

# Biased teachings

Again this term, there is a growing number of students who are upset by the inclusion in College courses of an instructor's personal and private beliefs.

It is our opinion that an instructor's biases, whether they be for atheism, Christianity, Transcendental Meditation, or racism, have no place in the curriculum of a class.

We freely admit that an instructor's personal feelings, experiences and views can add interest to an otherwise dull lecture and that academic freedom is a necessary part of our educational system. However, there are extremes to which both these things can be carried.

When instructors allow no other beliefs than their own to be discussed by the class, when they fail to allow students to question biased or incomplete teachings and when their personal beliefs are taught as fact, to the exclusion of the views of recognized authorities, then these instructors have abused their positions.

Perhaps instructors with strong biases concerning God or the lack of one, or who are hyped up on self-awareness "cult" teachings should set aside time after class when they could discuss these things with those students who are interested.

Or perhaps there could be a description posted somewhere describing what this instructor will teach in this particular class. Then students could decide whether or not they wanted to incorporate these ideas into their curriculum.

Those students who felt that an instructor's biases would be a detriment to their own learning process would then be able to decide before enrolling which instructors they would be comfortable with.

Or perhaps, administrators should keep a wary eye on instructors who are known to abuse their privileges in this area and give them duties that offend no one.

# opinion



## Other viewpoints

### No commercials for children?

**Editor's note:** This article was an editorial in the Jan. 20 issue of the Courier 4, the official weekly newspaper at Chemeketa Community College in Salem.

Decisions will be made soon to determine whether or not children should be treated as consumers.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), there are approximately 25,000 television commercials viewed by the average American child each year.

The FTC's four-man commission is presently evaluating a series of recommendations from its staff which would institute broad, new restrictions on advertising directed towards children.

If these recommendations are approved, there will follow a series of public hearings and a period of debate which will give parents an opportunity to voice their opinions about such advertising.

One of the recommended regulations is that advertisers of presweetened cereals be required to list such a product's sugar content. Other possible restrictions would be a limit on the content and techniques of selling, particularly directed towards programs aimed at smaller children.

Some of the options available to the FTC would force television to limit the amount of advertising on children's programming or eliminate it altogether.

Those in opposition of such restrictions base their fears on government control and censorship and argue in favor of voluntary industry standards.

They ask, "who will pay for children's programming if commercials are banned?"

Some suggest, considering the huge profits in television advertising, networks offer Saturday morning children's programs as a public service, subsidized by profits gleaned from other programs.

During prime-time television, programs are generally geared to satisfy the desires of parents who

object to the more mature shows at that time thus keeping it "safe" for children. Other programs warn the viewer in advance of material about to be presented which might be considered objectionable for young children.

These guidelines appear to be meeting the requirements of concerned parents without enforcing censorship on the media.

Rather than to resort to censorship, it is hoped that the FTC will consider alternate means of dealing with this problem, establishing guidelines agreed upon by both sides in this issue.

Parents are still expected to set the rules in the household for their children without waiting for others to satisfy the child's needs for direction.

Also, advertisers have a responsibility to the public as do the various media, which include television.

In the event the FTC and the advertisers cannot develop cooperative guidelines, rather than to resort to censorship parents should feel the urgency to act in behalf of their children.

Interested parents should write to the FTC and the advertisers voicing their opinions demanding that changes be made.

If this does not bring results concerned parents could then boycott the advertiser's products until advertisers find themselves forced to change their advertising presently laced with numerous enticements for young children.

When advertisers feel the pain of lost revenue from a boycott, they will begin to listen and make appropriate changes without having to allow government control to establish regulations which might ultimately result in losses of even more important freedoms later.

Clackamas Community College

## Educational 'dinosaur' evolves

By Gerry Bellavita  
For The Print

In searching for a topic of commentary for the Print, I found myself reviewing my "pet" causes. As a practicing generalist, with little expertise in many given areas, there is no lack of important, crucial, mindbending, societal, imperatives for me to speculate upon—the planet, the nation, Oregon, Clackamas County—they are all relevant boundaries for the substance of my dreams and opinions.

I can assume a limited set of "common interests" with the readers of the Community College Weekly and feel a constraint to address myself to those areas of shared interest.

Foremost among those interests, I further assume, is the area of education—one of my giant "pet" causes.

I'm not satisfied with what American Society has going in the field of education. I'm not negative about where we are (well, maybe a little negative) so much as generally dissatisfied.

Basic education (the first through twelfth grades) has failed so far in "adapting to the greatest tidal wave of transition in history." The ponderous education bureaucracies are in the early stages of a complete systemic failure to adapt to the rest of the world. Like the dinosaurs of the Mesozoic past, the terrible lizards of today roam the nation intent on mass mediocre education.

Feeding on the time, talent and energy of millions of well-intentioned students, teachers, administrators, parents and politicians, the muscle bound bureaucracy has grown through the years to a size that surpasses functional viability.

Do you recall the stories of the beast that had a little brain in its tail and another brain in its head, hundreds of feet away? That creature didn't survive because it took too much time to process neurological signals and feedback appropriate responses.

Education is only one of today's dinosaurs that suffers from that evolutionary maladaptation.

What can we do about it? It seems so much more complex an issue than recycling, for instance, where I can take an individual initiative to separate organic waste from the glass, tin, aluminum, paper and plastics long before society transitions to a source-recovery mode of solid waste treatment.

That type of solution is apparently not as effective with education. That is to say, I fail to see what I, as an individual, can initiate to substantially change the education monster in contact with my own life to bring it down to human scale and to do it in a way that allows for a moderate transition rather than a cataclysmic transformation.

The closest I can come to a conceptualization of one change that will have wide impact on education

as a whole is to shift the method of government support of schools.

As it is now, the government, through the states, pays school districts by a formula based on the number of full-time students enrolled (called FTE or full time equivalency reimbursement).

What I would like to see is those payments going directly to parents in the form of a voucher. The voucher can be "cashed-in" at a school that is accredited by the state as eligible to receive educational vouchers, the parent choosing the school that best meets his or her child's needs.

What will happen, among other things, is that that school will have to respond to the demands of the open-market, creating a variety of educational choices to meet the diverse and changing needs as seen by individuals—not institutions.

Perhaps it's time for Oregon to take up a new initiative and create a model of a state-wide voucher system as a demonstration for the nation.

Our state can demonstrate the positive elements of a voucher system and be "trouble-shooter" for the new problems a change like this is sure to bring.

Oh, but my heart warms to the thrill of a challenge as potentially rewarding as making the education system truly responsive to individual needs.

Dream on, dreamer, and you may wake up to find you're not dreaming alone.

