

Drs Fidditch/Foilitch

Dear Dr. Fidditch and Foilitch:

I've read as much as any busy teacher can read about so-called "developmental cognitive theory." I admit I'm no expert, but my students know the difference between "keeping school" and "being oneself."

When I give my students assignments to exercise the expressive uses of language, I think they wonder: "Who or whom does he think he's kidding?"

Sincerely,

Abram Martin, Jr.

Dear Mr. Abram:

When I try to recall my own days as a school child, it seems to me that I had only instincts for who or whom teachers were or were not "kidding." I believe that such instincts are all that students have in our own time.

I take heart from this belief: For it implies that a trusted teacher who trusts students can make much of almost any theory, however, "cognitive-developmental" or more traditional.

For that reason, I like both Stephen Bernhardt's misgivings in his "Language

Acquisition and Writing Ability" (p. 19) and the open-minded concession of its conclusion.

Sincerely,

Bertrand M. Fidditch

Dear Mr. Abram:

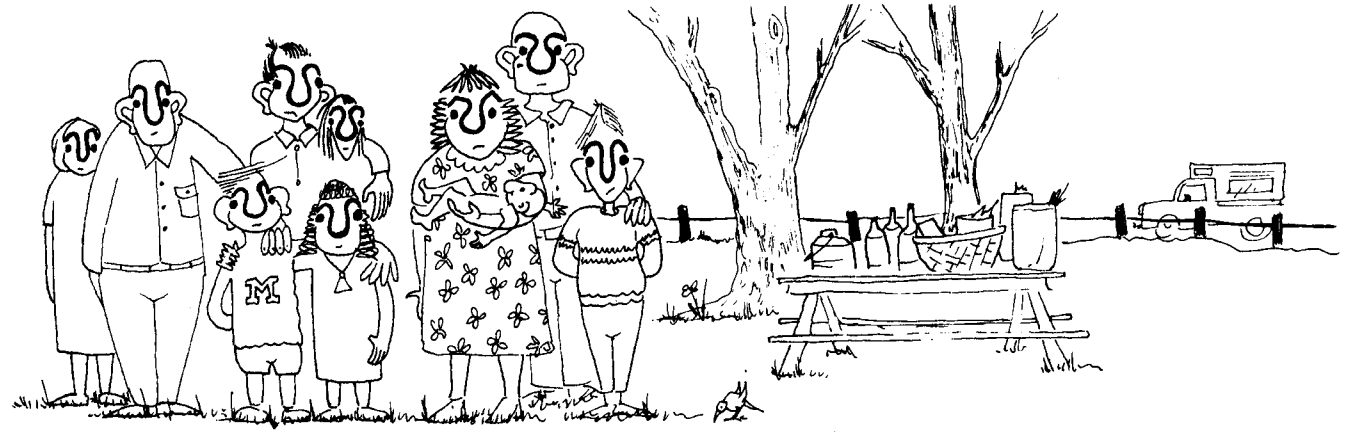
Because it is a jungle that your pupils will occupy when they leave school, it is fitting that they should have, before leaving, the skepticism on which survival depends--which needs always to know--whom is kidding who.

I suggest, then, that you augment your developmental assignments with ones discreetly selected from a no-nonsense textbook that is "kidding" no one, in demanding of students that they display the only skills that count in the jungle that is life itself, the jungle whose denizens scorn the frag, the infinitive and other constructions that are split too commonly up, and misspellings themselves.

I refer, of course, to the skills that are basic.

Sincerely,

Ignatius Foilitch, B.S., Ph.D.



THE MODIFIERS
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