

**Excerpts from a Speech Given  
by Dr. Eric MacPherson  
at the MCATA Annual Conference**

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- . Societal agencies of medicine and education are growing more rapidly than the GNP. This necessitates a slowdown of program expansion and restrictions that require adjustment to selective priorities, because of lack of funding for expansion.
- . Program reductions and/or personnel restrictions are going to occur, and public criticism is a smokescreen to reduce the pain of restrictive growth.
- . Change of curriculum has been in a state of flux so long that younger teachers are unaware of the fact that curriculum change has always been normal.
- . Desire for simplicity calls for a return to the basics, as change has created a less simple way of life.
- . The end of the Baby Boom resulted in a decline in lower levels for achievement tests. A return to a higher level is claimed to be a result of the demand for a return to the basics.
- . Curriculum change is no longer important, as people say "forget it" and return to the basics.
- . The need for skills in complex arithmetic problems is changing as the calculator replaces the need for human calculation. There is now a need for a greater emphasis on understanding the methods of problem-solving.
- . Let parents furnish calculators rather than having the school provide them. Teachers need to learn how to use them and where to use them. Using class

sets of identical calculators, start experimenting slowly, because response to the use of calculators at the elementary level is now chilly.

- . Look at the basics of new math and use practically.
- . The sociology of the secondary classroom has changed drastically.
- . A false concept is that an easy type of secondary program has failed to meet the needs for university.
- . The true ratio of top students is as high as ever. Lower standards of excellence are created for those below top level.
- . The danger now is a lack of challenge for top achievement because of mass education.
- . How are we going to adapt to mass education of today to justify the future of secondary education?

We must adjust our secondary program to provide for the needs of academics and non-academics, with more than one stream of secondary mathematics. We mustn't segregate excessively as is done in Europe.

- . Curriculum decisions are going to be made in the classroom, as research can never solve, but can only assist in solving, the problem.

#### October 15, 1977:

Early 1800s: mass education

1890-1910: There was a progression from Dickens-type schools to mass education, from children being treated as adults to children being treated as persons of their own age level.

1920s: There were first attempts made at evaluation during this period, but these were not sufficiently carried through. Therefore, some changes in the results of the measurements of today would be less criticized had the results of the '20s been carried through properly.

1950-1970: A fundamental change in curriculum content was necessary as there was a demand for change to meet a changing philosophy of life during this period.

It is time to stabilize the curriculum with changes quietly made and less dramatically innovative. The "back to basics" cries mean: do the job and keep quiet about changes you have to make, because the public is now suspicious rather than praising.

Recognize the problem and work together or "repetition," "regurgitation," "remediation" will return to haunt us.

Pay more attention to problem-solving and less to extensive standardized skills. Teaching methods that help in problem-solving in any discipline help in problem-solving in life. ■