



Teaching Creatively¹

Ted Ward

Tonight we celebrate the century past as a *century of transformation in the art of teaching*.

Premise: Teaching is a *creative art*.

... it is grounded in *spiritual purposes*
and *scientific understanding* of human development.

Common understanding of teaching is *over-simplified*.

... because teaching is a *commonplace activity*:
everyone does it—in one way or another
... intentionally or unintentionally
... skillfully or brutally
... in an amateur or professional style.

Professional teaching is a useful distinctive, but perhaps too formal.

Professional teaching *requires skills, understandings, wisdom, creativity*.

Tonight we focus on *creativity*: of special importance to Christians:

1. Biblical emphasis on *God as creator*
2. *Image and likeness of God* in the human (Genesis 1:26)
3. Human *participation in the redemption* of the fallen universe (Hebrews 6:9-12)

Understanding what has happened in the development of teaching practice.

From chalk sticks to computers—A review of the major educational changes in the Twentieth Century. As the Twentieth Century began,

1. Chalkboards were moving from the desks to the walls. Textbooks were becoming well established. (*Educational media*, if the term was ever used, encompassed chalk and textbooks.)
2. Educational opportunities were oriented toward motivations and needs of males.
3. Few people were in high school. (Teaching was mostly lecturing)
4. Fewer yet were in colleges or universities. (Teaching was almost all lecturing)
5. Education was gradually becoming accessible to the broader society, but schooling was still was mostly a privilege of wealth.

Education's Technological Highlights of the Twentieth Century

1. The beginning of large-scale *testing programs*. (“Army Alpha” began large-population testing—“IQ” became an accepted concept.) Note this first of several technological and social changes in education occurring during times of war—beginning with this innovation during World War I.
2. The emphasis on the *technology of teaching (media)* followed invention and social acceptance of entertainment and communication devices:

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workbooks (structured exercises in one-page or book formats)

projected pictures (became more popular after development of film-based transparencies)

mechanical duplicators (“handouts” for testing, exercises, and learning materials akin to “workbooks,” e.g., hectograph, spirit duplicators, mimeograph, offset, photocopy [xerography], computer-controlled printers)

moving pictures (became more popular after sound was added [technically called sound-on-film] in the 1930’s.) Assumed at first to be the Twentieth Century’s all-purpose teaching device.

simulation devices (popularized by the Link Trainer used by the Army Air Corps for more safely teaching instrument flight skills) The creation of near-reality devices and situations in which learners are confronted with problems and tasks much like the “real thing” and are presented with prompt feedback on the consequences of their responses.

programmed instruction (a more sophisticated form of workbook, enlightened by the sequencing of learning through controlled presentation and feedback) Promoted by the first wave of the organized educational technology specialists, largely based on the philosophies of B.F. Skinner.

computer-based instruction (became feasible in the 1960’s as demonstrated in IBM’s “Coursewriter” software) Provided the foundation for the end-of-the-century cluster of innovations, generally called “computers in education,” including e-mail protocols for distance learning, data-bases for instructional management, information bases for on-line access by learners, and advanced forms of educational protocols. (See following item.)

“the computer revolution in education” (the late-century upsurge of a myriad of inventions, innovations, and significant rethinking of the instructional process) Taken as a whole this evidence supports the conclusion that the Twentieth Century has seen the most dramatic changes in the history of educational practice.

From few to many—A review of the major changes in the sociology of Twentieth Century education

As the Twentieth Century began,

1. Most Americans had access to six years of formal schooling.
2. Rural populations were beginning to have access to “union” schools for several more years of schooling at regional centers
3. Teachers in elementary and secondary schools were mostly women. (“Normal Schools” brought professional teaching into the elementary schools)
4. Educational resources were racially separated and often unavailable at most levels in many regions of the country.
5. A clear distinction was drawn between the *classical* colleges and universities and the service-oriented *land-grant* and *A&M* colleges and universities.
6. The fields of professional education, even in medical education, were only slowly coming to accept the worth of practical experience as part of the educational process.

Sociological Changes Resulting from Twentieth Century Educational Innovations

1. *Substantial expansion of educational opportunity* to all. (Intervention of the federal government led to important changes in university and lower schools in matters of racial and gender bias.)

2. *Expansion of opportunities for higher education* as a result of the “**GI Bill**” after World War II resulted in the most significant changes in higher education regarding matters of access (reduction of prejudices against older and more experienced students), curricular diversity, total enrollment, and “part-time” status.
3. *New forms of teaching situations and experiences* resulted from a combination of factors leading up to and following mid-century. Resulting from the increase in educational research, the importance of applied learning within the academic curriculum has been generally accepted. Professional fields, especially through their accrediting associations, have brought pressure to bear on institutions which over-balance their degree programs with theoretical emphasis. The expansion of knowledge has demanded a more judicious and thoughtful curricular planning process. Thus field experience and internship, as well as in-service continuing education, have become more widely recognized as valid concerns of the institution.
4. The *expansion of knowledge* and its long-term implications for the sustaining value of higher education has stimulated the demand for post-baccalaureate degrees and continuing education.
5. The *higher expectations of more experienced students* has forced institutions to give more attention to the quality of instruction and to the relevancy of curricular content.

What are the Marks of Professionality in Teaching Today?

1. As always, *trustworthy integrity, truthfulness, and reliability*. (Jesus: He taught “as one having authority.”)
2. *Expanding knowledge* of the material being taught. First-hand applied experience with the content is becoming more important. Open *responsiveness* to interactions with the learners. (Reciprocal teaching-learning)
3. *Broad acquaintance* with a variety of related knowledge and experience.
4. *Prompt feedback* to students.

How Can You Increase the Professionality of Your Teaching?

1. Make time for social and professional *interaction with students*.
2. Seek out, learn about, and try out *alternative approaches to teaching* your courses. Predictable repetition is a sure sign of incompetence. Things are changing too fast to allow teachers to stand still!
3. Key to *course improvement*: Trim away at least 20% of the least effective procedures and material each year and replace it with a more current and better 20%.
4. Commit yourself to a schedule of *time-consuming assessment*—supplement the bare minimum of short-answer tests.
5. Get well enough acquainted with your students that you can *identify with their own goals, purposes, and approaches to learning*.