

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.

Henry David Thoreau would probably turn over in his grave if he heard what we might do to his beautiful writings.

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The announced use of "s/he" has the same stigma attached to it that your "woman professor" does, drawing attention to the use of terms even more recognizable as sexist. In addition it has the drawback of not being syllabifiable, except by saying "or." I would suggest that editorial policy omit the "s/he," and simply insert "he or she," "him or her," "hers or his," when an author uses one of the other personal pronouns to denote what is really applicable to *both* sexes.

Utilization of current words is much better than introduction of an entirely new symbol clearly identifiable with women's lib (according to one interpretation). It does the cause more harm than good.

My personal preference is to consider "mankind" as a generic term, and not introduce "humankind." I accept most of the new non-sexist terms, but feel that certain compound words, in particular, i.e. "Manhole," "manslaughter," "mankind" are better left as generic terms.

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## Editorial Response

Mr. Stroessner's and Dr. Bell's letters express some legitimate reservations regarding the modified pronoun forms we have adopted for use in the journal. Our rationale for writing the editorial and making the

changes is, we think, equally reasonable.

We want to reassure Mr. Stroessner that our intention is not to rewrite Thoreau. However, we do think that he should bear in mind that Henry David Thoreau lived from 1817 to 1862 and his writings reflected the social conditions and viewpoints of his time. *ABT* should, in our view, reflect the progress our country has made in extending human rights to all citizens since that time.

The purpose of the editorial was twofold: (1) to draw attention to the lack of an inclusive male-female pronoun; and (2) to have a consistent policy for dealing with the manuscripts that are accepted for publication in *American Biology Teacher*.

The idea of inventing a new pronoun is one that has occurred to a number of other people; Miller and Swift's book contains an entire chapter on alternatives. For our purposes it seemed important to use terms that are familiar—with some modification. We are sure that Dr. Bell would agree with us that although it is true that "s/he" may have feminist connotations, it is equally true that "he" may have male chauvinist connotations for those on the other side of the controversy. Unfortunately, we have no middle ground in our language. We welcome suggestions on new pronouns.

The forms we propose are somewhat jarring if one is reading aloud from the journal, but we think that anyone who uses our articles for this purpose will be sufficiently eloquent to supply "or" as needed.

Finally, we think that the problem Dr. Bell raises regarding compounds that begin with "man" is one that can be solved according to the context of the word.

We agree with E.B. White that "true inequality does not lie in our tongue, it lies in our hearts and in our habits, and language is remarkably sensitive to both" (Miller and Swift 1977), but we also believe that language can and must reflect change.

Joan G. Creager, *editor*  
Patricia A. Masters, *assistant editor*

## Reference

MILLER, C. and SWIFT, K. 1977. *Words and women: New language in new times*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

## A Glimpse into Biology Teaching in India

Are you sometimes depressed by the frustrations of your teaching situation? Are you discouraged by lack of materials and equipment, by the number of different class preparations, by the excess number of students in your laboratory and the lack of lab time? Or perhaps you lament over inadequate pay!

Come with me on a brief visit to a typical secondary biology classroom-laboratory in Dhamtari, India, a town of about 50,000 people. Meet Mr. Bhelwa, fifty-year-old veteran science teacher and his retired principal, Mr. Bachan, with thirty-seven years of experience. I had occasion to spend much of a day visiting with these delightful people and their school while my wife attended a church conference, the reason for our being in India, October 22 to November 14, 1977.

The campus of this private school built in the 1930's seems spacious enough and attractive. Once inside the sturdy looking buildings, we discover quite small rooms with very few furnishings. The biology room is average size by our standards, but Mr. Bhelwa has forty to fifty students in each of his classes, which demand four to five preparations on his part. Mr. Bhelwa has eight older compound microscopes for the entire class and very little other equipment. Visual aids, reference books, and models, are not available. Classes meet for only thirty minutes per day with a sixty minute "practical biology" block on Friday. Classes meet daily from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturday 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Students buy their own ancient English medium biology book geared to follow a "Biology Syllabus," a phylogenetic guide. Students learn facts so as to

"pass" their factual year-end tests.

My friends were unaware of any BSCS-type curriculum.

Teacher pay is dismally low and fringe benefits unknown. Pay is from about Rs. 15 per day for beginners to Rs. 35 per day for those with most experience. A rupee is worth eleven cents U.S. There is no retirement system. Compare a teacher's buying power with these few costs in India.

1. eggs—Rs. 6/dozen
2. gasoline—Rs. 15/gallon
3. a sari—Rs. 100-200
4. motor scooter—Rs. 6,000
5. auto—Rs. 60,000

In spite of the great deficiencies and frustrations experienced by my friend, Mr. Bhelwa, he seemed undaunted, moving forward with the satisfaction that he was doing the best job possible under the circumstances.

I came back to my job as a general biology teacher at Lakewood High School with new appreciation for my excellent teaching situation. I shall not soon forget my counterpart in India. I continue to wonder why there is such a wide gulf between Indian and American education. In the meantime I trust that you are not too discouraged by the problems of your own teaching situation.

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## Teacher Motivation

I would like to take exception to an article by Henry J. Bindel, Jr. entitled, "Why Secondary Science Teachers are Losing Their Students and Their Jobs" that appeared in *The American Biology Teacher* [40(2):115].

Student discipline, student drop-outs and lack of student motivation are serious and complex problems. Dr. Bindel would have us believe that the cause of these problems is the fact that science teachers lack motivation!

Bindel seems to base his opinions on the results of several surveys given to teachers and the general public. However, these surveys were not intended to measure teacher motivation, and using such data to measure teacher motivation and drawing sweeping generalizations is a questionable practice, if not pure speculation.

As with any other profession, there are science teachers with varying degrees of enthusiasm, motivation and professionalism. Unlike Dr. Bindel, I believe most science teachers are highly motivated and dedicated professionals. One must be to get through college with a science major in education.

Bindel has fallen into the trap of proposing simplistic answers to complex problems. Let us place some of the burden of responsibility for student discipline, student motivation and attitude problems where it really belongs—that is, with each individual student and his/her parents. For too long teachers have been the scapegoats for students and parents who will not assume their responsibilities.

I believe Dr. Bindel owes science teachers a clarification of his remarks or an apology.

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## Bindel Comments

I was delighted to receive the letter from Dennis Holly, Shelton, Nebraska requesting a clarification or apology on my February article. I am saying delighted because his letter is the only exception taken to my article during the three years that I have been speaking nationally on this related topic and following its publication in *ABT*.

From the vantage point of my 28 years working with science teachers on the local, state and national levels I feel more strongly every day about the article; I only wish I were wrong. A point that must be made clear is

that there are thousands of outstanding science teachers across the nation—teachers that are motivated and excited about teaching. It is clear to me why I have not received exceptions or negative comments to my article. Those reasons are:

1. The science teacher(s) that are aware they are teaching children first and subject matter second and are self-motivated know the article does not pertain to them.

2. Those science teachers that teach science just for a job ignore my plea.

My major request is that those outstanding science teachers with good attitudes, who are well motivated and dedicated to the profession keep up the good work. Also please, see what you can do for the unmotivated science teacher(s) with the poor attitude—try to inspire them—just think about the kids in their classrooms. Just because a teacher has a degree does not make him/her an effective teacher. Think too, what if one of those kids was your son or daughter?

## Podiatry Careers

Podiatry is a fast-growing profession with many career opportunities for young people. The American Podiatry Association, 20 Chevy Chase Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20015, has prepared several informative brochures on careers, including *Students Consider a Career in Podiatry*.

Students interested in podiatry careers should write to the Association and request their pamphlets.

Knowledge, in truth, is the great sun in the firmament. Life and power are scattered with all its beams.

Daniel Webster