



AMBASSADOR  
FOR  
EDUCATION REPORT

1995-1996

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AMBASSADOR FOR EDUCATION

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This report is dedicated to Mary Sue Coleman, the new President of the University of Iowa, and Walter Gohman, her high school science teacher at the Price Laboratory School at the University of Northern Iowa, who, through their life-long dedication to education, are examples of all the teachers in Iowa who give their lives in education for the students of Iowa. I can only say I am honored to be a small part of the events in their lives that so typify all the teachers and educators in Iowa.

This Ambassador for Education report for the 1995-96 school year contains several parts. Part One deals with the personal experience this teacher had as Teacher of the Year. Part Two will deal with the places I visited and the changes I saw taking place in education across Iowa. This part will also include my observations of critical issues facing education. Part Three will deal with concerns that parents expressed to me about practices in schools. Part Four will deal with concerns that teachers and administrators have expressed to me. This report is intentionally written to promote inquiry and discussion. It will, by nature, contain my observations and my biases. It is intended to be informative and thought provoking and hopefully suggest possible changes to make changes that will improve

education for the students of Iowa. After all, everything we do should have that as our main goal.

## **Part One**

This has been a fantastic year for me personally. As the Teacher of the Year, I had the President of the United States speechless for a few moments in the Oval Office when I said, "Good Morning, Mr. President," in Russian (transliterated "doe brA oo truh, gos puh dean president"). Because I addressed him in Russian, I found out that he understands some spoken Russian. I did not get a chance to see if he could speak Russian, but I have been informed that he had a Russian roommate as a Rhodes Scholar and learned his Russian from his roommate. Anyway, I learned a small footnote in history to go along with the fact that some of the walls in the White House are somewhat thin. While the Teachers of the Year were waiting to see the President, we were, of course, talking to each other. Four times an aide to the President came into the holding room to tell us to be quiet because the President was in a cabinet meeting and they could hear us in the cabinet room.

When I was a student in high school, I read a book about the German rocket scientists that developed the V-2 rockets at the end of World War II.

Another highlight of my year is that I met 5 of those German rocket scientists at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, and talked to them. It was interesting to hear about their lives in Nazi Germany at the end of World War II and America to be involved in the race to put men on the moon. It was their love for developing rockets for space travel that impressed me so.

While at Space Camp in July of 1995, I met and worked with 20 teachers who were from the 20 foreign countries involved with the United States in building the international space station. In addition, those 20 teachers brought 50 of their students with them. I spent every spare moment talking to those students because I knew I would probably never again get a chance to talk with that many foreign students in one place. I must say they were an interesting group and were quite sure of where they were going and what they wanted to do. Because of this year, I now have friends in 50 states and territories and 20 foreign countries. And, as a result of those contacts, I have been asked to give presentations in foreign countries, which I would love to do if funding can be found.

In April of 1996, I made a second visit to the Price Lab School at UNI. I was asked to join a group of 12 teachers from Slovakia who were here with the expressed purpose of learning American methods of teaching

and school administration. After the fall of communism, the minister of education realized the school would need to learn new ways of educating a populace trying to make the adjustments to the newly won freedom. Thus, a partnership developed between Slovakia and the University of Northern Iowa. It was a privilege working with those 12 teachers as they were attempting to learn new teaching methods. We worked together with Diane McCarty's social studies students as they tried to find the location of cities mentioned in the book she had read. Map reading became a way to bridge the language gap.

My first visit to the Price Lab School offered a different challenge. After speaking to a group of math and science 6th graders for an hour and a half on math and science, I was asked to speak to 35 secondary social studies teachers. When I arrived to speak, the audience had increased to almost 100 students. The elementary social studies teachers had somehow heard that I was speaking to the secondary social studies teachers, so they joined the group. As a language arts teacher, I was wondering what I could say about social studies to a group of social studies teachers. What did I know about social studies that would be new to them? I told them a true story about Winston Churchill and the German code machine called

Enigma; and using some of my large-number stories, explained mathematically why the code that machine produced was unbreakable.

Perhaps one of the most unexpectedly rewarding experiences for me was speaking to elementary students because in all my years of teaching, I had never been in an elementary classroom before to speak to elementary students. Again, the problem arose as to what to say to them. Fortunately, I had some of the poems my 8th graders had written over the years, so I read them. The students loved them. In addition, the students liked the stories I told about meeting the President and some of my other visits to the White House.

Several school districts had me talk about the heroes in my life and the life journey of my two sons who survived the killing fields of Cambodia. Their life stories of being orphaned while quite young to being the first high school student to win the first career sports award in the history of our school to graduating from college and going to Kazakhstan for two years in the Peace Corps became one of the best-received talks. I included a lot about developing self-respect and learning how to make good choices. Some of the school districts arranged for me to give the same presentation at night for community groups.

One of the other highlights of the year was the chance to present a seminar to a national audience on my 12-step, 135-word process for doing the infinity of English sentence structure. The process works because of how the brain developed words to access the world around it. The process takes only 12 weeks to learn and empowers students by giving them a step-by-step approach that shows how the brain uses language. In addition to control over sentence structure, the students now are able to use every punctuation mark correctly. Several school districts in Iowa have asked me to present this process to their English staffs. (It takes at least 2 to 3 hours to present.) I presented this process to one district in Iowa on a Wednesday. They started using it with their 7th and 8th grade classes and wrote me a letter two weeks later. They could not believe how much their students had learned about English in those two weeks. The process works because it gives the students control of the way the brain developed the language they speak and write.

Perhaps one of the nicest things that happened to me as Teacher of the Year and as the Ambassador for Education involved a friend who is a retired, 84-year-old former science teacher who just happened to have had the new President of the University of Iowa as a science student in the

1960's. He took her to a National Science Fair in 1960 where she won a national award. Because I already had an appointment in February to speak at the University of Iowa, I made an appointment to see the new president and brought her greetings from her old science teacher. Her eyes lit up and I had a marvelous 35-minute visit with her. She, in turn, had written an article for publication about a teacher who had influenced her, and the article was about her high school science teacher. She gave a copy of the article to me with a personal note, and I delivered it to him the same day. His eyes lit up with a marvelous glow. I feel fortunate to have been part of that exchange; and if nothing else had ever happened as a result of being the Ambassador for Education, that one event would have made the entire year worth it. After all, I think that is what it is all about--the educational influence we have on our students leads their lives to places they probably never dreamed about-to places unexpected.

One of the things I did learn was the inherent danger in trying to address large topics in limited amounts of time. And while I was the only one who knew what and how much I had to cut out of some of my presentations because of time limitations, I was well aware of the effects this had on my listeners and my presentations. Trying to juggle what

schools said they wanted to hear with the time allotted was one of the strains of the job. I am not sure if everyone understands the dynamics of such issues, but they do come into play when it comes to the effectiveness of the presentations speakers are asked to do.

One of the things I learned about myself--and I did not expect it--was the heart-wrenching sadness I would feel as I traveled Iowa and saw what was happening to the small towns and communities of Iowa. And what was happening to them was also happening to the schools, and more so to the people living there. I had not expected such a reaction. I can only liken it to the feeling I have had many times before when I have driven past an abandoned farm house and wondered about the people whose families once lived there. I visited one school building in a very small town. It was a beautiful building with solid oak woodwork, solid oak chemistry cabinets, and cut glass windows around the doors--a beautiful gem; yet I was saddened to learn the building may be closed next year. Gone will be such a beautiful building with all the dreams and possibilities that used to flourish and echo in its rooms and halls. Gone will be the students who will never get their lessons in such a hallowed place. And the world will be the loser when it closes.

Such has been the fabric of this past year. Add to that, all the former students I met in my travels who are now teachers and it has been a very special year. In fact, because of my travels this year, I have been able to track down friends I had in my first six years of school--people I wondered about and had tried to find several times before--people I had not seen or heard from in over 40 years. My year has been filled with splendid serendipity.

## **Part Two**

My approach to this year has been perhaps somewhat different from the other Ambassadors for Education who preceded me. Because I had just attended a Nobel Laureate Conference on "Unlocking the Human Brain," I knew I wanted to share that vital research with those teachers and districts that asked me because of the implications that research has for teachers and students in the learning process. With my 12-step, 135-word process which is based on how the brain accesses language, I have been able to help many language teachers address the needs of their students. Thus, one of my goals has to been to share this information with those that asked. I was working on writing a book about this process before being named Teacher of the Year and Ambassador for Education.

I wanted to give teachers new ideas they could use the next day with their students. Some of those ideas involved calculating the diameter of the universe; calculating the age of the universe in seconds (because it has something to do with the capacity of the brain and its learning potential--the brain can make more connections than there are atoms in the universe); dividing a second into a quadrillion pieces so that the pieces can be seen with the unaided eye; setting up a method that enables students to do for themselves all of the basic multiplication and division facts in the same process, which can lead directly to a study of fractions; and learning how to multiply or square two-digit numbers in the head. (I found just one student in the State of Iowa who knew how to do that before I explained it.) Each one of those ideas takes 15 minutes or less to learn, and most them can be learned by students as young as 5th grade. These processes showed students how the brain works and gave the students higher self-esteem that they can solve these problems at the same time.

In addition to the Nobel Laureate Conference on "Unlocking the Human Brain," I attended another Nobel Laureate Conference on "Material Technology." I wanted to share the observations of the three Nobel Prize winners who were there. One was a prize winner in physics, one in

chemistry, and one in biology. Their agreed observation was: "in school we should teach physics first, chemistry, second, and biology third." Of course, this is just the reverse of the way we teach those subjects. As one principal put it, "We teach those subjects in alphabetical order." The three Nobel Prize winners were recommending the reverse order. They all agreed it would mean an adjustment in the way we teach math because math seems to have been the main reason for determining the order in which we teach our science subjects. Our schools may need to review the curriculum. As the Nobel Laureates put it: It is physics that undergirds chemistry, and it is chemistry that undergirds biology. From my own experience in teaching language, it is ultimately physics that explains many of the conventions of English, including sentence structure and punctuation. This relationship has been hidden because of the vast distance separating the workings of atoms and the working of the brain as it developed ways to control the infinity of the world (universe) around it. [In the size scale of things in the universe--from the smallest subatomic particle to the farthest reach of the universe--where do human beings come in that size range? If your curiosity has been provoked, then you are well on your way to understanding the latest research on the brain, which says- "If you can get students playfully or

emotionally involved in their learning, you can teach them just about anything. The answer to the question posed is "About half way."]

The next two-day Nobel Laureate Conference is October 1, 1996, at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota, and will be on the Ape and the Development of Language. I would encourage anyone who is curious about the development of language to attend. Teachers need to keep up on the latest research and schools need to provide time for their teachers and students to attend such conferences.

Those of you seeking to read about all the many good programs in all the schools I visited in Iowa will be disappointed. First of all, I am not and have not been trained to walk into a school and evaluate a program in a day. To indicate to you that I had that kind of expertise would be misleading. In addition, if I were going to evaluate programs, I would want to see those programs in operation for several weeks to see how they work with the students. However, I did see some very interesting programs implemented that other schools might wish to emulate. If I visited your school and it is not mentioned in this section, it means you probably chose to have me talk with your students in the classroom or at an assembly or at an in-service meeting with your staff . Those were valid functions of my year. Otherwise,

my visit consisted of a tour of your building and a meeting with various members of the staff.

As most of us know, teachers want to talk and share new ideas that they can take back to the classroom and use with their students the next day. That was one of my goals this year--to give teachers new ideas to use with their students the next day--particularly those about the latest research of the brain and how that impacts teaching and learning. In fact, this part of the report is probably biased toward programs I saw that seemed to be based on the way the brain works.

At Anthon-Oto, I saw a school that had an IBM computer lab, a Macintosh computer lab, a networked Apple IIe lab for teaching keyboarding, and classrooms with several computers. In addition, I was greeted in each class I visited in Spanish. Because of its staffing patterns in the district, they were embedding the teaching of Spanish throughout the curriculum beginning in kindergarten. And though I am not qualified to evaluate programs of this type, it seemed to me to be the way we should be teaching our foreign languages. I am sure if anyone wants to know how they are able to do it, they may contact the school directly for more

information. It seemed like it was very effective in getting students involved in a foreign language.

I also saw how many districts were including and incorporating their special needs students in the school setting. Since most of this was new to me personally, I appreciated all the effort the schools in the State of Iowa are making on behalf of those students.

Perhaps some of the best things I saw from a teacher's point of view were the county-wide or multiple-districts in-service days, some of which were sponsored by Area Education Agencies. I attended one in Denison, Sumner, Ottumwa, and Mason City. The one in Denison had a keynote speaker for all the teachers, and then the teachers worked in interest sessions where they shared their expertise. I attended a session on grade-team planning. A similar approach occurred at Sumner, but this time I was one of the main speakers and a small-group presenter.

At Ottumwa I was a presenter for sessions on the latest research on the brain and my 12-step, 135 word, yes-or-no process for doing the infinity of English sentence structure, which, besides English, has implications for teaching English to non-English speaking students.

At Fayette, I presented similar topics, but for shorter time periods, to the Northeast Iowa Language Arts Council convention.

In Mason City, I saw representatives of several schools working on action-plan surveys concerning issues in their individual schools. They had collected various kinds of data and were attempting to apply the information gained to improve their schools. More will be said later about the issue of inservice training when I discuss some of the issues teachers discussed with me.

Many of the schools I saw were in the process of connecting their schools to the ICN. This is changing the way education is delivered to many Iowa students. Some teachers expressed concerns about the ICN with the realization that it is a new experience and that we will have growing pains and problems that will need to be addressed. We will need to be sure that it serves the needs of students and that it is used appropriately so that it attains the educational goals of learning for students. Some educators were concerned that it might be thought of as a cure-all.

In March I made a presentation over the ICN for the Department of Education and the Institute for School Executives. It was an interesting experience; and since it was my first experience in such a technological

environment, I was not sure just what to expect. I do know that using this kind of technology requires a different teaching style than I usually use. For example, the technology, as it is currently designed, physically limits the presenter to the front of the room. In addition, the teaching style is more formal--more of a lecture style and a presentation of information with a more formal style of question and answer than I generally use in my 8th grade classroom. My impression was that it was designed for a much older audience. I have a hard time seeing it used with younger students with much frequency. That impression may be the result of the fact that teachers have not had much experience with it yet. (Note: With the right technology using a camera called "camera man," the presenter can walk around the room.)

Similar concerns were expressed about the use of technology. There were concerns expressed that the momentum behind computers and technology might take on a life of its own and that legitimate educational goals might get lost in the rush for technology. Several teachers expressed concern that we keep in mind that teaching involves what we do to the brain and that we still need to teach the logical concepts in all the disciplines. Several teachers pointed out that the computer is a tool, not an end-all for

curing all the problems in education or other areas of life. They feel there is a danger in allowing the public to believe all the problems in education will be solved if we have more computers and use more technology.

The differences in the number of computers in use in schools is quite large. Some have the state of the art technology. They are hooked to the Internet and have other technology up and running. Other schools have very few computers and are only dreaming about getting connected to the Internet. Being connected to the Internet is raising all kinds of issues for school districts. Some of those issues involve finding time, rewriting curricula, limiting access to objectionable material, etc. In addition, some districts are dealing with problems as basic as where to find the physical room for the computers they want. Some of the libraries in schools have their card catalogs computerized and others are still dreaming.

Enclosed at the end of this report is a list of all the places I visited. I

have not tried to list every building I visited in a particular school district.

Because I was actively engaged with teaching students and with watching my colleagues teach this past school year, I came away with some observations that surprised and shocked me. These observations are given below, and they are the result of thinking back over the many experiences I

had this year. They are not the result of any one experience I had in any particular school or district. They are, however, general impressions from my entire year of traveling. They come from observations and conversations from many people and sources and seem to be pervasive.

First, I was not prepared for the number of students who come to school each day without having eaten anything for breakfast. Of all the things I saw this year, the no-breakfast should be of concern to everyone. Even in the schools where breakfast is provided, this issue is critical to the education of students because there are still large numbers of students showing up in classrooms without having eaten breakfast. This is frightening because brain research indicates that if the level of calcium ions is not high enough, the brain cells can NOT fire and make connections with other brain cells. The number of students I saw in classes or tried to teach who had not had breakfast was frightening, especially when one knows what the brain needs nutritionally to work. I consider this the biggest challenge to the education of students today, and solving it should be the number one priority of education. And although it is obvious that there are parents who do not understand the importance of a good breakfast, I am not sure that teachers and administrators really understand the seriousness of the

situation. Perhaps some people accept having listless kids in the classroom as the norm, not knowing that just a simple carton of milk might solve most of the problems of inactive, non-functioning brains. One can only speculate about how much return we are getting on our billion-dollar investment. This problem needs to be addressed by the parents because they ask society to provide the schooling. Society should expect the parents to take care of such basic things as seeing to it that students come to school in the morning fed. We cannot afford to leave the decision in the hands of students because they do not really understand that not eating breakfast is determining their future in subtle ways. One can even argue it has a huge economic effect on the entire country because of the learning that does not happen.

The second most shocking thing to me is the number of students that do not know how to respect themselves. If one does not know how to respect oneself, one cannot respect anyone else. The educational cost of ignoring this issue, let alone the economic cost, is enormous. If schools, parents, and the society as a whole do not deal with this issue, then we are failing in our efforts to do what schools were set up to do. A lot of the degeneration we see in society goes back to this issue.

The third most shocking thing was the discussion I had with teachers about the number of students that are now being labeled "attention deficit disordered." The increase in the number of students carrying this label is skyrocketing. Schools, parents, and society need to be looking into this problem and looking for solutions. Has our society started looking for pills to solve normal growth and development? Are parents not sitting their little kids on their laps for a ten or twenty minute time period to read the kids a story so the brain cells that allow them to develop an attention span are not getting trained? Is it an inappropriate use of drugs during pregnancy? Whatever it is, we need to be concerned about it because if the brain cells that allow us to develop an attention span are not getting developed, brain research would indicate that by the time students get to school, it may be too late. Brain research says that if the brain cells are not used for their designed purpose, they will wither away OR other areas of the brain will take them over for their own purpose. Once either one of those takes place, it is impossible to get those brain cells back for their original purposes. That should sound an alarm and frighten anyone who cares about the education of students.

Intermixed in the above issues is the need for teachers, parents, and administrators to know more of the latest research concerning the human brain. This research has so much to say about many of the issues facing education and society today. Teachers, parents, and students need to know how to apply this research to the learning process. In fact, I had discussions with several people who suggested that a class on parenting should be required of all students before they graduate from high school. Included as part of the curriculum for that class should be the issues raised above. As many teachers and parents stated, we cannot afford to ignore the important issues that so directly affect education. We cannot afford to manage schools as though we are still in the 19th century. That design does not work anymore. And unless we start dealing with some of the issues raised above, we will continue to have increasing problems that put unimaginable pressures on society and education.

If education is going to meet the challenges it faces, then everyone involved must be brought up to date on the latest research about how the brain works. If we fail to do that, we fail our students. We cannot carry on business the way we have. Requiring teachers to go back to college for course work does not mean they are getting material about the latest

research on the brain. Some way must be found to bring this research to every teacher in every school district immediately. [For school districts wanting to begin bringing information to their teachers and administrators about the latest research on the human brain, they may contact me about a set of video tapes that would make an excellent introduction to brain research for the entire staff.]

### **Part Three**

One of my goals was to listen to what parents had to say about their concerns. If I feel I have something valid to say about a particular concern, I will put it in brackets. More than likely, my comments will be based on the latest research about the brain and what it brings to bear on the issues being discussed.

The first area that seems to concern parents across Iowa is what they describe as giving a spelling pretest over words the students have never seen. Their concern is that their sons and daughters are developing a failing attitude or I-hate-school attitude because the kids do poorly on the pretest over words they have never had a chance to study. Their point is that it really does not make any difference how many times the teacher explains it is "just a pretest." The students still think of themselves as failures.

Apparently the students are developing this "failing" attitude and it is affecting other areas and subjects. Parents were in tears at times, pleading as they described it, to get the teachers to think about what this pre/post-test approach was doing to their child's self-confidence and attitude. They were asking why teachers felt it was necessary to give a pretest over words even when the teacher explained it was to help the students identify what words they knew and what words they needed to study. The parents accepted that as valid if it were not having such an adverse effect on students' attitudes.

The parents were pleading with teachers to think about their educational approaches and to consider the negative effects those approaches to spelling were having on students. Parents were wondering why the words to be learned could not be given to the students in advance, so they could do well on the "pretest" and thus have a chance to establish some good self-esteem by seeing their studying pay off on the pretest with achievement. [Brain research says that if you want a student to "learn" what you are teaching them, you must allow them to access the material at least three times in a same or similar manner before mixing it up for the purposes of testing them to see if they learned it. If you do not allow them those three times, you are defeating your own efforts to teach the students what you want them to

know. Brain research would also indicate all students should access their spelling words the same three times. Thus, allowing students to skip taking the final test because they did well on the pretest may be detrimental. If students have the lists of words beforehand, they can study for the pretest. That is accessing it once. The pretest is accessing it twice, and the final or post test is the third time. Teachers might also want to have the students write a story using those words before taking a final test. This modification would be much more beneficial to students according to brain research. ]

The second concern parents have involves whole language. This may be a perception problem, but parents are not buying into whole language when their sons and daughters come home with papers filled with misspelled words and other mistakes. Parents are wondering why they are sending their kids to school. Parents want their kids to learn good habits. Parents have the impression students are developing lazy habits about spelling and writing. Parents really do not care what good intentions whole language is supposed to have IF their kids are developing poor habits and attitudes about correctness. Parents continually remarked about the poor spelling their kids exhibit when they get older, and they express a great deal of concern that the older kids have developed such poor attitudes toward

spelling and correctness that they are functionally illiterate and will not be able to get a job or make it through college. Parents are really unhappy to get papers full of mistakes when they are sending their students to school to learn. As one of them put it to me: "Four hundred years ago people were spelling words any old way they wanted to and people could not communicate with each other because of all the ways. That is why they invented dictionaries. Why do we want to go back to those times of spelling any old way we think it should be?" Another parent said, "I don't buy the claim that when the kid gets older he will easily switch from this spelling sound system to correct spelling. It didn't happen with my son. He is a rotten speller and has a rotten attitude about a lot of things."

## **Part Four**

One perception from teachers about teaching is that it has changed dramatically in the last five or so years. There are more demands being made on teachers from almost every side. Parents expect the schools to do what parents used to do. There is a mixed message coming from parents about wanting more discipline in schools, but not my son, not my daughter. There is a feeling that too many members of society have lost it. They want

freedom but do not put any expectations of personal responsibility on anyone.

Administrators and teachers expressed an urgent need to do something about the flood of students coming into the school with all kinds of problems, from the increase in the number of students diagnosed with attention deficient disorder to those who have had no breakfast. Some teachers felt that if we don't take immediate steps to address these problems we will never be able to expect to have a functioning, responsible society.

On the issue of students coming to school without having eaten breakfast, teachers are wondering why our society "winks" at the problem. For parents to allow their students to go to school without eating breakfast borders on neglect. Some teachers see it as accepted societal child abuse and wonder why we do not start getting serious about calling it that and charging parents. Because students' brains cannot function without nutrition and are thus mentally absent, teachers wonder why we are not as serious about this issue as we are if the students are truant.

The other issue of the increase in attention deficient disorder brings up the issue of what happens to students before they even start school. Kids need to have their brain cells trained to develop an attention span.

Unfortunately, those brain cells need to be trained before the students are old enough to attend school. If that development of the brain cells that allows us to develop an attention span is not done at the right time, the other brain cells will take over those brain cells or those brain cells will wither away from lack of use. Whichever is the case--once it happens, one can never get those brain cells back that allow us to develop an attention span. Thus, we are spending a lot of time and money trying to correct a problem that is created before the students start school and that is not easily correctable after it happens--if it is correctable at all. We may be spending a lot of our money resources on a problem that cannot be fixed after it has happened. It may be as devastating to kids as fetal alcohol syndrome.

One suggestion for addressing the problems described above is to require a class on parenting because, as a country, we cannot continue to ignore the issues of what happens to students before they become of school age or before they come to school in the morning unfed. These two issues impact not only the student and his or her future, but also the future of everyone living in this country. In the discussions I was able to have with parents, even the parents, when informed about the issues, felt something must be done to address these problems.

As more and more technology comes into the school environment, teachers feel the need to be trained on the new technology. Thus, schools need to plan on training costs for their staffs. Teachers felt everyone in society, including the politicians and the general public, needs to understand that schools cannot operate as they have in the past. There are going to be costs for doing business that did not exist when most of the public was in school. When, as one teacher put it to me, the world is literally changing under our feet as we are talking, we will need to rethink how we operate as a learning institution.

Teachers also expressed the need for providing time to meet with other teachers from other districts to share and trade ideas. Some districts already share in-service dates with other districts for this purpose. Teachers speak of this need because they know how isolating the classroom can be. One model suggested to me was to have six districts meet one year, then split that group in two to meet with three other districts the next year. The third year the 12 districts meet and bring in a national or state speaker for their in-service. The cycle would then start again. As one teacher put it, doctors and scientists, principals and administrators meet with their colleagues--it is just teachers who do not get out of the classroom as often to

exchange ideas with other teachers. Teachers, particularly those in the smaller districts, expressed the need to talk with teachers from other districts.

Finally, I want to say I have had a marvelous year. In spite of the problems, I found it to be a productive year. I had my sport coat tugged on by 6 kindergartners all talking at the same time and all tugging at the same time and came away with a new appreciation for what all the elementary teachers do every day. I taught 3rd graders how to multiply and divide at the same time and learned a new respect for the learning capacity of students. I have this vague feeling that we have traditionally underestimated the level of concepts we could be teaching to our students. I taught various high school chemistry, physics, and calculus classes some of the latest research and discoveries in science. And there are a lot of English teachers who will never again hear the sound produced by an "R" followed by an "I" followed by a "T" without thinking of the four different words that carry that "sound name" that can be put together in a correct English sentence that sounds like "Wryt, wryte 'Ryte'Ryeght." In addition, I introduced a lot of people to some of my favorite words--I will leave a list

of them at the end with their definitions--unmatched, of course--so those of you who are life-long learners will have the fun of learning some more.

Thank you, Susan Fischer, Dwight Carlson, Ted Stilwill and all the other people in the Department of Education, for putting up with all my questions and concerns. And thank you, State of Iowa, for providing this opportunity to support education. Iowa is one of a small number of states that has such a program. If I have made a difference to one student or to one teacher, I will count coup as my ancestors did long ago.

## **Visitation Schedule**

### ***September:***

Alpha Delta Kappa, Boone

Department of Education, Des Moines

Roland-Story Schools, Story City

State Board of Education, Des Moines

William Penn College, Oskaloosa

Maharishi University, Fairfield

Fairfield High School

### ***October:***

Teacher of the Year Interviews, Des Moines

Wartburg College, Waverly

University of Northern Iowa, Price Lab School, Cedar Falls

Teacher of the Year Reception, Des Moines

University of Iowa, Iowa City

Central College, Pella

Eddyville-Blakesburg Schools

Cardinal Schools of Eldon

Iowa Wesleyan College, Mount Pleasant

Mount Pleasant Middle School

Southern Prairie AEA, Ottumwa

Denison Schools

Western Iowa Reading Association, Denison

Anthon-Oto & Maple Valley Schools

Grandview College, Des Moines

AEA 4, Sioux Center

South O'Brien Schools, Paullina, Primghar and Sutherland

***November:***

Sioux City Schools

Western Hills AEA, Sioux City

Dordt College, Sioux Center

Simpson College, Indianola

Indianola Middle School

Pleasantville Schools

Student ISEA Convention, Des Moines

Goals 2000 Forum, Washington, D.C.

Anne Arundel Middle School, Crofton, Maryland

Iowa School Board Association State Convention, Des Moines

Toastmasters, ISU, Ames

Woodbine Schools

Manning Schools

***December:***

Clarke Community Schools, Osceola

Windsor Heights Lutheran Church, Windsor Heights

Green Valley AEA, Creston

Institute for School Executives, West Des Moines

Drake University, Des Moines

Baxter Schools

North Polk Schools, Alleman

***January:***

Lakeland AEA, Cylinder

Roland-Story Schools, Story City

Lenox Schools

Red Oak Schools

Bedford Schools

St. Cecilia School, Ames

***February:***

Marion High School

Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids

Iowa City High School

Muscatine Schools

University of Iowa, Iowa City

Postville Schools

Decorah Schools

Northeast Iowa Community College, Calmar

North Winneshiek Schools, Decorah

Luther College, Decorah

MFL Mar Mac, Luana & Monona

St. Cecilia School, Ames

Danville Schools

***March:***

AEA 7, Sumner

ISU Student Teachers, Ames

Bedford Schools

NIACC, Mason City

Garner-Hayfield Schools

Forest City Schools

Waldorf College,

Woden-Crystal Lake Schools

Maquoketa Schools

Delwood Schools, Delmar

Big Bend Writer's Conference, Clinton

Camanche Schools, Camanche

Harmony High School, Farmington

University of Iowa (ICN Broadcast), Iowa City

*April:*

Pella Rolscreen Corporation, Pella

Emmetsburg Schools

Emmetsburg Catholic School

Armstrong-Ringsted School

Spirit Lake Schools

George-Little Rock Schools

Rock Valley Schools

Price Lab School, UNI, Cedar Falls

North Fayette, West Union

Upper Iowa University, Fayette

***May:***

Fair Meadows School, West Des Moines

First in the Nation in Education Education Research Foundation Awards

Ceremony and Reception

Clarke Community, Osceola (Commencement speaker)

***June:***

State Board of Education

State Youth 4-H Council

Vocabulary:

1. Pixilated
2. Omphaloskepsis
3. Chionophobia
4. Defenestrate
5. Pulchritude
6. Fatuity
7. Infundibular
8. Coryza

Unmatched definitions

- a. a head cold
- b. to throw a person or an object through a window
- c. funnel-shaped
- d. physical beauty
- e. the act of sitting around all day watching one's navel for a religious experience
- f. slightly unbalanced mentally
- g. self-satisfied stupidity
- h. fear of snow