poets feel when they have created something beautiful. Like clergy and politicians, teachers try to convert their students, to entice them to want to be members of the various associations that gather around academic subject fields.

Teachers should think of themselves first and foremost as representatives of the academic disciplines they teach, who themselves become excited by issues in their subject areas and who want to establish an environment where students can create and test their own ideas in these same areas. We agree with Duckworth:

The right question at the right time can move children to peaks in their thinking which result in significant steps forward and real intellectual excitement. Although it is almost impossible for an adult to know exactly the right time for a given question for a given child—especially for a teacher who is concerned with thirty or more children—children can raise the right questions for themselves when the setting is right. And once the right question is raised, they are moved to tax themselves to the fullest to find an answer.  

She argues that her observations about how children advance in their intellectual lives suggest the outlines of a curriculum—a curriculum "with a difference." Instead of urging teachers to follow what textbooks specify without deviation, the aim of the curriculum is to press teachers and students to have unanticipated ideas of their own, to encourage them to take risks in developing hypotheses, and to encourage them to have confidence in the worth of their ideas.  

Lest Duckworth be branded as a hopelessly woolly minded romantic among curriculum theorists, we want to point out that she can be hard-headed, too. She does not say that being critically minded is an experience of forever bouncing around interesting questions. Like any academic community, where scholars and apprentices advance by following their own interests, the

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16 Ibid.
elementary classroom has a place for students to learn the ideas of other people, to know that in some contexts a right answer does exist, and to make sure that tasks are accomplished with precision. Thus, as any good teacher knows, in nurturing critical reasoning, direct instruction has an important place. Duckworth asserts, however, that direct instruction alone is not enough to encourage students to be questioning, growing individuals. The primary goal of classroom instruction, she insists, is to model critical reasoning, to create a culture that encourages people to follow their interests in various contexts, and to encourage people (both teachers and students) to test their own ideas.

The possession of metaknowledge is a crucial element of students' experience in this kind of educational culture—having the ability to interpret what people do when they are reasoning critically in various domains. Teaching metaknowledge is not the same as teaching critical thinking skills. It is more like providing self-images for students to solidify and reinforce the effective reasoning habits that students have already shown. It occurs when, after a charismatic moment in which a teacher and students have pursued an interesting issue, the teacher asks students to reflect on what they have just done. This reflection is the birth of a methodological interest, which has a prominent place in any mature academic discourse. Students need to do more than model the styles of thinking that pertain to particular teaching and learning discourses. As they advance, they need to know how to speak about how critically minded people attack problems. Having a critical spirit ultimately requires both the ability to attack problems maturely and an awareness of methodological disciplines.

4. Teachers and administrators should systematically evaluate the general culture of their classrooms and schools and should estimate how this culture affects their ability to promote critical reasoning habits among students. Working broadly from Goodman's whole-language learning theory and Krashon's acquisition theory, we argue that students acquire critical reasoning habits much more easily and effectively in a community of teachers and peers that respects ideas and lets students work on genuinely interesting problems and issues. Therefore, we encourage teachers to think of themselves as representatives of types of knowledge and styles of inquiry and as mentors who want their students to become creative, questioning, flexible thinkers.

Thus, the Critical Spirit Project is developing a model that requires teachers and principals to pay attention to the culture of their classrooms and to administrator-teacher-student relationships.\footnote{For an extended discussion of classroom culture, see M. Frances Klein, \textit{Curriculum Reform in the Elementary School. Creating Your Own Agenda} (New York. Teachers College Press, 1989), chap. 5.} We doubt that critical habits can flourish in schools where the classrooms are consistently authoritarian.
where administrators treat teachers as employees, or where teachers think of themselves as technicians.

We do not have a set of directions for creating an open, critical culture in schools. We do, however, believe that teachers and administrators should, at least in general, be able to answer yes to these questions:

- Does the atmosphere or culture of the school consistently encourage teachers and students to be intellectually curious?
- Do teachers and students spend a sizable amount of their time in the classroom working on intrinsically interesting projects?
- Do teachers, students, and administrators believe that their ideas are respected and that they are able to take risks?
- Are teachers, administrators, and students demanding in their expectations; does this community respect high standards?
- Do teachers and students know how to switch gears—when their studies require a spirit of playfulness or when their studies require a devotion to precision? Furthermore, are teachers and students aware of differences in how people talk, act, and think as they move from one academic subject to another?
- Does the school and the classroom offer the child a culturally stimulating physical environment? Do enough exhibits and bulletin boards raise questions?
- Does the physical arrangement of furniture in a classroom encourage students to interact with each other and with the teacher in nonhierarchical styles?

These questions all assume that we can view the elementary school (like the junior high school, the senior high school, or the college and university) as a social system, or as a community, where critical values dominate.

Communities hardly ever live up to their own best values (i.e., external goods often swamp concerns for achieving internal goods), but the values constitute a kind of informal compact that we should hold the community leadership accountable to. In the Anglo-American world of schooling, educators should feel accountable for establishing a climate in their schools that promotes a questioning, critical spirit. Thus, educators need to know how to analyze their own system as a web of values, especially to know how teacher-student-administrator relationships, room arrangements, teaching methods, scheduling practices, and classroom-management techniques all serve powerfully to promote or to inhibit critical values.

5. In their efforts to nurture a critical spirit among students, teachers should assess the compatibility between the students' primary discourses and the school's secondary discourses. When students arrive at elementary school, they have already been socialized into primary discourses—ways of thinking, speaking, and acting from their homes and neighborhoods. In a region like
In southern California, a student's primary discourse often uses Spanish, Spanglish, or Black English (or a host of other immigrant or pidgin languages), and usually these languages are associated with distinctly ethnic types of personal relationships, styles of learning, and ways of reasoning. Some primary discourses are compatible with the school's secondary discourses—ways of thinking, speaking, and writing associated with schooling. Others are not. Some discourses emphasize habits that channel students toward particular academic areas. Others enable students to develop as generalists. Others succeed only in making schooling a tribulation.

We have no reason to regard one primary discourse as better than another, and schools do not exist to suggest, even subtly, that students should abandon the primary discourses that allow them to function in their own homes and neighborhoods. Likewise, primary discourses are not private, and the discourses used in the public schools are not public. All discourses are public. Every last one of them establishes some kind of public identity.

Nevertheless, schooling requires certain character traits, and schools have a self-imposed obligation to socialize children into the habits of speaking, thinking, and acting that the school environment values. If students' primary discourses get in the way of their ability to become socialized into these school-related discourses, educators should help them make their leaps into the school's discourse-worlds—without, if possible, jeopardizing students' ability to function in their own homes and neighborhoods.

We are speaking nervously at this point because we are aware that these matters, especially in states like California, are controversial. We wonder, for example, whether socializing children into the school's discourses, which usually are associated with standard English, can ever occur without alienating children from primary, nonstandard English discourses.¹⁸ We wonder whether schools, even at the elementary level, should consciously try to develop traditions in the arts and sciences (especially the humanities and social sciences) that grow out of various ethnic and racial identities. We also wonder whether discourses associated with the arts and sciences, even at the elementary level, perpetuate male-dominated images of critical reasoning and therefore should be radically revised.¹⁹

These are not inconsequential issues to be relegated to the domain of professional bull sessions. The secondary discourses associated with schooling are not static. For example, no single model of thinking, speaking, and acting in the social sciences (or any other academic discipline) is cast in stone, forever resistant to change. Educators should perpetually be tinkering. They


should respond to society's changing values, to pressures from activist groups, to their own and their colleagues' changing interests and inclinations, and to altered concepts of what justice requires in the schools. Therefore, teachers and other curriculum makers cannot avoid forming their own judgments about the kinds of thinking, acting, and speaking that are minimally essential in their classroom activities.

If critical reasoning is always relative to the various school contexts (e.g., academic disciplines, playground activities, classroom conflicts), educators must become self-conscious about the character or the contours of these contexts. They need maps of each discourse so that they can function as guides for students. Teachers cannot model sophisticated styles of thinking, speaking, and acting in the school's subject-matter areas when they themselves (often through university-induced fears) are as much strangers in these areas as their students are. Teachers need simplified insights into subject-matter discourses to feel at home. In many discourses, they need something analogous to the maps they use when they strike out into alien territory in their automobiles during vacation months.

To foster critical spiritedness among students, teachers must judge where the contours of their students' primary discourses suggest that the students will be relatively at home or will be baffled by the terrain of the school's secondary discourses. Thus, teachers need skills in mapping the ethnic and cultural discourses that students bring to schooling, especially elements of these discourses that shape their students' experience of authority, their images of male and female roles, their desire to think independently, and their attitudes toward tradition and conventional opinion. Does a particular primary discourse, for example, encourage a student to question other students' opinions? Does it consistently encourage a student to be docile? Does it encourage individual achievement?

Discourse map making, then, is a crucial component in the sociologically oriented curriculum model we are developing. If teaching critical reasoning is ultimately a process of socializing students into school-related discourses, teachers will be much more effective if they are sensitive both to students' cultural (primary) profiles and to the normative profiles in the school's academic and nonacademic activities. Teaching is ultimately a task of helping students feel at home in foreign terrain—enticing them into different models of sophisticated academic behavior. This task requires an ability to communicate across discourse boundaries. Map making does not supply teachers with ready-made classroom strategies for cross-discourse communication, but it

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20 The term map has a technical use in qualitative sociological literature. A map is always a simplification. It portrays the essential features of a social terrain. It describes the fundamental styles of thinking, speaking, and acting that characterize a human association.

21 Elliot Eisner speaks about teachers as "travel agents," a metaphor that seems consistent with our discussion about the importance of maps in the classroom.
does give them tools to help identify barriers and incentives. In effect, map making helps teachers themselves to become more critically spirited in analyzing the multiple “languages” of their classroom.

Unfortunately, scholarship in the broad field of education, especially in teacher education, is not yet adequately directed toward honing the skills required for discourse map making. Elementary teachers must become what the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss calls *bricoleurs*—people who use assorted odds and ends to accomplish their purposes. Teachers must find help in disparate places; they must be able to pick up bits of guidance wherever they can find them.

In drawing maps of academic discourses, for example, teachers can use conversations with high school, college, and university instructors about ways of thinking and about what is going on in various academic areas. These conversations are increasingly available in preservice and inservice programs. Elementary teachers can benefit, as we have, from Kolb and Fry's efforts to map the styles of thinking, speaking, and acting that characterize various school-related discourses. They acknowledge their debt to Lewin's social psychology but then proceed to use his categories in drawing stylistic maps of various academic disciplines. Their chapter, "Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning," provides an extremely useful starting point for doing the same thing in a far broader school-related context.

6. A narrative form most effectively assesses students' ability to function critically in school-related discourses. This analysis uses the maps of students' primary discourses and of the school's secondary discourses and evaluates students' progress in becoming assimilated into school-related discourses. Narrative is the literary form most appropriate to speaking about students' socialization into school-related discourses. Narrative is dramatic. Whatever the school system's dominant mode of evaluation, narrative evaluation provides an invaluable supplement because it focuses on children's natural social experience. Teachers try to lure students into discourses that may not seem serviceable to students in their homes and neighborhoods.

Our evaluation of individual students' growth emphasizes two points.

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The experience of barriers and incentives that affect their induction into the school’s discourses—Do students, for example, exhibit signs of being at home in a particular subject area and of wanting to progress in performing increasingly sophisticated tasks in that area? How do students’ primary discourses affect their performance in that area? What forms do the teachers’ expressions of approval or disapproval assume?

Students’ performance of increasingly sophisticated tasks, as judged by people who identify with the science community, the arts community, the literature community, and other communities encompassing the cultural life of our society—Our model assesses socialization. It does not view growth as the progressive accumulation of skill bits.

The evaluation model of the Critical Spirit Project has its methodological foundation in qualitative sociology, which relies heavily on participant-observers’ disciplined, question-constrained intuitions. Educational evaluation is an activity of teachers who have learned skills in observation, note taking, and qualitative generalization.

Qualitative assessment is labor-intensive, a major drawback for overworked teachers. Thus, in the Critical Spirit Project, we are searching for ways of routinely integrating evaluation activities into teachers’ daily agendas while maintaining the advantages of disciplined qualitative observation and generalization. Toward this end, we are experimenting with simplified forms of desktop evaluation journals and computer-assisted journal keeping.

We are also interested in experimenting with a case-study approach to evaluation that would help teachers occasionally to become disciplined qualitative observers of teaching and learning segments in their own classrooms through the use of video. We are particularly interested in what might happen if enough trust develops for teachers and students—especially older elementary students—together to analyze what is going on in their classroom.

A CASUAL POSTSCRIPT

Educators in the camp of the natural learning or acquisition approach to education are often accused of providing a feast of theory and only a tiny morsel of practical guidance. The accusation, we insist, is not valid. It emerges from images of the educational process that portray teachers as engineers, who busy themselves with helping their students acquire skill bits. Comfort comes from speaking in a technological fashion about education because it suggests teachers can learn recipes that will ensure effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers can learn skills of teaching so that students can acquire measurable performance skills.

The curriculum model evolving in the Critical Spirit Project leaves plenty for us to do. We can, for example, spend much time making teaching and learning activities into enticing and demanding occasions. We can become
skilled in refashioning a classroom climate that more effectively stimulates critical reasoning. We can pay attention to how home and neighborhood environments affect students' abilities to perform critically in schools' activities. Indeed, we can find ways to bridge homes, neighborhood resources, and schools so that families and neighborhoods better support the demands made in the schools.

There is plenty to do.

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This book introduces 17 types of research used in curriculum studies, including philosophical, historical, scientific, ethnographic, aesthetic, narrative, phenomenological, hermeneutic, theoretical, normative, critical, deliberative, and action-oriented forms of inquiry. The authors explain how to conduct the different forms of inquiry, their basic principles and methodologies, and their use in addressing particular curriculum questions. The numerous curriculum studies cited illustrate the use of each form of inquiry. This book provides a rich overview of the subject and a new perspective on what can be achieved in curriculum studies with multiple forms of inquiry.

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This book gives practical principles of change, leadership, and management for urban high schools. Grounded in five case studies, these principles illustrate the problems and successes of efforts to plan change, understand the context of school reform, build a vision, manage resources, and cope with day-to-day problems of change. This book contains a synthesis of the literature and practical guidelines for action.