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ABSTRACT

This topical paper discusses the concept of teacher-student interaction. In an attempt to apply the concept to junior colleges, the paper presents the findings of several research studies in which the types and extent of interaction have been assessed at other levels of schooling. Only a few of the ways in which teachers and students relate are considered: (1) relationship in class; (2) out-of-class contact; (3) potential effects of interactions on student attrition; (4) cognitive learning; (5) student development; and (6) faculty satisfaction. This paper will be a chapter in a forthcoming book, The Community College Instructor: Person and Profession, to be published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. (Author/CA)

THE DYNAMIC INTERACTION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER

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FOREWORD

In this Topical Paper, the seventeenth in the Clearinghouse series, the concept of teacher-student interaction is discussed. In an attempt to apply the concept to junior colleges, the Paper presents the findings of several research studies in which the types and extent of interaction have been assessed at other levels of schooling. This Paper will be published as a chapter in a forthcoming book, The Community College Instructor: Person and Profession, to be published by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

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THE DYNAMIC INTERACTION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER

Changes in students' aspirations, personality development, and capabilities are more than the result of direct instructional effort. The instructor also affects his students inadvertently. What are the subtleties that lead to this effect?

More to the point of this paper, what are the students' effects on the instructor? To what extent do they shape his behavior within the classroom and as he plans his activities? Can he be callous, maintain the pace? Shift gears a hundred times daily and still be himself? How deep can his relationships be with any of the students? Perhaps his involvement must be superficial because, as Rossi and Cole suggest, "Teachers are like priests and whores. They have to fall in love in a hurry with anybody who comes their way. Afterward there is no time to cry . . . . There are so many others to serve" (33:35). We know that influences are like two-way streets, but what are the processes of interchange?

The question of what passes between college students and their instructors is among the thorniest in education. Although students and instructors separately are studied up, down, and sideways, the element of mutuality is too often overlooked. Each person affects the other and, while young people's needs are vociferously proclaimed, adult needs are generally overlooked. The many dimensions of the relationship mesh. Commentaries on the people who function within the schools and discussions of ways to improve education frequently neglect this point even though, as Jones (21) notes, the needs of the instructor

and the way they interface with the needs of the students are germane to all questions in education.

This chapter deals with faculty/student interactions--relationships in which members of both groups are involved. Only a few of the possible ways of considering these interactions are included here: relationships in class; out-of-class contact; and the potential effects of interactions on student attrition, cognitive learning, student development, and faculty satisfaction.

The Concept

Interaction has been described as what occurs when two or more persons behave overtly toward one another so that one receives perceptions and impressions of the other(s) that are distinct enough to incur reaction (3). This definition allows the phenomenon to be examined in terms of its effects on the people involved. Yet, even without attempting to assess effects, systems for describing what goes on between the members of two groups are not easily stabilized.

The study of teacher/student interaction takes place in many different ways. Students "evaluate" the instructor according to their perceptions of him. Thus, the study of student ratings of instructors is, in fact, one type of investigation of interaction. When outsiders visit the classroom and describe the numbers and types of comment made by instructors and students, they too are assessing interaction. A third method of study is observing teacher/student interaction in other than formal classroom situations.

Certain problems are common to all attempts to study human interaction. A recurrent problem is rater-bias--that is, through whose eyes the assessments are being made. Another is establishing the categories, determining the kind and amount of inference that can be drawn from the ratings themselves (32). The most difficult problem, of course, is in extrapolating from interaction studies

of any type to the broader questions of human change.

A major reason for the failure to develop systematic knowledge of teacher/student relationships is that such information has awaited--and still awaits--the emergence of a serviceable psychology of personality development. Still, we must study interaction as best we can. Nevitt Sanford aptly set the scene for these inquiries:

> Very little is known about the influence of college teachers' characteristics upon students' learning and development. Although studies of this aspect of the educational process have often been carried on in the elementary and high schools, almost nothing has been done in the colleges. Here is a vast and significant area that awaits investigation (35:54).

The importance of studying faculty/student interaction is also suggested indirectly in the large body of inspirational literature extant in the field of education. Prospective teachers are exhorted to be warm, friendly, kind, sympathetic, and so on. Why? Ostensibly, so that they will have some positive effect on their charges. But how or when the warmth and friendliness translate themselves into impact on an individual remains in the realm of mystery. The mechanism of transference is ambiguous, consequently, devices to assess the quality and extent of faculty/student interaction are often gross and crude.

In response to the question of whether individual instructors affect students, the immediate reaction is to say, "Of course." The evidence, however, is sketchy, more anecdotal than empirical. In his study of colleges and their impact on student values, Jacob (20) used testimony provided by educators and counselors to show that profound influences were exerted by some teachers, even to the point of causing certain students to re-orient their philosophies of life. However, because the influence that ignites "the certain spark" is personal and often

indiscernible, it is difficult to identify.

Many other investigations attempt to grasp these same issues. Perceptions of students, teachers, and trained outside observers have frequently been examined in relation to dimensions of classroom activities--Morse, Bloom, and Dunn (29), for example, studied development, mental health, and group process; a more recent line of study emphasizes interpersonal perceptions as well as teacher-leadership styles. Countless other reports of teachers' interactions with students are available, as are observational techniques that assess the spontaneous behavior of instructors.

Some investigators suggest that faculty members who have powerful effects on students are likely to be individuals whose own value commitments are firm and openly expressed, who are outgoing and warm in their relationships. Their influences are more pronounced in institutions where association between faculty and students is frequent and where students find their teachers receptive and unhurried in their classroom conversations. These assumptions, however, are usually based on superficial observations, not developed from well-substantiated constructs.

Limited knowledge about the interaction process has not deterred today's instructors. Building on minimal knowledge that implies more students are positively affected by warm and friendly people than by cold and aloof individuals, a school of "maximum interaction" has recently developed. By the end of the '60s, practically every institution had at least one instructor who insisted on "revealing himself" to his students. In the classroom, this revelation took the form of everything from frequent personal references through confessionals to arranging situations with much physical contact. This type of intense personal interaction was usually justified by each practitioner as a way of putting the student more in touch with his "real self" and "freeing" him for

greater heights of awareness. Although the "touch and tickle" school of classroom instructors claimed that it intended to enhance intellectual work, many of its devotees allowed the process to override potential learning. Those who used the process were often likely to perceive the personal contact as an end in itself.

Interaction Analysis

Interest in measuring classroom interactions more precisely has led to various systematic rating schemes that can be classified under the general term "interaction analysis." By definition, interaction analysis refers to "a system for categorizing, observing, recording and analyzing the classroom behaviors of teachers and students" (9). Trained raters note the form and extent of interaction in the classroom by observing how often one or another person speaks, makes positive statements, asks questions, and so on. They tally these behaviors along such dimensions as "direct" and "indirect" statements; that is, statements that tend to minimize or maximize student freedom to respond. The implication is that a student's learning is enhanced when he feels free to express himself in an open environment.

When interaction is examined by viewing the classroom "game" (4), more than half the classroom talk is frequently attributed to the teachers. Amidon and Flanders (1) have discussed this at length. They find that the average classroom has someone talking two-thirds of the time, that two-thirds of this is teacher talk, and that two-thirds of the teacher talk is made up of direct attempts to influence students. Thus, despite recent cries for student involvement in every educational process, the teacher still looks upon himself as properly the single most active person in the classroom. The higher the level of schooling, the more this is true. Whereas the elementary school teacher frequently has the students recite, read, and report, the image of the college classroom is

more often that of a professor giving a fifty-minute lecture to a silent room. Arguments against this teacher-dominated situation are frequently raised. In fact, Postman and Weingartner (30) go so far as to insist that each teacher be limited to three declarative and fifteen interrogative sentences per class. They even suggest fining a teacher for each sentence above the limit, with the students doing the counting and the collecting!

Tallying overt classroom behaviors is seemingly a crude way of assessing anything, but the practice does show promise in assisting instructors to become aware of their own actions. An instructor may genuinely feel that his classroom is free and open, yet, rating the environment, trained and objective observers may present him with data that suggest quite the opposite. The resultant surprise can be most enlightening.

Out-of-Class Interaction

Looking on the closeness of a "college environment" as positively affecting students' lives, extensive contact between faculty and students outside of regularly scheduled classes is a fond dream of educators. They see this kind of interaction as part of the total immersion of the student in his environment--a feeling that stems from the residential college concept. Unfortunately for their hopes, relatively few junior college students reside on campus. Hence, possibilities for contact out of class are frequently limited to scheduled visits in instructors' offices, chance contacts on the way to parking lots, or association with instructors in sanctioned "student activities."

Only a few studies examine the degree of student contact with faculty members outside the classroom. Feldman and Newcomb (14) summarize the results of eight such studies but none deals with students and faculty in community colleges. Except in the smaller schools, this type of contact is probably minimal--a phenomenon that

leads to the charge of depersonalization. Depersonalization, however, does not necessarily imply that all students would have it otherwise. For some, this is what it is and this is what they prefer.

One study of out-of-class interaction in the junior college was conducted by Machetanz (26), who surveyed 5,400 students and 546 faculty members in 21 Southern California institutions. Most out-of-class contacts were found to take place either in the instructor's office or in the classroom just before or after class. Few students sought out their instructors to talk about personal or social problems or academic questions in general; instead, they questioned course assignments or grades. Although most students reported that they found it fairly easy to meet instructors outside of class, they did so infrequently--rarely more than once a month.

About half the instructors surveyed in the Machetanz study held off-campus jobs and a fourth more were involved in graduate studies of their own. The instructors who were most committed to non-teaching activities were the ones who interacted least with their students outside class. Similar results were reported by Wallner (39), who found all faculty/student relationships to be stronger in institutions having a higher percentage of full-time faculty members.

These reports suggest a phenomenon not easily overcome in the current structure of the community college. One gets the picture of both students and faculty members driving to a campus, walking to a classroom where they meet together, and then leaving to engage in work, study, or play unrelated to the college. Who meets whom in the process remains within the "potential researchable question" category.

Many two-year colleges attempt to stimulate interaction by organizing activities designed to bring students and instructors together outside class. Their success, however, is not great. When both students and instructors

are commuters, the ideal of a campus where chance contacts are a possibility throughout waking hours cannot be realized. This state, so desired by those who base their vision of a college on the English boarding school, is far from reality in the community college. Commuting is a state of mind as well as a physical fact.

Interactional Effects

How important is it for college students to maintain close relationships with faculty members? White argues that the instructor as a person is less important to the college student than he is to the high school student--and considerably less important than he is to the elementary student. Whereas the child does not compartmentalize but, rather, interacts holistically with the adult, the college student is "capable of interacting with the instructor at almost a purely intellectual level, in a manner that makes many of his personal characteristics irrelevant" (40:68). Wise corroborates this observation, suggesting that students who seek contact with faculty do so for the purpose of establishing a close social relationship with available adults. They "are not nearly so eager to learn to know faculty members as people as they are to know them as teachers . . . as 'experts,' and to have further opportunity to explore with them the new ideas met in their courses" (41:28).

However, many students apparently do attend to their instructors as people. This was shown in a study of approximately 2,000 entering freshmen at three junior colleges. Students ranked "Instructor's personality" second in a list of eight "things they look for" when they enter a class for the first time ("specific learning objectives" was ranked first; "course reading list" was last!) (8). If, as Sanford (36) argues, optimal student development comes from a highly personal student-faculty involvement, we might infer that these junior college respondents knew what they needed. And, if other people

differ in their goals, personal objectives, and feelings--then students also vary in their needs for close contact both in and out of the classroom. Feldman and Newcomb substantiate this latter position by suggesting that "Different kinds of students . . . do not always agree about the desirable degree and nature of student-faculty contact" (14:251). They point to one study that found a sizable majority of high-achieving students wanting closer contact with their professors but only a few lower-achieving students seeking such closeness.

If we are to look at interactions in terms of mutuality, we must also measure the effect of consonance and dissonance between faculty and student groups. In a project comparing hierarchies of values of junior college instructors and students, both groups ranked, in order of importance to them, lists of instrumental and terminal values developed by Rokeach (31). There was wide disparity in the importance attached to different values by both participating groups (6). It might well be asked, however, whether one really has any right to expect congruence in value structures--and thus, ultimately, in behavior--between people representing different generations. And if there is marked disagreement, what, indeed, can be the effect of academic interactions? If people are so different in characteristics as basic as values, one wonders if there can be any direct reciprocal effect at all on any but the most superficial level.

Processes of interaction relate to other issues in the academic setting. Student attrition is one prominent concern; another is individual and institutional purpose. The two may be related.

We have certain information about student withdrawal from college, but, as Summerskill (38) points out, in forty years of study the dropout figures--and presumed causes--remain the same. One dropped class does not make a college dropout, yet each class that a student attends and each instructor with whom he interacts contributes to

his chances of staying in or withdrawing from school. What indeed are the relationships of student and teacher that lead to such effects as persistence or withdrawal?

Although the instructor formulates his own courses, develops and uses certain instructional methods, and establishes practices that may activate students' decisions to stay or drop from school, few studies have examined the differential retentive capacities of instructors. Terminal interviews with the students often reveal, as a major cause of early departure from college, a general dissatisfaction with instructors and with the traditional curricula (13). While the teachers' ability to sustain the interest and attention of their students would seem to be a major determinant of success in teaching, this variable is rarely included in investigations of academic mortality rates.

Certain instructors probably account for more dropouts than others do. Is this phenomenon related to the personalities involved? Marking (27) examined the extent of similarity in attitudes and personality characteristics between students and their instructors, noting their social class identification, values, masculine-feminine traits, and liberalism versus conservatism. Whether or not the students were "like" their instructors did not relate to their staying in school. Nothing that could be identified made a significant difference between the variables "persist" and "withdraw" from junior college.

Does the issue of dropout relate to the instructor's methodology? If certain instructors have fewer students who withdraw from college before completing their programs than other instructors do, these staff members might be communicating a sense of purpose to their students, many of whom are desperately seeking such direction. One way this sense may be transmitted is through the outlining of specific learning objectives. Theoretically and logically, objectives are important to achievement. If attitudes--of both faculties and students--are also

essential to the learning experience, it can be assumed that students will learn more from the instructor who has a clear notion of his own direction than from the instructor who conducts his class in a vague and ambiguous manner. It follows, then, that the instructor who specifies the ends of his teaching and who focuses his students' attention on the goals rather than on the media of his instruction is more likely to hold students than other kinds of instructor. Students do seem to prefer this type of direction. As Arrowsmith put it, "If a student is serious, he rightly asks of his education that it give him some sense of the end on behalf of which the whole process takes place. Finding no such end, he calls his education 'irrelevant' . . . . The student rightly expects his teachers to have some sense of the same end, or to be busy about remedying the lack" (2:60).

Which Teacher? Which Student?

All schemes for observing classroom interaction and all questions of individual instructor effects run afoul of the phenomenon that different teachers affect different students in ways that are still unknown. Several investigators have reached this same conclusion.

In studies of the elementary school, teachers and students have been classified into several types on the basis of classroom observations. Noting responses to an interest-personality inventory, role playing, and scores on an educational examination, Heil (17) found that only the interest schedule yielded clear results. This verified his major hypothesis that different kinds of teachers get different kinds of achievement from different kinds of children. The self-controlled individual was found to stimulate the most achievement from certain children, while the fearsome teacher was associated with the least achievement. With children classified as "conformers" and "strivers," the turbulent teacher was almost as successful as the self-controlled one, but less than

half as successful with children who had been classified as "opposers." The salient point is that there was neither one kind of teacher who did well with all kinds of students nor one kind of student who did well with all kinds of teachers.

For some time, McKeachie and his associates have been concerned with the interaction between student motives and instructor's cues (25; 19). They find that college men who are high in affiliation motivation make relatively better grades in classes that are characterized by a high level of affiliation cues. Conversely, men low in affiliation motivation do relatively better in classes low in affiliation cues. They also report that certain teacher characteristics--e.g., "warmth"--relate to achievement differently for men and women and for students high and low in "need affiliation." Thus, if warmth affects some students positively and others negatively, in any study of student groups, the effect may cancel itself out. Other variables probably interact in similar ways.

Re-analyzing the data from nearly 100 studies of comparative teaching methods, Dubin and Taveggia (11) also suggested that some students react favorably to one method, others to another. Thus, the results of studies comparing different teaching procedures must be inconclusive. if only because each type of student-subject cancels out the other.

Nevertheless, certain gains in both comprehension and factual information seem to be influenced by different types of teacher behavior. Apparently, teachers must be very clear about their objectives and, further, must develop those aspects of their natural styles that best lead students to attain those objectives. Certain teaching modes are probably better suited for some groups of students than for others and, eventually, it may be possible both to select instructors especially adept at teaching certain student types and also to help teachers

develop styles best suited for particular audiences. Heath (16) reports that the ability of teachers to relate to students may vary according to the ethnic background of the students and that certain elements of teaching style contribute to this ability differentially, again depending on the students' ethnic backgrounds.

Most research reports, however, are inconclusive regarding the key question of how affinity relates to learning. As Heist notes, "A student may prefer certain types of teachers, but how they affect his learning or development is not known . . ." (18:313). It does seem that most faculty members who are attentive to individual students are more effective as teachers than those who are less so. Yet, lacking information about faculty characteristics, we cannot predict what kind of instructor will tend to be so attentive. Further, except in very limited cases where single classrooms are examined, we do not know how individual students react to permissive or authoritarian teaching situations.

Studying Congruence

What can the study of interaction offer the instructor? The attempt to discover the impact of anyone whose personality structure is essentially congruent or dissonant with his associates seems potentially fruitful. We do not know whether common characteristics or mirror images are more influential in determining effects of teacher on student or of student on teacher.

To formulate responses to the general question of interaction, we must find answers to such specifics as: Do teachers who tend to be extroverted relate better to students who are similarly oriented? In terms of a taxonomic scheme of cognition, is the individual who functions at the level of "synthesis" better able to learn from the teacher who functions at the same level? Or does the ability to synthesize really stem from other sources, such as the exposure to a potpourri of cognitive styles?

Dealing with relatively more global aspects of individual personality, it seems important to ascertain whether students who are relatively high in ego-strength are better able to learn from teachers who are spontaneous, impulsive, and unstructured. Similar lines of inquiry could employ almost any variables.

Some investigators have indicated that differential cognitive preferences affect the processes of classroom interaction. In this vein, Smith and Meux point out that

> . . . some teachers prefer to deal with details and thus neglect the general ideas of the material they are dealing with. On the other hand, other teachers prefer to discuss generalizations, and, in consequence, overlook the details which support the more general conceptions and principles. The same sort of preferences may also be found among students. These sorts of preferences will probably influence the quality of classroom discourse, shaping its various twists and turns and determining, in part, who will participate (37:117).

Perhaps, instead of grouping students by "ability," we should try grouping them by "style" or "approach."

Many alternative arrangements can be--and have been--posed for capitalizing on different styles or modes of approach. Perhaps it is feasible in larger classes to let some students gain information from library learning rather than from class attendance. Other students might be encouraged to do laboratory work and still others, to gain experience in field settings. The point is that a variety of approaches to the same ends should be offered. McKeachie (24) suggests that at present we do not know much about which students best achieve which goals with which experiences--a concept explored by Cohen (7) in the context of the junior college.

Many students have opinions about what and how they can best learn. Although these opinions are not generalizable, giving students the opportunity to determine their

own conditions of learning, letting them suffer the consequences of bad choices, and allowing them to learn from these experiences may be the most important way education can be personalized. Information on the interaction of student and teacher characteristics as it relates to and affects learning may even suggest that it is best to feed all the data into a computer and assign students to classes with those teachers who would "best fit their needs." However, this seems an unlikely and possibly even an "undesirable consequence." We might do better to teach a student to learn from a variety of teachers rather than restrict him to teachers to whom he can adjust most easily.

Research on the phenomenon of cognitive style or preference, in fact, may be the most promising venture in understanding classroom interaction. For, if the classroom is to be viewed as a prime medium for student/faculty interaction, personality and cognitive preferences must be assessed. It seems rather presumptuous for the field to maintain the existing patterns of classroom dominance by the instructor or to plunge into the uncharted waters of intense personal relationships (bordering on the therapeutic) without bringing other variables to the surface. Personality development, a desired but indefinable outcome of college, is more difficult to measure than cognitive preference, but both might be enhanced if we better understood either one.

The process of interaction also relates to the study of instruction. Because most classroom teaching shifts at the whim of the individual instructor, it is extremely difficult to separate the effects of instructional techniques from the total configuration of the person. Instructional methods, techniques, and treatments cannot be assessed apart from the individuals who employ them and, in spite of the emphasis being placed on hardware and reproducible media, viable teachers continue to play the major role in college-level instruction. Where instruction is "live," the teacher as a person is a more important

variable than the presumed instructional treatment. Mutuality affects the process of instruction itself but, here again, we know little about how to measure it.

In the final analysis, the raison d'être for any study of faculty/student interaction must be to perceive its relationship to learning. To understand how the instructor affects student learning, it is necessary to examine those phenomena that act on the individual by enhancing changed attitudes or behavior patterns. One reason the research is so inconclusive may well be that the classroom is the wrong place to seek patterns of interaction that lead to change in human functioning. To search within the classroom is probably to ascribe a value to it far beyond its real worth as an instructional form. To remove "instruction" from the view of people interacting within the classroom is to change the pattern of observation so that the ostensible purpose of the meeting is removed from the model. We are far from being able to make definitive statements about the process of classroom interaction or about the way it affects the individual. We are even farther from specifying the types of teacher who are most likely to influence particular types of student.

Effects on the Instructor

The student is not the only one affected by student/faculty interaction. Students affect the instructor as a person, subtly warping his personality, perhaps causing him to become something other than he might have become if he were in a different field. The effects reverberate. The students' social behavior, their diligence, and their levels of intelligence all bear on the types of instructor who apply for positions at the schools and thus serve as selection factors. They also influence the instructors' behaviors in the classroom. Students thus indirectly play an important role in their own teaching. Lombardi (23) has documented the extent of student activism in

junior colleges. In time, this form of student behavior will have its own impact.

Special types of student have lasting effect on the instructors--students of "marginal ability" being a case in point. Despite the pronouncements of administrators and other leaders who insist that the junior college is "uniquely qualified to meet the needs of the community," many instructors chafe at teaching students so classified. Whether teachers of psychology are being surveyed (10), teachers in training (as at UCLA), or teachers in general (15), the same feeling frequently comes through.

Similarly, institutional reputations for attracting "high-" or "low-ability" students affect instructors' predispositions. Teachers may be drawn or repelled by an institution's reputation for student abilities and attitudes, or they may accept employment only by default--because their first and second choices did not materialize. These attitudes can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy: "The students are poor, unappreciative, lacking in basic skills, and unmotivated. Why should I bother to try?"

What effects might "low-ability" students have? The situation may lead instructors teaching remedial classes to feel they have a role different from other instructors and may force them into isolation from their preferred reference groups. Instructors who teach remedial courses may feel they are not "college professors" and may show their resentment to the detriment of the students, the college, and themselves--a phenomenon explored by Moore (28).

The "unmotivated" students can also cause the instructor to shrink away from them as individuals. As Riesman puts it (in Dunham), "One might even contend that a certain amount of poor communication and distorted feedback may be necessary if faculty are to maintain their morale in the face of an enervating environment of mediocrity" (12:172). In self-defense, the instructor of remedial courses may resist close interaction with his students.

This can lead to charges that some instructors do not care about students as people, that they actually see students as a mass of unidentified people, not as individuals--yet the instructor may actually be attempting to save himself from despair and self-doubt.

This phenomenon of personal withdrawal was reported by two of the new secondary school instructors who contributed to Ryan's book:

> As I began to recognize the shells into which many of the more established teachers withdrew, in their professional roles, I also began to understand why this happened. They were afraid of the new student body, which few of them were prepared to educate (34:109).
>
> . . . I never became deeply involved in school affairs or with any of my students. I held myself aloof, jealous of demands on my time and on my emotions, as though protecting myself, from what, I didn't know (34:141).

The activist or vociferous students take their toll in another way. Faced with accusations that his subject area is "irrelevant," the instructor may abandon his discipline and begin to make unsubstantiated pronouncements on contemporary issues--a form of "intellectual suicide" that can adversely affect both students and instructors. By pandering to the wants of the students who challenge his authority, the instructor may think he is helping, but "the teacher who makes the students' point of view his own not only yields to dishonesty but runs the risk of destroying the students' vision" (22). Students may sincerely wish to confront the establishment as a way of testing their own boundaries. Unfortunately, they are often greeted by "professional masochism," exhibited under the guise of "making the course relevant." The student challenges; opposition evaporates. Neither instructors nor students are well served.

A similar effect obtains when students in college to avoid the draft or to escape work of any sort demand "relevance." The instructor may feel he must relieve the students' boredom by catering to their insistence on excitement, on happenings. In fact, the students may have brought to the fore the instructor's own lack of commitment to his discipline, his failure to maintain currency in his field, or his just plain laziness.

Changes do occur--in both instructors and students--but as McKeachie so perceptively notes:

> As faculty members it is easier for us to accept the possibility that students may have personal barriers to learning than to recognize that we as teachers often defend against real change in ourselves. If we accept Roger Heyns' definition of college as a community of learners, every teacher-student interaction carries potential for learning of both teacher and student. Teaching should be a two-way process in which both students and teachers learn from one another; as long as teaching conditions facilitate a two-way interaction, we can place substantial reliance on the good sense of teachers and students (24:31).

The instructor who understands his own dynamics, as well as the reciprocal interplay between himself and his students, is in a better position to gain a sense of personal and professional maturity.

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