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## Educator urges better reasoning skills

By **STEPHANIE MARTIN**  
*The Battalion*

In an effort to teach administrators how to boost the quality of education in their schools, Dr. Iles Lee Hannel,

counselor and educational consultant for the Malka Hoffman Institute for Cognitive Modifiability in Phoenix, spoke on Tuesday about the relationship between abstract reasoning skills and academic achievement at the

1993 Principals' Academy at Texas A&M University.

Hannel said American children are excellent at playing dumb in order to evade work. "American children are the laziest children in the industrialized world," he said.

Teachers allow their students to be mentally lazy by giving them the answers rather than forcing them to draw conclusions through cognition, or "the ability to use abstract reasoning to solve higher learning problems," he said.

In Europe, methods in cognitive thinking are more advanced. Hannel said that in Israel, where student performance is very high, the children do 90 percent of the thinking. Furthermore, Israeli teachers must go through four years of training in thinking skills, he said.

"Current teacher practice will make the rich richer and the poor poorer," Hannel said. Low scores on the TASS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills), a standardized achievement test that measures minimum academic skills, point to a deficiency in the cognitive ability of many students in the lower middle class and poor districts, whose scores are, in general, drastically lower than those of their upper middle class peers.

Hannel said that abstract reasoning is an acquired skill, and implied that opportunities to learn cognition are more accessible to wealthier students.

"You cannot do somebody's work for them and make them smart," Hannel said. In order for test scores to improve, teachers and administrators must change their approach.

Hannel said the transition in instruction must change from "didactic to Socratic." Instead of bombarding students with facts, teachers should question methodically until the facts are derived through the students' own reasoning. In this way, the teacher's role shifts from "giver of information to facilitator of information." Thus, the student learns to rely on her or his own capabilities rather than those of the instructor, he said.

Hannel concluded his speech with a reminder that the jobs of many principals in suffering school districts may hinge on whether or not test scores rise. He urged principals to take greater responsibility in their roles as administrators, and to become trained in thinking skills so that they can be informed decision makers.

Hannel's speech was part of The Principal's Academy, which began on Sunday and ends Friday. The program is conducted by the Texas A&M Principals' Center.

"The Principals' Center's mission is to enhance school principalship throughout Texas," said Dr. David Hinojosa, the director.

Hinojosa, along with Dr. David Earlenon, developed the center in 1983 to specialize four major areas of concern: preparation of principals, research of principles, staff development and networking. During the conference the administrators spend the majority of their time working in small groups on specific topics that apply to their individual concerns. Costs are alleviated for some principals by scholarships from The Kellogg Foundation, and Pepsi-Cola.



MARY MACMANUS/The Battalion

Dr. Iles Lee Hannel, counselor and educational consultant for the Malka Hoffman Institute for Cognitive Modifiability in Phoenix, talked to an audience of Texas principals Tuesday morning in Rudder about teaching students to think.

## Howard gets death penalty for killing trooper

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — A Houston man convicted of gunning down a state trooper was sentenced to death Wednesday after jurors rebuffed a claim that he was inflamed by hard-driving, anti-police rap music.

The eight-man, four-woman jury had deliberated since Friday before recommending that Ronald Ray Howard, 19, die by lethal injection.

State District Judge Whyland Kilgore, who twice urged jurors to keep working when they said they were deadlocked, then ordered the death sentence for Howard.

Howard showed no emotion as the verdict was read. But he cried when his mother and grandmother embraced him.

The same jury took only 40 minutes on June 8 to convict Howard in the April 1992 slaying of Department of Public Safety Trooper Bill Davidson.

The trooper had stopped Howard, who was driving a stolen vehicle, near Victoria because of a missing headlight.

Howard, an admitted car thief and crack cocaine dealer, confessed on numerous occasions to shooting Davidson in the neck at close range with a 9-mm handgun.

Defense attorney Allen Tanner argued that Howard's fascination with anti-cop "gangsta rap" music and his childhood in the oppressive inner-city were factors in the killing.

Tanner said he plans to appeal. Jurors had been divided until Wednesday on how to punish Howard. They wrote two notes to the judge saying they were "hopeless-

ly deadlocked" 10-2 in favor of the death penalty. All jurors had to agree in order to issue a death sentence.

But the two dissenters apparently decided to join the other jurors after Kilgore told them not to "hesitate to reexamine your own views and to change your opinion if you decide you are wrong."

One of the two holdout jurors, who declined to give his name, said he changed his mind Tuesday night.

"There was no coercion at all," he said of the deliberations. "Music can affect people

very strongly I believe, but in the end a person is responsible for their own actions."

Tanner said he believes the death sentence would be overturned.

"We will have a record which shows how long the jurors deliberated and the notes which they sent out," Tanner said.

"All the jurors told us that they thought Ronald Howard was affected by this gangsta rap music," he said. "However, balancing it with his background and the crime which Ronald committed, they didn't that it was enough whereby he deserved a life sentence."

## Crime Stoppers

Storage buildings located on South College were burglarized March 17 between noon and 3:30 p.m. The persons responsible for this burglary cut the locks off several storage buildings.

While inside, they stole one overhead metal door, computer equipment, a Victor welding set and hoses, a truck wrench with a 125' cable, 550 lbs of "shot" shotgun pellets, a Heyn 270 bolt-action rifle and a Remington 22-250 rifle with an eight power scope. Also taken were several golf clubs,

two wedges, two putters, three iron drives, a brown golf bag, a pair of NIKE white and blue men's size 13 golf shoes. The estimated value of these items is \$2,432.

The suspects are described as one black female and two white females, all heavy build, driving a black or dark-colored pickup truck. Bryan Police Department Detectives believe these suspects may have been involved in two other burglaries that occurred in Bryan.

This week the Bryan Po-

lice Department and Brazos County Crime Stoppers need help identifying the persons responsible for this burglary. If you have any information call Crime Stoppers at 775-TIPS. When you call you will be given a special coded number to protect your identity.

If your information leads to an arrest and a grand jury indictment Crime Stoppers will pay you up to \$1,000 in cash. Crime Stoppers also pays cash for information on any felony crime or the location of any wanted fugitive.

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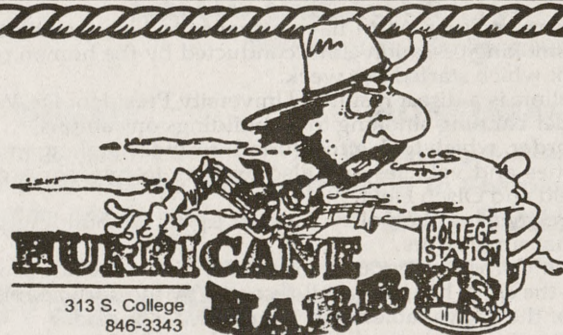
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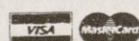
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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone number is 845-3313. Fax: 845-2647.

Advertising: For campus, local and national display advertising, call 845-2696. For classified advertising, call 845-0569. Advertising offices are in 015 Reed McDonald and office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fax: 845-5408.

Subscriptions: Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year. To charge by VISA or MasterCard, call 845-2611.