ENCOUNTER

EDUCATION FOR MEANING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Editorial

Teacher Education Reform and the Mindful Practitioner

In the last fifteen years the nation has been engaged in substantial debate over, and implementation of, a variety of educational reform efforts, ushered in by the publication of the Reagan administration-sponsored report, *A Nation at Risk*, in 1983. The reform movement has simultaneously proceeded in two waves: the first wave of "accountability and excellence" and the second wave of "school restructuring." These waves have in turn entailed considerable reflection on, and a variety of proposals and legislative action for, the reform of teacher education.

In the first wave of reform the focus has been primarily on accountability. In general, it is argued that schools will improve if teachers, parents, administrators, etc., are held accountable for the educational achievement of students. Accountability is in general defined in terms of standards of "excellence." Accountability measures have taken the form of higher certification standards for teachers, higher standards for student performance, and an increased emphasis on standardized forms of assessment, among other proposals. A focus on increasing standards as accountability measures is scientific management revisited. By controlling what standards are used to evaluate performance, it is reasoned, one can control the substance of the performance. By controlling the criteria of evaluation one one is believed to determine curricular content and, indirectly, instructional method. These proposals centralize authority by narrowing the parameters of assessment. Complex and sustained assessment requires local (communities, schools, and individual teachers) judgment. These proposals encourage managerial centralization by requiring "objective" indicators of teacher performance. Implicit in such indicators are detailed specifications of teaching style in terms of managerial prerogative. In many ways these measures constitute mechanisms to reestablished bureaucratic control.

The bureaucratic model of school governance is based upon a view of teaching as a routine technology. From an organizational perspective the teaching/learning process demands a control strategy entailing a system of input, behavior, and output controls. The first wave of reform perceived the loosely coupled nature of the school system as the cause of educational mediocrity and consequently is an attempt to tighten bureaucratic control through various accountability measures. The accountability movement reinforces a model of teacher education that is grounded in "technical rationality," an approach to professional practice that is based upon instrumental problem solving, disciplinary authority, the application of "scientific" knowledge to practice, and an inherent dualism between theory and practice, conception and execution.

In contrast to the first wave of reform, the second wave is centered in the notion of school restructuring, the idea of comprehensive reform centered in individual schools. This view maintains that reform must emerge organically from the bottom up. School improvement cannot be legislated but must be grounded in the context of local practice. At the core of school restructuring is the empowerment and professionalization of teachers. This approach maintains that decision-making power should be located as close as possible to the actual educational event. It is argued that through the centralization of decision making, bureaucratic systems of administration disallow teacher participation, thereby undermining their professional development. This view is premised on a conception of teaching as a fluid and complex, rather than as a routine activity. From this perspective, learning styles are diverse and teaching is a creative activity. Being creative, it is based upon an integration of the conception and execution of instructional and curricular strategies. This conception of teaching necessitates an organizational structure that directly involves teachers in the formulation of educational policy. If teaching is a fluid, complex, creative act, then a bureaucratic system of governance that disallows teacher participation in the pol-

icy process will undermine professional development, in essence de-skilling them just as workers have been de-skilled through scientific management. From this perspective too much bureaucratic control, not too little, is at the heart of educational mediocrity.

In addition, the study of policy implementation suggests that even in a centralized, top-down system of administration, implementors reshape policy to fit a variety of situations and needs. From this perspective, policy emerges from the bottom rather than being dictated from above. There is also a significant evolutionary character to emergent policy, in that policies evolve and change over time; however, this evolution is contingent upon the organization's capacity for learning. The emergent, evolutionary perspective is especially relevant for public schools, which have been appropriately described as "loosely coupled" systems. The imposition of a bureaucratic system of governance on a loosely coupled system significantly impedes the emergent, evolutionary nature of policy formation. Centralization undermines organizational learning, which, in turn, undermines the school's ability to respond to changing social conditions. Over time, the reduced capacity of the school to respond to change erodes the educational quality of the school.

The conception of teaching practice implicit in school restructuring has been shaped by Donald Schon's notion of the "reflective practitioner." This approach attempts to move beyond technical rationality as a model of professional practice, on the grounds that it neglects and distorts the organic nature of practice. The reflective model is an approach to knowledge and practice that is more artistic and intuitive, based upon elements of tacit knowing as a fundamental guide to practice. From this perspective, theory and practice are integrated on the basis of an intuitive grasp of the organic unity between knowledge and action. Teaching is conceived more of as a craft than a scientific-technical application.

Although rarely acknowledged, the reflective model finds its foundations in the philosophy of dialogue. The reflective practitioner is engaged in an integrated, transformative process of reflection and action. This process entails a dynamic interaction between the practitioner and the environment, which assumes a fundamental unity between the two.

However, this unity is not a merger with the loss of the distinction between the two, but an integration that preserves their distinct identity. This relation defines the essence of dialogue. Dialogue is a relationship that unifies while maintaining distinction, a uni-verse, a unity in diversity. The reflective practitioner is deeply embedded in, organically connected to, her environment. Yet she is not merged with it: she is in a reflective mode. Such a relationship is an *encounter, a meeting*. It entails a deep connection to and interaction with the environment while simultaneously maintaining a conscious witnessing, a consciousness of consciousness, a presence, a profound degree of self-awareness in the midst of action. In short, the reflective practitioner enters into a dialogical relationship with the practice environment.

The technical-rational model is based in the objectification of the practice environment. In the case of teaching, the student is objectified. The reflective, dialogical model encounters the environment as subject. In the case of teaching the students is dialogically encountered as an unique subject, as a *thou* rather than as an *It*. The I, the consciousness, of the practitioner is in each case fundamentally different: the I in the technical rational practitioner is egoicly separated, perched as it were at an analytical distance from the object of his practice. The reflective practitioner's consciousness is empathically integrated with the subject of his practice. This empathy, necessary for dialogue and thus reflective practice, is contingent upon, and in fact a function of, the reflective practitioner's degree of wide-awakeness, presence, mindfulness. In order to encounter the student as a subject, the teacher must be fully present with the student; she cannot be mentally or emotionally distracted, and this capacity is a function of the development of mindfulness.

Thus, we can reconceive the reflective, dialogical practitioner as also the mindful practitioner. And if the professional empowerment of teachers is key to educational reform, then teacher education must be reconceptualized to facilitate the development of mindfulness. This proposition would transform teacher education and teaching into a "spiritual" practice, not in any religious sense, but in the sense of the realization of the possibility of human dialogue.

— Jeffrey Kane and Dale Snauwaert

Ten Characteristics of the Democratic Frame of Mind

Dispositions Key to Education for Existential Democracy

David Chicoine

Those who embrace democratic ideals as a way of life are the cornerstones of a healthy society.

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Democracy is viewed by most Americans as a core value; in fact, democracy and America are viewed by many of our citizens as synonymous. It is also widely understood that democracy cannot be taken for granted, here or elsewhere, and as we look back it is clear we have fought horrific wars this century and paid dearly in order to preserve or promote democracy. Yet many of our schools and colleges seem to neglect any careful thinking about how to teach for democracy; the belief appears to be that education itself is a sufficient guarantor of democracy. However, there are many different approaches to education, and the question arises: Can we simply assume that each one is as effective as the other in promoting democracy? In what follows I try to take a careful look not so much at the relation between education and democracy but at the prior question of what may lie at the heart of democracy, for only when we have a sense of what democracy is in practical terms can the problem of educating for democracy be effectively addressed. I will begin by examining what we might actually mean by democracy in general and *American democracy* in particular; next I propose in some detail ten *dispositions* that I believe lie at the heart of democracy and what I call the democratic character, followed by a brief sketch of how schools might foster each of these dispositions; and finally I close with a reminder from John Dewey on the importance of placing the educating for democracy at the very center of our educational enterprise.

Democracy as a Frame of Mind

Education for democracy, like democracy itself, has meant different things to different people over the years, and it still does. In order to arrive at a sense of the best, or at least an adequate, approach to an education for democracy, it is essential to first determine exactly what is meant by democracy. I am underscoring this issue precisely because the answer, although crucial, is *not* necessarily obvious.

What then *is* democracy? It is important to note that this question may be seen as comprised of a subset of questions basic to any society: not only how should people make communal decisions and govern themselves, but also how should they *live* together? How should they interact? What should the rights of the individual be? What are the responsibilities of the individual to others and to the community as a whole? What are the responsibilities of the community to the individual? And what are the *rights* of the community as opposed to those of the individual?

Further, it should be pointed out that different "democratic" nations have somewhat different, or even radically different, conceptions of democracy. In order to address the question of what approach to education is most appropriate for the American people, any focus on the definition of democracy should relate specifically to the unique attributes of American democracy, or more precisely, the ideals of American democracy.

First, then, it must be said that democracy is perhaps most often perceived by Americans to be a form of government, a universally participatory approach to governance which is based on the egalitarian notion of "one person, one vote." Power is thus seen as being wielded by the people themselves, not by one individual or a limited collection of individuals.

In his *Philosophy of Education* (1951), Kilpatrick points out that "discussion and persuasion, not force or violence" is also an essential characteristic of democracy (p. 143). This vitally important corollary to the freedom of speech implies that decisions in a democracy are made collectively through peaceful means in the marketplace of ideas, not through intimidation, coercion or fiat. The assumption is that decisions made in this manner—through voting or consensus *after* sufficient discussion—will consequently serve the interests of the population as a whole, and not just of the privileged few. It is important to note that this form of majority-based self-governance not only characterizes the way the nation as a whole conducts its business through legislative bodies at the national, state, and local levels, but also it may be and frequently is employed as an approach to governance throughout the various levels of social organization from informal groups of people to clubs to civic organizations.

Along with this ethic of universal participation and majority rule, a belief in the essential political and social equality of every member of American society is also cherished. This belief includes an abstract commitment to see that every member of the society enjoys at least an equal *opportunity* to attain all of the positions and rewards available in the society.

Finally, a premium is placed on the individual in American democracy. She or he is seen as being guaranteed certain inalienable rights, including freedom of movement, speech, assembly, religious practice, public education through high school, as well as due process of law and freedom to engage in virtually any activity in pursuit of personal happiness which does not infringe on the rights of others. Indeed, as Kilpatrick points out, the historical evolution of the centrality of the rights and dignity of the individual was *the* great revolutionary message of democracy. He identifies the essence of democracy as "freedom of the individual to decide and act on his [*sic*] own" (p. 134). The American view of democracy includes the belief that each individual has the right and should have the opportunities to develop her or his potential to the fullest. And in this country the rights and freedoms of the individual have indeed been achieved to a high and praiseworthy extent in historical terms (although it should be pointed out that in regard to the rights of gays and lesbians, legal immigrants, the terminally ill, the poor and others, we still have a considerable way to go).

The practice of American democracy, however, may be seen to be *more* than these conceptions of what is usually referred to as liberal democracy, a system of governance and a set of prescribed liberties and theoretical opportunities. It is precisely at this stage that our visions of democracy begin to sep-

arate off into sometimes radically different directions. It seems to me that a significant number of our citizens—perhaps the majority of those who consider themselves to be conservatives—believe that democracy means "liberal democracy" *and nothing more.* Any definition or understanding beyond this is viewed as inappropriate, even dangerous. A significant proportion of the framers of the Constitution, suspicious of the wisdom of the common citizen, held this very view (Dewey 1927, 1930b; Dahl 1956, 30-32).

There is a conception of democracy, however, which is not restricted to a set of individual liberties and a type of social and governmental organization (Held 1987). Although such aspects of democracy are extremely important, these democratic structures and concepts may be perceived as externalizations of a more fundamental dimension of democracy, something that may be seen as the democratic spirit, or the spirit of democracy. This understanding of democracy may be defined as the belief that democracy is most clearly seen not in a list of rights and set of rules of governance, but rather in the *types and quality of human actions and interactions* within a society. Given this assumption, that, as Dewey put it, democracy is "primarily a mode of associated living" (1916, 87), it is my contention that at the heart of a democracy lie caring and decency as essential values, and that these values in turn imply a sense of responsibility to the community as a whole. In this view, the most important index of the degree to which democracy is implemented in a society lies in the characteristic dynamics of personal behavior and interpersonal interaction, a dimension that may be designated as *existential democracy* [note that "existential" is used here solely in its generic sense, "relating to daily life," with no reference to or connotations of the *philosophy* of existentialism].

Existential democracy refers to a more inclusive vision of "participatory democracy," one which is evidenced through active participation in affairs and decision-making processes of the various strands of civic society—the home, the workplace, one—s network of friends and acquaintances, and local community affairs (Held 1987, 257-264). As Dewey stated it, the democratic ideal is one in which every individual has "a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain" (1927, 147). He goes on to say, "From the standpoint of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common" (p. 147). In my opinion, the democratic spirit or ideal so defined implies a vision of "associated living"—*existential* democracy—where only *universally egalitarian and caring* human actions and interactions which further (or at minimum do not violate) the interests of the entire community are appropriate. [I will return to this central point later.]

> *Decisions in a democracy are made collectively through peaceful means in the marketplace of ideas, not through intimidation, coercion or fiat.*

It may be argued, however, that caring and egalitarian modes of human action and interaction themselves proceed from a dimension of democracy even more fundamental. At its core democracy should be seen neither as a set of rules nor as certain characteristics of behavior and interaction, but rather as *a frame of mind* which determines all behavior and which inevitably creates the enlightened set of rules for governance appropriate to a democracy.

How might we understand this most fundamental level of democracy, from which all the visible and tangible manifestations of democracy, both existential and governmental, proceed? I would propose that the democratic frame of mind might best be defined as a particular set of *dispositions,* or habits of mind and behavior. These dispositions taken together can in turn be seen as defining a type of character upon which the health of a democracy will depend. [It should be noted here that placing character at the heart of democracy is far from a new idea. Plato (1974), Crevecoeur (1981), Tocqueville (1969), Dewey (1964a, 1959, [1908] 1978), and Bellah et al.

(1985) among others have all had important things to say on this issue. Dewey's ideas in particular (see Westbrook [1991] for an excellent review and summary) are relevant to the ten dispositions I am positing and have strongly influenced my own views. However, a full exploration of the historical and current ideas on the kind of character appropriate to democratic ideals is beyond the scope of this paper.] They are required not just in the voting booth and in the gathering and evaluation of information that precedes the act of voting, but in the daily existential reality experienced by every citizen. I have identified a minimum of ten distinct dispositions or habits of mind that I believe comprise such a democratic character, or more specifically, the *ideals* to which such a character should strive. (And it should be noted at the outset that I would not be surprised if, as with Howard Gardner's original list of seven intelligences, one or more could be added.)

Ten Dispositions of the Democratic Character

Shared Decision-making

The first and perhaps foremost quality of such a character may be seen as a psychological approach that does not seek to dominate others in any context, but rather prefers to share decision-making in a non-authoritarian way. This means that where this frame of mind is present, decisions made at home, at work, in community and civic settings, with friends and in spontaneous gatherings of people—in other words, in virtually *every* social environment—are made through processes of consultation and discussion, and are resolved by consensus or majority vote where consensus cannot be obtained. Manipulation, coercion, intimidation, bullying, and commanding have no place in democratic relations. Further, a genuine sharing of power means sharing it simultaneously, not wielding it individually, or vying for it openly or covertly, or entering an arrangement in which it is traded back and forth, with one the decision-maker/boss for a while and then the other.

I believe a careful examination of both the overt and subtle power relations experienced at every level of our society, from life partners to families to friends to the school to the workplace, will demonstrate that such a truly democratic sharing of power is a much rarer occurrence in our contemporary society than might have been expected. There can be a very fine line between wishing to have the best idea prevail and wishing to dominate or win. In any human interaction, the power of ideas can easily be supplanted by the exercise of power. True democracy must proceed from a democratic *psychological* disposition from which all motives of power (in the sense of domination) are excluded, or at least held in check. Cooperative, team player, and egalitarian are labels that cling naturally to one who does not seek to dominate others or place him/herself in a position of artificial superiority.

This is not to deny that leadership should be exercised in a true democracy, only that coercion and manipulation have no place in it. Nor can it be denied that fully democratic (in the sense of fully equal) relations are sometimes or even often inappropriate, in the family and in the school in particular. Obviously, each member of a given community must have the skills and the maturity to assume the responsibilities implied by full participation in the decision-making process, and before such skills and maturity are acquired it would be folly to insist that every member of a group share equally in its governance. However, there should always be a systematic means in place to provide the requisite skills and experience to every member so that full responsibility can be given to each individual as soon as possible. Such an educational approach might be called *developmental democracy* (see Snauwaert [1993] for a general discussion of this concept, and also Held [1987]), the design and implementation of which should be a major priority of the family, the school, and the workplace.

Caring and Compassion

The second feature of the democratic frame of mind is that it places extraordinary value on caring and compassion at a personal level. At its deepest source this proceeds from a recognition that there is an essential unity to all being and to all creatures; from this perspective, when one does not care about someone else one is in the ultimate view not caring for an indivisible part of one's own self. (Caring and compassion as the essential expression of a holistic vision may be defined as *spirituality*, and thus the promoting of caring must be seen as the preeminent component of *spiritual education*.) This holistic vision

demands that "self-ishness" be redefined from the negative viewpoint of putting one's own interests before those of others to the positive ethic of judging *everyone's* interests from an objective, corporate point of view and then acting on the best interest of the aggregate—much as an honorable Martian might adjudicate a situation where the various claims of a number of human beings must be decided fairly and dispassionately. One's personal needs do not disappear, but are subsumed in the needs of the larger community precisely because one's core identity expands beyond the personal to embrace that community. To one fully possessed of the democratic frame of mind, everyone is perceived as a part of one's self. Love is perhaps the word that represents the deepest understanding of the meaning of caring and compassion. The vision voiced by the historical Jesus to love thy neighbor as thyself is at the heart of the democratic frame of mind. It should go without saying that a consciousness characterized by a sense of responsibility to care guards assiduously from engaging in behavior which might cause needless harm or pain to others (Dewey 1964a).

A Holistic Perspective

This disposition to be caring and compassionate towards others closely relates to a third quality of the democratic frame of mind, which generalizes caring or love beyond the personal to the transpersonal level. Again, the expansion of identity of self from one's own person to those people with whom one comes in contact can continue even further to encompass the community of all beings. Such a greatly expanded identity leads inevitably to a truly communitarian approach to the broadest social considerations. It is characterized by an *ecological* perspective in the largest sense, an attitude that constantly seeks the widest frame of reference for self or situation, and always identifies with and adopts that larger point of view. Such a perspective (which may also be defined as the *spiritual* perspective) means that the very broadest implications of any situation or problem are those which are constantly being sought out and assessed. Thus one possessed of the democratic frame of mind is concerned with the good of the community while others are perhaps only concerned with the advantage to their group, or with the good of the

nation while others seek to maximize the good of their community, or with the global implications while others are caught in the limited viewpoint of nationalism.

The democratic frame of mind is thus unashamedly and inescapably holistic, reflexively interpreting *all* experience from the vantage point of relating to the largest conceivable whole. As a result, even the smallest of personal daily actions are determined or influenced by this philosophy: using only what is required, sharing unstintingly, helping others whenever possible. This ecological characteristic of the democratic character implies that one who possesses it finds the deepest wellsprings of personal meaning in perceiving events from a holistic frame of reference and by engaging in behavior in line with such a perception, behaving, that is, in ways which consciously contribute to improving the health and well-being of the larger community of beings (Dewey 1964a; Clark, Jr. 1991, 53-62).

Commitment to Diversity

A fourth quality of a democratic mind and character is a general and pervasive appreciation for and commitment to diversity.[1] A valuing of "the many" is as important as of "the one"; in fact, both represent the two essential sides of a single coin. However, this disposition to honor diversity plays out in a number of different arenas. First, our American democracy has always been a pluralistic society, and the unique flavors and contributions provided by each racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural element in the society must not only be respected but celebrated if true unity and cohesiveness are to be attained and if the cultural and spiritual resources of the society are to be fully tapped. At the very least, tolerance of even distasteful differences must be cultivated, so long as those differences do not involve any element that could be clearly injurious and detrimental to the health of the whole society.

A true democracy is also multicultural in the sense that no one of the cultural elements is perceived to be the basic one or the norm, but rather every perspective must be considered important and treated with honor and respect (Kohl 1998, 310-312).

Finally, diversity among individuals must also be honored and respected. The unique interests, talents,

and contributions of each individual should be encouraged and celebrated. Equally important, the different values, perspectives, and dreams of each individual should be heard and taken into account when interpersonal and collective decisions must be made, for the democratic frame of mind is one that always seeks to strike a reasonable and fair balance between competing but essentially healthy interests and values.

Disciplined Intelligence

A fifth quality of the democratic character is the habit of thoughtful reflection or intelligence in the Deweyan sense. An independent stance which questions all assumptions and approaches problem-solving and the evaluation of evidence with an open mind disciplined in scientifically sound methods is essential to a democratic frame of mind. In a democracy the beliefs, attitudes, ideas and habits passed on by tradition should be scrutinized with the same care and objectivity as if they were the latest hypotheses needing experimental verification before being accepted as warranted. Without disciplined intelligence as a foundation, the problems encountered in a democracy could not be solved in a manner which accords with the other democratic principles just enumerated. Thus, the clear and open mind, not the biased or closed, is characteristic of the truly democratic disposition (Dewey 1930a).

The kind of sophisticated thinking required to solve the problems encountered in a democratic society entails many discrete skills as well as habits, or more precisely, the habitual exercise of certain key skills. The most important of these are crucial enough to merit reviewing sequentially (but briefly).

First, problems must be recognized and then prioritized, with the important ones defined carefully and accurately. (An essential aspect of this is the disposition to stay well informed generally, which I explore more fully below as the sixth democratic disposition). Any assumptions and preconceptions related to the problem or issue must be scrutinized and evaluated (an aspect of this disposition is so important that it is presented below as the seventh democratic disposition).

Next, active research may be necessary to gather sufficient information and evidence required to form a justified and defensible opinion or position. Alternate possibilities and solutions should be sought out systematically and considered fairly. All of the foreseeable effects of each alternative solution or course of action should be explored carefully. Logic must be valued throughout the entire process; conclusions must be based on logical inferences, and conclusions that are drawn validly from adequate evidence must be respected. Maintaining an open mind and not making a decision or judgment, taking a position or side, or "jumping to a conclusion" until sufficient evidence is acquired and evaluated is crucial. (As Dewey pointed out, in some cases this might mean reserving one's judgment or opinion even for a period of years [1930a]!) And finally, a conclusion intelligently reached must not then be over-generalized; its specific area of applicability must be recognized and respected.

Once a conclusion is drawn, one should be prepared to act upon it (a disposition which constitutes the eighth characteristic of the democratic character, further elaborated below). Yet that final step of integrating the product of one's intelligent deliberation—one's new or revised idea, opinion, or plan—is perhaps the most difficult and formidable of all, a hurdle that to many often proves insurmountable. Thus, while a new insight has been hard won through a cautious and painstaking process, integrating that insight firmly into one's worldview to the extent that one *behaves* differently in the future often simply does not occur. Such is the power of old habits to persist despite one's best efforts and intentions. The motivation to push beyond this barrier perhaps comes only when two other dispositions, a holistic vision, already discussed, and moral strength, developed below as the ninth disposition, are brought into the situation as essential aspects of the process. (See Dewey 1964a, 133-137; and [1908] 1978, 363-375.)

Finally, it is worth reminding the reader here of a point made earlier, that a hallmark of democracy is the solving of mutual problems through nonviolent methods of analysis, discussion, and compromise (Kilpatrick 1951, 143). Because violence engenders more violence, resorting to violence as anything other than a last and extremely reluctant option for solving problems must be seen ultimately as a *failure*

of intelligence and understanding. (This point is so important that it could easily be elevated to status as an eleventh disposition of democracy, the disposition to solve problems nonviolently.)

Staying Informed

The sixth democratic disposition involves the habit and skills of staying reasonably well informed, which is essential if the citizens of a democracy are to be aware of the issues and problems they must act on through the ballot and civic engagement. First, staying well informed of social, cultural, and political issues in the local, regional, national, and global spheres must be ingrained *as a habit*. Without such a systematic and ongoing process of staying informed, in this fast paced-era it is almost impossible for citizens to avoid ignorance of the crucial issues besetting their society.

Equally important, however, is the ability or *skills* of research and observation and the *disposition* to gather information from a variety of sources likely to present the full range of facts and opinions relevant to any given problem or issue (Dewey 1938, 67-72). It is as important for the citizen in regard to civic issues as it is for the scientist in her or his field of investigation to stay abreast of the current issues and problems that confront the community (and the society) and to develop as comprehensive and objective an understanding of these issues as possible. Only a well-informed citizenry can respond intelligently by recognizing societal priorities and the information relevant to making wise decisions about them.

The skills and habits related to media literacy, or a keen awareness of the ways that the various media might be intentionally or unintentionally distorting, withholding, or otherwise misrepresenting facts and information, are of course crucial to staying well informed in this age of information and corporate ownership of media.

Questioning Core Values

The seventh characteristic of the democratic character is closely related to the two preceding characteristics. In order to think clearly and make decisions about the issues which will lead to an increasingly healthy society, the disposition to question and clarify one's values and value hierarchy *as on ongoing process* is essential. I am referring to a phenomenon

which relates to but goes deeper than keeping an open mind and questioning one's assumptions, mentioned in the discussion of the fifth characteristic of thoughtful reflection and disciplined intelligence. These habits were presented in the context of operating in regard to an engagement with a specific issue or problem, but the questioning involved here must go beneath the assumptions being held about any given issue to the very foundation of one's decision-making habits: the core values and beliefs which predispose one's decisions to take certain habitual directions rather than others. Citizens who avoid examining their own most cherished beliefs will be impervious to evidence which points to the need for drawing a conclusion which is in violation of or in opposition to those beliefs, no matter how compelling that evidence might be. Dogmas and positions will become ever more deeply entrenched, inevitably resulting in harsh factional mindsets held by people not only unwilling but unable to compromise. Yet compromises are essential to a healthy pluralistic democracy in which competing interests must be regularly balanced; ultimately these compromises rest on the individual citizen's ability to demonstrate the flexibility that can only be achieved when the most precious of values and beliefs are regularly subjected to honest and careful reappraisal.

An Activist Orientation

As mentioned earlier, the eighth characteristic of the democratic frame of mind is an activist orientation. As Dewey put it, "In our moral books and lectures we may lay all the stress upon good intentions, etc. But we know practically that the kind of character we hope to build up through our education is one which not only has good intentions, but which insists upon carrying them out" (1964a, 133). Thus, the person possessed by the spirit of democracy is one who is involved, who understands the crucial importance of taking responsibility (response-ability). Such an orientation is another result of the holistic vision, for one who is consciously attuned to assessing needs from the largest possible context will appreciate the ethical imperative of acting upon that assessment. Seeing what is normally thought of as the world beyond one's self as indivisible *from* oneself necessitates action from the simple point of view of

self-interest, and at times, even self-preservation. The duality of me and them, my needs vs. their needs, is transcended in the democratic frame of mind so that the viewpoint becomes one of *our* needs, *our* interests. There need be nothing mystical or mysterious about this point of view; one may simply choose to identify self with the larger context—and the democrat does.

Further, the democratic frame of mind recognizes that perceptions and solutions arrived at via the other characteristics of the democratic frame of mind will remain meaningless unless they are followed by overt effort and action. Related to this is the characteristic of self-motivation. The person who actively assesses the needs of the larger situation and then by the logic of self-interest seeks to meet those needs is necessarily a goal setter and an achiever; a life consisting exclusively of contemplation and complacency is unthinkable to one who identifies self with the larger world. Thus involvement and taking responsibility are key to a truly democratic frame of mind (Dewey 1956; 1938).

Moral Strength

A ninth quality of the frame of mind possessed by the true democrat, a conscious desire and strategy to be in the deepest sense highly moral at all times, is integrally related to the previous characteristic and along with a holistic vision is an essential element in providing the motivation for an activist orientation. Simply put, the identification of self with other at the heart of the spirit of democracy means that the golden rule *must have dominion* over every aspect of one's life. One treats others as one would want to be treated by others, and *acts* as one would have others act in a similar situation, because one and other are seen as ultimately synonymous. The moral side of this coin is the rationally derived as well as intuitively motivated effort to maintain one's integrity at any cost. It manifests in a strongly developed and passionately pursued sense of justice, at both the personal and transpersonal levels and domains (meaning in the community, societal and international spheres).

This characteristic of leading a moral life must necessarily include the quality of *moral courage*. The democratic frame of mind means that one must tran-

scend considerations of "self" interest in the interests of the larger good, which the democrat knows actually constitutes the larger and more authentic self. There are unavoidable occasions in everyone's life when action is difficult, when taking responsibility in the interests of that larger good means that one's personal interests (of advancement, security, and even safety) must be sacrificed, sometimes painfully or frighteningly so. Someone seeing the world from a firmly entrenched democratic frame of mind will (or at least be more likely to) have the courage and the wisdom to do this, for an authentic perception of any situation from the largest possible frame of reference guarantees self-interest is evaluated from the perspective of the whole and not the personal or "small" self. The genuine democrat also realizes that one's self-respect and self-esteem, i.e., the maintaining of one's *integrity*, are integrally tied to overtly acting upon one's moral vision and perceived responsibilities. The very health of the smaller self necessitates the courage to act on the perceived needs of the larger self, and it is the health of the larger self, the community/society, that makes the very existence of the individual and her/his ability to act possible; thus are the health of the individual and the community inextricably linked in a circle of interdependency (Dewey 1964b).

Taking Care of Yourself

Finally, the tenth essential characteristic of the democratic frame of mind results from the perception outlined above of the interdependence of the health of the larger community and the health of the individual and that these work in both directions. The characteristics detailed earlier relate in one way or another to a unifying vision in which one's expanded sense of identity compels one to consistently experience events holistically and ecologically and to choose actions which will be in the best interests of both other and self and of the larger community. An inevitable aspect of such a holistic vision is the eventual perception that one's own physical, mental and spiritual health must be maintained at optimal levels so that this service to the larger whole remains effective and efficient. Therefore, such an orientation places priority not only upon the maintenance of one's (moral) integrity, but also upon a focused and

intelligently managed process of self-growth, with self-realization or self-actualization as a key value and goal. As was intended by including it prominently in our Declaration, "The pursuit of Happiness" was seen from the beginning of our American democracy to be one of its most essential elements. From the holistic point of view, *Do unto oneself as one would do unto others* is as crucial a concept to democracy as the more traditional formulation of the Golden Rule.

It has long been theorized that the health of a society is dependent upon the health of the individual members of that society, and that the health of those individuals depends upon the fullest possible realization of their own potential. For democracy to flourish, these two concepts must be linked: The individual cannot achieve her or his full potential until she/he is so situated as to make the most important contribution to society of which she/he is capable, and the society will not be truly democratic until it finds a way to provide each of its citizens the opportunity and ability to do this (Dewey 1959; 1964a). However, there is an important qualification to be made here: There are certain prerequisites in the form of meeting ongoing personal (read "self-ish"—in the sense of the "small" self) needs that must be attended to in order *to be able* to make a contribution to society. We may pay lip service to a person who is "completely self-sacrificing," but it is likely that such a person would quickly burn out...and consequently be useless to others as well as to self. It is only through a carefully nurtured balance between meeting one's "own" needs and finding a way to be giving, to make a contribution to the lives of others and to one's society, "to make a difference," that the long-term health of both individual and society can be guaranteed.

The Democratic Character

These ten overlapping qualities together, then, may be seen as comprising the democratic frame of mind. The common denominator between all ten habits of mind is a sense of expanded identity beyond the usual point of view of the personal, egoistic self to the much larger perspective of the whole. I have explained how these qualities of the deeply democratic disposition may be seen as constituting

the qualities needed in the *character* of the healthy citizen in a healthy democracy. By character I mean those tendencies, based on past choices and experience, and the learning that was derived from them, to think, feel, and behave in certain ways rather than others.

It is appropriate to return here to an idea set out at the beginning of this article, that caring and decency are the essential values at the heart of democracy. All ten of the characteristics just enumerated can be seen to have the quality of caring as a common denominator—caring in the sense that Noddings defines it, as a multidimensional quality including "an ethic of relation" but not limited to it (1992, 15-20). The expanded sense of identity which leads to a transcending of the limited egoistic-oriented perception of reality simultaneously leads to a generalized mode of caring for and decency toward the "extended" aspects of self, which are more usually perceived and defined (and treated) as "other." I posit that by definition one cares for and about one's "self," and when the conception of that self is expanded to that of an interconnected web of all being, caring becomes generalized, and in our society is manifested in the ten dispositions of democracy. Sharing in decision-making, valuing diversity, having a disciplined intelligence (being open-minded, using logic, questioning assumptions and not jumping to conclusions when problem-solving, nor over-generalizing one's conclusions), staying well-informed on current issues, being open to and respectful of alternative perspectives, assuming an activist orientation, being committed to moral behavior as well as to maintaining one's own health in its largest sense—all are interconnected forms of caring and compassion for both self and the lifeworld, the larger self that confronts us daily. Indeed, if any of the ten dispositions listed above were to be removed (I invite you to undertake the thought experiment), it seems to me the entire fabric of the democratic, caring orientation toward life would inevitably begin to unravel. In this sense, the ten dispositions as an expression of democracy and the democratic character are themselves interdependent. And because democracy is integrally related to a holistic vision with caring and compassion at its heart—in my opinion, the definition of spiritu-

ality—democracy may be said to have a spiritual foundation, and to be a spiritual endeavor.

It is my belief that citizens who possess the attributes of the democratic character outlined above would inevitably create a society whose social dynamics and interactions are characterized by the kind of egalitarian and compassionate qualities which define the spirit of democracy outlined earlier. The outer structures of democratic governance and personal liberties appropriate to a healthy (liberal) democracy should also follow inevitably from a citizenry with the behavioral, psychological and spiritual attributes ascribed to the democratic frame of mind. Conversely, citizens who in general do not possess this full set of characteristics will *not* be able to create a truly healthy democracy. It is my belief that this in fact is what has led to the many imperfections in our society historically and at present. A particular kind of character may thus be seen as being the indispensable heart of democracy.

It should be acknowledged at this point, however, that democracy is not an all or nothing absolute—a more reasonable view is that it is a matter of degree. Accordingly, the ten dispositions I have identified as essential to the democratic character and hence to democracy itself represent *ideals* to be striven for, not a reality to be achieved and then moved beyond. The extent to which our citizenry internalizes these habits of mind and behavior may determine the extent to which democracy is realized in practice, but democracy, much like the character of the human beings that create it, should perhaps be viewed more as an ever-evolving process that can be strengthened rather than a fixed state of reality or final endpoint to be attained.

Educating for Existential Democracy

If the psychologized definition of democracy I have provided has validity, a certain set of readily identifiable dispositions must indeed constitute the indispensable heart of a healthy democracy. This conclusion in turn will be of paramount importance to the question of what education is most appropriate for a democracy. The crucial question then becomes the following: How should education be structured so that a healthy and full democratic character will be systematically fostered in our children?

Specifically, what curricula, what pedagogy, and what school structures and organization (and perhaps I should add here mechanisms of school *funding*) are best suited to promoting the democratic character? The traditional approach to educating for democracy—which has as its premise that democracy is primarily a form of governance and not, as Dewey and many others believe, *a way of life*—is to focus on the (surface) history of our American democracy, promote a familiarity with the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and foster the reading and writing skills needed to follow the issues and to qualify to vote. In other words, basic literacy skills and exposure to key documents and facts constitute the core curriculum to develop the "skills of democracy." However, a view of democracy that sees it primarily as an issue of character formation would include this traditional approach but add much more.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this issue in any detail. However, a quick review of the ten dispositions with the educational implications they hold leads to some immediately tangible ideas:

Shared decision-making can be systematically fostered through the extensive use of cooperative learning activities and projects in which the teacher shapes the skills of cooperation and negotiation and shared decision-making. Also, empowering students to participate democratically in decisions regarding curriculum and learning activities can lead to the habits and skills associated with this character trait.

Caring and compassion can both be modeled by the teacher and promoted among students for each other and beyond. An emphasis on relationships (as seen, for instance, in the Central Park East schools, where students and teachers stay together for multiple years, class and school size are small, and where the teachers are advisors to the students [see Meier 1995; Darling-Hammond 1997]) as well as on reflective school and community service also lead to the deepening of caring and compassion as a character trait. Other important approaches include peer tutoring, mentoring of younger students, having all students participate in childcare under expert supervision, and a carefully designed program to promote emotional intelligence (and empathy in particular) (Goleman 1995). Noddings (1992) also provides

many interesting ideas in her systematic approach to fostering an ethic of caring.

Promoting *a holistic perspective* is both a complicated and subtle business, but a beginning can be made by encouraging active engagement in local ecology issues, as well as placing at the center of the curriculum thoughtful (and empathetic) analysis and discussion of current events in general and global ecological issues in particular. The multiplicity of possible perspectives on any given issue should be explored and evaluated carefully, with an emphasis on identifying the largest perspective available. Another important approach would be a focus on utopian studies. Students should be encouraged to discuss, debate, and develop their own ideas about what might constitute the ideal democratic society ... and to investigate carefully in which ways America in both the past and the present falls short of that ideal, and to speculate why. This same kind of study can be expanded to encompass the global situation and humanity's evolutionary struggle for equality and justice...what might constitute an ideal "world order" or society, what part America has played (and is playing) in bringing it about, and how closely we are living up to our own ideals of democracy in this regard. Finally, it should be pointed out that virtually all of the other dispositions and the ways to foster them relate to the development of a holistic perception.

There are a number of excellent guides available to foster a *commitment to diversity* through a multicultural approach to education and a valuing of the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of the students themselves, as well as of their individual profiles of multiple intelligences (see Darling-Hammond 1997, 123-128; Gardner 1993). Of course, de-tracking and "inclusion" of students with physical, emotional, and learning differences are vital to a strategy of promoting this disposition.

Disciplined intelligence can be fostered through a school-wide "shared norms" approach such as the "five habits of mind" outlined by Meier (1995) and Darling-Hammond (1997). Dewey devoted a whole book to this issue, still worth reading (*How We Think* 1933). Also, through Socratic dialogue and gentle "interrogation" during discussions of current events, literature, etc., the teacher can help bring to

light—and, if helpful, call attention to—hidden assumptions, illogical reasoning, hastily drawn conclusions, over-generalizations, etc.

Staying informed as a character trait can be fostered through the systematic integration into the heart of

A significant number of our citizens believe that democracy means "liberal democracy" and nothing more.

the curriculum of a study and discussion of current events throughout the schooling process. Especially in a theme-based, interdisciplinary approach, current events can even be used to drive much of the curriculum, encouraging students, especially at the high school level, to delve deeply into and trace the connections between issues important and relevant to their own lives. Careful attention must also be paid to fostering powerful and balanced research and information-gathering skills as well as media literacy (see Postman and Powers 1992; Herman and Chomsky 1988).

Questioning core values can be an aspect of this use of current events if handled thoughtfully and sensitively by the teacher, for virtually all of the controversies reported by the media have conflicts of basic values at their core, and usually the students (and their parents and teachers) will not all share the same viewpoint or opinion...or core values. Students can be asked to take a position on a current (or past) controversial issue, and in the course of defending it to present the arguments fairly and comprehensively on both (or all) sides. The teacher can encourage an ever-deeper exploration of the values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface of the stances taken. Debates on controversies meaningful to the students which are fairly moderated by the teacher (or the students themselves) can also be a powerful tool in promoting this disposition, particularly if upon occasion the students are asked to take the side opposite to that which they personally believe in and defend it to the best of their ability.

An activist orientation can be achieved by taking a projects-based approach to learning and making "as-

sessment by exhibitions" a key aspect of the curriculum (see Sizer's *Horace's School* 1992, 102-134 and *Horace's Hope* 1996, 83-86; Darling-Hammond 1997, 107-117). Arts education, including the creation of tangible products (and perhaps performances) of high quality through the employment of multiple skills and the habit of perseverance, is particularly well suited to developing this disposition. Of course, school and community service and a developmental approach to student self-governance are also highly relevant here.

Moral strength can be promoted through a number of the approaches mentioned above, especially if the exploration and discussion of current events is properly handled by teachers to include systematic investigation into the values that undergird the choices made by figures in both current and historical events and the students' own choices with regard to engagement with community and with each other. A careful examination of the role of moral courage in the lives of our nation's and the world's great figures, past and present, as well as in the lives of "ordinary" citizens and even "ordinary" students can sensitize learners to this quality, if not actually embed it. Also, a systematic approach to fostering emotional intelligence throughout the years of schooling can be a vital component of strengthening this disposition (Goleman 1995).

Finally, *taking care of yourself* can be promoted not only by having a strong physical and health education component (including such things as dance and yoga, as well as progressively designed sex, drug, and death education), but also by offering a course of ongoing spiritual, psychological, and sociological studies, a portfolio/processfolio approach to assessment (which both empowers and promotes self-esteem), integrating a reflective component to all projects, including a strong component of autobiographical writing in the curriculum, and allowing the student increasing ability to choose what to study, how to study it, and how to demonstrate in authentic ways that learning has taken place.

Beyond this brief sketch, the deeper point is that a clear and well-articulated understanding of the components of the democratic character is essential to the kind of intelligent speculation and ongoing experimentation which will be required to achieve effective

educational approaches to fostering such a character. Once the aims of education for democracy are clearly in view, the means to achieving them ever more successfully can become the focus of investigation. Again, it is crucial to be aware that the identified dispositions and skills must be seen *as ideals* to guide the direction taken by educational practice, not as qualities that can be attained once and for all.

It is perhaps appropriate if we return to John Dewey for a final thought on education for democracy. His warning that "the democratic ideal of education is a farcical yet tragic delusion except as the ideal more and more dominates our public system of education" (98) is as true today as when it was written in 1916. Dewey goes on to remind us that "a society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" (99). It is my contention that the kind of education referred to by Dewey must consciously and systematically focus on and develop in its students the ten dispositions or habits of mind of what I have called existential democracy— democratic habits of perceiving, thinking, and behaving which must ever more deeply suffuse the activity and interactions of everyday life—or the ideals of democracy and education for democracy that Dewey points to will be difficult if not impossible to attain.

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Note

I am indebted to my colleague Ken Bergstrom for first pointing this out to me.

Curriculum from the Back of the Bookstore

Alan A. Block

Where a course is taught can have a deep impact on whether knowledge is "owned" or merely "possessed."

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Next year my five-year-old daughter will begin kindergarten. We will, as we did for her older sister, talk excitedly of her now becoming a big girl and being able to start school. We will read many books about starting school; this impending event will, I hope, have become an old theme in our home. But Anna Rose will still ask, "Why do I have to go to school?" And we will answer, "To have a good time." "But, Daddy," she will protest, "I already have a good time at home and at day care." "Well," I will respond, "we go to school to learn new things." "But, Daddy," she says, "I learn new things every day—from you and Mommy and Emma and Carol and Julie." "Well," I say, "in school you'll learn how to read and to count." "But, Daddy, I know how to read and I can already count to one hundred!!" "Well," I continue, "you'll meet new people and make new friends." "But, Daddy," she says, "I have lots of friends, even new ones. I have my own friends and I play with Emma's friends." I am stumped. "Let me think a while longer," I say to her.

The space of the classroom is the issue. That is, as I must acknowledge that learning isn't particular to school (alas, often it is inimical to it), then I must also wonder what is so special about the classroom that we send our children to it? I do not mean to address the sociological or historical or philosophical justifications for school—others have been more eloquent. Rather, I would like to consider the actual space of the classroom as a scene of learning, and wonder whether in the deliberation on that space the activity of learning might be reassessed as both a physical and psychological phenomenon. That is, how might the space of the classroom be understood—what events might occur within in it and what results might derive from those immanent undertakings (at least those which we have come to identify as indications of learning) so that my daughter's question

might be answered. If it is good for her to go there, then it must be because, indeed, she will *learn* in the space. But I wonder now what that means: Why and how might it occur there? I think that learning is beneficial. I have devoted my life to the belief that learning occurs in the space of the classroom. Anna Rose, with her questions, asks that I reexamine what I do and who I am. And so here I would like to consider the relationship between the space of the classroom and the activities by which that space becomes defined so that I might answer my child. Why, indeed, should my Anna Rose go to school? What should happen when she gets there? What can she expect to find and to do there in the classroom that would favor her attendance?

Bowman 304

The room assigned my graduate class, 421-782, was Bowman 304. It was a relatively new room in what was certainly the oldest building on campus. For years the building's bell tower served as the iconographic emblem of the entire university; indeed, before it was even a university and was yet a state college this bell tower typified the institution. With respect to bell towers, it was no Notre Dame, but its solid brick chimney-like shape ascending in the air oversaw the city of Menomonie with an industrial mien as the towers of Notre Dame filled the air about Paris with a spiritual aspect. Atop this tower, and quarterly by the hour (the insistent focus on time appropriate for a technologically-oriented institution), the bells would ring in an ever-lengthening melodic reminder of the completion of the hour. The bells' toll could be heard a half-mile from campus; from the classroom below the peal of the bells were immediate and god-like.

The room itself—the third and top floor of Bowman Hall, was descript in a non-descript way. It was a comparatively large room, seating perhaps fifty students at little desks dyed in glaring hues of school yellow and red and orange; these were, well, you know, actually quarter-desk surfaces with barely room for a folded notebook and an elbow and small seats with barely room for thin buttocks. These were, well, you know, hard, intractable plastic writing surfaces attached to hard, severe chairs all facing forward toward the large and relatively roomy gray

metal teacher's desk positioned imperiously and stolidly at the front of the room. Cutting across the front wall, like a raised and ragged scar across smooth skin, was the blackboard. The student furniture all faced toward this pulpit and altar which defined the consequences of the space. This was a place structured not for conversation but for declamation, not for knowledge construction but for its transference. The almost absolutely rectangular room was an architecture to ensure that you got your mind right. Various media equipment sat in disarray on gray metal stands about the perimeter of the room—giant, empty, and silent reflecting screens. Shadows could be seen in those grey veils. The walls, which were painted a pale yellow, more the color of disease than early spring flowers, were barren of all decoration save for the snakelike meanderings of occasional electrical wires and the yawning outlets for the media equipment. Occasional fingerprints marred the flat surface. I would sometimes wonder how those prints had come to be on the walls—ghostly markings of human presence. Along three walls there was no other break in the pale yellow display than these. The fourth wall consisted of an array of large windows which overlooked the main intersection of the town but from which could also be seen the beautiful hills west of the city. Throughout most of the winter the hills were invisible in the dark.

Perhaps it was the dreary Wisconsin winter and the thought of spending hours in that dreary room. I had been assigned to this space in previous years. Perhaps it was the contrast between the cavernous, empty nature of the space and the intimacy of the material that led me to seek out alternative space. This was to be a graduate class entitled Instructional Analysis. I had years earlier designed the class from two existing courses: Instructional Processes and Analysis of Teaching Behavior. These two courses had been crunched into one because students preferred to come only once to campus albeit for a longer period of time for a single course than to come two nights for two courses. Thinking about Bowman 304, I could appreciate their resistance. The *de rigueur* course objectives for Instructional Analysis addressed the student's abilities to examine current personal classroom practices and to analyze present ways of being—including design of instruction—in

the classroom. It was apparent to me—though not necessarily to all—that this was a class which required intensive and often sensitive autobiographical work: it was a course designed to consider the motives and designs of personal teaching practices and behaviors and to analyze the contexts in which those behaviors were learned. We wanted to articulate how we had come to learn how to be students and how to be teachers. We wanted to remember how we have forgotten what, and how we learned to be educators. In his own study of the re-construction of selves in autobiographical practice, Mark Freeman (1993, 183) reminds us, "we become 'determined' as a function of the degree of our own self-alienation; the more we have repressed, the more we fall prey to the psychological deep freeze of repetition, which in turn can give our lives the appearance that there are secret forces responsible for their very shape." This couldn't, I assume, be good for education. And as psychoanalyst Adam Phillips (1994, 37) reminds us, repetition is a way of remembering without knowing what it is we are remembering. I am convinced that the banality of so many of our classrooms derives from the unconscious remembrance of things past. There is really so little time permitted for examining our lives as teachers and learners that it is no wonder so much of education is mechanized and monolithic. This class was an attempt to make conscious the daily practices of practicing teachers and teacher-educators. I wanted to disrupt the normal course of classroom practice in order to make strange what was so routine and familiar. For several hours each week we wanted to get lost. Once lost we might find ourselves again. Thoreau reminds me that it is so easy to get lost in this world—we have only to close our eyes and turn about once to lose our place. I had designed this class to examine the daily practices of professionals engaged in their profession and to analyze these behaviors from the perspective of autobiography. Time was the given; it was the luxury of space that I sought. I hoped that if the space were changed the time might be transformed as well. I wanted the opportunity of turning about once with eyes closed.

Through formal readings, writings, and assigned public readings of personal autobiographical inquiry, we were going to develop what Freeman

(1993) calls a "poetics of life history." We were going to examine our daily lives as teachers within the contexts of our autobiographies—how we learned what we learned. Or rather, how *we* learned what *we* learned. Freeman's own conclusions on autobiographical practice informed my theory: the rewriting of self results in the development of self as a product of the lights of the world freshly seen. "What I am proposing," says Freeman about autobiographical work, "is a mode of inquiry that precisely in virtue of its being attuned to the poetic figuration of life itself—both as lived and as told—opens the way toward an enlarged understanding of life and world" (231). We were going to do intimate work in this class, I hoped, and the untransformed Bowman 304 seemed a nightmarish environment for this sensitive dreamwork. There was already in the room too much echo and too little space for insight.

I had originally considered the basement of my home as the locus for class but issues of accessibility (I have an uphill driveway which freezes in the winter) and distance from campus—three miles—deterred me from establishing class there. More importantly, the space would have been mine and thus have defeated the whole notion of a strange space. My friend Van Foreman and his wife Karla Miller own the local bookstore in which I shop almost weekly. I am mostly intimidated by book stores, especially bigger ones, because they remind me of my mortality. But The Upstart Crow is a manageable space for me and Van collects an interesting panoply of titles; I have come across some important texts to my life on his shelves which might have never come to view in a larger store. I think Van knows every book that presently sits on his shelves. I asked him what he thought of my holding class in the back of his bookstore on Wednesday evenings from 5 to 8 p.m. I offered to close for him because he is not usually open that late mid-week, nor unfortunately is business so brisk (albeit this is a college town) to warrant later hours. He surprisingly agreed and agreed as well to remain in the store for the duration of the class.

The Upstart Crow

The Upstart Crow is a relatively small, eclectic book store. Its total floor space is approximately six-

teen hundred square feet; there is ample area to meander between the book-packed shelves (most of them are at eye level) and browse. There are chairs throughout the space inviting the browser to sit and glean. The walls in the front of the store are a familiar, pale yellow (Van informs me that they are really 'French vanilla'), but the pallor is made rich and deep by colorful posters of writers, by book advertisements, by wood shelves packed with books, and by the mixed aroma of wood and words and coffee. One student commented, "The smell of the coffee was nostalgic [of] places where conversation may occur.... Personally, a warm cup of coffee in hand seems to free the inhibitions for conversation to occur." Conversation is what I desired. In the rear of the store is a rectangular space of perhaps one hundred square feet in which sits a couch, a coffee table, and several cushioned and folding wood chairs. On the floor and under the coffee table—as in so many living rooms—there rests a six by nine Persian carpet; one student expressed an affection for the design of the carpet and spoke of following the pattern at several moments during the semester. It was here, in this relatively close and enclosed space, that Van would occasionally sponsor readings and book discussion groups. There had been conversation here before. The walls in the rear of the store were a purplish burgundy—Van referred to them as raspberry-colored. On the perimeter of the space, there was a chess board on a kind of end table next to one of the shelves. Van would often entertain a game with many a customer. He loves coffee as well, and he offered to brew the coffee I volunteered to supply. He has a little grinder and a coffee machine in the rear of the store with a collection of ceramic coffee mugs. Occasionally, Karla, Van's wife and store co-owner, would bring a bag of cookies for us; Katherine, one of the non-traditional students who was already a family therapist returning to school for an Ed.S, brought a bag of Twizzlers weekly and once baked us cinnamon sweet rolls. We never lacked for food and drink.

For sixteen weeks, thirteen of us from the university would gather in the back of The Upstart Crow and explore our readings and our writings and our thinkings. I believe we did very personal work there, and that for the most part it was an important experience for all participants. One student writes, "We communicated through spoken words and body language. This setting prevented us from feeling that everything we said was being scrutinized and judged. It allowed us to move beyond the traditional game of performing for the professor who hands out our grades." But I do not mean to say that miracles occurred. Or that if they occurred it was a result solely of the space. Heisenberg has taught us that in principle it is impossible to measure precisely certain pairs of properties, including position/momentum, simultaneously. In this situation in the bookstore, there were so many other significant factors to consider that it would be impossible to ascribe the success or failure of the class to the change in space. Indeed, perhaps it would even be hubris to assume that change took place at all—the classroom has become such a confusing space to me. And yet the space was special. While we sat and talked of cabbages and kings and lessons and plans, business in the store continued as usual. The cash register rang as we read our autobiographical musings; customers roamed the store searching out appropriate reading material; university personnel entered the store and stared in mystery at the group concentrated at the rear of the bookstore. I liked to imagine that in their faces I read disappointment that they had missed the advertisement for the reading, or better, envy that I had gotten here first. Occasionally, those who knew me would recognize me and try to make sense of the vision. Van would on request explain our presence; they would look to the rear of the store again and again as they now somewhat distractedly studied the shelves. Often they searched for books not far from our space; Thoreau tells us that "Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after." During our own breaks we roamed amid shelves of books, purchased more than our share (I certainly bought more books than I would have time to read), and breathed in a different air than that of Bowman 304. We were off campus.

The change in classroom space originally derived from my discomfort with the regular classroom assignment. I did not originally intend an experiment. But the change in space made the contemplation of space possible. The substance of the space and the relationship between that space and the activity which takes place there became, as it were, italicized by this

attempt to keep on keeping on in an environment constructed for other than classroom purposes. I wondered what might happen to the work of a classroom when only *the idea* of its space is transformed rather than its actual physical place. That is, how might we think about the production and transformation of knowledge in the classroom (learning) from our experience in the transformed space of the bookstore? The familiarity of the classroom makes certain knowledges possible and legitimate, but what might occur when we move away from the classroom and try to produce transformative knowledge? Perhaps more specifically, how might the production and ownership of knowledge be reconsidered in the reconfiguration of the space of the classroom? This was Anna Rose's innocent question: why do I have to go to school at all? I do not think we can remove all of our classes to alternative classrooms, but perhaps the experience at the back of the bookstore helped me redefine the substance of the work of the classroom by giving substance to the abstract of the classroom space. Space is all about us and we occupy it; what does it mean to occupy the particular space of the classroom? I know that we do not create space, but we do construct a particular space. We use space—the space of our classrooms. Our experience at The Upstart Crow led me to understand that space can be known—and transformed—by the particular action which might be allowed to take place within it. Space is not something into which we move; rather, the action which we practice defines the space. Perhaps the idea of the classroom space might be regularly transformed by the activity taking place within it. It is to this notion that I now turn.

Ownership and Acquisition

The Talmud is the summary of oral law that evolved as a result of the inquiry of sages living in Palestine and Babylonia. Adin Steinsaltz (1976, 3), a Talmudic scholar, claims that "If the Bible is the cornerstone of Judaism, then the Talmud is the central pillar, soaring up from the foundations and supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice.... It is a conglomerate of law, legend, and philosophy, a blend of unique logic and shrewd pragmatism, of history and science, anecdotes and humor." The Talmud offers me a set of resources different than those

traditionally used in Western culture to consider issues of curriculum. Chapter one of *Bava Metzia*, a tractate in the Babylonian Talmud, explores considerations of the law when two people contest ownership of the same ownerless object. Now, the unowned objects which one may legitimately claim as "mine" are intimately connected to the space in which those objects are found; thus, the notion of space might be considered central to the principle of ownership. Ownership is my interest now as well, though, as I have said, I am concerned with claims to the ownership of knowledge within the space of the classroom. Learning is the process of acquiring and constructing knowledge; what may be acquired in the classroom and under what conditions that acquisition may occur very much affects students' stance toward education. This particular piece of Talmud concerning the acquisition of unowned objects oddly enough seems extremely relevant to my present concern at the back of the bookstore. The Talmudic rabbis here must attend to matters of space and time so that issues of ownership of unowned objects may be decided. I think these scholars may have much to suggest to me about curriculum and learning. We often are asked to consider curriculum as knowledge—often questions of curriculum are framed as questions concerning whose and what knowledge is of most worth. It is conceivable that knowledge might also be thought of as a found, even ownerless object; that is, knowledge is always something we did not know we were going to find—it is always the answers to our questions. Knowledge, our constructions from the bric-a-brac we come upon in the world, often surprises and delights us; there are always alternative claims to knowledge.

Knowledge is, as I have said, what we construct in the pursuit of answers to our questions. Needless to say, and as Anna Rose reminds me, we need no classroom to find this knowledge, but our discoveries and claims to knowledge, nevertheless, always do occur in a particular space. We occupy space. Objects we would own—and those we do not wish to own—exist in an explicit space. The classrooms to which we send our children are such spaces. Questions regarding the ownership of unowned objects involve issues concerning space. Questions regarding the right to the ownership of knowledge—and to the materials

available for the construction of knowledge—are concerned with issues concerning classroom space. What does define the space of the classroom that students might acquire ownerless objects in it? Why, indeed, does Anna Rose have to go to the classroom to learn? How will the construction of the classroom space enable her to create and change her world?

In our classrooms knowledge is traditionally orated—it is not only *a* given but *the* given. Ownership is not an issue. Our classrooms are filled with declamations and Socratic monologues: knowledge proferred and ultimately, conferred. We debate the legitimacy of the ownership of knowledge, but not the conditions of its acquisition. We debate whose knowledge is of most worth. We wonder what knowledge is of most worth that we may bestow it. We question how possession of a particular knowledge might be best evaluated and assessed. We are concerned with whose claims to possession of knowledge take precedence. We wonder what is to be done with these various and often disputed claims to possession. Our classroom spaces are constructed based in our responses to these considerations. I think the space of the classroom is defined by the notion of knowledge that occupies it; I believe that the possibilities for its ownership organizes knowledge. What knowledge is conceived to be authorizes the activities by which it may be acquired. In many classrooms we are typically interested in the objects possessed rather than with issues of the actual ownership of those objects; we are concerned, perhaps, with the occupation of knowledge rather than its ownership. Indeed, it is the nature of traditional measures of assessment and evaluation to objectively determine what knowledge has become, as it were, "possessed," to calculate the quality and quantity of that knowledge "possessed," and to assign and certify the "possession" of that knowledge. Such issues occupy the front pages of our daily newspapers; they comprise the discussions concerning national standards and standardized testing procedures. In our classrooms, for the most part, the tenancy of knowledge is conferred; we are concerned with its possession and not ownership. The spaces of our classrooms are designed to facilitate this process. It is likely that what teachers and students think about the activity of the classroom may be connected to their feelings regarding the space of the classroom and ideas regarding the possibilities for the acquisition, in this case, of knowledge within it. If knowledge is merely to be possessed then it is external to the knower; what activity might occur in the classroom will be based on this foundation. But if knowledge might be owned, then knowledge is conceptualized as intrinsic to the knower, and the classroom space and the activity available within it, too, might be redefined. I wonder how ideas concerning the classroom space might be recast if we focused not on the product finally possessed, but rather on how specific actions had to be assayed for knowledge to come to be in our possession; what if we were interested not so much in what we had acquired but in the means by which we have come to acquire it? For example, how might we have to reconsider assessment and evaluation if what we sought was not what unowned objects had been acquired within the space of the classroom but the conditions by which that acquisition occurred? I believe that the idea of the classroom space would of necessity change.

Constructivism argues that knowledge is constructed by the individual and is therefore directly affected by the life circumstances of the learner. Constructivists are concerned with the activity of construction: the form and the materials and yes, the final object. I am concerned with these items as well. Every construction is accomplished with various found objects and takes place within a specific space; ownership, however, remains a central issue. The right that I have to certain materials affects what I believe I may construct and how I might ultimately define ownership of that construction. What I do with what I find is an educational issue, and my sense of ownership determines what materials I may use and the use to which I may put them. The space is where objects may be found. How I recognize the final construction as mine is no small issue; how I establish ownership of ownerless objects to facilitate construction seems integral to the space of the classroom. The classroom is itself a particular, historical, constructed, and designed space in which learning is meant to take place. How we think about the activity of the classroom—in this case, what ownerless objects might be there acquired to be subsequently used—might be affected by our senses of the space of

the classroom. Relationships between space and ownership are here intimately connected. How we think about a space affects what we think we can come to own within one. Educational discourse has been concerned of late with space; I am not so much concerned with the creation of space as I am with the relationship between space and ownership. When our students learn in our classroom spaces, they must know that what they know—their knowledge—has been acquired by them and is theirs. It seems to me our function must be to provide environments—the classroom—for our students to acquire unowned objects. Space is where things are acquired, but what that acquisition means is yet problematic. And so I turn to a consideration of space and the conditions of acquisition of unowned objects within these spaces.

If One Sees an Ownerless Object

The Talmud has two main components, the Mishnah, which is the redaction of the Oral Law completed in about 200 C.E., and the Gemara, the commentary on that law. Our Mishnah (11A) says that "If one sees an ownerless object and falls upon it, and another person comes and seizes it, he who has seized it is entitled to its possession." There are conflicting notions of space operating here. There is, first, the space defined by the object—it exists in the same space—on the ground presumably. There is the space occupied by the first individual's physical presence: the first individual literally covers the object with his/her body apparently by falling upon it, and by this act assumes acquisition of an ownerless object. There is the space of the second individual who enters into the space occupied by the object and the first individual, and in the overt act of seizure assumes acquisition of an ownerless object. The space, seemingly an objective locus, itself has been redefined by the entrance into it by someone whose action changes the *potentialities* of that space. For the first individual, acquisition of an unowned object is achieved by falling upon it within a space. However, as soon as a second claimant enters and enacts an overt seizure of the unowned object within the same space and from *under* the first, then the second acquires ownership of what is *yet* considered ownerless property. Claims to ownership are not coincident

with discovery, mor is it coincident with mere occupation of space. Rather, claims to ownership seem to be irrelevant to time and contiguity.

According to the ruling, the contiguous and synchronous occupation of space with the unowned object by the first individual is not sufficient grounds for its acquisition. For the subsequent entrance by the second individual into the identical space, and the seizure of that object by him/her within that space and from under the first individual actually acquires the object for this second individual. In the first case, for the first individual, falling upon the object acquires ownership provided that no other claim is effected. This is not insignificant. Contiguity to the space is in all cases crucial; you can't fall on an object or even seize it without being in proximity to the object. Indeed, even if the space belongs to you, ownership of unowned objects found within that space is not assumed; a subsequent Mishnah insists that an unfenced field acquires ownership for the owner only if the owner is standing by the field and he states that the field acquires ownership for him. Humans must act—even linguistically— the doctors of the Talmud seem to suggest, to acquire unowned objects. The rabbis seem concerned not so much with actual physical possession as with intent. These Talmudic doctors are setting principles of conditions for the acquisition of unowned objects within specific spaces. This acquisition is tied in the rabbis' discussion to the intent of action, and is directly concerned with the idea of the intentional use of the space in which the object is found. Use is a human act.

How is it that falling upon an object is not sufficient grounds for ownership? How is it that an ownerless object physically seized out from under another may yet be considered rightfully acquired? Resh Lakish, one of the doctors of the Talmud, wondered the same thing; Lakish objected that the Mishnah must be mistaken because the rabbis earlier had instituted a ruling that defined about each person a four cubit space within which all ownerless objects may be considered owned. Ownership is, suggests Lakish, a spatial matter, and that space is physical and eminently measurable—four cubits. This four cubit space is sufficient, the rabbis acknowledge, for lying down in comfortably and for reaching without taking a lot of trouble when bending over. Therefore,

argues Resh Lakish, since a person's four cubits acquires property for him everywhere, then falling upon an object should acquire it; according to Lakish, the person who falls upon the object should own it. Furthermore, Lakish suggests, "The rabbis instituted this law in order that people might not be led to quarreling." That is, what is in one's space—the four cubits—may be considered as owned.

I can understand where this concept might prevent quarreling: ownership was considered a spatial relationship in which time was also a factor. In the late twentieth century we have come to understand this concept of the four cubits less as a physical than a spiritual—or virtual—space. We have no firm notion of how far it extends, though we yet deem it terribly valuable and worthy of respect. "I need my space," we say; "Get out of my space!" we demand. We are safe within our four cubits; safety within the classroom is often an issue. One student writes:

> The first day that the idea was suggested that the class be moved it did not sit well with me. I could not help but wonder what type of setting this would put me in. I try to avoid places or people who would make me feel uncomfortable. This appeared to force me to sit close to another person, maybe even give up the personal space that I only shared with the empty chairs that surrounded my every side.

In our classrooms we sit at our desks separate and alone; surrounded by our four cubits we work in isolation. We remain alone in the undertaking of our work and its evaluation.

Resh Lakish's argument, as is that of so much educational work, is that ownership of unowned objects is dependent upon the position of the object: when it enters our four cubit space it becomes ours. It lies within our notebooks, it exists in our heads and may be reproduced on our tests and in our assigned papers. It is ours. Knowledge in the classroom is often the activity of falling upon the object. In the traditional classroom, ownership is the product of the activity *of the object*—we have but to stand passively and our four cubit space acquires for us when the object enters. We fall passively upon the object; all within that space is considered ours and we clutch it whole. "Cover your papers, class," the teacher advises. For Resh Lakish, space is a physical reality and one need do nothing to acquire as long as the object

lies within the four cubit space. The classroom acquires; we acquire within the classroom the objects that enter within our four cubits.

But in our Mishnah, clearly the notion of the four cubit space is not applicable; Abaye and Raba, citing Torah, raise an objection to Lakish's argument: Deuteronomy 24: 19 commands that the gleanings of a harvest belong to the poor. Yet, Abaye and Raba continue, a law declares that if a poor person takes part of his rightfully gotten gleanings and throws them over the rest, making the gleanings his agent, as it were, and thereby, increasing the space of his four cubits, or if the poor person simply throws his body or his cloak over the gleanings, again increasing the scope of his/her four cubits, s/he loses all. How is it, they ask, that a person's four cubits acquires for him by rabbinic dictum, but in the instance presented here a person's claim to the four cubits forfeits. The Torah says that "When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forget a bundle in the field, you shall not turn back to take it; it shall be for the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow," but this ruling says that if a poor person would take his gleanings which are legally his and throw them upon other gleanings in order to gather more, then he loses both that which might be rightfully his and also that which are not his. Or, if the poor person falls upon the gleanings or a forgotten sheaf, all of which is rightfully due him, he loses his claim to all his gathered gleanings. In other words, not all forms of owning unowned objects are equal.

Several explanations are offered which have bearing on the notion of ownership and space. Rav Papa argues that the rabbis instituted the custom of the four cubits only in a public place in order to prevent arguments, they "did not institute [such a law] in a private person's field." That is, space within a private person's field in which one might acquire unowned objects is defined not by the four cubits but by what a person can reach and pick up by his/her effort; of course, what is gleaned must be first considered ownerless. No part of the field itself may be regarded as his/her ground, though the Divine Law did give the seeker "the right to walk in it and glean its corners." One may gather the gleanings but not consider the field as public land within which the four cubit space may acquire.

I think of our bookstore—all about us are the gleanings of the world's wisdom available to us, but only with our effort. The field is not ours. One student writes, "Another bonus that I received from holding classes in the bookstore was the purchase of a few good books that I would not otherwise have read. Throughout the semester, I bought four books on a whim. I enjoyed each one…." I think about our classrooms: students sitting at desks covered with notebooks and papers. They wait for something to be given them. The Talmud suggests that it will not do to throw themselves upon the space—they must walk through the field picking up only what they can carry. The space is available for use but it may not acquire for us. To lie upon the land—or to throw the gleanings about in the effort to gain more is insufficient—we would lose what we have already acquired. Thus, the definition of space becomes a consequence of a specific activity; space is where that activity takes place. Ownership of ownerless objects is contingent upon the activity within a space and not upon the space itself. Indeed, this is crucial to the idea of the classroom: the space might belong to none of us, but it may be yet filled with ownerless objects—knowledge—which we would acquire. The doctors of the Talmud insist that if we would acquire, then we must do so on our own volition. We must make a conscious and public effort; presence is not enough, nor, apparently, is agency. Throwing our cloaks over the gleanings to avoid picking up or to increase our four cubits is an unseemly means of acquisition. In our classrooms this issue of volition becomes crucial. One student writes, "The fact that we could look at different books on our breaks was an added benefit. The owners of the bookstore were nice also, they did not try to force us to buy any of the books even though we read the first chapters of some of the many different titles." Space is where we might acquire *by our own effort* ownerless objects.

A second and similar objection to the proscription against falling upon or throwing one's cloak upon the gleanings as a means of acquisition is raised by Rabbi Jacob ben Idi. Rabbi Jacob says that the rabbis ordered that a person's four cubits could acquire for him *everywhere*, and therefore, the person's four cubits should permit the acquisition in the fields of these ownerless objects by, indeed, falling upon them or throwing one's cloak over them. Rabbi Jacob is arguing that ownership can be passively acquired or acquired by agency. But the rabbis' response is to me remarkable: They argue that because the person fell upon the gleanings and did not declare "I wish to acquire it," it may not be assumed that, indeed, acquisition was the intent. Merely falling upon an object is an unacceptable mode of acquisition. Falling may be considered too involuntary—even random. The rabbis seem to insist on conscious intent for the acquisition of unowned objects—especially when that ownership might be contested. Similarly, it is also true that since the person threw his cloak upon the gleanings, s/he did not wish to acquire them by means of his four cubits and therefore, since a person's four cubits does not acquire in a private field, the ownerless object may be acquired by the act of seizure. That is, neither passivity nor agency may be legitimized as means of acquisition of unowned objects. The rabbis insist that intentionality be central to acquisition, and that merely covering the object in space represents insufficient claims to an ownerless object.

Though Rabbi Jacob continues to insist that according to the ruling that the four cubit "fence," personal space acquires ownership regardless of verbal intent, the other rabbis continue to insist that this claim is insufficient. And the reason they then offer is that the four cubits is only valid on a side street that is not crowded; in a public place or a crowded thoroughfare marking out a person's four cubits is a meaningless distinction. But, advocates of Rabbi Jacob's position argue, doesn't *everywhere* mean everywhere? No, comes the surprising response; "everywhere" includes only the [ground] on both sides of the high road. That is, in a sense, the rabbis establish a rule regarding the four cubit space and then render that rule inoperative in all but the most specific circumstances. They seem to demand explicit activity—picking up—and overt intentionality if one wants to acquire an ownerless object. The space is not as crucial as the intent; indeed, the space is defined by the intent. Though the rabbis distinguish generally between public and private space and set restrictions of ownership of unowned objects within private space, they nevertheless seem to acknowledge that any ownership is contingent on activity. Even ownership of the land does not ensure owner-

ship of all that is on the land. Ownership is contingent on activity; the type of activity seems to define the space.

Perhaps that is why the laws of ownership are here defined by laws of gleaning. Deuteronomy ensures that the field may not acquire absolutely for the owner—what is dropped and forgotten (and ah, yes, the rabbis must yet decide what that exactly means) may not yet be declared owned by rights of the field. What is left must be considered unowned and therefore available to be found. How may these gleanings be gathered and by whom and under what conditions? Aren't these, too, the questions of our classrooms? All about us are unowned objects, real objects dropped by real people. How might we acquire them and own them that they might be used? How might we learn to be scientists and bricoleurs—how might we change our world? Agency—either the whole of our bodies or our cloaks—is insufficient means of acquisition. Rather, it is only the active and linguistically articulated intention of ownership that acquires. The doctors of the Talmud seem to operate here to minimize the possibility of contention and maximize the activity of the finder. Space is known more by the legitimated action which takes place within it than by the physical bounds which demarcate it. If in a crowded public place, a person's four cubits do not exist, then this means of acquisition is inappropriate. Acquisition must be accomplished by seizing. So, too, must this be in our classrooms which exist in and as crowded public spaces.

The End

We sit at the back of the bookstore. We are in a classroom nonetheless. And in the fall I return to Bowman 304. I think we are looking for unowned objects, and if we are not looking for them they are about us all the same. Instructional analysis: analysis of instruction. Lessons on analyzing how we teach and how we learn. We wish to own our pasts, but first they must be discovered. Until we own them are they our pasts? "The regressive phase of *currere*, Pinar (1994, 265) "is not about wandering around in one's own house of mirrors, Narcissus-like, but remembering that the language we speak now derives from what and whom we saw through our windows as infants and children and young adults." One stu-

dent writes, "Even breaks became educational, as we all browsed through the stacks of books…. Holding class in the bookstore allowed busy graduate students the opportunity to browse." I cannot help but connect this browsing with gleaning: "When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forgot a bundle in the field, you shall not turn back to take it; it shall be for the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow, so that Adonai, your God, will bless you in all your handiwork." The bookstore, like our classroom, is crowded public space in which the rabbis' ruling of the four cubit space is inapplicable; the bookstore, like our classrooms, is a private field in which the four cubits is not valid as well; we may acquire here only by a physical act and by our public statement of intentionality. Like the bookstore, our classrooms are private space; we do not own, but we move in them as gleaners. We may not consider the classroom as our field. Thus, if we want to acquire unowned objects in them we must do so by picking them up ourselves. And we must consciously seize and articulate this desire: "I wish to acquire it." For our purposes here we must acknowledge that in the back of the bookstore we are only permitted to acquire by personal action—neither our four cubits nor any agent may acquire for us. Education is a personal and conscious act, and if one means to claim ownership of the unowned object it must be done so by a public, personal and linguistic act announcing intentionality.

The Beginning

I have been thinking about how I should respond to Anna Rose's query. Perhaps I have arrived at a partial answer. In schools—in her classrooms—Anna Rose will come upon unowned objects which she could acquire. (We must insist that there are sufficient objects available in our classrooms. We must be sure to leave a great deal from which to glean. We must make those objects important so that she can acquire them). We must let her, and others like her, know that acquisition of the objects is the activity of the school, and that in this public/private space the potentiality for a diversity of objects is wonderfully immense. She must have confidence that it is her prerogative—indeed, her right—to change the world by her effort in this acquisition, even if it is only hers at

present that she means to change. However, she must also know that she may claim unowned objects only by acts of *intentional* public and linguistic means. The effort must be all hers and all hers to direct. Of course, she may always decide what objects she will pick up, but the classroom space will be where she may acquire *by her activity* and not merely by her presence. What she builds out of what she finds may be hers only if she declares that she wishes to acquire and if she knows that she may so acquire. School, I tell Anna Rose, is another rich field in which she may walk and in which she may acquire unowned objects by her activity. It is her right. It is divine law.

I think we must begin to make ready those fields.

Notes

1. Van's degree of comfort with our occupation of his store must have been considerable. Towards the end of the semester he and his wife, Karla, left on vacation to Mexico for two weeks and we continued to meet at the back of the bookstore with his own substitute teachers, as it were, in charge. He did ask several of us for recommendations for his reading material. Despite my objection he still took David Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion*. I don't think he read it.

2. I mentioned to the class that at least two literary works, Henry James's "The Figure in the Carpet" and W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* have at their center such a carpet and the search for the principle of design in a rug.

3. I distinguish found objects from borrowed objects because many constructivists would deny that knowledge is ever borrowed; rather, knowledge is found and used in personal and often idiosyncratic ways. Of course, knowledge may be shared, but I believe we are dealing with claims to lost objects—to found knowledge.

4. For example, the man who built my house doesn't own my house, and if he is found in it after hours he may be prosecuted for entering a house not his own.

5. The word *acquires* is that used in the Talmud.

6. This is a phrase I borrow from Emmanuel Levinas to refer to the personages engaged in Talmudic discourse.

7. A cubit was originally the distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger; by culture it varies from approximately 16 to 20 inches. The English cubit is a measurement of 18 inches.

8. I reserve for another time the discussion of why the rabbis go to this particular passage in the Torah to justify ownership of unowned objects.

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The Masks of Mentor

Donna Glee Williams

Formal educational mentoring programs are most effective when they recognize that mentoring has many faces and can teach many wisdoms.

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During my first semester of teaching, I was assigned a "mentor." Her silhouette in the doorway of my classroom had the same effect on me that the shadow of a hawk has on the small furry creatures of the field. She was the most terrifying thing that happened to me during that whole terrifying year, and my deepest desire was the prey's prayer to avoid all contact with her as much as possible.

Could you say that she was my "mentor"? The university called her that. But what does that word mean? It crept into English from the Greek name Mentor, the counselor of Odysseus. Disguised as Mentor, Athena, goddess of wisdom, became the teacher and protector of Odysseus' son Telemachus while his father was away. A minor character in Homer's *Odyssey*, in 1699 Mentor appears as a major character in *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, the best known work of the educator and theologian Fénelon. Boosted by Fénelon's attention, during the eighteenth century "Mentor" begins to appear in English as a proper noun, a classical allusion denoting "advisor." During the nineteenth century, the word is established as a common noun as well. During the second half of the twentieth century, we begin to hear of "mentoring" as a verb, and eventually (by analogy with pairs like "grantor/grantee") we begin to hear of "mentees," the recipients of mentoring.

Until the last few decades, the word "mentor" always referred to informal, mutually self-selected counseling and teaching relationships between individuals. But as observation and research revealed the importance of the mentoring relationship in complementing formal education, administrators in education, business, and government began to plan for intentional mentoring programs in their organizations. In teaching, particularly, with its notoriously daunting first-year experience, mentoring has been seen as a way to help turn educated novices into competent

professionals. The hope is that effective mentors will buffer the "reality shock" that causes so many aspiring teachers to quit before they ever have a chance to reach mastery.

The urgency to keep new teachers from quitting and to speed their transformation from novice to competent professional has forced a tremendous bloom of interest in mentoring in the educational literature in the past quarter century. In the July 1973–June 1974 *Educational Index*, the only mentor listed is Mentor, Ohio. Ten years later, twenty-two references to mentors and mentor programs are listed in the 1983–1984 volume. Another decade passes and fifty-eight articles are mentioned in 1993–1994. An online search of 1998–1999 references to mentors in the ERIC database uncovers 190 articles. Most of these articles refer to institutionalized mentoring programs in which mentors are formally assigned to protégés by third parties. Rather than dealing with how to awaken genius, most of the programs discussed have an implicitly remedial agenda: The protégé is seen as being *less than able* and the goal of mentoring is to alleviate this lack.

But perhaps we should remember that the word once had a wider scope. Perhaps we should remember that mentoring once meant more than a formal administrative relationship in which an experienced practitioner is expected to train, supervise, and evaluate a less competent colleague. Perhaps as we design formal mentoring programs for teachers and students, we should reconsider mentoring in the older tradition associated with counseling, protection, and teaching: what Merlin was to Arthur, what Anne Sullivan was to Helen Keller.

True mentors in this venerable tradition match what they offer to what their apprentices need to bring their genius to light. These needs vary across situations and through time. This came home to me again when I was listening to Mary McCay, a Rachel Carson biographer, tell the story of the education of Carson, the woman who put pesticide pollution on the world's agenda.

As part of my work at The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, I had arranged for a group of teachers to spend a week focusing intensely on the life and work of Rachel Carson. Mary McCay, my own mentor for many years, gave the keynote address. I had asked her to speak about Carson's education, to give some glimmers about how we as teachers today could awaken impassioned genius like Carson's.

Rachel Carson had always been a hero of mine but, as my old friend and teacher told her story (1998), I came to see Carson with fresh eyes. Carson's accomplishment is like the top of a mountain viewed from a distance—from afar you don't see the underpinnings, the support structure, the solid rock that elevates the peak into the sky. Mary's telling brought her life into closer focus, showing how Carson stood high on a sturdy edifice of mentoring and support from a large cast of characters, including her mother, Maria Carson; her teacher, Mary Skinker; her literary agent, Marie Rodell; her friend, Dorothy Freedman; and her secretary, Jean Davis. Mary stressed that Carson's mentors stood by her with different types of support to match her different needs at different points in her life.

As Mary McCay displayed the changing faces of Carson's mentors, I began to sense natural categories of ways in which we give and receive informal mentoring. In real life, the different forms of support often blend and intertwine, but they have distinct dynamics. The energy flow in mother-mentoring is different from that in teacher-mentoring, which is different from agent-mentoring, helper-mentoring, or friend-mentoring.

The Mother-Mentor

The essential acts of The Mother archetype are *feeding and protecting*. A mother *feeds* the world to her child, offering experiences in bite-sized pieces that are comfortably matched to what the child can absorb. She is aware of her child's changing "digestive" capacities, and responds to them. She also keeps her young one safe while it imbibes the world. (Before the unattractive term "mentee" gained currency, the receiver of mentoring was often referred to as the *protégé*, "the protected one.") I have been a witness to a number of careful mothers introducing the world to their children in measured doses. My friend Anne Vilen, a writer and wild woman raising a wild toddler in the mountains of North Carolina, is scrupulously vigilant when she takes her daughter to the woods, so that the little one is not overwhelmed by

fatigue, discomfort, boredom, or novelty. The hikes get longer and the sharing more complex as little Annalee gets stronger and wiser in the ways of the wild.

The mother-mentor need not be an actual biological mother in this relationship, nor the protégé an actual child in age, but the vocabulary of mother and child perfectly captures the essence of this type of support. The mother-mentor holds the child in full protection while offering the world to the young human-in-training in manageable experiences. In the safety of the "mother's" powerful care, the "child" can experience wonder and excitement, not fear and confusion, in the adrenaline rush and pitty-pat of the heart that attend the encounter with Something New. Comfort in the face of challenge and novelty is essential to explorers and creators of new realities. If this sort of mentoring is successful, it creates an engaged being, a person who is connected to the world by bonds of emotion: care, concern, curiosity, and awe.

The Teacher-Mentor

An entirely different dynamic of mentoring is embodied in the figure of the teacher. In myths and fairy tales, there is often a figure who assigns seemingly impossible tasks to a young hero. The hero finds ways to accomplish the tasks and, in completing them, comes to the fullness of strength, maturity, and wisdom. The essential act of the teacher is *assigning tasks* that lead to growth. We often think of teachers as some form of "tellers"—talkers, lecturers, preachers, speakers. But the actual work of teaching has more to do with setting tasks for students than with spewing knowledge at them. An effective teacher-mentor assigns tasks that stretch and strengthen the learner, that require the learner to practice skills, to acquire knowledge, to develop discipline. The accomplishment of the task is something that can be judged—Is it done? Is it done *well*?—and, in the judging, the learner can acquire standards. This function has been associated in some psychologies with the role of the father. Yaya Diallo (1989) tells that there is no word for "teacher" in the Minianka tongue of West Africa, because teaching is so closely associated with the role of the father.

Like the mother-mentor, the teacher-mentor must be exquisitely aware of the changing needs and abilities of a protégé. Because mentoring is, by definition, a relationship in which the human-in-training grows (that is, *changes*), the teacher-mentor must have clear eyes to realistically appraise the learner's capacities at any given stage in development. The "homework" assigned has to be carefully attuned to who the student is at a particular stage: if it is too easy, it is pointless, but if it is too hard, futility and hopelessness can break a learner's heart.

I was generously mentored by Frank Parker, a professor in graduate school who kept regular hours at the college coffee shop. Any student who wished could cruise by during his coffee-time, sit for a few minutes or hours, listen or argue or ask questions, and absorb as much of Frank as he or she could take. After years of tooth-dissolving University Center lemonade, Frank Parker became my dissertation advisor. Frank not only taught the subject matter of linguistics but also, by assigning an endless torrent of problems of increasing complexity, taught his students how to think like linguists. He forced us to analyze dozens of articles, not just for content but also for effectiveness of writing, so that by the time I came to write my dissertation, successful academic writing was an open book to me. Writing the dissertation was merely one more in the long series of problems Frank set before me. His grading policy was so— well, let's call it *rigorous*—that his classes usually shrank to half their original sizes by the end of the semester. The proudest moment of my graduate career, and I mean better than graduation day and better than my first publication, was the day that he walked into class and publicly acknowledged that I had been right in an argument we had had over a test question. In intellectual matters, there is no question that he was "like a father" to me. As I sit and write this article, I can feel him reading over my shoulder and ticking like a Geiger counter whenever I slip away from clarity of thought or language.

Of course, a teacher-mentor need not be an actual classroom teacher like Frank Parker was for me. In fact, effective classroom teachers, like good mothers, may blend all sorts of mentoring styles as they strive to meet the needs of the humans-in-training they care for. But the vocabulary of teacher and student perfectly captures the essence of one type of mentoring support: assigning tasks that promote

growth. Persons who are well mentored in this way have plenty of experience with both succeeding and failing. Their successes give them the belief that they can make a difference; their failures armor them against the reverses that are the necessary companions of a serious effort. Every failure I brought to Frank, every rejection letter and failed application, he would greet with his enthusiastic "failure is good" speech. ("Failure is *good*. Failure is your friend. Your successes are a certain proportion of your attempts. It's simple math: The more often you try, the more often you'll fail, but the more often you'll succeed, too.")

Successful teacher-mentoring leaves the young human-in-training skilled, self-confident, and self-disciplined. If these tools of accomplishment are added to the engaged passion for the world resulting from effective mother-mentoring, what results is a person who not only *cares* but also has the tools with which to *act* in the world.

The Helper-Mentor

Clerical assistance is not usually regarded as mentoring these days, but if we look objectively at the lives of people who really get things done in the world, we will not ignore it. It may seem a little odd to dignify with the word "mentoring" the functions of the helper or amanuensis. Could our reluctance to attribute value to the helping role stem from the fact that it has traditionally fallen into the province of women: secretaries, librarians, nurses, and wives?

The essential act of the helper is *handling the details*, a function often associated with the traditional role of the wife. As at an earlier stage the teacher-mentor *assigns* work that strengthens and stretches the protégé, conversely the helper-mentor *does* the routine work that would otherwise deplete and distract the creator. The helper handles logistics and any aspect of the work that can be delegated. Once professional skills have been mastered, routine tasks (although crucial) may be a drain on energy and time. Passing them on to competent assistants means that the creative spirit can occupy itself with the larger issues of the work.

Recently, a new face of the helper-mentor has become a welcome partner to many of us: the computer angel. The person who figures out how to save the deleted but vital file, who knows the arcana of multimedia presentations, who can wring the missing information out of the World Wide Web, who can teach us how to use that new software that is supposed to make our job so much easier—that person facilitates creative work that would be impossible if the computer-impaired were left to our own devices. "Facilitate" is not a strong enough word—in Spanish, there is a verb *posibilitar*, meaning "to make possible." English needs the verb "possibilitate." This is what computer angels, secretaries, and assistants do.

Lee Isaacson is the person who comes to mind when I muster the memories of the helper-mentors who have allowed me to fly. Lee is the computer whiz who has supported me from the beginning of my writing career. It was Lee who came out in the (literal) hurricane on the night when I was on a tight deadline, broke my toe, and had my printer go on strike. Threading his way between downed tree limbs and flooded-out cars, he rode in like the U.S. Cavalry with a fresh printer and set it up on the spot. I may have been the "creator" of the article I finished that night but was either of us non-essential to the process?

At the point where the creative intelligence has both a passionate concern and the tools to act, the helper-mentor becomes most important, saying "I'll handle this. I'll take care of the details. You do what you do best, what only you can do. Point the direction—I'll help carry the load." It is this relief from the overwhelming burden of busywork that enables many productive minds to soar. Details are important—Where is God, after all?—but they can swallow the attention of a person whose great talent should be seeing "the big picture." It is very difficult to keep one's mind on the forest while having to measure, identify, and catalogue every tree. If this sort of mentoring is successful, it results in a person who is not only engaged and empowered, but who is *effective*, able to persevere without wasting themselves on details, without burning themselves out on minutiae.

The Agent-Mentor

At the point where the passionate, competent, and effective intelligence has a contribution to offer, the role of the agent-mentor becomes critical in finding

an audience for the work. The essential act of a literary or theatrical agent is *getting the world to listen*. As the mother-mentor gives the world to the protégé, conversely the agent-mentor gives the protégé to the world, by finding venues, opening doors, making introductions, writing recommendations, and pulling strings. The mythic figure associated with this role is that of The Herald, the one who runs before and announces the coming of someone special: "Hear ye! Hear ye!"—the agent-mentor gets people to listen. John the Baptist performed this function for Jesus; Ezra Pound did the same for many modern poets.

Essentially every professional success I've ever had has been connected to agent-mentoring I received from one woman, Mary McCay (whose analysis of Rachel Carson's education (1993) provided the seed for this essay.) She drove in from another city to sit on my dissertation committee. I owe my first academic job to her; "I can get you the interview," she said, "but you'll have to get the job." I can't count the letters of recommendation she wrote for me later, when I was trying to move up the academic ladder, each one tailored to the position I was grasping for. When I was finally being considered for the one job on the whole planet that required my odd mix of skills as a writer, nurse, and English teacher, she made phone calls and used her connections to try and smooth my way. She gave me my first contract for writing academic reference articles in a book she was helping to edit, and helped to get me writing regularly for another academic publisher. And I am only one of Mary's protégés—she gives this sort of support to many, many people. As the chair of a university English department, she sprinkles "Calls for Papers" on everyone she knows, never misses an opportunity to nominate someone for an award or honor, and writes more letters of recommendation than is humanly possible. In short, she is a gifted agent-mentor and seems to take delight in using the power that professional success has given her to open doors for the people who are coming up behind her. Many people owe her their professional lives.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996) believes that true creativity is not something that happens inside the confines of a human skull, but is an interaction between an individual human intelligence, a domain (or system of symbolic knowledge, like science or music), and a field (a system of individuals who act as gatekeepers for the domain, like editors and critics.) He says that

> …a personal trait of creativity is not what determines whether a person will be creative. What counts is whether the novelty he or she produces is accepted for inclusion in the domain…. Creativity cannot be manifested in the absence of a field that recognizes and legitimizes the novel contributions.

Work that is never brought out to the relevant community may be personally satisfying, may be "successful" within a limited scope, but it will not help advance the general progress of its field.

The agent-mentor is the one who "brings it to light," who ushers into the field the work of the engaged, empowered, and effective creator.

The Friend-Mentor

Up to this point, there has been a sort of developmental logic to the types of mentoring we have considered. Before a person is ready to set their work before the world, there is not much need for an agent-mentor to find them an audience. Until a person has learned the tools of their job, there is not much need for a helper-mentor to assist them in getting that job done. Before a person has fallen in love with some part of the world around them, there is no point in a teacher-mentor helping them learn the skills and information they need in order to act on the world. And the mother-mentor stands at the beginning of it all, feeding us with "needful food." But there is another face of mentoring that can happen at any point in this developmental sequence and that is the *friend*.

The essential act of the friend is *witnessing*, listening, seeing. The agent-mentor gets the world to listen to the protégé's *offering*, but the friend-mentor listens to the friend's *self*. The quality of this attention helps the aspiring world-changer to clarify thoughts, to gain courage in the face of setbacks, and to deepen the self. Having a passionate witness to one's life grounds the creative spirit in human reality. In some types of mentoring there is a distinct, and probably necessary, power differential: mothers are more powerful than children, teachers than students, bosses than secretaries. In contrast, true friendship most often occurs where there is no power differen-

tial between the persons involved, or it is consciously minimized. The archetype of the friend-mentor is The Beloved.

At any point along the creative journey, a person may encounter a friendship. The friend-mentor says, "Tell me who you are and I will tell you what I see in you. Listen to me, also, and tell me what you see in me. Let us tell each other our best truths." Or as Lou Reed (1967) puts it, "I'll be your mirror—reflect who you are, in case you don't know."

My own "mirror" ever since I got on the bus that took me to my first day at junior high school has been my friend Kathy Panks. Across decades, miles, and personal differences, I have squeezed myself through telephone wires to tell her the story of my life and listen with passionate fascination to her story. Husbands and lovers, jobs and hopes have come and gone, but we have stayed constant in each other's lives. When I am mysteriously depressed, I call her so that she can interrogate me and drag out the secret truth I am hiding from myself. When one of my dear plans is squashed by unfriendly reality, I call her so that she can cheer-lead my rage. When I succeed, I show her the pretty shine of my triumph. When I'm scared, she tells me I'm strong and smart and fabulously able to slay the dragon. Without her, I wouldn't be who I am. We have helped to create each other.

As honesty leads to honesty, friends come to value their friendship more and more so that, when it is challenged by difficulties, they work to preserve it. As they work to preserve it, they are called to deeper honesty and grow as human beings in the process. The ability to trust and lean on a deep friendship gives the creative intelligence a warm greenhouse in which to grow a heart. As Reed's song continues, "I find it hard to believe you don't know the beauty that you are. But, if you don't, let me be your eyes, a hand in your darkness, so you won't be afraid." Friends give each other that hand in the darkness that makes everything possible.

Mentoring Run Amok

Athena wears the mask of Mentor in order to teach and protect young Telemachus. But Athena has many faces; the mentor can offer many wisdoms. In this exploration of the different faces of the mentor, I have pulled apart a skein of different styles in order to consider each of them separately. By doing this, I have not meant to imply that these functions occur in isolation or are the private property of a particular category of people: mothers assign tasks, friends may do detail work, agents sometimes listen, and teachers often find venues for students to publish or perform. I have used the classifications of mother-mentoring, teacher-mentoring, helper-mentoring, agent-mentoring, and friend-mentoring to shine a light on the essential differences between certain types of activities so that we may think about them more clearly. It is possible that by differentiating the functions of the mentor, we may be able to analyze the problem more precisely when mentoring goes haywire.

Like every human relationship, mentoring has its shadow sides. The evil queen feeds Snow White a poisoned apple instead of needful food. The sorcerer delegates a reasonable task, but leaves a tool too powerful in the young apprentice's hands. Wicked stepsisters claim the attention that rightfully belongs to Cinderella. Parents "eat their young." Teachers "break the spirits" of their students. Delegation fails. Well-intentioned "helpers" step in when they should hang back and let their apprentices gain experience. Gatekeepers block, instead of opening doors. Mentoring roles, such as providing safety and evaluating accomplishment, come into conflict. Friendship degrades into co-dependency.

For a study of a mentoring relationship run amok, consider the recent movie *Shine*, the biography of a talented pianist. We might use the taxonomy of mentoring to analyze the young musician's problems with his father. Mother-mentoring becomes perverse in the relationship: instead of offering his son expanding horizons, the father actively isolates the young man and deprives him of experience. Teacher-mentoring is likewise deformed: instead of assigning tasks that appropriately grow in difficulty as the boy's skills increase, the father encourages his young son to learn Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto, at a wildly inappropriate level of difficulty. Instead of relieving the young musician of the burden of housekeeping details, the father eats up his son's time and energy by having him share his father's work. As long as the boy is young, the father's agent-

Is Technology in Education Promising Too Much?

A Neo-Luddite Analysis of IT in Curriculum

Matt Maxwell

Much of what is being touted by advocates of IT in education as hip, exciting, informative and interactive is, upon closer analysis, often dehumanizing and antithetical to a sense of emotional fulfillment, to a communitarian spirit, and to nature.

It is an axiomatic cultural/social/political statement that those who are in charge of the education system in any given society will have a profound influence upon the youth that pass through that system. In the field of critical pedagogy, this point has been explored in a multitude of ways, generally through historical and/or sociological perspectives, in the examination of curriculum as cultural reproduction, as opposed to its more superficial purpose, that of a trans-generational transfer of knowledge and techniques (see, for instance, Apple 1982 or Giroux 1983). How the Information Technology (IT) industry, through educational uses of computers, is extending its influence on the behavior and thought patterns of today's youth has been the subject of a growing body of literature (Bowers 1988; Bowers 1995; Robins and Webster 1989; Roszak 1994; Sale 1995). But those raising their voices against the ever-increasing computerization of our lives are nonchalantly dismissed by a bevy of consultants, futurologists, and technologists, as well as many members of the academic world, who insist that the emergence of a world embedded in and dependent on IT is the inevitable and enduring future. My intention here is to examine the discourse of those advocating an IT-driven curriculum, to discuss the philosophical infrastructure of this discourse, and to bring into relief a number of concerns which I believe cannot be considered as separate from IT.

The 'Net-Generation'

Popular writer and cyber-guru Don Tapscott (1996) has proposed a new moniker for the generation born after 1980—"net-gener." The premise underlying this term is that this group of teenagers and

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preteens has so fully integrated digital technology into their day-to-day existence that it is the defining "quality" of their generation. The most recent previous generations—Depression-era children, the Boomers, and Generation Xers—were described in, respectively, economic, demographic/economic and existential terms. That these popular terms are ridiculously broad in their implied meanings is a given; nonetheless they do speak of our recent collective historical journey (particularly in the First World). Depression and boom represent the two endpoints of the arc along which the pendulum of neoclassical economics swings. Boom of course also refers to the post-war population bulge in the developed world; in many regions in the Third World, needless to say, this demographic explosion has continued unabated. As for X, it has many blurred connotations, including "crossroads," "negation," "forbidden," and "exit." What these implied meanings have in common is that they are all indicative of a postmodern malaise brought forth in a world of diminished opportunities. While there is a certain pessimism inherent in this *inquietitude*, it also makes a call for resolution, for the reaching of higher ground. Can this deep psychic hole be filled so blithely, with the coming of the next generation, by the unquestioning, and one is led to believe, near rapturous acceptance of the Internet and the World Wide Web? According the mainstream viewpoint, and corroborated by the movers and shakers in the corporate and political worlds, this is indeed the case.

This faith in the salutary powers of the digital revolution, the notion that our cultural, social, ecological, moral, and philosophical ills will somehow be remedied through the application of our new technological knowledge, is in my mind, quite disturbing. The most fundamental questions concerning our present state and the directions in which we should be proceeding—in any and all of our collective and individual activities—are, for the most part, left undebated. The optimism which has been at the core of the scientific revolution for the last three hundred years, the sense that, for the bulk of humanity, things were going to continue to improve on the road to our technological utopia, has for the most part been quickly, and surprisingly quietly, dashed over the last decade.[1] The almost endless onslaught of catas-

trophes brought on by environmental degradation as well as ever-growing political and economic inequities has forced this naïve idealism to a grinding halt. There is no concurrence of opinion, let alone a master plan, to address any of the major issues affecting our continued survival on the planet, such as rainforest destruction; loss of biodiversity; desertification; topsoil loss; nuclear and toxic waste disposal; freshwater, ground water and ocean pollution; the population explosion; mass starvation; war; and epidemics. The international protocols on ozone layer depletion and global warming are weak and marginally enforceable. A wide array of experts from many fields say that within the next three decades, ecological destruction will be so severe as to put a very large number of species at risk of extinction. Thomas Berry (1990) refers to this end time as the Terminal Cenozoic. With our planetary survival at stake, one would think that those who wield the powerful wand of technology would be putting their best efforts into resolving, or at least addressing, this multitude of threats. Sadly, in the logic prevalent in mainstream corporate and political circles, planetary survival is quite far down the totem pole of priorities, well below shareholder profits and corporate mergers.

Technology and Education

Where industry and trade are leading, education is following, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the road upon which it will tread is that of IT. The discourse surrounding this journey is filled almost exclusively with references to opportunities in the emerging competitive global marketplace and is largely devoid of discussion on how to redesign our society in ways that create sustainability. I would suggest that lack of a strong ethical, social and ecological framework for present day curriculum, the focus on IT in the classroom, and the ever increasing corporatization of our schools, are different elements of the same picture: They are all manifestations of the dream-structure being created, refined, and promulgated by present day business and political leaders. Our discussion will now center on an examination and deconstruction of this mainstream worldview. We will take a closer look at its philosophical underpinnings and aspirations, and analyze its implications for education now and in the future.

A Closer Look at the
Mainstream Perspective of Technology

The Internet is a privilege and a responsibility. Not everyone will use the libraries of the future. Not everyone has the inclination. More importantly, many lack the skills or the money to acquire them. Let's not look at this as social responsibility, instead call it forward looking opportunism. The new titans of industry will understand this boundless on-line expanse as the natural resource of the future. It is the next geological survey in which the mother load [sic] exists in endless quantities just beneath the surface, right under your mouse. To realize this dream, investment is required—investment in technology, investment in ideas, investment in people.

Let's put a computer in every home and every classroom. It doesn't have to be the most advanced computing platform on the market. Let's connect those computers to the Internet. Let's connect Canadians of every age, race and gender to each other and to the rest of the planet. Let's create incentives for business and government to make the Internet and all that it brings accessible to all Canadians. (Kocho 1998)

The very revealing passage quoted above is part of the very extensive copy on the benefits of technology in a variety of full-page ads[2] that have been purchased by Bell Telecom (Canada) "for a series of discussions on communications and technology." Bell is, apparently, providing us these ads out of a spirit of public generosity, because they "...also believe it's important to provide a forum to discuss opportunities afforded by these new technologies."[3]

Obviously, when Bell is paying top dollar for these full-page ads, it wants to get the most exposure for its advertising budget: the author, cyber-entrepreneur Keith Kocho, who does indeed believe passionately in the digital revolution, is ostensibly an independent individual taking part in this "series of discussions," but he is, of course, also conveniently expressing the philosophy and rhetoric of Bell Canada, which is itself indistinguishable from that of almost all other major corporations.[4] Telling us that the Internet "is a privilege and responsibility" is, I would suggest, only stopping a few steps short of saying it is a sacred thing. When something is accorded to us as a privilege, it is something that is treated with def-

erence and respect, as is the case with right to drive a motor vehicle (which, since the dawn of suburbia, has been seen as a thing bordering on the sacred). In the context of this passage, the use of the term "responsibility" is ambiguous: does the author mean that if we are responsible citizens, we will use the Internet, or that once we are surfing through cyber-territory, we will do so responsibly, avoiding trashy sex and video arcade-type sites in our quest for the Holy Grail, the mother [down]load? It is conceded that "not every one will use the libraries of the future." Implied in this phrase, of course, is the notion that the libraries of the present will then be the libraries of the past. Buildings in which one can walk up and down stacks of real books, finding treasures which one would have surely missed if one was simply scanning a database, these will surely exist for the computer illiterate, but they will likely be but gradually crumbling relics of their former selves, older buildings holding out of date and deteriorating book stocks. Why will everyone not use the digital "libraries of the future"? For some unknown reason, apparently "not everyone has the inclination." How this could possibly be does not seem to be of interest to the author, who is more concerned for those who don't have the money, access, or experience to use this new resource. But how can we deal with this stultifying socioeconomic barrier facing potential net-surfers? According to Kocho, it is really quite simple—we just have to rename the problem and, quite instantaneously, just like a computer virus located and destroyed by a sophisticated piece of anti-viral software, it is eradicated from view! We can resolve this problem of social and economic inequality by no longer speaking of social responsibility; rather we will "call it forward looking opportunism." Translated into plain English, this implies that we can solve issues of social inequality with more of the same corporatist fare, that is, unbridled capitalism and "trickle down" economics. Moreover, there is both a stridency and urgency in this message—we are exhorted to make computers ubiquitous, at home, at work, at school. And it is essential that all these computers be online, part of one vast digital neural network upon which we can commune with other enlightened citizens of the Earth.

Similar epistemological deconstructions could be

performed on the volumes of material being created (every day over 30,000 articles[5] on technology are published) that speak of the virtues of both IT and unfettered large-scale capitalism; these analyses would almost certainly yield similar results. According to the unwritten manifesto to which the large bulk of IT advocates subscribe, new technology is generally accepted in an unquestioning way. Every new innovation is seen as a means of furthering what has become for many the primary purpose of existence, which is the acquisition of new wealth. This discourse is largely devoid of any serious discussion of issues of ecological sustainability or those of social, gender, economic, and racial justice—their presence is largely ignored in the rhetoric surrounding the advent of ever newer manifestations of digital wizardry.

The standard bearer (and biggest player in terms of economics and sheer power) of this new high-tech revolution is, as we all know, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates. In his best-selling *The Road Ahead* (1995), he lays out the vision of his Information Age utopia. His unbounded enthusiasm for the emerging Information Highway pervades this entire work. While he freely admits that any number of his predictions of how this digital revolution will play out in specific areas might not be on the mark, the overall prognostication is a happy one from Gates's perspective, which, needless to say, embodies perfectly that of mainstream corporatism. It is one of a fast-paced, competitive, wealth-producing, computer-driven world, where conveniences are ever more abundant, a world of "plugged-in homes" and "friction-free capitalism," where education is viewed primarily as an "investment."

This world will be one that caters to the needs, wants, and whims of the individual; advertising will tailored to suit one's personality profile (we are assured that our privacy will nonetheless be carefully safeguarded by encryption mechanisms)[6]:

> There will be plenty of opportunity for calculated surprise on the information highway. From time to time your software agent will try to entice you to fill out a questionnaire indicating your tastes…. The questionnaire will incorporate all sorts of images in an effort to draw subtle reactions out of you…. That information will be used to create a profile of your tastes,

which will guide the agent. As you use the system for reading news or shopping, an agent will be able to add information to your profile…. The agent will use this information to help prepare various surprises to attract and hold your attention. Whenever you want something offbeat and appealing, it will be waiting for you…. (Gates 1996, 169)

In the emerging brave new digital world, we will be able to shop extensively without having to leave our computer screens. In fact, we will be able to entertain and educate ourselves, communicate with our friends, and generally have a wonderful time without ever leaving our homes, if we so choose. Riding this highway of the future, we will be masters of our own chosen destiny, albeit one possibly more than a little influenced by ubiquitous advertising and promotions of corporations.

Technology as Religion

This fast-paced journey into a world of ever more sophisticated technology—into which all of us, willingly or not, are being pulled—is not a value-free one, driven only by an honest and idealistic notion of acquiring knowledge for knowledge's sake. The types of technological devices we create and the forms that they take are really an extension of our collective worldview, with all the biases that it contains. In the atomistic thinking which is the enduring legacy of Adams, Locke, Spencer, et al., materialistic self-improvement, i.e., the accumulation of wealth and property, is viewed as something of great value, both complementary to and essential to the development of the common good. In this formulation, which was drawn up long before the limits of the Earth's holding capacity could be foreseen, this ongoing creation of ever greater amounts of wealth could not but benefit everybody, since there would be more of everything to go around; even the less fortunate members of society would perforce be better off than they had been in the past. From this perspective, the world, and in recent decades the larger universe,[7] is seen as a resource to be exploited by those members of the human race who have the intelligence, strength of character, and chutzpah (rich parents help, too!) to do so. The large bulk of technology, apart from what has been developed for military purposes, has been created with this exploitative,

"wealth-creating" function in mind.[8] Chainsaws, steam shovels, automobiles, assembly-line factories, pesticides, and so on, are not the inevitable manifestations of some objective and predestined form of progress, but rather extensions of what critical analysis reveals to be a narrow and highly biased anthropocentric worldview. The world of high tech is nothing but the most recent incarnation—albeit a highly sophisticated and glamorous one—of what is a largely exploitative technology that is itself issued from an exploitative worldview.

But it is one thing to refer to technology as an extension of a worldview and quite another to refer to it as religion. Does the modern obsession with technological innovation really share a large number of attributes with what is generally considered religion?[9] For David Noble (1998), technology does not only resemble or share features with religion (or maybe more appropriately, *religiosity*), but is rather a direct extension of millenarian Christianity, the roots of which reach back to Carolingian times. This apocalyptic strand of Christianity has always been consumed with Adam's Fall from Grace and has viewed the "useful arts" and the "mechanical arts" (the precursors of modern technology) as the means by which mankind could hasten its return to the Garden of Eden (following, of course, the cleansing devastation described in Revelations). While much of science has over the last two centuries seen itself as divorced from and even the antithesis to religion, there has nonetheless been throughout history a large core of thinkers and innovators including Roger Bacon, Francis Bacon, Columbus, Werner Von Braun and, most recently, many of the key individuals involved in the development of Artificial Intelligence, the space race, and genetics,[10] who have seen their work from this fundamentalist religious perspective. Even as the new technology, rooted seemingly in empiricism and rationality, sheds its more obvious religious roots, it replaces it with a fervor of another kind, one that promises salvation through improvement and progress. Noble (1998, 207) says:

> A thousand years in the making, the religion of technology has become the common enchantment, not only of the designers of technology, but also those caught up in, and undone by, their godly designs. The expectation of ultimate salvation by technology, whatever the immedi-

ate human and social costs, has become the unspoken orthodoxy, reinforced by a market-driven enthusiasm for novelty and sanctioned by a millenarian yearning for new beginnings. This popular faith, subliminally indulged by corporate, government and media pitch men, inspires an awed deference to the practitioners and their promises of deliverance while diverting attention from more urgent concerns. Thus, unrestrained technological development is allowed to proceed apace, without serious scrutiny or oversight—without reason. Pleas for some rationality, for reflection about pace or purpose … are dismissed as irrational. From within the faith, any and all criticism appears irrelevant, and irreverent.

While technology does not share with the great religions the belief in a transcendent godhead, it does contain characteristics that are generally considered part of a religious worldview. These are the following:

- *Promise of salvation*. From the technological perspective, truly felicity of spirit is to be achieved not in the hereafter, but here on earth, and in the foreseeable future. Through the use of instant communication, with its inherent wealth-creating and convenience-producing capabilities, significant portions of humanity will achieve a higher quality of life than at any other period in human history.

- *Transcendence of the physical*. In the virtual world of the information highway, we become disembodied; we free ourselves psychologically from our physical locations. Our ideas intersect, at the speed of light, with those of other souls halfway around the world. On a chat line, a fat, balding middle aged man becomes a virile 24-year-old. A hormone-charged adolescent boy can take on the persona of his favorite video arcade super hero. In this computer-mediated experience, and ever more so with ongoing advances in Virtual Reality (VR) technology, we will be able to create a credible sense in the participant of having transcended physicality.

- *Guardians of the Truth*. Every fundamentalist religion has seen itself, at least up until recent times, as holding a monopoly on the understanding of the Ultimate Truth. Whereas the classical religions saw this Truth embodied in the words, actions, and experiences of their

masters, prophets, and saints, the believers in high tech see Truth as being expressed and discovered through the accumulation, processing, and communication of ever greater amounts of information. This Truth is also expressed through ever growing power of technology in our lives.

- *The desire to convert others.* Most, though not all, of the great religions have a strong missionary component (Christianity and Islam have developed the most zealous means of proselytizing). The rhetoric surrounding the new technology is filled with a fervor and optimism found in both religious fundamentalism and highly charged political movements. It is endlessly inviting others to its cause, not with zealous religious foot soldiers, but with an endless barrage through the media by a well-oiled corporate machine. Even if the endless progression of technology is not divinely inspired, it is, according to this worldview, one that is nonetheless inevitable.

The Information Explosion

The coupling of Galileo's realization that the universe can be described quantitatively (while ignoring qualitative aspects) with John Adam's notions on the accumulation of wealth have led over the years to the overriding belief in our culture that the bigger something is, the better it is. The minority viewpoint expressed by the Luddites in the early nineteenth century, and more recently by such luminaries as Chesterton (1926)[11] and Schumacher (1974), that small localized economies create considerably healthier and happier environments, has been largely discounted or simply ignored by the larger society. Our fascination with bigness can be seen in all facets of contemporary life: strawberries the size of apples (but tasting more like blotting paper),[12] Exxon Valdez-size oil tankers, jumbo jets, beef cattle bulked up on steroids and growth hormones (and, for the most part, cramped into large factory farms), enormous tree-harvesting machines (called "feller-bunchers") that do the work of ten people, mega-cities, mega-school boards, mega-corporate mergers, and so on.

The belief that greater quantity leads to greater quality is a largely unquestioned aphorism with regards to IT. Those who speak of the virtues of computer technology feel that the accumulation and processing of information—any information—cannot but be a good thing, leading us to an ever greater understanding of our world and ourselves. But this vaulting of information to a near salutary status does not come without a cost, since it decontextualizes knowledge and makes it value-free. As Roszak (1994, 14) points out:

> [O]nce information had been divorced from its conventional meaning, the word was up for grabs. Following the lead of information theorists, scientists and technicians felt licensed to make ever broader and looser use of the word. It could soon be applied to any transmitted signal that could metaphorically be construed as "message"—for example, the firing of a nerve impulse. To use the term so liberally is to lay aside all concern for the quality or character of what is being communicated. The result has been a progressive blurring of intellectual distinctions. Just as it is irrelevant to a physicist (from the viewpoint of a purely physical phenomenon) whether we are measuring the fall of a stone or the fall of a human body, so, for the information theorist, it does not matter whether we are transmitting a fact, a judgment, a shallow cliché, a deep teaching, a sublime truth, or a nasty obscenity. All are "information." The word comes to have a vast generality, but at a price; the meaning of things comes to be leveled, and so too the value.

This denaturing of information, which renders mundane a statement of great profundity, and can elevate a rant or a piece of trivia to the same level of neutrality, speaks of a worldview so intent upon quantifying existence that the role of qualifying it recedes to the distant background.

Education and IT

The integration of IT and education is well under way in developed nations around the world. Bill Clinton, in his 1996 Inaugural Address, stated:

> [A] free people must choose to shape the forces of the Information Age and the global society, to unleash the limitless potential of all of our people.... The knowledge and the power of the Information Age will be within reach of not just a few, but every classroom, every library, every child.... (1993, 1-3)

Needless to say, the IT revolution extends well beyond the U.S.—some countries, such as the Netherlands and France, have made the computerization of schools an official part of their national educational agendas (Roszak 1994). Over the last fifteen years in North America, large computer manufacturers have equipped thousands of schools with computer hardware at greatly reduced costs (Robertson 1998; Roszak 1994), most notably, Apple Computer's ACOT[13] program (Dwyer, Fisher, and Yocam 1996), which was established in 1985 and is now well into its second decade of operation.

According to Tapscott (1996), computer-mediated learning is both inevitable and desirable; it is, quite simply, the next step in the evolution of education. According to his analysis, digital learning is intrinsically beneficial, largely because it is an *interactive* medium, unlike traditional learning, which he refers to as "broadcast learning," i.e., one based on a transmission-type curricular model. He defines "broadcast learning" (which he also equates with learning without computers) in the following terms: linear/sequential, instructional, teacher-centered, absorbing materials, school-based, one size fits all, school as torture, teacher as transmitter. Digital, "interactive learning" learning, on the other hand, is described in these ways: hypermedia learning, construction/discovery, learner-centered, learning how to learn, lifelong learning, customized, school as fun, teacher as facilitator.[14]

The emphasis is not so much on acquiring specific *skills* as it is on learning how to *construct knowledge* in freer, multi-dimensional ways, unencumbered by the ponderous linearity of traditional learning:

> N-geners assess and analyze facts—a formidable and ever-present challenge in a data galaxy of easily accessible information sources. But more important, they synthesize. They engage with information sources and other people on the Net and then build or construct higher level structures and mental images. (Tapscott 1996, 145)

Tapscott declares that precisely because this new technology is interactive, it does away with the passivity associated with the traditional learning model in which the student is viewed as an empty vessel to be filled by the knowledge and expertise of the teacher. Tapscott expands upon his notion of "learner-centered" education:

> The new media enable centering of the learning experience on the individual rather than on the transmitter. Further, it is clear that learner-centered education improves the child's motivation to learn. Learning and entertainment can then merge. (p. 144)

The medium and context for this student-centered curriculum is *hypermedia*, which gives the student, and teacher, unlimited flexibility in accessing, manipulating and integrating information.

Bill Gates (1995, 112) describes how hypermedia can be used to make lessons both informative and enjoyable:

> It is hard for a teacher to prepare in-depth, interesting material for twenty-five students, six hours a day, 180 days a year. This is particularly true if students' extensive television watching has raised their entertainment expectations. I can imagine a middle-school science teacher a decade or so from now, working on a lecture about the sun.… Snippets of video and narrated animations from countless sources will be available. It will only take minutes to pull together a visual show that would now require days to organize. As she lectures about the sun, she will have images and diagrams appear at appropriate times. If a student asks her about the source of the sun's power, she can answer using animated graphics of hydrogen and helium atoms.…

As for whether computerization of classrooms will actually enhance the performance of students in any way other than by increasing their facility with electronic media, the evidence is still inconclusive; to this point there seems little reason to think that computers will revolutionize children's cognitive abilities in the ways envisioned by Pappert (1980) in his highly influential *Mindstorms*. ACOT's ongoing study of computer use in a large number classrooms across North America has, apart from anecdotal accounts, little to report in the way of academic improvement; for instance, ACOT researcher Kristina Woolsley (1996, 73) a "Distinguished Scientist" at Apple Computer, remarks,

> Interestingly, I have not seen much compelling data or engaging analysis of the relationship be-

tween computer use and learning. It could just be our imaginations or our wishful thinking or our joint fantasies that convinces [sic] us that learning has improved.[15]

Another admission of a paucity of tangible academic improvement is given by ACOT researchers Baker, Herman, and Gearhart (1996, 199):

> Our ACOT evaluation studies, for example, produced findings that could easily be interpreted as no news, or even bad news, but not by us. Our work provided empirical documentation of the school scene confirming that change is complex and slow. People need to know this.

One bright spot in the ACOT project was a longitudinal study of students at West High School in Columbus, Ohio, where the ACOT students had half the absentee rate of non-ACOT students. Moreover, 90% of the ACOT students continued on to post-secondary education, compared to only 15% of the non-ACOT students (Baker, Herman, and Gearhart 199, 26). Dwyer (1996, 32) points out, however, that the ACOT graduating class "was not a technical random sample," so generalization is not possible in this study.[16]

Outside of the ACOT project, there are other analyses which seem to imply some positive (albeit tentative) correlations between computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and academic advancement, especially in math and graphing skills (see Herman [in Means 1994, 133-166], for a review of this research). Given ongoing funding from computer and software manufacturers, as well as from various government departments, there should be no shortage of research projects in the future attempting to establish incontrovertible evidence of links between CAI and improvements in student performance.

The Unseen Side of Computer Mediation

What is often missed in the IT-friendly discourse is the fact that computer-mediated education is, by definition, a mediated form of learning; it is based on forms of perception that are governed by means of delivery—computer screen, keyboard and mouse—that are artificial, human-made inventions, many times removed from the natural world. Moreover, the ways that computers encode, store, and process information, although often portrayed as value-neutral, actually encourage a mode of thinking particular to the detached "logical" and "objective" modernist thinking that is largely the invention of Western culture.

As Jerry Mander points out in *The Absence of the Sacred*, computers are really just the latest manifestation of a mediation process undertaken by humans in modern times, in which our own creations—our roads, office buildings, malls, homes, televisions, etc.—have created ever greater barriers between us and our experience the natural world, a world that until this very recent juncture in history, had been the source of our collective and individual experiences:

> With each new generation of technology, and with each stage of technological expansion into pristine environments, human beings have fewer alternatives and become more deeply immersed within technological consciousness. We have a harder time seeing our way out. Living constantly inside an environment of our own invention, reacting solely to things we ourselves have created, we are essentially living inside our own minds. Where evolution was once an interactive process between humans and a natural unmediated world, evolution is now an interaction between human beings and our own artifacts. (Mander 1992, 32)

While a student studying environmental issues might be collecting vast amounts of data on natural habitat, this information will be received as words, facts, figures, images, video clips, etc.; the physical and emotional impact of being in a natural environment—of feeling the sun on one's forehead, the wind on one's cheek, of hearing the caw of a crow, the rustling of leaves, the gurgling of a forest brook—all of these sensations and the feelings that accompany them are lost in the mediation process.

Computers have a different way of mediating reality than has been the case with earlier technology. Mechanical (Industrial Age) technology has been largely concerned with altering our physical world in order to make life a more comfortable affair. Ever faster, more efficient means of transportation, central heating, air conditioning, electric toothbrushes, power tools, etc., are all manifestations of this same desire for the physical improvement of the human condition.

The printing press can be considered the first form

of worldview-altering media technology in that it enabled the dissemination of vast amounts of information and ideas to a broad audience. Nonetheless, its products—books, articles, treatises—are essentially non-invasive forms of communication; their contents must be actively sought out, ingested, understood, questioned, and synthesized with the active, conscious participation of the reader. The advent of television signaled a new relationship between the medium of communication and people—it encourages passivity, lack of discrimination; it offers a fractured, noncontiguous stream of images and sound that leave little time for reflection on the part of the viewer. Those extolling the virtues of computers and the Information Highway declare that precisely because this new technology is interactive, it does away with the passivity associated with television. While there is some truth to this notion, it must be pointed out that the type of interactivity associated with the digital technology is not value-free, but rather one that reinforces a very specific form of cultural coding, that is, Western, progressive, anthropocentric modernity. As C.A. Bowers (1995, 84) points out,

> Computers both embody and facilitate mental processes, and they involve culturally specific ways of knowing: the design, engineering, and development of the machine's logic system and software programs, computing and word-processing as part of a larger process of problem-solving; and the use of metaphorical language that encodes the analogue thought processes and experiences of people who had a specific historical/cultural identity. But the amplification characteristics of computers are very limited in the forms of knowledge that can be represented. Whether we are talking about a student using a database or a simulation program, or an engineer dealing with a set of mathematical relationships, there is a commonality in the form of knowledge that is the basis of the person/machine relationship.

Through the distorting mediation of computers, physicality is denied, emotions are compressed through a cognitive prism, and spirituality is ignored. No amount of sophisticated computer graphics, animation, or 16-bit stereo sound can fill the void created by the absence of direct physical contact with

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other humans, animals, plants and the greater natural world.

Computers and Socialization

Franklin Bobbit (in Miller and Seller 1985, 39) once remarked that education "is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails." The use of this mechanical metaphor to describe the socialization of the youth of the day was in keeping with the mindset of the early twentieth century, when there were still vast untapped timber and mineral resources to be exploited by means of ever more powerful and sophisticated machinery, and the ongoing development of transnational railroad networks was facilitating the rapid urbanization of America. By likening the molding of students to the creation of steel rails, Bobbit is implying that as productive members of an industrializing society, we must be prepared to lay ourselves down, to become willing carriers of the vast and powerful machine of progress. I would suggest that, with education's headlong rush into the Information Age and its new desire to create a generation of "plugged-in" students, the mechanical metaphor of Thorndike's and Bobbit's social efficiency movement has been replaced in the late twentieth century by an electronic one—instead of viewing students as steel to be shaped, we are encouraged to see them as being formed into computer chips, which are to become part of the vast IT neural network that is rapidly entering into ever more areas of our lives. Of course, unlike the discourse of eighty years ago, the rationales for IT curricula being brought forth by computer advocates such as Gates and Tapscott do not include transparent discussion of the need for an army of conformists to perpetuate our present economic order. To the contrary, as we have seen, the primary focus of this new discourse is a feel good, do-your-own-thing optimism. Instead of a generation of cogs, the new educational system being touted will create an army of savvy entrepreneurs, ready to take their place in the exciting, no-holds-barred global economy. What this discourse lacks is any analysis of either the origins of computers or their primary purposes, which, according to many Neo-luddites, are corporate hegemony, governmental control, and military superiority. Roszak (1994, 26) points out:

As futurologists and their political disciples present it, the rise of the information economy in America is a matter of manifest industrial destiny, a change so vast and inevitable that it might almost be a natural process beyond human control. It is hardly that. The conversion to high tech has been the result of deliberate choices on the part of our political and corporate leadership. To begin with, it was intimately linked to the steady militarization of our life since the beginning of World War II, without which very little of our aerospace industry would exist at all. The high-tech industries remain significantly tied to the Pentagon budget.

And according to historian Kirkpatrick Sale (1997):

> [Information] technology is developed by and for corporations and large governments for a particular kind of control and power—the speed and domination of large masses of numbers and people ... that's what these machines were designed to do and it is absurd to think that they would do anything else....

The power of this corporate and military clout can never be underestimated. For every student doing research for some school project, for every concerned citizen participating in an online chat group on social or environmental issues, there are almost certainly hundreds of (largely male) corporate executives moving inconceivably large sums of money around the world, brokering business deals—mining, forestry, residential subdivision, and mall construction, etc.—that will accelerate the already rapid breakdown of planetary ecosystems.

There is something of a self-fulfilling prophecy in the high-pitched promotion of technology in schools. As the benefits of computers and IT are extolled by business, media and politicians, more and more members of society jump on the digital bandwagon, creating an ever greater demand for these type of services. There are indeed many career opportunities in the emerging world of IT, but in all good conscience, can we educate people for what might well be very lucrative positions while ignoring the larger issues of planetary survival?

Conclusion

When the veneer is stripped away from the rosy picture being presented by the advocates of IT in education, we see that much of what is being touted as hip, exciting, informative and interactive is, upon closer analysis, often dehumanizing and antithetical to a sense of emotional fulfillment, to a communitarian spirit, and to nature. It is not a value-free technology, but one that is issued from a highly anthropocentric, egocentric culture; moreover, by its very nature and means of encoding information, it reinforces these cultural patterns. While I am not suggesting that we should necessarily eschew computers entirely[17] (this would be highly unrealistic, given what appears to be IT's nearly unstoppable momentum; moreover I would be a hypocrite to suggest as much—after all, this paper has been produced on my Mac, and yes, I do have an e-mail address), I feel that we must be circumspect about their use. Like any dangerous tools, they should be handled with extreme caution. It is maybe unrealistic to expect schools to relegate all computers to dusty storage rooms, but it would be wise to limit their use; at most they should be an adjunct to a holistic, experiential program which emphasizes creative thinking, wholeness of being, societal responsibility, and ecological sustainability.

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Notes

1. Even more so in recent months with the collapse of financial markets around the world.

2. Along with Hollywood's making of full-length movies of every comic strip ever produced, full-page newspaper and magazine ads purchased by transnationals to "enlighten" the general public are one of the defining characteristics of the mass media in the latter half of the 1990s.

3. It is unlikely, to say the least, for Bell to offer this advertising space to anyone of a neo-Luddite persuasion!

4. According to the CBC radio broadcast *Luddites and Friends, Part 2*, February 24, 1997.

5. The large majority of these are obviously not neo-Luddite arguments.

6. It is a given that in our present times, the privacy of the individual is already being seriously flaunted through the creation of personality data profiles (Mander 1992).

7. I am referring to recent talk of mining asteroids, terra-forming Mars, etc.

8. It is a given that militarism, which long predates this recent incarnation of atomism, has been profoundly aided and abetted by it, as was (and continues to be) witnessed in nation-state imperialism.

9. *Religion* is an absolutely enormous word, pregnant with a whole spectrum of meanings. In this context, I am referring to the exoteric, dogmatic, and belief-driven varieties, as opposed to the esoteric, experiential (i.e., mystical) traditions, which though not nonexistent in the West, have clearly been much more prevalent in Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

10. The human genome project is known as the "Adam Project."

11. Chesterton's economic model of *distributism* shares a lot with cutting edge bioregional thought.

12. Does blotting paper even exist anymore?

13. Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow.

14. Both Dwyer (1996) and Means (1994) draw similar distinctions between traditional and computer-mediated pedagogies, albeit with a slightly more sophisticated vocabulary.

15. Or just possibly the fact that Dr. Woolsey and her colleagues work for a computer company.

16. All references to ACOT in this paragraph are drawn from *Education and Technology* (Dwyer, Fisher, and Yocam 1996).

17. A number of neo-Luddites, including Noble and Sale, as well as the members of the recently founded Lead Pencil Society, feel that any use of computers is to be avoided whenever possible.

Refocusing and Reframing Education
The Basic Design

Riane Eisler

A curriculum that teaches young people to recognize the contrasting configurations of the partnership and dominator models will help them cut through much of their confusion about values.

RIANE EISLER is the co-founder, with David Loye, of the Center for Partnership Studies in Pacific Grove, CA, and the author of *The Chalice and the Blade, Sacred Pleasure, The Partnership Way,* and other books.

Children are being given a false picture of what it means to be human. We tell them to be good and kind, nonviolent and giving. But on all sides they see media images and hear and read stories that portray us as bad, cruel, violent, and selfish.

In the mass media, the focus of both action entertainment and news is on hurting and killing. Talk shows capitalize on human suffering. Situation comedies make insensitivity, rudeness, and cruelty seem funny. Even children's cartoons incessantly present violence as not only exciting and funny, but also without real consequences.

Our media also communicate massive cynicism. As portrayed in news, talk shows, and many "hip" entertainment programs, nobody believes in anything—to quote the columnist Leonard Pitts, "not the nihilistic rapper with the hard streets rep, not the bad-boy athlete with the big-bucks contract, not even the politician with the aw-shucks smile and the gleam of sincerity in his eye."[1] Contemptuous terms such as do-gooder and bleeding-heart dismiss empathy and progressive activism as wimpy and foolish. The phrase "nanny state" has become a term of derision to express contempt for caring as not only inappropriate for government officials, but as unmanly.

Media political coverage is far less about issues than about who won and who lost, or, as Deborah Tannen puts it in her book *The Argument Culture*, about "who's up and who's down." In short, much of our public discourse is framed in terms of a dominator model of relations—with a tough and angry ideal of masculinity, as Tannen notes, the ideal norm.[2] Even much of today's talk about morality is angry and vitriolic, focusing on persecuting and punishing rather than on the age-old "golden rule" central to genuine morality: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

All this holds up a distorted mirror of themselves to children. And rather than correcting this false image of what it means to be human, many of the narratives in our school and Sunday School curricula actually reinforce it.

Although teachers in early grades try to impart the values of sharing, caring, honesty, and nonviolence, this message is largely offset not only by popular entertainment but also by nursery rhymes and fairy tales full of cruelty, trickery, and violence. Later on, it is further contradicted by much in the school curriculum. The way history is taught emphasizes battles and wars—in other words, violence. Classics such as the Homer's *Iliad* and Shakespeare's kings trilogy romanticize "heroic violence" and present a worldview in which rulers and warriors are the only noteworthy protagonists. Scientific stories tell children that we are the puppets of "selfish genes" ruthlessly competing on the evolutionary stage. And religious stories teach children that we are a species irretrievably flawed by "original sin." Small wonder that so many children and adults are plagued by conflicting messages and learn to compartmentalize what they hold as knowledge and truth.

Even worse, this kind of education produces people susceptible to domination and control. If we are inherently violent, bad, and selfish, obviously we need to be strictly controlled by punishments and fear of punishments.

Narratives that provide a negative picture about "human nature" are central to dominator mythology. They are, however, totally inappropriate if young people are to learn to live in the democratic, peaceful, equitable, and Earth-honoring ways needed if today's and tomorrow's children are to have a better future—perhaps even a future at all.

How can we ensure that during the formative years of childhood and adolescence education reflects back to young people a less distorted, less negative, more accurate picture of what it means to be human? What can we do so that this picture includes all children, that it integrates the history, needs, problems, and aspirations of both the female and male halves of humanity, and that, to borrow Emily Style's words,[3] it both reflects our own experiences and provides a window through which to see those of people of different races and ethnic origins? How can we reframe education so that what we teach and how we teach are structured around what Nel Noddings calls competences of caring—for self, for intimate others, for global others, and for the natural world?[4] How can we refocus education in ways that will more effectively help young people avert the crises that threaten their future? What do they need so they can instead move toward a 21st century where all children can develop their enormous human potentials?

Partnership education addresses these urgent questions from a new perspective, with three main goals in mind:

- The first goal is to help children grow into healthy, caring, competent, self-realized adults.
- The second goal is to help them develop the knowledge and skills that will see them through this time of environmental, economic, and social upheavals.
- The third goal is to equip young people to create for themselves and future generations a sustainable future of greater personal, social, economic, and environmental responsibility and caring—a world in which human beings and our natural habitat are truly valued and chronic violence and injustice are no longer seen as "just the way things are."

Partnership and Dominator Values

Like many of us, I am heartbroken when I pick up the newspaper and read yet another headline about children brutalizing and killing other children. I am often shocked by the barbarically cruel video games, essentially training tools for mayhem and murder, I see boys playing with, as well as by other aspects of our mass culture that desensitize and deaden empathy. I am also concerned about the media-induced fixation of many children on ever more material acquisitions.

There are many factors contributing to these and other contemporary problems, but clearly our educational system is not teaching children sound values.

It is not enough for parents and teachers to preach to children about sound values such as kindness and sensitivity rather than cruelty and insensitivity, democracy and equality rather than tyranny and inequality, and environmental responsibility rather than irresponsibility. What counts is what our homes

and schools model, and what the school curriculum itself communicates about values.

Some people will undoubtedly argue that it is just up to parents, not schools, to teach children values. But all schools teach values, whether they do so explicitly or implicitly, by inclusion or by omission. All educational curricula are based on certain assumptions about social relations: about what was, what is, and what can be. The issue therefore is not whether schools should teach values but what kinds of values schools teach.

Children are born curious, hungry to learn, to satisfy their need for meaning and fulfillment, to realize their enormous potentials for creativity and caring. Much of what children internalize as knowledge and truth is spontaneously formed through their interactions with the living world around them. Young children in particular learn from what their parents, teachers, and other caregivers model. Hence partnership process—the interaction of student and teacher in caring and respectful ways that deepen rather than dampen our human capacity for empathy—is of critical importance. So also is partnership structure: a learning environment that both models and supports respectful and caring interactions, a school to which parents and other members of the community can turn for information and support, which is in turn supported by the entire community.

But a great deal of what children learn about the world and their place in it comes from the narratives transmitted to them as knowledge and truth in schools and through the larger culture. In fact, studies have shown that what children learn in their schools and their larger cultural environment can even override what children see in their immediate environment. Consider, for example, the little girl described in Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin's *The Psychology of Sex Differences*, who asserted that only boys can be doctors—even though her own mother was a physician.[5]

As children get older and their cognitive faculties become more developed, the need for partnership educational content becomes even more important.[6] At this point, when they become more aware of themselves and the larger world around them, when they begin to consciously think about what is right or wrong, normal or abnormal, important or unimpor-

tant, young people need narratives that help them develop pro-human and environmentally sensitive values.

This is particularly crucial today, since so much in both our popular and traditional culture contradicts these values, or at best conveys conflicting and confusing messages about values, standards, and morality. Young people are often given the false impression that our only choices are either repressive controls or a total lack of any standards, ethics, or morals. Indeed, this second view is today propagated not only in much of popular culture but in some intellectual circles, as in the extremes of libertarianism and academic cultural relativism.

A curriculum that teaches young people to recognize the contrasting configurations of the partnership model and the dominator model makes it possible to sort through conflicting messages and cut through much of the contemporary confusion about values. It makes clear that the issue is not either returning to dominator controls or rebelling against all standards, but developing and applying standards appropriate for partnership relations in our families, schools, workplaces, communities, and the world at large.

I believe that we are all responsible for the choices we make. But to make sound choices, we need to understand our alternatives. And one of the most important functions of education is to help young people see the full range of their alternatives, both individually and socially.

A curriculum informed by the partnership model makes it possible to see that dominator relations are not inevitable, that there are viable partnership alternatives. It offers young people a larger perspective on both their day-to-day lives and on the world at large by showing that the tension between the partnership and dominator models as two basic human possibilities has punctuated all of human history.

To illustrate, by learning to use the partnership-dominator continuum as an analytical lens in the study of history, students can contrast economic inventions such as slavery and serfdom, which came out of ancient societies that oriented closely to the dominator model (and thus placed no value on freedom for "inferior" groups), with more partnership-oriented economic inventions such as trade guilds

and labor unions, which were developed as workers began to challenge traditions of economic domination. They can contrast the ancient Roman business motto *caveat emptor* ("buyer beware") with product warnings that were the result of organized action by consumer protection groups that place higher value on ethics and human well-being than on freedom for businesses to sell what they see fit without consideration for these matters. They can then see how profoundly values are influenced by social structures, and how sound values in turn can motivate people to change unsound institutions and practices.

Students can also see how laws can enforce either dominator or partnership values. For example, because no value was given to freedom and equality for women in the European Middle Ages, laws deprived women of both freedom and equality, and even permitted husbands to beat wives, a practice still legally condoned in some rigidly male-dominated countries such as Iran and Afghanistan.

They can contrast these kinds of laws with laws making it possible for women to own and control property, vote, run for office, and receive some measure of protection from domestic violence—and learn that these laws supporting freedom and equality for women were enacted as a response to women's persistent organized efforts. They can contrast solar power (a non-centralized technology potentially available for all, once the investment in developing affordable and efficient solar delivery is made) with nuclear power (which, besides being dangerous to our safety and health, requires centralized operation and control). And they can explore what kind of social and economic system—one orienting more to partnership or domination—would accord funding priority (and thus value) to the development of solar or nuclear power as an energy source.

In short, a partnership curriculum can help young people learn values appropriate for sustainable and humane ways of living. It can help them develop standards based on environmental and social responsibility and respect for human rights—and to make choices guided by these standards. It can also help them acquire the competences they need to live by partnership ethical and moral standards through role models that highlight our enormous human po-

tential to learn, to grow, to create, and to relate to one another in mutually supporting and caring ways.

Partnership and Dominator Structures

When Sharon Thomas introduced the concept of partnership to her fourth-grade class, she started with games that communicate a different perspective from the dominator one of life being a struggle between winners and losers. She found that collaborative games such as "frozen beanbag" (where you "freeze" if a beanbag you put on your head falls off, and can go on playing only if another person puts it back on your head) became popular, fun activities.[7] When Urban Paul Thatcher Edlefsen was introduced to the concept of partnership in his high school American Government and Economics class, he lucidly expressed the changes this brought to his worldview in a paper worthy of a graduate university student. Called "President Clinton's State of the Union Address: A Partnership Analysis," it emphasized the need to find solutions for violence and other contemporary problems through "bottom-up, grass-roots means, and through the redefinition of men, women, heroes, and government."[8] Other students and teachers have also found that the pattern-recognition skills learned by using the analytical templates of the partnership and dominator models transfer to all their studies—and their lives. As students learn to look at the world from this new perspective, they develop their critical faculties. They become interested in matters that earlier seemed distant and abstract, and they begin to see recurrent patterns.

However, as in the story of the blind men and the elephant, these patterns are only visible once we look at a larger picture that takes into account the whole of our lives (both the so-called public and private spheres) and the whole of humanity (both its female and male halves). The blind man who felt the elephant's trunk described it as a leathery snake, the one who felt its leg described it as a solid tube or tower, and so forth. But none of the blind men was able to describe the animal's total configuration. In the same way, studying human society by focusing on only one area—psychology on personal relations, economics on economic relations, political science on political relations, and so forth—and at only one his-

torical period at a time is like looking out of a window that only overlooks a small portion of a landscape. And if our view is still further narrowed by looking at only one-half of humanity—as is true of almost all traditional studies, which are aptly called "the study of man"—we can never see more than half the picture.

By looking at the whole picture, we can see that societies that at first glance seem very different—a tribal society like the Masai of 19th-century Africa, an industrial society like 20th-century Nazi Germany or Stalin's Soviet Union, and a religious society like Khomeini's Iran or the European Middle Ages—actually have the same core configuration. They are all characterized by authoritarian rule based on fear of pain in both the family and the tribe or state, rigid male dominance,[9] and a high degree of socially condoned violence, ranging from child- and wife beating to brutal scapegoating and warfare. We can also see that, transcending differences in time, location, and other conventionally studied categories, societies orienting primarily to the partnership model have a very different core structure. As illustrated by contemporary Scandinavian nations, tribal societies such as the Tiduray,[10] and prehistoric societies such as Minoan Crete, this core configuration consists of a more democratic and equitable family and social organization, a more equal partnership between women and men, and the absence of a structural requirement for idealizing or building violence into the social system, as it is not required to impose or maintain rigid rankings of domination. Moreover, rather than systems of belief, myths, and values that make a dominator configuration seem normal and even moral, the ideological systems of these societies—including the narratives that define what is "human nature"—present a partnership social structure as not only desirable but possible.

It is vitally important that students understand these connections in light of today's call by some Christian fundamentalists for a return to "traditional family values." In fact, what are being advocated under the guise of Christianity are authoritarian, male-dominated, and punitive family relations—even though there is nothing in the teachings of Jesus to support this type of family structure.[11] Habits of thinking and feeling (and thus beliefs and values)

that are unconsciously developed through our family experiences provide basic mental and emotional blueprints for what kinds of relationships we consider possible, normal, and moral. This is why authoritarian societies have historically supported authoritarian families whereas democratic families are foundational to democratic societies. The slogan of the United Nations' Year of the Family, for example, described the family as the smallest democracy at the heart of democratic society.

The tragedy, and irony, is that dominator socialization—and with this, the unconscious valuing of undemocratic, abusive, and even violent relations as not only normal but moral—has been unwittingly passed on from generation to generation. Psychologists have found that children who are dependent on especially abusive adults tend to replicate these behaviors with their children, as they have been taught to associate love with coercion and abuse. Many of these children also learn to use such psychological defense mechanisms as denial and the deflection of repressed pain and anger onto those perceived as weak. Sometimes these are directed against themselves, particularly in the case of women, who are made to feel that anger is a male prerogative. Usually they are directed against others through the bullying, scapegoating, and other forms of emotional and physical violence characteristic of the properly socialized dominator psyche.

What we find in dominator systems is the institutionalization of trauma—whether through the pain of physical and/or emotional abuse, through humiliating and painful rituals of male initiation, or through the creation of artificial scarcity of both material and emotional sustenance in all areas of life.[12] This is how rigid hierarchies of domination are maintained. In short, the conditions that cause pain and anger are built into dominator systems.

The degree to which a society or period orients to the dominator or partnership configuration has profound implications for all aspects of our lives. For example, the concept of human rights—which is fundamental to the partnership model—was not known during the Middle Ages. This is not coincidental. Although intermittent attempts were made to inject partnership elements (such as the veneration of Mary as the compassionate mother of God or the

courtly love and chivalry codes of the troubadours and their female counterparts, the trobaritzes), the Middle Ages oriented closely to the interactive, mutually reinforcing configuration of the authoritarian, male-dominated, and highly violent social organization characteristic of the dominator model.

It is important for teachers to emphasize that no family, society, or organization orients exclusively to a partnership or dominator configuration. What we are dealing with is a continuum, a matter of degree. For instance, societies orienting closely to the dominator model always co-opt (absorb, distort, and exploit) partnership elements, as these elements (for example, love) are necessary if we are to survive. Moreover, we are not dealing with simple causes and effects, but with mutually interactive and reinforcing elements that maintain a system's basic character.

Through a curriculum informed by partnership education, teachers can help students look at the whole range of human relations, from intimate to international, and discuss their interconnections and interactive psychosocial dynamics. They can also give students a far more interesting, and useful, perspective on history: one that focuses not just on isolated events but on the underlying tension between the dominator and partnership models as two basic human possibilities.

This more holistic or systemic approach helps young people develop both cognitive (intellectual) intelligence and emotional (affective) intelligence. Most important, it enables them to better navigate through our difficult times and to better understand and begin to lay the structural foundations for a world in which both other humans and Mother Nature are truly valued.

Partnership and Dominator Narratives

An important element of partnership education involves helping young people more critically evaluate narratives that make the dominator model seem inevitable, desirable, and even moral. Postmodern scholarship highlights the importance of narratives or stories in how we come to perceive what we call reality. Although the term *story* is often associated with fiction, in fact almost everything we learn is through stories. Whether they are religious or secular, whether we learn them from our parents, our

schools, or the mass media, the stories we are taught largely shape how we view our world and how we live in it.

Partnership education can help young people become more aware of how stories and images shape our mental maps and, through these, our world. As we will see, the curriculum design I am proposing offers two different kinds of narratives about our world and our place in it, showing how knowledge—and with this, what is considered natural, important, and valuable—is constructed differently from a partnership or dominator perspective. In other words, partnership education offers both some of the conventional narratives that present dominator relations as normal, even inevitable, and alternative narratives that help young people explore other alternatives.

For example, in the natural sciences, partnership narratives emphasize what scientists are increasingly documenting: the interconnection of all forms of life. Such narratives lead to a greater awareness of the web of life that is our environment—which has largely been ignored in the traditional curriculum—and thus to a greater understanding and valuing of activities and policies that promote environmental sustainability. Organically flowing from this approach is the new partnership ethic for human and ecological relations urgently needed in our time.

I have personally seen how excited children become when they learn that we are partners on this planet with trees and plants. When I gave my seven-year-old friend Karen the Rainforest Action Network's Kid's Action Guide to illustrate this point, and she found out that we cannot survive without the oxygen given off by trees and plants, she was both amazed and concerned. "That's neat," she said, quickly adding, "but we better take good care of plants and trees, so they will want to be our friends."[13]

Most educators today agree that students need a better grounding in science. But although some progress has been made toward a stronger science curriculum, all too often it fails to adequately reflect scientific discoveries about our universe and our species that do not conform to a dominator model of relations. This severely handicaps young people, as if we learn primarily about our limitations, and if

these are presented to us as inevitable, either as religious truth or scientific fact, why even bother to try to change anything for the better?

For example, the narratives still taught in many schools and universities tell us that Darwin's scientific theories show that "natural selection," "random variation," and later ideas such as "kinship selection" and "parental investment" are the only principles in evolution. Actually, as we will see, Darwin did not share this view, noting that, particularly as we move to human evolution, other dynamics, including the evolution of what he called the "moral sense," come into play.[14] Or, as Frans deWaal writes in *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*, "the desire for a *modus vivendi* fair to everyone may be regarded as an evolutionary outgrowth of the need to get along and cooperate."[15]

But the story that emphasizes violence, predation, and randomness persists, making repression, inequity, and violence appear natural and normal. Through partnership narratives, teachers can help students understand that, although such a system is a human possibility, it is not "just human nature." They can offer them scientific narratives that focus not only on competition but also, following the new evolutionary scholarship, on cooperation. As we will see, these include information about seldom-noted evolutionary developments such as the biochemicals known as neuropeptides that, by the grace of evolution, reward our species with sensations of great pleasure not only when we are cared for but also when we care for others. This fascinating scientific discovery is as yet not highlighted either in our schools or in most popular scientific writings. Much has been made of the discovery that emotional states are created by the release in the body of biochemicals called endorphins. But the emphasis is still mainly on those biochemicals that induce negative emotions, such as fear and aggressive impulses.[16]

The approach I propose offers a narrative that is not only grounded in science but also supportive of spiritual values. It does not leave young people with the sense that life is devoid of meaning or that we humans are inherently violent and selfish. This approach takes us past the contemporary debate between creationists and scientists. Drawing from empirical evidence that our human strivings for love, beauty, and justice are just as rooted in evolution as our capacity for violence and aggression, it can be a bridge between science and authentic spirituality and morality.

A partnership curriculum makes it possible to see that many assumptions about our past, present, and potential future have been projections of dominator mindsets. For example, by looking at not only history but also prehistory, young people will see that familiar images conveyed by cartoons of our early ancestors as brutal cavemen dragging women around by their hair are completely absent from early prehistoric art. On the contrary, images that honor the giving and nurturing, rather than the taking, of life play a central role in Stone Age art.

Looking at our more recent past from this new perspective, young people will also see that there is far more to history than wars, dates of battles, and who won or lost in struggles for political control. They will be able to see the last three hundred years in a new, and more hopeful, light. By focusing on the efforts of women and men worldwide to construct a more equitable, democratic, gender-fair, environmentally sustainable, and nonviolent world, teachers can help young people see that these efforts are not disconnected, that they are part of the movement to shift from dominator to partnership societies worldwide. They will also see that, despite all the talk of the failure of liberalism, feminism, and other progressive modern social movements, organized social action has made major contributions to human welfare.

Students can look at how not so long ago in the United States child labor was legally condoned and fifteen-hour workdays were commonplace. They can see how at the turn of the 20th century women were still barred from universities and how just a few decades ago blacks had to sit in the back of buses and domestic violence was rarely prosecuted. They can also consider how these and other harmful practices were changed by the determined actions of a small—and, at the time, highly unpopular—minority.

By focusing on the movement toward a partnership society, teachers can help students comprehend the enormous difference these gains continue to make in our lives and better understand how they

were made. This makes it possible to relate history to daily concerns, to what kinds of relations we have with friends, parents, teachers, employees, and public officials—as well as with our natural habitat. It also makes it possible to see that nonviolent tactics have brought about important social changes.

For example, in the United States women won the right to vote, despite enormous opposition, when courageous women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul gained support through demonstrations, hunger strikes, and extensive political lobbying. In India, Gandhi used the same methods in his successful struggle for independence from British colonial rule. And, again, in the United States, women and men such as Frederick Douglass, Emma Goldman, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Rachel Carson, and David Brower have peacefully worked for civil rights for blacks, workers' rights for all Americans, and environmental sustainability.

Studying the lives of women and men who played an active part in these progressive movements will provide inspiring role models for tomorrow's children. Understanding that progress has been made over the last three hundred years despite enormous resistance and periodic setbacks, young people will see that they, too, can make a difference.

This leads to something of critical importance: The shape of our future will be profoundly affected by what is, or is not, included in the school curriculum. As Jane Martin shows in *Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families*,[17] including certain kinds of information in the curriculum—and not including other kinds of information—effectively teaches children what is, and is not, valuable. Such decisions also largely determine what children come to believe is important or unimportant, possible or impossible, good or bad, normal or abnormal.

Partnership and Dominator Priorities

As noted earlier, the partnership curriculum is gender-balanced. This is essential if all children are to be valued—and if all children are to learn more pro-human and environmentally sensitive values.

Following dominator educational traditions, most existing textbooks still focus primarily on the male half of humanity: on what men did and thought. We need only look at our texts on literature, art, history, and philosophy to see how our education still omits a huge part of the human story. Studies show that an education that minimizes the role and contribution of women has negative effects on girls' sense of self-worth and severely limits the realization of their potentials.[18] But it also has negative effects on boys, and on the whole of our social system, as this kind of education distorts our entire system of values in significant and highly destructive ways.

Some people, like a human rights luminary with whom I discussed discrimination against women some years ago, still argue that gender issues should take a back seat to more important issues—matters, as he put it, of life and death. But valuing the male half of humanity more than the female half is all too often a matter of life and death. In some world regions, it means that female children get not only less education but less health care and even food—literally condemning girl children to death.

It is hard to believe that parents would so treat their own children. But that they do is starkly borne out by the statistics. According to United Nations reports, in 1991 the yearly ratio of deaths per thousand children ages two to five in Pakistan was 54.4 for girls versus 36.9 for boys. In Thailand, it was 26.8 versus 17.3. In Syria, it was 14.6 versus 9.3.[19] As my Pakistani friend Abida Khanum told me, when a boy was born the women sang songs of celebration, but when a girl was born, they mourned.

The very fact that many of us see nothing strange about calling any issue that affects the 51% of Americans who are female "just a women's issue"—even though we would think it peculiar to call issues that affect the 49% of Americans who are male "just a men's issue"—indicates how profoundly we have been influenced by this hidden system of gender valuations and priorities.

Whether gender roles and relations are socially constructed in accordance with the dominator or partnership model directly impacts not only our entire system of values but every aspect of society. It affects whether families are egalitarian and democratic or authoritarian and violent. It affects whether activities stereotypically associated with women, such as caring for children and maintaining a clean and

healthy physical environment, are, or are not, given government policy priority, and, hence, funding.[20]

Through a partnership curriculum, teachers can help students see how learning to accept the ranking of half of humanity over the other as normal and right provides a mental map for all rankings of domination—whether race over race, religion over religion, or nation over nation. They can help students see that we need to give greater value to traits such as empathy and nonviolence—which are still stereotypically associated with women—whether they are found in women or men. In short, they can impart values that are appropriate not only for a truly democratic society but also for a more equitable and less violent world.

To this end, there are many materials about women in the chapters that follow. Some people may even feel that there is too much emphasis on women. However, despite efforts since the late 1960s to include women in the curriculum, studies show that there is still a long way to go. In their examination of 47 U.S. textbooks for grades one through eight published between 1980 and 1988, Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant found that males, or more specifically white males, were still predominant. Not only that, women in these textbooks are still incidental to the main story line. As Sleeter and Grant write, "One gains little sense of the history or culture of women, and learns very little about sexism or current issues involving gender."[21]

Today teachers are still faced with an overwhelmingly male-based curriculum in which women and anything associated with them is deemed unimportant. If we are to change this, our curriculum needs to recognize what should have been obvious all along. This is the fact that women and men are the two halves of humanity and hence that what we teach young people about what it means to be a woman or a man basically teaches them what it means to be human.

The way in which the roles and relations of men and women are socially constructed differs in partnership- and dominator-oriented societies. For example, the popular belief that testosterone inevitably makes men violent is not borne out by research. In fact, studies show that the issue is not hormonal arousal, but rather the combination of hormonal

arousal and social cues—and that men with low testosterone have actually been found to become less violent when their testosterone levels are increased.[22] Many men are today beginning to challenge a definition of fathering once primarily associated with a disciplinarian/provider role to include the nurturing once only associated with mothering,[23] and just as many women are beginning to break into the once aptly termed "men's world" of government, business, and the more lucrative professions.

In other words, there is strong movement toward the more flexible gender roles and equitable relations appropriate for a more peaceful and caring society. But there is also strong resistance. A gender-balanced partnership education can reduce this resistance and help us move toward a future when all children are valued and essential human activities such as caring for children and maintaining a clean and healthy environment are accorded the importance they merit.

Partnership and Dominator Relations

Partnership educational narratives integrate materials on peoples of all races and many cultures, not only in the United States, but worldwide. They also include materials on other people who are "different," people who are blind, deaf, or otherwise physically or developmentally challenged, highlighting not only their problems but also their enormous achievements and courage. (For example, Helen Keller was blind and deaf, yet, through the caring of her teacher Annie Sullivan, became an inspiring public figure; and actor Christopher Reeves, after suffering a paralyzing accident, became a spokesperson for the physically challenged.) By clearing up stereotypes and misinformation, these kinds of material can help students see through scapegoating and become more empathic.

Again, despite changes in textbooks since the 1960s to make them more pluralistic, as Sleeter and Grant found in their study of reading, science, mathematics, and social studies textbooks, even where more diversity was incorporated, it has often been in a fragmented, superficial fashion, as a mere add-on to the "important" material dealing with white Anglo-Saxon males. They found that most of these books contain little about contemporary race rela-

tions, poverty, discrimination, and other issues that profoundly affect the lives of a large number of non-white children. In readers, the story lines generally centered on whites; even when blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, or Asians were included in pictures, they were often involved in mundane activities, such as writing a letter or drinking a glass of juice, rather than in meaningful pursuits. And although the textbooks dealt with problems that existed in the past, such as slavery or the Great Depression, they rarely dealt with current social problems, giving the young readers a false impression about life today.[24]

Children whose identity is not valued or recognized in the school curriculum suffer in many ways from their exclusion—as evidenced by the much higher dropout rates among black, Hispanic, and Native American students and the much higher suicide attempt rates among gay and lesbian students.[25] For example, a study by Gary Remafede of the University of Minnesota (based on a statewide adolescent health survey) reports that suicide attempts by boys who identified themselves as gay or bisexual occurred at a rate of 28.1%, compared to 4.2% for heterosexual males. The rate for girls who identified themselves as lesbian or bisexual was 20.5%, compared to 14.5% for heterosexual girls. (Curiously, the news story mentions only in passing the shocking statistic that this suicide attempt rate of 14.5% for heterosexual girls is four times higher than that for heterosexual boys.)

Through partnership educational narratives teachers can integrate multicultural materials into all areas of study. Students need texts and other materials that reflect the reality of life experienced by children who are marginalized in U.S. culture. Indeed, in this age when technologies of communication and transportation, as well as destruction, have radically shrunk our world, a pluralistic/multicultural partnership curriculum is essential for all children.

Partnership narratives can promote more equitable relations between different races and ethnic groups in schools, neighborhoods, and the planet. They provide a clearer understanding of the global realities of poverty, including the fact that, worldwide, peoples of color, women, and children are the vast majority of the hungry and poor. They docu-

ment the need to narrow the gap between haves and have-nots for the sake of all children, reveal cultural and structural obstacles blocking this goal, and highlight action for positive change. Partnership educational narratives not only include the often-ignored wisdom of women and men of many cultures, they also include materials from ancient traditions from all world regions—many of them orienting more to the partnership model. This makes it possible to look to cultures that have retained a closer relationship to Mother Earth for what we today call environmental consciousness. For instance, many of the indigenous peoples of the Americas still view the Earth as sacred, and have rites and rituals that honor our interconnection with nature. This connectedness is an important aspect of the partnership worldview—one that is the common heritage of many world cultures from a time before the dominator model became the norm.

In short, through a pluralistic partnership curriculum, teachers can help young people find common ground with one another, rather than, as some people fear, promoting dissension and enmity. By providing the partnership and dominator models as analytical tools, teachers can help students determine what in their own and other cultures promotes equitable and caring versus inequitable and uncaring relations. This helps students see that just as we need to work to change the dominator aspects of our own culture, we need to support those women and men within other cultures who are working for these ends.

By applying these human rights standards—which are one of the foundations for partnership morality—to all cultures, students will not have to fall into the old trap of thinking that we are superior. Nor will they fall into the more recent trap of cultural relativism, whereby any and every practice is justified on the grounds that it is a cultural or religious tradition. Rather, they will see that the issue is the degree to which any culture—our own or another—orients to the dominator model or the partnership model.

This helps children learn the real meaning of one of the core values of democracy: that we are all responsible for making ours a better society and a better world. It also makes learning more relevant to

our day-to-day lives, to how we act in our families, workplaces, and communities.

The Partnership Curriculum
Loom and Learning Tapestry

When I think about education, I think of the interweaving of many different strands into a continually growing and changing tapestry of learning. I am using this image of a tapestry being woven on a loom as the metaphor for partnership curriculum planning.

Looms are the framework on which threads are interwoven into designs. Every educational curriculum is woven on a loom or conceptual framework consisting of the basic philosophical assumptions about our world and our place in it, which the curriculum both explicitly and implicitly communicates.

The loom or framework holding partnership education together is a worldview that emphasizes our human possibilities rather than our limitations, showing that it is possible—and essential at this time in history—to structure relations in ways that help us actualize, rather than inhibit, our great human potentials for creativity and caring. This is the worldview expressed by cultural transformation theory, which identifies the partnership and dominator models as two underlying possibilities for social organization. Hence cultural transformation theory is integral to the partnership curriculum loom.

Cultural transformation theory provides a new perspective on our past, present, and the possibilities for our future as a larger frame for education. It traces the tension between the partnership and dominator models as two pulls or attractors from the earliest human societies to our time. It charts thousands of years during prehistory when there is evidence that the cultural mainstream was less violent and more equitable—an era orienting more to the partnership model[26]—before there was a shift to a social organization orienting primarily to the dominator model in all major centers of civilization.[27] Cultural transformation theory also maps recorded history from this perspective, showing that it has been punctuated by movement toward partnership, countered by dominator resistance and periodic regressions. Focusing on the last three centuries—a period of great disequilibrium due to rapid technological change—it proposes that the currents and crosscurrents of our time

can best be understood in terms of movement toward another fundamental shift: this time, from a dominator to a partnership model. It further proposes that we today stand at an evolutionary crossroads when completing the shift to a partnership model can take us past the danger of breakdown to an evolutionary breakthrough.

In short, cultural transformation theory proposes that the underlying struggle for our future is not between the conventional polarities of right and left, religion and secularism, or capitalism and communism. Rather, it is between a mounting grassroots partnership resurgence that transcends these classifications and the entrenched, often unconscious, dominator resistance to it.

In proposing that the evolution of self and society are inextricably interconnected, cultural transformation theory provides a framework for identifying and analyzing dominator narratives embedded in traditional curricula. It suggests new narratives that expand our consciousness. It also suggests questions that need to be asked, programs that need to be developed, and personal practices and social innovations that can help us accelerate the shift to a world orienting primarily to partnership rather than domination.

The learning tapestry woven on the partnership curriculum loom consists of three main bundles or strands of educational threads.

The Vertical Threads

The vertical threads provide the basic story line for a new set of narratives about our world and our place in it. They take us from the beginning of our universe to a point where we fit into the evolutionary picture. As detailed elsewhere in *Tomorrow's Child*, they tell a story that continues into our own time: the extraordinary saga of cosmic, planetary, biological, and cultural evolution. They culminate in two possible futures: evolutionary breakdown or breakthrough.

These chronological threads give students the grounding many of us lack today: a clear sense of our world and our place in it, which we need to function optimally—psychologically, socially, technologically, and ecologically. They dispel many misconceptions about nature and our own human nature; high-

light the relationship between values and social structures; engender environmental responsibility; and integrate seemingly disparate areas of study, contextualizing science in a larger story. By showing that ours is a contingent universe in which at every turn there are different possibilities and choices, they inspire constructive action.

The Horizontal Threads

The horizontal threads provide both the old and new tools of mind that children need. One bundle of horizontal threads represents established fields, such as math, reading and writing, science, social studies, art, physical education, and music, as well as fields that are now entering the curriculum, such as computer literacy. The second bundle consists of immediate and long-term needs, interests, aspirations, hopes, and concerns of students, thus helping us prioritize what is more, or less, important in education for the 21st century.

Like a design that suddenly begins to come to life in the weaving of a tapestry, these topics acquire new meaning when interwoven with the vertical chronological threads. What then comes together is relevant to our day-to-day lives and to our choices for the future.

The Cross-Stitchings

Cross-stitchings hold a tapestry together and bring its patterns to life. Six sets of cross-stitchings integrate and enrich partnership education. The first set consists of the partnership and dominator models as tools to develop pattern recognition skills. Through an understanding of the core configurations of these two different possibilities for relations, we can see connections between what otherwise seem disconnected bits of information. We deepen our understanding of the relationship between values and social structures. And we see that the shape of our future depends on whether we succeed in shifting further toward the partnership model.

The second set of cross-stitchings is partnership values and ethical/moral standards: guidelines for day-to-day life in our families, workplaces, and communities, and for how we treat our Mother Earth. This set also includes education for the moral and ethical leadership required to construct a more equi-

table, peaceful, and creative rather than destructive 21st century.

The third, and closely related, set of cross-stitchings consists of basic partnership literacies and competences, ranging from emotional, parenting, and systems competence to political, spiritual, and leadership competence. These competences help young people develop the pro-human values, environmental sensitivities, and life skills we need to more fully realize our personal and social potentials.

The fourth set of cross-stitchings consists of materials that ensure gender balance: that equal value is given to both the female and male halves of humanity in what is taught. Gender-balanced education not only profoundly alters what children learn as valuable knowledge and truth; it also makes them aware that they have the potential for a wide range of traits and behaviors, not just those we have been taught to associate with our basic identity as women or men. It encourages young people to recognize the value, in both women and men, of traits and activities stereotypically considered "masculine" (such as assertiveness) and "feminine" (such as the caring and caretaking work without which none of us would survive), and to see that the association of domination and violence with "real" masculinity is not inevitable.

The fifth set of cross-stitchings consists of materials that make for a pluralistic/multicultural curriculum that values diversity in both humans and nature. Rather than providing environmental education as an add-on, these materials integrate it into the entire curriculum. Rather than diminishing the contribution of European influences, they enrich our understanding of European cultures by showing the similarities between some of their early partnership roots and those found in other cultural traditions. Pluralistic education is key to the future of children from otherwise marginalized nonwhite, non-European groups. It is also critical to the future of us all in our age of globalization, when we need to understand many world cultures and learn to live in partnership with one another and our Mother Earth.

The sixth set of cross-stitchings represents partnership process: a way of teaching that models and supports partnership relations, honors diverse learning styles, and makes each child feel seen and cared

for. This approach integrates emotional and intellectual learning, recognizes what Howard Gardner called multiple intelligences, promotes teamwork, and lends itself well to self-directed learning.

Weaving the Future: Partnership Schools

The overall design of the Partnership Curriculum Loom and Learning Tapestry encourages systemic or holistic thinking. It provides a biological and social matrix for understanding children's capacity to learn, grow, and create. It offers teachers a structure to use in incorporating the materials that follow, as well as for reexamining the curriculum they currently use through the analytical lens of the partnership-dominator continuum.

The "Weaving the Future: Partnership Schools" project of the Center for Partnership Studies (CPS) is already using some of these materials in collaboration with schools, universities, and other organizations to develop and disseminate curriculum content, learning processes, and educational structures that reflect partnership attitudes, values, and skills. For example, at the School in Rose Valley (Pennsylvania), CPS is assisting the development, testing, and evaluation of curricula for younger students that integrate service learning and simultaneously help children think critically about the partnership and dominator models. With *New Moon*, the Minnesota-based award-winning magazine for girls edited by girls ages eight to fourteen, CPS brings together girls on the culturally diverse *New Moon* editorial board to write stories on partnership themes for children of various ages. At the Nova High School in Seattle, Washington (a public charter school with a multicultural student body), CPS is working with teachers, students, and recent graduates in developing, testing, and evaluating new biology and cultural history curricula.

Of particular interest for teachers and home-schooling parents is that, in collaboration with the University of Kansas Center for Research and Learning (a leader in continuing teacher education), CPS offers teacher professional development workshops in various U.S. regions. These short workshops can be taken for continuing education credit. Longer workshops for "training of trainers" are being planned to accelerate replication of partnership

education nationally and internationally. In addition, plans are under way at the California State University Monterey Bay for a Master's program for educators who want to incorporate the partnership model in their classrooms.

These project sites are developing components for an integrated partnership education, blending content (what we learn and teach), process (how we learn and teach), and structure (where we learn and teach). Some of these materials will be available, and periodically updated, through the CPS website at <www.partnershipway.org>. Where appropriate, they will also be available through educational publishers, bookstores, and other channels of distribution.

I am delighted that even in advance of the publication of *Tomorrow's Children* there is so much interest in using it to begin reweaving the present educational tapestry and helping children learn to live more fulfilling, productive, and caring lives.

Again, this does not mean that all the problems young people face, particularly young people living in poverty and daily violence, can be solved by partnership education. But by stimulating children's enormous curiosity, offering them new and inspiring stories, supporting them and encouraging them to help each other (for example, through team assignments and peer teaching), and facilitating their use of partnership education to meet real-life needs, become involved in their communities, maintain a clean and healthy environment, and put themselves in the place of those in need, partnership education will be a powerful force for transforming our communities and our world.

This cultivation of empathy—and the life-skills to put empathy into action—is one of the core goals of partnership education. It is an ambitious goal, and will not be easy to accomplish in a world that still orients heavily to the dominator model. But there is evidence that movement in this direction is already under way.

As seen in progressive corporations today, the partnership leader or manager is not a cop or controller who gives orders that must be obeyed, but someone who inspires productivity and empathically facilitates creative teamwork. In progressive schools, teachers inspire and facilitate learning and

creativity, modeling caring and empathic behaviors. A critical difference between the dominator and partnership models lies in the distinction between authoritarian families, which model inequality and replicate the kind of unempathic childrearing required to mold a dominator psyche, and democratic families that model empathy, caring, and equality, instilling democratic values on an experiential day-to-day level. There is today strong movement toward not only more equality between adults in households but also more empathic childcare.

Empathy, caring, and equality are, of course, what great religious teachers such as Jesus preached. Partnership education can build on these basic, universally recognized values. It can help young people escape the cynicism and nihilism of our time, not through the old dominator morality of punishment and coercion but through the partnership morality of caring and empathy.

The universality and persistence of partnership values as ideals, even in the face of all that militates against their expression, says something important about our human species—and about the possibilities of a fundamental cultural transformation in a time when the kind of breakdowns that could come with the end of the modern industrial era could bring a virtual avalanche of multiple systems failures. Many of us realize that unless we prepare today's and tomorrow's children to live together more equitably and peacefully, they may have no future in our age of biological and nuclear weapons. We also realize that if we do not leave behind our once-hallowed "conquest of nature," we endanger not only the future of other species with whom we share our planet but also the future of our own human species.[28]

If, unlike the ancient story of how the Emperor Nero fiddled while Rome burned, teachers, parents, and all of us who care about the future of today's and tomorrow's children join together, all this can be averted. If through partnership education we nurture the wonderful range of human capacities now largely ignored in schools, particularly our human capacities for caring and creativity, we will help lay the foundations for a partnership world.

Notes

1. Leonard Pitts. 1998. Rebuilding Morality Will Take "Titanic" Effort. *Miami Herald*, 26 February.

2. Deborah Tannen. 1998. *The Argument Culture*. New York: Random House.

3. Emily Style. 1988. Curriculum as Window and Mirror. *Listening for All Voices*. Summit, NJ: Oak Knoll School.

4. Nel Noddings. 1992. *The Challenge to Care in Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

5. See Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974). A more recent work on sex differences showing the enormous importance of gender socialization is Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), which, as its title suggests, dispels many false preconceptions about inherent biological differences between women and men.

6. *How Schools Shortchange Girls: A Study of Major Findings on Girls and Education*. 1995. New York: Marlowe.

7. Thomas, Sharon. 1998. E-mail communication to author. Iowa City, 20 July.

8. Urban Paul Thatcher Edlefsen. 1996. President Clinton's State of the Union Address: A Partnership Analysis. Research paper written for Nova High School's American Government and Economics class, 31 January.

9. The crux of the matter is the ranking of one-half of humanity over the other. This provides a mental map for perceiving relations of domination or submission as normal. It could theoretically be the social ranking of the female half over the male half (i.e., matriarchy), although there have been no historical instances of this.

10. See Stuart A. Schlegel, *Wisdom from a Rainforest: The Spiritual Journey of an Anthropologist* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998). In my earlier writings I have used the name Tiruray, even though in this book Schlegel has switched to using the name Tiduray rather than Tiruray, as in his earlier writings. It is the same tribe, regardless of the spelling.

11. On the contrary, Jesus challenged the rigid male dominance, hierarchy, and punitive nature of his time—for example, by stopping the stoning of a woman accused of adultery and preaching against men's legal right to throw out no-longer-wanted wives by simply saying "I divorce you" three times (as is still the practice in some Muslim fundamentalist nations today).

12. See Riane Eisler, *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body* (San Francisco: Harper Collins), ch. 10.

13. *The Kid's Action Guide* can be obtained from the Rainforest Action Network, 450 Sansome Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, California 94111. For more information, check out the network's web page at <www.ran.org/ran/>.

14. Charles Darwin. [1981/1871]. The Descent of Man. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 89-90, 404. See also David Loye, *Darwin's Lost Theory* (New York: Harmony Books, 2000).

15. Frans deWaal. 1996. *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 207.

16. Emotions occur when neuropeptides (amino acids strung together like pearls in a necklace) make contact with receptors (complicated molecules found in almost every cell in the body, not just the brain). Although there is still much work to be done to identify the exact nature of these biochemicals, it is clear that different emotions involve different neuropeptides, which are essentially information-carrying molecules. For an accessible account of this phenomenon, see "The Chemical Communicators: Candace Pert," interview with Candace Pert in Bill Moyers, *Healing and the Mind* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), pp. 177-193.

17. Jane Martin. 1992. *Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

18. See, for example, *AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1997). Particularly as girls approach puberty, their sense of self-worth and competence decreases rather than in-

creases—a phenomenon largely due to the fact that girls begin to understand from many social messages (including a school curriculum that basically excludes them) that boys and men are considered more important.

19. United Nations. 1991. *The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics*. New York: United Nations, p. 60. For further discussion, see Riane Eisler, David Loye, and Kari Norgaard, *Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life* (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Center for Partnership Studies, 1995).

20. Eisler, Loye, and Norgaard, *Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life.*

21. Sleeter, Christine E., and Carl A. Grant. Race, Class, Gender, and Disability in Current Textbooks. In *The Politics of the Textbook.* Edited by Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, p. 98. The textbooks in question covered the subjects of reading, science, mathematics, and social studies.

22. One such study is reported in Jeane Seligmann, with Bruce Shenitz, "Testosterone Wimping Out?" *Newsweek,* July 3, 1995, p. 61.

23. Rob Koegel. 1994. Healing the Wounds of Masculinity: A Crucial Role for Educators. *Holistic Education Review* 7 (March): 42-49.

24. Sleeter, Christine E., and Carl A. Grant, eds. *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

25. For statistics on dropout rates, see *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1998), chart 297, p. 187. This source indicates that the 1996 dropout rate for white students was 9.2%, compared to 11% for black students and 24.6% for Hispanic students (nearly one-fourth of the total). For the Remafede study of young people's suicide rates, see Sandra G. Boodman, "Gay and Teen Boys More Likely to Commit Suicide," *Washington Post*, March 3, 1998, p. Z05.

26. My work has focused primarily on how this shift occurred in the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea—regions generally described as the cradles of Western culture. Although the timelines differ, there is strong evidence of the same pattern in other world regions. For example, in Min Jiayin, ed., *The Chalice and the Blade in Chinese Culture* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 1995), which is available in English from the Center for Partnership Studies, scholars at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing have also identified a prehistoric shift to a dominator culture, although it occurred later there than in the West. Cultural transformation theory looks at this shift from the perspective of chaos theory, nonlinear dynamics, and other new approaches to the study of how living systems maintain themselves and change. In particular, it proposes that human societies are living systems that cannot be understood in terms of simple one-way causes and effects. They are self-organizing, self-maintaining, and capable—during periods of great disequilibrium or chaos (such as ours)—of transformational change. See, for example, Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987, 1988); and David Loye and Riane Eisler, "Chaos and Transformation: Implications of Nonequilibrium Theory for Social Science and Society," *Behavioral Science* 32 (1987): 53-65.

27. For a perspective on Europe, see Marija Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991); on the Middle East, see James Mellaart, *Catal Huyuk* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975); on pre-Columbian North America, see Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1980); and on Asia, see Jiayin, ed., *The Chalice and the Blade in Chinese Culture.*

28. See, for example, Ervin Laszlo, *Choice: Evolution or Extinction?* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1994); and Daniela Meadows, *Beyond the Limits* (Post Mills, Vt.: Chelsea Green Publishing, 1992). See also Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, ch. 12.

Curriculum, Control, and Standards-Based School Reform

Scott Fletcher

Evans Clinchy's collection, *Transforming Public Education: A New Course for America's Future* (1997), provides a useful occasion to reflect on educational reform in the United States, its recent developments, and the possible trajectories of its future. In this review, I begin with a discussion of the approach one takes to reading the text because I think attention to this matter will mark the difference between readers who find the work provocative and those who come to it looking for something it does not provide. So, without qualifying my enthusiasm for this collection, I begin with two caveats for potential readers.

Two Caveats

First, readers will note that most of the essays collected here were written for a special editorial section of the January 1995 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, as a response to the Clinton administration's Goals 2000 legislation passed in 1992. While funding for local programs continues under this legislation, the eight goals offered to frame America's educational mission slipped relatively quickly from our collective consciousness and did little to inform subsequent debates over national educational policy. Indeed, most of the goals offered in the Goals 2000 legislation were

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easy to dismiss as utopian fantasies, not just of what schools might accomplish, but of an American society that could hardly be imagined without structural changes of enormous magnitude (recall, for example, the document's first goal, which states that, "by the year 2000... All children will start school ready to learn," quoted in Clinchy, p.3). While Clinchy notes that "Goals 2000 ... is merely the most visible tip of a very large and by no means recently formed educational iceberg" (p. 7), the connection to this eight-year-old legislation is unlikely to resonate with many readers, and runs the risk of making the essays collected here look untimely. As Clinchy suggests, readers will need to look beyond the historical context of the Goals 2000 legislation to see these essays as part of a larger discourse (and conflict) about school reform. This effort is worth the dividends it pays.

My second caveat concerns the title of this collection, which is a missed opportunity to give readers a better sense of what is contained within its pages. It may be difficult to avoid the now-prosaic rhetoric of educational "transformation" (which, as far as I can tell, excludes nobody these days, from E.D. Hirsch and William Bennett, to Michael Apple and bell hooks), but *Transforming Public Education*, with its subtitle, "A New Course for America's Future," risks a kind of overstatement that does the collection little good. The essays collected in this volume are quite diverse in subject and methodology, with a number of the contributors summarizing positions they have established elsewhere. I consider this to be one of the collection's strengths, making it equally valuable for use in university classrooms and in public discussions of educational policy. In my view, however, the collection falls short of charting "a new course for

America's future," and readers who come looking for a "movement" or a "school of thought" in educational reform may be perplexed and disappointed not to find one in this volume. The irony here is that Clinchy's use (some may think overuse) of nautical metaphors explicitly suggests an open-ended inquiry (voyage) into the future of America's schools, rather than a singular path for educational reform. Nonetheless, the text steers an uneasy path between offering a set of "very rough-and-ready maps ... for all of us to use as we attempt to make some progress toward our destination" (p. 182) and a diverse set of commentaries from philosophers, social scientists, policy advocates, principals, teachers, and (other) school reform activists.

So, what *can* a reader rightly expect from this collection, and what tack is appropriate to take in delving into its details? For me, the most provocative way to read *Transforming Public Education* involves mining it for support of two general claims about the nature and practice of school reform. The first of these claims holds that standards-driven educational reforms, and specifically those aimed at exercising control over public education through the promulgation of curriculum content standards, are misguided and ultimately counter-productive. The second claim holds that meaningful school reform requires increased autonomy at the school and classroom level, in support of a pedagogical orientation that values the uniqueness of individual students and promotes critical engagement with authentic questions about the world. I examine both of these claims here, but I spend more time detailing the case against standards, in part because it has so far been a losing cause at state and district levels, where efforts to control the school curriculum matter most to educational practice. In contrast, more has been successfully argued on behalf of limited local autonomy in schools and, as several of the pieces in this collection demonstrate, reform-minded educators have had some success in strategically managing the bureaucratic constraints that typify American public education.

The Case Against Standards

In his essay, "The End of the Federally Driven Standards Movement?," Larry Cuban argues that "the centralizing impulse of federal school reform

has ended" and he predicts that, "as the year 2000 approaches, action will remain in states (where the impulse to centralize remains strong)" (p. 95). This "impulse to centralize" is especially evident in state-wide programs to implement curriculum content standards, often backed by high stakes standardized tests and by the procedures used to dispense school improvement funds. Setting aside the dubious policy goals offered in federal documents like the Goals 2000 legislation, it is possible and useful to read *Transforming Public Education* as a powerful indictment of efforts to control schools and school change through the use of curriculum content standards. In fact, I think this collection provides support for the claim that curriculum content standards, no matter how much they are elaborated and refined, will *never* be adequate guides for school reform. This kind of "strong critique" suggests that the more time "experts" spend parsing curriculum standards and wrestling with the "performance indicators" that demonstrate their successful "implementation," the less likely schools are to meet the real needs of students. In my reading of *Transforming Public Education*, I see three general arguments offered in support of this position.

Curriculum Standards Reflect a Narrow Vision of What it Means to be "Educated" and Constrain Schools from Responding to Changing Conditions in Society

Foregrounding the work of "care" theorists like Jane Roland Martin, Nel Noddings, and Blythe McVicker, Clinchy is a powerful and welcome strategy in a collection that focuses on educational policy and school reform. While each is well known in their respective fields (Martin and Noddings as philosophers of education, and Clinchy as a developmental psychologist), it is still not uncommon to hear their work described as primarily concerned with "gender issues." As the essays collected here make apparent, these scholars are eloquent advocates for a view of education that radically displaces the well-entrenched emphasis on disciplinary knowledge in schools and their equally well-entrenched mechanisms for measuring and assessing only a narrow range of human activity. Those familiar with Martin's *The Schoolhome* (1992), Noddings's *Caring* (1984) and *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (1992), and Blythe

Clinchy's work, with Mary Belenky, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986), will see familiar themes echoed in the chapters contributed by these authors.

For care theorists, the argument against standards often begins with Dewey's recognition that schools must respond to the changing needs of the society they serve. Both Martin and Noddings point to the disaffection and despair felt by many youth today, and recent examples of horrifying school violence attest to the depth of this need. What, then, should the role of public education be in such a society? Toward what ends should our best efforts be directed? Noddings, Martin, and Clinchy challenge the view that the most important goals of schooling are best understood in relation to the acquisition of specific content knowledge, or through the reproduction of a globally competitive work force. In her essay, "A Morally Defensible Mission for Schools in the 21st Century," Noddings argues that,

> Our society does not need to make its children first in the world in mathematics and science [Goal 4 in the Goals 2000 document]. It needs to care for its children—to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to reward excellence at every level (Gardner, 1961), to ensure a place for every child and emerging adult in the economic and social world, to produce people who can care competently for their own families and contribute effectively to their communities. In direct opposition to the current emphasis on academic standards, a national curriculum, and national testing, I have argued (Noddings, 1992) that our main educational aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people. This is a morally defensible aim for education in the 21st century. (p. 28)

Curriculum standards simply cannot live up to this challenge, indeed, they are more likely to stand in its way by sustaining the presumption that students are best served, and the interest of our nation is best promoted, by further honing the specific articles of content that mark the truly educated person and the successful global entrepreneur.

The positive vision of school reform that grows from this critique retains an important connection to Dewey's legacy, especially his argument that educa-

tional reform will never succeed until we overcome the false and pernicious dichotomy between "the child and the curriculum" (Dewey, 1990/1902). To do this, according to Dewey and the care theorists, requires that we embed questions of curriculum firmly within the broader field of human growth and experience. On this account, curriculum standards are necessarily incomplete guides to healthy growth and moral development because the decontextualized patterns of knowledge they offer cannot sustain the richer meanings embodied in individual lives. The meanings that others have constructed cannot be organized, codified, and transmitted to others in this ready-made form. To be educated in a more fully human (and moral) context requires a holistic vision of life and learning. In "A Philosophy of Education for the Year 2000," Martin (p. 21) argues that

> We need a new curricular paradigm: one that does not ignore the disciplines of knowledge, but reveals their proper place in the general scheme of things as one part of a person's education; one that integrates thought and action, reason and emotion, education and life; one that does not divorce persons from their social and natural contexts; one that embraces individual autonomy as but one of many values.

Transforming Public Education does a good job putting down its roots in this fertile landscape, which is all the more striking for the much needed emphasis it places on reform initiatives that would radically reorient educational practice toward Martin's idea of schools as the "moral equivalent of home" (p. 16) and Noddings's view of a "new education" that "puts a very high valuation on the traditional occupations of women" (p. 31).

Curriculum Standards Divert Attention from Students' Active Participation in Learning Through Their Emphasis on the Acquisition of a Specific and Codifiable Body of Knowledge

A second powerful critique of curriculum standards that can be found in *Transforming Public Education* gives particular attention to the assumptions such standards make about students and the process by which they learn and grow. Advocates of curriculum standards often make a distinction between curriculum (as content) and pedagogy (as instruction), suggesting that teachers can use whatever means

they find appropriate to implement the standards, as long as students learn the required material and can demonstrate this achievement through some kind of standardized assessment procedure. In this way, proponents of standards-based reforms argue that their proposals are instructionally neutral and present no barrier even to the most progressive instructional methods. Some proponents of a common national curriculum(e.g., Finn, 1991) even argue that such an approach honors the professional knowledge of teachers, leaving instructional decisions up to them, while preserving the national interest in providing citizens with a common body of knowledge determined by experts.

Teachers, of course, know otherwise, as they labor under the increasingly unbearable burden that standards makers create in their efforts to compile, organize, and list *everything* that *all* students must know. Critics of standards might safely rest their objections on the apparent indeterminacy of this process, or the inevitable overload that results. But despite the virtual certainty that some level of disagreement will always exist among professionals in their academic fields, as well as among diverse community members, there is another line of argument that emerges in *Transforming Public Education* that should give the advocates of curriculum standards pause. Simply put, curriculum standards can never incorporate the active participation of students in this would-be dialogue. The point here is not that students possess the same kind of knowledge that teachers have about subject matter (although I think we routinely underestimate what students do, in fact, know). Rather, if we understand teaching and learning as activities that involve the co-construction of knowledge, then we know that curriculum standards cannot "create" knowledge that students then dutifully swallow whole. This runs counter to what we know about cognition, as Blythe Clinchy points out in "The Standardization of the Student," where she argues against school reform proposals that use content and performance standards alone to define what is most important about the process of learning:

> To a developmental psychologist, what is striking about the Goals 2000 initiative is its virtual omission of the student. Of course, its proponents refer to students repeatedly. They speak of

exposing students to important things and *providing* them with these things ("content standards"); they talk about *requiring* students to do things that are good for them, and *evaluating* them to see whether they did what they were supposed to do ("performance standards"). But in all these pronouncements students are almost always treated as *objects*, rarely as *subjects*. Goals 2000 focuses almost exclusively on the external *"stuff"* that is to be implanted in these apparently inert organisms. (p. 66, author's emphasis)

As Clinchy notes, treating students as "passive receptacle[s]" (p. 66) waiting to be filled with the appropriate content reminds us of the unflagging persistence of the "banking model" critiqued by Paulo Freire (1970) and an "obsolete and simplistic model of cognitive development," where learning is viewed as "entirely a matter of 'socialization' from the 'outside in,' a molding of the shapeless blob of the mind by outside agents" (p. 66).

So where do we go for models of what it looks like when students participate in constructing curriculum in a particular setting, and what exactly is to be gained from such a "risky" and "open-ended" process? Maxine Greene, in her essay "Art and Imagination: Reclaiming a Sense of the Possible," provocatively answers these questions in the context of an argument about the role of aesthetic experience in schooling. An especially relevant and important aspect of Greene's argument is her observation that "the existential contexts of education" embrace so many pressing social concerns (e.g., broken families, homelessness, violence, and social inequality) that "notions of world-class achievement, benchmarks, and the rest seem superficial and limited, if not absurd" (p. 56). In Greene's account, what students need is an educational context in which they can confront this "world of fearful moral uncertainty" and become active participants in their own lives, in their own humanity. Instead of curriculum standards that inspire (even enforce) passive reception, working in the arts, according to Greene, gives students the opportunity to become fully immersed in the process of creation that *is* their lives, and to see in this experience the power to influence it:

> Aesthetic experiences are events that occur within and by means of the transactions with

our environment that situate us in time and space. Some say that participatory encounters with paintings, dances, stories, and the rest enable us to recapture a lost spontaneity. By breaking through the frames of presuppositions and conventions, we may be enabled to reconnect ourselves with the processes of becoming who we are.... By becoming aware of ourselves as questioners, as makers of meaning, as persons engaged in constructing and reconstructing realities with those around us, we may be able to communicate to students the notion that reality depends on perspective, that its construction is never complete, and that there is always more. (p. 62)

Transforming Public Education is well-served by Greene's argument that "we have to combat standardization and what Hannah Arendt called 'thoughtlessness" (p. 59) in order to make possible the kind of "significant encounters" that help students to become more self-reflective and to see a role for themselves in the collective moral life of their communities. No educational reform based on curriculum standards can accomplish this goal, regardless of its precision, organization, or strategy for implementation.

Curriculum Standards Ignore or Suppress the Diversity of Identity and Experience that Students Possess

The version of this argument that focuses on the curriculum as cultural "canon" or as a vehicle for "cultural literacy" has probably received more attention than any other in recent debates about what should be taught in our public schools. The attempt to list all of the books that every student should read, or to publish a dictionary of ideas that every student should learn as the indisputable "core" of western culture, presents an almost irresistible invitation to disagree, and the results of such challenges have filled editorial pages and academic journals alike. And while we have reached little consensus on the relative merits of *The Great Gatsby* vs. *The Bluest Eye*, the debate over culture's role in the curriculum has done well to promote scrutiny of the images that are portrayed there and the messages that are communicated to students, especially about issues of gender and race. The question these disputes less commonly concern themselves with, however, is whether we could, in principle, find a canon that effectively represents the diversity of the United States, and whether such a canon could serve as a basis for effective curriculum standards.

In the case against curriculum standards that I see in my reading of *Transforming Public Education*, there is good reason to think that the answer to this question is no, but not because the essays in this volume venture very far into the socio-political quagmire of considering how to represent all cultures in the public school curriculum. Instead, an even more decisive argument is made by the contributors here, one that focuses on the need for teachers to see their students in particular terms, with a sense of their past experiences, current interests, and goals for the future. This view suggests that teachers make instructional decisions that are highly dependent on the context they face in each class, knowing that students will enter a field of study through different points and that they will express their interests and abilities in different ways. As Linda Darling-Hammond argues in her essay, "Reframing the School Agenda," teachers

> must adapt and respond on the basis of individual needs and interactions to a complex, ever-changing set of circumstances—taking into account the real knowledge and experiences of learners, including their cultures, their communities, and the conditions in which they live. Yet this is what many current school reform policies seek to prevent teachers from doing. (p. 48)

On this account, curriculum standards inhibit teachers' capacity to envision the "whole student" and diminish the likelihood that instruction will engage students in the concrete reality of their specific identities, experiences, and needs. Darling-Hammond argues for creating conditions in which "the teacher's job is no longer to 'cover the curriculum' but to enable diverse learners to construct their own knowledge and develop their talents in effective and powerful ways" (p. 38). This approach resonates well with Blythe Clinchy's support for "a system of education that places[s] care and understanding of persons rather than impersonal standards at its center" (p. 78) and Maxine Greene's belief in "educating young people to grow and become different, to find their individual voices, and to participate in a community in the making" (p. 64).

The Argument for Local Autonomy
In Schools and Classrooms

Transforming Public Education also offers support for the progressive pedagogical innovations that are enabled by increased instructional autonomy in the classroom, and for the democratic organizational structures enabled by greater insulation from constraining educational bureaucracies at the district and state level. The first-hand accounts of particular schools and classrooms included here are invaluable for describing authentic examples of innovative reform that have actually made a difference in the lives of students, described by some of the people responsible for making the necessary changes happen. These narratives reflect the spirit and activism that sustain effective, grassroots, school reform.

Two of the most powerfully grounded essays in this respect are Linda Nathan and Larry Myatt's, "The Travails and Triumphs of Charters and Pilots: Fenway Middle College High School—A Work in Progress," and Deborah Meier's, "How Our Schools Could Be," an account of her work at Central Park East in Harlem. What is particularly effective about these two essays is the fluid mix of reflections on the stark realities involved in confronting entrenched educational bureaucracies, in Boston and New York, respectively, and the clear sense readers get of the motivation that sustains the enormous collective effort required of staff, students, and community at each of these schools.

Consistent with the case against standards outlined above, such results cannot be accomplished using a top-down, factory-model approach to school change, where efficiency and economies of scale derive from centralized control and the standardization of production/instruction. Rather, it comes from the effort of these schools to remake themselves along the lines of a more democratic, student-centered, and inquiry-based approach to education.

A danger associated with telling stories like the ones told here about Fenway Middle College High School and Central Park East, however, is that educators who do not see a popular uprising occurring any time soon in their own backyards can become discouraged. They can be discouraged by the contrast they see in the seemingly unstoppable momentum of their own local bureaucracies, and the weight states and districts throw behind efforts to regulate and control the process of change. This worry is leavened to some degree by Nathan, Myatt, and Meier's description of the supportive role played by networks of reform-minded schools and their supporters. The hope that effective school reform might be promoted more broadly through such affiliations is also elaborated here in essays by Tony Wagner and Larry Cuban. Both scholars have a lot of experience studying the process of school reform and both do a good job placing individual success stories in the larger context of school reform networks and strategies for making discussions of educational reform more open, more public, and more democratic. Despite efforts to exert top-down pressure on American schools, the real story of educational reform, as Cuban points out, will still be told by those "who over the past decade have established school-by-school changes and created networks of improving schools across the country" (p. 95).

As virtually all of the contributors to this volume point out, the final question of whether our schools will change for the better rests on whether teachers are supported in helping students to expand their vision of themselves, to grow as healthy and moral individuals, and to join others in creating communities based on caring and a shared respect for difference. Essays by Anita Maria Teeter, and by John Rivera and Mary Poplin, give clear voice to the concerns of students and teachers in their visions of what schools might become. In Teeter's essay, "Bread and Roses," readers will find a grounded critique of tracking and the ill-effects of standardized testing. Teeter's long experience as an elementary teacher in the Boston Public Schools gives her a narrative voice that will resonate with many readers, especially those who share the despair she feels for students whose futures are constrained by an educational system in which they will always be outsiders. Initially, the picture Teeter fashions of "an ideal world" in which "communities ... interlock to weave a web of safety, good health, comfort, and education" (p. 168) may seem as utopian as the Goals 2000 legislation. Teeter's proposals, however, address the concrete realities of teaching quite straightforwardly and they clearly reflect the experience of a thoughtful veteran of the classroom.

The essay by Rivera and Poplin, "Listening to Voices from the Inside," gives readers an even more closely grounded view of *students'* reactions to a school culture that often denies their status as able, active, and resourceful participants in their own education. It also promotes a view of the current educational debate that I feel concerned enough about to comment on here. What worries me is the authors' advice that we should "begin by letting go of our fervor for advancing narrow-lens political or educational objectives" (p. 98). This recommendation makes good sense in relation to the kind of interest group politics that dominates public dialogue in this country, and the authors' appeal to people's common desire "to love their families, be safe, provide for themselves and their loved ones, be treated justly, interact with dignity and respect, and contribute [their] very best" (p. 99) provide a strong foundation for thinking about the goals of public education. However, I think their suggestion that the "conservative-liberal-radical debate" is one of the central causes of our inability to make schools more humane places is a dangerous view. It implies that we have a system of education which is somehow a compromise of these perspectives, or perhaps a system that lacks any coherent body of underlying beliefs and values. If we associate "standards-driven" school reforms with the success of educational conservatives in shaping current public school policy, which doesn't strike me as a controversial claim, then it may be news to the liberals and radicals in this volume that they have got in the way of much of anything. Indeed, this would be an improvement on the current state of things!

Nonetheless, it is the first-hand experiences of students that comes through most resoundingly in "Lis-tening to Voices from the Inside," and there is much to be learned from Rivera and Poplin and from what students have to say about what should be done to improve our schools. The need to *listen and learn*, in fact, is a good insight to take away from this entire volume; our schools will improve only when we listen to what teachers have to say about their classrooms, when teachers listen to what students have to say about the culture of schooling, and when students have occasions for constructive dialogue with their peers and with trusted adults. Such an approach to school reform calls for a greater understanding of the full range of human endeavor, a common commitment to relationships built on caring and respect, and, as Nel Noddings concludes in her essay, an effort to "relax the impulse to control ... in an era reeking of distrust and filled with demands for accountability" (p. 35).

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Book Reviews

Living by Wonder: The Imaginative Life of Childhood

By Richard Lewis

Published by Parabola Books in association with Touchstone Center Publications (New York), 1998. 150 pp. Hardbound.

Reviewed by Peter Blaze Corcoran and June LaCombe

> A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. (Carson 1965, 42)

In *Living by Wonder* Richard Lewis pays obeisance to godmother Rachel Carson, whose influence has presided over so much education by wonder since her profound meditation on the power of intuitive apperception in childhood—*The Sense of Wonder*. Carson assures us of a deeper meaning, a hidden soul that lies just beyond our lived experience.

So much education teaches us not to trust our wonder, our intuition, and the ineffable sources of our human strength. Carson reminds us that these are part of our humanity; she offers validation of the power and authority of childhood experience and an invitation to plumb its depths.

For those of us who have followed Carson's invitation, Richard Lewis's wise book guides us to both

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living by wonder and *teaching* by wonder. He brings enormous insight to childhood imagination. His capacity to understand and interpret childhood experience and his "reading" through direct observation is unsurpassed.

As children's questions bring Lewis to wonder, so his questions bring us to wonder. These essays offer a rationale for the great value of the immediacy and generative power of wonder. We must not retreat from wonder, he argues, lest we "[let] go of a gravitational center within ourselves" (p. 139). Surely Lewis has retained his sense of wonder!

Lewis' essays mainly reflect the light within a series of personal observations over many years of working with children and parents. The essays explore the imagination and the importance of finding individual voice while keeping in touch with the primary impulses leading to the initial forms of expression we call the arts.

In the chapter "The Creatures They Are: Children Becoming Their Nature," Lewis describes a classroom in East Harlem. Children have made masks of birds and they engage their imaginations by letting themselves become something other than themselves. "If they could imagine themselves as birds, they could do what birds do—FLY, but in this case fly imaginatively" (p. 113). The birds became metaphors for their own imaginations. The program has included the children's personal observations of birds and visual arts projects creating bird masks and wings. They have studied Native American stories and myths and have written their own stories and poetry. The project has culminated with a ritual in Central Park with musicians, storytellers and dancers sharing through performances how birds have flown through the human consciousness and influenced the arts throughout time. Lewis describes a child running along a path with her wings floating, "Who could distinguish at that moment, what was bird and what was human? As she flew out of sight with her bird imagination, she exemplifies our human connectedness to all living things" (p. 118).

Richard Lewis founded the Touchstone Center in 1969 in the belief that all persons have natural creative and artistic capacities, which, when encour-

aged and allowed to develop, find unique expression in each individual. For thirty years, the Touchstone Center has developed programs that encompass drama, poetry, dance, storytelling, natural history, mythology, comparative cultural study, writing, and the visual arts. It has formed collaborative alliances with the American Museum of Natural History, Wave Hill Environmental Center, the Orion Society, the Abrons Arts Center, Parabola Books, and numerous public schools. Located in New York City, it is a nonprofit educational organization acting as a leader in creating arts programs in public schools to explore the role of the imagination as pivotal to all learning. The Center's work has concentrated on developing the use of elemental themes to express, through a variety of artistic media, the innate human relationship to the natural world.

Publications by Richard Lewis include *All of You Was Singing* (1991), a poetic rendering of ancient Aztec myth about how music came to Earth; *The Butterfly in my Pocket: On Teaching the Imaginative Experience* (1987), a monograph discussing the ways the author enables children through writing and related arts to come in touch with their inner world; and *Miracles: Poems by Children of the English Speaking World* (1966), a classic collection of poems by children that reveal the excitement, wonder, and rich imaginative power of children.

Miracles was an enormously positive influence on us as we developed a program in human and natural history twenty-five years ago at Mast Landing Nature Day Camp in Maine. We realized from Lewis' respect for the child's poetic urge that poetic understanding ought to be at the heart of effective holistic education. In a delightful essay in *Living by Wonder* on why children ask "Why?" entitled "The First Question of All," Lewis writes,

> By poetic understanding, I do not mean our interest in the craft of poetry. I mean, more generally, that understanding which—from curiosity, wonder, and our questions—created a bridge to the unknown, those outer and inner elements of our existence which we cannot and will never be able fully to comprehend. But it is an understanding that, freeing up dogmatic and rigid ways of perceiving and knowing, allows us to experience the endlessly evolving ways we can see and feel the world around. (p. 21)

Lewis's work rings true with the veracity and blessings of our humble teaching experience and resonates with many who have addressed the imagination and nature, especially Edith Cobb and Marjory Spock.

The essays were written between 1982 and 1997 have some shortcomings as a book. They would benefit from a thoughtful introduction and/or conclusion that would provide a principle of coherence to the collection. The quotations are not well referenced or cited by page—a serious shortcoming for those wishing deeper exploration. Disparate as they are, they do reflect the light of the author's powerful insight and shimmer brightly together like moonlight on the water, illuminating the imaginative life of childhood.

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Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture: Rethinking Moral Education, Creativity, Intelligence, and other Modern Orthodoxies

By C.A. Bowers
Published by State University of New York Press (Albany, NY), 1995.

The Culture of Denial: Why the Environmental Movement Needs a Strategy for Reforming Universities and Public Schools

By C. A. Bowers

Published by State University of New York Press (Albany, NY), 1997.

Reviewed by Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr.

A respected colleague of mine—a professor in Reading and Language Arts—was recently in my study. On my desk was a copy of C. A. Bowers *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture.* He looked at the book and said, "With that title, it looks like they'll publish a book on almost anything."

His comment was ironic. C. A. Bowers is one of the most interesting and potentially important contemporary theorists in Education. His perspective, in this reviewer's opinion, is unique in the field and says much that is new and much that is profound. He is also largely ignored by many of the people who should find his work most useful.

In works like *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture* and *The Culture of Denial*, Bowers argues that ecological issues are largely ignored in most educational settings. According to Bowers, the tendency of schools to value scientific progress, the primacy of the self, and the mastery of Nature, represents a bias that undermines efforts to create a more sustainable culture.

My colleague's comment is indicative, according to Bowers, of the lack of understanding on the part of many academics of deeply important ecological issues. I would imagine that if Bowers had been in the study when the comment was made, he would have asked my colleague if the curriculum he taught encouraged people to embrace a destructive consumer life style—one that threatens the very existence of our planet. Bowers might challenge him about his uncritical acceptance of technologies like computers, or ask him to discuss how current curriculums de-emphasize the wisdom found within traditional and local communities.

My colleague, who is a well-meaning individual, would probably be confused and even hurt by what Bowers had to say. Bowers would consider his response as part of a "culture of denial." *(Denial*, pp. vii-viii) He might go on to explain to my colleague how "the ecological crisis forces us to confront" the problematic aspects of our culture, *(Educating*, p. 3) and how elementary and secondary schools and universities promote the "myth" that rationally based systems of science and technology will "always enable us to overcome the breakdowns and shortages connected with the natural world." (ibid., p. 3)

My colleague might defensively respond that science has proven its worth. Bowers might then argue that if the traditions of science and progress were

working so well, why was there a depletion in the ozone level, why is there global warming, and why aren't many of our society's core problems (poverty, violence and inequality) being more adequately addressed?

Bowers might talk about the idea—widely accepted in ecological circles—of creating an "ecologically sustainable culture." He might quote Aldo Leopold (whose 1949 *Sand Creek Almanac* is one of the classic books in the field of ecology) to the effect that "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." (ibid., p, 5)

Bowers might then explain that the public schools and universities—and in particular professional schools such as business and education—systematically present and reinforce models of culture that tend to threaten the integrity of the community. (ibid., p. 8)

At this point, my colleague would have probably lost his temper, but, being a gentle soul, he would have quietly excused himself from the discussion. When I met him a couple of days later at work, he would probably ask me, "Who was that character you had me talking to?" I would then try to explain to him why what Bowers said was so important. My colleague, because he likes me and trusts me, would patiently listen, but probably not take in much of what I was saying.

The fact remains that what Bowers would probably have said to him, and what he does say in the two books being reviewed, is profoundly important—and like many revolutionary ideas difficult to immediately understand, much less embrace. In *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture* and *The Culture of Denial*, Bowers challenges many of the fundamental assumptions of our educational system and culture. He sees technology—in formats such as the computer—as a highly value laden technology. Arguing that technology and its role in shaping our society is among the least understood aspects of contemporary culture, Bowers argues that "technology mediates human experience through its selection and amplification." (ibid., p. 79)

In both of these books, Bowers asks at the most fundamental level what it is that our schools teach? At the university level he argues that the values that

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are unconsciously promoted include: (1) the idea of the individual rather than the group being the basic social unit of the culture; (2) the organization of the natural world around strictly human needs and perspectives; (3) the idea of change being inherently positive and constructive; (4) that most traditions are irrelevant and actually inhibit progress; (5) that the world is secular in nature and that spirituality is largely a personal rather than a public matter; (6) that social development is understood in terms of economic and technical needs, rather than those of the community; (7) that machine-based systems, like computers, correspond closely to human and biological systems; (8) that technologies created by experts in one part of the world can be replicated and used anywhere on the globe; and (9) that science is the most powerful and legitimate means of explaining life and culture. (*The Culture of Denial*, pp. 7-8)

Bowers argues that other ways of knowing—ways, which have been important throughout human history—are increasingly devalued and ignored in the educational system and contemporary culture. These include: (1) mythopoetic or meta-narratives; (2) metaphorical language and thought processes; (3) a sense of time where the past and future represent sources of authority (What do I leave as a legacy to the next generation? What have I inherited that I need to pass on?); (4) a strong tradition of transgenerational communication; (5) a sense of community which incorporates conviviality and mutual aid; (6) technological designs that take into account the nature of the land and the local environment; and (7) an ideology that emphasizes the conservation of cultural values and beliefs that helps to sustain the environment. (ibid., pp. 4-5)

If I were to return to the example of my colleague and outline the cultural messages and models that Bowers believes our educational system ignores, I believe my colleague would listen and be impressed. I would also cite Aldo Leopold's notion—one that Bowers cites—that, all education is ultimately deeply ecological. Like Bowers in *The Culture of Desire*, I would talk to my colleague about how existing cultural maps—a concept drawn from the work of Gregory Bateson—are built into our models of education. (ibid., pp. 151-153) I would ask him to consider, as Bowers does, how terms like "wilderness" "private

property," "artificial intelligence," "information superhighways" and so on, represent "cultural maps" and ultimately, value-laden means of interpreting the world.

In all of this, several well-understood concepts in curriculum theory come to mind, including the hidden curriculum, and the null curriculum. These are not terms that are used by Bowers, but they are profoundly relevant to his arguments,

- What is the hidden curriculum of our schools, for example—the things we unconsciously teach while we emphasize the seemingly main subject?
- How does the null curriculum work as part of our educational system; that is, what we do teach about things by excluding certain topics?

In this context, for example, we look at the extreme emphasis at all levels of our educational system and culture on the success of the individual, rather than the group. Why do we value individual intelligence and achievement more than collective wisdom or shared intelligence? Why do we always assume that change is good? How are unconscious values such as these built into the very foundations of our educational system?

Taking all of this into account, Bowers argues for a new paradigm, essentially "An Ecological Reinterpretation of Modern Educational Ideals" (*Culture of Denial*, ch. 4, pp. 143-197). His intention is to propose an alternative model to those patterns that are currently reinforced in the educational system.
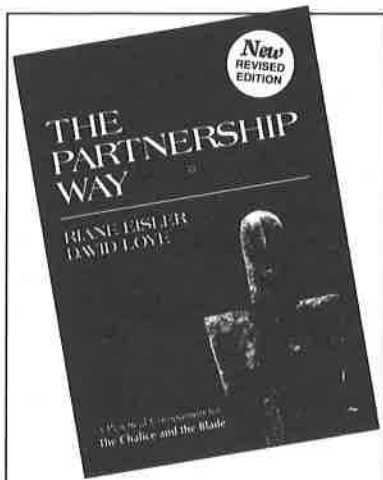
Bowers believes that the outside perspective provided by ecological theory can provide the means by which traditional educators can begin to view what they do in new ways. Bowers concludes *The Culture of Denial* by outlining a series of strategies for reforming the educational system. In the case of schools of education, and the training of elementary school teachers, he argues that the "emphasis on learning techniques" or methods that so dominates the field "needs to be subordinated to an understanding of how the curriculum reproduces past cultural ways of thinking" (ibid., p. 252).

In the case of teaching education students about computing, this type of approach would lead students to ask questions about how computers have changed traditional models of learning, whether or not they are a value-free technology, and what it

meant to be literate in a computer-mediated environment.

In essence, Bowers calls for a much more critical and reflective curriculum—one that carefully examines the assumptions of our culture and educational system, and the resources and models we value or ignore. In this context, Bowers ultimately makes an important contribution to the literature—one that should be given careful consideration by almost every person in the field.

Designing Schools as Learning Communities

Edward T. Clark, Jr.

In a learning community, the members of the school community as well as the community-at-large learn, change, and grow.

EDWARD T. CLARK, JR., specializes in integrated curriculum design and site-based educational change. He has been involved in teacher education for over 30 years—as Director of Teacher Education at Webster University, as Professor of Environmental Education at George Williams College, and as an independent educational consultant for the last fifteen years.

I am dubious as to how far we can move toward global community—which is the only way to achieve international peace—until we learn the basic principles of community in our own individual lives and personal spheres of influence. (Scott Peck 1987)

In response to what he calls the "rampant cult of individualism" that has swept America during the last 50 years and is rapidly "spreading like a cancer around the world," historian Christopher Lasch (1995) notes that "self-governing communities, not individuals (have been) the basic unit of democratic society." He points out that it has always been this local, self-governing community that furnished "the sources of social cohesion" which made life satisfying and meaningful for its members. Here people experienced the "shared assumptions ingrained in folkways, customs, prejudices, habits of the heart" that provided them with both an individual identity and a sense of belonging. In addition to its impact upon its members, the self-governing community promoted and sustained the common good by protecting both the people and their natural resources against outside exploitation. Because of the breakdown of this fundamental social unit, Lasch argues that "a public philosophy for the twenty-first century will have to give more weight to the community than to the right of private decision. It will have to emphasize responsibilities rather than rights."

Since the beginning of human experience, local communities—clans, tribes, villages—have always held a pivotal position as the mediator between the individual and the larger, impersonal outside world. Because political and economic forces outside the community have always tended to be exploitative, without the strength, support, and cohesion of a local community of people, their natural resources rapidly disappear while individuals simultaneously feel increasingly disempowered and disenfranchised.

Today, without the mediating role of a local, self-

governing community, the individual is cast adrift, alone in a vast sea of people, isolated from everyone else and dominated by powerful, anonymous forces such as big government and/or large corporations. As is increasingly evident in the political arena, when these two powerful forces combine their strength to mastermind the decisions that shape the lives of everyone in the society, individuals have little more than a token voice. Not only is the individual at the mercy of these impersonal economic and political forces, the natural resources that belong to us all—what ecologist Garrett Hardin calls "the commons"—the air, water, and land upon which all humans depend for survival, are increasingly exploited, often beyond any hope of recovery.

This would suggest, that of the eight global dilemmas identified earlier (*Holistic Education Review* 10[4] 71-76), the most pivotal and far reaching has been the breakdown of these local, self-governing communities. On the one hand, it has had disastrous consequences for whole societies that have taken the forms of genocide, abject poverty, and ecological devastation, to list but a few. On the other, the loss of supportive communities has resulted in a pervasive sense of helplessness in the face of these disasters on the part of ordinary citizens.

Nowhere is the emphasis on individualism at the expense of community more evident than in the way we educate our children. It should come as no surprise to find that

> The schools ... play a more powerful role in stressing an individual rather than a common vision.... Individual success and achievement are greatly emphasized.... We are taught mostly to learn to be alone, to compete, to achieve, to succeed.... It is not that the schools, like the culture, are not mindful of social identity, but they clearly put much more emphasis on our personal identity, especially as it relates to our obsession with personal success and achievement. (Purpel 1989)

Not only are we not surprised by the above description, but most adults would probably agree that this is the way it ought to be. I am certain that if asked, the majority of parents would strongly support the current emphasis on competitive achievement and individual success as preparation for the real world. In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary (Johnson et al. 1984; Kohn 1986), there is the implicit assumption throughout Western society that competition to promote individual achievement, whether in sports or in school, brings out the best in people. And so, in virtually every facet of the educational experience, children are encouraged to compete with each other—for

grades, for class ranking, and for special opportunities such as gifted and college preparatory programs. Two obvious consequences of this focus on competitive striving and individual accomplishment are (a) that while there are a few winners, the great majority of our children are losers, and (b) there is a loss of social cohesion derived from the shared goals and values of community.

As would be expected, this emphasis on the individual at the expense of community gets played out in the larger social arena. In a 1989 survey (Etzioni 1993) high school students were asked what was special about the United States. The two most frequent responses were "Individualism and the fact that it is a democracy and you can do whatever you want" and "We don't have any limits."

This leads me to suggest that the most fundamental social issue confronting Western culture in general and American culture in particular is learning to find a balance between *the rights and the good* of the individual and those of the society as a whole. At its root, this is a philosophical issue—perhaps *the pivotal* philosophical issue facing our nation and humankind today. From this point of view, a primary culprit is our propensity for either/or thinking. An inheritance of Cartesian dualism, this reductionist view of the world incorrectly assumes that the individual and the community represent opposite ends of a continuum of rights and power that exist in a constant win/lose struggle for dominance. The alternative way of visualizing reality, which I have called systems thinking, implicitly recognizes that the common good and the good of the individual are inextricably bound together so that the well-being of either is dependent upon the well-being of the other.

Once we have reconceptualized this dilemma, we will have moved a long way toward resolving the related problems. While I believe that many of us intuitively understand the nature of this apparent impasse, few have conceptualized it in a way that empowers them to change their way of thinking and acting. As sociologist Jane Jacobs (1992) points out, "many of us have taken on casts of mind so skewed toward one set of ... values that we have little understanding of the other, and little if any appreciation of its integrity too."

Cultural tradition to the contrary, it was not always this way. Recognizing that it does indeed take a village to raise a child, the indigenous model described by Tewe Pueblo educator Dr. Gregory Cajete (1994) stands in sharp contrast to the culturally dominant model described above.

> The ideal purpose of education is to attain knowledge, seek truth, wisdom, completeness, and life as perceived by traditional philoso-

phies and cultures around the world.... It embodies a quest for self, individual and community survival, and wholeness in the context of a community and natural environment... The living place, the learner's extended family, the clan and the tribe provided the context and the source for teaching. In this way every situation provided a potential opportunity for learning, and basic education was not separated from the natural, social, or spiritual aspects of everyday life. Living and learning were fully integrated ... (and) unfolded through mutual, reciprocal relationships between one's social group and the natural world. This relationship involved all dimensions of one's being, while providing both personal development and technical skills through *participation* in community life. It was essentially a communally integrated expression of environmental education.

Mitakuye Oyasin ("We are all related") is a Lakota phrase that captures an essence of Tribal education because it reflects the understanding that our lives are truly and profoundly connected to other people and the physical world.... Education is, at its essence, learning about life through participation and relationship in community including not only people, but plants, animals, and the whole of Nature. (Cajete 1994)

Since it is primarily the students' future that is at stake, if they are to ever achieve global community, it seems appropriate that schools become the training ground where students learn to work cooperatively in "learning communities." Here they can experience and acquire the insight, knowledge, and skills necessary to ensure both individual and community survival and wholeness. As the research has made amply clear, cooperative or collaborative learning does not mitigate individual initiative, worth, and achievement but rather provides a context where these necessary qualities are enhanced. But it is more. In a learning community not only do individuals learn survival and wholeness, but the community learns survival and wholeness as well.

The Ecology of Learning Communities

Learning communities don't just happen. Although the insight, knowledge, and skills for cooperative behavior are intuitive, because of our cultural programming to the contrary, learning communities must be carefully designed and deliberately nurtured. The ecological community is a natural and readily accessible model for a learning community. A pond community, a

forest community, a prairie community—indeed, all communities in nature—are, at a fundamental level, learning communities in which individuals, species, and the community as a whole, learn, change, and grow. These communities share a set of essential properties characterized by the ecological principles identified in Chapter Six (*Encounter* 11[4] 66-78): interdependence, diversity, partnership, and co-evolution. Since I discussed these at some length earlier, here I will generalize on them by reflecting on the ecological features of a learning community as they apply to a classroom, a school, or a neighborhood.

- *In a learning community, the curriculum is "Life in all of its manifestations."* The essence of education is learning about life through participation and relationship in community including not only people, but plants, animals, and the whole of nature. Thus, the primary resources are the lives, the experiences, relationships, questions, and concerns of the learners themselves.

- *A learning community provides supportive, sensitive, valuing, responsive, accepting learning environments that enhance self-worth, creative intellectual endeavor, and responsible behavior.* Here one's contribution depends on what one brings to the experience and no one's personal worth is at stake. *Ownership, responsibility, and accountability are assumed to be synonymous with membership in the community.*

- *A learning community is designed to reflect the interests and capabilities of the learner/students.* Because it is relevant to the interest and abilities of its members, the individual has as much power over her learning environment as she is capable of handling. Students are encouraged to learn on their own initiative and in as many diverse ways as possible.

- *A learning community is cooperative and synergistic.* Here everyone is both a learner and a resource for everyone else. The outcomes are designed to challenge the intuition, imagination, knowledge, and skills of the members, including the instructor. Peer learning is heightened, and everyone recognizes that in many situations, two or more heads are truly better than one.

- *A learning community extends beyond the walls of the classroom.* Because the curriculum reflects all the life experiences of the student, the community of learners is expanded to include other peers, administrators, support staff, parents, and members of the broader community.

- *In a learning community, learning is participative so that feelings and intellect are fully involved in every*

facet of the learning process. Learning is always experiential and relevant in ways that ensure the learner of participation in the decisions that shape her or his learning. In this way, both intuitive and cognitive processes and knowledge are honored, and learning experiences are designed to reflect the multidimensional and multisensory nature of intelligence, thinking, and learning.

- *A learning community is characterized by both consistency and responsiveness.* Because the environment can be depended on, there is little or no anxiety and fear. When the learning environment is reactive, malleable, and responsive, students can actively participate in creating and shaping their learning experience.

- *A learning community provides regular, consistent, and appropriate assessment through a variety of feedback loops.* The primary purpose of assessment is to provide qualitative feedback vis-à-vis progress toward clearly defined learning objectives in ways that tap the wellsprings of creative possibility inherent in each member of the community. Such assessment is nonjudgmental and noncompetitive.

- *A learning community is energized by a shared purpose, vision, or mission.* A purpose held in common can turn a random assortment of individual students who happen to be assigned to the same classroom into a genuine learning community. Shared visions are seldom imposed from above, e.g., by a teacher, but must emerge from the goals, aspirations, and dreams of the members themselves. A shared sense of purpose can create an alignment of energy that is empowering and energizing for everyone. In such cases, individual performance is often enhanced beyond predictable expectations.

Carole Cooper and Julie Boyd (1994), co-directors of Global Learning Communities, note that a collaborative learning community is

> a philosophy as well as a place; it is a way of being as well as a working model. It is a mindset as well as a map…. The foundation … is *collaboration working together for common goals, partnership, shared leadership, co-evolving and co-learning—rather than competition and power given to only a few.*

They remind us that "the focus of the collaborative learning community is *learning* … [which] takes place within the context of *community.*" This is in contrast to the traditional classroom where the focus is on teaching, e.g., covering the content, and where students sit in quiet isolation presumably absorbing what is presented

and taking written tests to prove it. In a classroom that has become a collaborative learning community, (1) students take responsibility for their own learning; (2) learning experiences are geared to students' interests and needs; (3) students are actively engaged in learning in a variety of groups and contexts; and (4) learning is understood, applied, demonstrated, and internalized (Cooper and Boyd, 1994). These characteristics are, of course, the very ones that I have been promoting throughout this book. They are ecological in nature and humanistic in principle. To embrace them requires a different set of assumptions about human nature and the fundamental relationships that shape our lives. To put it simply, they are the essence of a new and comprehensive paradigm.

Learning communities don't just happen. They reflect core values that are essentially the values of the community. The Center for the Study of Community in Santa Fe suggests some basic values that characterize creative, healthy learning communities (Cooper and Boyd 1994):

> Sense of shared values; agreement on core values; participation; communication; commitment; conscious choice; shared responsibility; equity; openness; respect for differences; acceptance; trust; collaboration; reciprocity; accountability; efficacy; perceived skill; and cohesion.

Imagine the difference it would make if every school in America were designed to reflect these values? The great irony is that we already have a model for learning communities that reflect all of these characteristics— the modern preschool or kindergarten. Visit a nearby kindergarten and note the ambiance: bright colors, lots of light from large windows, plenty of space, small unobtrusive learning centers designed for one or two students, small tables, bookcases and books, a warm carpet, and lots of pillows. There are also lots of toys: puzzles, pattern blocks, Cuisenaire rods, magnets, crayons, paints, paper, scissors. There may even be a couple of computers with fun games and creative tools for drawing, painting, and lettering. In some rooms you will find ladders for climbing and tunnels for crawling or hiding. There is a low murmur of conversation with other children and with the teacher who is unobtrusively moving around among the children. While a voice may occasionally be raised in excitement, in general the talk is "library talk" because the children are intensely involved in whatever they are doing. Look at their faces. They are alive and intent with concentration as they lie on the floor, lean across the table, or sit quietly in the corner with a book. In short, they are engrossed in whatever they are doing. Are they learning? Of course! Are they enjoying the experience? Of

course. Are they a learning community? Of course.

After you've spent an hour in the kindergarten room, move on to the fourth or fifth grade classroom and spend an equal amount of time quietly sitting in the corner. Chances are that the children are sitting in rows either listening to the teacher or doing seat work. Either way, there is no talking. If there is a question, it's for clarification: "Do we have to write in complete sentences?" "Does punctuation count?" Any other verbal exchange is in answer to a teacher's question. In these cases, note which students answer the teacher's questions. Watch their faces. Then look at the faces of the other students. Note the difference between the faces of these children and those in kindergarten. In general, these faces are blank, the kids are passive and, except for an occasional wiggle or squirm, the kids are perfectly still. Count the number of kids who are daydreaming. How many are just plain bored? The teacher sits at a desk or walks up and down the aisle looking over the shoulders at the seat work, occasionally pointing out a mistake, a messy paper, or a misspelled word. Does the teacher look happy? How often does she smile? How often does she frown? If you want to know what's wrong with education today, figure out why there is such a difference between what's happening in kindergarten and what's happening—or not happening—in the fourth, or eighth, or tenth grade classroom. It's as simple—and as complex—as that!
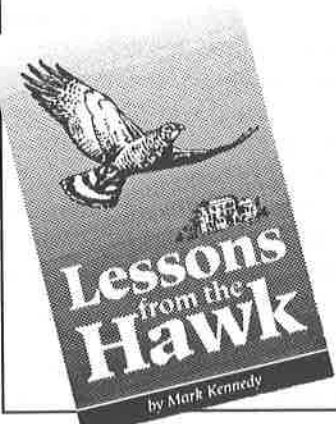
By now it should be obvious that a "learning community" is not the same as a "community of learners." While educators may use the term "community" as a euphemism to describe the arbitrary assortment of individuals in a typical classroom or school, proximity doesn't automatically create community. And while the inclusion of cooperative learning activities may turn a classroom of individuals into a community of individual learners, it does not necessarily mean that they have become a learning community. As long as the emphasis in the classroom is *on the individual at the expense of community*, it can never be more than a collection of individ-

ual learners who may share some community-like experiences. In short, in a learning community, not only do the individuals who make up the community learn, change, and grow, but the community as a whole also learns, changes, and grows. As a result of the cooperative synergism of its members, the learning community thrives and moves in new directions with capacities that would be impossible without the common goals and shared leadership of its members. As the community changes and grows, the members of the community benefit in innumerable and often exciting ways.

The Classroom as a Learning Community

It is obvious that the ambience of a classroom as learning community is radically different from that of a traditional, individual-based classroom. For the past several years, teachers at Thompson Middle School (St. Charles, IL) have been encouraged to organize and conduct their classrooms and teams as collaborative learning communities. It is obvious to even the casual observer that the ambiance of these classrooms is radically different from that of a traditional, individual-based classroom. Special Education teacher Jan Sutfin reflects on the difference:

> I, along with my special students, have experienced something very unique and enlightening. We have experienced inclusion into an integrated curriculum environment. It is an environment designed for learning at its deepest, most connected level. It is a place where learning opportunities abound and positive attitudes can't help but flourish. Sound like an unattainable ideal? Yes it does. But walk into a classroom where students are enthusiastically leaning in toward the center of their cooperative group sharing ideas, coming to consensus, and developing a plan; where there is an understanding that they are connected in powerful, wonder-filled ways by their unique talents, and you become a believer. Students with short attention spans get pulled into the action. Students who have difficulty expressing themselves begin to do so. Students who have difficulty writing have the confidence to record information for their group. A miracle is not occurring! However, something awesome is. People who have carried labels all their school lives suddenly don't have them any more. They too have something special to offer in this academic learning community. What they learn and how they learn it has relevance to them. Connections have been made that cause students to say, "I get it."

How does this environment develop? In this case, the "how" is attributed not to the teacher alone, but to the entire classroom community. After all, we are all connected; one cannot do it without the other.

This illustration reflects many of the ecological characteristics that characterize learning communities. Note, for example, how *interdependence* is expressed. It is obvious that the students understand implicitly that *the success of each individual member depends on the success of the team/community as a whole, while at the same time the success of the team/community depends on the success of each member*. They know that it is in everyone's best interest to see that everyone else succeeds. This is possible because in these teams everyone learns from everyone else. Rather than achieving a level of learning based on the lowest common denominator as often happens in other classrooms, the synergy of the team often quickens the insight, knowledge, and skills of even the brightest student and raises the level of learning to new heights for everyone. For example, special education teacher Jean Humke found that, given an appropriate environment, so-called youth-at-risk can survive.

> I have seen the LD/BD students thrive in the integrated, cooperatively taught classroom. William was a bright boy with good auditory and mechanical reasoning skills, who could not read a traditional science textbook. In lab and group project work he became the leader. Someone else did the reading and the recording, and William took over the hands-on part. His motivation improved and negative classroom behaviors disappeared.

After the experience of having Jean's students integrated into her eighth grade science class, Bonnie Pettebone wrote,

> The surprise was seeing that the regular children also benefited from having the "specials" in the classroom. Although Jean kept an eye on her special students, she worked with the entire class. This was especially helpful for the lower ability students who didn't qualify for special education services. When special ed students were part of a group project, other "regular" students often came to the study hall where Jean gave her special ed students extra help. The room that was once the "LD room"—an embarrassment to the students assigned there—became just another classroom. Soon, regular students were asking if they could come all the time.

A second essential in a learning community is *diversity*. Although tracking students by ability level or long-term goal, e.g., gifted, or college bound, has a long history in schools, research makes it clear that diversity both in age and ability results in more stimulating and productive learning environments than are possible with homogeneous groupings. While cooperative learning provides a unique opportunity for mixed ability groups, many teachers who have had only a cursory introduction to cooperative learning still operate on the assumption that if good and poor students are in the same teams, the former will do all the work while the latter share in the success. At Thompson, however, it has been demonstrated over and again that this is not the case. When teams of students are free to explore their own questions in ways that they determine, each member learns to share in both the responsibilities and the benefits of team learning. Ownership of one's own learning is, after all, the most successful motivation possible. In addition, students are the best teachers and soon those who initially tend to be lazy learn to participate more fully. As noted in the last chapter (*Encounter* 12[3] 61-72), one sixth grade team at Thompson reports that since students began to define their focus of study, only 3 of 125 students were chronically choosing to do poor work— far fewer than in previous years.

In his year-end summary report to the teachers based on the meetings he had had with the various teams, Kurt Anderson reflects on some of things they, as a community, have learned.

> We are beginning to learn that there is no "right way." That's the exciting and frustrating part about it! Our commitment is to create and discover experiences that will be best for kids. As long as we have that goal and leverage what we learn from each other, we will reach the vision of "integrative learning" — whatever that is. I think we know it when we see it, but we can't get it into words just yet!

As has already been noted, as a result of Thompson's inclusion program, special education students are now full participants in regular science and social studies classes at all levels. And they are not merely tolerated by other students. Last year an eighth grade "Learning Disabled" girl received the quarterly "team choice" award by her academic team based on her level of team participation. This was the first time an LD student had been selected for this award. In her end-of-the-year "A Celebration of Learning" report, seventh grade team leader Joanna Martin wrote, "The team has openly accepted special ed teacher and kids—something which couldn't have happened four years ago. The growth has been phenomenal. To watch a special ed child who

we didn't think had any growth last year actively involved in dissecting a shark and anxious to get to a frog, has been most gratifying." Team leader Bonnie Pettebone noted that one of her special ed boys "walked in as a six-footer with four feet of confidence. Now he is confident and leading—because the process is the emphasis, not the final test." In the words of another teacher, "Instead of being considered outsiders, special ed students are often defended by regular students in the same way they defend their closest friends."

Another characteristic of learning communities experienced at Thompson is the countless forms of *partnership* strategies. These strategies reflect both cooperation and competition and involve students, teachers, teams, and the school as a whole. As a result of the new focus on cooperation, these groups *coevolve* through an interplay of creativity and mutual adaptation. For example, teams have been challenged by the opportunity to present their final product, e.g., a Medieval Fair, to the entire student body. On the other hand, the healthy but often subtle competition has stimulated some genuine risk-taking on the part of more reluctant student teams and teacher teams—a kind of "If they can do it, so can I" response.

The learning communities at Thompson are energized by the *free flow of information,* and the built-in *feedback loops* have been increasingly effective because of the cooperative groupings. Almost without exception, teachers consider the primary purpose of assessment to be feedback to students and have created a variety of assessment rubrics designed to accomplish this. Although teachers are still required to give grades, instead of being stuck with a final grade, students are encouraged to redo for improvement—a process that truly enhances the learning. Teachers who still give quizzes and tests find that having students "take quizzes until you get it right—along with reminder hints during the quizzes—has really promoted the learning." In some classes, anything below a B is a "do-over." For one team, math assessment is now displayed through portfolios, not homework and tests. Finally, "they are not the same kids at the end of the year. Because of 'do and redo,' grades are higher and more kids have learned more things better." This year teams will be given the option of including with the grade narrative reports from teachers. Donna's seventh grade team has decided that each grade they give will be accompanied by a brief account of the student's experience and progress in that subject.

Feedback works both ways. One seventh grade teacher noted,

> The kids have directed things a lot. When they see that we have listened to them and used the

feedback they gave us—when they notice you have changed based on what they have said, they have great ideas and suggestions.

Sustainability in learning communities requires both different and a greater variety of resources than those usually found in the traditional school. Most schools are still more like "ecological monocultures," e.g., a cornfield, than ecological communities, e.g., a prairie. Just as prairies or forests require a greater variety of resources than a cornfield, so it is with schools that are becoming learning communities. As Resource Center Director Chris Sherman notes, this is occurring at Thompson.

> Kids ... are exploring subjects for which relatively few materials have been available. *The result is that different kinds of resources are being ordered to meet the needs of both teachers and students.* (emphasis added).

I think the following insight, shared by Eva Pierrakos, co-founder of the Pathways Community in upstate New York, captures the essence of the ecology of learning communities.

> The group consciousness does not level off uniqueness, but furthers it. The group is no longer used as a crutch because the self cannot handle life. Nor is the group an authority that one needs to rebel against.... The highest organization of group consciousness is that within which each individual has found ... autonomy. (Davidson and Davidson 1994)

Such a classroom is not an accidental happenstance, the result, say, of one of those truly outstanding classes that appear on rare occasions. Although the cooperative characteristics are intuitive, the classroom environment must be thoughtfully and carefully designed. Teachers must not only understand, but must experience for themselves what it means to belong to a learning community. Recognizing this need for an experiential introduction to cooperative learning, for the past three years the St. Charles schools have provided a series of week-long workshops and in-class training sessions in cooperative learning with Carole Cooper. Although attendance at these has been voluntary, most teachers have attended at least one such workshop. Many have participated in two or more and several teachers have become skilled trainers in their own right so that the district can now offer its own in-service training programs. As a result, the entire faculty of Thompson has become experientially grounded in both the philosophy and methodologies of cooperative, or what Carole Cooper prefers to call collaborative, learning.

When I first went to Thompson, I found it taken for granted that for most studies, students would be divided through a variety of combinations into learning groups or teams of four. These teams were characterized by the four elements common to cooperative learning classes—positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction among students, individual accountability for mastery, and interpersonal and small group skills (Johnson et al. 1984). The following report by eighth grade teacher Barb Gudvangen, reflects the general ambience of Thompson. Due to illness, Barb was two months late in starting school. She records her experience.

> I was amazed at how well the cooperative groups were functioning. At first I thought I would have to work at gaining control of the classes. But I found control to be no problem at all. I attributed this to three factors. One was the excellent work the other team members had already done with these students. A second factor was heterogeneous grouping. The third factor was the work done earlier by the sixth and seventh grade teachers who had been trained in cooperative learning.

During my first curriculum workshop, it was clear from the ease with which the teachers worked together that there was a level of cooperation among workshop participants that I had not found in other schools. In the succeeding months, I realized that the training in cooperative learning had prepared the rich and fertile soil within which creative and innovative strategies, such as the integrated curriculum, process writing, whole language, authentic evaluation, and outcome-oriented learning, have found root and are flourishing. Without the plowing and tilling generated by the philosophy and experiential methodologies of cooperative learning, the hard ground, though extremely fertile, is often so inhospitable that only the occasional seed can grow.

Principal Kurt Anderson was reminded of the importance of such preparation when he recently visited another district to introduce them to what was taking place at Thompson. On several occasions, he asked his audience of teachers and administrators to form teams for the purpose of discussion. He was amazed at the level of resistance and their reluctance to work together or to discuss anything of substance. In contrast, on almost any occasion if one walks into the teachers' lounge at Thompson, one can hear substantive conversations about what's happening in the classrooms—even including the failures. It is not unusual to hear excited voices describing classroom experiences that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier.

As a consequence of this training in cooperative learning, while there is still resistance to substantive changes on the part of some teachers, many of the interdisciplinary, grade-level teams at Thompson have become genuine collaborative learning communities. Even those teams that have resisted changes in the orientation of the curriculum are, to a significant extent, applying cooperative learning strategies in their classrooms. From the perspective of an outside observer, it is clear that the levels of energy, enthusiasm, synergy, creativity, and, not so incidently, laughter are very high. One has only to walk through the halls and look into the classrooms to know that Thompson is different from most other schools.

Ruth Ann Dunton describes her team's experience:

> I realized that it was through "systems" and the functions therein that the fundamental concepts are inherent. If students understand what a system is and how it works, they are able to understand and apply concepts such as diversity, interdependence, sustainability, change, etc., naturally. So, we introduced students to systems and have been using [the systems] matrix in many ways. Together, we—teachers and students, teachers and teachers, students and students—are doing some serious thinking. All of us on the team have been experimenting with the systems models in different ways. We feel that we have reached a new level of thinking, but that we are truly just beginning to explore the possibilities. We are impressed with the ideas the children have. At the same time we realize that we need to continue to work together as a team—always pushing ourselves to a higher level. Only in this way can we better facilitate in our classrooms. We are not always sure of ourselves. Sometimes we become exhausted from thinking, but it's that good kind of exhausted when you're exhilarated at the same time. We feed on each other's ideas and need more time to explore our thoughts. We feel we are the students in a student-centered situation. Truly, we as a team find ourselves in a "learning community" situation which is what I have been hoping for all along. Hurrah!

The School as a Learning Community

As we have discovered at Thompson, when classrooms become genuine learning communities, the school itself is in the process of becoming a learning community. One model for the school as a learning community is the learning organization. Based on the work of Peter Senge (1990) and other corporate consultants, the learning organization provides an effective

and practical prototype for organizational transformation from within. According to Senge, the learning organization is one

> where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn…. The organization that will truly excel in the future will be the organization that discovers how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels in an organization.

One of the characteristics of the learning organization is that the *customer* is recognized as integral to the organization. For example, there are many parallels between the failure of Ford and General Motors and Honda's success in the 1970s and the failure of public schools during the last 20 years. In much the same way that Ford and GM believed they knew best what people wanted/needed—namely what Ford and GM wanted to produce, e.g., big cars—so educators believe that they know best what students want/need—namely what educators want to teach. On the other hand, Honda was a genuine learning organization that listened to their customers and responded by designing the kinds of cars they wanted. When a school becomes a learning community, its entire focus is designed to respond to the learners' needs. In short, the entire school is truly learner-centered. This focus on the customer has been one of the lessons that teachers and administrators at St. Charles learned from a series of Total Quality Management (TQM) seminars conducted by Arthur Andersen & Co. Kurt Anderson comments on this influence.

> Our training in Total Quality Management helped us recognize the need for our work to be "customer-driven," "consumer-focused." For our immediate concerns, the students and their parents are our customers. Education is unique in that the primary customer is also the primary worker in the system. Suffice it to say that the student should come first in all our thinking. Now this philosophy permeates all our thinking — from scheduling, to delivery of instruction, from extracurricular opportunities to bussing.
>
> On the other hand, we are also recognizing that teachers are also customers — that is, we are all learners.

Kurt is quick to point out that Thompson's mission statement is the only one he has ever seen that mentions adults. It begins with the words, "Thompson Middle School is committed to nurturing and involving students and adults…. " Reflecting on this inclusion, Kurt commented:

> The first and foremost goal of staff development is to help teachers become healthy individuals. If we are healthy people inside this building, we will have healthy kids. If we aren't healthy ourselves, it doesn't matter what kind of curriculum or teaching strategies we have because only healthy individuals can allow and help kids make healthy choices.

It must be emphasized once again, however, that the fundamental issue here is not content versus no content, nor is it adults' content versus students' content. The issue revolves around the real-life needs of the consumers of educational expertise.

However, schools are unique organizations in that their students are not the only customers whose needs must be addressed. Parents are also customers and, indirectly, so is the larger community that the school serves. Thus, when we talk about the school as a learning community, we must include parents and others of the larger community among its members. In short, even as the one-room school of yesteryear often served as the hub of community activities, so this function is, I believe, implicit in the concept of schools in a democratic society. If schools are to become learning communities in which *all of its members* are, to some degree, learners, then the walls of the school must become permeable and true centers of learning for the entire community. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as evening classes and other activities that address adult needs.

One elementary school with which I worked several years ago provides an outstanding illustration of how the school can become a vehicle for creating community both within and beyond its four walls. Asa Messer Elementary School in Providence, Rhode Island, was a pilot school for Ecoliteracy, an ecologically based educational program that Fritjof Capra, Carole Cooper, and I designed as a model for restructuring education. Substantively, Ecoliteracy is modeled on and incorporates the philosophy and strategies presented in this book. During the course of a year, Carole Cooper and I conducted a series of workshops for the Asa Messer teachers. An inner-city neighborhood school, Asa Messer draws its students from a widely diverse ethnic and cultural milieu—more than 40 languages are spoken by the 92% minority families of its students. All school-family communications are printed in three languages, English, Cambodian, and Spanish.

The Providence Public Schools, like any large urban school district, suffers from the complex problems inherent in any bureaucracy. Giving lip service to school-based change is far easier than supporting it. Our Ecoliteracy team soon realized that the staff at Asa Messer were highly skeptical of and resistant to any new ideas—particularly when these ideas were introduced by what they interpreted to be administrative fiat. The protection of turf was endemic and resistance to any form of change was palpable. They had been burned so often and were wary of anything different. There were times when we became convinced that the only thing the teachers agreed on was a shared lack of trust in anything new or different. And yet, beneath their skepticism, we found that the teachers were deeply concerned; they did care for their children, often going out of their way to work with those who were having problems. In the words of Principal Jerry Landies, "We have to be mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, policemen, doctors, lawyers—and fit that all into the school day, as well as curriculum. So for some teachers, [Ecoliteracy] was just another thing they were being asked to do" (Cleland 1994). Dedicated to his work and desperately overloaded with the administrative trivia common to large bureaucracies, Jerry gave us complete cooperation and support within the limits of bureaucratic constraints.

During the summer preceding our involvement with Asa Messer, I had become acquainted with a unique program being conducted in rural Vermont called Food Works. Helping students and parents work cooperatively to design and build vegetable gardens that became "curriculum organizers," this program assisted schools in designing integrated curriculums based on ecological and cultural concepts that were indigenous to the area. As we began to realize that the Asa Messer teachers needed some kind of practical, hands-on program that enabled them and their students to actually experience the ecological principles we had introduced, I recommended that the teachers consider some kind of garden project similar to Food Works. Shortly thereafter, due to lack of funding and bureaucratic turf battles, Carole and I discontinued our personal association with the program. However, the idea gained support and, using local resources, the garden project began to evolve. The following report was written a year later by principal Jerry Landies.

> To get the ball rolling, students and teachers built garden boxes with the help of community members. Teachers then began to formulate math lessons based on the planting of seeds and drew from farming folk tales and garden fables for their reading lessons. Weaving the educa-

tional requirements into the larger framework of Ecoliteracy began to make sense…. The more the teachers began to do these projects, the more they realized … you don't do Ecoliteracy on Monday morning from 9:00 to 11:00 and do math from 11:00 to 12:00 and do English the rest of the day. You can combine it all; it's all one philosophy.

With the help of parents, volunteers, teachers, school administrators and local politicians, Asa Messer's 625 students enthusiastically undertook a hugely successful neighborhood cleanup near the end of the school year. The effort drew support from community members and businesses and brought the school neighborhood together. These was especially significant because the majority of Asa Messer students are from Cambodia, where reverent parents normally stay away from involvement with their children's school…. Many of the Cambodians maintain small garden plots in their own crowded Providence neighborhoods and bring several millennia of native wisdom about the land—resources that will add immeasurably to the school's gardening and cultural awareness efforts.

Landies concluded,

> We developed some good will through the clean-up day…. Just the feedback alone was tremendous. It gave the kids themselves a sense of *being*, that they had actually made a contribution that people appreciated…. We started out by learning the principles of ecology, but hearing them and really believing them are not necessarily the same thing…. [Ecoliteracy] is something that you have to experience.

National Education Association President Keith Geiger (1995) has recognized this important function of the school in the community.

> The breakdown of community underlies much of what afflicts America today—drugs and despair, complacency and indifference, discrimination and bigotry, violence and rancor. We cannot return to the one-room schoolhouses that communities literally build with their bare hands. But we can begin to reinvigorate our communities by making our public schools truly community schools—ones in which everyone has ownership…. In the community public schools, citizens, parents, teachers, support personnel, principals, and businesspeople

pull together to make a uniquely American institution work.... We return to the idea of the community public school not because it is old, but because it is true. When schools are the center of the community, as Thomas Jefferson envisioned, we have better schools and better communities.

"Make A Difference Day" was a step in the direction of involving the Thompson school community more directly in the larger community. Although individual classes had, from time to time, taken on community-oriented projects, this was the first time the entire school had participated. Since the day was an early release day with classes ending at noon, it was decided that teachers and students would spend the entire morning implementing the projects that their teams had chosen. Team projects included making sack lunches for a local homeless shelter, packed in individually decorated brown bags; conducting a river cleanup on the Fox River, which runs through the middle of St. Charles; helping with a local prairie restoration project, e.g., collecting seeds; undertaking school grounds clean-up; having a clothing drive; making and presenting paper-flower corsages with individual notes to residents of a local nursing home; conducting a community-based food drive for the township Food Pantry; and making and distributing handcrafts and individualized letters to members of a local retirement center. The enthusiasm and excitment permeated the entire building. A district administrator who happened to be visiting the school that day described the ambience as magical.

Designing Schools as Learning Communities

Economist David Korten (1995) echos the central theme of this chapter when he notes,

> Healthy societies depend on healthy, empowered local communities that build caring relationships among people and help us connect to a particular piece of the living Earth with which our lives are intertwined. Such societies must be built through local-level action, household by household and community by community.

Korten might have added, "school by school." I believe that schools are the most obvious places to begin re-creating community—first in the classrooms, and simultaneously within the school itself among the teachers, staff, and students. But, as happened at Asa Messer, the community that is centered in the school can be expanded to incorporate the broader neighborhood of parents, neighbors, friends, and businesspeople. Only in this way can parents once again reclaim their right to educate their children in schools that reflect and honor their values, beliefs, and standards.

For this to happen, schools must once again become community-based and neighborhood-oriented. This means that in the future, schools must be smaller rather than larger and may well be racially, ethnically, and culturally homogeneous. While this seemingly contradicts the ecological principle of diversity as well as the goals of cultural diversity espoused by many Americans, I suggest that it may actually be more ecological than our present legal interpretation of diversity and more educationally beneficial than many of our marginally integrated schools. It is significant, I think, that at the very time when schools and communities need neighborhood schools as a community focal point, the Supreme Court has eased the federal regulations that forced large metropolitan school districts to desegregate their schools by bussing. While I initially supported bussing as a necessary way to integrate and equalize educational opportunity, I think the time has now come when the need to re-create sustainable neighborhoods and communities is greater than the need to integrate every school. When separation is by choice and financial resources are distributed equitably, everyone—children, families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities—will benefit from neighborhood schools.

This means that large public school districts must eventually decentralize into several smaller districts, while these districts must decentralize to the extent that substantive control and direction is provided by the community which is served by the school. In this way, neighborhood schools need not stand alone but can be linked within districts whose primary function is to provide a variety of support services but without the large bureaucratic systems that traditionally have accompanied such services. This is possible if the districts are designed from the bottom up so that the primary decisions, including allocation of monies, will always be made in the school by those whose lives are affected by the decisions. As NEA President Keith Geiger (1995) notes,

> The community public school is the opposite of the factory-style, remote controlled school.... In the community public school, citizens, parents, teachers, support personnel, principals, and businesspeople pull together to make a uniquely American institution work.

In this way, the function of school districts changes radically. No longer in control, districts can serve as resources, encouraging networking among schools and providing services at the request of the community schools. This will, of course, require that principals once again become educational leaders rather than

building managers, a role that, unfortunately, many prefer. It will also require that local citizens learn the self-governing skills necessary for participative, nonauthoritarian leadership. For those who say this is an impossible task, I would remind them that, as Paul Hawken suggests, it is simply a matter of design.

In fact, this model is already being implemented. Geiger cites the example in Seattle, where administrators, parents, and citizens worked cooperatively to trim the system's central bureaucracy by 40%. By eliminating all layers of management between the superintendent and the principals, they saved millions of dollars that they promptly reinvested in the schools.

There are several advantages to the small neighborhood school, most of which are obvious. The neighborhood provides a "sense of place"—a concept that is fundamental to indigenous educational practice but which is almost totally foreign to current American education where the same textbook content is being studied in a dozen different states and thousands of different schools. A sense of place includes an already established community and the opportunity for active parental involvement and local control. It includes, where appropriate, the school being available as a year-round community/social/learning center for learners of all ages. Another advantage that seems to be increasingly important is that neighborhood schools can become centers of cultural, ethnic, or racial identity and pride. Though a given neighborhood may lack a broad diversity of social groups that for some may seem to be important, there is a wonderful opportunity for schools to proudly reflect the mores, values, and standards of the local community as they did a century ago. If the parents in one neighborhood prefer to have sex education while the parents in another prefer not to, each can be governed according to parental desires. A school can include locally important ethnic or racial programs, e.g., Black Studies, Cambodian Studies, etc., without every school in the district having to adopt the same curriculum. There is still diversity but it is now at a different level—a diversity of schools within a single district. When a district is structured in this way, students can, through a voucher system, be given the freedom to switch to another school within the same district.

Along with this freedom of choice comes a new level of accountability—schools that are constantly losing students to other schools are obviously not meeting the needs of their constituencies and will, of necessity, be forced to change or close.

There are two perceived disadvantages to such homogeneity and both are related to finances. The first is that the local community may not have an adequate tax base. Once again, it depends upon how the system is designed. An areawide, citywide, or statewide program designed to level the financial support for schools would solve this problem and insure that separate can be equal, if the separation is by choice and not by manipulation or law. The more serious perceived disadvantage is that large buildings can have better facilities than smaller ones—facilities such as gyms, lunchrooms, resource centers, and science and computer labs. I would argue that while such amenities are nice, they are neither necessary nor important enough to offset the advantages of small, neighborhood-based schools—particularly at the elementary level. However, I'm not convinced this is an either/or issue. Once schools become community centers where everyone in the community can participate in a variety of continuing education programs, schools will be open all the time, and will, therefore, be more likely to engender the financial support necessary to meet the needs not only of children but of the entire community.

Another feature of the traditional, one-room school-as-community that is slowly regaining acceptance is the multi-level classroom. We now know that kids learn a great deal from their peers and that students-teaching-students is one of the best ways to learn—for both the one teaching and the one being taught. It is ridiculous to assume that because a student is 12 years old, she or he automatically is ready for sixth grade-level work in all the subject areas. For those who believe in the *school as factory* model—where everything, including classrooms, must be organized into neat, discrete categories that follow some preset criteria—proposals such as multilevel classes will be considered a throwback to preindustrial times. However, for those who understand human developmental processes and who appreciate the informal ways that people learn and that communities function, multi-level classrooms will seem like an idea whose time has come—or, more accurately, has come again.

Another feature of the *school-as-community* that Kurt Anderson is implementing involves students in the care and upkeep of the school building and grounds. As a result of an experience last year when two students who were conducting an ecological audit of the school's utilization of natural resources recommended changes that were, in the long run, highly cost effective, Kurt requested and recently received administrative approval to have students perform much of the routine custodial work previously performed by two custodians. The money that was saved went into curricular resources requested by the teachers and resource center director. There is nothing better than participation in care to create a sense of ownership and a sense of place for students who spend so much of their day in school.

The High School as a Learning Community

While most parents today expect preschool to be a fun experience for children and some may even agree that elementary and middle schools should be enjoyable, satisfying experiences, influenced as they are by their own educational experience, few would be comfortable if classrooms for 16-year-olds resembled kindergarten. Communities are willing to build elaborate labs and expensive recreational facilities for their high schools, but when it comes to classrooms, the only acceptable design is the factory model with its inflexible structure, its production-line mentality, and the inevitable memorize-and-recall mode of learning. If, however, we accept the assumption that the best curriculum at any level is student-centered, then we must begin to rethink the role and function of the American high school. As Roberts and Cawelti (1984) note, there is no clear consensus on what the central mission of the high school should be.

> Critics have long lamented the fact that high schools have tried to do far more than they could reasonably expect to accomplish and as a result have diluted the academic program.

In earlier chapters I have suggested that to adequately prepare students for life in the twenty-first century, e.g., learning how to learn, the fundamental purpose and role of the education must be transformed. This transformation must include the high school as well as lower grades. However, until we recognize the discrepancies that exist between the knowledge and skills for learning how to learn and the so-called world class standards that currently dominate high school outcomes, nothing substantive will change. These discrepancies highlight the constraints that must be addressed before substantive change can take place at this level.

For example, much of today's high school curriculum is based on the outdated assumption that once children achieve the capacity for abstract thinking and reasoning—Piaget's "formal operations"—learning no longer needs to be concrete or relevant. Nothing could be further from the truth. Regardless of age, true learning must always be relevant to the life experience of the learner. The lack of concern for relevance is reflected in the factory-model mindset, which assumes that students can switch their cognitive gears every 45 minutes—shifting from math to social studies to science to literature to physical education—all before lunch.

But relevance is only one facet of learning. As I pointed out in Chapter Two (*Encounter* 11[1] 62-72), everything that we know about thinking and learning, intelligence and the structure of knowledge, points to one conclusion: *all intellectual endeavor, regardless of age, is systemic and contextual.* In short, facts are not the building blocks of knowledge, but its fruit. The process is not linear but organic. The outcome is not an end that has been or will be achieved, but a process to be experienced hour by hour, minute by minute. Learning is not something that can be taught; it is as natural as breathing, eating, running, or playing. Mary Catherine Bateson (1994) speaks of learning as "one of life's greatest pleasures." Once we acknowledge this, we will, in her words, "cease to focus on learning as preliminary and see it threaded through other layers of experience … an open-ended introduction to a process of continual change in which self-observation can become the best of teachers."

A second constraint to substantive change at the high school level is the problem of scheduling. Exacerbated in large schools by the sheer size of the student body and the diverse multiplicity of offerings, the schedule has become the primary structural barrier to change. However, once the school's mission becomes clear, appropriate scheduling becomes essentially a design problem that can be remedied.

The last constraint may be more difficult to overcome: resistance on the part of teachers who have a significant investment both in their specialized disciplines and in the independence that accompanies such specialization. For this reason, Roberts and Cawelti recognize that substantive change will necessitate a substantial program of professional development that involves the teachers directly in redesigning the curriculum. However, on every high school faculty there are a few teachers who are ready and eager to attempt innovative programs. For example, at St. Charles High School several interested teachers have been given permission to design team-led, interdisciplinary courses. At a neighboring high school, located in a major river valley, a science and a social studies teacher have received permission to offer a course based on the question, "How have rivers shaped American culture?" Because of back-to-back scheduling, the course will be conducted daily for 90 minutes and will include significant blocks of time for on-site investigations.

I think it is clear that, in time, high schools must find ways to adapt the middle school model, i.e., a team of four or five teachers with 100 to 125 students, to their unique requirements. One inner-city high school with whom I have worked initiated just such a program for 120 incoming freshman. While there were many adjustments to make, the major problem the five teachers faced was resistance from their colleagues. At the same time, however, it is significant to note that adults outside the educational system are beginning to support

such a change. In a recent survey of more than 2000 respondents, 62% agreed that large schools should be broken into smaller communities (Friendly Exchange 1995).

Conclusion

The 1960s were the halcyon days for education. Educational reform was in the air. Workshops in New Math, Kitchen Physics, and "Man: A Course of Study" were popular among teachers at all levels, and schools were being designed and redesigned to accommodate the open classroom and experiential learning. Books like *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* and *Summerhill* were being discussed and debated among parents as well as teachers.

In 1968, George Leonard, a senior editor for *Look*, wrote a little book entitled *Education and Ecstasy*. As a professional journalist and therefore an outsider to education, Leonard's insightful combination of analysis and vision captured the essence of developmentally appropriate education. In the chapter, "Visiting Day, 2001 A.D.," Leonard sketches his vision of a school of the future. The school is a campus rather than a building. There are no formal classrooms and no teachers as we know them today. There are, however a variety of learning centers or, more accurately, learning environments, where children can read, play, listen, contemplate, sing, dance, create art, participate in individualized computer instruction—all according to the student's inclination. Early on, students are encouraged to respond to their own internal rhythms rather than clocks, schedules, and bells.

The underlying assumption of Leonard's vision is obvious. *Learning is as natural as breathing*. Learning is as much fun as exploring a cave, as exhilarating as a wild dance, as stimulating as a mystery thriller, as challenging as Nintendo, as satisfying as discovering a new friend with whom you can share your deepest thoughts and dearest secrets. Just as every child loves to explore caves, dance in the streets, mold clay, paint pictures, sing songs, tell and listen to stories, ask questions, imagine answers, they can also thrill in the discovery of the beauty and structure of math equations and chemical formulas, the intricacies of cell structure or of an atom or of a city, the possibilities and nuances of language and communication patterns, and the emotional impact of history (his-story) and her-story.

In spite of the obvious logic of Leonard's assumption, we continue to have a cultural predisposition against the idea that learning can be exciting, satisfying, and just plain enjoyable. For most people, learning is considered to be serious work, and, though it is not stated explicitly, the school is, more often than not,

equated with the workplace. Since surveys show that most Americans do not like their jobs or their places of work, which are, to a great extent, dehumanizing environments, it should not be surprising that schools are also dehumanizing environments. And that's the problem: We as a society have become so conditioned to living and working in dehumanizing environments—schools, factories, offices, stores, restaurants, crowded cities, and equally crowded suburbs, high-rises, and ghettos—that we can scarcely imagine alternatives. Whenever we are confronted with a vision of something different and more satisfying, we justify our present reality with a "Yes, but this is the real world!" And so, we continue to inflict that same dehumanizing environment on our children day after day for twelve years or more, and we wonder why so many of them either fail or rebel. The reality is that in general, both our schools and our workplaces are what Leslie Hart would call "brain-antagonistic" environments.

The irony is, of course, that all of Leonard's assumptions about human potential, thinking, and learning have, since then, been supported and expanded by research in many different fields. Indeed, these assumptions are the cornerstone of the integrated, learner-centered strategies presented here. Unfortunately, as is often the case with visionaries, Leonard's projected timeframe was far too optimistic. What is important, however, is not his timeframe, but the vision itself, at the heart of which is the recognition that, at the most fundamental of levels, education is about students, not curriculum.

Buckminister Fuller once observed, "Nature is clearly intent on making humans successful" (Golding 1995). The degree to which we as a species have achieved success is debatable. While we have literally taken over and remade the planet in our own image, it seems increasingly clear that to be successful in the future will require something more of us than just scientific and technological prowess.

It should be clear by now that I consider educational success to involve a great deal more than preparing our youth for jobs in a highly technological society. It is about far more than American competitiveness in what seems to be a dog-eat-dog world. Today, in the last decade of the twentieth century, educational success is about what it means to be human in a world gone awry. It is about human potential—about our hopes, our aspirations, our dreams, our visions. Today educational success is about the future—our kids' future and the future of their kids and their grandkids to the seventh generation. It may even be about the future of humankind on Planet Earth.

The theoretical formulations necessary to redesign a

systemic educational structure that reflects our innately human process of meaning-making are already available. According to systems thinking the same theories and principles that were applicable at the micro level, e.g., curriculum design and learning strategies, can be applied at the macro level of institutional purpose, function, and structure. If we combine Taba's taxonomy of knowledge, Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, the research that demonstrates the contextual nature of thinking and learning, Piaget's insights on cognitive development, and what we know about learning communities, we have a blueprint for designing a "brain-compatible" educational system.

Anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson (1994) sums up the challenge which we as educators—and as humans—face today.

> We are called to join in a dance whose steps must be learned along the way.... Improvisation and new learning are not private processes, they are shared with others at every age ... so it is important to attend and respond. Even in uncertainty, we are responsible for our own steps.

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