

LOGO AS TROJAN HORSE:  
RETHINKING LOGO PHILOSOPHY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF A REAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

Seymour Papert  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, MA

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It is appropriate at the opening plenary session to take stock of where the Logo movement is this year and to propose themes for thought and discussion that will resonate with its current concerns.

Two years ago at LOGO 84 the dominant mood was exuberance: the simple fact that Logo was becoming a reality in schools was still exciting in itself. The dominant intellectual interests were those most closely related to getting started. At LOGO 85 there was more questioning of the meaning of this reality. In the plenary sessions and in informal discussion more attention was paid to criticism from without and from within.

I hope that exuberance and self-criticism will again be present this year. But I sense a gearshift. The focus of interest has shifted from getting started and justifying Logo to integrating it into the life of a school. How can Logo interact with the curriculum and with the learning style in the school?

Of course these issues have been present in discussion about Logo from the beginning. But I believe that the time is ripe for a stronger drive towards deeper understanding and more effective action. There is a well-established broad base of Logo practitioners in schools. We have more concrete examples on which to base discussion of Logo and the curriculum. And I feel that theoretical ideas relevant to the issues have become sharper. In my address I shall draw on the past year's experience in the Hennigan School to describe some new examples and to review old and new theoretical issues.

Although the situation in this school is exceptional in many ways, including a very high density of computers, examples of work developed there are applicable in situations with more modest resources.

The chief theoretical issue I shall talk about touches on two themes that will be explored more deeply in the other plenary sessions: "Curriculum vs Cognition" and "Reform vs Revolution." The central question for educators is whether schools of the future will go on teaching the same curriculum, using computers to do the job better, or whether we'll see radical change in what is taught and what is learned in schools. In my address I shall suggest that the education system will not be able to bring itself to decide on radical change in the curriculum. But there will be radical change all the same, despite the system's lack of decision-making power. Change will come about through what I call "The Trojan Horse Effect" -- the system will admit what look like innocuous materials which will serve as vehicles for "germs" of change.

Of course the analogy with Troy is not exact. Our agents of change are not enemies

everyone will be better off in the end. And there need be no deception if the "horse" is so valuable even from the traditional perspective that it is seen as an offer they can't refuse.

Logo is not the only Trojan Horse on the scene. But I do think that Logo-based methods will be the most powerful Trojan Horses and that the Logo community is by disposition as well as by expertise the set of people most likely to carry out this kind of strategy and thereby take its place as the foremost agent of change in the contemporary world of education.