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Source: *College English*, Feb., 1973, Vol. 34, No. 5 (Feb., 1973), pp. 623-633

Published by: National Council of Teachers of English

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/375330>

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BARRETT JOHN MANDEL

Teaching Without Judging

AT THE MEETING of the National NCTE Ad Hoc Committee on Grading, Miss Jean Anderson of Burlingame High School in California turned to the group and asked, "How can one teach without evaluating or judging?" As a first-rate teacher, Jean could see, of course, how to judge gently and kindly, but she wondered whether in the teaching of literature it was possible to substitute for the judging of student work an entirely different pedagogical strategy.

Many college teachers of literature have recently been struggling with this problem. I would like to set forth a fairly detailed account of my own approach, not in the least as an example of Truth, potent for all professors at all institutions, but as one approach, which has borne results for me and which may provide helpful hints for some readers of *College English*.

My teaching uses no gimmicks and

embodies no monolithic "Method." But it does work on the assumption that judgment in the form of grades and measurement (against "standards") does more to prevent education than to encourage it. This assumption is, fortunately, shared by a great many professors of literature today. But many of them have not found satisfying ways of translating their assumptions into classroom practice. My own practice may afford a few suggestions which others may find useful.

To Jean Anderson's question—Can one teach without judging?—I have come to feel that, for me at least, I cannot teach and judge as the same person. As a teacher I attempt to follow the following summarized rules of behavior, suggested to me not only by my own intuition and that of very talented colleagues, but also by my readings in third-force psychology, phenomenological psychology, and hermaneutics. However vague in listed form, these rules of thumb become powerfully practical for me in the literature class:

1. I listen until I hear.

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2. I look until I see.
3. I psychologically support and encourage any signs of intellectual and emotional energy.
4. I encourage interaction among students.
5. I advise, but never force or require.
6. I try to be intellectually and emotionally honest and accessible.

Of course I *never* succeed at all of these at one time (though I occasionally fail at all of them), but they represent a goal which I keep before me constantly.

I will attempt to flesh out this skeleton now, but before I do, perhaps I should point out also in outline form, a few of the pedagogical devices I never use—for reasons which I hope will become clear below.

1. Never call on anybody who has not volunteered.
2. Never correct an interpretation.
3. Never berate students for lack of knowledge, understanding, or hard work.
4. Never use lecture as the dominant approach.
5. Never require specific projects at specific times.

For literature more than perhaps many others areas of human study a discussion format seems desirable. I am well aware that many lecturers and question-posers get high ratings in student evaluations of teachers and for good reasons, but I have come to believe that class discussion cannot be overdone—not if it is free and open. Many students and teachers have simply never participated in an open discussion in a classroom and define as “open,” a rigidly controlled environment.

By “open discussion” I mean just that. The impetus, direction, style, depth, coverage, energy of the talk all are allowed to happen in the classroom as they would elsewhere, whether over

coffee in a restaurant, or at a party, in an intense bull session, or in a work session among equals. The teacher has no lecture notes, no hidden agenda. Many teachers have commented to me that they hate giving (and preparing) lectures, that they find lecturing ego-building for themselves but not educationally valuable for students. Some of them have said that they do not want to direct Socratic discussions, but that if they give up this prerogative, they feel at a loss and do not know what their role should (or could) be.

A teacher in an “open discussion” has many ways of behaving. I mention some of them only to demonstrate practical steps a teacher who wishes to encourage open discussion can follow. It is reasonable and not inconsistent with the aims of open discussion to assume that the teacher will make sure that there is something to discuss—a focal point of attention—though this assumption by no means implies that he or she has to determine *what* the focal point should be. The teacher may conceive of his or her role as making sure that students meet in workshops early in the term for the purpose of designing a syllabus or developing a set of issues. For some courses, students arrive with very fixed ideas about what works they would like to study. At such times, the teacher can act essentially as a secretary, making sure that the books are in print, available, etc. A class is certainly off to a dazzling start when a sizeable number of students know what they have come to learn about. Much more commonly, naturally, students have very few ideas about the possible readings for a course, and the teacher may have to provide the appropriate titles. In either or any case, the “open discussion” format (for me, at least) implies that there will always be

something to discuss, but that the discussion itself will not be controlled or directed. A rootless course with no fixed expectations would make me very tense and would drive me, because of my sense of the void, into the worst kind of pontification. Pure, undirected rap (obviously valuable in its own right and occasionally what occurs in my classes) flourishes most positively when it is spontaneous. A class is not spontaneous. In my classes I choose to establish a context in which a work of literature is always the potential focus of attention. If my students choose on occasion to pursue their education by talking about something other than literature, it is not because there is no common reading to discuss.

The teacher has to do whatever can be done to make the classroom experience conducive to discussion and discovery. Superficial measures often help: having the class arranged so that everyone sits facing everyone else, as in life; allowing the discussion to take whatever shape it wants to on the assumption that what is meaningless for one person (perhaps the teacher) may be educative for another, that no one lecture or series of questions is likely to be as valuable for individual students as the questions and points they make in a natural, free-associational discussion about the play, poem, or issue at hand, if that sort of discussion can be generated.

Each class day—we often meet at my home or a student apartment or on the campus lawn—one student, each of whom volunteers for arbitrary dates on the first day of the term, acts as the discussion starter. This student does nothing more or less than that: he or she starts. It is not a report and it is not a project. The student gets no “credit” at all, beyond whatever pleasure there may be in triggering a lively discussion. He or she

may ask some questions, providing they are genuine questions, or may express an opinion as to the meaning or value of the work of literature at hand or may simply confess confusion about the literature. I have found that the “starter” nearly always takes this responsibility seriously. Never reminded after the first class day, the starter always shows up, always starts, and almost always learns from the experience. “Today I was the starter for *Stop-time*,” writes one freshman woman in her journal. “Our class was very exciting. I learned the greatest amount from this class. . . .”

Often, especially at the very beginning of a term, if I find that the class is inhibited, I run some fast freeing-up exercises. There can be no open discussion, I find, when the potential participants are up-tight, full of self-doubt, suspicious, or bored. Often I do not need “freeing” exercises, but when I do, they always take the form of short answers (three or four sentences), written anonymously, to questions I pose concerning the students’ inner reactions to what has been happening in the class. I might ask, “List one response—doubt, question, disagreement, confusion—you had to the starter’s opinion.” Or, “If *you* had started what would you have said?” Or—simply: “What are you waiting *for*?” Naturally students who think that they are thinking “nothing,” discover that they are “not thinking nothing,” but that, as Duchess Alice says in Witkiewicz’s *The Water Hen*, “Apparently you had to forget everything else.” I collect the anonymous responses, shuffle them, and read them in a warm and supportive way. (I would only do such an exercise if I was *feeling* warm and supportive, aware of the students’ fears and self-doubts. I pause after each one and ask for comments. Such an exercise seldom

fails to trigger a lively discussion, and, more important, a pattern of lively discussion. The written statements are almost always psychologically validating for most of the students. Each one finds that her or his own confusion and self-doubt are reflected darkly behind the bland masks all around the room. This term I asked a freshman class the question, "What are you waiting *for*?" Twenty-one of twenty-two students wrote some variety of "I have no ideas of my own; I am waiting for somebody else to stimulate my ideas." Just hearing how insecure all of the others were freed many students immediately for their first genuine participation in an open discussion.

Whether or not written exercises are used, the class often stumbles along painfully at first, tentatively groping for a direction. What is the teacher's role during all of this apparent aimlessness? Again, I speak only about my own teaching which I offer as one way of defining one's responsibilities.

During this initial groping and seeming chaos, I do not under any circumstances take over the class and start "teaching." Having been greatly influenced by the writings of Carl Rogers, I basically run a student-centered class. This has been parodied as the "uh-hmm!" school of pedagogy, in which the student says (as one recently did), "What hit me the most about *The Quare Fellow* was the idea that everyone at the prison was equally responsible for the injustice and inhumanity which took place there," and the teacher says, "Uh-hmm!" That's a parody, but like all good parody it strikes close to the truth.

When a student makes a tentative comment during the early moments of a class, instead of my thought falling into the pattern which exclusively char-

acterized my early teaching, that the remark was "good" or "bad" (that is, near to or far from my perception—or Robert Brustein's—of the truth), I now think something like the following: "From her point of view that's the way the things looks." Or: "For reasons of her own, she has chosen to present herself in that light." Now if no other student responds or there is reason to assume that I should respond myself, I can say, "Uh-hmm," or "Would you say, also, that there are no morally upright characters in the play?" or "I never thought of it from that point of view; can you think of some specific examples?" The particular palavar is not nearly so important as the teacher's frame of mind. The student is an adult with an opinion which he or she has a right to expect will be taken seriously. More often than not, the teacher does not have to say anything because some other student may catch fire from what has been said and add a new dimension or deepen the perception. As Rogers has discovered in clinical therapy, I have found in teaching that the more a student feels that the environment is safe for personal thinking and feeling, the less tentative become the contributions, the more accelerated the momentum, the profounder the insights and self-satisfaction. This uh-hmming approach is very hard on a teacher, molded, as I was, into an authoritarian. One must work hard against mind rapping, against saying, however subtly, "You are wrong, my dear. Now listen to the truth." Teachers who have "tried this approach" and have found the students closing up like provincial post offices at lunchtime have, I fear, never fully convinced their students that *this* class is a really safe place. From my own experience I know that there is much a teacher can do to drain off the unproductive

anxiety and occasional peer aggression.

I do this uh-hmming or whatever psychologically supportive activity I can (though I *never* start to “teach”) until the natural rhythms of the session are established. In other words, when the majority of the students have begun to sound and look confident, I feel free to participate fully in three ways: 1) If I have an idea I have never had before and which occurs to me as a result of the class discussion, I tell it (if I can get a word in edgewise); 2) If I have a real question—one for which I do not have a secret answer tucked away—I ask it; 3) If a student asks for factual information about history, biography, bibliography, literary conventions, genres, and the like, I provide what I call a mini-lecture, which may take from twenty seconds to fifteen minutes, but which, hopefully, seldom goes beyond what the student apparently wishes to know. I try never to cut a student off, to take sides in an argument, or to dominate discussion. But most importantly, I try never to judge negatively and am even stingy with positive judgments. When I hear something I like, I occasionally say so, usually admitting only to the indisputable fact that I like it and less often to the more dubious assertion that it is “right” or “good.” More often than not, I say something like, “If I understand you, you are saying that thus-and-such is the case.” I always trust the class to make their own value judgments on ideas and interpretations.

As I understand the teacher’s function, it is to listen until he hears. When students sense that they have not truly been heard (that is to say, understood), they—like their teachers or any other people—either harden into a strident dogmatism or shrink insecurely away from the fire: I mean they cease to learn. But when stu-

dents feel that they have been understood, really heard, they intuit at once that there is little reason to repeat or defend or flee in fear from what has now been heard and accepted. They paradoxically find themselves ready to form new thoughts because they are there and safe with the one they’ve got. They are in a mental posture of openness and willingness to move on to new ideas. The same holds true for all of us. If these words I am writing conform to your own thoughts, thereby helping to legitimize yours, you will feel relatively happy, open, and eager to share thoughts. If, though, from your point of view I am dishing out hogwash and am not thereby helping to legitimize your views, you will probably feel yourself hardening against me, tensing for a fight to defend your view.

If what I have been saying about hearing as a way of stimulating intellectual openness sounds like overly tender treatment of fragile student psyches, it may suggest how far we have allowed ourselves, in our roles as defenders of the Sacred Flame and molders of youth, to stray from reasonable human interaction with the men and women who are largely forced through sociological pressure to put up with us. I do not like to be mollycoddled, and I do not like to treat others patronizingly. Really what this description of non-judgmental teaching calls for is nothing more or less than polite, respectful dealings with human beings who are made free by God or Nature to think what they want to think, even about literature. And though we may presently have the power to require certain obeisances from them, I do not think we should honor the wielding of it by calling it education. None of what I have been saying is meant to suggest that I think any real learning can take place

without discipline. But I favor self-discipline in myself and abhor its absence when I am lazy. I likewise favor allowing others their own discipline and their own guilt. As I see it, it is their business, not mine. Mine is to meet them where, when, and how they are ready to learn. I am, of course, speaking here of emotional time and space, “lived time” in Minkowski’s useful phrase. I tolerate student laziness because I know too well my own; I “don’t see” evasiveness and many forms of student dishonesty because I remember too vividly myself as a student. I know that behind the laziness is energy, behind the lassitude, interest, behind the evasion, commitment. A student of mine who sees herself as phoney, shallow, and lazy recently wrote, “I’m not doing what I deeply want to do! I’m not at all satisfied with my life because I am so fake! I’m unreal! I am a different character for each different group of people. I give most adults the answers they want to hear, not the answers I truly feel.” Now, of course, she is fake and dishonest. Who doesn’t accept her judgment as valid? What point would there be in calling this statement of hers a lie and self-deception, but to validate her own self-judgment? But, at the same time, who could fail to “hear” in this energetic self-depreciation a desire to build, grow, achieve, and learn? As a teacher, especially of literature, I feel that it is our business to tell students, through our support and emotional availability, that we “hear” them. It does not make me a psychoanalyst (that tired attack) or less of a professor of literature if I free a student to grapple with Donne by saying, in one way or another, “Sure you’re lazy! Who isn’t lazy? I’m lazy. Donne was lazy too! Now let’s talk about what else we are—energetic, creative, and educable.”

Much of what I have been saying applies to class discussion and conference interaction, but it applies just as well to the written work students may do for a course. I have found that since I have stopped grading the written work of my students, the papers I have received are more interesting to read than before, more personally worth my while, more informed with the kind of human presence I can respond to.

I am not going to argue here against the validity of grades as a psychologically valid pedagogical device. The mountain of psychological and sociological evidence on the subject and the various commission reports speak for themselves. The point of this essay is to share pedagogical experience of the kind that helps to make possible teaching without judging. Grades are fixed judgments. So naturally I do what I can, in an institution dreadfully out of date on this issue and repressive to teachers who monkey around with the grading system, to satisfy the Registrar’s demand for grades without sacrificing what I hope are my sense of human decency and my knowledge of the ways in which people learn. My present grading compromise—I have hitherto tried and rejected blanket A’s, student self-grading, various “in-put grading” procedures (a combined grade based on student self-evaluation, teacher evaluation, outside, objective judgment)—is to grade entirely, though flexibly, on a quantitative basis, rather than a qualitative one. Specifically, if students attend the class reasonably often and do one project, they get at least a “C”; if they do a “C”-level and a “B”-level project, they get a “B”; if they wish an “A” in the course, they hand in a “C”, “B”, and an “A” level project. The “C” level project often involves group participation: a prepared scene from a play, a presenta-

tion of seventeenth century music or art, or the like. Each person in the group receives a "C" for participating, no matter how little or much she or he does. The "B" and "A" level projects can each be selected from lists which I provide. Here are the options for a "B" in my present Modern Drama course; the student need only do one of these for a "B" in the course:

- an intellectual journal covering the course readings and the class itself. Due twice: mid-term and end of the term.
- "customized" exam (in-school? take-home? oral? on what? when?) Due any time after the second-third of the term.
- paper on the influence of Artaud or Brecht on contemporary theatre. Due any time.
- original play in the style of one modern playwright: Due any time.
- close analysis of one play (if the analysis differs from that which evolves in class discussion). Due any time.
- non-verbal project. Due by last class day of term.
- one of your own, but must be cleared with the instructor.

The student who wishes to receive an "A" in the course would work on a "C"-level project, hand in one of the above "B"-level projects, and would add one of the following "A"-level contracts:

- research paper on one of the authors discussed this term. Due any time.
- take-home exam on the complete theatrical works of one of the authors discussed this term. Due any time.
- objective exam on all introductory material in all the texts. Due any time.
- detailed summary and review of two books on the background reading list. Due any time.
- research paper on the existential background of modern drama. Due any time.
- paper on the relationship of modern drama to the "modern" phase of the

subject of your own major studies. (In what way is the modernity of recent drama comparable to the modernity of recent sociology or home economics or chemistry or music?) Due any time.

- one of your own, but must be cleared with the instructor.

An "A" student in my Modern Drama class may, then, have fulfilled the following, typical "contracts": reasonable attendance; participation in a presentation of a scene from *A Doll's House*; a paper on the influence of Artaud and Brecht on contemporary drama; a summary and review of Brustein's *The Theater of Revolt* and Blau's *The Impossible Theatre*.

The point is that the student gets the grade the moment he or she hands in the project, regardless of its quality.* Now, contract grading calls for an act—even a leap—of faith in students. For me this faith comes easy. For others, it may be difficult or impossible. I will, theoretically, *accept* trash submitted for an "A". But I *believe* that in a non-judgmental, unpunitive, encouraging context, students will want to work toward achieving self-styled and often very challenging goals. While nothing in the format of the course coerces a student to do anything which reason, energetic teaching, and the student's native curiosity do not inspire, I, needless to say, constantly encourage self-discipline and self-respecting work.

No human system is perfect. Of course I occasionally receive rushed or careless junk. But my approach to teaching is geared to those who can and want to learn, no to those who, for reasons they are entitled to, cannot avail themselves

*Hostile pressure from the Douglass Deanery has been so relentless that I have been forced to modify this grading approach. I do not have the guts to martyr myself for this cause.

of the opportunities to learn. I strongly feel that if my goal is to liberate minds through the liberal arts, I can only do it as a liberal role model and in a liberal environment. I remember too vividly the student journal published in the first issue of *Change* magazine in which the student, Kate, lambasted her left-wing professors for shooting off their mouths about liberal, human values, and teaching in an atmosphere of stuffy, conservative self-deception. Her stance was: put up, or shut up. Don't espouse one life style and live another. Don't speak of the liberation of the subjugated and then lower my grade because I hand in a paper late.

I believe that students want to learn and are willing to work *hard*. But they have a right to know what a teacher expects. Some teachers say that they expect a fifteen page research paper, with twenty footnotes. And they mean it. I say that I expect self-respecting, personally designed work. And I mean it. In both cases a teacher can *help* the student achieve the desired ends.

I may report that the work which I receive is enormously superior to the work I used to receive. It is better, really, by most criteria one could use: it is more imaginative, better written or organized, and often longer; it reflects a caring sensibility and is therefore interesting; it is more courageous in what it attempts. At the same time, without fear of a low grade, a student can learn from an unfinished project ("work in progress") or from one which fails to fulfill itself. Some of the most productive educational insights in my classes have been the result of a student's discovery of boundaries, limitations—the results of projects too heavy to float. I would want my students to learn as much from failure as from success. Naturally the grade is the

same in either case.

In a non-judgmental context, a great many of our old pedagogical approaches find renewed vigor. For example, if a student knows that he will receive the grade he wants in a course and that no particular responses to exam questions or no failure of paragraph development in an essay will affect the grade he has contracted for, he begins to see that he may be able to take an exam or two, or write a paper, or give a report in a frame of mind conducive to intellectual growth. I give customized exams for those who want them. The students may choose the areas or material in which they wish to be examined. They may request in-school exams, oral or written, or take-home exams. They are free to ask to be examined even on bite-sized amounts of reading, but they almost always choose the whole term's reading or large swatches of it—this in the spirit of "I may as well see how I do with everything since I can't get shot down if I bomb." Of course, having prepared for an exam they have designed so personally, very few students bomb at all. I don't know how many times I have heard students say after handing in an exam or paper, "Not having to worry about the grade really freed me to develop my thoughts during that exam. I really learned a lot."

As teachers we always say that an exam is or should be primarily a learning experience. In reality, though, how often does the exam experience teach the student anything beyond: I must have said the right things (or wrong) because I got a good grade (or bad)? Too many students learn from exam taking only how to take an exam. That was certainly true for me in college. What real learning I did occurred quite regularly out of the school or course context.

Since the grade I give to written work does not reflect the worth or value of the project in relation to peer group or professional or absolute “standards,” it communicates nothing to me (beyond the fact that the student did a certain project) when I look up my records for letters of recommendation. What I do is very simple: I keep a folder with carbon copies of all my comments on student work. When I read the paper on Artaud that Charlene Brown has submitted, I slip a piece of legal-pad paper and carbon paper behind the last page, and as I record for her my responses to her work (about which responses I will have more to say), I make for my own records a copy of the response. On the top of the legal-pad sheet, I write:

Brown, Charlene
 “Artaud’s influence on Modern Drama”
 7 pp.—original.

And then, after the carbon copy of my comment to Charlene, I may add certain observations for my own future reference about the growth and development of her literary sensibility, the difference between what I expected and what I received, some observations on her classroom performance, etc.—whatever strikes me as likely to be valuable if I expect to have her in another class or if I think I will be called upon—*outside of the educational context* (i.e., after the term)—to *judge* the student in a letter of recommendation. If I cannot recommend a student, I tell him or her so.

Perhaps I should devote a few remarks to the way I approach the written work of my students. As with hearing in the classroom, I try to look at the written work until I see. I guess we all know how nearly pointless it is to tell a student, for example, that the sentence he or she has written is unclear. If it is clear

to the writer, he will not be able to understand the teacher when the teacher writes “unclear” in the margin. From the student’s point of view, it is the teacher who is unclear. But if the teacher struggles to see what the student means and then, say, comments on the passage by restating and perhaps agreeing with it, the student will be likely to become, in Cleaver’s term, permeable to a new idea. If I write in the margin the judgment “weak” or “awkward” very little of educational value is communicated to the student. The student will have no way of knowing why the passage is weak or awkward and will either think I am arbitrary and mean or somehow privy to secret knowledge unattainable to the uninitiated.

In contrast, let’s suppose the teacher writes in the margin, “If I understand you, you are implying that Josie’s maternal love of Tyrone is productive and fulfilling. I had never thought that that was a possible reading, though now it leads me to suspect. . . .” Such a comment begins by admitting that the student has befuddled you somewhat and that it may be partly your fault. It then restates the student’s proposition in an alternate syntax which may strike the student as an improvement. The teacher goes on to take the idea seriously, thus signalling that it may be worth the writer’s effort if it gains such warm support. The teacher concludes by adding to the proposition and further legitimizing the student’s effort.

In the teaching of writing as in all other teaching, I feel we must play to the strengths of the students. The style is the man; to attack the writing is to attack the writer. To give a “C” to a paper is too often to say to the student, “You are a mediocre person.” And that I believe is just about the cruellest judgment

one can make. Few things inhibit affective and intellectual growth more. I certainly “correct” psychologically neutral mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and factual information. But I believe what we probably all believe—that syntax and metaphor reflect a writer’s world view in powerful, however unconscious, ways. If we lay claim to such belief, we must be careful where we tread. To say that one’s writing is bad is to say that one’s world is wrong or false. Who wouldn’t become resistant or defensive in such a painful plight?

I hope it is clear that I am not describing a phoney and empty power of positive thinking, but a genuine and always honest interaction with students in terms that will be of benefit to them without falsifying one’s own sense of how open and decent human beings sharing an experience should relate to each other.

Some will say they have tried this way of teaching and found that it didn’t work or that “students weren’t motivated” or that “some force is necessary or ‘they’ won’t learn.” My suspicion is that many of these people never overcame some central obstacles. For example, I have heard this lament from teachers who spoke of trust but kept secret grades. Nothing violates the spirit of sharing and good faith faster than a teacher’s reluctance to share the judgment he or she has made of the students. Other teachers have removed grades altogether, but have pressured the students into “covering,” as we say, certain points, instead of trusting the students to discuss what is of interest to them. One approach is not “better” than another; different students will respond to different methods. But all students need psychological consistency and clarity. Some teachers who theoretically believe in the new, “open” discussion for the teaching of

literature still lack the faith that it requires and continue to manipulate in rather gross ways. If teachers remove the grade pressure, encourage interaction, try to deal humanly with students and, instead of learning, they go away in great numbers (and I don’t know a teacher who hasn’t had this awe-inspiring experience), it would seem to suggest not merely that the students are unmotivated—a classification too absolute in its implications to mean much, however often we use it—but also perhaps that the reading is meaningless to them or that the teacher is somehow inadequate for this group: listless, unprepared, dull, silly, defensive, ignorant, pompous, vague or any of the other blights that can afflict a teacher along with the rest of humanity, including the assumption that what is important to him or her is **IMPORTANT**.

This teaching approach is radically different from my earlier, graduate-school notion of the way teaching and learning take place. And some readers of *College English* would no doubt find it difficult. If it sounds like hard work—it is. I am forever conferring with students, making up customized exams, reading papers of different types which come in throughout the whole term, responding to journals which occasionally run to 140 pages. But on the other hand, I never make up a lecture or “prepare” teacher’s “notes” for a Socratic discussion. I need seldom be bored by reading twenty or seventy exams on one subject at one time. Since I can send final grades to the Registrar *before* I read the papers carefully, I can take my time with the work, reading at leisure and in the right frame of mind; I can *take the time* to think of educative comments, and personalized comments, so that my energy and time will not be

totally in vain. My colleagues rush in a frenzy to mark final exams, putting minimal and admittedly rather pointless comments on the bluebooks, in order to get grades in to the Registrar before the end of the term. I ask my students to hand in, with their final submissions, stamped, self-addressed envelopes. In my own good time—and it takes good time to read and respond to a 140-page journal!—I send the work back to the students, hopefully with the kind of feedback which they will really find useful.

Students and teachers must live together. If it is true that not every student is destined for great intellectual

achievements, it is also true that not every teacher will be first-rate (though, of course, we can all do a better job than we have been). Perhaps the best idea would be to let students and teachers seek each other out as need dictates, so that only those who can work well together would agree to pursue a joint educational enterprise. But if such a Utopia is not to be expected soon, let us at least create an environment in which our students will be able to learn what they can without being the only ones penalized for what surely is as much our failures as theirs.