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Interactivity Foundation

Special Report

Teaching Methods

Policy Possibilities for Public Discussion

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The discussions that were the basis of this report were cooperative and exploratory.
No statement herein can or should be attributed to any single participant.
There are policy possibilities in this report that few if any of our participants would endorse,

but which they nonetheless think are useful for public discussion.

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CONCEPTUAL POLICY POSSIBILITIES

FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A. Let the Universities Force Change

- *Would force faculty members to adopt new teaching methods*
- *Would fire those who refuse to comply*

B. Ask the Students

- *Would let students determine which teaching methods their teachers should use*
- *Would ask students to evaluate teaching methods to find the best among them*

C. Raise the Status of Teaching

- *Would try to raise the status of teaching and teachers*
- *Could try to devalue research in the process*

D. Raise Funds for Education

- *Would try to raise the funds necessary to improve teaching methods, including class sizes, school buildings, learning environments, libraries and information technology equipment*

E. Experiment With Many Different Methods

- *Would encourage universities to include courses with a wide variety of teaching methods in their curricula*
- *Would encourage teachers and students to experiment with a wide range of teaching methods*
- *Would encourage them to pursue those teaching methods that work best for them individually*

F. Improve Teaching Evaluations

- *Would design teaching evaluations that are more objective and useful for students and teachers*

G. Let the Market Point the Way

- *Would focus university education upon meeting the job needs of the future*
- *Would seek the advise of employers in designing university curricula and teaching methods*

THE IF DISCUSSION PROCESS

Public policy discussions too often focus upon the specific actions that governments might take to address a problem instead of the broader conceptual possibilities that might inspire them. This is unfortunate, since the wise choice of a public policy requires an exploration of a wide range of conceptual possibilities—including the different concerns, questions, beliefs, values, goals, and interests that might motivate them. The Interactivity Foundation (IF) believes that governments too often act without considering a wide range of conceptual possibilities for public policy, and that citizen discussions of contrasting possibilities can help to improve both our public policy choices and our own ability to make them. IF thus supports discussion projects that are designed to explore, develop, articulate, and test contrasting conceptual possibilities for public policy in selected areas of concern. We believe that our discussion projects and the conceptual possibilities that we develop in them can help citizens to explore an area of concern with their neighbors and make individual choices about which policy possibilities might be worthwhile to pursue.

The aim of IF is *not* to recommend or advocate specific policy possibilities or actions. It is to improve public policy by encouraging citizens to participate in democratic discussions about their public policy concerns—and about the different conceptual policy possibilities for addressing them. The conceptual possibilities that we present in our reports are developed by citizens in confidential 'sanctuary' discussions for use by their fellow citizens. We hope that they will help to stimulate and aid such discussions, and that they will provide both a starting point and a conceptual springboard for citizens who wish to explore the different policy possibilities and ends that we might want to achieve as a society.

In 2010, with the support of IF, eight young teachers from Eastern Europe participated in a three month IF 'mini-project' in Washington DC to explore concerns and policy possibilities about introducing new teaching methods in their home countries.

Our project on Teaching Methods was conducted in cooperation with The George Washington University's Research Program in Social and Organizational Learning, which also provided space for our discussions. Its participants included university teachers from Albania, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Georgia who had come to the United States under the auspices of the United States State Department's Junior Faculty Development Program and the Open Society Institute to learn about new teaching methods that they might use in their classes back home. These teachers met with us, both individually and as a group, for over 50 hours to explore concerns that people in their countries might have about new teaching methods, to develop conceptual policy possibilities to address them, and to learn how the IF Discussion Process might be used to facilitate student-centered discussions in their classrooms.

The aim of IF is not to recommend specific policy possibilities or specific actions. It is to improve public policy by encouraging citizens to participate in policy discussions.

This special report describes seven conceptual policy possibilities pertaining to the introduction of new teaching methods into their countries that the teachers explored, developed, articulated, and tested during the course of their discussions. It also describes their concerns about introducing new teaching methods in their countries; their thoughts about the actions that might be taken to implement each of the conceptual possibilities that they developed; and their thoughts about the practical consequences that those actions might have for individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large. It does not, however, discuss the pros and cons of any particular teaching method, or even the ways in which different teaching methods might differ. The governance concerns and policy possibilities that are described in this report might thus apply to any teaching method that people might try to introduce into a country in which university teachers are being asked to change their ways.

TEACHING METHODS AS AN AREA OF CONCERN

Teaching methods have been a perennial area of concern for democratic societies ever since the Athenians forced Socrates to drink the hemlock. Socrates, of course, was accused and found guilty of worshipping false gods and corrupting the youth of the city, charges that were bolstered by claims that he questioned the authorities of the city in the marketplace, making the weaker argument appear the stronger, and vice versa. Today, some people believe that the use of the 'right' teaching method is critical to the learning process and the development of a young student. Others believe that the use of the 'wrong' method can seriously retard a student's learning and may even turn a student off to education altogether. Still others believe that different people learn in different ways and that the methods teachers use are far less important than the content they teach. And still others believe that different teaching methods are causal factors in the development of different kinds of societies, that some teaching methods lead to authoritarian 'closed' societies in which people take orders without question from above, and that other methods are catalysts for the development of democratic 'open' societies in which citizens hold their leaders accountable for what they do, and play an active role in the governance of their societies. Indeed, the State Department and Open Society programs that brought the participants in this project to the United States are based upon the idea that the closed societies of the former communist block were partly the result of their teaching methods, and that replacing them with new teaching methods will be an important factor in their transformation.

This is the context in which teaching methods emerged as an area of concern for the teachers who participated in this project. It emerged, more specifically, in the framework of the Bologna Process, which is an attempt to restructure the curricula of universities in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe so that they would be more like the universities in Western Europe and America.

The Bologna Process is an international treaty that attempts to standardize academic degrees in Europe so that students are able to transfer their academic credits to other universities throughout Europe. It currently has forty-six participating countries, including twenty-seven members of the EU. The teachers in our project discussed the process at length. They generally agreed that it is a very positive development in that it affords greater freedom and mobility to both students and teachers—at least in theory. They also agreed that the process is poorly understood, that it could just as easily be used to deny academic credits that students are trying to transfer from other countries as to accept them, and that the fog surrounding it has led many university students, teachers, and administrators to think that the Bologna Process mandates the use of new teaching methods that professors might not want to use if left to their own devices. But as our discussion progressed, it became clear that the Bologna Process neither requires nor prohibits the use of any specific teaching method—though it does require teachers to think more carefully about the teaching methods that they use, to specify the intended outcomes of the courses that they teach, and to explain how the teaching methods that they use will help them to achieve those outcomes.

But what are teaching methods? What are their different dimensions? What values and goals might people associate with their use? What concerns might different people—teachers, students, parents, employers, and government officials—have about them? And is there some one best teaching method that enables everyone who uses it to learn better and more easily than they would without it?

These questions reflect broad concerns about the nature of teaching methods that are fundamental for their use in any system of higher education. The teachers in our mini-project used them as springboards for their discussions about teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

The teachers did *not* try to *define* the term 'teaching method'—let alone once and for all. Nor did they strive for consistency in using it. They instead said many different and seemingly contradictory things about teaching methods. They said that the dimensions of a teaching method include content, context, and process; that teachers are facilitators, lecturers, and mentors; that students are participants and listeners; and that the objective goal of a teaching method is to make an impact upon the quality of communication in the exchange of information. They said that teaching methods may be student-centered or teacher-centered; that they may range from the '*ex cathedra*' to the interactive; that they may be inductive, deductive, or experimental; that they may involve teaching assistants and tutors; that they may vary with the field of study; that they may also vary with the size of the class; that they may require different facilities, time commitments, and knowledge on the part of the student; that they may employ videos, online resources, and other media resources; but that they should all focus upon giving information, challenging students, and delivering the message that a teacher wants to get across to the students. They said that teaching methods often involve rules—such as dress codes, rules of conduct, and codes of ethics—that establish discipline in the classroom. And they said that how a teacher dresses and the cleanliness of a classroom are important symbols that convey how a student is expected to behave.

But despite saying all of these things, the teachers did not spend much time comparing different teaching methods with each other, or assessing their relative strengths and weaknesses, or arguing for or against the use of any of them. Their discussions instead focused upon concerns that people in their countries—students, teachers, parents, university administrators, government officials, and future employers—might have both about teaching methods in general, and about trying to introduce new teaching methods in their universities. And while each of the teachers may have had one or another specific teaching method in mind when she or he spoke about teaching methods, what they said could easily apply to any and all of them.

Some of the teachers worried that they might not be able to adapt themselves to new teaching methods. Others were sure that they would be able to adapt, but wondered whether their colleagues could. And still others said that their concern was not so much their colleagues' inability to adapt as their sense that learning how to use new teaching methods might be too time-consuming and costly for what it is worth. The teachers also wondered whether a new teaching method would help or exacerbate the 'free rider' problem, and their students' desire to get the best possible grades with the least possible effort. Some of them talked at length about corruption in their universities—including teachers taking bribes and giving expensive private tutorials—and said that some new teaching methods might simply be inappropriate for or out of touch with their cultures. Others worried about how their students would adapt to them, and whether they would still learn anything that is worth learning. Still others feared that parents and 'the older generation' might oppose them because the old teaching methods worked well enough, because the new teaching methods have not been tested well enough, and because…well, simply because. And everyone expressed concern about whether or not the new teaching methods would meet the requirements of the Bologna process—though most of them confessed that they were not at all clear about what the requirements of the Bologna process actually are, whether they have anything to do with teaching methods, or why they matter.

The teachers described many concerns that people might have about teaching methods. But when we asked them to choose the ones that they thought would be most useful for public discussion, we found that we could cluster all of their choices into seven broad concerns, namely: that people might resist new teaching methods due to fear of change, that students might not be able to adapt to them, that professors are simply more interested in research, that their universities might not have the material resources necessary to apply them, that the methods themselves might not be in accord with the Bologna process, that it is not clear how they would be evaluated, and that it is not clear whether they would meet the job needs of the future.

There were seven major concerns that the group described during the course of their discussions. They said that:

- *Some teachers, students, and other stakeholders may resist the use of new teaching methods due to their fear of change*
- *Students may not like a teaching method or may not be able to learn from it*
- *Faculty members are generally more interested in research than in teaching and are generally rewarded more for research than for teaching*
- *Their universities may not have the materials and financial resources that a teaching method requires*
- *New teaching methods may not be in accord with the requirements of the Bologna process*
- *It is not clear how teaching methods will be evaluated*
- *The knowledge that students acquire may not be suitable to meet the job needs of the future*

Once the teachers articulated these seven concerns, they proceeded to develop contrasting conceptual possibilities for addressing them. These possibilities differ in a variety of ways. Some of them hold that there are teaching methods that work well for everyone, that we should determine what they are, and that we should then force all of our teachers to use them. Others maintain that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' teaching method, that different methods work well for different people, that we should thus experiment with many different methods, and that we should encourage teachers and students to try all of them. Some of them assume that students are actually the best authorities about which teaching methods work best for them. Others maintain that their teachers are. And still others say that university officials are. Some of them would have students evaluate the teaching methods that their teachers use early and often. But others might be compatible with cutting back on teaching evaluations or even eliminating them altogether.

THIS REPORT

The following pages describe the contrasting policy possibilities that the teachers developed. They also describe their ideas about what we might do to implement each possibility, and the effects that they might have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large. **We want to emphasize that this report does not urge the adoption of any of these policy possibilities. It instead describes the possibilities that the teachers thought might be useful for discussion,** along with their possible practical consequences and the concerns, values, interests and beliefs that inspire them. There are possibilities in this report that none of the teachers would endorse, but which they nonetheless think should be part of the public policy discussion.

Our reasons for presenting this material are thus different from what you might expect. Most public policy reports recommend actions that governments should take to solve problems in current policy. They are written to overcome opposition and secure support for those actions. This report is different in that it assumes that teaching methods are a perennial area of concern, but does not presume that our current policies are broken and need to be repaired. Some of the possibilities in the report may differ from current policy. But others are no doubt consistent with it. We do not present them to forge a consensus for action—or even to foster a debate about which is the best or most useful to adopt. We present them instead with the hope that you will deepen your understanding of governance concerns and possibilities pertaining to teaching methods—and that this will eventually lead to more thoughtful policy. We have, in describing each possibility, thus suggested reasons why you might *not* like it—and we have tried to point out other policy possibilities that you might prefer if you don't. It is pointless, and even counter-productive, to try to compare or evaluate the possibilities in this report in terms of any one governance concern, policy issue, or concept of teaching. Some of the possibilities may be consistent with each other. Others are mutually exclusive. But they each present an approach that merits exploration and development.

We want to emphasize that each possibility in the report is described in broad conceptual terms, and that we have made no effort to describe the many qualifications and exceptions that we would need to make to them if we were to actually adopt any one of them as our policy. It may be useful, for this reason, to emphasize that ***we do not intend any of the possibilities in this report to be understood as being, in any way, absolute, unqualified, complete, or without exceptions.*** It seems clear, on the contrary, that we would have to work out the details of many exceptions and qualifications to each of the possibilities were we to ever adopt it as our actual policy toward teaching methods. We know that the devil is in the details—and that the details are his full-time residence when it comes to public policy. But we believe that these exceptions and qualifications are best worked out as the need for them arises in the real world.

We also want to emphasize that we do not intend the 'possible implementations' and 'possible effects of these actions' that we list after each possibility to be necessary, complete, certain, or even consistent with each other. Predicting the actual consequences of adopting a policy possibility is a notoriously difficult task. This is because we can usually implement a policy in many different ways—and because its actual effects will depend upon how we actually implement it. The teachers often disagreed about how to implement a possibility and the effects that those actions might have. You will probably think of different ways to implement each possibility, and of different consequences that it might have for individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large as well. We have nonetheless included some of the teachers' thoughts about them in this report

- partly to illustrate how a discussion about conceptual possibilities might lead to a discussion about possible actions and their possible consequences in the real world
- partly to give you a better idea of what the teachers who developed these possibilities were thinking about, and
- partly with the hope of stimulating further discussion about the conceptual possibilities themselves.

Finally, we want to emphasize that this is a special IF report, and to explain the various ways in which it is special. Here, the first thing to say is that by calling it a special report we do *not* mean to suggest that we attribute any special authority to the teachers who developed it or any special value to the policy possibilities that it presents. We regard it as a special report, on the contrary, because the project that produced it differs in significant ways from the projects that we usually conduct at IF. It is a special report, first of all, because it is the result of an IF 'mini-project'. Unlike our regular IF projects, the discussion time in this project was severely limited, partly by the fact that the teachers would be in the United States for only a few months, and partly by the fact that they had many other things to do while they were here. It is also a special IF report because the policy possibilities that it presents were developed by only one panel of discussion participants, while our regular IF reports present policy possibilities that are initially developed by two panels of participants that conduct their discussions separately and are brought together to meld the possibilities that they have developed only toward the very end of the project. Thirdly, it is a special IF report because the discussion sessions that produced these policy possibilities were not all facilitated by an IF Fellow, but by the teachers themselves, who were learning how to facilitate IF-style discussions by doing it, so they could use our discussion process as a teaching method in their courses when they return home. We could have very easily spent three or four hours of discussion for every hour of discussion in this 'mini-project'. We would have done so in a regular IF project. And we no doubt would have developed the possibilities in this report further if we had done so in this project, or if we had two separate panels, or if an IF Fellow had facilitated all of the discussions—though it is impossible to know exactly how they would be different. Finally, it is a special IF report because, unlike our regular reports, which, as the product of confidential 'sanctuary' discussions, guarantee anonymity to the panelists who produce them, we have published the names of the teachers who produced the possibilities in it in accordance with their request. These are the reasons why this is a 'special IF report'.

We do not believe that the possibilities that we present in this report are the only conceptual possibilities pertaining to teaching methods that you might want to discuss. But we do believe that they are provocative and worthy of your attention and careful discussion. We hope that you will find them interesting, that you will understand them in the way that we intend them to be understood, that they will stir your imagination and cause you to think about other conceptual policy possibilities pertaining to teaching methods, and that you will discuss them with your friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens in the cooperative spirit in which we developed them.

As you consider the possibilities in this report and discuss them with others, you may wish to ask yourselves some of the following questions:

- What are the values that motivate this particular possibility?
- Why might someone hold these values?
- Why might someone be opposed to them?
- What goals is this possibility trying to achieve?
- Why might someone have those goals?
- Why might someone be opposed to them?
- What actions might we take to implement this possibility were we to adopt it?
- What effects might those actions have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large?
- How might they affect you personally?
- What are the strengths of this possibility?
- What are its weaknesses?
- Who would be likely to benefit from the adoption of this possibility?
- Who would be likely to benefit from its rejection?
- What other approaches are available for pursuing the values and goals that inspired this possibility?
- Who might be more likely to benefit from choosing those other approaches?
- Who might be less likely to benefit from choosing those other approaches?
- What actions would we be likely take to implement this possibility, given our current political realities, were we to adopt it?
- What effects would those actions be likely to have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large?
- How effective would this possibility be in achieving its desired ends if we were to adopt it?
- What would you do to strengthen this possibility?
- How would you compare this possibility to each of the other possibilities in this report?

POSSIBILITY A

LET THE UNIVERSITIES FORCE CHANGE

This possibility would encourage universities to use the power they command to force their faculties to adopt new teaching methods. Faculty members would be obliged to implement whatever methods university administrators think are necessary. Those who refuse could be charged with breach of contract and fired.

Do you believe that part of the reason why our students can't learn is that their teachers can't teach? Do you think that part of the reason why our teachers can't teach is that they use old and ineffective teaching methods that students today simply find boring? And do you think that part of the reason why rectors and deans can't get their faculty members to adopt new and more effective methods is that you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

This possibility flows from a belief that good teaching involves the use of good teaching methods, that good teaching methods constantly evolve over time, and that it is thus necessary and desirable for teachers to keep up with what is happening in their profession and to change their methods whenever new ones evolve that seem more effective. But this possibility also flows from a concern that learning new teaching methods requires a lot of time and energy; that teachers, like most people, get set in their ways; and that they are likely to resist learning new methods for the very reason that they are new. Change is often a long and painful process, and many people both fear it and have difficulty adjusting to it. But that is no reason to avoid it. On the contrary, the future of our educational system, if not the future of our world, depends upon using the best teaching methods that are available. And universities have an obligation to see that they do so. This possibility would thus encourage university officials to address these concerns by using their power to force their faculty members to adopt the teaching methods that they believe are most effective. Sometimes this might mean violating a professor's academic freedom. And sometimes it might even mean firing professors who refuse to comply with university directives, or who try to resist the change.

Far from giving teachers the freedom to decide for themselves which teaching methods to use, this possibility would urge universities to coerce their teachers into using the methods that they want them to use—and to get rid of teachers who try to resist.

This possibility flows from a concern that learning new teaching methods may require a lot of time and energy; that teachers, like most people, are liable to get set in their ways; and that they are likely to resist new teaching methods for the very reason that they are new.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that teachers need to use new and more effective teaching methods, you may think that trying to force them to do so is not the right way to go. You may think that change is usually a long and painful process, but that trying to bring it about by force may only make it seem longer and more painful. You may believe that academic freedom means that teachers should generally be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not to adopt a new teaching method. Or you may feel that change will eventually occur even if we do little or nothing at all—and that trying to force teachers into adopting new teaching methods might only make them resist the change even more than they would have otherwise. But if you are inclined to believe any or all of these things, then you may think that it would be better to try to inspire change than to force it. Instead of using force, we should offer teachers opportunities to learn about new teaching methods, and incentives to try them out in their classes. And you may think that, whatever else we do, we should provide teachers with various kinds of formal and informal training programs designed to introduce them to new teaching methods and to help them to implement them in their courses.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Make the use of prescribed teaching methods a contractual obligation, and fire all professors who refuse to use them
- Explain the benefits of the new methods to the professors and how they might be used before actually forcing them to use them
- Offer a variety of carrots and sticks related to salary increases, promotions, course loads and sizes, and vacations to force professors to adopt the new methods
- Establish a special committee of faculty members to identify teachers who are not using the prescribed teaching methods
- Include faculty members in the creation of plans that describe the goals, standards, and deadlines for using the new methods—and the possible punishments for not using them
- Create an academic court of appeals, with faculty members as jurors, so that professors who have been accused of not using the prescribed methods can contest the charge

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Spark innovation and the use of new teaching methods in our universities, although some good professors could be lost along the way
- Help to minimize the fear that professors might have about using new methods, while at the same time obliging them to use them
- Persuade professors who might otherwise try to resist using the new methods to at least try them out because doing so would be in their own interests
- Allow faculty members whom the committee identifies to adopt the prescribed teaching methods to avoid further action
- Ease the implementation of the new methods, since faculty members might be less resistant to adopting them if they feel that they are part of the process
- Allow professors who have been charged with not using the prescribed methods to defend themselves against the charge and to be judged by their academic peers

For Further Discussion…

- Do you think that people are generally afraid of change? And if so, why?
- Do you think that fear of change is the only reason why teachers, students, and their parents might be opposed to the use of new teaching methods? And if not, what other reasons might there be?
- Do you agree with the idea that students do not learn because their teachers persist in using old and ineffective teaching methods, or do you think that this explanation is just a little too simple? And if it's too simple, then what other factors might be involved?
- Do you agree with the idea that teachers will eventually change their teaching methods of their own accord if we do little or nothing at all? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that forcing teachers to use teaching methods that they do not want to use would pose a threat to their academic freedom? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that the future of our educational system and the future of our country depend upon our using the best teaching methods that are available, as this possibility suggests? Or do you think that this idea is just another attempt to hype a policy?
- Do you think that teachers should be fired just because they use old-fashioned teaching methods? If so, why so? If not, why not?

ASK THE STUDENTS

This possibility would let our students determine which teaching methods their teachers should use. It would, more specifically, ask them to evaluate teaching methods, to criticize them, and to suggest possible ways to improve them in an effort to find the best teaching methods among them.

Do you believe that professors, school officials, and professional teaching experts are often out of touch with their students? Do you think that they too often advocate the use of teaching methods that are not really effective? And do you think that our students are really the best authorities about which teaching methods do and do not work for them?

This possibility flows from the belief that good teaching is the result of good teaching methods, that the primary reason why students do not do better in school is that their teachers use old and ineffective teaching methods, and that students are actually in the best position to know which teaching methods work best for them. But this possibility also flows from a concern that teachers, school officials, and teaching experts very seldom ask students about which teaching methods work best for them, and that they rarely take student input seriously even when they do. It is true that school officials often ask students to evaluate the courses that they take. It is also true that students have a vested interest in getting the best education that they possibly can. But course evaluations too often focus upon whether or not students *like* a course and its teacher. They seldom, if ever, ask students to evaluate the teaching methods that the teacher used in it. They can be interpreted in many different ways. But they are more often used to silence student dissent and to justify personnel decisions that have already been made on entirely different grounds than to improve the quality of teaching. This possibility would try to change all that by taking student input more seriously, by focusing evaluations upon the effectiveness of the teaching methods that were used in a course, and by using them to determine which teaching methods work best and which should and should not be used in the curriculum.

*Student course evaluations too often focus upon whether or not students **like** a course and its teacher. They seldom, if ever, ask students to evaluate the teaching methods that the teacher used in it. They can be interpreted in many different ways. But they are more often used to silence student dissent and to justify personnel decisions that have already been made on entirely different grounds than to improve the quality of teaching.*

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that we should take student input more seriously, you might still feel skeptical about letting students decide which teaching methods their teachers should use. You may think that students are far from being disinterested consumers of teaching methods—and that it would be too romantic to think that they are always interested in doing whatever is necessary for them to learn a subject. You may think that students, on the contrary, are all too often 'free riders' looking for the teachers, courses, and teaching methods that will offer them the best possible grades for the least possible effort. Or you may simply think that teachers are masters of the subjects that they teach; that they know far more about them, and about what it takes to learn about them, than their students do; that they also have much more experience with different teaching methods than their students do; and that we should, for these reasons, get out of their way and let them teach. But if you find yourself thinking any or all of these things, then you may also think that instead of asking students to decide which methods their teachers should use, we should allow teachers to select not only the teaching methods that they think are most appropriate for their courses, but also the best and most highly motivated students to take them.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Provide more options for students, i.e., more courses, more professors, more teaching evaluations and a greater variety of teaching methods in a course
- Organize meetings to discuss and explain teaching methods to the students and their representatives
- Introduce a new method and then collect the students' suggestions about it
- Give students an appropriate choice of teaching methods from which to choose
- Ask students about the use of certain teaching methods and the reasoning behind them in the course evaluations
- Use questionnaires and surveys to gather the students' opinions about teaching methods
- Let students design the evaluations of teaching methods
- Ask the students' for their opinions, but let the teachers use the teaching methods they want to use in their courses

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Give students more freedom of choice, more control over their education, and the sense that university administrators and professors take their ideas seriously
- Create a more manageable environment in which to explain the benefits of each method to the students
- Motivate professors to create better syllabi for their courses
- Prevent a free rider problem by forcing students to make choices
- Allow the majority of students to determine which teaching methods should be used, and make them happier in the process
- Help to determine what the students think in a more effective and objective way
- Result in more effective teaching evaluations and motivate teachers to meet students' needs
- Give students the idea that their opinions are valued and that they are a part of the decision making process

For Further Discussion…

- Do you think that students are intellectually and emotionally qualified to evaluate teaching methods? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree with the idea that students are really the best authorities when it comes to which teaching methods work best ***for them***? If so, why so? And if not, then who do you think might be better authorities—and why?
- Do you believe that whether or not a student ***liked*** a course and its teacher is irrelevant to its evaluation, as this possibility suggests? If not, why not? And if so, then what factors do you think are relevant?
- Do you think that teaching evaluations do what they are intended to do? If so, why so? And if not, why not?
- Do you agree that students are often 'free riders' looking for the teachers, courses, and methods that will offer them the best grades for the least effort? And if so, do you think that there is anything wrong about it?
- Do you think that teachers should be able to decide which students can take their courses and which cannot? If so, why so? And if not, why not?
- Do you believe that there is some one teaching method that works best for all students? Or do you think that different students learn in different ways and there is no one-size-fits-all method to it? Explain your answer.

RAISE THE STATUS OF TEACHING

This possibility would take steps to elevate the status and prestige of teaching, teachers, and the teaching profession, both in the university and in society at large, in an attempt to motivate university professors to devote more time and attention to teaching.

Do you believe that most universities value and reward research more highly than they value and reward teaching? Do you think that society simply does not respect and value teachers and the teaching profession as much as it should? And do you think that these are two of the reasons why professors may not want to devote the time and energy that it takes to master new teaching methods?

This possibility flows from the belief that our society and our universities generally do not value teachers and the teaching profession as highly as they should—and from a concern that professors generally have little motivation to improve their teaching methods as a result. Despite the concern that most of our citizens have for the education of their children, our society simply does not reward teachers as well as it should. And despite the emphasis that our universities sometimes place upon teaching evaluations, their salary and promotion decisions more often than not reward research much more highly than they do teaching. This possibility maintains that teaching is at least as important to a university as research and that our society should regard it as at least as valuable as other professions. It thus maintains that we should value teachers at least as much as other elite professionals in our society—and that we should compensate them at least as well for their work. This possibility would thus offer a wide variety of incentives to attract the best and brightest young students to the teaching profession, and a wide variety of incentives to keep them there. It would also try to motivate teachers to devote at least as much time to their teaching as they devote to their research—and to focus their attention upon improving their teaching and teaching methods—by raising the social status of teaching so that teachers enjoy the respect that is due them both in our universities and in society at large.

But far from demanding excellence in both teaching and research, and far from requiring professors to divide their time between the two, this possibility might well encourage universities to focus exclusively upon teaching and to leave the research to non-teaching research institutions. And this, in turn, might lead some universities to prohibit their professors from even conducting research, or to regard it as an impediment to learning, in their attempt to improve the quality of teaching.

This possibility flows from the belief that our society and our universities generally do not value teachers and the teaching profession as highly as they should—and from a concern that university professors generally have little motivation to improve their teaching methods as a result.

Other Perspectives. But even if you share these concerns and beliefs, and even if you agree that we should raise the status of teaching and teachers, you may feel that trying to do so at the expense of a university's research may backfire. You may think that research is not so much an impediment to good teaching as its very lifeline; that teachers have to be up-to-date with research if they are going to have anything worthwhile to teach; and that the best professors can always find a way to divide their time between the two. You may feel that research without teaching is blind and teaching without research is dumb. And you may think that any university that focuses upon improving its teaching at the expense of its research will ultimately find itself losing its best professors and its best students to other schools. If you are inclined to think any or all of these things, then you may think that we should not make the choice between teaching and research an 'either...or', and that we should instead find a way to raise the status of teaching without forcing professors to choose between the two.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Divide professors' workload between research and teaching in every department
- Establish a special professional degree for teachers and make it a job requirement for those seeking university positions
- Raise the salaries of teachers to the level of other elite professionals, since salary is a typical indicator of the value we invest in a job
- Develop a points system for teaching, and a new set of requirements for tenure and career development, that gives points for the number of courses that a professor teaches
- Offer prestigious national and international prizes for excellence in teaching, and attach monetary rewards to them
- Raise salaries for professors who specialize in teaching relative to those who specialize in research
- Reduce teachers' workloads, both in terms of the size of their classes and the number of courses that they teach each term
- Base professors' salary increases and job promotions primarily upon their performance in the classroom

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Help to raise the status of teaching in the universities
- Lead professors to pay more attention to teaching; make teaching more important for future professors
- Raise the social status of teachers in society; attract more and better people to the teaching profession
- Force professors to pay more attention to teaching, since the number of courses they teach would become a measurable condition for getting tenure
- Result in more teachers becoming concerned with the quality of their teaching, which in turn would raise the quality of teaching itself
- Make more and more professors 'come out of the closet' by choosing to specialize in teaching rather than research
- Improve the quality of teaching by giving professors the time that they need to better prepare for their classes
- Rekindle professors' interest in teaching methods and in ways to improve their use of them

For Further Discussion…

- Do you believe that our society and our universities value teaching and teachers as much as they should? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Why do you think our universities do not value teaching and teachers as highly as they do research?
- Why do you think our society does not reward teachers as highly as it does other elite professionals?
- Do you believe that we value some workers more highly than others because we pay them higher salaries, or that we pay some workers higher salaries than others because we value their work more highly?
- Do you agree that paying teachers higher salaries to compensate them for their work will help to raise the social status of teachers? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that university professors should make as much money as other elite professionals? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that a teacher should be rewarded for the number of courses and students that he teaches, or for the quality of his teaching? And if the latter, then how should we measure the quality of his teaching?

RAISE FUNDS FOR EDUCATION

This possibility would focus upon developing and successfully implementing a wide range of activities for raising the funds that are necessary for improving teaching methods in our universities. It would, more specifically, try to raise funds to pay for better teachers and libraries, smaller classes, more attractive learning environments, better-equipped buildings, and the modern information technologies that are characteristic of good teaching methods in today's world.

Do you feel that the success of an educational system ultimately depends upon the quality of its teaching methods? Do you think that well-prepared teachers, small classes, well-equipped buildings, good libraries, and state-of-the-art IT equipment are characteristic of good teaching methods in today's world? And do you worry that our universities are simply too poor, too ill-equipped, and too dependent upon the state to support the modern teaching methods that are necessary for quality education?

This possibility flows from a belief that today's 'state-of-the-art' teaching methods require a very expensive material infrastructure, and from a concern that we cannot yet afford to pay for it. This possibility would thus try to successfully implement a wide range of fundraising activities, including volunteer work and extra-curricular activities, to improve both teaching methods and the education system as a whole. It would use the money raised through these activities to pay for smaller classes, better-equipped buildings, more attractive learning environments, well-prepared teachers, new IT equipment, better libraries, and student scholarships. It would also encourage universities to network with alumni; to establish cooperative relationships with other universities, stakeholders, and shareholders; and to find local and international donors in an effort to raise funds for education. It would seek out partners who can provide the financial and non-financial capabilities that will enable them to look beyond their currently available financial budgets to establish better teaching methods at their schools. And it would, in this way, aim not only at improving teaching methods and the quality of education, but also at securing the university's financial independence so it could use its funds as it sees fit.

Far from resigning itself to the *status quo*, this possibility would encourage universities to do whatever they can to raise the funds necessary to transform themselves into institutions that can offer the kind of world-class education that will enable their graduates to compete in today's global market.

This possibility flows from a belief that today's 'state-of-the-art' teaching methods require a very expensive material infrastructure, and from a concern that we cannot yet afford to pay for it.

Other Perspectives. But even if you share these beliefs and concerns, you may think that trying to raise funds for education is ultimately an exercise in futility. You may feel that just as we cannot get water from a stone, we cannot charge students more for their education because they simply do not have the money to pay for it. You may think that it would be nice to have all of the modern high-tech bells and whistles that are available today, but that teachers have taught and students have learned perfectly well for centuries without them. Or you may simply feel that learning does not depend upon teaching methods; that teaching methods do not have to be so expensive; and that trying to raise funds may ultimately distract teachers from teaching—and our students from learning anything at all. If you are inclined to believe any or all of these things, then you may also think that we should face up to the reality of our situation and ask our teachers and students to adjust their expectations to their available resources, to be creative about improvising new teaching methods, and to do what they can with what they have instead of wasting time and energy trying to raise funds for education.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Encourage students to volunteer their time and labor for their university and community
- Encourage students to organize fundraising events such as plays, talent shows, etc.
- Incorporate the cost of teaching methods into the students' tuition
- Organize specific fundraising events for specific needs, such as books, IT equipment, online databases, scholarships, refurbishment of classrooms and offices, etc.
- Network with corporations, international donors, and other organizations that are able to donate funds
- Tap into alumni networks and invite those alumni who are experts in a field taught at the university to speak at about their field at the university
- Encourage universities to share their best practices regarding information technology
- Encourage teachers to do what they can with what they have

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Give real world experience to the students and build closer ties within the community
- Tap into a large, enthusiastic, and free labor force for such events
- Give students a better education and let them know how their money is spent
- Attract patrons who are willing to donate money for special needs; provide greater transparency about where the money is coming from and how it is being spent
- Attract patrons who are able to donate sufficient funds to improve the education system as a whole
- Strengthen the university's image among alumni as a place driven by cutting edge ideas, which in turn may lead alumni to donate more money
- Save money on databases and other aspects related to information technology
- Would not raise money, but might prevent money from being wasted

For Further Discussion…

- Do you think that the success of our educational system ultimately depends upon its teaching methods? If so, why so? And if not, why not?
- Do you believe that good teaching methods require an expensive and sophisticated material infrastructure? And if so, why do you think that some students have been able to learn a great deal at schools that are relatively poor and ill-equipped?
- Do you think that students and teachers should devote a lot of time to raising funds for their universities? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that universities would generally be better or worse off if they were financially independent from the state? And why?
- Do you think that we should regard smaller classes, better-equipped buildings, more attractive learning environments, well-prepared teachers, new IT equipment, better libraries, and student scholarships as *teaching methods*? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that learning in today's world really depends upon these kinds of material things? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that trying to raise funds for education would provide students with the kind of education they need in today's world, or that it would ultimately distract them from getting it? And why?

EXPERIMENT WITH MANY DIFFERENT METHODS

This possibility would encourage teachers to experiment with a variety of different teaching methods and to promote the ones that they find most effective. It would also encourage students to take courses that use the methods that they find to be most beneficial for their own learning.

Do you believe that different students have different needs and that there is no such thing as a teaching method that is the best for all of them? Do you think that teachers should be able to use whatever methods they think might work in their attempt to improve the educational experiences of their students? And do you feel that each student is ultimately the best judge of what works best for him, and that a student should be able to decide for himself which teaching method he wants to study under?

This possibility flows from the belief that it is foolish to think that there is some one teaching method that best fits each and every student's needs—and that it is even more foolish to waste our time, money, and energy trying to find one. But it also flows from a concern that this is all too often what some parents, teachers, education experts, and school administrators seem to think. The widespread concern with new teaching methods seems to presume that there is a direct relationship between teaching and learning—so that a teacher and the method he uses must somehow be at fault if his students do not learn. But the relationship between teaching and learning is much more complicated than that. Students can and do learn without ever being taught at all—and a teacher can use the best available teaching methods to no good effect if his students are not ready and willing to learn. The fact of the matter is that learning depends at least as much upon a student and his curiosity as it does upon a teacher and his method. And experience has shown that it is all too easy to turn a student off to learning by insisting that he study under methods that do not appeal to him. This possibility would thus urge universities to include courses that use a wide variety of different teaching methods in their curricula. And it would encourage teachers and students to experiment with all of them until they find the ones that work best for them.

The widespread concern with new teaching methods seems to presume that there is a direct relationship between teaching and learning—so that a teacher and the method he uses must somehow be at fault if his students do not learn. But the relationship between teaching and learning is much more complicated than that. Students can and do learn without ever being taught at all—and a teacher can use the best available teaching methods to no good effect if his students are not ready and willing to learn.

Other Perspectives. But even if you share these beliefs and concerns, you may think that this possibility is not the right way to go. You may think that some teaching methods are simply better than others, and that we can tell which are which by evaluating them. Or you may feel that offering too many courses with too many different teaching methods may ultimately be just too confusing for all concerned. Or you may think that we need to hold teachers accountable for how they teach—especially if they are young and inexperienced and want to use novel methods—and that we can do so by stipulating which teaching methods they can and cannot use. Or you may feel that letting teachers and students experiment with a wide variety of different methods may ultimately lead to our giving university degrees to students who are poorly educated and ill-prepared to fill the jobs that our society will need in the future. But if you are inclined think any or all of these things, then you may also think that instead of encouraging teachers and students to experiment with many different teaching methods, we would do better by keeping a tight grip on the teaching methods that we let our teachers use—and that a good way to do this would be to redesign our teaching evaluations so that we would be in a better position to know which teaching methods work best and why.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Make appropriate resources available for a teacher to experiment with a variety of different teaching methods
- Develop a course on different teaching methods for first year students and require that they take it
- Create a course about different teaching methods for professors and offer a variety of incentives for them to take it
- Offer a wide variety of monetary incentives—grants, salary increases, etc.—for professors to experiment with a wide variety of teaching methods
- Offer a variety of grade-related incentives—give pass/fail credit, allow students to drop courses and low grades without penalty, etc.—to encourage students to experiment with a wide variety of teaching methods
- Allow students to design and experiment with independent studies and other 'teacher-less' courses
- Pay professors to design and offer workshops to inform their colleagues about new teaching methods that work particularly well for them

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Make it easier for teachers to experiment with a greater variety of teaching methods by defraying the costs of doing so
- Help students discover early on which methods work best for them so that they can make better choices about which courses to take
- Increase awareness among professors of the different teaching methods that exist, and increase the probability of their using them
- Result in more professors experimenting with new teaching methods and lead some professors to discover new methods that work better than the ones that they have been using
- Result in more students taking courses that use a wide variety of different teaching methods; undermine the grade system as students take more pass/fail courses and drop courses in which they do not do well
- Enable students to follow their own curiosity and interests; inform teachers about their students' interests
- Lead professors to pay more attention to their teaching methods; lead some professors to try methods they would not have tried otherwise

For Further Discussion…

- Do you think that there is some one teaching method that works best for all students? And if so, what is it?
- Do you agree that teachers should be able to use whatever methods they think might work in their attempt to improve the educational experiences of their students? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that learning depends more upon a student's curiosity and other character traits than upon a teacher's methods? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that each student is the best judge of what teaching methods work best for him? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that trying to find teaching methods that work best for everyone is really a foolish waste of time, money, and energy?
- Do you agree that the teacher is most often at fault if his students do not do well in the classes he teaches? If so, why so? And if not, then what other factors do you think might be involved?
- What teaching methods do you think work best for you, and why?

POSSIBILITY F

IMPROVE TEACHING EVALUATIONS

This possibility would try to improve the design of teaching evaluations to make them both more objective and more useful to students, teachers, and administrators.

Do you believe that it is necessary to evaluate our teachers, the courses they teach, and the methods they use in order to determine the best practices in education? Do you think that the results of a proper teaching evaluation can help teachers to learn new methods, to successfully implement them, and to thereby improve the quality of both their teaching and their students' education? But do you worry that the evaluations that we actually use are not designed to achieve these ends?

This possibility flows from the belief that good teaching evaluations could be a very useful tool for introducing effective teaching methods to teachers who might otherwise be reluctant to use them. But it also flows from a concern that teaching evaluations are usually not designed well enough to serve this purpose. Most teaching evaluations are simply too subjective, ineffective, and easy to abuse to give objectively reliable assessments of teachers, their courses, and their methods. And the ugly, but open, secret is that teaching evaluations can usually be interpreted any way university administrators want—and are sometimes used to 'justify' promotion and salary decisions that have been made on entirely different grounds. This possibility would try to improve the quality of teaching evaluations by using both formal and informal evaluations; by using outside reviewers as well as students and colleagues; by assessing a teaching method holistically as a part of an entire course; and by judging a university as a whole and not just as the sum of its parts. Here, evaluating a university as a whole would mean taking into account a multitude of different indicators, such as the quality of its teachers, the grades and test scores of its students, and the job offers they receive after they graduate; informal evaluations would judge a teaching method via the real time feedback that teachers get from their students; and formal evaluations would judge it through the use of objective questionnaires and similar tools.

Far from maintaining that a teacher and the teaching method he uses must somehow be at fault if his students do not learn, this possibility presumes that different students may have very different learning styles, that there is no direct relationship between how a teacher teaches and what a student learns, and that learning depends at least as much—if not much more—upon a student and his character than a teacher and his method. But it still maintains that a teacher and a teaching method can make a big difference in how and what we learn, and that we can improve the quality of education by improving the way in which we evaluate it.

This possibility flows from a belief that good teaching evaluations could be a very useful tool for introducing effective teaching methods to teachers who might otherwise be reluctant to use them. But it also flows from a concern that teaching evaluations are usually not designed well enough to serve this purpose.

Other Perspectives. But even if you share these beliefs and concerns, you may think that trying to improve teaching evaluations may be a waste of time. You may believe the relationship between teaching and learning is tenuous, that students can and do learn without ever being taught at all, and that a teacher can use the best methods to no good end if his students are not ready and willing to learn. Or you may think that teaching evaluations are *inherently* subjective, ineffective, and subject to abuse, and that it is not just our current teaching evaluations that suffer from these faults. Or you may think that each student is ultimately the best authority when it comes to his own mind, and that he should be able to decide which teaching methods work best for him without appealing to allegedly 'objective' teaching evaluations. But if you think any or all of these things, then you may also think that trying to improve our teaching evaluations is both expensive and futile, and that we would do better to abolish them instead.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Try to make teachers more aware of the usefulness of the feedback that they can get from teaching evaluations, and how they can put the feedback they get to good use
- Create a self-evaluation system for university professors and encourage them to use it
- Consult with students and colleagues at other universities to assess the effectiveness and objectivity of their evaluations
- Design new teaching evaluations that evaluate teaching methods holistically, and test them at several different universities
- Create an independent board of evaluators that include all levels of education
- Use computerized evaluation systems to survey more data
- Create a 'best evaluation award'
- Create an international board of experts to conduct evaluations
- Build a detailed action plan regarding who should be evaluated, when, where, and how
- Evaluate the evaluators regularly

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Lead to a win-win situation in which students, teachers, and educators will all get better feedback about the effectiveness of teaching methods and how they can be improved
- Make professors think a lot more about their teaching methods and how to develop them
- Increase the effectiveness and objectivity of the new teaching evaluations by exploring how other universities might do it better
- Gather more accurate and useful information about the effectiveness of teaching methods at different universities
- Lead to more effective, objective, and useful teaching evaluations on all levels
- Allow us to take into consideration a richer array of experiences in evaluating teachers
- Have moral and financial benefits for teachers
- Lead to better evaluations and lend more legitimacy to the evaluation process
- Result in fairer and more systematic teaching evaluations for all concerned
- Improve the objectivity of their evaluations

For Further Discussion…

- Do you believe that it is necessary to evaluate our teachers, the courses they teach, and the methods they use in order to determine the best practices in education? And if not, how else might we do it?
- Do you believe that good teaching evaluations can be a useful tool for introducing effective teaching methods to teachers who might otherwise be reluctant to use them? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that our current teaching evaluations are not designed well enough to serve this purpose? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that it is possible to design teaching evaluations well enough to serve this purpose? And if so, how would you do it?
- Do you think that teaching evaluations are all inherently subjective, ineffective, and subject to abuse? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that teaching evaluations might serve useful and important academic purposes even if they are inherently subjective, ineffective, and subject to abuse? And if so, what are they?
- What non-academic purposes might student teaching evaluations serve?

POSSIBILITY G

LET THE MARKET POINT THE WAY

This possibility would encourage universities and teachers to work with international and local employers, experts, and government officials to develop teaching methods and a curriculum that will meet the global job market needs of the future.

Do you worry that there may be only a very tangential relationship between what students study in school and the knowledge and skills that they will eventually need to enter the job market? Do you wonder whether a university education will actually enable them to get good jobs when they graduate? And do you think that we could improve both our university curriculum and our teaching methods by designing courses that are more likely to meet our employers' needs in the future?

This possibility flows from a belief that future job market needs are predictable, that employers and experts are in a better position than teachers and students to know what they are, and that the value of an educational system can be measured by its success in preparing students to meet them. But it also flows from a concern that our current curriculum and teaching methods might not be in tune with the real job market needs of the future, that our universities may not adequately prepare students to meet them, and that our students will be unable to get good jobs when they graduate. These beliefs and concerns have become all the more pressing in recent years as globalization, and especially the development of information technology, has turned the job market into a more global—and much more competitive—affair than it was just a few years ago. Today, businesses and employers around the world are finding it easier and easier to cross borders, to outsource their jobs to workers in foreign countries, to relocate their operations abroad, and to hire employees who are ready, willing, and prepared to meet their needs wherever they can find them. This possibility would try to better prepare students to enter this competitive global job market by encouraging universities and teachers to seek out the advice of both local and international employers, experts, and government officials to design a curriculum and teaching methods that will meet the job needs of the future.

This possibility flows from a concern that our current curriculum and teaching methods might not be in tune with the real job market needs of the future, that our universities may not adequately prepare students to meet them, and that our students will be unable to get good jobs when they graduate as a result.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that there is only a tangential relationship between what students study in school and the jobs they will be called upon to fill when they graduate, you may still think that allowing employers to take the lead in designing our university curricula is not the right way to go. You may think that the job market is in a constant state of flux; that the knowledge and skills it will need in the future are neither as certain nor as predictable as this policy assumes; that trying to 'time the market' can all too easily backfire, leaving students unprepared for what it really needs; and that our students will have wasted their university educations if it does. Or you may feel that education is a very different thing from job training; that university students should not exist merely to be cogs in someone's employment machine; that they should, on the contrary, be free agents and masters of their own fates; and that they should thus be able to choose the courses that they want to take regardless of what employers may need. Or you may simply think that allowing employers to take the lead in designing the curriculum would only allow them to shift their own job training costs onto the public purse. But if you think any or all of these things, then you may also think that we would be better off focusing our university curricula and teaching methods upon time honored basic skills and knowledge—such as reading, writing, and arithmetic—that will enable students to adapt themselves to meet the requirements of a variety of different jobs, instead just one or two, as our needs change.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Survey employers to learn their needs for current and future employees, and redesign the curriculum accordingly
- Create a panel of academics to research the job market needs of the future
- Organize job fairs where teachers and students can learn about the needs of different companies
- Organize seminars with employers, teachers, and students
- Create a Career Center for Students
- Survey alumni for their experiences in the workforce
- Give more credit to students for internships
- Invite guest speakers from companies to classes to talk about their experiences
- Design curriculum to meet general competences
- Develop local case studies with companies about the fit between university education and the job market

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Lead to more employable and employed graduates, since employers know best what workforce they need
- Help universities to offer courses that will assure timely employment
- Inform teachers and students about the needs of different companies, thereby helping teachers to update the curriculum
- Motivate employers to participate in the design of the curriculum
- Inform students about market needs
- Provide insightful information from alumni about their experiences in the workforce
- Motivate students to take internships
- Transform university education into job training
- Teach students what they need to know so they can get jobs
- Enable us to make better judgments about how university education meets job market needs

For Further Discussion…

- Do you believe that the job market needs of the future are predictable? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that employers are really in the best position to predict the future needs of the job market? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if not, then who might be in a better position to predict the future needs of the job market?
- Do you agree that the value of an educational system can be measured by its ability to prepare students to meet the job needs of the future? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- If you do not agree that the value of an educational system can be measured by its ability to prepare students to meet the job needs of the future, then how do you think it can be measured?
- Do you agree that our current educational system is not in tune with the real job market needs of the future? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that there is, or should be, a difference between job training and a university education? If so, then how do you think they do or should differ?
- Would you like to live in a society in which the primary focus of the educational system was to prepare students to meet the job needs of the future? If so, why so? If not, why not?

ON CONTRASTS AND CHOICES

AMONG THE POSSIBILITIES

There are many contrasts among our seven conceptual possibilities and many choices that you would have to make in order to adopt any of them. Some of these contrasts and choices concern whom we should regard as the proper authorities for making decisions regarding teaching methods. Others concern the value that our society should place on teaching—and the value that university professors should place on it relative to research. Still others concern the way in which teaching evaluations should be used, and the value that we should place upon them. And still others concern the purpose of a university education and role that money plays in it. We will not attempt to describe all of the contrasts that exist between these seven possibilities and all of the choices that they might call upon you to make. But a few examples of the more salient ones might help you to recognize others, and to better understand the possibilities that we have described and the need to choose among them.

Let the Universities Force Change, **Ask the Students**, **Experiment With Many Different Methods**, and **Let the Market Point the Way** each give different answers to the question '*Who should determine which teaching methods our teachers should use?*' **Let the Universities Force Change** says that rectors, deans, and other university officials should—and that we should dismiss professors who refuse to comply with their decisions. **Ask the Students** says that we should let the students tell us via their course evaluations which teaching methods work best for them. **Let the Market Point the Way** says that we should listen to what potential employers, local and international experts, and government officials have to say about the job needs of the future. And **Experiment With Many Different Methods** would encourage teachers and students to experiment with a wide variety of different teaching methods, and to choose those that work best for them individually. It is difficult to see how you could consistently adopt all of these possibilities at once. You must, instead, choose among them.

Raise the Status of Teaching would try to increase the value that we place upon teachers and teaching by creating special post-graduate teaching degrees—and by requiring that people earn those degrees in order to hold teaching jobs. It would also raise teachers' salaries, reduce their workloads, create prestigious teaching awards, and base professors' promotions, salary increases, and the like upon their teaching performance. And it might seek to lower the value of research, and perhaps even prevent university professors from engaging in it. But all of this would seem to conflict with **Let the Market Point the Way** and **Let the Universities Force Change**—both of which seem less likely to treat teachers with such respect.

Finally, we should point out that each of our conceptual possibilities might be regarded as presenting at least two possible policy choices. For you might choose to accept it *or* to reject it—*or* to modify it in some way to make it acceptable. But quite aside from that, we have included an 'Other Perspectives' section in the description of each possibility that suggests some reasons why you or other people might oppose it, and which conceptual possibilities you might prefer to pursue if you do.

These are just a few of the ways in which the conceptual possibilities in this report contrast with each other, and just a few of the choices that you would have to make to adopt any of them. There are, of course, also numerous ways in which the possibilities overlap with each other. Some of the possibilities, as we have already said, are consistent with the others and could probably be adopted together with any or all of them—**Raise Funds for Education** comes to mind—though even there, you may have to decide which possibility takes priority over which. But we hope that pointing out some of their differences will assure you that they are not planks in a unified political platform for public policy pertaining to teaching methods.

We hope that these contrasts, and the need to choose among the conceptual possibilities in this report, will help to stimulate and enhance your exploration of both teaching methods as an area of concern, and the conceptual possibilities for public policy pertaining to it that we present here. We also hope that you will enjoy discussing these possibilities—and any others that they might lead you to develop—with your families, friends, and neighbors. And we hope that you will carefully consider each of the possibilities in this report, and many more of your own, before deciding which of them, if any, you might like to pursue as public policy.

An Open Invitation To Further Discussion & Interactivity

We hope that you will use this report to carry forward the discussion begun by our project panels.

We have developed a citizen discussion process that may be useful for groups interested in discussing the ideas presented in our reports or in discussing matters of public interest more generally. We have also developed facilitation and discussion guidebooks to assist in the planning and conduct of these discussions. These materials, as well as copies of this and other Interactivity Foundation reports, may be downloaded from our website (listed below). You can obtain additional printed copies of any of our publications (at no cost) by sending us a request that briefly indicates their intended use.

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Finally, we welcome your comments, ideas, and other feedback about this report, its possibilities, any of our publications, or our discussion processes.

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