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Homer L.J. Carter
Western Michigan University

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Editorial Comment

SCHOLARLY DISCIPLINE OR PRACTICAL ART

It is reported that the Johns Hopkins Education Department and Master of Arts in Teaching programs will be discontinued after June 30, 1971. William Doll, a graduate student in education at Johns Hopkins University, has in the September issue of *Phi Delta Kappan* stated that this action is due to financial difficulty, in-fighting within the department, and to the fact that the department was not in the mainstream of Johns Hopkins' academic interests where research in the sciences and scholarly prestige are stressed. Surely, one is tempted to ask: To what extent do these conditions apply to departments and schools of education in other colleges and universities?

Joe Wittmer, summarizing a dissertation by Wayne E. Miller in the November issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, points out that Amish students in parochial schools taught by eighth grade graduates had on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills the highest mean scores of any of the five groups participating in the investigation in both spelling and word usage and placed second in arithmetic. In both vocabulary and reading the all-Amish students scored second to the non-Amish group. Others acquainted with Amish children report that the incidence of non-readers in Amish schools is not as great as that found in the public schools. Surely, one is tempted to ask: How much "scholarly discipline" is needed to teach reading?

As in the practice of medicine, scholarly discipline and practical arts are handmaidens who should never be separated. The gathering together of knowledge should be associated with the dynamics of a powerhouse rather than with the accumulation of information stored in the dusty vaults of a bank. If the art of teaching is to become effective, it must be based upon principles and proven theories which have been worked out by the scholarly disciplines. In the practical art of teaching the instructor must stimulate his students, provide simple, direct and specific help when and where it is needed, and guide the children in the realization of their goals. The practical art of teaching must grow out of a new humanism which is based upon a sincere respect for knowledge and an understanding of the individual in his environment. The good teacher, like the good physician, must know his students and be willing to give of himself as he facilitates the learning and development of others.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor