

No matter who treats our nation's poor and minority patients, the fact is that they tend to have multiple, chronic medical conditions and are often clinically complicated. They need the best doctors they can get, regardless of race. To be sure, not enough doctors choose to work in rural communities and poor, inner-city neighborhoods. Lowering standards for admission to medical school is not the remedy for that shortage, though. As far as patient preferences are concerned, again it would make more sense to create mechanisms that ensure patient choice.

So, this is Critical Medical Theory. We now have postmodern theories of disease, wherein the ideal of personal responsibility for health is overtaken by the concept that oppression will inevitably undermine it. We have racial preferences in medical schools based on the unfounded notion that doctors are biased against minority patients. Medicine, I'm afraid, will be the next institution beset by political correctness.

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## Pedagogical Advocacy

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Although I am affiliated with Harvard's Graduate School of Education, that is usually not enough to redeem me in the eyes of scholars in the arts and sciences or in other professional schools, at Harvard, as well as at other universities. Indeed, education schools have always been at the low end of the academic totem pole because their courses, their research, and their ideas on pedagogy and curriculum have not been viewed as warranting intellectual respect. Regrettably, there is good reason for this judgment.

Education schools have not tended to promote pedagogical ideas that result in the qualities that college faculty have traditionally sought in their students: disciplined study habits, a knowledge base that enables them to study the subject matter of their courses in its mature form, a capacity for analytical thinking, and the ability to write clearly and cogently about the substance of their courses. That many students enter college with these qualities is usually not a result of the training their teachers received in schools of education. Nor do education schools have a track record of promoting pedagogical ideas that have worked, or worked well, for those students who do not go on to postsecondary education. But today, in a stunning perversion of their primary mission, education schools now promote pedagogical and curricular ideas—whether associated with a multicultural approach or a constructivist approach—

that undermine or inhibit the development of analytical thinking, the ability to read advanced levels of English prose, and an adequate knowledge base for informed participation in our civic life, all in the name of broadening the curriculum to include “other ways of knowing” and to address “equity” concerns.

In my book, *Losing Our Language*, I have tried to show how these outcomes are being facilitated as part of a multicultural approach through the selections provided in reading instructional textbooks for grades 4 to 6 and the pedagogical recommendations given teachers in accompanying teacher guides.<sup>1</sup> In this essay, I indicate, briefly, what I found in my analysis of these textbooks. I also indicate how schools of education are further corrupting academic goals and our civic culture through pedagogical and curricular ideas associated with a constructivist approach to learning, through what is being done in the name of educational research, and through neglect of the crucial role of teacher competence in subject matter.

### **Multiculturalism and Elementary Reading Instruction**

One key way in which reading textbooks for the upper elementary grades undermine the development of analytical thinking is by emphasizing children’s feelings in response to what they read. Children are frequently asked to tell how they feel or to imagine how others feel, especially when discussing selections that deal with victimized or oppressed groups of people. For example, after children read a politically innocent story, “Petranella,” about a nineteenth-century immigrant family to Wisconsin, Silver Burdett Ginn’s fourth-grade teacher’s edition calls for the following lesson plan (under what is ironically titled “Appreciating Cultures”):

Appreciating Cultures. Tell students to imagine how homesteaders and Native Americans must have felt during the settling of the frontier. Discuss how they would feel if the government suddenly told them they had to leave so that people from other parts of the country and the world could move in. What are some problems that would develop? Have students find out what happened to the Native Americans when they were forced out. (280)

Although one might well think that this story deals with a clash between Native Americans and a group of settlers, there is not one Indian in the story. Nor are Indians ever discussed. Nor is the Homesteading Act mentioned in the story—or information given about it. A negative emotional response to European immigrants is what the multiculturalist is after. Children are not asked to discuss the culture of *these* immigrants, the Homesteading Act, or what propelled immigrants like these to this country in the nineteenth century.

Analytical thinking is also undermined by the incomplete or misleading information given students on various social or political issues. Although protection of the environment is a major theme in almost all of the textbooks,

there are no selections in any of them on such conservation pioneers in American history as Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot. Rachel Carson is the only environmentalist who is the subject of a biographical selection, probably as much for her condemnation of the pesticide industry as for her gender. Almost all of our presidents, scientists, and inventors are gone as well; unlike years ago, students today will learn almost nothing from their reading textbooks about significant people in American history and the causes of the industrial, scientific, and technological achievements of the twentieth century. The only scientist/inventor who is the subject of a biographical selection is George Washington Carver; he clearly bears a heavy representative burden.

The development of literary knowledge and taste is also being undermined by the frequent exploitation for political purposes of the good children's literature that is still in these textbooks, as we saw with the selection on the immigrants to Wisconsin, and by the use of what I call pseudo-literature: selections chosen to address "representation" of various social groups or to present the social issues about which today's moralists want to shape or alter children's attitudes. As further examples of the first of these two ways to corrupt literary study, a grade 4 selection from *Mary Poppins* is recommended for classroom discussions of the problem of day care and single parent mothers; a grade 4 selection from *The Cricket in Times Square* is recommended for discussions of the problems of the elderly poor and homeless in our cities. The many examples of pseudo-literature that I offer readers in my book are simple, preachy, or boring selections, sometimes little more than pieces of advocacy journalism on behalf of a group portrayed as oppressed by mainstream society, like the deaf.

Perhaps the most damaging way in which the education of American children is being corrupted is at the level of language itself, by the debasement of the English language in many selections (through the use of dialect, slang, Spanglish, Japlish, or words in other languages), and by the smaller number of literate English words that now appear in these reading textbooks compared to those of even a decade ago, as suggested by an examination of their glossaries (which usually consist of those words the editors have targeted for direct instruction in each selection). One major reason for the smaller number of literate English words in current textbooks is the growing presence of academically useless foreign words or proper nouns that come from the many different ethnic groups now featured in these textbooks, many of which follow pronunciation patterns at odds with those of the English language. Consider the following excerpt from "Have a Happy . . ." by Mildred Pitts Walter in the 1993 Houghton Mifflin fourth-grade reader that requires students to learn 35 Swahili words.

In the wee hours of the morning, the family made a circle around Grandma Ida, Beth, and Chris. Grandma Ida gave the *tamshi la tutaonana*: "In this new year let

us continue to practice *umoja, kujichagulia, ujima, ujamaa, nia, kuumba, and imani*. Let us strive to do something that will last as long as the earth turns and water flows."

"*Harambee!*" they all shouted. They repeated it seven times, with Chris's voice the loudest of them all. (280)

Here is an excerpt from a story, "Pacific Crossing," by a well-known writer, Gary Soto, in a 1996 sixth-grade, Houghton-Mifflin textbook.

On the *engawa* after dinner, Mr. Ono said to Mitsuo, "Take Lincoln to the dojo. You are not too tired, are you, Lincoln-kun? It is almost eight o'clock."

"No, not at all," Lincoln said as he left the room to get his *gi*.

And here is an excerpt from a story in Spanglish titled "Yagua Days," by Cruz Martel, in the 1995 Scott Foresman fourth-grade reader.

The whole family sat under wide trees and ate arroz con gandules, pernil, viandas and tostones, ensaladas de chayotes y tomates, and pasteles.

Adan talked and sang until his voice turned to a squeak. He ate until his stomach almost popped a pants button.

Afterwards he fell asleep under a big mosquito net before the sun had even gone down behind the mountains.

In the morning Uncle Ulise called out, "Adan, everyone ate all the food in the house. Let's get more." "From a bodega?"

'No, mi amor. From my finca on the mountain.' (C68)

Fortunately, this kind of language stew is not yet characteristic of the majority of selections in these readers. But they represent a trend promoted by schools of education through their courses and their professional journals, presumably to render English-speaking children less linguistically ethnocentric and to build the self-esteem of those groups who use these words (although it is not clear how many Swahili-speaking children are in our public schools). The source of this pedagogical nonsense is not the publishing houses or teacher requests but the academic and multicultural advisers the editors draw on. While no reasonable person wants these textbooks to return to only the depiction of the Dick, Jane, and Sally world of fifty years ago, at least their names followed English pronunciation patterns, unlike such names as Emeke, Mitsuo, Tasinagi, Chano, and Wanbli.

The deep-seated problems in today's reading textbooks can be traced ultimately to the pursuit of social and political goals, not intellectual and literary

ones, by teacher educators in our schools of education, despite the fact that there is no empirical research whatsoever to support the efficacy of these presumably esteem-building strategies for improving reading ability in minority youngsters. Indeed, the reading test scores released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in February 1999 show that the gap between the reading scores of minority students and those of other students, which began in the early 1990s, continues to increase. Minority students are not the beneficiaries of today's meaning of multiculturalism, ironically enough, but its chief victims.

### **The Constructivist Approach to Learning**

There is every reason to believe the gap will increase if the influence of a constructivist approach to learning grows in our schools. Briefly, a "constructivist" or inquiry-based approach to learning seeks to base what is to be studied more on the student's idiosyncratic interests than on a curriculum planned by the teacher; it favors interdisciplinary (or holistic) approaches to learning that seek connections across subject areas and reduce the amount of disciplinary content taught to students; it privileges topics for study generated by social and political issues rather than by the structure of a discipline; it encourages practical problem-solving rather than abstract or deductive thinking; it promotes student-led small group activities rather than whole class instruction; and it too often places much of the responsibility for teaching the less able students on the more able students in the class rather than on the teacher. Although a constructivist approach to learning is allied today with a multicultural approach to curriculum and pedagogy, it deals more with what it presumes are the motivating conditions for learning rather than with the specific content of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Nor, in itself, does it seek to inculcate specific attitudes and feelings on social or political issues, as does a multicultural approach.

The explicit claim made by supporters of a constructivist approach to learning is that poor student achievement in K-12, especially in mathematics and the sciences, is due to an overstuffed curriculum with no relevance to the "real world," taught by teachers who do little more than lecture and "drill on skills," and who expect students to learn mostly through rote memorization. Those who support this approach believe that the obstacles to higher academic achievement lie chiefly in the structure and content of the traditional curriculum and in the use of unmotivating pedagogical strategies, not in low academic expectations for all students or the growing decline of teachers who are knowledgeable in their subject matter. Indeed, its supporters seem to ignore the possibility that a curriculum based on student-initiated inquiry may require for successful implementation more highly knowledgeable teachers than we have at present or are ever likely to have. Because a constructivist approach to learning has a history going back to Piaget's work in children's intellectual

development, it has had a very strong influence on most current national and state standards in mathematics and science.

### **The Corruption of What Research Is**

Although there is no compiled body of information on what education school professors want their students to learn in their methods courses, we do know from the vast paper trail this faculty must produce for professional advancement—their publications—what they think is important to do research on, what they think teachers, administrators, publishers, and other professionals involved in educational matters ought to do on the basis of their “findings,” and what they think research is. Today, research is at the heart of the problem in the English language arts—the most basic subject in the K–12 curriculum.

As weak as educational research has generally been through the years, most education researchers used to try to observe the structures and strictures that promote methodological soundness. These include the need for an open-ended question, the existence of a research question itself, the systematic gathering of information to address the question, the need for credible evidence—more than subjective opinion—to back up claims, the requirement that conclusions follow logically from the results of the research, and the academic courtesy of indicating the limitations in the design and carrying out of the research in order to prevent unwarranted or careless applications of the results. Today, these constraints have been almost totally abandoned by many who call themselves researchers or who publish what they label as research in order to further their ideological goals.

The corruption of educational research in the English language arts and reading has not gone unnoticed. One of the most respected researchers in this field, Alan Purves, wrote in a 1995 essay in *Research in the Teaching of English* (a journal I edited from 1991 to 1997), that so far as he was concerned, “research in English teaching had hit a dead end, a point where there was a great deal of heat, but little light.” It was now “an exercise whose importance I consider questionable at best.”<sup>3</sup> He then went on to spell out the main problems he saw, such as (1) “the proliferation of journals and a new cabal of editors who want journal submissions to reflect their particular ideologies regardless of the scope of the research or its findings,” (2) few fresh ideas, just “applications of various labels from a variety of new European (and therefore chic) writers to the results of observations of students, teachers, or schools,” (3) “questions of validity,” (4) methodological battles in which each side endlessly “asserts primacy,” and (5) a tendency on the part of researchers to prescribe pedagogy on the basis of a set of descriptive categories the researchers have created for that purpose.

Purves believed that the “purpose of research is to discover knowledge.” That is not what large numbers of language arts researchers believe today.

One such professor of education expressed the intentions of many researchers quite succinctly in a preface to a 1992 volume of essays on various methods and approaches to “literacy research.”<sup>4</sup> What he thinks they should be doing through their very research is “altering social relationships” in the classroom or school. Indeed, he believes that education itself is “about the business of altering social relationships,” a view that is uncontested in the essays in that volume.

This view has been communicated to teachers by their professional journals and by awards given, sometimes in Purves’s name (he died in December 1996), for what is now regarded as research. I give a few details here because the exploitation of Purves’s name illustrates how easy it is to manipulate an entire profession. In their February 1998 issue, the editors of *Research in the Teaching of English* announced an Alan C. Purves Award to honor each year a research article published in RTE that “makes the greatest contribution to our understanding and conduct of educational practice.” The first award was given at an annual conference of the National Council of Teachers of English in November 1998 to an article published in the February 1998 issue titled “The *Tesoros* Literacy Project: An Experiment in Democratic Communities.”<sup>5</sup> This article violates almost everything Purves stood for as a researcher; indeed, it reflects much of what he criticized in current research. It is a description of a Marxist-inspired curricular project showing “critical pedagogy” at work.

In the article, the author “narrates the effects” of a ten-week project that he and two teachers carried out with a group of “Latino English-as-a-second-language students and at-risk Anglo counterparts” in a rural high school in Michigan in which the students read two English-language stories featuring Hispanic characters and then discussed, among other things, their experiences with “racial and/or class prejudice” at the hands of the “dominant culture.” The scapegoating of the literacy practices of the “dominant culture” (e.g., a short story by Edgar Allan Poe) as “oppressive” and as the source of these students’ “alienation” from school and “exclusion” from participation in the high school’s “dominant culture” is a typical feature of “critical pedagogy.” Designed to suggest what other teachers should do with similar students in their classes, the article is a good example of pedagogical advocacy.

The award to this article, which is far more important than the article itself, clearly conveys to teachers, researchers, and graduate students in English education that advocacy now counts as research—and that research may now consist of a piece of writing without a research question, a systematic gathering and display of one’s data, or an evaluation by any independent source of the value of a particular curriculum project. The article offers only the author’s self-congratulatory judgment of the benefits of his project for helping to create what he believes constitutes a “democratic community.” Absent is the critical self-reflection that Gerald Graff, writing as someone on the left in sympathy with efforts to foreground gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality in academic

studies, believes those advocating or practicing “critical pedagogy” should do but don’t.<sup>6</sup>

Studies can be corrupted by the conclusions or recommendations their authors present.<sup>7</sup> There may be an almost complete disconnect between the actual evidence and what the authors suggest are the pedagogical implications of the research undertaken or reviewed. This recently happened with respect to a body of research on a very important pedagogical issue—the teaching of reading to immigrant children. In March 1998, the National Research Council issued a report titled “The Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children” recommending that those who speak a language other than English—for which there are instructional guides, learning materials, and fluent teachers—should be taught to read in their native language while acquiring proficiency in spoken English.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the research it reviewed in no way supported these recommendations. Indeed, the report issued by the NRC in 1997 titled “Improving Schooling for Language Minority Children,” which reviewed the exact same body of research, pointed out that “there is not really a strong consensus about what is best for the education of English-language learners.”<sup>9</sup> The 1997 report states:

The studies reviewed [in this report] do not answer a question that has dominated research and professional and public discourse about educating English-language learners: What role should home language and culture play in the education of these students? The studies reviewed here can, at best, make an oblique contribution to this debate, in part because there are no rigorous studies that have controlled for interactions among student background (e.g., prior schooling in the native language, age), ways in which the first and second languages are used, and other instructional variables (e.g., overall quality of schooling). (178)

One page earlier, this report states: “We do not yet know whether there will be long-term advantages or disadvantages to initial literacy instruction in the primary language versus English, given a very high-quality program of known effectiveness in both cases.” One may surmise that the recommendations in the 1998 report were intended to undo any influence that the truthful remarks in the 1997 report might have on educational policies for immigrant children. Not surprisingly, the leadership of the two professional organizations most responsible for the teaching of reading in this country, the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, chose to refer *only* to the recommendations of the 1998 report when informing their membership in 1998 about what the research said was best for immigrant children.

Schools of education are thus corrupting our civic culture through the “findings” of their own “research,” through what they say “the research says,” and through the attitudes and beliefs about research that they convey to teachers in K-12. Through references in the articles they have published or through awards to non-research as research, they have confused teachers about what



constitutes empirical research (e.g., that it doesn't have to have an open-ended research question guiding the systematic collection of data) and misled them into thinking that advocacy, opinion, or anecdote written by someone with a doctorate does constitute research. On the other hand, in an Orwellian tactic, they have tried to get teachers to distrust experimental research. One well-known educator described it in an article for elementary school teachers as not "readable," of "limited value," and unable to "help [teachers] in the classroom." Teachers cannot see "their schools, classrooms, or children in the data." It is "devoid of context" and concerned with "sterile" and "faceless" data.<sup>10</sup> Another well-known educator, the founder of Whole Language, is quoted in *Education Week* as saying that the "conventional research sets up artificial experiments. The research is skewed by its design."<sup>11</sup> In other words, some of today's self-described researchers have tried to cash in on the prestige of scientific research by calling non-research approaches "research" at the same time that they are denigrating real research. We do not know what attitudes and beliefs about research (or science in general) newly trained K-12 English or language arts teachers influenced by such "educators" convey to their own students, but they are unlikely to be sound ones.

### **Indifference to Teacher Competence in Subject Matter**

Finally, schools of education are damaging public education and our civic culture by their seeming indifference to the crucial role of teacher competence in subject matter in improving student achievement. This indifference to intellectual competence is strongly suggested by the "Equity Policy" just passed at the end of 1998 by Division K of the American Educational Research Association, the division concerned with Teaching and Teacher Education. It is simply the latest mind-boggling example of the indifference if not antagonism to the worth of intellectual competence by those in charge of teacher education. As reported in Division K's Winter 1999 newsletter by a teacher educator at the University of Syracuse, "those who voted (after several reminders) unanimously passed the proposal [policy]." The Equity Policy is a very lengthy resolution listing the many things that teacher education programs should advocate or address that, in the eyes of its authors, would improve the education of all students. However, as noted by Mara Sapon-Shevin, the author of the report, "there were several strong concerns about the policy among those who voted against it, including objections that the focus on equity didn't mention the need for teachers to be competent in their subject matter (particularly math and science)." Aside from the obvious fact that the policy couldn't have passed "unanimously" if some of those who voted had voted against it (and no count was provided of the votes for and against), I want to note that I was one of those who voted against this policy because the *only* matter the resolution failed to include in its exceedingly long laundry list was the need for teachers to be competent in their subject matter. (I had mentioned math-

ematics and science in particular in my reply to the person collecting the ballots).<sup>12</sup> As a body of educational research has regularly confirmed, the one instructional variable consistently correlated with student achievement is teacher knowledge of subject matter.

What makes this report on Division K's vote even more problematic is Sapon-Shevin's further comments on the new policy. She nowhere acknowledges that teacher competence in subject matter *is* a need. Instead, she asks how the division can "deal with the Equity/Excellence debate within teacher education programs? . . . How do these twin objectives affect issues of acceptance into teacher education programs, hiring of teacher education faculty, assessment standards and programs?" In other words, teacher competence in subject matter is problematic, not clearly desirable. In fact, a cynic might say that the emphasis on a constructivist philosophy of education, in which more meaningful learning is supposed to take place when students teach each other in small peer-led groups what they know from their own experiences and thereby "construct" their own knowledge, is the self-serving answer that schools of education have found to two significant problems: how to make the absence of knowledgeable teachers in K-12 classrooms an irrelevant issue, and how to avoid their responsibility for ensuring a regular supply of such teachers.

### **In Conclusion**

The rest of the university needs to pay much more attention to our schools of education than they have. Today they play the central role not only in teaching K-12 teachers *how* to draw on the knowledge they have gained in their undergraduate majors to develop appropriate learning activities for different types of students at different educational levels, but also in determining *what* is taught in K-12. Education schools have almost always determined what is taught in K-6 as well as how it is taught, because the subjects taught in the elementary school are usually taught by generalists—teachers who have majored in education itself, not in an academic discipline—and because education schools have always placed great emphasis on the importance of children's motivation and on the relevance of developmental learning theories for shaping curriculum and instruction in the elementary school. Today, schools of education have as strong an influence on what is taught and how it is taught in the secondary school. This is not just because high school textbooks now tend to be written by editors and professional writers hired by publishers, often in consultation with high school teachers or faculty in schools of education. It is also because college faculty (for example, in mathematics departments) have been virtually excluded from any influence on the high school curriculum in recent decades, or from participating in the development of national and state standards in their subject, as noted in a Thomas B. Fordham Foundation monograph on state standards in mathematics.<sup>13</sup>

In one sense, the profound influence of schools of education on public education and, ultimately, higher education may be seen as a form of revenge on the academy itself. It is supremely ironic that what is probably the most disdained professional school at our universities is now in the position of being able to change the content of higher education as well as our culture as a whole through its almost unfiltered influence on our public schools. And it is not the case that their influence is a result of a deliberate takeover of our teacher training institutions by power-hungry progressives in the early decades of this century continuing down to this day. As Sidney Hook and others charged many years ago, the arts and sciences faculty in our universities snobbishly abandoned an earlier involvement in the schools and in teacher preparation before or as major teachers colleges began to be founded, leaving the deeply serious problems of mass education in a democratic society to, as Hook put it, less than the best minds in the academic world.<sup>14</sup> In the intellectual vacuum created by the withdrawal of liberal arts faculty from K–12 matters, anti-intellectualism flourished unchecked.

### Notes

1. Sandra Stotsky, *Losing Our Language: How Multicultural Classroom Instruction Is Undermining Our Children's Ability to Read, Write, and Reason* (New York: Free Press, 1999).
2. See, for example, the essays in *What's at Stake in the K–12 Standards Wars: A Primer for Educational Policy Makers*, ed. Sandra Stotsky (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc., 2000).
3. Alan C. Purves, Comments in "Viewpoints: A Symposium on the Usefulness of Literacy Research," ed. A. L. Saks, *Research in the Teaching of English* (October 1995): 326–31.
4. Jerome C. Harste, foreword, in *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Literacy Research*, ed. Richard Beach, Judith L. Green, Michael L. Kamil, and Timothy Shanahan (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1992), ix–xiii.
5. Todd DeStigter, "The *Tesoros* Literacy Project: An Experiment in Democratic Communities," *Research in the Teaching of English* (February 1998): 10–42.
6. See, for example, Gerald Graff, "The Dilemma of Oppositional Pedagogy: A Response," in *Left Margins: Cultural Studies and Composition Pedagogy*, ed. Karen Fitts and Alan W. France (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); also, Gregory Jay and Gerald Graff, "A Critique of Critical Pedagogy," in *Higher Education Under Fire: Politics, Economics, and the Crisis of the Humanities*, ed. Michael Bérubé and Cary Nelson (New York: Routledge, 1995).
7. In some cases, as I discovered in my examination of the manuscripts submitted to me while I was editor of *Research in the Teaching of English*, it includes efforts to manipulate the data that a researcher gathers so that the results will come out according to the party line—or at least not contradict it. For example, one author's manuscript, based on her dissertation, purported to show that fifth graders could conduct discussions of the stories they were reading in small groups without the teacher's "intervention" and could demonstrate that they understood what they had read. Perplexed by the absence of a description of the stories these fifth graders had read, I checked on their reading level by calling my own public library and asking the children's librarian there. Two of the works turned out to be picture books whose illustrations, as we all know, serve to convey the plot of a story. That hardly made for an unbiased test of the author's hypothesis. In another example, the author sought to show how the opportunity to do collaborative writing (a group of children talking and then composing a story together) was beneficial to their writing; the major problem was that the author provided no examples of the

children's collaborative writing, only transcriptions of their (very sophisticated) talk about their writing. When I questioned her about the lack of examples of their writing (after telling her that I would not accept the manuscript without some examples), she told me she "had a problem" responding to my request because the children's writing wasn't very good—indeed, it was far inferior to their talk. Although I suggested that that was her real "finding" and that she should say so and speculate why (and thereby make a genuine contribution to the field on that issue), I never heard from her again. Both of these authors are now teacher educators.

8. Catherine Snow et al., *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1998).
9. Kenji Hakuta et al., *Improving Schooling for Language Minority Children* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1997).
10. Donald Graves, "A New Look at Writing Research," *Language Arts*, 57 (1980): 913–919.
11. Karen Diegmueller, "The Battle over Whole Language," *Education Week*, 20 March 1996, 13.
12. Mara Sapon-Shevin, "New Equity Policy Passes—The Hard Work Begins," *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Division K Newsletter, Winter 1999, 3 ff.
13. Ralph A. Raimi and Lawrence S. Braden, *State Mathematics Standards: An Appraisal of Math Standards in 46 States, the District of Columbia, and Japan*, Fordham Report Vol. 2, No. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, March 1998).
14. Sidney Hook, in "Modern Education and its Critics," *Modern Readings: Philosophy and Education*, ed. Israel Scheffler (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1958), 272–91.

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## Corrupting the Rule of Law

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A Russian, a Cuban, an American, and a lawyer are seated in the same compartment on a train. The Russian takes a bottle of vodka out of his luggage, pours some into a glass, drinks it, and firmly states: "In Russia, we have best wodka in the world, nowhere in the world you can find wodka as good as one we make in mother Russia. And, we have much of it, so much we can just throw it away like vater." That said, the Russian opens the train's window and hurls the vodka out of the train. The others in the compartment are quite impressed. Then the Cuban removes a box of Havana cigars from his luggage, takes one, lights it, and begins to smoke. "In Kooba, we have de best cigars of de world, habanas, nowhere in de world are dere such many and good cigars, and we have much of dem also, such many dat we can just trow dem away." Making that bold statement, the Cuban sends the box of Havanas the way of the vodka. Once again, the compartment's occupants are quite impressed. Then, not to be outdone, the American abruptly stands up, opens the window wide, and throws out the lawyer.

### 1. Introduction

This joke concerns a subject near to my heart after twenty-one years as a law professor. The question I want to address can be variously put. What has happened to our law schools? What has happened to our profession? What havoc are we, who train our lawyers, wreaking on them, on American society, on American culture?