and so "new" answers (well beyond the three-R's type) are possible in response to the question. In *In Defense of Youth,* Earl Kelley lists five such possible answers:

1. the need for other people
2. the need for good communication with other people
3. the need for a loving relationship with other people
4. the need for a workable concept of self
5. the need for freedom.

One does not need to accept all of these in order to accept Kelley's *perspective* on what is fundamental. Obviously, we would want to add to his list "the need to know how to learn," as well as some others which are suggested by our list of "standards" questions. The point is that any curriculum that does not provide for needs as viewed from this perspective—"What does the organism require in order to thrive?"—is not, by our definition, concerned with "fundamentals."

We would like to invite you now to reexamine our sample questions. They represent, after all, a possible curriculum for the new education: The What's-Worth-Knowing Questions Curriculum. This curriculum has several characteristics that require elaboration here. For example, note that all the questions are of a divergent, or open-ended, nature and that each one demands that the learner narrow its focus. Part of the process of learning how to learn is the rephrasing, refining, and dividing of a "worth knowing" question into a series of "answerable worth-knowing questions." It is a fact not easily learned (and almost never in school) that the "answer" to a great many questions is "merely" another question. This is not only true of such questions as we have listed, but even of such questions as "What is a noun?," "Who discovered oxygen?," and "What is the principal river of Uruguay?"

To illustrate the point, we have reproduced below a problem that is sometimes given to students by teachers who regard the process of question asking as basic to education:

1. Study the following questions.
   *a.* What is the name of this school?

from Teaching as a Subversive Activity -
by Neil Postman + Charles Weingartner



   *b.* Are children of permissive parents more creative than children of nonpermissive parents?
   *c.* Who discovered oxygen?
   *d.* Who is the most beautiful woman in America?
   *e.* Are the people on Mars more advanced than the people on Earth?
   *f.* Will it rain tomorrow?
   *g.* How are you?
   *h.* Will you get into the college of your choice?
   *i.* Is *love* a noun or a verb?
   j. $8 + 6 = ?$
   *k.* Why do airplanes crash?

2. Answer the following questions.
   *a.* Which of the questions above can you answer with absolute certainty? How can you be certain of your answer?
   *b.* What information will enable you to answer other questions with absolute certainty? Where will you get the information?
   *c.* Which questions restrict you to giving factual information? Which do not? Which require no facts at all?
   *d.* Which questions require the greatest amount of definition before you try to answer them?
   *e.* Which questions require the testimony of experts? What makes one an expert?
   *f.* Which questions assume the answerer is the expert?
   *g.* Which questions may have false assumptions?
   *h.* Which questions require predictions as answers? What kinds of information may improve the quality of a prediction?

In working this problem through, students quite frequently discover that the question "Who discovered oxygen?" (to cite only one example) is ambiguous in that form. Usually, they rephrase it to read something like, "According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* who is given credit for the 'discovery of oxygen'?" If you feel that there is no important difference between these two questions, or that "everyone knows" that the former implies the latter, may we remind you that, as a matter of fact, the answer to the question "Who discovered