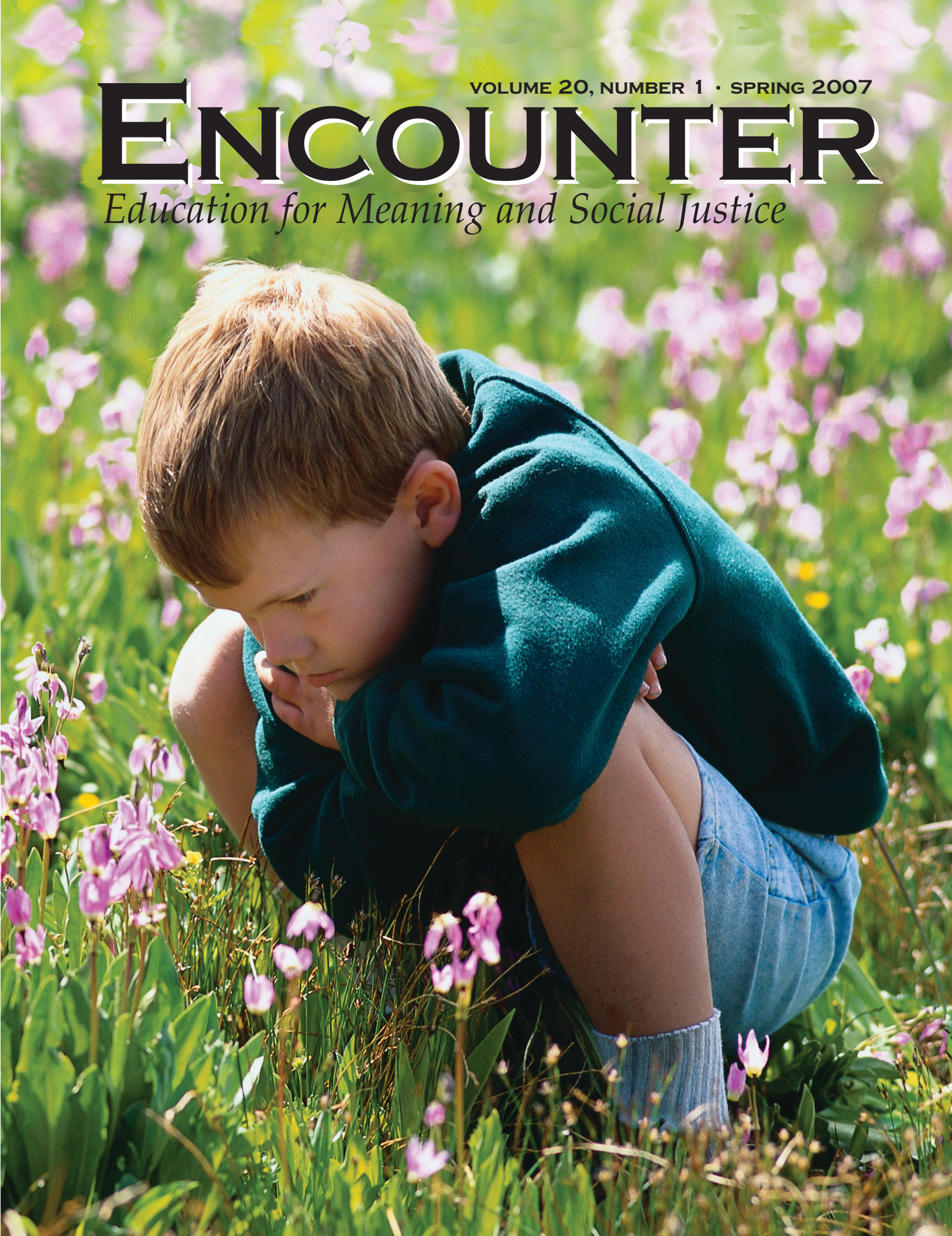
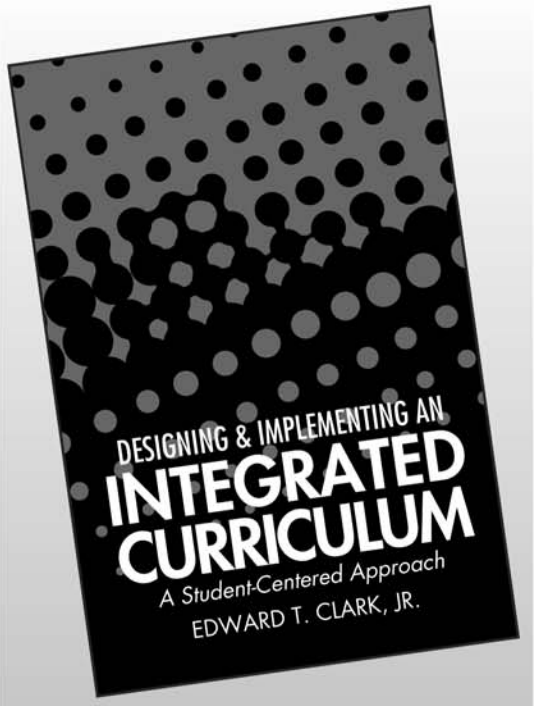
VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1 · SPRING 2007

ENCOUNTER

Education for Meaning and Social Justice





"This is a visionary book, yet firmly grounded in the author's extensive and successful work with school staffs attempting genuine restructuring."

—Ron Miller, Editor
Great Ideas in Education

"Clark's perspective has stimulated and sustained us as we have reconstructed our curriculum."

—Kurt Anderson
Middle School Principal

ISBN 0-9627232-7-4
$21.95
4th printing, 2002

Holistic Education Press
P.O. Box 328
Brandon, VT 05733-0328

1-800-639-4122

http://www.great-ideas.org

Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum

A Student-Centered Approach

Edward T. Clark, Jr.

Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum is a powerful curriculum development tool for teachers, schools, and school districts. It can be used to help educators evaluate the effectiveness of their current curricula and develop new ones that better meet the needs of their students as individuals and members of society.

Clark not only focuses on the "what" and "why" of a truly integrated curriculum, he also backs it up with scores of real-world examples of its development and implementation. He makes it clear that an integrated curriculum is far more than a mere combination of subject areas and suggests avenues to integration based on recent research in learning and intelligence, systems theory, and organizational effectiveness.

Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum is an ideal text for inservice workshops and university-level education courses.

Table of Contents

Dr. Ed Clark is an international educational consultant specializing in integrated curriculum design and site-based educational change. He has been involved in teacher education for over thirty years.

ENCOUNTER

EDUCATION FOR MEANING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1 SPRING 2007

Table of Contents

ENCOUNTER is an independent journal that views education from a holistic perspective and focuses on its role in helping a student develop a sense of personal meaning and social justice. Manuscripts (an original and two copies) should be submitted to the Editor, Bill Crain, Department of Psychology, CCNY, 138th St and Convent Ave., New York, NY 10031, typed double spaced throughout with ample margins. Since a double blind review process is used, no indications of the author's identity should be included within the text after the title page. All manuscripts must be original work not being considered for publication elsewhere and prepared in accordance with the author-date format as described in chapter 16 of the 14th edition (1993) of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

ENCOUNTER (ISSN 1094-3838) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December by Holistic Education Press, P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733-0328. 1-800-639-4122. E-mail: <encounter@great-ideas.org> Website: <http://www.great-ideas.org>. Annual subscription rates are $39.95 for individuals and $90 for libraries and other multi-user environments. (Foreign subscribers, please add $9 to above rates.) Selected back issues are available. Periodicals postage is paid at Brandon, VT, and at additional offices. This issue of **ENCOUNTER** was produced with Corel Ventura software and printed by Quickprint (www.quickprintvt.com) in Rutland, Vermont. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **ENCOUNTER** , P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733-0328.

Editorial

Valuing Our Senses

In his book *The Heart of the Hunter* (1961, 9), Laurens van der Post told about a surprising incident when he visited the indigenous San people (informally called Bushmen) in the Kalahari Desert. His San interpreter told him that people were coming in the distance, but van der Post couldn't see or hear anyone approaching. "Are you sure?" he asked his interpreter. "Oh yes! I feel them coming here!" the interpreter replied, tapping his chest. "Men and women in trouble coming this way." After some time elapsed, the interpreter's prediction proved correct. Through their senses, the San also could identify the location (and sometimes even the postures) of unseen animals (van der Post 1961, 235-237).

I suspect that most, if not all, indigenous peoples, living closer to nature, develop their senses to a greater extent that we do in modern, Western societies. We live more in our intellects, and instead of relying on our senses, we depend on our technology and instruments. We no longer use our senses to try to feel whether rain is coming; we watch TV for satellite-based weather reports. Fishermen no longer depend on their senses to detect fish; they use sonar technology. Even automobile mechanics no longer rely on the sounds, heat, and odors of an engine to identify a malfunction; they read computer printouts.

As Ronald Zigler notes in this issue, late in his life Aldous Huxley (1962) wrote a passionate essay calling for an education of the senses. Modern education, Huxley said, places a premium on science and technology, and education in these fields occurs primarily at the conceptual and symbolic level. Some educators give greater emphasis to the humanities, but "what do we find? Courses in philosophy, literature, history, and social studies [that] are exclusively verbal" (p. 281). Educators simply replace the scientific symbol system with a verbal symbol system. To balance this situation, Huxley argued, we need education on the preconceptual and nonverbal level — on the level of elementary awareness.

Huxley was not alone not alone in this view. Buddhists and phenomenologists have emphasized direct sensory perception. They have urged us to learn to observe the world directly, as it appears to us, rather than imposing our mental categories upon it.

But is an education of the senses necessary today? As holistic educators, we want to educate the whole person, including the senses, but critics consider our position anachronistic. They point out that we no longer live in an age when alert senses are needed to detect the presence of a saber-tooth tiger. In today's world, we need the higher-order cognitive skills that enable us to process the symbolic information that is available from books, videos, and computer screens.

However, a few years ago I began to question this view of the modern world. As the husband of a pediatrician, I discovered that the senses still play a major role in her high-tech field. This discovery, in turn, led me to a broader consideration of the senses in contemporary life.

The Doctor's Sensory Impressions

When my wife, Ellen F. Crain, became the director of the pediatric emergency department at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx (NY), she often received phone calls at night. Doctors-in-training needed her advice. After a moment or two on the phone, Ellen often asked, "Well, how does the baby look to you? Does she look sick or well?" It was obvious that this question struck the young doctors as new. They hadn't come upon anything like this in their book-learning.

Indeed, the doctor's sensory impression of the patient is hardly mentioned in the growing research on medical education. The investigators routinely assume that the physician thinks in the systematic, step-by-step manner of a computer program or like a statistician. But the doctor's sensory impression is vital. As Paul McCarthy, Professor of Pediatrics at Yale University, says, the doctor needs to form a general, "instinctive" impression of whether the patient is seriously ill

before raising more specific hypotheses (McCarthy et al., 1980).

In medicine the sensory impression is called the *clinical impression*, and it is essential in many diagnostic realms. One place where it is especially critical is in the evaluation of febrile infants—infants with a fever. Febrile infants, who are common in emergency rooms, are worrisome because a small percentage have occult bacteremia. That is, the infants have bacteria in the blood and are therefore seriously ill, but they don't display any of the classic signs or symptoms of a serious illness. Consequently, pediatricians often hospitalize febrile infants and give them intravenous antibiotics while waiting for the results of a blood culture, which takes at least a day or two. Pediatricians would prefer not to subject the baby to hospitalization and the pain of the intravenous procedure, but the pediatricians don't know what else to do.

The predicament has led some pediatricians to search for early predictors of serious illness, predictors that can be used during the baby's initial visit. And the best predictor so far is the clinical impression. Clinical impression is not perfect, but it's superior to the lab results that are available on the infant's initial visit (Crain 1988; Avner et al. 1993).

Still, many pediatricians have doubts about something that seems so unscientific. "How," they wonder, "can I make decisions on the basis of how the baby looks to me?" This approach seems too personal and subjective. It must be especially frightening to the young doctor, who would feel so much more comfortable relying on external, objective data and standard guidelines. He would like to be able to say, "I hospitalized this infant because she had a white blood count over 15,000 and an ESR over 30." But to say, "I had the sense that this baby was sick" leaves him with his own personal impression. He has to trust his own senses, and this is lonelier and scarier.

To make clinical impression with febrile infants more scientific, some researchers have tried to isolate the impression's key components and put them on a rating scale. The pioneer in this research is Paul McCarthy (1980). Using McCarthy's scales, doctors rate the infant on variables such as the baby's color, alertness, and the quality of her cry. But the scale hasn't been too successful. Total scores on the scales haven't been able to predict serious illness better than a general, overall impression of whether a child is sick or not (Avner et al., 1993).

Ellen and I (Crain and Crain 1987) have tried to get a more naturalistic sense of how advanced clinicians actually form their clinical impressions. We asked esteemed attending pediatricians (known for their diagnostic abilities), as well as interns and residents, to give a running commentary on their thoughts and feelings as they evaluated febrile infants in the Jacobi Hospital pediatric emergency room. When a baby with a fever came in, we asked the available pediatrician to report his or her thoughts and feelings while an audio tape recorder was on. (In this study, there were 14 interns, 9 residents, and 5 advanced attending physicians).

The most striking finding had to do with the degree of intellectual detachment from the baby. Most of the interns and residents attempted to form a clinical impression from the detached position of an objective scientist, making observations and drawing inferences. The following is an excerpt from one intern's comments.

Dr. 1

> I have observed that the child has been quiet the entire interview [with the mother], which indicates that he may have been sick for several days, as the mother reports. But he is alert and does respond to outside stimuli, so his level of alertness is suggestive, too. I notice he has nice large tears, which is indicative of a well-hydrated state.

Dr. 1 filtered his observations through the intellect, making each observation part of an intellectual analysis. In contrast, the approach of the advanced attending physicians was direct and intimate. They tried to get a personal sense of the baby's health by talking and playing with the baby. For example, one attending physician asked the mother a couple of questions and then said to the baby,

Dr. 2

> Hello cute baby, how are you? You are very cute. And you're smiling at me and happy, and you're looking me right in the eyes. So I'm not too worried about you, because you're smiling so nicely. You're nice and fat, yes you are….

It seemed to us that those in the early years of medical training would be surprised by our findings. After all, medicine promotes itself as a rational, scientific enterprise. Actual clinical experience, we speculated, must bring about a substantial shift in the image of what a doctor does. To explore this possibility, we asked participants at various levels of medical training to guess how advanced Drs. 1 and 2 were.

The rawest beginners, pre-med students, overwhelmingly guessed that Dr. 1 was more advanced. His scientific and intellectual approach fit their image of the professional physician. They often criticized Dr. 2 for not "putting enough distance between himself and the patient."

But as our participants' levels of training increased, from medical students to senior residents, they increasingly rated Dr. 2 as more advanced. Those at the highest level of training appreciated the way Dr. 2 was picking up a preconceptual sense of the baby's health through personal sensations and feelings.

We have learned, then, that advanced attending physicians interact in warm and friendly ways as they form clinical impressions of babies, but we still don't know very much about what goes on. Advanced pediatricians have told us that they form a "general sense" or a "gut-level impression," but we would like to know more.

One distinguished pediatrician told me she would never divulge to her colleagues, let alone publish, what she really does. It would sound too mystical. She told me that when she isn't initially sure if a baby is seriously ill, she looks into the baby's eyes and asks the baby, "Are you okay?"

> And the baby looks back and sends me a message if she's okay. She looks back with a look of calm or peace. It's also a firm gaze. If the baby is not okay, she doesn't look back at me in this way. There's a dullness in her eyes, or she just doesn't look back. Then I'm worried, and I have to go by my gut impression that the baby is sick.

I asked this pediatrician if she actually asks the baby if he or she is okay *in words*. The doctor said she wouldn't do so if a medical student or other medical professional was in the room. "They would think I am nutty. But if I'm alone, yes, I ask in words. Otherwise, I just ask silently, and the baby sends me the message."

It says a lot about our scientific culture that this doctor is reluctant to say what she really does. But the doctor is esteemed for her ability to form a clinical impression and we need to know what goes into it.

The Autonomous Self

The ability to trust one's senses extends well beyond the tasks of physicians. If the humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers (1961) and Abraham Maslow (1954) were right, this capacity is fundamental to autonomous selfhood, to becoming a person in one's own right. In the view of these writers, people are generally conditioned to experience life in safe and conventional ways. As they grow up, they learn that they get approval by feeling and acting in the "right" ways. As a result, they distrust much of their inner experience, such as their sexual or aggressive feelings or their own sense of the direction they should take in life. At the same time — and this is what I wish to emphasize here — they are not open to their own sensory experience of the outer world. Instead, they perceive people and objects through conventional categories. If, for example, they go to a museum they automatically like a painting because everyone says it is a masterpiece. They don't attend to and explore their own sense of it — how it strikes them.

Rogers developed his theory of personality on the basis of his work as a psychotherapist. Maslow's ideas were strongly informed by his study of self-actualizing individuals, individuals who were highly creative in various fields, including the arts, politics, science, and just ordinary life. The two writers did not agree on every point, but Rogers found that when his therapy clients became in touch with their inner feelings, their sensory experience of the outer world became increasingly like that of Maslow's self-actualizers. His clients perceived people and things more freshly and openly, as if seeing them for the first time. Freer of stale conventional categories, they regained the child's sense of wonder.

Over the years, I have been a bit puzzled by the extent to which humanistic psychologists, when discussing the autonomous self, emphasize our immediate sensory impressions. One reason, I believe, is

that our sensory impressions are personal and first-hand. They are, to be sure, subject to cultural conditioning, but they are potentially fresher and more original to us the information we obtain from books, lectures, and screen media, which has already been processed by others. Our immediate sensory impressions are more directly our own. (For a discussion of this point, see Joan Erikson's book, *Wisdom and the Senses*).

Poetry

Open and keen senses contribute enormously to artistic creativity, including poetry. Consider Gary Snyder's (1992, 308) poem "For All."

> Ah to be alive
> on a mid-September morn
> fording a stream
> barefoot, pants rolled up,
> holding boots, pack on,
> sunshine, ice in the shallows,
> northern rockies.
>
> Rustle and shimmer of icy creek waters
> Stones turn underfoot, small and hard as toes
> cold nose dripping
> singing inside
> creek music, heart music,
> smell of sun on gavel.
>
> I pledge allegiance
>
> I pledge allegiance to the soil
> of Turtle Island
> and to the beings who thereon dwell
> one ecosystem
> in diversity
> under the sun
> With joyful interpenetration for all.

In the first two stanzas, Snyder describes a specific setting and then brings the senses alive within it. We can almost feel the icy water, sunshine, and stones under our bare feet. Snyder feels so invigorated that he enthusiastically pledges his allegiance to all of Turtle Island (the Native American name for North America). Had he not begun with his immediate sensory experience, but had simply presented an abstract argument, his writing would have been far less compelling.

In this issue of *Encounter*, Paul Freedman reminds us of children's unique power to observe the world freshly and directly through the senses. And we see how their words, driven by their senses, become pure poetry. For example, a fifth grader writes,

> Vroom, woosh, crack, smash, the wind goes as it crashes through a tree, making the leaves dance around. Everybody running around, screaming trying to catch one. The field is full of voices saying, "I got one! I got one!"

In another piece, a fourth grader asks,

> Can you feel the wind on your face? Have you reached, lunged, leaped, only to see the leaf skid off your finger tips? Did you taste the sweet wildness of the swirling freedom in the air? Can you smell the freshness…?

These youngsters heighten our awareness of the real, sensual world. As with Gary Snyder's poem, the children practically put us in an actual setting.

In prior issues of *Encounter*, Richard Lewis has discussed the imaginative qualities of children's poetry, and it is encouraging to read about efforts by Freedman and Lewis to stimulate poetic writing in the schools. Childhood might be a natural period of poetic creativity, a period that gives way to more abstract, detached, and conventional thinking in the years that follow. If adults are to develop their poetic creativity, they can benefit from a childhood foundation of poetic and sensory experience, even if it is buried and in need of recovery.

Nature Studies

With the possible exception of poets, it is hard to think of a group that values sensory experience as much as naturalists do. Naturalists have found that keen senses — together with a curious and open mind — are essential for making discoveries. Thus, Ann Zwinger (1990, ix) says, "Nature writers, with stubborn persistence, sharpen their powers of observation the same as others practice piano scales or tennis serves."

Naturalists emphasize that vision, the most heavily used human sense, is not sufficient. If, for example, we are walking in the woods, we will only be open to new discoveries if we use our other senses as well. Quiet and careful listening can alert

us to the presence of a small animal that we wouldn't otherwise have known dwelled in the woods. Scents lead us to unseen plants, and our skin's sensitivity to an unusually cool spot might indicate where a particular species makes its home (Johnson 1990, Ch. 3).

Naturalists often provide educational opportunities, especially at nature centers, and have developed many activities to help children sharpen their senses. Many of the activities include blindfolds, which stimulate children to rely on non-visual senses. For example, blindfolded children might be led on a walk; then, when the blindfold is removed, they try to find their way back using the non-visual cues they picked up (Cornell 1998). In such activities, nature educators typically avoid providing much guidance. They want children to make their own discoveries.

Conclusion

It is generally assumed that what people really need today are rational, cognitive skills and the ability to access information from books and computers. Nurturing students' precognitive sensory experience might therefore seem to be a waste of time. However, I have tried to suggest ways in which sensory experience is valuable. I have pointed out, for example, how advanced physicians nurture their preconceptual, sensory impressions of patients' health. Relatively few students, to be sure, will become physicians, but if Rogers and Maslow were correct, becoming open to one's own sensory impressions is a vital part of becoming an autonomous person. I also have suggested that keen and open senses contribute to poetic creativity and to discoveries about the natural world. I hope others can suggest ways in which the senses make life richer and more rewarding.

— William Crain, Editor

References

Avner, J., E. F. Crain, and S. P. Shelov. 1993. The febrile infant less than 60 days of age in the emergency department. *Seminars in Pediatric Infectious Diseases* 4 (1): 18-23.

Cornell, J. 1998. *Sharing nature with children* (2nd ed.). Nevada City, CA: Dawn Publications.

Crain, E. F. 1988. Management of febrile infants in the first weeks of life. In *The febrile infant and occult bacteremia*, edited by Kenneth B. Roberts. Columbus, OH: Ross Laboratories.

Crain, W., and E. F. Crain. 1987. Can Humanistic theory contribute to our understanding of medical problem-solving? *Psychological Reports* 61: 779-788.

Huxley, A. 1962. Education on the nonverbal level. *Daedalus* 92: 279-293.

Johnson, C. 1987. *The naturalist's path*. New York: Walker and Company.

Maslow, A. H. 1954. *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.

McCarthy, P. L., J. F. Jekel, C. A. Stashwick, S. Z. Spiesel, and T. F. Dolan. 1980. History and observation variables in assessing febrile children. *Pediatrics* 65: 1090-1095.

Rogers, C. 1961. *On becoming a person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Snyder, G. 1992. *No nature*. New York: Pantheon.

van der Post, L. 1961. *The heart of the hunter*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Zwinger, A. 1990. Forward to *On becoming lost*, by Cathy Johnson. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books.

Dr. Kate McReynolds, Associate Editor

ENCOUNTER is pleased to welcome Dr. Kate McReynolds as an associate editor. Kate, who received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at The City University of New York in 2004, frequently consults with educators and parents on mental health issues. She says that one of her goals is to help them "see that young children experience the world in a dramatically different way from grown-ups and that teenagers are not yet grown-ups." She also tries to get out the message that many so-called mental health issues are really education issues that come from excessive pressures and stresses produced by the standards movement. Kate has contributed often to Encounter (including a Commentary on page 43 of this issue). She brings to us a deep commitment to the full, well-rounded development of all children and adults.

— William Crain, Editor and Charles Jakiela, Publisher

Writing With the Wind

Paul Freedman

An autumn windstorm serves as a teachable moment for kindness, sharing, and even language arts.

Not long ago, due to teacher absences and lack of available substitutes, I found myself in an unfamiliar setting. I had to temporarily put aside my administrative duties and take charge of a class of eleven students from age of 5 to 11. This age range and the associated differences in interest, skill, attention span, and learning style, made planning the day difficult. Faced with this challenge and without much time to prepare, I remained determined to infuse the day with my core beliefs about education.

I was looking for a way to unite this learning community around a central subject, a "great thing" as envisioned by Parker Palmer (1998). I wanted to integrate the students' writing with other subject areas, preserving meaning and relevance, as advocated by John P. Miller (1996), Ron Miller (2000), and Deidre Bucciarelli (2004). I hoped to build our connection with the natural world as described by David Orr (1992). I wanted to allow the children to "learn by doing" as articulated by John Dewey (1997). I wanted them to be fully present in the moment as described by Krishnamurti (1981).

As the day began, however, I lacked inspiration. I began to draw upon my standard stock of lesson plans — typical substitute survival stuff. Then, at first recess, when we opened the door and stepped outside the confines of the classroom walls, a lesson presented itself. It literally slapped us in the face!

We were in the midst of a huge windstorm. There were small breezes, building to large gusts. The trees shook and bent. Most impressive was a hundred-year old American Elm tree, which swayed and shivered on the south edge of the schoolyard. It was in the throes of its autumn leaf drop, and the windstorm was helping it along. The tree was letting go of its leaves and, as is our tradition during November at Salmonberry School, we all gathered round to try to catch a falling leaf, a sure harbinger of good fortune through the fall season.

Paul Freedman is the founding and current Head of the Salmonberry School on Orcas Island, WA <www.salmonberryschool.org>. He is currently a graduate student at Goddard College in Vermont. His primary interests include holistic, progressive, and partnership education.

As the leaves swirled and whirled, the kids and I performed acrobatic leaps, dives, and lunges. And the kids spontaneously developed a chant, which we yelled in between gusts: "Come on wind, Come on Tree/Drop a Leaf, Down for Me!" The excitement built as the wind picked up and the leaves fell and danced all around us. The yard was filled with shrieks of joy, as well as wails of frustration.

As they completed their writing, the students were thrilled to share their work with one another. Each student read aloud, while, for certain readings, another student or pair of students, danced or gave physical voice to the writing. The reading was expressive, passionate, and full of personal meaning.

The children's spontaneous language reflected their curiosity and passion.

> "Did you see Grayson go for that leaf? He looked like he was dancing." I wonder how many leaves will fall in the next gust? The next hour? By Monday?"

> "I hadn't caught any leaves but Desmond gave me one of his; he's such a real friend!"

Eventually we went inside. The kids came in full of chatter and excitement, and moving into my planned seatwork seemed almost cruel. Instead, I encouraged them to give language to their experiences. I suggested that being a writer is about seeing the world with new eyes, with bringing an unexpected or unique point of view to an experience; it is about capturing a moment in time and bringing it to life; and these things were happening "in spades." "You are all incredible writers," I told them, "because of how you see!"

We shared some of the words and language we had heard and used outside — "swirled, whirled and twirled" "gustily, lustily, thrustilly." We shared unique perspectives: the leaf's, the tree's, the wind's. Then they wrote! We all did. How could we not?

The assignment was very open ended. I did suggest some alternative formats — a poem, or a short story, or a letter. But what mattered was to give language — rich, bold, beautiful language — to our amazing shared experience, and they did! Here are some samples.

> *Wind Stampede*. Vroom, woosh, crack, smash, the wind goes as it crashes through a tree, making the leaves dance around. Everybody running around, screaming trying to catch one. The field is full of voices saying, "I got one! I got one!" (Lee, 5th grade)

> *View from a Pocket*. I was hanging on with all my might but when that big gust came I came twirling down with hundreds of other leaves. The wind was so strong it carried me far from the tree. I could see kids below me as slowly I came down. Somebody reached up and grabbed me. They shoved me in their dark pocket and left me there. (P. S. I am writing this in their pocket. (Brodie, 4th grade)

> *Sporadic Events*. The scope, the crouch, the lunge, the grasp, the roll, the recovery, the twirl, the twist, the gaze, the defeat, the sniper, the plaster on my face, the realization, the pluck, the joy. (Crosby, 6th grade)

> *Freedom in the Air*. Can you feel the wind on your face? Have you reached, lunged, leaped, only to see the leaf skid off your finger tips? Did you taste the sweet wildness of the swirling freedom in the air? Can you smell the freshness, the first sign of winter, rushing down the mountain, dancing out over the sea? Close your eyes. Hear the gushing power of the storm, like a river caught behind a dam and then released. This is wind, yes, this is wind. (Brigid, 4th grade)

> *Ha Ha!* I was reaching for a leaf then all of a sudden Brodie came and we collapsed on the ground together. And, in that very moment, I felt like I saw that very same leaf say, "Ha ha!"

> And I saw almost a little twinkle in its eye and a little warm smile on its face. (Chloe, 3rd grade)
>
> *Friend*. The tree was dropping leaves and Desmond gave one leaf for me. And other guys caught some leaves and I caught none, except Desmond caught one for me. (Eve, 1st Grade)

As they completed their writing, the students were thrilled to share their work with one another. Each student read aloud, while, for certain readings, another student or pair of students, danced or gave physical voice to the writing. The reading was expressive, passionate, and full of personal meaning.

During this work, I did find moments to work with individual students on various skills: Eve, on capitalization; Maddy on "-ing" words; Peter, on editing skills; Lee, on word choice; Desmond, on organization. Some skills were reviewed; others were introduced. But mostly we simply celebrated language and life together. We actualized the ideals of engagement, of connecting deeply with nature, of using experience as a basis for our work, of integrating subject matter, of infusing school work with passion, purpose, and personal voice. We were reminded that our work and lives are to be shared and that we are enriched by the sharing. We learned that all voices, regardless of age, can have power and wisdom. And we learned that when creativity flows from a source of personal meaning and experience, it feels wonderful.

References

Bucciarelli, Dierdre. 2004. If we could really feel: The need for emotions of care within the disciplines. In *Educating for a culture of peace*, edited by Ron Miller and Riane Eisler. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dewey, John. 1997. *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone. (Originally published in 1938)

Krishnamurti, Jiddu. 1981. *Education and the significance of life*. New York: Harper & Row. (Originally published in 1953)

Miller, John P. 1996. *The holistic curriculum*. (2nd edition) Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Miller, Ron. 2000. *Caring for new life: Essays on holistic education*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Orr, David. 1992. *Ecological literacy: Education and the transition to a postmodern world*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Palmer, Parker. 1998. *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Confronting One's Real Self

A Benefit of Learning a Foreign Language

Chako Amano

Learning a foreign language makes us become aware of our unexamined beliefs and assumptions.

You are traveling through a foreign country. You want to buy a train ticket or book a hotel room or order a meal. After realizing that you cannot make yourself understood in English, you try to string together a sentence using your limited vocabulary in the local language. You manage to somehow communicate with the aid of gestures and maybe some drawings on a notepad, but there is still the risk that you might end up taking an express train to a wrong destination, or that the meal you order may be something completely different from what you had in mind. You feel like a small child who cannot perform even a simple task, and feel frustrated and regretful. "I should have at least tried learning basic expressions!"

But being able to engage in a basic conversation does not automatically solve your problems. Perhaps you have been living in a foreign country for some time, and have been invited to a dinner party. You can just about figure out the topic of the discussion at the table, but cannot follow the details. When people laugh, you make sure you smile widely, yet you don't really know what they are laughing at. You are relieved that no one asks for your opinion, but at the same time you feel ignored and neglected. You feel like a fool, unable to make even the simplest comment. You feel small and insignificant.

These examples illustrate how vulnerable we feel in situations in which we cannot fully express ourselves. We are adults who should not only be able to book a hotel room ourselves but should also be capable of negotiating the price. Yet, if we do not speak the language, what we can manage is very limited. At a dinner party, we may usually be the one that entertains others by cracking clever jokes, yet now all we can do is smile. We might be a successful busi-

CHAKO AMANO is a senior tutor at the School of Asian Studies, The University of Auckland. She has taught Japanese as a Foreign Language for 25 years, in the UK, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Her main interests are foreign language pedagogy and spirituality in education.

nessperson or a distinguished professor, but we are not even able to tell people our achievements, let alone communicate our thoughts and ideas. These situations can be frustrating and humiliating, leaving us feeling that we cannot portray our self images to others. "They don't know me. This is not the real me. I more than what they see!"

Vulnerable but Free

What is "the real me"? Mark Tennant's (2005, 103) definition of the self is that it is "the *I* who experiences and ... the *me* or *object* who can be known by both myself and others as a cluster of attributes and identifications." In an environment in which we cannot express ourselves in the way we can in our mother tongue, the self we experience and the identity that we portray to others can differ significantly. This inability to accurately display our self images to others can be quite uncomfortable. At times we may feel like we are about to lose our identity. Nevertheless, I consider this experience to be very useful (Amano 2005).

Situations where we cannot easily portray our self image challenge our ego. Our ego doesn't like to be wrong or to make mistakes. Our ego wants to sound clever and smart. But if our language level is too low to perform the ego's usual tricks, such as bluffing, fudging or camouflaging, we are forced to be direct, simple, and straightforward. Such lack of articulation makes us feel naked and vulnerable. But at the same time there is a sense of relief. "Nobody knows me. I can be what I like. I free from expectations!" The Japanese proverb, "Shame is discarded on a journey,"expresses the sense of freedom that comes from being relatively anonymous. McWhinney and Markos (2003) describe how obscuring one's name and professional identity and dumping one's life story allows one to wander in a transformative space, the liminal space, where one is free from assumptions, expectations, and ego identity. As we shed our armour of eloquence, we come face-to-face with our authentic, real self (Tennant 2005, 104). Learning a foreign language takes us on a similar journey into our personal self.

Taking a Fresh Look at Ourselves

When we learn a new language we start with simple greetings and day-to-day expressions. After learning example sentences, we are asked the simplest questions about ourselves. What time do you get up? Do you eat fish? What do you like doing? What are you good at? These basic questions can be used to raise learners' awareness of things they take for granted. Learners reflect on simple "facts" about themselves, which learners as well as others around them have previously accepted without thought.

Learning a foreign language forces you to reexamine automatic assumptions. Suppose you don't like singing. Your friends are going to karaoke and have asked if you want to join them. You say no and they ask why not. In your mother tongue, you would just say because you don't like singing or could give them other convenient reasons. Whatever the answers, they usually come out without effort. However, if you have to answer in a foreign language in which you are not fluent, it requires a certain amount of time and effort. Answers do not come automatically. You have to stop and think. In order to construct a meaningful sentence, you have to become conscious of what you want to say and make a deliberate effort to express it. This process of stopping and thinking is useful. The inability to quickly produce your "usual" answers gives you an opportunity to reflect on what you intend to say.

The process of self-awareness begins the moment we start to pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and physical movements.

Yoshiharu Nakagawa (2002) describes *deautomatization* as one of the primary functions of awareness, which he considers to be an essential element of holistic education. By being mindful, one learns to deautomatize habitual and mechanical behaviors. The process of self-awareness begins the moment we start to pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and physical movements. When we are required to stop and think, we can no longer make an utterance automatically. Conscious, deliberate efforts, which are constantly required in the process

of foreign language acquisition, help to deautomatize our habitual responses.

"I don't want to go to karaoke because I don't like singing." With a great effort, you have managed to put a sentence together. You are satisfied with the correct grammar and pronunciation. However, you hear your teacher asking a further question. "Why don't you like singing?" If someone asked this question in your mother tongue, you could shrug it off with "I don't know." But this is a language class and if you are asked, you must give an answer starting with "because."

Speaking a foreign language gives us a chance to pay attention to responses that we may not question when we communicate in our mother tongues. "Why don't I like singing?" "When did I decide I would never sing again (at least in front of others)?" Reflecting on such questions can lead us to identify our self-limiting belief systems.

A Personal Experience

One of the topics I chose for my intermediate Japanese language course last year was Decision Making and Selection Process. Apart from the usual linguistic objectives, the aim of the oral exercises and essay writing was to give the students an opportunity to reflect on their own decision-making processes. One Chinese student wrote in her essay that she had never even thought about the fact that she did not know what she really wanted. "I have never asked myself what I really wanted."

The same thing happened in my own experience. When I first started communicating in English, I didn't like the question, "What do you want to do?" I didn't know what to answer. In Japan we don't ask such direct questions. Even though we have the word *tai*, which means *want*, we do not use it in the same way. A direct translation of "What do you want to do?" should only be used if someone who is close to you is asking you what sort of activities you want to do in a particular situation. And even among close family members and friends, the word *tai* is not commonly used with the word you". Similarly, the word *hoshii*, which also means *want* is used with a noun — not the personal "I" or "you."

As a result, I had only a vague idea of what I wanted and what I wanted to do. I was so busy trying to meet our social and cultural expectations that I had lost touch with my true self. How do we begin to know who we really are if we are not even aware of what we really want? Speaking English made me become conscious of thoughts and feelings I had never been aware of before. I gradually began to learn that it was okay to express *honne*, or my real voice, rather than *tatemae*, or what is socially acceptable. Learning English opened a door to my journey of self-transformation.

Conclusion

The process of foreign language acquisition offers us an opportunity to "refresh" ourselves. By surrendering to the fact that we are deprived of our accustomed fluency, we can learn to let go of our fixed ideas about who we are. Reexamining our thoughts and beliefs with an open mind can help us discover things we have long forgotten about ourselves. Our use of simple, straightforward language may bring out truths that have been hidden deep within. Once we are aware of our true intentions, we can begin to rewrite our own stories.

Foreign language classes can create the optimal setting for tapping into one's true self, and for releasing ourselves from our self-limiting belief systems. In a laughter-filled, non-threatening environment, learners can be gently guided towards cultivating their self-awareness, and redefining and expressing who they really are.

References

Amano, C. 2005. Cultivating self-awareness through foreign language acquisition: A holistic approach to teaching Japanese as a foreign language. *Studies in Holistic Education* 8: 19-28.

McWhinney, W., and L. Markos. 2003. Transformative education: Across the threshold. *Journal of Transformative Education* 1: 16-37.

Nakagawa, Y. 2005. *The holistic clinical pedagogy: Education, psychotherapy, spirituality.* Osaka: Seseragi Shuppan.

Tennant, M. 2005. Transforming selves. *Journal of Transformative Education* 3: 102-115.

Art in a Standardized Academic World

Stacey Pistorova and Ruslan Slutsky

An "emergent" approach to the curriculum — one that builds on children's own interests and creates settings in which meanings are made, not given — can provide gateways to academic skills.

Imagine you are a five- or six-year-old child who is entering a formal classroom setting for the first time. Your life up to this point has been filled with intense, active interaction with the world, defined by your senses and social relationships. Oral language has played a tremendous role. You enter school with these foundations and are filled with excitement and a desire to learn. But imagine what happens to you when you are told to "think without hands … to listen and not to speak," and to be told "that work and play, reality and fantasy, science and imagination, sky and earth, reason and dream are things that do not belong together" (Malaguzzi 1998, 3). The sense of wonder you had for discovering the world has been replaced by a world based on listening, obedience, and conformity. The new world emphasizes written language and academic skills. Interaction with peers is sharply curtailed. How would you, as a child, react to this new environment and its demands?

Teachers, faced with the pressures of meeting academic standards, need ways to respect children's natural means of learning while facilitating the skills considered necessary for school success. Currently, teachers often revert to traditional methods focused on worksheets and solitary work. In contrast, the language of art, a natural language for children, can help teachers help children develop academic skills in a way that is more natural to them. Art promotes a non-threatening language through which knowledge can be conveyed and constructed. Drawing allows

STACEY PISTOROVA has an undergraduate degree in art and is currently a doctoral candidate and graduate assistant in early childhood education at the University of Toledo. Her research interests focus on the arts in education and on authentic and democratic educational practices.

RUSLAN SLUTSKY is Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Toledo. His research interests include connecting children's art experiences to early literacy development, the Reggio Emilia approach, and learning communities.

children to communicate through line, color, texture, and symbols, thus building the necessary literacy skills for later reading and writing abilities.

We would like to demonstrate the potential of the arts through two case studies. Both are drawn from a participant/observer study of preschool children from the ages of three to five.

Have You Seen My Pet Rock?

The classroom is busy with activity. In the housekeeping area a couple of boys and girls are cooking from a recipe, and one boy is in the far corner with a toolbox pounding on a large structure. On the other side of the room, a group of boys are actively building a structure from scrap pieces of wood. Some girls can be seen in the writing center sharing pictures. Cara (a pseudonym) and a few other girls also seem to be searching for something in the classroom. You can see them looking under tables, on shelves, and inside containers. Their search seems futile, and after discussing the matter among themselves, they approach the teacher.

Teachers, faced with the pressures of meeting academic standards, need ways to respect children's natural means of learning while facilitating the skills considered necessaryfor school success.

Cara has lost her pet stone. She says she had it the day before, but now it is missing. The teacher asks Cara to describe the rock, but when this proves difficult for Cara, the teacher suggests that Cara draw a picture of her pet rock. From the picture, the teacher can decipher that it was a pink rock with painted eyes.

The teacher then suggests to the group of girls that when someone loses a pet, they often make signs and post them around in case someone else has seen the pet. She sets up a space at the writing center to make such signs and writes the word "lost" on a piece of paper. She then leaves the girls to their work. The girls work together to make their signs, each drawing a picture of the pet rock with the word "lost" written next to the drawing. They then walk throughout the classroom with their signs and tape, posting their signs. As they do this, other children begin to ask questions, becoming engaged in the search as well. Soon the room is filled with "lost" signs made by a large number of the students.

As the activity begins to die down, the teacher brings the girls together and mentions that some people write newspaper articles to find a lost object. The girls seem very interested in this new idea and ask if they could make a newspaper with an article about their lost rock. The teacher provides a piece of newsprint to make the experience more authentic. She folds it and begins to discuss with the girls what should go into this type of article. She then asks Cara what she would like to write, and Cara dictates her words to the teacher. After this, the girls supplement the article with another drawing of the pet rock. Cara then takes the newspaper to various groups of children throughout the room, showing them the picture and pointing to the words and reading them aloud. During circle time the teacher asks Cara to read her article to the class and tells them that if anyone has seen the rock they should contact Cara.

Comment

In this episode the teacher promoted various symbolic activities. When Cara was unable to express in words how her rock looked, the teacher suggested another form of symbolic expression — drawing — that was within her repertoire. The teacher then facilitated new literacy experiences by modeling the word "lost" and by writing a newspaper ad. The girls gained a new appreciation for the value of literacy, eagerly adopting print in their search. Although the girls did not write the newspaper ad, Cara did use it to ask her classmates if they saw her pet rock. At no point did the teacher directly instruct the children. Instead, she modeled or aided the children in ways that stimulated their natural curiosity. The teacher allowed literacy to emerge in her classroom as the result of Cara's authentic need to find the rock.

The Wheels on the Bus

As we enter another classroom, we find children driving cars and tractors around the large group area

within the center of the room. Traffic lights and signs are present. Two girls sit on a small wooden bench under one of the traffic lights. They hold a pad of paper and a pen, pulling over any "motorists" who don't obey the traffic laws.

The class has been following the theme of vehicles and transportation for some time. The use of painting, stories, drawing, wire, and three-dimensional representations are some of the media used during this classroom exploration. These skill-building experiences led to the following episode.

In a mini-art studio area, there is a table with markers, scissors, buttons, paper, toilet paper cores, and paper circles. One child finds a stack of paper bags and begins to make a fringe around one of them. The teacher, seeing the potential to facilitate their vehicle study, goes to the shelf and also takes down a bag, to which she adds a few of the circular pieces of paper, suggesting wheels. She then leaves it on the table to see what happens. Connor (pseudonym) and Mallory (pseudonym), two children who are often in the art studio area, inspect the bag and turn it around. Connor, who often takes charge, decides that the object could become a school bus. They discuss what they need: windows, people, windshield wipers, and a driver. They first draw images of people on square pieces of paper and glue the images onto the side of the bag. Now the bus has riders! Using sticks, glue, and crayons, they add windshield wipers, a larger window for the driver, and stairs for the bus. Connor decides that the bus needs a number, and he and Mallory write a number 8, the bus they take home from school, on a piece of paper and glue it to their bus.

Connor continues to think about signs for the bus while Mallory is actively engaged in designing antennae for the school bus. She carefully punches holes in the bag, and goes to the shelves and pulls out wire and a wire cutter. She cuts the wire into smaller pieces, wraps the wire through the holes, and twists it to create her antennae. Connor decides to name the bus "horse" and asks how to spell it. The teacher writes "horse" on a piece of paper; Connor then writes the word on his own piece of paper and glues it to the front of the bus. Mallory continues to place antennae all around the bus. Throughout this process, other children seek bags for themselves, but none take the activity to the level of Connor and Mallory.

Figure 1. The Bus Named Horse

Comment

The teacher observed Mallory and Connor's spontaneous interests and found a way to extend them. By simply placing her own materials (a bag with wheels) on the table, she was able to further stimulate their interest in vehicles. Moreover, the children's artistic work expanded into the areas of mathematics and literacy; the children wrote the name of the bus ("horse") and numbered it ("8"), and the construction of the antennae and windshield wipers involved spatial reasoning. In addition, the children made good use of oral communication skills within a social context: Throughout the episode, the children's dialogues elaborated and guided their non-verbal constructions. The activities of these two children, finally, took place in a classroom in which other related activities occurred, such as the writing of motor vehicle summonses, an activity that involves rules and regulations associated with social studies. Thus, by amplifying on one child's initial work with the paper bags, the teacher kindled a variety of experiences that are generally considered "academic."

Conclusion

These two episodes illustrate how teachers, when free from prescribed lessons and curricula, can promote literacy and other academic skills in authentic ways. When teachers meet children

through their spontaneous play and creative endeavors, the teachers can stimulate work that readily leads to the knowledge that schools value. The experiences of Cara, Connor, and Mallory illustrate an "emergent" approach to the curriculum, one that builds on children's own interests and creates settings in which meanings are made, not given (Eisner 1998). The children have ownership of their knowledge and are given the time they need to build it.

Children's artwork has a special place in early childhood education. Aesthetic education is "interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable and quantifiable, not in what is thought of as social control…. It signifies the nurture of a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching out for meanings, a learning to learn" (Greene 2001, 7). The arts provide a journey, not a destination.

Endnote

The first author would like to thank the preschool staff members of Hardin County (Ohio) for allowing her to enter their classrooms and observe children in the natural context of their school day. The authors dedicate this article to the school's staff, hoping that their devotion to young children and the images the children create will inspire others.

References

Eisner, E. 1998. The uses and limits of performance assessment. *Phi Delta Kappa*. Retrieved September 2005 from <www.pdkintl.org/kappan/keis9905.html>.

Greene, M. 2001. *Variations on a blue guitar*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Malaguzzi, L. 1998. No way: The hundred is there. In *The hundred languages of children: Advanced reflections* (2nd ed.), edited by C. Edwards, L. Gandini, and G. Forman. Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Note to Authors

Encounter is dedicated to the education of the whole, growing person as she seeks meaning and justice in the world. Most education today focuses very narrowly on only one aspect of personal development—cognitive skills. Our journal emphasizes that humans also have physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs and potentials.

We therefore welcome a wide range of manuscripts. They may address any phase of the life cycle. So far, most of *Encounter*'s articles have been theoretical, but we also invite research reports and accounts of personal experiences—and even an occasional poem if you think it's the best way to express yourself. We would like to see more writing on children's relationships to the animal world and students' activities on behalf of peace.

Manuscripts should be less than 20 double-spaced pages with ample margins. Please follow the author-and-date format in Chapter16 of the 14th (1993) edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Manuscripts should be original work and not under consideration elsewhere. To facilitate a blind review process, please remove all information that might identify you or any of your coauthors.

Good writing is hard work. It is usually necessary to write several drafts. Try to write simply and directly. We strongly recommend William Strunk and E. B. White's little book, *The Elements of Style*. The authors urge us to write in the active voice and to omit needless words. They also encourage descriptions of specific events and people rather than vague generalities. You might already have read the book, but it merits repeated readings. We recognize that writing is a personal matter, and that you have your own style, but try to write in crisp, straightforward prose whenever you can.

It is important to cite relevant prior works on your topic. But do not pile up quotes from esteemed scholars as a means of supporting your thesis. Stick to what you, yourself, have to say.

Send three copies of your manuscript to William Crain, Professor of Psychology, The City College of New York, 138th St. and Convent Ave., New York, NY 10031.

— William Crain, Editor

The Greening Power of Childhood

Nature's Influence on a Life in Progress

Tom Goodridge

Children's affinity to nature will be suppressed once they get into school — unless perceptive teachers are willing to challenge the system.

My passion for nature was awakened as a child at Emerald Lake in Western Connecticut, where my family spent the summers. Exploring the plant and animal life in the hemlock forest and meeting the painted turtles and frogs of the glacier-shaped lake, I discovered myself to be part of a diverse community.

Neither of my parents had known an intact family life, and the family life they provided felt incomplete. But in this wild place I found an extended family. I roamed the woods and swam the lake in a state of perpetual wonder. I felt that each member of this bio-diverse universe had a secret to impart, a lesson to teach. Although I never spoke it aloud, I came to believe that there was a place for me in the "great family of things."

School Days

When I was five-years-old, we moved from New York City to Greenwich, Connecticut, where I first attended school. I couldn't figure out how what I learned in school was connected with what I had learned from the woods. The best experiences I can recall from those early school years were making apple jelly and sewing a rag doll. Most of what we learned in school seemed made *only* for school; school learning made no attempt to address the mysteries I had met in nature. Nature's current, which had carried me in childhood, went underground like a spring.

There was social pressure to conform to the standards of this competitive suburb. In third grade some students had a special friend of the opposite sex and displayed their "steady's" photo in a silver ID bracelet. I got such a bracelet too, but in mine I kept a picture of my rabbits, Inkspot and Snowball.

Tom Goodridge worked 11 years as a special education teacher in a Harlem, NY, elementary school. He is currently a doctoral candidate at Union Institute and University, where he is conducting research on the impact of gardens on inner city children.

Fortunately there was an old estate with an abandoned farm and fallow fields directly behind our modest suburban house. I spent much time exploring those "wild" grounds. I eagerly waited for spring when the purplish-green skunk cabbage emerged from the wetlands and the fronds of fern unfurled. I climbed into a secure seat in a large oak for a safe lookout over a changing world. Sometimes I built forts in the wild rhubarb with younger neighborhood boys, but most often I explored on my own. I felt closest to nature when I was alone. I needed no words to describe our silent and spontaneous connection. School was just the opposite; it seemed artificially "made-up" and it was all about words. In nature I had discovered a deep identity. In school I was socialized into cultural norms.

Learning at school usually required abstraction; we were expected to separate the subject from its natural context. When we did look at something real (instead of letters, numbers, or colors) we would break it up into parts and impose our order upon those parts. In a school lesson on spiders, we were asked to count its legs. When I met a spider in nature, it would never occur to me to do a leg count. The miracle of this deft weaver, able to connect stray branches with intricately patterned webs could in no way be "explained" by its having eight legs. Moreover, the scientific study of the spider began by killing it. Then its parts would be analyzed and labeled. I learned something about spiders from this dissection, but I couldn't learn about real, living spiders in their own habitats.

Adolescence

With adolescence my passion for nature waned. I can remember the sharp transition upon reaching seventh grade at Eastern Junior High School in Greenwich. The girls seemed twice as big as the boys. There was a new rebellious edge to the student relationships. The culture of *cool* entered my life. It was not always clear what made someone cool, so trying to figure it out took a lot of attention. I no longer simply chose friends whom I liked; I now tried to be around kids who were popular and cool. It was as if a self-conscious critic entered my adolescent life. This critic undermined the self-acceptance the natural world had so freely given me. Nature's principle of inclusion — the promise that each divergent part belonged within the greater whole — came under threat. There was now a heightened concern with status and hierarchy.

Adult notions of status influenced our adolescent standards, at least in part. I began to judge that we were poorer than most of my friend's families. It now mattered that my family never purchased a new car, and that our house was too near the railroad tracks. These concerns reflected adult influences.

But we also wanted to forge our own culture. We traveled around town in small packs. A favorite hangout was Todd's Point, Old Greenwich's town park and beach, a nature preserve located on a peninsula that jutted out into Long Island Sound. Roaming its trails, we *did* notice the beauty of the woods, the wildlife we flushed out, and the sunsets over the beach. Now, however, my "wild" peer group mattered more to me than the "wild" world. The "wildness" in adolescent culture expressed itself by defying conventions of dress and language. We experimented with what was taboo, like smoking, alcohol, and sex. Our primary concern was *not* to integrate with the prevailing human or natural community but rather to distinguish ourselves from the status quo.

The Need to Control

Assessing nature's influence upon any stage of development is difficult; its presence is subtle, yet encompassing. One way to recognize the extent of its influence is an attempt to eliminate it. Institutions represent a human attempt to "filter out" nature's unpredictable and mysterious influences. We create bureaucracies in order to be efficient and systematic — bureaucracies like schools!

For me, a powerful experience of the control of nature occurred when, during high school, I attended a National Science Foundation summer program at Western Michigan University. I worked in the behavioral psychology department, which enthusiastically carried out research on B. F Skinner's operant conditioning. We learned behavior modification by teaching a rat to press a lever. The laboratory rat had been deprived of water and lived in a highly controlled environment called a Skinner Box. Our job was to *shape* the rat's behavior to press a lever, using water as reinforcement. We were asked to describe the rat's behavior in objective, quantifiable terms. We were asked not to as-

cribe motives (which could not be observed) to the rat's behavior. I couldn't help but identify, or at least sympathize with this pink-eyed creature of the laboratory. When I learned that another student from my program was surreptitiously watering the thirsty rats, I applauded her action. Nature and science appeared to be in conflict; I knew which side I was on.

After training a rat to press a lever, we were to devise an independent project to apply the principles of operant conditioning. I chose to work at Ft. Custer, a state mental hospital in Michigan. Ten miles of corridors and wards from an unrenovated World-War-II-era army barracks now held permanent wards of the state. Most residents had severe levels of mental retardation and had been institutionalized for their entire lives. I was to design a program to shape the behavior of a non-verbal 12-year-old boy, Lester. I devised "Belongingness," a kind of picture bingo program to teach Lester to associate functionally related articles such as comb and brush, toothpaste and toothbrush, socks and shoes. I learned later Lester did not possess most of these items.

The experience left me suspicious of the quest for scientific objectivity. I was to give Lester cereal (dry, stale cereal was used as the reinforcement) whenever he correctly matched the pictures. I found the research protocol humiliating. I ended up giving him *unconditional reinforcement,* cereal, praise, and walks outside to him — just for being Lester!

The place scared me. I received shrill catcalls from an insane old woman. I found the ward filled with residents having hydrocephalus, whose heads were so large they needed to be periodically turned by attendants. But most frightening of all was that I had participated in this institutional research regimen without protesting it. I had participated in a program that treated Lester as an object to be researched and behavior control a supreme objective. In our quest for scientific objectivity we had forgotten nature's law. According to that law, we are a conscious link in the web of life, but we are not the weavers of the web.

Teaching with Nature

I found the antidote to institutions when I spent an off campus year in Scotland at a Camphill Community for adults with special needs [see Tom's letter in this issue — Editor]. I have taught at two museum centers outside the educational mainstream. At these centers, I saw how teachers, given the freedom to innovate, could tap children's imaginations. I also was able to return my focus to the natural world. At the Norwalk Maritime Center, we introduced visiting elementary school classes to the Long Island estuary. An imaginative exercise I improvised there began with a "telephone" conversation to various creatures using a seashell as the receiver. We used this skit to launch a day featuring interspecies communication.

Children want to solve real problems. I was teaching a third-grade class at the Maritime Center one day when a national news story broke about a pod of whales stranded in the freezing shallow waters of Hudson Bay. The children spontaneously proposed a response. They decided we should all hold hands, close our eyes, and focus together on sending heat to the melting ice. And the whales did go free. Although opinions will differ on the children's causal role, the episode illustrates children's desire to respond to the critical issues of the day. I believe, moreover, there is a sense in which children are *meant* to help society improve. Their lack of cultural programming and their natural empathy for other living beings enable them to perform a critical role in social reform.

During my thirties, I decided to shore up my educational credentials and earned an M.A. at the Bank Street College of Education in Early Childhood Ed, with a focus on Special Educator. I then (in 1991) took on a position as a Special Ed teacher in a Harlem public elementary school. There I was eager to share the natural world with my five- to eight-year-old students, most of whom rarely left Harlem. I brought them into nearby parks and obtained funding to take them to outdoor nature centers and forest preserves.

The Garden of Love

In my third year at the school, the principal asked me if I wanted to begin a school garden. A community activist had obtained a lease on an empty lot across the street from the school through Greenthumb, the NYC agency that offered community gardeners empty city lots in order to help restore rundown neighborhoods. I said "Yes!" to the principal's offer, although I had no idea *how* to create a gar-

den from a dumping ground, which was filled with refuse and rats. Creating a Japanese-inspired moss garden at my parents' suburban home was my only previous gardening experience. I wanted to make a sanctuary where city children could meet Mother Nature up close. With great help from a volunteer horticulturist, Mary Emma Harris, we established the student-named "Garden of Love."

In our quest for scientific objectivity and control, we have forgotten nature's law: We are a conscious link in the web of life, but we are not the weavers of the web.

The city children planted, picked mulberries, watered, weeded, and searched for worms. One warm spring day Lucinda, a five-year-old student asked, "Can I sit on the grass?" Her uncertainty was understandable. Many young city children have all their recreation in paved playgrounds that lack any natural elements. Many parents judged the area's parks unsafe for children's play. And many urban adults are uncertain how to guide children's play within "unstructured" natural areas.

Meanwhile the city was changing. Harlem was becoming hot real estate. The political climate also heated up when Mayor Giuliani threatened to sell off the Greenthumb garden lots in his plan to create more housing and generate revenue. We hoped our garden might be spared development. The trees were maturing and the garden was filling out; it was becoming a green asset to the neighborhood as well as the school. We also thought our 25′ by 100′ lot was too small to interest a real estate speculator.

We were rudely awakened when the garden was bulldozed on 11/2/98. I had just entered the school's office when the custodian asked me why a bulldozer was in the garden. Through the large window I saw that the yellow machine had crashed through the fence. It was devouring the twelve trees, scouring the earth of the shrubs, flowers and landscape we had lovingly planted and nurtured for over five years. I ran into the Garden and yelled at the operator, "STOP! What are you doing?" Without stopping from the destruction he called out, "This is city land." Students, staring through opened windows, witnessed their garden's demolition. After the bulldozer left, all that remained was the garden's interior fence. That fence still held the dream-catchers we had created under the guidance of an Ogala Sioux artist. I had believed the dream-catchers would protect the garden from any harm.

The traumatic death of the garden awakened me. A week prior to the bulldozing I had a dream in which I attempted to stop two men from removing a tree. In the dream I called out "Stop!" to the men. Looking closer at the (dreamed) tree I saw a malignant growth on its uppermost limb. Peering into where that limb joined the trunk, I saw swarms of snakes, including a huge one with a large triangular head, emerge from the wound and descend the trunk to the Earth.Upon awakening I felt that a tremendous surge of psychic energy had entered my life. Viewing the dream from a Jungian perspective, I believe that it not only prognosticated the death of the Garden of Love, but that the snake's return to the earth suggested my future direction and opened up a new life force within me.

In any case, the garden's loss catalyzed action. I ran directly from the bulldozer to the nearby home of a community gardener/activist Cindy Worley; she called the *New York Times*. An article appeared the next day on the front page of the Metro Section, along with a picture of a boy searching for his plant. When our school cook saw me being interviewed on national television news, she said, "I had never before seen you angry." The garden had been my reason and my refuge, now it was gone. Its loss goaded me to descend deeper, to follow my dream snakes down into the Earth, where I hoped to ground a deeper identity. I felt that the Earth had designs on me.

We knew that one day we might lose the garden. If it was to be taken, the City had promised that an alternative site would be provided, well in advance, to give us time to design another garden with the children. The City's Housing and Preservation office called me a week after the bulldozing to apologize for their "mistake." A year later we were given

a lot adjacent to the school to "replace" The Garden of Love.

New Beginnings

I had seen what nature meant to city kids. I had watched it being taken away. I found my mission. I shifted my course. I left teaching for the City of New York to pursue graduate studies in ecological learning, while serving as the volunteer coordinator of the school's new garden.

The school uses the garden in many ways: planting bulbs in fall, sowing seeds in the classroom for transplanting in spring, and as an outdoor/nature classroom throughout the school year and summer. I have not created a garden curriculum. Teachers already have enough difficulty meeting external curricula. I want the garden to serve as an antidote to some of these pressures — to be a place where teachers, students, parents, and community members can connect with their home, the Earth.

Six vegetable beds grow "standards" like radish, carrots, lettuce, eggplant, tomatoes, and collards. (One girl admitted that she had never known the collards come from gardens.) Perhaps our most talked-about crop has been the apples on the red delicious tree, growing close to the street. One year we lost our six apples when a child scaled the twelve-foot iron fence (installed by the city) to pick them. We also lost most of the cabbage family crops to white grubs, whose writhing torsos fascinated the young gardeners.

The herb patch by the school gate is also very popular; we use the scents of lavender, rosemary, thyme, lemon grass, oregano, basil, mints, and anise hyssop to lure visitors further into the garden.

Large wooden containers lining the south wall are planted with exotics selected to spark children's multisensory imaginations. They include mimosa, or sensitive plant, which, when touched, quickly clasps its fern-like fronds together as if in prayer. Ginger, aloe, a blueberry bush, and pineapples are other container mates.

A parent from Niger helped us plant an African heritage bed with manioc, peanuts, a red bean and gourds to climb the adjacent fence, which were to become shakerees. We got verdant foliage but no gourds. The excited parent brought to class manioc roots just mailed from his brother who still lives in Africa, a French-speaking African student translated. We closely watched the parent plant the roots, and he told us of his hope to "grow some Africa" in his new land. But none survived. It led to many conversations about cultural transplanting, climate variation, hope, and loss.

The garden has hosted many events that have supported the regular curriculum. For example, a kindergarten class was studying the animals of Africa. The teacher had read them nonfiction accounts of the animals' lives. I then led some imaginative activities to help them choose a "guardian" animal. We made cardboard masks to honor their guardian animal's spirit. The next morning the *guardian spirits,* moving-as-animals, filed out of the school in a snaky line and circled on the garden's lawn for an "animal council"; The *Council of All-Beings,* developed by Deep Ecologists Joanna Macy, John Seed and Arne Naess was our inspiration. In the character of the "Green Man," supported by a Native American parent, I facilitated the Council: we invited the assembled animal spirits to share a message. Most *spirits*, new to such rituals, only emitted their sounds; others said a few words, like "Hello!"

Except for the plants, the compost bin has been the most popular garden stop. It is the most likely place to find worms, bugs, and all manner of mysteries. Although most students are initially squeamish about meeting up with the crawling inhabitants of the compost, their curiosity keeps them returning to the bin. The fecund life that emerges from decaying vegetative matter may teach them something about the place of decomposition and death in the life cycle.

An 11-year-old boy, who had recently lost both his parents to disease, became one of our lead gardeners. He was fascinated by the regenerative capacity of the composting process and became an ardent seed-saver. Since his graduation from our school, he continues to help his Belize-born grandmother in a Harlem community garden.

Like him, I feel a sense of regeneration in our garden. My childhood spring continues to flow into me as a seasoned adult. My mission is to conduct nature's current into the lives of children who have never had a chance to wade in those living waters.

Holistic Education in Japan

A Gaijan's (Foreigner's) Journey

John (Jack) P. Miller

Holistic Education has begun to take root in Japan despite the increasing conservativism of the Ministry of Education.

JOHN (JACK) MILLER has worked in the area of holistic education for 30 years. He is a professor at the Ontario Institute for teacher Education and is the author or editor of 14 books, including *The Holistic Curriculum*, *Education and the Soul*, and *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion*.

Since 1994, I have traveled to Japan almost every year to teach and work with holistic educators there. My experiences there have deeply affected my views about education and life, and I would like to share some of my observations.

The Beginning

On my first trip to Japan, I met several people who are still friends and colleagues today. One was Kohei Yamane, a visionary educator who has had a long connection with my institution, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). Kohei embodies generosity, one of the qualities possessed by so many Japanese. All his guests are treated graciously to dinners, sightseeing, and trips to *onsens* (hot springs). During my first visit, he also took me to Hiroshima to visit the museum there. He told me that his family lived near Hiroshima when the bomb exploded and that he was four months old. Kohei's father helped with the rescue and clean-up operations after the bombing. Hiroshima has become a center for peace, and every August there is a memorial gathering there. Japan's constitution includes a peace provision that allows Japan only to develop a defense force. Prime Minister Abe recently announced that Japan will not develop nuclear weapons, despite the threat of North Korea's nuclear program.

I also met my wife, Midori, that first year in Japan. She was my translator for workshops in Nagoya, Nagano, and Nagaoka. When she was translating for me, even though I do not understand Japanese, I intuitively felt that we were speaking with one voice. We were married in 2000, and one of the joys of my life is teaching with her in Japan. Midori also is very interested in holistic learning and embodies many of

the qualities and practices that I talk about, such as being present and mindful. Student evaluations of our courses inevitably include comments on Midori's translation and the positive atmosphere she helps create in the classroom.

One of the most passionate and dedicated holistic educators I have known is Giichiro Yamanouchi, who took me to the first school I visited in Japan, in the village of Ojiya. This elementary school has been described in Ikue Tezuka's 1995 book, *School with Forest and Meadow*s. I still remember how the children welcomed me with flowers. The school building surrounded an area where animals such as rabbits, chickens, goats, and turtles were kept which the children fed and cared for. Behind the school was a small forest with 290 trees, planted and also cared for by the children.

At the Ojiya school, the students develop a bond with the animals and the trees and they do not see themselves as separate from the environment. The school's curriculum focuses on activities that holistically integrates these activities into the curriculum. Yamanouchi believes that a teacher's most important responsibility is help children grow as human beings so that they can think for themselves and to treat others kindly and fairly.

Recently Yamanouchi won an award for his work, and a celebration was held in his honor in June 2004. Midori and I were present when former students and parents commented on the impact of having a small forest on the school grounds. One parent got up and talked about an experience with his daughter at the school that had a profound impact on him. One day he went with her to school to look at the tree she was taking care of. There was a small vine growing around the bottom of the tree and the father started to remove it. His daughter got upset and said: "Don't do that! The vine and the tree are friends." The father said that his daughter's words hit him like a hammer and since that moment he has looked on the natural world in a different way. He said he is much more sensitive to the environment in his work in the construction industry, and he now encourages tree planting. This comment exemplifies the power of holistic education.

Teaching in Japan

Since 1994 I have taught 15 courses in Holistic Education and Spirituality in Education at Kobe Shinwa Women's University and Ritsumeiken University. Most of these courses have been at the graduate level, but I have also taught a few courses to undergraduates. In teaching these courses I use the same framework that I use at OISE/UT. The courses focus on underlying theory, various teaching and curricular approaches, and the importance of teaching presence in holistic learning. To facilitate the last aspect — teaching presence — I ask students to do meditation practice.

Meditation can be important in how we approach teaching. If teaching is ego-based it can become a frustrating series of mini-battles with students. The classroom becomes focused around the issue of control. If we teach from a deeper self (e.g., our Buddha nature), teaching becomes a fulfilling and enriching experience. Robert Griffin (1977, 79) summarizes this very well.

> You do not feel set off against them [the students] or competitive with them. You see yourself in students and them in you. You move easily, are more relaxed, and seem less threatening to students. You are less compulsive, less rigid in your thoughts and actions. You are not so tense. You do not seem to be in a grim win-or-lose contest when teaching.

When we teach mostly from our egos, our work inevitably becomes tense and frustrating. Conversely, when we teach from our deeper self, or soul, our work can become an act of joy and delight. Teaching from this deeper place, we experience connections with our students and our colleagues. Meditation, with its focus on the development of our deeper self rather than the ego, can facilitate this process. The rationale for Self-based teaching has been explained in other contexts (Miller 1993; 1994; 1995). I have also conducted research on the impact of meditation in teachers' lives (Miller and Nozawa 2002; 2005).

The students do the meditation or other spiritual practices outside the class. In the class itself the chairs are arranged in a circle and I ask students to share their experiences in this format. For example, I ask them to describe a person in their lives whom they feel embodies spirituality. This is often quite moving, especially when students describe someone

in their own family. After the sharing is completed, I ask them to list the qualities of these individuals and they often cite compassion, kindness, and the ability to listen deeply. I suggest that these are qualities that should be fostered in our schools instead of just focusing on solely on knowledge and skill acquisition, if we truly want the world to be a better place.

There is, of course, some irony a Westerner introduce meditation to the Japanese. However, I try to point out the connection between meditation and Japanese contemplative practices such as the tea ceremony, flower arranging, and calligraphy. Students can choose whatever spiritual practice or meditation they like. Some chose meditation, while others kept a gratitude journal where they write about things that they appreciate in their lives.

This last year (2006) I asked students to write about their spiritual practice and what they found valuable in the course. One Chinese student in a graduate class commented about the importance of teacher presence. She wrote,

> Teaching is the most noble job under the sun. I believe the foundation of the country is education, and education largely depends on the humanity and quality of the teachers. In short, that is the presence of the teacher. The teacher's everyday behavior and words can have a huge impact on kids.

Other students focused on being mindful in their work and life. One Japanese graduate student commented:

> I am more aware of my reaction[s] and try to be mindful. I can step back and try to accept what's been said, instead of reacting right away. I also try to invite what has been said to me into my thinking and also to reflect on my own thinking. Even scenery looks different now. When I look outside from the University building and see some flowers and grass they look so pretty and green and this makes me calm. When I walk, my feet touching the ground brings a sense of happiness. I believe that all these changes happened because of my spiritual practices.

A Chinese student also described the impact of mindfulness practice.

> During this course I was offered a job as an interpreter for a group of Korean students. It was my first job as an interpreter and I was feeling pretty nervous. Then I decided to practice mindfulness. This way I was able to spend those ten days mindfully and things went smoothly. Interacting with students mindfully made me feel connected with them and we felt like one big family.... Even through my work schedule was heavy from 9 in the morning till 9 at night, I did not feel exhausted or irritable.

One of the students, who taught high school, described how the practices made a difference in her classroom. In her reflections she refers to her *kokoro*. There is no direct translation into English with closest words being "heart' or "soul." I found that the Japanese use this word more frequently than Westerners refer to soul or heart. This teacher wrote that

> by taking this course and doing spiritual practices every day, I was able to feel the growing space in my *kokoro* and to face my students with a much warmer attitude. I also felt more grateful about things happening in my daily life. My own change affected my students in a positive way. My class is going much smoother and calmer and students [are] more engaged.

Progress

In the past dozen years I have witnessed many developments in holistic education in Japan.

- The Japanese Society for Holistic Education was founded in 1997 and now has over 200 members — teachers, researchers, and parents. Every year, it publishes a book that focuses on topics such as Waldorf education in Japan, Violence and Peace, and ESD (education for sustainable development). The society also provides annual workshops and symposia and is an important network for holistic educators in Japan.
- In 1994, there was one Waldorf kindergarten in Tokyo; now there are five schools, with three more in the planning stages. Professor Atsuhilko Yoshida has provided important leadership in this area and has written a book on the Waldorf school in Kyoto.

- Under the leadership of Professor Yoshiharu Nakagawa, Ritsumeiken University is becoming an academic center for holistic education in Japan.

In contrast to these developments, the Japanese Ministry of Education, like many other government ministries, has become more conservative. There was an emphasis on creativity and individuality in the 1990s, but the Ministry has recently become very concerned with how Japanese students perform on international tests and has focused on more traditional approaches to learning. This tension between grassroots developments in holistic education and government policies exists throughout the industrialized world. The future of holistic education will depend on how deeply the seeds of holistic learning that are being planted by people like Yamanouchi, Yoshida, and Nakagawa take root.

Concluding Reflections

As I contemplate the possibilities of change, I find inspiration in William James's view:

> I am done with great things and big things, great institutions and big success, and I am for those tiny invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which if you give them time, will rend the hardest monuments of man's pride (Korten 2006, 315)

Growing on local levels, holistic education can also be seen as a global awakening. David Korten (2006, 356) writes that

> the momentum is building. Around the world people are organizing from the grass roots up to take back their lives, reject calls to war and violence, rebuild their local economies, democratize their political institutions, and create authentic cultures.

Eckhart Tolle (2005, 293) focuses more on awakening consciousness when he writes that

> we are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness, but they won't be talking about it in the news tonight. On our planet, and perhaps simultaneously in many parts of our galaxy and beyond, consciousness is awakening.…

Holistic education can be seen as part of this process, which can also be viewed as reclaiming the ancient vision of wholeness (Miller 2006).

I can say that my journey as been deeply transformative for me, and I hope it has been meaningful for many of the people I have worked with in Japan. My journey has been one of continual surprise and wonder. Emerson (1990, 238) wrote that "the results of life are uncalculated and uncalculable." The Japanese speak of *en* or the mysterious relatedness of all things. Sometimes when we meet a person or go to place and we feel a strong connection or even a sense of mutual destiny. Japan and its people, then, have been a profound experience of *en*. Emerson also wrote (1990, 200) that "the way of life is wonderful, it is by abandonment." To go to Japan I had to abandon myself, to let go, and thus I was able to experience some of the wonder that the universe offers us.

References

Emerson, R. W. 1990. *Selected essays, lectures, and poems*. New York: Signet.

Griffin, R. 1977, February. Discipline: What's it taking out of you? *Learning*, pp. 77-80.

Korten, D. C. 2006. *The great turning: From empire to earth community.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Miller, J. 2007. *The holistic curriculum*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Miller, J. 1993. *The holistic teacher*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Miller, J. 1994. *The contemplative practitioner*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Miller, J. 1995. Meditating teachers. *Inquiring Mind* 12:19-22.

Miller, J. 2006. Ancient roots of holistic education. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice* 19:55-59.

Miller, J., and A. Nozawa, 2002. Meditating teachers: A qualitative study. *Journal of Inservice Education* 20: 179-192.

Miller, J., and A. Nozawa. 2005 Contemplative practices in teacher education. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice* 18:42-47.

Tezuka, I. 1995. *School with forest and meadow*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press

Tolle, E. 2005. *A new earth: Awakening to your life's purpose*. New York: Dutton.

According to Local Custom

A Talmudic Look at Education

Alan A. Block

To know the local custom is to appreciate the integrity of the community and social relationships.

The Mishnah, an ancient body of Hebrew law, says,

> If someone hired workers and told them to come early or to stay late, [in] a place where it is customary not to come early and not to stay late, he is not permitted to force them. [In] a place where it is customary to feed [them], he must feed [them], to provide [them] with a dessert, he must provide [it], everything in accordance with local custom (*Bava Metzia*, 82a).

Here, the halakhah — the law, the way one should act, or literally, "the way in which one goes — refers to the power of local custom to determine what an employer can require of his workers. Unless something else has been previously stipulated, all conditions of employment — from responsibilities to benefits — are contingent on practices established in and by local custom. As the Rabbis might say, "What does this mean?" I believe the meaning extends beyond labor relations and applies to education.

The conflict between local custom and national standards has beset education in the United States from its public beginnings. It is an argument between those who advocate for local control and those who require more bureaucratic structures. We are certainly not at the end of this debate; indeed, the rhetoric from both sides increases daily in volume and acrimony. Who should be responsible for the organization and running of the school system? Should what the children in any community study and learn be set by the wishes of the local constituency, which includes the parents, or should it be set by the mandates of the state and national government? Who should be responsible for the standards by which teachers are accredited and curricula developed? Should it be the

ALAN A. BLOCK is a Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has written extensively on curriculum, ethics, and education. His new book, *Pedagogy, Religion and Practice: Reflections on Ethics and Teaching*, will published in September 2007 by Palgrave-Macmillan.

people whose children are subject to them, or the state, which at least theoretically advocates the excellence and equality of opportunity that requires standardization? What role should federal government play in the regulations of the local and culturally diverse public schools? What, indeed, is the teacher to do? Of course, if all is organized and practiced according to the policies of local custom, then what chance is there ever for change and innovation?

I believe what is really intended in the Talmudic tradition is a respect for the worker — and by extension, the student and any other person. For to know the local custom is to understand the entire context in which work must take place, which precludes the arbitrary establishment of any practice that treats workers as anything less than free individuals. Workers enter into work relationships with certain rights that derive from the histories that comprise their daily lives. To know the local custom is to require an appreciation for the integrity of community and social relations, which includes the particular history of those relations. The adherence to local custom prevents anyone from enforcing regulations without regard to long-standing local conditions and traditions. It prevents the exploitation of the less powerful. Corporate patriarchy is here prohibited by the Rabbis. Here no company stores are permitted. Teacher-directed classrooms, too, are forbidden and, it would seem, course syllabi must forever be negotiated.

The conversation has only begun.

Local or Ideological?

In the execution of my labor, I prepare syllabi, assignments, and tests; and I assign texts that I have chosen. Even students' free reading choices are often subject to my approval. The local custom I follow is, perhaps, not so very local. Perhaps, instead, it is ideological. It derives from what I think a teacher should do. My practice assumes a student whom I have invented and which may actually be me. I have learned these ideas somewhere, and they may have nothing to do with my students. Perhaps there is nothing local but my arbitrary location, which could be anywhere. And besides, my daughters are in school — is there a local custom that organizes their day and their practice? This Talmudic conversation on the importance of local custom speaks directly to my situation in the classroom.

Ethics

Local custom cannot be absolute. Some customs strike us as unjust. For example, slavery or school segregation could be considered local customs. Talmudic law recognizes that ethical principles must also guide action. Still, the highest principles are "local"; they emphasize the *face-to-face*, and the importance of *the Other*.

I am a teacher and the students enter the classroom without need of my permission. I work until I deserve them. They are, after all, Other. To look into the face of the Other means that I am not independent and solitary, and that my behavior may not be originally established for my benefit. Perhaps in our overcrowded classrooms and lecture halls, driven by external standards and instruments of assessment, we tend to lose sight of the faces which should command us. We hide ourselves — our own faces — behind the comfort of the lectern, perhaps, to avoid these face-to-face commitments so that we might confidently and comfortably continue what we are doing. If, as Levinas (1990) says, violence is to act as if we were the only one present, then many of us in our classrooms practice violence. Levinas explains,

> I do not only know something. I am also part of society.... Speaking institutes the moral relationship of equality and consequently recognizes justice.... What one says, the content communicated, is possible only thanks to this face-to-face relationship in which the Other counts as an interlocutor prior even to being known. (Levinas 1990, 8)

To speak to another is to hear that Other's voice in the form of a question or a demand addressed to me. To be part of society is to move outside my self. Everything over which I assert control by definition must belong to me — is part of me — and cannot, therefore, be respectful. To speak to another, says Levinas, I must acknowledge her freedom. To claim to possess anythin — even knowledge, and knowledge of another — is to commit a violence. To claim to know another person is to transform that subject into an object which can be then contained. This, I learn, would be

the practice of violence. I am the one in the classroom who knows, but if I claim to be so, I have already instituted the practice of violence against my students. The face of the Other at which I look is the acknowledgment of the other's claim on me. The face is what I cannot make an object because that would be to possess it. I can give a failing grade to a thing but never to a face. And vice versa: the ascription "that asshole teacher" can be applied only to a thing.

The conflict between local custom and national standards has beset education in the United States from its public beginnings.

I wonder if there is enough time in the semester to stand face-to-face with my students. Thank goodness! How would I have time for anything else?

I think that it is to this imperative for face-to-face meeting that the Mishnah refers. There is no end to this obligation. Thank goodness! How else can I begin to fulfill my responsibilities to students.

And the local custom to which we are so heavily responsible? It must be always elaborated face-to-face.

I am a worker. I have workers. Of course, I am called professor and I call them students. And I was once a student to teachers who had been educated by teachers to be teachers. I am a teacher to those who are learning to be teachers. I am a student to those who would be teachers. The moral responsibility that falls upon me rests in the face of the students. "For Judaism," Levinas (1990, 8) writes, "the world becomes intelligible before a human face...." Not in their gazes which I might possess, but in their faces which I might never know, and which command me infinitely to act, rests my professional responsibility.

Questioning

> In the dark, stuffiness of the cheder, the Rabbi stands before the class of children. The youthful charges, some not more than five or six, sit on the benches with their feet dangling several inches from the floor. The Rabbi is tall and his beard is wild and flowing. He wears the traditional garb: black trousers, what seems to be a permanently soiled white shirt, a black coat that flies up behind him as he paces back and forth before the students, and a black *kippah* (skullcap). The students sit silently, expectantly and terrified. He stares at his charges and in a stern voice asks, "Class, can anyone tell me why the first book of the Bible, *Bereshit*, begins with the letter *gimel*?" Confused and panicked, not a child moves, nor offers a response. Each sits with his head down trying desperately to avoid notice. "Well," the Rabbi thunders, "can anyone tell me why the first book of the Bible, *Bereshit*, begins with the letter *gimel*?" He stares with wild, almost crazed eyes at the frightened children sitting quaking in their seats. The silence intensifies. "Can no one give me an answer?" the Rabbi roars. Suddenly, from the back of the room a hand goes up. "Yes," the Rabbi says, "can you please tell me why the first book of the Bible, *Bereshit*, begins with the letter *gimel?"* In a hushed and tentative voice, the child responds, "But Rabbi, the first book of the Bible doesn't begin with the letter *gimel*; it begins with the letter *bet*." The other children sit horrified and await tremblingly for the wrath of the Rabbi to come down on their poor classmate. The Rabbi stares out at the brave child for another ten seconds, and he says with a soft lilt in his voice, "Well, that's one answer!"

I have always loved that story. What is moving is not just the child's bravery, which seems to soften the heart of the rabbi. It's also the respect given to the act of questioning. In an open classroom, conversation would never end. For every answer, another question. Yes, I would respond, that is one answer. There is, of course, a danger for me in that open classroom: If I teach students how to ask questions, then how can I stop them from asking me questions for which I have no answers. How shall I control the classroom when the world might be in there! And if answers and questions are not readily forthcoming, can I yet consider myself a teacher? What should occur in the classroom that learning would take place? What is the motive for a type of learning based on objectives

— but no, that is a false question because I already know its answer.

Contemporary issues of curriculum swirl about issues of control — of children, knowledge, dreams — and who should be responsible for its establishment. Control — that is the only answer in the classrooms of the United States and, I fear, in too much of the rest of the world. It is comforting, I suspect, to know exactly what material must be covered; it is satisfying to know that the material has been covered. And so I wonder, if there were no objectives, then what would we do here daily? How would we know when the class or the day or the year should end? I do not think that these are matters to be dealt with by epistemologists or efficiency experts — or even curriculum developers. I think that these are issues of ethics.

Into the World

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai and his son Elazar went and hid in a cave. A miracle happened. A carob tree and a spring of water were created. They took off their clothes and sat buried up to their necks in the sand. All day they would study, and at prayer-time they would get dressed and wrapped. Then they would take off their clothes to prevent their rotting.

> They lived twelve years in the cave. Elijah came and sat in the opening of the cave and said, "Who will tell Bar Yohai that Caesar is dead and his decree has been repealed?"
>
> They came out. They saw people plowing and sowing, and they said, "They ignore the life of eternity and busy themselves with the life of this world!" [Whatever] they cast their eyes [on] immediately burned up. A heavenly voice came out and said to them, "Have you come out to destroy my world? Go back to your cave" (*Shabbat*, 33b).

There is a political context to this story. The legend has it that the Roman occupiers were rounding up and executing rabbis whom they suspected of inciting rebellion against Roman rule. It is said that Shimon bar Yohai managed to escape Jerusalem hidden in a coffin carried out of the city gates by his followers. In the company of only his son, Elazar, he remained in self-imposed exile until the Roman forces were driven from Palestine. Despite their danger, how wonderful to be engaged almost without conflict in regular study and prayer! Hidden in the cave, Bar Yohai and his son need never consider nor deal with the daily world; their sustenance comes by heavenly miracle, and they are physically and spiritually satisfied. Father and son engage constantly in study except for times of prayer, meals, and sleep.

In this manner they lived for twelve full years. I think these two are quintessential scholars. They do nothing but study; they are consumed by study. But, absorbed so completely in their scholarship, Bar Yohai and his son suffer a loss of sympathy for the diurnal world when they compare it to the world of study in which they have flourished. Of local customs they know and care nothing. When the threat of political retribution is gone, they exit their cave, and look with contempt upon the workaday world — whatever they cast their eyes upon is instantly incinerated. Immersed in their study, they have become enemies of the world. Ironically enough, they have become as dangerous to the people as had been the Roman conquerors.

> "Go back to your cave" they are commanded.
>
> They returned and stayed [in the cave] twelve more months. It is said that the decree for the evil in Gehinnom is twelve months. A heavenly voice came out and said, "Come out of your cave."
>
> They came out. Every place Rabbi Elazar harmed, Rabbi Shimon healed. [*Shabbat*, 33b]

As a result of the additional period of exile, the older Shimon has come to understand the integrity of the daily world. He knows that the contempt with which he treated the world upon his original return has been punished by an additional twelve months in exile from it (the same length of time sinners, of whom we all must account ourselves, must remain in Gehinnom after death before returning to God). Elazer, however, remains contemptuous. For him the world of study — the world of the cave — is inviolable. Elazer must be carefully watched; though he is brilliant, he lacks compassion for, or understanding of, the world. But Rabbi Shimon, from his study, learns such tenderness. From within his cave, Shimon learns to see the world and its populace anew.

Levinas reminds us that Moses and the prophets were preoccupied not with the state of the human soul, but with the welfare of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. As individuals, we respond to the needs of the other, and not to some ideal spiritual state. To be a teacher is to work in the mundane world to work for its repair. Levinas (1990, 14) writes: "For Judaism, the goal of education consists in instituting a link between man and the saintliness of God and in maintaining man in this relationship." This link is forged in practice and manifests itself in local custom, and rests in responsibility to the other. It is what and how we teach. Teach we must; it is the law, and it is *our* law. Teachers we be, and it commits us illimitably.

Levinas writes, "I see myself *obligated* with respect to the other; consequently, I am infinitely more demanding of myself than of others" (1990, 22). Levinas (1990, 19) says that "the daily fidelity to the ritual gesture demands a courage that is calmer, nobler and greater than that of the warrior." I think now that that gesture is the loyalty to the local custom grounded in eternal law. It is ethics. And that ethical stance grounds us in humility.

Humility

Once, a famous scholar came to the Rabbi of Lublin (cited in Buber 1975, 312). The scholar complained to the Rabbi: "How is it that so many flock about you? I am much more learned than you, yet they do not throng to me." And the Rabbi of Lublin answered, "You know, I too am astonished that so many should come to one as insignificant as myself, instead of looking to you whose learning moves mountains. Perhaps this is the reason: they come to me because I am astonished that they come, and they do not come to you, because you are astonished they do not come." Our humility is our strength; we are never as important as those we teach and whom we serve. Our hubris is our failure. We must work until we deserve them.

References

Buber, M. 1975. *Tales of the Hasidim.* New York: Schocken.

Levinas, E. 1990. *Difficult Freedom*, translated by S. Hand. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The Tao of Dewey

Ronald Lee Zigler

The similarities between Dewey's approach to education and that of the Zen masters is a reflection of the way Dewey perceived the world.

Ronald Lee Zigler is Associate Professor of Education at Penn State Abington. His primary area of interest is the common ground underlying concepts from Eastern and Western philosophy, and relevant research on the mind-body, especially as it pertains to moral growth and development.

Identifying similarities between John Dewey's ideas and Eastern thought is not unprecedented. In 1962, Victor Kobyashi published a paper which examined parallels between the Zen concept of *satori*, or awakening, and Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience. For Dewey the aesthetic domain was not necessarily confined to the fine arts. Rather, he emphasized that aesthetic quality can be found underlying every experience — an idea that is common to several Eastern traditions. In this essay, I hope to contribute to this discussion on how Dewey shared an Eastern approach to the possibilities for personal growth. In doing so, I will discuss some topics that are generally considered more philosophical than educational, but I hope to show that they do have pedagogical implications.

To suggest a relationship between Dewey and these Eastern traditions, however, is not to imply a direct influence of classical Eastern texts on Dewey's thinking. Rather, I believe that similarities between Dewey's ideas and those found in the Zen and Taoist traditions have less to do with discursive reasoning or scholarly texts and more to do with the manner in which Dewey personally experienced the world. Dewey possessed an aptitude to experience the world in a manner that Taoist or Zen masters would consider more accurate — more accurate, that is, than the experience had by the ordinary individual in a conventional society.

Collective Habits

In the *Tao Te Ching*, we are provided a characterization of the stages and conditions under which a society — or an individual — lives when it has failed to develop a capacity to respond to the challenges and problems of everyday life: i.e., has failed to cultivate a life in accordance with the *way*, the *Tao*. Such an individual or society is then seen as increasingly dysfunctional, specifically because, out of touch with

the natural flow of life, it can not respond well to changes in the environment. In the classic Taoist text, the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu (1974, 99) observes that

> when the *way* was lost there was virtue; when virtue was lost there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost there was rectitude; when rectitude was lost there were the rites. The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and good faith, and the beginning of disorder.

The "rites" in this ancient text represent the formal procedures, social customs, and collective habits of a society, widely shared among its members. When these social customs begin to rigidly define a society and its individual members, that society may become unstable during times of change. Disorder and dysfunction is thus imminent.

Ultimately, Dewey thought, the development of our creative powers hinges on the development of our imagination, since all new possibilities reach us through the imagination.

To emphasize the failures of a rigid society, the *Tao Te Ching* (1974, 99) advances one of its more famous paradoxes: "A man of the highest virtue does not keep to virtue and that is why he has virtue. A man of the lowest virtue never strays from virtue and that is why he is without virtue." To grasp the paradox, we need to recognize the occasions where the word "virtue" refers to *conventional* virtue. Thus, for example, the man "who never strays from [conventional] virtue" is "without [true] virtue."

In *Human Nature and Conduct* (1930), Dewey took up the same matter in his discussion of habit. A principal challenge for humans according to Dewey is to form habits which are flexible and responsive to our everchanging environment as opposed to habits that restrict and limit our responses to environmental challenges. The problem with habits is that they may either liberate us or restrict us — limiting us when we encounter situations for which our habitual ways of acting are ill-suited, for example, when we are faced with the unexpected.

Habits may liberate us insofar as they free our mind from attending to certain details of our conduct so that we can attend to other challenges or features of our environment. This idea might be illustrated by the observation that when we first learn to tie our shoe laces, it requires the considerable focus of our attention. Then, once this task becomes automatic and habitual, the mind — our focus of attention — is free to attend to other matters of interest, even creative endeavors (e.g., thinking how to end a poem one is composing). In addition, for Dewey, we may also cultivate the "habit" of reflection and thereby avoid the problems created by otherwise blind, "habitual" responses.

Unfortunately, as Dewey observed, some habits, like social customs, can become "ruts" that limit and constrict us, most especially when we encounter novelty — in particular, the unexpected challenges of social life which are an inevitable part of the human experience. Indeed, for Dewey (1930, 96) a principal problem with our educational system is that it frequently exposes children to a "premature mechanization of impulsive activity" into the "fixed pattern of adult habits." In this way the habit-forming function of school limits the developing potential of the child rather than expanding it.

Paradoxes

To break free of social ruts, we must look at things in radically new ways. Indeed, we must often act in ways that are paradoxical. As the *Tao Te Ching* (1974, 95) says, "If you would have a thing shrink, you must first stretch it; If you would have a thing weakened, you must first strengthen it." At first blush, such advice may strike one as nonsensical, but Dewey tried to make a similar point. To overcome habits that restrict us, we may need to exercise what Dewey (1930, 35) termed a "flank movement" rather than a direct attempt to stop the unwanted habit. As an example, Dewey asked us to consider an effort to change poor posture. To try to improve our posture "directly" via a special act of willpower after being told to do so, is comparable to an alcoholic whose effort to stop drinking merely centers on the intention not to drink. It won't work. What's more, thinking

about the habit keeps us in the same rut. What we need is to "discover some course of action, having nothing to do with the habit of standing erect" (Dewey 1930, 35). Instead of worrying about the old, undesirable habit, we need to think of some action that creates an entirely new habit that happens to produce the desired end.

Although the ancient Taoist text is somewhat cryptic on this topic, I think Dewey came close to the intended meaning. If our goal is to "shrink" we must first "stretch" and if our goal is to "weaken" we must first "strengthen." In each instance we are instructed to pursue a course of action that, on the surface might appear to have little to do with our intended purpose.

Zen in the Art of Archery

In Eugen Herrigel's classic booklet, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, we are afforded an insight into an important Eastern philosophical tradition — as well as a deeper insight into some of the pedagogical implications of Dewey's theory of habits. Herrigel was a German philosopher who, while teaching in Japan, took up the study of Zen as cultivated through the practice of archery. In the Zen tradition of Buddhism, archery, as well as meditation and other branches of the martial arts, represents a formal discipline of study whose aim is to foster a state of mind-body integration and harmony — much as Tai Chi functions for the Taoist. This state of mind-body harmony is an important ideal and is deemed essential for creating a more accurate, more vivid, and more aesthetically real experience of the natural world.

At the commencement of his study of the Zen approach to archery, Herrigel (1971, 44) observed that great emphasis was placed initially upon "practice and repetition" for the purpose of "mastery of form." Such practice and repetition continues to increase in intensity as one's study ensues, with the purpose of giving a pupil complete *control* of his or her craft. Yet, the goal of this repetition is not for the sake of developing habits that confine and restrict us; it is just the opposite. Herrigel (1971, 46-48) writes that over a course of years the student will discover that "forms which he perfectly masters no longer oppress but liberate." This is because the practice of these skills ultimately lends itself to establishing "the right frame of mind for creating" and "the meditative repose" which is deemed the foundation for "that vital loosening and equability of all his [the student's] powers." It is as if the special regimen of "habits" that Zen archery seeks to cultivate has the potential to enhance all dimensions of our conduct and the manner in which we meet the challenges of our environment.

In a related fashion, Dewey (1930, 177) described "a certain delicate combination of habit and impulse" that optimizes our creative, imaginative powers and thereby (as Herrigel wrote) will "establish the right frame of mind for creating." Such development requires a base of knowledge, but for Dewey knowledge does not simply reside in a vague, mental "consciousness," but in "muscles" — the *mind-body*. This recognition is implicit in the traditions of Tai Chi as well as Zen archery, where the practice and repetition of specific skills define a developmental sequence in which one is not simply cultivating behavioral habits or cognitive processes in the mind, but rather an integration of the mind-body as a means of developing an experience and understanding at a most profound level — where imagination and the aesthetic dimension of reality is never lost from experience. This is what Herrigel terms "the right frame of mind for creating" and the "meditative repose" required for the full development of the student's powers.

Ultimately, Dewey thought, the development of our creative powers hinges on the development of our imagination, since all new possibilities reach us through the imagination. The significance of imagination's impact on our lives is best captured in Dewey's (1934, 43), observation that "things unrealized in fact come home to us and have power to stir us." Yet, without the requisite habits, discipline and practice, our imaginative powers wither, and we fail to tap our creative powers whereby we can successfully meet the challenges of the unexpected and to advance the good and our best ideals.

Ideals

For both Dewey as well as Herrigel's Zen master, embarking on a program of self-improvement or mind-body integration is to adopt a goal that represents an ideal—a highly valued end. But Dewey didn't view ideals in the ordinary way — as a goal that is external to our actions. Instead, he believed that an ideal must be embedded in our ongoing activity. As

Dewey (1971, 262) put it, "Ideals are like the stars; we steer by them, not towards them." He later elaborated on this idea: "The ideal is not a goal to be attained. It is a significance to be felt, appreciated" (Dewey 1930, 263). As we will see, the function of an ideal in Dewey's philosophy is very similar to the function of ideals in Zen: Ideals must emerge in the *process* of human development, not at the end.

The function of an ideal in Dewey's philosophy is very similar to the function of ideals in Zen: Ideals must emerge in the process of human development, not at the end.

In his description of the relationship between an ideal and the conduct we perform to reach it, Dewey embarks upon one of his most abstract discussions, but it is a discussion that makes sense in the context of Herrigel's practice of Zen archery. Dewey's discussion is abstract because he is attempting to describe the manner in which a particular subjective experience emerges in the "field" of our awareness *while* we are engaged in action. Specifically, Dewey (1930, 262) refers to our awareness of our goal, when it is an ideal, as an emotion that accompanies a "flickering light" that guides our development:

> Even if the light is flickering and the illuminated portion stands forth only dimly from the shadowy background, *it suffices if we are shown the way to move*. To the rest of the consequences, collateral and remote, corresponds a background of feeling, of diffused emotion. This forms the stuff of the ideal. (Dewey, 1930, 262; emphasis added).

Dewey's comment above is among his most abstract observations. Yet, in his attempt to capture in words the nature of ideals as experiences that emerge within our conduct — and within our awareness — he inadvertently describes Herrigel's own experience, as well as the function of the Zen master as Herrigel came to understand it. A consideration of both sources sheds light on each.

According to Herrigel, it is the function of the Zen master to show us the direction, *the way to move*, the next step in an unfolding developmental process that we cannot fully grasp in our early stages of development. The master facilitates the cultivation of this experience by keeping us on track in the pursuit of our goal. As Dewey observes, this goal is "vague" and our normal mode of understanding — "intelligence" — can illuminate but a small part of it.

Bringing this experience more fully into our awareness requires that we continue to practice our chosen discipline — in Herrigel's case, archery. Slowly, with practice, we begin to acquire on our own what Dewey terms that "diffused emotion" which is the "stuff of the ideal." Indeed, these passages aptly capture the experience Herrigel describes for us as he progressed in his study of Zen archery and, in effect, began to gain a greater sense of the relation between the true or ultimate goal he was pursuing and the means by which he was pursuing it. Herrigel (1971, 60) tells us that only after the investment of considerable time and repetition did he begin to develop some skill in his practice. His growing expertise was revealed to him on the occasions that he performed more "right shots" with his bow and arrow, which his Master signaled "by a deep bow."

Herrigel's experience underscores the tenuous relation between conscious thinking processes and his engagement in a different mode of knowing, understanding, and awareness which, while experiential, is not intellectual or conceptual. He wrote that he was himself perplexed by his experience that emerged as he began to grow more competent in the discipline he was practicing. He indicated that he could not fully explain or understand this experience when it initially emerged, since it felt as if he shot his arrows "without doing anything." Nonetheless, he appreciated the significance of this experience: It marked the point of being able to distinguish a correct from an incorrect "shot" with his bow. Herrigel (1971, 60) wrote that he henceforth recognized a "qualitative difference … [that] … is so great that it cannot be overlooked once it has been experienced." In Deweyan terms, Herrigel experienced "the stuff of the ideal," and it has

emerged as Dewey would have predicted — only *after* the habit had begun to be established.

Dewey and the Zen and Taoist traditions give us a deeper sense of why the most meaningful experiences cannot be cultivated directly through the effort and desire to willfully bring them about. This would be, as it were, to exercise our conventional intelligence, which, as Dewey observed, can only "throw a spotlight on that little part of the whole." Instead, our most valuable experiences emerge during ongoing activities — when the proper conditions (i.e., habits) have been created. Most importantly, Dewey (1930, 263-4) observes that these experiences are most likely to be found in those activities "where effort ceases; where thought and doing fall back upon a course of events which effort and reflection cannot touch." This experience arises in "a point in deliberate action where definite thought fades into the ineffable and undefinable — into emotion." This, as we have seen, is the precise experience that Herrigel shares with us, an experience that accompanies the cessation of effort ("without my doing anything") and is ineffable and undefinable. As Herrigel (1971, 60) writes: "how it came about that my tightly closed right hand suddenly flew back wide open, I could not explain then and I cannot explain today." Nonetheless, the *qualitative* difference in this experience from anything previously encountered is unmistakable. As Herrigel had written, the qualitative difference in his experience was so great that "it could not be overlooked once it has been experienced."

For Dewey, as well as Zen, the pursuit of ideals as "ends" does not belong to the future. They are embedded in the present, and must be cultivated in the present. Otherwise, as Dewey (1930, 265) states, we are engaged in "the subordination of activity to a result outside itself." And this is a sure way of undermining everything that Dewey, the Taoists, and Zen masters wish for us to derive from the activity of our life. This is most forcefully expressed in *Zen and the Art of Archery*, where it is made clear to Herrigel by his master that the aim or goal of the discipline in which he has engaged himself is *not to hit the target*. As Herrigel's (1971, 63) Zen master puts it "if you hit the target with nearly every shot you are nothing more than a trick archer who likes to show off." What is important for both Dewey and the Zen master is the *quality of our present action*. To focus improperly on the "aim" or "goal" in a narrow sense is in Dewey's (1930, 266) words "to throw away the surest means of attaining it, namely attention to the full use of present resources in the present situation."

What both Dewey and the Zen master are describing is a form of attention that is not readily grasped by our normal focus of awareness. Consequently, to cultivate it we may need to engage ourselves in "breaking down old rigidities of habit" (Dewey 1930, 57) to engage in a new discipline with which we are unfamiliar so that we can begin the process of establishing a form of awareness and understanding that will serve us well under *any* circumstance of life.

Conclusion

The work of Dewey and Eastern thought is in many ways so different from conventional thinking that it is necessarily elusive. It does not help that Dewey is often extremely abstract, and that Taoism and Zen sometimes seem to be purposely vague. Thus, I would like to conclude with two examples of how we might foster creativity along the lines discussed in this essay.

Near the end of his life, Aldous Huxley (1962, 283) wrote about the need for a new discipline of study: the *non-verbal humanities.* According to Huxley, the non-verbal humanities are necessary to counteract the overwhelming bias in our schools toward training on the "symbolic level." Indeed, he was critical of the use of the humanities, conventionally understood, as an antidote to too much science and technology in the curriculum. As Huxley (1962, 282) saw it, introducing the humanities — e.g., literature — in an effort to humanize our curriculum in order to compensate for the focus on science and technology is simply to replace the "excessive specialization" in one kind of "symbolic education" with the excessive specialization in another kind of symbolic education. What is needed is not more conceptual training through the medium of language or math, but rather the training of perception and our elementary awareness. That is, the cultivation of "unconceptualized" non-verbal experience would, to use Dewey's phrase, go a long way "to break down the rigidities of old habits" and expand consciousness.

My second recommendation is to draw upon Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) work on the nature of "flow." The flow experience is like the non-self-conscious, "effortless" experiences that Dewey and Eastern masters talk about. The positive elements attributed to the experience of flow are also linked to the individual's development of a repertoire of skills and habits that define a discipline, a discipline in which one is continually and incrementally challenged so as to advance his/her level of mastery. The mastery of a single discipline simultaneously advances the student's overall capacity for patience and concentration. To develop such mastery, it is important to begin with activities that students find intrinsically interesting and make sure that their intrinsic motivation is preserved throughout the skill development. Such a program can help students develop the fullest range of their potentials.

References

Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1990. Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. New York: Harper & Row.

Dewey, J. 1934. A common faith., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dewey, J. 1930. *Human nature and conduct*. New York: Modern Library. (Originally published in 1922)

Dewey, J. 1971. The study of ethics. In *John Dewey: The Early Works, 1882-1898, Volume 4: 1882-1898.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press (Originally published in 1894)

Herrigel, E. 1971. Zen in the art of archery., New York: Vintage. (Originally published in 1953)

Huxley, A. 1962, Spring. Education on the nonverbal level. *Daedalus* 279-293.

Kobayashi, V. 1962, February. The quest for experience: Zen, Dewey and education. *Comparative Education Review* 1962, 217-222.

Lao Tzu. 1974. *Tao te ching*. Translated with an introduction by D.C. Lau. London: Penguin.

Commentary

Global Capitalism and Education

Kate McReynolds

In "Globalization and Urban Education" (*Encounter*, Winter 2006), David Baronov addresses an important and under-reported issue: the devastating effects of global capitalism on public education. Predatory capitalism and rampant consumerism threaten, as Baronov points out, to turn education into a commodity. I would suggest, however, that globalization has not made students into "clients," but that they too have become mere commodities.

The standardized and homogenized educational practices demanded by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) are designed to streamline the production of a globally competitive workforce with the goal of expanding our nation's economic and military supremacy. Within global capitalism, young people have value only insofar as they are an exploitable resource. From this perspective I see education under NCLB as a factory or processing plant grinding out the product — demoralized, dispirited and alienated youngsters — for our globally competitive future. How else can we understand a political policy that emphasizes future economic gain while ignoring the present misery of millions of children? Today in the United States, thirteen million children live in poverty. Of these, 5.6 million children live in extreme poverty (annual income under $7,610 for a family of three). During President Bush's administration extreme poverty has increased 20% (Children's Defense Fund 2005).

Income Gaps

Exacerbated by globalization, the gap described by Baronov between the wealthy and the poor is painfully real. Consider New York City, where I live. In 2003-2004 the poorest school districts received $634 per student, while per student aid in the wealthy districts was $1,218 (New York State Education Department 2006). There is convincing empirical evidence that poverty and its associated hardships are major contributors to poor academic performance; as need increases (i.e., poverty) academic achievement declines. But, despite the shocking increase in extreme poverty and the persistent disparities in wealth and academic achievement among our nation's children, the Bush administration continues to promote standardization and high stakes testing as the solution to the so-called achievement gap. To me, this "solution" isn't merely a matter of poor judgment; it's a moral outrage.

Baronov points out that problems of poverty are intertwined with patterns of migration and immigration, compounding the challenges faced by communities and school districts. Nationwide, immigration has increased 16% over the last five years (Lyman 2006). The people of New York City, for example, are overwhelmingly immigrants and first generation Americans. Since the mid-1990s this group has made up two-thirds of the population. During this time, poverty rates for children of immigrants to New York City have been 50% higher than for children of non-immigrants (Easter and Refki 2004). Increasingly, new immigrants are settling in communities that have not traditionally attracted foreign-born residents, posing new and unfamiliar challenges to previously homogeneous school districts. Federal control of local school districts requires communities to meet these challenges by closing the gap in achievement test scores between privileged and underprivileged children, and to accomplish this using the market-based reforms, increased standardization, and high-stakes testing Baronov describes. Within this narrow definition of equity,

KATE MCREYNOLDS, PH.D., is a child clinical psychologist who works in New York City. She has contributed several articles and letters to *Encounter*, and is the Associate Editor of this Journal

schools must eliminate (at the risk of sanctions) the test score gap while the underlying causes remain.

Individuality

Although the achievement gap is decreasing in some schools (although hardly to the extent standards advocates had hoped for), this is often the result of mind-numbing test prep and restricting curricula to subjects in which the federal government mandates testing. To poverty and lack of privilege in all its forms, children can now add a new gap: the opportunity to study a rich and varied curriculum.

A varied and rich curriculum enables children to discover their unique individual talents and interests. It helps them develop as individuals. But as Baronov suggests, globalization requires a homogenized workforce in which workers are replaceable regardless of the country or setting. Thus, standardized schooling better fits the needs of global capitalism, which means that individuality is thrown by the wayside.

Punitive Measures

Most fundamentally, what Baronov's article implies, yet does not explicitly state, is that global capitalism does not care about children. Baronov describes the impact of punitive, repressive anti-crime legislation aimed at urban youth as "disruptive" and "dispiriting," but this only hints at the magnitude of our policymakers' disdain for children. A 2005 joint report by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (Amnesty International 2005), reporting the status of child criminal offenders worldwide, illuminates the extent to which American anti-crime measures disregard the needs and special status of children, including their potential for rehabilitation. The investigators obtained information from 154 countries on the number of people serving life sentences without parole for crimes they committed when they were children. With the exception of the United States, the investigators could identify only a total of 12 people in three countries who were serving such life sentences. In the United States, this figure stands at 2,225. Forty-two states and the Federal government permit such sentences. As the authors of the report point out, virtually every country in the world rejects the punishment of life without parole for child offenders. They state that

> Such harsh treatment for youth offenders cannot be squared with the most fundamental tenets of human rights law. International standards recognize that children, a particularly vulnerable group, are entitled to special care and protection because they are still developing physically, mentally, and emotionally.

It seems the United States has no intention of joining the world community on behalf of children. In a stunning rejection of international standards, it has refused to ratify the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, the international treaty that prohibits life imprisonment without parole as a violation of children's human rights. Since 1989, the treaty has been signed by 192 countries. The only other United Nations member state not to have ratified the treaty is the collapsed state of Somalia (Amnesty International USA 2006).

One of the problems posed by the treaty is that some of its provisions contradict United States law, for example the prohibition against life sentences without parole for children. Another "problem" is that the Convention on the Rights of the Child forbids the execution of minor children in capital cases. At the time of its review by the U.S. Senate, 20 states had statutes permitting the execution of child offenders. In 2005, the United States Supreme Court ruled that executing children was cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the eighth amendment of the U.S. Constitution. At the time that the Supreme Court ruled, there were 72 inmates in 12 states on death row for crimes they committed as children. Only three other countries in the world execute child offenders — China, Iran, and Nigeria — but since 2002, the United States has led the pack, responsible for 4 out of 6 juvenile executions. It seems that in the United States, sentencing children to death is not that unusual. (Human Rights Watch 2005).

I would like to be able to say that the U.S. refusal to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child was based on objections to issues other than executing children. But, that is not the case. On June 14, 1995, Senator Jesse Helms, then chairperson of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, blocked the ratifi-

cation of the treaty primarily because it would interfere with the states' constitutional liberty to impose the death penalty on children. Although the Supreme Court ruling on the death penalty is an important advance in the humane treatment of children, it is unlikely to lead to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Human rights after all, are not a priority of the Bush administration.

Our True Values

This brings me back to my claim that global capitalism doesn't care about children. This isn't quite right, of course. It is people that care or not, for children, for the earth, for the disenfranchised the world over. It is people, caring or otherwise, that sustain the political and economic systems within which we live and work. And so it must be said that we, the people, don't care enough about children. If we did, we'd worry less about our competitive position in the global economy and more about the 5.6 million children living in extreme poverty. If we thought more carefully about what children need now, we'd worry less about closing test score gaps and more about closing gaps in housing, health care, nutrition, and basic human rights—including the right of each child to develop her individual potentials.

Thirty-four years ago, E.F. Schumacher, a respected economist, wrote a book called *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973). He argued that the problems of the world, especially those created by global capitalism, are not primarily economic, scientific or technological failures, but are the result of a metaphysical failure, which he defined as our refusal to clarify our central moral convictions. According to Schumacher, the public's obsession with limitless economic expansion and its single-minded pursuit of material wealth are moral problems. He was right on target. Our country's obsession with material wealth and preeminence in the global economy has made us blind to our central convictions, the true democratic values that have made us a great nation. There is no wisdom or morality in policies that aim first to close test score gaps while children go hungry and senators fight for the right to execute children.

On the 5th anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings made another, in a long line of, morally vacuous speeches. But she unwittingly asked a question that could help our nation recover its moral bearings. She asked, What will it take to help the students who are struggling the most? The answer to this question will require a realignment of our priorities and a real commitment to the social welfare and human rights of children. Any such realignment must begin with the understanding that all children need education that does not make them a means to an end in global politics.

References

Amnesty International. 2005. The rest of their lives: Life without parole for child offenders in the United States. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engamr511622005>.

Amnesty International USA. 2006. Children's rights. Convention on the rights of the child. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <www.amnestyusa.org/children/crn_crc.html>.

Children's Defense Fund. 2005. The state of America's children. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/Greenbook_2005.pdf?docID=1741>.

Easter, Maud, and Dina Refki. 2004, November. The changing face of NYS: Immigrant youth in every community. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <www.cwig.albany.edu/IW%20NovFacts.pdf>.

Human Rights Watch. 2005. US Supreme Court ends executions. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/03/01/usdom10231.htm>.

Lyman, Rick. 2006, August 15. Census shows growth of immigrants. *New York Times*.

Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is beautiful: Economics as if people mattered*. London: Blond and Briggs.

New York State Education Department, Fiscal Analysis and Research Unit. 2006. State aid to schools: A primer, Pursuant to laws of 2006. Albany: The State University of New York. Accessed online on January 26, 2007 at <www.oms.nysed.gov/faru/Primer/Primer06_07/Primer06-07A.pdf>.

Letter to the Editor

The Camphill Community

It was a pleasure to read the Autumn, 2006, article by Robin Jackson about Camphill, a therapeutic community serving people with developmental disabilities. When I first heard about it as a college student in 1970, I knew I had to go, and the Camphill movement has profoundly influenced my life.

At the time I was attending New College, a progressive college in Sarasota, Florida. New College enabled me to carry out independent studies. I kept a journal from my fieldwork with special needs children, and my developmental psychology professor would suggest in our tutorials further explorations and readings from the questions that emerged. This was the relevant, progressive pedagogy I had wanted. But even though the college granted me tremendous freedom to pursue my individualized course of study, and I shared its alternative ideals, it did not feel like my community.

I found community in my year at Camphill's Newton Dee Village in Northern Scotland, near Aberdeen. Camphill gave me what I had felt was lacking in college.

Camphill was founded upon the holistic philosophy of the early 20th century philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner (who also inspired Waldorf Education, Biodynamic gardening, and other initiatives). Camphill's mission is both to live in a community shaped by Steiner's Anthroposophy and to provide a therapeutic community for individuals with disabilities. It is also an economic commune where no one draws a salary but all have their needs met. The exchange of money would work against Steiner's model of mutual interdependence, which is necessary for a community devoted to the highest development of its members. All are encouraged to join in the work and the social and spiritual life of the community, regardless of disabilities. In fact, there are no labels such as "staff" and "patients." In terms of social roles, community members are most commonly identified by the practical work they perform — farmers, weavers, potters, cooks, and so on. Of course, each kind of work involves its own set of skills and capacities, but I was often surprised by the high level of work of which people with significant developmental disabilities are capable.

Camphill's founding members began their community when they fled occupied Europe during WW II. They purchased an old estate along the banks of Scotland's Dee River; they chose a rural setting so that they could grow their own food biodynamically and live in harmony with the seasons and the land. Over 150 diverse souls lived at Newton Dee at that time. This multicultural community shared in the pastoral routines of village life, ordered in the way that Camphill believed was most conducive to human spiritual growth.

I saw many people benefit during my stay. Sally, for example, appeared almost stereotypically insane; she had a wild gleam in her blue eyes and a witch's cackle but very little speech. Formerly institutionalized, Sally found in Camphill a place to belong and a place where she could make her contribution. Sally's place in Camphill was with "her" pigs. She fed them and cleaned their quarters. It was apparent that she understood their ways. Sally found her gift of porcine empathy at Camphill and contributed that gift back to her community.

Finding my own role in Camphill was a struggle. Although I espoused its communal, egalitarian, holistic principles, I was used to an unstructured "do your own thing" lifestyle. Looking back, I realize how I personally benefited from Camphill's structure (time schedules, clearly defined roles, and rituals like Bible readings on Saturday evenings). Back then, in my early twenties, I felt almost threatened by its "totalitarian" framework (with a German accent no less).

I am still in contact with the founders of a second generation Camphill venture in the Republic of Ireland. Friends from my Scottish sojourn who committed their lives and raised their children in Camphill are still spawning new and more integrated ventures near Kilkenny Ireland. When I attempt to assess Camphill's accomplishments after almost three-quarters of a century (in these changing, worrisome times), I can think of no experiment that is bolder or more relevant.

For more information on Camphill communities, visit <www.camphill.org>. To find out more about Camphill in Ireland, contact Patrick Lydon at <callan@camphill.ie>.

—Tom Goodridge

Tom Goodridge was a special education teacher in Harlem for 11 years and is now working on a doctorate in ecological learning at Union Institute and University.

Book Reviews

Learning to Teach Inclusively: Student Teachers' Classroom Inquiries

by C. Oyler with Allaf, Hamre, Howard, Gore, Lee, and Wang

Published by Lawrence Erlbaum (Mahwah, NJ, 2006)

Reviewed by Chris Kliewer

During the last week of January, 2000, an article by the *Miami Herald* syndicated columnist Leonard Pitts appeared in newspapers across America describing a failed and seemingly irredeemable high school student named Jermaine Barnes. Barnes had been raised in abject poverty, surrounded by utter hopelessness. In turn, he lashed out at the society from which he had been excluded and abandoned. Barnes's teachers referred to him, Pitts noted, as "hell."

From the mist of this bleak existence, an art teacher emerged, Janis Klein-Young, who showed Barnes a picture of wildflowers she had ripped from a magazine. "Paint this," she told Barnes. And he did — beautifully. Klein-Young would go on to tutor Barnes outside of school, and as his skills developed, his paintings were exhibited and began to sell. Pitts wrote, "I'm struck by the fact that of all the things there are to paint, this tough kid from a watch-your-back part of town chooses graceful, delicate flowers."

The story of Jermaine Barnes is an amazing one in that a teacher, armed only with watercolors and a brush, was able to see past the label of "hell" into the capabilities of an adolescent most school professionals had given up on. I share this story with my graduate and undergraduate students who are either teachers or who are preparing to become teachers in the hope that the subsequent discussion will thoughtfully address the question, "How do we foster teachers who are able to see student capacities and competencies *and* create contexts that support these capacities and competencies?" At times a wonderfully rich debate ensues; other times I leave class dissatisfied and frustrated.

Chris Kliewer is a professor of special education at the University of Northern Iowa. His ethnographic research on literacy development in children with developmental disabilities has appeared in the *Harvard Educational Review*, the *Teachers College Record*, the *American Educational Research Journal*, and other journals.

The question seems simple but it is surprisingly complex and has guided my career from my days as a preschool teacher to my current status as an ethnographic researcher studying inclusive classrooms. In a recent publication with several colleagues (Kliewer et al., 2004), we quoted a research participant who told us about one of her kindergarten students, Elijah, a child with trisomy 21 (Down syndrome) and labeled as having significant developmental disabilities. Taking a sip of coffee, the teacher-participant whose pseudonym is Shayne Robbins, explained, "You know, after all these years, I really, really see it as about my imagination for a kid. Like Elijah, his only limitations were how I imagined he could do things" (p. 380). When she told us this in a research interview, I recall literally gasping. Most of us assume limitations are built into the child and here was this wonderful teacher suggesting that limitations might actually be built into the imagination of those who surround the child. Talk about an inversion of assumed reality! But how do we alter the equation for others? How do we create teacher-preparation programs that open the imagination of educators to a child's capacities and competencies and foster in them the skills to develop contexts that further support his or her development?

A new book by Celia Oyler and the Columbia University Teachers College Preservice Inclusion Study Group is one of the most thoughtful efforts to address this vital question. Titled *Learning to Teach Inclusively: Student Teachers' Classroom Inquiries*, the book takes us into a study group that opened the imagination of preservice teachers to the full possibility of learning environments arranged for signifi-

cant diversity in the student populations. Students with complex developmental disabilities participated along with their non-disabled peers.

The book begins with Oyler's Introduction, in which she explains the origin of the Preservice Inclusion Study Group. This is followed by five chapters written by preservice teachers. Each chapter is organized around a point of inquiry conducted during student teaching in the fashion of participant-guided action research. Following the five inquiry chapters is a discussion of the complexities of these placements by the supervisor of student teaching. The final chapter brings together the varied themes from throughout the book.

In the Introduction, Oyler explains (p. 5) that "Viewing teaching as a moral endeavor filled with uncertain and inevitable dilemmas positions the teacher always as an inquirer." In this brief statement, Oyler captures the essence of Leonard Pitts, Janis Klein-Young and Shayne Robbins described above. The notion of teaching as a *moral endeavor* contrasts with dominant perspective of teacher preparation as primarily a technical enterprise. As a moral enterprise, Oyler embraces Robert Coles's (1986) sense that education must imaginatively recognize the full depth and breadth of a child's rightful citizenship. This is a sorely lacking concept in relation to children with disabilities!

Oyler also notes that teaching is filled with uncertainty. Teaching cannot be reduced to placing a single-sized template placed over a classroom; yet current policy and dominant theoretical traditions often act as if it can. Thus the work of Oyler and colleagues becomes one of resistance which asks future teachers to bring a sense of imagination and problem solving to the complexity of a classroom.

Finally, the notion of the teacher as an *inquirer* is actually quite radical. The teacher becomes the producer of educational knowledge, not simply the reproducer or enactor. The teacher becomes an action researcher in an environment where change can occur.

In the first of the five inquiry chapters, Carine Allaf describes joining the Preservice Inclusion Study Group when she entered the Teachers College graduate program in elementary education. A requirement of the study group was that everyone develop a specific research project related to their student-teaching placement. Describing her findings, Allaf awakens us to the dramatically different ways settings affect children. In one placement, students who fell outside perceptions of normality struggled to find a valued place in the classroom community. Allaf writes (p. 20) that

> I realized that the issue of understanding differences was never addressed in this classroom. Any behavior that deviated from the norm was immediately criticized not just by the teacher but by the students as well.

In contrast, Allaf notes (p. 21) that students in her other placement

> were aware that they were in an inclusive classroom. They understood that everyone in that class possessed different talents and that they all had their own challenges. They openly discussed these similarities and differences and not only understood, but expected differentiated treatment.

As with each of the five inquiry chapters, Allaf's is followed by questions and ideas for reflection.

The second of the inquiry chapters has Barbara Wang, then working on her Masters in early childhood and elementary education at Teachers College, exploring the too-often-ignored, highly complex issue of children with significant disabilities fitting into the social networks of general classrooms. The chapter is not necessarily of the happy-ending variety. Wang presents in excruciating detail case studies of the struggles some children face when attempting to find respect and a valued space in the classroom. These are, however, stories that must be told if inclusive practices are to improve. Wang notes (p. 50) that

> Teaching is not simple. It is not easy. It is a profession where everyday is a challenge. It is often a personal struggle…. The classroom could be used as a forum to teach the ideals of who we would want to become.

In the next chapter, Scott Howard, then a Masters degree student in elementary education, examines notions of discipline and what gets referred to as class-

room *management*. Howard disengages himself from traditional sweeping approaches to controlling children and argues for an individualized approach to setting expectations, one that involves the specific child in context. Howard evokes important points from Alfie Kohn's (1999) efforts to alter the discussion of discipline in American classrooms. Rather than relying heavily on punitive measures, Howard asks us to consider (p. 68) the possibility of saying, "Something has gone wrong here. What might we do about it?"

In the fourth of the inquiry chapters, Leslie Gore, working on her M.S. in elementary education, takes us into the intricacies of developing multilevel instructional approaches for diverse classrooms. Gore describes one lesson in which she read to her primary-aged students from Tomie de Paolo's classic *Strega Non*, in which a character goes through several epic struggles related to his chores. Gore then describes how she involved the children in several subsequent, related activities that brought their own histories into the story and turned the book into a thematic experience crossing various curricular areas. Gore emphasizes that the successful multilevel curriculum is created upon the somewhat paradoxical sense of a deep knowledge of the individual learners and a larger sense of the group as a whole. "Discovering the strengths of all learners," Gore writes, "often means observing individual children in the context of all" (p. 89).

The final inquiry chapter has Jen Lee, also a graduate student in elementary education, addressing the often elusive forms and structures necessary to develop a deeply inclusive school. Lee points out (p. 104) that

> the inclusion movement recognizes that there is no single way to teach students and that all students are diverse in many ways. However, school practices seem to go against these beliefs.

Lee notes that committed leadership, not just on the part of administrators but also teachers, families, and the wider community, is the only real route of resistance to stifling policies and practices.

Following the inquiry chapters are two important treatises on supporting the inquiry and idealism of preservice teachers. The first is by Britt Hamre, who oversaw the student teaching experiences. Hamre observes that the spirit of questioning wasn't restricted to the teachers; it also sparked her own reflection. She notes (p. 132), "Probably the question I most frequently ask myself continues to be, 'What can I do and say to facilitate and stimulate their growth as novice teachers'?"

The next chapter, by Oyler and Hamre, draws together particular themes from all the previous chapters. There of course is no single, clear path to crafting teachers who draw out children's true potentials. Oyler and Hamre, however, diverge from Pitts's description of the great teacher, which I described earlier. Pitts's account falls into the genre of teacher lore that Sari Biklen (1995, 1) calls the *Lone Ranger* approach: a single, isolated teacher rises above the mediocrity of her colleagues and succeeds where no one else can. Oyler and Hamre point out (p. 148) that

> There is a relationship among personal courage, social vision, and sustained organization. For inclusive classrooms to become the new standard for educational equity and excellence, teachers must organize with others who are like-minded to sustain their vision of what kind of school and world we want to create…. It is collective vision that will keep us true to our vision.

This is an excellent book that brings a new angle into the conversations and actions surrounding the creation of excellent classrooms made up of diverse populations of children. Students in teacher-preparation programs should be enthralled at the description of others like them wading into the waters of educational change. This book also serves to challenge dominant myths about the nature of teacher-knowledge and whose voice might be heard within certain of the great educational debates of our time.

References

Biklen, S. K. 1995. *School work: Gender and the cultural construction of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Coles, R. 1986. *The moral life of children*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Kliewer, C., L. M. Fitzgerald, J. Meyer-Mork, P. Hartman, P. English-Sand, and D. Raschke. 2004. Citizenship for all in the literate community: An ethnography of young children with significant disabilities in inclusive early childhood settings. *Harvard Educational Review* 74: 373-403.

Kohn, A. 1999. *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.

Forever After: New York City Teachers on 9/11

Edited by Teachers College Press with Maureen Grolnick

Published by Teachers College Press (2006)

Reviewed by Paula Rogovin

There you are, you and your students, and the Twin Towers are falling. What do you do? That's one of the important questions addressed in *Forever After: New York City Teachers on 9/11*. How do you deal with children when your school is so close to the Twin Towers, and students have seen so much, and dust and fumes are all around? How do you deal with the anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and other bigotry arising out of the crisis? When school reopens two days later, do you return to teaching as usual, implementing the curriculum, or do you address the students' and your questions and concerns? What's ultimately important — school tests scores, or the emotional wellbeing of students and teachers? These are some of the huge questions faced personally by the authors of this book.

Eagerly, I read *Forever After*, wondering whether I had any "soulmates" among the authors who told their responses to 9/11. My first grade classroom was uptown from the Towers. Although I am a long-time teacher and a social activist, inside and outside of the classroom, I had to grapple with some of those issues around 9/11. What was an age-appropriate, crisis-appropriate response? What response should there be one month, one year, five years later? The teachers shared a diversity of responses.

It was heartwarming to see how all of the teachers and administrators immediately took responsibility for the safety, comfort, and well-being of their students. That was a common thread.

Patricia Lent, whose school was evacuated and moved to another site, had her third grade class do regular school work to create a sense of normalcy but added singing, games, and dances, as well as discussions about what had happened. She thought "It was also important that they knew I was there to listen and respond to the ideas and feelings they were expressing through writing, drawing, and talking" (p. 13). Patricia chose to change the curriculum to meet the needs of her classroom community.

Marygrace Berberian, a school consultant, felt that "Young people needed to rebuild the Twin Towers, they needed to rebuild what had been destroyed…. Creativity allows for describing, building, and reconfiguring an injured object so that mourning can begin" (p. 76). Marygrace reached out to New York University's Graduate Art Therapy Program. They in turn reached out to families, local merchants, and other community residents. Together they created the World Trade Center Children's Mural Project. This brilliant project served as a tool for children developing cultural and racial awareness. The project enabled children, families, and teachers to think about the crisis and to dream dreams for the world. "As a community, we all wished for peace" (p. 79).

Dalia Hochman acknowledged that 9/11 forced her to step out of her "prescribed role" as a high school social studies teacher to help her students cope with their trauma, confusion, and grieving. She discussed the duality between the cognitive and affective domains of learning. She said that the

> cognitive involves the more scientific method that the brain uses to decode and integrate new information. The affective domain relates to subjective feelings and associations that surround such information. (p. 89)

When Dalia told a mother of a 15-year-old that her daughter, formerly a very fine student, was failing, Dalia was shocked when the student sobbed uncontrollably. It was then that the mother told Dalia that the girl's older sister had died in the Twin Towers. Dalia had never allowed the students to talk about their experiences or their trauma. What Dalia learned from this was profound, "One of the problems with such a prescribed curriculum is that its prescription obviates one of the central tasks of teachers, which is to make executive decisions on what is more or less important. The skill of prioritizing significance, one that we try to instill in our students, becomes

Paula Rogovin, who teaches at The Manhattan New School, PS 290, has been an elementary classroom teacher in the New York City public schools for the past 34 years. She is the author of several books, including *Classroom Interviews: A World of Learning* and *Apartheid is Wrong: A Curriculum for Young People*.

lost in a cookie-cutter curriculum" (p. 92). She brought the children's lives into the curriculum. She decided, then, to "forge ahead on my own." She revised the curriculum, skipped some of the mandated topics, saying that she believed "that an in-depth, critical approach to teaching history was ultimately worth the sacrifice" (p. 92).

To me, Dalia's learning was one of the high points of this book. Perhaps it is something that all of us should apply, not just to crisis situations, but to our everyday teaching. Perhaps the cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all curriculum leaves many children behind and fails to address the social needs and the development of our students as human beings.

Loyan Beausoleil was so pleased when her pre-kindergarten and kindergarten kids had not talked about that terrible day. So many of them had witnessed the tragedy at the Twin Towers. "It was just what Edna and I wanted for our classroom" (p. 148). The next day they began school with a song, using the children's names. Everything went according to plan until the two teachers announced that the children would be building with blocks. A four-year-old blurted out that "Workers are trying to build the World Trade Center." Then, all of the children began talking about it at once. Loyan realized then that what the children had to say about the disaster was very important. "Young children use play as a way to understand the world around them … to express their ideas and feelings" (p. 150). She realized that her students needed to play more than anything else. Loyan helped herself through the crisis by recording and writing about her students, observing how they talked, worked, and played together. She has so much to teach us.

> A common theme was expressed by Debbie Amontaser, an Arab-American Muslim educator who, along with family and friends, faced the misdirected anger and hatred in the society around them. Right away, she recognized the crisis of 9/11 as "a teachable moment I could not avoid delving into"(p.126). Right away she and her 10- and 11-year-old students discussed issues of blame and speculation, fear, and bigotry. Her students even discussed their fear and concern for Debbie, who wears a hijab. Debbie was asked to bring her expertise and her sensitivity to help reach out to schools in District 15. She raised these same issues in schools and at forums throughout the district and then worked as a volunteer at night when she organized cross-cultural events, interfaith gatherings, as well as demonstrations opposing the detention of innocent people. She said (p. 131),\In search of healing our souls, we look to the things that give us comfort and happiness. Happiness can be defined in various ways, depending on the individual. In my search for healing, I realized that making others happy brought me the comfort I longer for after the tragic events of September 11th. My purpose in becoming an educator was finally revealed to me. I was driven by my passion for social change.

Debbie worked with Educators for Social Responsibility to develop and fund an on-going program which addressed those same issues. When Kathleen Byrne, an art teacher at PS 230, approached Debbie about a mural project to reflect the "unique diversity of the school," Debbie felt compelled to support that project. Families gathered to tell their stories and to paint and to heal. Debbie told of the power of a mural project and a documentary film about the process of painting that mural.

Each teacher who wrote had a different response to the crisis because we all come to our teaching as different people with a real variety of life experience and different values. All acknowledged that there are no guidelines for teaching during a time of major crisis. While some of the teachers talked about their personal responses, from those responses we can glean critically needed guidance for possible crises in the future.

Other educators such as Linda Lantieri, a co-founder of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program and an activist educator, along with Madhavi Nambiar and Michael Chavez-Reilly, talked about another issue. They were concerned about the well-being of educators. They were involved in Project Renewal, to provide educators "with help in gaining control over their circumstances, strengthening their inner resources, and supporting one another in contexts where they would be able to formally debrief their experiences" (p. 113). Also, they went into motion with other educators

to develop and fund on-going programs about addressing bias and discrimination.

It's wonderful to find educators whose early instincts in crisis reach far beyond themselves and their personal comfort and well-being. Whether they focused on their individual classrooms or the larger picture, the teachers in this book are fine role models. We must take time to learn from them and to share their vital messages with teachers around the world.

Abigail Deutsch, a student at Stuyvesant High School (a school which was evacuated after the Twin Towers fell), made a statement which all teachers must hear. Most of her teachers, chose to ignore 9/11. This was not uncommon.

> What was wrong with me? I wonder sometimes which I found more psychologically unsettling: September 11, or the fact that my school community seemed set on the notion that September 11th had not occurred. Suspecting I was either perceiving things wrong or so fundamentally different from my classmates that no conversation was feasible, I ceased bringing it up. (p. 101)

At Yale, the next year, Abigail mentioned to her classmates that she had gone to a school near the Twin Towers. "They really wanted to talk about it." She found more solace from her college classmates, strangers to New York City, than she had among her Stuyvesant classmates. Until that moment she hadn't told anyone her stories: "Stuyvesant's silence had taught me to keep silent."

Abigail said that conversations "help us make sense" of September 11. I wish my teachers had responded differently to September 11…. But in their failure to act the way I wanted, they taught me more than they could in the classroom" (p. 103).

Fellow teachers, let's listen to Abigail. Let's bring her message and the messages of the wonderful educators who shared their varied stories into our classrooms. Let's remember to help our students make sense, not only of major big crises like 9/11, but of the smaller crisis in our towns and cities, in our communities, and in our families.

Foundations of Holistic Education

Books on education's leading edge, now available at reduced prices

Order from:
The Foundation
for Educational Renewal
(800) 639-4122
Write to:
FER at P.O. Box 328,
Brandon, VT 05733
email: books@great-ideas.org

VOL 1 — Caring for New Life: Essays on Holistic Education
Ron Miller 2000 136 pp. $14.95
In his distinctly clear style, a main theorist of holistic education reflects on the meaning and implications of this emerging paradigm.

VOL 2 — Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education
Yoshiharu Nakagawa 2000 278 pp. $16.95
A Japanese philosopher explores parallels between western holistic thinking and Asian spirituality.

VOL 3 — "Under the Tough Old Stars": Ecopedagogical Essays
David W. Jardine 2000 239 pp. $12.95
A profound meditation on educating for connectedness, attention, devotion, care, renewal, and hope.

VOL 4 — Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education
Edited by Brent Hocking, Johnna Haskell, and Warren Linds 2001 333 pp. $16.95
Bold educational ideas for rekindling the senses to provoke learning that is fully engaged with the world.

VOL 5 — Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love
Ramón Gallegos Nava; translated by Madeline Newman Ríos and Gregory S. Miller 2001 162 pp. $14.95
A brilliant young Mexican sociologist explains the historical and social significance of holistic education.

VOL 6 — Nurturing Our Wholeness: Perspectives on Spirituality in Education
Edited by John P. Miller and Yoshiharu Nakagawa 2002 326 pp. $16.95
Educators who have explored the frontiers of educational practice reflect on teaching inspired by diverse wisdom traditions.

VOL 7 — The Primal, the Modern, and the Vital Center: A Theory of Balanced Culture in a Living Place
Donald W. Oliver, Julie Canniff, and Jouni Korhonen 2002 337 pp. $14.95
Provides a comprehensive analysis of the "cultural errors" of modernity and a vision of a more nourishing holistic culture.

VOL 8 — Holistic Education: An Analysis of its Ideas and Nature
Scott H. Forbes 2003 386 pp. Hardcover $19.95
A rigorous inquiry, grounded in extensive research, into the philosophical foundations of holistic education.

For complete descriptions of these titles, visit our website:
www.great-ideas.org/foundations.htm

ENCOUNTER
P.O. Box 328
Brandon, VT 05733-0328
https://great-ideas.org

PERIODICALS

"Most of what we learned in school seemed made only for school; school learning made no attempt to address the mysteries I had met in nature. Nature's current, which had carried me in childhood, went underground like a spring."

— Tom Goodridge