

Mark's answer to textbook woes: Textbloids

The Missing Pieces

by Mark Owens

Last week, as many of you know, educational guru Ernest Boyer canceled his speech here due to the weather - one of the very few times a school-related activity has been canceled due to bad weather. Which, by the way, wasn't all that bad.

Remember when you were in grade school? It took a tornado, a nuclear strike, or a visit by Pat Boone to get school canceled. Nope, last week's storm wasn't bad. Definitely not as bad as when you were in seventh grade and had to walk two miles through freezing snow and biting winds just to get to school, to discover you'd forgotten your book report and your gym shorts and your teacher was a mutant squid from hell. (Editor's note: Is anyone else worried about Mark's frequent use of strange animal references?)

Anyway, I was kind of hoping Dr. Boyer would've shown up, because I wanted to share my views on higher educational reform with him.

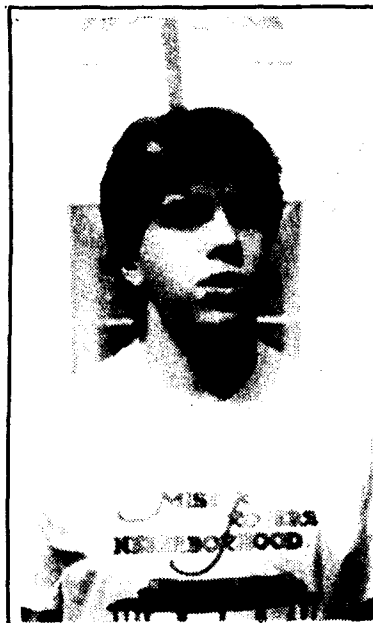
Getting back to my main point, I've always found it odd no one has bothered to ask students about what needs to be changed in education. After all, we, as students, are paying other people so we can get up early, type 12-page research papers and take mind-numbing tests which eventually collect underneath our beds, causing dorm fires which kill 17 people. The first thing students need is a change in books.

Announcing Mark's Better, More Colorful, New and Improved Way to Buy Books. The answer is simple - tabloids. Let's say we do away with hardcover textbooks and switch to a tabloid-type format. Every two weeks or so you'd buy the next installment of the "book."

Even though you have to buy something more often, there are a lot of advantages to this idea, which I like to call the textbloid. It's lighter, more colorful, can have the most up-to-date information and will definitely be more interesting. After all, where else can you have an osmosis lab on page 10 and an

account (complete with photos!) of certain Hollywood celebs' steamy antics with a petting zoo on page 11? The best part is when you're done with the textbloid you can throw it away and not bother trying to sell back a \$50 text book for \$19.95.

While we're at it, let's have a



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little truth in textbook titles. I wish publishers would give books the titles they deserve. Its not like these tomes of knowledge are going to wind up on the *New York Times* Best Seller list or anything. Right now in our book store we have all kinds of interesting titles. *There's Brief Calculus, with applications; Elementary Algebra and Elementary Differential Equations*. When was the last time anything connected to math was brief, let alone elementary? We also have a shelf full of introductory books, like *Introduction to Basic Legal Principles* (can you say lawsuit?) and *Introduction to Financial Management* (can you say overdrawn?). Finally, for the low price of \$20.95 you can buy a book entitled *Developing Reading Skills* (see Dick run). While I'm sure it's a nice book and all, you'd kinda think by the time people got to college they could read.

But then, educational reform shouldn't be limited to colleges and universities. Take oil tanker captain training for example.

Lots of our college brethren on the west coast are going to have a bleak spring break, seeing as a nice stretch of Long Beach and Newport Beach are covered with oil. Almost 400,000 gallons of oil, that is. Oil spilled from the tanker *American Tradition* after it apparently ran over an anchor earlier this month.

With all this pressure from the public and government, the oil industry has come out with a list of do's and don'ts for it's tanker captains. A confidential source at a major company has sent me this list scrawling across the top in big red letters, "For Your Eyes Only, @*&\$!" Naturally I've reprinted it here for you:

- Don't run over pointy things like reefs or anchors.
- Don't wear t-shirts with beer company logos on them in public.
- Do carry a large bucket on board.
- Do make sure the company lawyer is on board or with you at all times.
- Do make sure Geraldo Rivera isn't on board.

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