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ENCOUNTER

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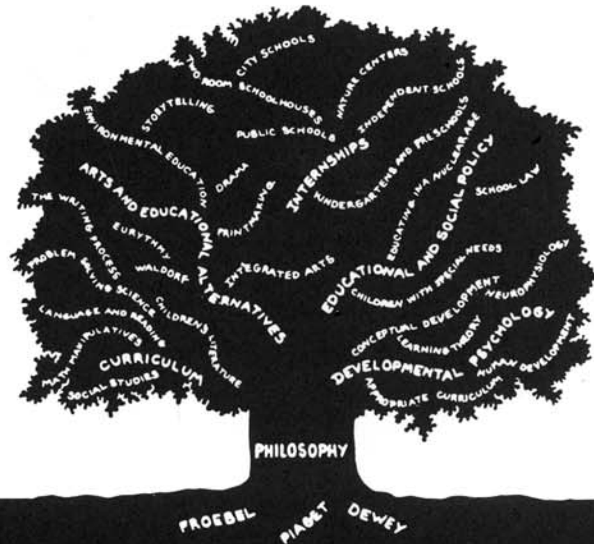

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Encounter

Education for Meaning and Social Justice

Volume 18, Number 1 Spring 2005

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Tsunami

Holistic educators want to foster children's connections to the natural world, but the task is difficult. In today's test-driven educational climate, most schools barely find time for recess, let alone opportunities for children to explore parks and natural settings. Outside school, parents worry about children wandering about outdoors, so children spend much of their free time indoors, watching TV and playing video games.

I feel this situation is very serious, and I go to numerous meetings and forums to urge adults to give children more time in natural settings. In making these appeals, I cast nature in a beneficent light. I point to evidence that nature awakens children's senses and fills them with wonder. Natural settings also give children a sense of peace and belonging to the larger web of life. Our educational system, I acknowledge, doesn't place a particularly high value on these feelings; it is more concerned with academic skills, test scores, and technological competence. But many poets, artists, and other creative individuals try to recapture the childhood sense of wonder and to re-experience the feelings of comfort and belonging that nature provides.

Rethinking Nature's Benevolence

But the tsunami of December 26 forces a reconsideration. After the ocean took so many innocent lives, is it realistic to keep emphasizing nature's positive qualities? As a colleague told me after a January vacation at the Long Island seashore, "Nature is beautiful and good for the soul. But we've just seen that nature also can be terribly cruel." In light of the tsunami, is talk about our connection to nature too romantic? How can we value human ties to forces that can be so cruel?

These questions were on my mind as I read, in the weeks that followed the December 26 tsunami, newspaper articles and other essays on it.

After the tsunami struck, the media initially focused on the death toll and relief efforts. Considerable attention also turned to technological warning systems. Seismic sensors and satellites are in place in the Pacific, but not in the Indian Ocean, where the tsunami-producing earthquake occurred. Most of the world's leaders have therefore called for the development of high-tech warning systems in the Indian Ocean and all the other oceans that lack them (Brooke 2005; Romano and Ulick 2005).

A Surprising Observation

Amidst these discussions, alert journalists discovered something unexpected. Numerous animals apparently sensed the danger ahead of time and escaped. Although many humans were killed in Sri Lanka's national wildlife park at Yala, very few elephants, monkeys, buffalo, or leopards were found dead (Lafferty 2005). *The Washington Post* (Oldenburg 2005) reported that in Khao Lak, Thailand, a dozen elephants giving tourists rides became agitated at about the time the earthquake set the tsunami waves in motion. As the tsunami approached — but still an hour before it hit shore — the elephants trumpeted and wailed, and some were able to break their chains and flee. Flamingos on India's southern coast also left for higher ground well before the tsunami pounded the land.

What's more, small hunter-gatherer tribes on India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands apparently took cues from the behavior of the birds, lizards, and marine animals, as well as the wind and ocean, and escaped. Before the Tsunami struck, they moved inland for protection (Oldenburg 2005; "Reading winds" 2005).

Scientists' Reactions

Following up on these reports, several journalists asked Western scientists what they thought about animal sensitivity to earthquakes and tsunamis. Typically, the scientists were skeptical and even dismissive. "If we can't sense (building earthquakes) with incredibly sensitive equipment, how can they?"

said Roger Hansen, Alaska's state seismologist (Lafferty 2005). Scientists also argued that the evidence for animal detection capacities is largely anecdotal and hasn't been studied in the laboratory (Oldenburg 2005).

Some scientists — seemingly in the minority — were more open to the possibility that animals possess sensory capacities that humans lack. They noted that elephants, for example, seem to detect infrasound vibrations in the earth through their legs. Animals also seem more alert to the natural environment in general (Oldenburg 2005).

An impressive instance of animal sensitivity occurred last year in Florida's coastal waters. Twelve hours before Hurricane Charley battered the region, 14 electronically tagged blacktip sharks fled their threatened territory off Sarasota. None of the sharks had ever left its territory in the previous 4 years of monitoring. The fish stayed away up to 2 weeks, and then returned home. The facts suggest that the sharks had somehow sensed that the hurricane was coming (Oldenburg 2005).

Still, scientists generally seem reluctant to learn from animals. Although some Chinese researchers are attempting to replicate the sensory physiology of animals in new technical systems (Oldenburg 2005), this approach is the exception. And few scientists anywhere recommend that we keep a close eye on animals themselves for cries, nervous behavior, and other signs of approaching threats. According to Jan Randall, an animal behaviorist at San Francisco State University, the evidence with respect to animal warnings is just too sparse. "Besides," she asks, "Do you really think humans would pay attention?" (Kenneally 2005). United States Geographical Survey seismologist David Oppenheimer makes the same point: "If someone said, 'The horses are acting up,' do you think the public would be comfortable with receiving a warning like that?" (Lafferty 2005).

Indigenous Peoples Heed Animal Warnings

But the five aboriginal tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands apparently did heed animal warnings of the tsunami — and they escaped. These tribes are very old; some date back over 60,000 years to the Paleolithic era. In the last two centuries, the tribes have suffered encroachments, assaults, and diseases from Britain and India, and the tribes' numbers have sharply declined. Their current populations range from about 43 to 380 members, and their futures are very uncertain (Grig and Ross 2005; "Knowledge of natural world" 2005; Mukerjee 2003, xv-xviii).

The largest three tribes have been reclusive and have tried to fight off outsiders. When India's government sent a helicopter over one of the coasts to inspect the tsunami's damage, tribesmen shot arrows toward it as a signal to stay away ("Andaman tribes" 2005). A few members of one Andaman tribe, the Jarawa, did let outsiders know they were all safe, but they refused to disclose the specific cues they relied on to escape the giant waves (Misra and Sanyal 2005).

Fortunately, we do have valuable information on the traditional customs and beliefs of the Andaman tribes because of a pioneering anthropological study by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. Radcliffe-Brown lived among the tribes between 1906 and 1908, and in 1922 he published his landmark book, *The Andaman Islanders*, based on his observations. His study was most detailed with respect to the tribe called the Great Andamanese, but he suggested his observations were generally true of the other tribes on the island as well.

Radcliffe-Brown was deeply impressed, and even a bit mystified, by the prominence of animals in the peoples' lives. He said they constantly "personified" animals, giving them human traits, but he suggested it was more accurate to say that the people simply didn't draw the great differences between animals and humans that we do. In fact, their legends say that there was a time in the past when animals and humans were a single species, and everyone's first ancestor was not a human, but a monitor lizard. The indigenous people had names for every species of plant, insect, and other animal in the forest and the surrounding sea. Many animals, such as birds and cicadas, were especially sacred.

The aboriginal islanders did kill some animals for food, but their hunting and food preparation had to adhere to detailed rituals of respect. Otherwise they would become ill. The islanders also were quite familiar with natural calamities such as floods, storms, and cyclones. But these events did not detract, in their view, from an underlying moral order in the

world, an order that infused both nature and society. People maintained this order — and avoided disruptive storms and disasters — by observing rituals, exercising self-control, and acting generously. This order, in turn, was a source of comfort and strength for them.

From just this brief summary of Andaman attitudes, students of anthropology will recognize many themes common to indigenous peoples in other parts of the world. Most, if not all, original peoples have ascribed a far higher status to animals than we do, and have had a greater reverence for the natural world. In his 1933 book *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, Luther Standing Bear (1978) described the Lakota's admiration and careful observation of animals. Prairie cranes announced weather changes; croaking frogs proclaimed hidden springs; and snorting horses warned of unseen dangers. Standing Bear was astonished by the extent to which white people considered themselves superior to animals and distanced themselves from them. The slaughter of the buffalo and the enslavement of animals within fences were only two examples of the white people's contempt for other-than-human life.

Contemporary Disregard

The kind of behavior that appalled Standing Bear has hardly let up. Today, logging, industrial fishing, pollution, and other human activities are causing the extinction of animal and plant species at thousands of times the natural rate. Some biologists estimate that one-third to two-thirds of all current species will be extinct by the year 2050 (Cunningham and Saigo 2001, 288). Meanwhile, we raise almost all the chickens, pigs, and other animals we eat in cruel factory farms, confining them to cages so tight that they can never move about and forcing them to suffer painful diseases.

To help distance ourselves from our cruelty, we refer to animals as "livestock," "resources," and "fisheries," as if only general categories were at issue, not individual animals whose suffering might provoke emotional reactions. Animals are not "killed" but "harvested." In the wild, this "harvesting" is described as "population control" and "management policies," making the killing seem impersonal and necessary.

Lessons

What, then, might the December 26 tsunami teach us? In response to the devastation, our first impulse is to draw back from nature and take a more sober view of it. But the surprising findings about the escaping animals and the indigenous peoples actually suggest the opposite. We need to become closer to nature, more like the tribes on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, who apparently paid close attention to the animals and the elements. The expansion of technological warning systems is also needed, but it would be foolish to ignore the ways of those who were able to anticipate the disaster.

Among those interviewed by the media, I have come across only one individual who has proposed a careful study of how the ancient tribes anticipated the tsunami: the anthropologist V. R. Rao of India ("Andaman tribes" 2005). However, it is not clear how well such an investigation will fare, for the tribes that have most ardently stuck to their traditional behavior are wary of outsiders.

Nevertheless, we can support those who study animal behavior in the best spirit of the indigenous peoples. For example, ethologists in the tradition of Konrad Lorenz, Niko Tinbergen, and Jane Goodall patiently observe animals in the wild. Even in their more technical writings, one senses their quiet admiration of the subtle behavior of animals in natural settings. Increased government and university support for ethologists, combined with the conservation of free-roaming wildlife, might help anticipate natural threats in many parts of the world.

I do not mean to make light of the terrible destruction caused by earthquakes and earthquake-generated tsunamis. But the geological changes that produce earthquakes may also be necessary to keep life going on the planet (Broad 2005). We cannot, in any case, stop earthquakes; we can only anticipate them and take measures to protect life that is threatened. It therefore makes good sense to support all who might help us learn when tsunamis might strike.

But what about the more romantic views of nature? Doesn't the tsunami at least expose the folly of sentimental feelings? I don't think so. As horrible as earthquakes are, the far greater assault on life has been inflicted by industrial societies, and those who have most successfully fought this assault have been

motivated by an open-hearted love of nature. Two cases in point are John Muir and Rachel Carson.

Muir, the geologist who persuaded the U.S. government to preserve Yosemite and King's Canyon, California, as national parks, was so affected by the cascading, singing brooks in the high Sierra Mountains that he thought the "hand of God becomes visible" in them (1997, 245). Carson, whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* exposed the effects of DDT and initiated the modern environmental movement, admitted she was sometimes moved to tears by nature's small dramas — such as tiny young fish battling the waves to get out to sea (Brooks 1972, 7). Carson said she was not afraid of being called a "sentimentalist" (p. 325), and she insisted that *Silent Spring* was not just a presentation of terrible facts. "No," she wrote to a friend, "I never thought the ugly facts would dominate, and I hope they don't. The beauty of the living world I was trying to save has always been uppermost in my mind" (Brooks 1972, 13).

—William Crain, *Editor*

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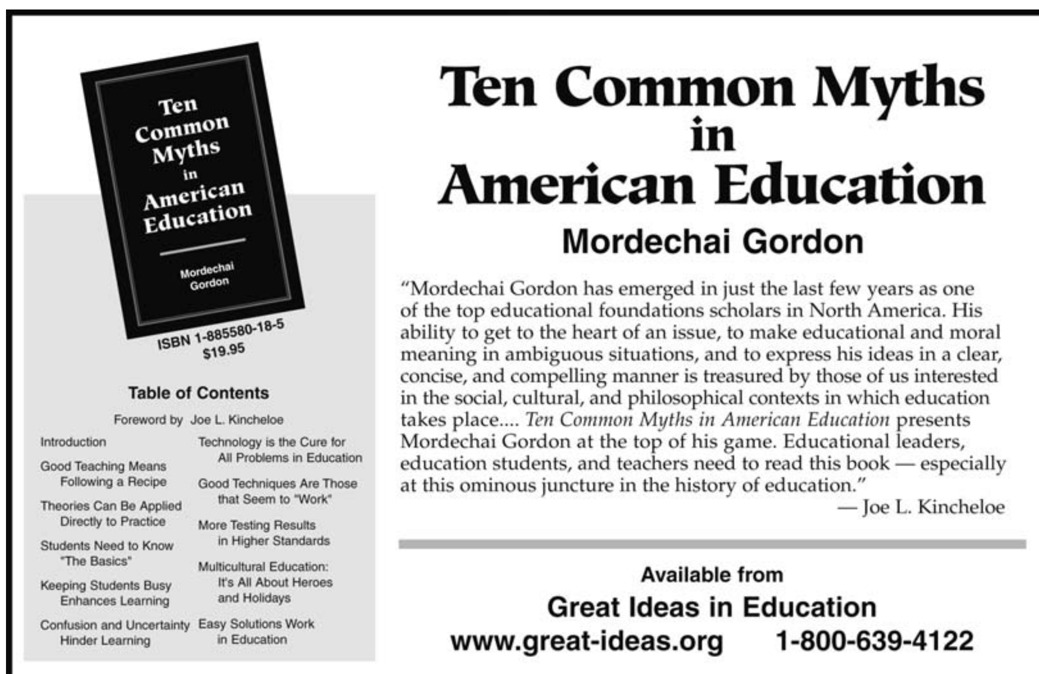

John Hope

A White Man Who Chose to be Black

Lawrence Rushing

Although in appearance he was white, Hope identified himself as African American and became a major catalyst in the development of African American education.

John Hope, was the first black president of two black institutions of higher learning, Morehouse College (from 1906 to 1931) and Atlanta University (from 1929 to 1936). W.E B. Du Bois, who considered Hope his closest friend, believed that Hope's life work was more successful than either the towering black leader of the age, Booker T. Washington, or Washington's militant adversary, Monroe Trotter (Torrence 1948, 271). In an era when African Americans were generally considered fit only for vocational skills, Hope institutionalized a college liberal arts education for them in the Deep South. And more than this, Hope inspired African Americans to combine their intellectual achievements with service to their people. Hope himself attended the founding meeting of the NAACP in 1910.

At the same time, Hope was always something of an enigma to those who knew him. In appearance, he was white, with no visible characteristics of African ancestry. His blue eyes, fair skin, and light brown hair caused him to be perceived as a white man by virtually everyone, black and white alike. Yet he identified himself as black, and he made the cause of black people his lifelong work (Torrence 1948).

Some people found Hope's white skin and black identity extremely disconcerting; he didn't fit the conventional ways of defining race, in which classification is based on outward appearance. Du Bois thought that this showed a fundamental ignorance about race in America. Irritated by the incongruity that some individuals perceived, Du Bois attempted to resolve what he considered a fallacious issue. Writing shortly after Hope's death in 1936, Du Bois said: "Biologically, [Hope] belonged distinctly to the typical white American race; but by education and social heritage, he was just as typically a Negro.

Author Note: This paper benefited greatly from the comments of Dr. Mary Henle, Professor Emeritus, Graduate Faculty, The New School for Social Research.

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There is no inner soul dissension about this. He was at once white and glad to be black" (Torrence 1948, 375). Du Bois reiterated this opinion a decade later. "There was nothing extraordinary in Hope's being a Negro," he wrote. "He did not consciously choose to be a Negro. He was a Negro…." It would have been unnatural "for a boy raised to regard himself as colored to desert his folk … in spirit and loyalty, much less in physical withdrawal" (Du Bois 1948, 271).

In Du Bois's view, John Hope and others like him provide palpable evidence that race is not fundamentally defined by biology; rather it is determined by family nurturing and social influences. In his book *Dusk of Dawn*, Du Bois asserted that physical characteristics of race only have relevance as they are responded to by others. They have "little meaning in themselves"(1968, 117). In *Black Folk Then and Now* he explicitly denied the biological significance of race, stating that "no scientific definition of race is possible" (Lewis 2000, 455).

Nonetheless, Du Bois exaggerated the inevitability that Hope would regard himself as an African American by underestimating the personal contribution Hope made in defining himself. Hope consciously made the choice to be identified as black; he was a voluntary black man. Unlike most blacks, he could not take his racial identity for granted, and he was always conscious of the criteria that defined him.

Mixed Ancestry

Hope's son, John II, once said that a study of his father's "mulatto" heritage would also be a treatise on the "sociological literature on race and culture...." In John II's opinion, "Colored people of backgrounds essentially similar to Dad's are not as unique as the great majority of white persons think…." But, he added, "The subject of miscegenation is ignored because it is considered 'touchy' … difficult to handle … and dangerous" (Torrence MS, Box 3A, folder 8).

Indeed, it was so touchy a subject that Du Bois and Hope rarely talked about the fact that they shared a racially mixed ancestry. "Among us of mingled bloods in America," Du Bois confessed, "there are subjects we do not discuss" (1948, 271-272). Not only did Du Bois know little about Hope's forebears, it is doubtful that he was aware that two of Hope's sisters, Alethea and Georgia Frances, who were raised like Hope as black, later disguised their African ancestry and disappeared into white society. Had Du Bois known about Hope's sisters, he might have been less certain of the inevitability of Hope's identifying himself as a black man.

Out of loyalty to his sisters' wishes, Hope carefully guarded their secret of "passing" as white, sharing it only with his wife and a few others. He understood the disadvantages of black skin and never criticized his sisters (Davis 1998, 398). When Hope visited his sister Alethea in Providence, Rhode Island, where she had moved from Georgia to disguise her race, he allowed his black Providence friends to think that he was visiting white acquaintances. He was so secretive that when his son attended Brown University in the 1930s, Hope did not inform him that his aunt resided in the city. Hope also understood Georgia's move to Los Angeles as a "white" woman, but there was a limit to Hope's tolerance. He never forgave her for failing to attend their mother's funeral in Augusta.

Hope's Background and Childhood

Hope was the product of generations of cohabitation between white men and black or mixed race women. His great grandmother, Mary, an attractive adolescent slave, was assaulted in her master's house by a visiting white planter and gave birth to Hope's grandmother, Alethea, in 1820. Mary was the last "full blooded" black ancestor in Hope's genealogy. Mary's experience was followed by three more generations of cohabitation and common-law relationships between white men and black women.As a result, Hope's grandmother and his mother, Fanny, looked white. Hope himself would have been considered, in the unscientific terminology of the time, an octoroon or one-eighth black (Torrence 1948, 5-8).

Hope's mother first lived in a common-law marriage with George Newton, a prominent Augusta white physician with whom she had two children. James, her second common-law husband and Hope's father, was a Scottish immigrant and wealthy businessman. They had five children and lived together until his death in 1868.

From childhood, Hope was aware that he was partly Scottish. One of the most deeply affecting experiences of his life was visiting, on his first trip to

Europe in 1912, his father's hometown of Langholm, Scotland. Hope retained a lifelong connection to his father's heritage through his love of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns, whose home he also visited in 1912. But Hope only discussed his European identity with his wife Lugenia. Otherwise, he felt he had to keep it a secret because he feared his fellow blacks would fail to understand the complexity of his multiple identities and accuse him of lacking respect for his African ancestry. Still, several of Hope's dominant traits, such as sociability, love of family, and concern for the less fortunate can be traced to his father's influence (Torrence 1948, 180-182).

What Hope and Du Bois had in common was their character, commitment, and dedication to the racial cause. The overriding motive driving both men was neither prestige nor wealth, but the search for justice for their people.

At the age of 8, Hope experienced one of the turning points of his life. On the Fourth of July, the all-black town of Hamburg, South Carolina, which was just across the Savannah River from Augusta, was literally wiped off map by a white mob led by an ex-Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan member. When a white man was inconvenienced in crossing a road being used by the black militia, a large, well-armed white mob invaded the town, defeated the black militia and murdered black civilians in cold blood as they attempted to escape across the river. "After the carnage," wrote the *Augusta Chronicle*, "Hamburg ceased to exist" (Davis 1998, 24).

Thereafter, when the subject of prejudice and oppression was raised, Hope would remark, "Remember, I heard the guns of Hamburg." Hamburg didn't symbolize fear and horror as much as it did his solidarity with the people he identified as his own. Although he was only a child at the time, the Hamburg massacre enrolled him as a soldier in America's racial struggle (Lewis 1993, 255). It was the experience which led Hope to observe that "A man sooner or later becomes what he is tied up to, and I have been tied to this problem in a way that the average colored boy even of today is not, for I lived as a little child during troublous days in Augusta, Georgia" (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 2).

Soon after the Hamburg massacre his father died. For the first time, the family was reduced to a life of near penury. Although his father had willed most of his large fortune of $56,000 to his common-law wife, Fanny, the racially discriminatory legal system enabled the executors of his estate to embezzle the bulk of it. Hope's older siblings — Madison, Georgia Francis and Jane — were forced to drop out of Atlanta University. Fanny took in sewing, Madison got a job as a barber, and Hope at the age of 11, in opposition to his Mother's desires, started his first part-time job as an errand boy. Although Augusta had one of the first African American high schools in the South, two years later Hope felt it was his duty to work full time. He left school in 1881 at the end of the 8th grade to become a bookkeeper in a fashionable restaurant run by Lexius Henson, an enterprising African American (Davis 1998 25-26 and 30-32).

This was unfortunate since Hope's intellectual interests had up until then been fostered by Lucy Laney and Georgia Swift, two legendary African American teachers. Laney, one of four members of the first graduating class of Atlanta University during Reconstruction, was an advocate of a classical curriculum. She instructed Hope in Latin and Greek at Augusta's Fourth Ward Public School. Later, she established the Haines Institute high school. Georgia Swift, Hope's favorite teacher, also graduated from Atlanta University and was the Principal of the Fourth Ward School. Hope said that she "had a peculiar facility for making pupils efficient in arithmetic [which he struggled to master], and instilling the principles of a true gentleman" (Davis 1998, 21 and 22). It is likely that both teachers had an influence on his becoming an educator who tried to train both the minds and souls of his students.

The interruption in Hope's education ended after five years, when Hope was 18. A factor was the persuasiveness of John L. Dart, a young African American Baptist minister. Dart had a special interest in the

education of young blacks, and Hope recalled that Dart was the only person "who met me on the street … and said, 'John, why don't you go to school?' …That Baptist preacher had wielded such an influence … it got working on my mind almost like a command." Dart convinced Hope to "aim high" and enroll in the Worcester Academy in Massachusetts (Torrence MS, May 14, 1935).

Hope's years at Worcester were his first outside the black community. The school's principal, Daniel Webster Abercrombie, took a special interest in Hope and became Hope's lifelong friend. Abercrombie made it possible for Hope to attend Brown University, where Abercrombie was a trustee. Without Hope's knowledge, he arranged a scholarship from a group of Baptist philanthropists (Torrence 1948, 75-87).

Although Abercrombie was not black, he helped to solidify Hope's identity as an African American. It was Abercrombie's influence that resulted in Hope's calling Worcester Academy, and not Brown University, "the only democracy I ever knew " (Torrence 1948, 96). Brown made racial distinctions — exclusion from fraternities, and segregated dormitories — that were absent at Worcester. At Brown, Hope was respected because he was perceived to be as accomplished as the white students; at Worcester, he was also respected as an African American. To Abercrombie, this gave Hope's achievements even greater distinction, for as a Southerner he was aware of the social disadvantages confronting African Americans. Abercrombie believed "character is everything," and that Hope had character. Abercrombie may have fulfilled a vital role as a substitute father. Hope considered his warmth and guidance crucial to his academic success. At age 60 Hope wrote to his old teacher, "I wonder whether you know how much I owe to you for whatever I have of culture and a love for the beautiful and the true" (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 5). These words Hope could easily have applied to his Scottish father.

The Decision

Perhaps the most decisive point in Hope's life occurred when he was a student at Brown University, where he had earned the respect of the faculty and his fellow students for his scholarship, geniality, and exemplary character. The faculty appointed John H. Appleton, Professor of Chemistry, to speak to Hope shortly before his graduation in 1894 about what they considered an unusually generous offer. Aware that Hope had an interest in journalism, and had served as editor of the *Brown Daily Herald* and as college correspondent for both the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune,* Professor Appleton told him that a position had been arranged for him on the city's best newspaper, the *Providence Journal.*

However, the offer was made with the proviso that Hope would disguise his African ancestry and live as a white man. Forewarned that Hope wanted to return to the South to live among his people, Appleton attempted to dissuade Hope from going. "I know that you're anxious to work among those you call 'your people,'" Appleton said. But he called Hope's plan " very foolish" because Hope's work would "be measured merely by a Negro yardstick" (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 2).

But Hope's mind was already made up. After graduation, he reaffirmed his pride in his racial identity by returning to the South as an African American teacher of black youth at Roger Williams University, a black college in Nashville, Tennessee. Hope never tried to take advantage of his fair complexion. "We must learn," Hope said, "to give up advantages to secure justice" (Torrence, MS, Box 3A, folder 6).

Identity Role Models

While Hope chose to retain his black identity, he did not make his choice alone. As he was growing up, he was fortunate to know other African Americans with skin color light enough to pass, but who identified themselves as black. One was his older half brother, Madison Newton. Hope looked up to Madison for being one of the first students to attend Atlanta University after the Civil War. Hope was grateful to his brother for helping to finance, out of his meager postman's earnings, Hope's first year of study at Worcester Academy.

Another fair-skinned model throughout Hope's childhood was William Jefferson White, a close family friend. Called the "Father of Negro Education in Georgia," White was one of the most renowned black educators, journalists and political leaders of his time. Yet, White's black ancestry is even less historically evident than Hope's; so much so, it is con-

ceivable that he had no African biological inheritance at all. Publisher of the *Georgia Baptist*, the state's leading African American newspaper, White inspired Hope's love of writing and journalism. "[He] showed me for the first time in my life," Hope said "that Negroes could operate and own a newspaper." As important, he added, was that serving his people, not "earning a living," was "his chief aim and function" (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 2).

Hope's own fair-skinned mother Fanny was another model of pride in African ancestry. Before Hope was born, his father moved to New York City with Fanny and their two children to escape the turmoil of post-Civil War Reconstruction (Davis 1998, 14). In spite of being encouraged by the great Frederick Douglass to remain in the North, Fanny declined to change her race, which staying in the North might have entailed. Instead, she returned to Augusta to be reunited with relatives and to resume her African American identity. After her husband's death, Fanny was impoverished, but she refused to give her sister permission to adopt their five-year-old daughter Anna. Fanny could not accept the option of Anna's being raised as white and being deprived of all future contact with her (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 5).

Returning to the South

Following graduation from Brown in 1894, when Hope decided to return to the South, the personal risks were clear. For one thing, he had become engaged to Lugenia Burns, who resisted the idea of leaving the North. A move to the South threatened to dissolve their engagement. In addition, the career to which he was heading in the South, as a teacher of black youth, meant low pay and the probability of facing racial violence and even lynchings. Hope's black friends were shocked that he would even contemplate returning to Georgia when he had a great future in the North. Reportedly they queried him, "Going back South, where Negroes are Jim-Crowed and lynched?" When Hope said, yes, he was going back, his friends grew more insistent: "Back to Georgia, when for your race Georgia is hell?" Hope replied, "Yes, Georgia is hell. But Georgia's home (Torrence MS, Box 3 folder 4).

Lugenia, of course, would have been aware of lynchings, such as the notorious one that took place in 1892, around the time she met Hope. A black man accused of rape was dragged from the local jail, and hung before a crowd of 10,000 men, women, and children. In 1899, just one year after John Hope arrived in Atlanta, Georgia gained the dubious distinction of being America's foremost lynching state. Twenty seven Negroes were killed by extra legal violence, which constituted 31% of all the African Americans murdered by mobs in the nation. Lugenia's fears became palpable during the 1906 Atlanta riot, when Hope, then President of Morehouse, and his entire faculty were compelled to stand guard with loaded pistols at the ready in order to protect the lives of their students from a violent white mob threatening to invade the campus (Davis 1998, 114-115 and 166-171; Torrence MS, Box 3 folder 3).

During Hope's tenure at Morehouse, white citizens of Atlanta murdered his chauffeur, killed a Morehouse student from one of Atlanta's most prominent black families, killed a young man for commenting about a white woman, and took the life of a paper boy for not removing his hat (Davis 1998, 313-314). The Hopes' intrepidness in confronting physical danger was on display after the paper boy was killed. Three Ku Klux Klan members "in full regalia knocked on the door of the Hope home on the campus." Lugenia answered the door and asked them "What do you want?" When they answered, "John Hope," she replied, "He's not here. I'm sorry he missed you (Torrence MS, Box 3, folder 3).

Hope's Career as a College President

Before beginning his 30-year career at Morehouse in 1898, Hope worked for four years as a professor at Roger Williams University, a small liberal arts college of about 175 students. Established in 1867 to educate newly freed slaves, Roger Williams was affiliated with the northern American Baptist Home Mission Society, the same organization that sponsored Morehouse. Its founder and first president was a white Brown University graduate, Daniel W. Phillips. Hope's success as a teacher of science, Greek, and Latin landed him a teaching appointment at Morehouse, which at that time was called Atlanta Baptist College.

When Hope became the first African American president of Morehouse in 1906, he reshaped it to

serve the requirements of his subjugated people. Defying a South that Du Bois characterized as still wanting African American "schools to train servants and docile cheap labor," Hope demanded that his students be immersed in the same liberal arts curriculum taught in America's best institutions. Feeling, however, that the New England education he knew and cherished could not be imported wholesale for an oppressed group, he attempted to combine the liberal arts of Worcester and Brown with a more activist philosophy that incorporated service to others. Hope wanted his students to stand for something more than pursuing money, popularity and interests that may be "against our progress." He asserted that a school had to have "a soul or spirit," and that it was the souls of young people that were his primary interest (Du Bois 1924, 185: Hope MS, February 10, 1922).

The "Morehouse soul" manifested itself as the so-called "Morehouse man": dignified, competent, self-assured, and committed to a higher purpose. The great theologian Howard Thurman, a student at Morehouse when Hope was president, said he "was profoundly affected by the sense of mission the college inculcated in us. We understood that our job was to learn so that we could go back into our communities and teach others...." Years later, following some of Thurman's speeches, people would approach him to say, "You're one of John Hope's men, aren't you?" The Hope ethos of service, competence, and self-respect became legendary at Morehouse, perhaps reaching its culmination in the achievements of Martin Luther King Jr., the college's most celebrated alumnus (Thurman 1979, 35-37).

Hope expended great energy on nurturing his students, treating them with the same warmth and generosity Abercrombie showed towards him. Viewing education as a form of social activism, Hope sought to elevate the race and eliminate racial caste distinctions by molding the character and personalities of his students. Explaining his own role in the classroom, Hope declared "I'm not teaching Latin, I'm teaching men." He began every academic year by getting to know all of his students and was never too busy to speak with them, even if it required him to stay up late at night to finish his work. "When the college grew," his secretary said that "he mourned the fact that he no longer knew all of his students by name" (Torrence MS). "He insisted that [students] be treated justly," Du Bois once remarked, " and worried tremendously if they were not (Torrence MS, Box 3 folders 2-3).

When it came to his racial identity, Hope revised Dr. Abercrombie's adage that character was everything, making it consistent with his own belief that, to be an African American, dedication is everything; appearance is nothing. He was convinced that, irrespective of his fair complexion, his racial identity would be determined by the quality of his contribution. In real terms, this meant committing his life to the uplift of his people as teacher and mentor, builder of black institutions, and spokesperson for his people's aspirations. If anything, Hope may have overcompensated for his light skin by striving with greater effort on his people's behalf.

Hope was a compulsively tireless worker throughout his life. In his sixties, after suffering a major heart attack, he took on the exhausting task of becoming President of Atlanta University, while also continuing for several years as President of Morehouse, in order to consolidate the graduate school of three undergraduate colleges. Against the wishes of his wife and friends, aware that added work was not advisable because of his weakened heart, he assumed the job in the absence of anyone more qualified to do it. Lugenia bluntly stated that "no question that the added stress from the consolidation caused his death" on February 20, 1936 (Torrence, Box 3, folder 3). Hope had kept his feelings from her, but confided to the college nurse that the increased pressure was going to kill him. After a lifetime of sacrifice, he was incapable of saying no.

Conflicts

Whether stress caused Hope's first heart attack is not known, but stress was indisputably a part of his job ever since he had assumed the presidency of Morehouse. In that role, he experienced constant conflict from pressure to repress his political militancy, so as not to alarm conservative Northern philanthropists, upon whom the college depended for economic sustenance. Although he had a well earned reputation for being a member of the militant Du Boisian camp among black intellectuals, as the college grew in size and reputation, he moderated

his voice on social issues or refused to speak out at all. One of the most dramatic instances of this occurred when, to the distress of many in the college community, he kept silent following the racially motivated murder of a Morehouse student.

What was remarkable was his ability to stay allied with both the militant and conservative camps. Accomplishing this feat, however, resulted in anxiety that often accompanies the suppression of basic attitudes and beliefs. For example, when on the recommendation of Booker T. Washington, Hope managed to secure a large donation from Andrew Carnegie, it placed a severe strain on his friendship with Du Bois, who deplored Washington's philosophy of racial submission. Fearing the dissolution of his friendship, Hope defended himself by pointing out to Du Bois that "I would not yield a principle for the benefit of myself or my school." However, Du Bois refused to let him off of the hook, saying that he hoped that the "pound of flesh" that Hope had to pay "will not be vital." They managed to retain their friendship because both men understood that racial progress inevitably involved entering into a Faustian bargain with the white society, a bargain Du Bois admitted soiled his own hands as well as Hope's (Aptheker 1973, 164-167).

Conclusion

Placing people at the center of concern is what united Du Bois and Hope in friendship, despite their being different in so many ways. Du Bois, the impassioned scholar-activist, was more radical, self-assured, and brilliant. Hope, the exceptional teacher and administrator, was more personable, sensitive, and modest. What they had in common was their character, commitment, and dedication to the racial cause. The overriding motive driving both men was neither prestige nor wealth, but the search for justice for their people.

Because of the color of his skin, Hope's life demonstrates with greater clarity than did the life of Du Bois the extent to which race can be defined by how one chooses to live and not by one's genes. Hope's decision to honor his black identity in an era of pogroms and lynchings demonstrated remarkable courage; he shared the existence of African Americans during a time of physical danger and social need. As a voluntary black man, Hope exemplified how the definition of an individual's race can evolve out of dedication and commitment. He made his choice fully aware of its many burdens, but also aware of its many possibilities for living a life of greater significance. John Hope's racial identity was a reflection of his humanitarianism: a profound commitment to and solidarity with the struggles of a people he considered his own. He never expressed his feelings more clearly than in a letter to Lugenia in 1899:

> From the bottom of my heart as long as the Negro is a sufferer, and as long as the white man makes him suffer, I prefer to be with the oppressed, feel with the oppressed, and, if need be suffer with the oppressed, rather than be as … mean and uncharitable as white men, rather than have a share with oppressors. (Hope MS, August 2, 1899)

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Peace Education

Lisa Porter and Maureen Lorimer

It is now more important than ever for teachers to incorporate peace education into their classrooms.

The American people are operating in crisis. The war in Iraq has shifted our national priorities from progress to defense. As of December 2004, over 1300 United States soldiers had died in Iraq; 10,000 had been wounded, and 15,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed (Ewens 2004). This international conflict has cost the United States over 140 billion dollars (Ewens 2004). Each month, this amount increases by approximately 4.5 billion dollars. When comparing the cost of this war to the needs of American schools, the national agenda's transition from progress to defense becomes painfully obvious. The current amount spent on the war in Iraq is approximately three times more than what President Bush is proposing to appropriate to the Department of Education for the 2005 budget (U.S. Department of Education 2004), and 40 times what it would cost to enroll the remaining eligible preschoolers in Head Start (Jackson 2004; National Priorities Project 2004).

American reactions to this war have been strong. As a result, lines have been clearly drawn. Be it anti-war bumper stickers, Saddam Hussein playing cards, American flag t-shirts, or films such as Fahrenheit 9/11, Americans are definitely using their First Amendment right to express support or dismay for United States' presence in Iraq. Nevertheless, such polarized reactions from the American public have tended to be shortsighted at a time when discussion on alternatives ways of handling international con-

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flict is vital. This paradigm shift will be a difficult transition to make.

Schools play a vital role in children's understanding not only of the current war in Iraq but also in shaping their overall perceptions of peace and war. Educators need to begin looking at how war and peace are being presented in our K–12 schools and continue searching for ways to deepen students' understanding of the issues. Teachers must also encourage students to see the roles they can play in working for a better world. However, there are many stumbling blocks.

Difficulties

Discussing controversies such as war in the classroom can be difficult. Determining how to begin the discussion and maintain a "safe space" for opinions to be shared can seem overwhelming. Many teachers, fearful of the legal ramifications of discussing controversial issues, take a "business as usual" approach to teaching. These teachers either make a conscious decision to avoid political issues, or they feel too inundated with their teaching demands to set aside time to unravel the complexities of current events such as war (Birkett 2003; Dillon 2003).

Some teachers do attempt to deal with the issues surrounding war and peace. One approach is to connect current events to the standard curriculum. For example, middle school teachers might choose to relate the standard readings on the geography and history of the Middle East to the daily events taking place in Iraq. High school teachers might choose to connect a curriculum unit on world religions to the current war in Iraq. Although these discussions can be productive, they must be carefully planned or they could backfire. Last spring several educators were placed on probation for showing the beheading of Nick Berg, an American captured by Iraqi militants, to their students (Associated Press 2004a and 2004b; Sanchez 2004). The quick response of parents and school districts to these viewings further reinforced teachers' hesitancy to discuss war with their students.

For some teachers, the safe and perhaps preferred approach is simply to focus on patriotism. Many teachers talk broadly about freedom and the specific needs of American soldiers. Common student activities often include generating letters and care packages for military troops (Hoffman and Spencer 2003). Coloring U.S. flags and reciting patriotic songs are also visible signs of classroom connections between patriotism and war. Although these activities may be seen as engaging, they leave very little opportunity for students to discuss the deeper issues and sentiments connected to war (as well as nationalism).

Some teachers use annual holidays such as Martin Luther King Day or Cesar Chavez Day to highlight the concept of peace within a particular time period in history. However, aside from viewing a picture book on Martin Luther King at the elementary level or reading his *I Have a Dream* speech in middle and/or high school, students have very little exposure to understanding peace as a proactive model for national and international conflict. These intermittent and detached exposures to peace activists send a subtle message to children on how little peace is valued as a viable process for handling conflict.

Yet another strategy is to incorporate peace into the classroom through modeling peaceful interpersonal conflict resolution strategies. Several websites have been generated in recent years that provide sample lessons and curriculum ideas on issues such as bullying, peer mediation and conflict resolution <http://www.gigglepotz.com/peace.htm> or <http://www.bridges4kids.org/SC.html#3>. Although essential in helping students attain healthy interpersonal relations, strategies for bullying and peer advising are not being applied to international relations. As a result, conflict resolution strategies do not generate much credibility on the global scale. The message that resounds is that conflict may be resolved peacefully between individuals but rarely between countries (Hakvoort and Oppenheimer 1993).

National history standards place an enormous emphasis on understanding the major regional and global conflicts that have been resolved through war. Often these events are reduced to a cyclical pattern: an international conflict is presented, military intervention occurs to control the conflict, the situation is handled, and peace is created. Students are being exposed to what peace scholar Johan Galtung (1969) referred to as "negative peace" or a peace that is created, monitored, and modified by the fear of war. In

other words, peace becomes nothing more than a deterrent to war.

If international conflicts depicted in the curriculum are always followed with the onset of war, how can students attempt to visualize peaceful strategies as a way of resolving conflict between countries? Not only is war being presented as the only option with very little discussion on alternative methods, peace is being taught as a concept that is linked to war rather than existing independent of it.

Promising Possibilities

Given all the problems, it would be easy to forgive teachers for avoiding the issues of war and peace around us. But teachers cannot escape the fact that messages that condone war are being promulgated in our textbooks and media. Consequently, teachers who want to get their students thinking, independently and critically about the issues, need some alternatives.

First Steps

To begin, it is helpful to understand what is possible. As noted earlier, teachers worry that discussing the ramifications of war can be too controversial and may even create legal problems. What guidelines and support networks exist to help in these situations? The National Council for Social Studies <http://www.ncss.org> is an example of an organization that provides useful teaching strategies as well as helpful information on academic freedom and the rights of teachers and students. Teachers also can learn more about the parameters of academic freedom by researching district and state educational codes (Kalita and Ortiz 2003). Teachers must stay current on educational policy and issues as they explore alternative strategies.

Teachers also need to be honest about their own feelings and consider how they foster open dialogue without forcing their own views onto the class. We believe it's important for teachers to recognize that the exchange of ideas between students is much more valuable than the "textbook" answer or conclusion they often expect their students to reach. Once the teacher adopts the roles of facilitator and stimulator, the problem of indoctrination falls aside, and the teacher becomes confident in her ability to bring contemporary issues into the classroom. The educator's job is to get students to broaden their views, consider others' opinions, and reformulate and advance their own thoughts — in short, to get students to think. This cannot occur if controversial topics are avoided in the classroom.

Peace discussions in the classroom need to shift from focusing on "negative peace" to embracing "positive peace" (Galtung 1969; Barash 1999; Bar-Tal 2002). Education curricula built upon "positive peace" explores ways of maintaining balance at the personal, structural, and international levels. Such a curriculum connects the concept of peace with issues like equality, social justice, and environmental sustainability. It is a proactive and cooperative view of handling conflict without resorting to violence. Further, its focus is on accountability rather than blame. This definition of peace suggests a process of finding balance and does not rely upon war to construct its meaning. The following are what we believe to be the necessary components for discussing political conflicts in the classroom and for incorporating peace into the curriculum on a more substantive level.

Student Participation

Although it seems obvious to encourage student ownership and participation in the learning process, this method is often frowned upon when the issue of war is being discussed. Whenever tension occurs, we as educators tend to quickly dismantle its roots in order to maintain harmony. This compulsive tendency not only prevents meaningful contextualization from occurring but it also normalizes the status quo. As educators, we need to be comfortable with dissension. If we always strive for consensus, we will end up shunning students. Students need to be encouraged to have a voice when trying to untangle the confusion surrounding controversial issues like war.

Community Projects

Classrooms can be a safe place for meaningful conversations if teachers can establish an environment that honors student participation (Charney 2002). One of the critical links in engaging students is to understand how the "personal is political." Students need to realize that they have a role in contributing to problems as well as solutions. Reflective writing, active questioning, and community-based

projects are a few techniques that can encourage student participation and help them to develop linkages between personal experience, community issues, and global awareness (Vreins 1999).

The inspirational story of the Freedom Writers in Long Beach, California, is an example of how powerful student activities can become. Erin Gruwell, an inner-city English teacher at Wilson High School, was shocked to discover that her students knew nothing of the Holocaust. As a result, she and her students embarked on a year of in-depth reading, class discussion on social injustices, and international networking to bring to class speakers such as Miep Gies and Zlata Filipovic to share their personal experiences. Ms. Gruwell's students, known as the Freedom Writers, began to see how individual biases and local injustices can fuel conflict on the international scale. Once stereotyped as "potential dropouts," these students began translating classroom assignments into forms of activism. One of their projects included mentoring elementary and middle school students to choose the "pen over the gun" with the creation of the program, "Celebrating Diversity through the Arts" (Freedom Writers and Gruwell 1999). Upon graduating from high school, the Freedom Writers flew to Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia and Hercegovina, where they attended a planning summit with Muslim, Croatian, and Serbian university students to discuss ways of ensuring national and international peace (Erin Gruwell Education Project).

Broadening the Concept of Conflict Resolution

Part of understanding how individual contributions can make a difference is by broadening the concept of conflict resolution. Teachers need to help students connect interpersonal strategies used in the classroom (sharing, listening, compromising, and respecting property and opinions) to international conflict resolution. Currently, the realms of interpersonal and international communication are disconnected. If students can see respectful strategies that work to end bullying and conflict in the classroom, they are more apt to integrate these characteristics into conversations about solutions to international conflicts. "Leadership Profiles" are a good way of trying to assist students in detecting conflict resolution strategies used in international relations. This activity requires students to select a political figure and critically analyze his/her conflict resolution skills in the international arena. An example might be for students to examine the outcome as well as global impact of Mohandas K. Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, or non-violent movement, in India against the British. Students would be asked to evaluate what type of conflict resolution skills were used by Gandhi and how the outcome for India might have been different if he were to have used another strategy. This same assignment could be used for any political leader as a way of encouraging students to connect consequences to decisions in addition to exploring alternative conflict resolution strategies. Teachers may want to try this same exercise with students in analyzing President George W. Bush's decision to declare war on Iraq.

Linking Multicultural Education and Peace

Students are not going to prioritize solutions to international conflicts that attempt to honor all involved parties if they have not been exposed to learning about different cultures and practices (Quezada and Romo 2004). In fact, the only way students are going to get past the stereotyping that occurs between countries, especially witnessed during wartime (Zeligs 1955), is to learn how to look at issues from multiple perspectives. Learning about peace without embedding multiculturalism will only lead to a model of nonviolence that is shaped by assimilative motives (Shapiro 2002). One of the most practical ways of teaching students to look at the multiple perspectives involved in a conflict is to actually attempt to retell the story from another viewpoint (Carter 1995; Hoffman and Spencer 2003). This strategy is often used when trying to resolve fights on the playground, but it is seldom used when trying to understand the differing perspectives on international conflicts. Involving students in mock United Nations meetings or other interactive simulations as well as viewing primary literary sources are two effective techniques used in incorporating multiple viewpoints in the classroom. The History Alive! social studies curriculum provides excellent simulation and role-playing ideas for teachers to try (Teacher's Curriculum Institute 2004).

Critical Theory

Learning the standards, creating lesson plans, incorporating the text, and preparing for student assessments and teacher evaluations leave very little time for educators to step back and critically analyze what material is being covered in the required texts and how it is being presented. How, for example, are students becoming desensitized to violent acts, such as war, through their textbooks? Teachers as well students need to feel comfortable with critiquing the standard texts. What messages are evident concerning peace? What stories are being told and whom are they benefiting? What is being left out? What conclusions in the texts seem unjustified (Podeh 2000; Vriens 1999)?

Communicating as Educators

Educators across the globe are grappling with the issue of peace. How can peace be incorporated into curricula and educational practices? Very rarely do educators have the opportunity to interact with one another to share such ideas, yet, this interaction is critical. Exciting community and educational models are being generated in several countries to help students envision a more humane world. These models, emphasizing activism, illustrate to kids how they can become part of peace making processes. Students themselves have even begun creating such sites. Even though it is important to create models that are conducive to the needs of a particular area, age group, etc. (Bar-Tal 2002), it is beneficial to learn the varied cultural perspectives and approaches that exist on the topic of peace. Here are a few national and international sources to browse for ideas:

General Resources

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/links.htm (This page contains links to youth websites.)

http://www.freethechildren.org/peace/resources/websites.html (Free the Children is an international network of children helping children at a local, national and international level through representation, leadership and action.)

http://www.tolerance.org (This is a web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center offering a plethora of resources for teaching tolerance.)

http://www.saracameron.org (This website provides true stories from the front lines of the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia.)

Lessons/Activities

http://projects.takingitglobal.org/home/projectlist.html?CatID=14(Taking It Global is an international organization led by youth. This online community assists young people interested in connecting across cultures and making a difference in their world.)

http://www.cultivatingpeace.ca/pematerials (Classroom Connections is a non-profit organization dedicated to instigating positive societal change by strengthening the education and parenting of Canada's youth. This website offers many resources and lesson plans for teachers and others.)

http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/multi/mpeace.htm#PER (This website offers a detailed bibliography that includes teacher and classroom resources, picture books, fiction and picture storybooks, and peace links.)

Youth Activism

http://www.y2kyouth.org (This webpage offers a listing of a variety of organizations and events for youth involvement.)

http://www.radiantpeace.org/peaix.htm (This website provides a listing of peace education awards and includes student essays on the topic of peace.)

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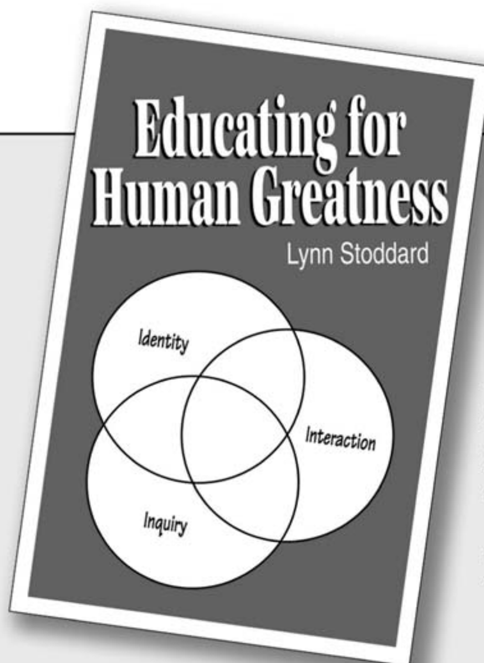

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Educating for Human Greatness

In this wise and perceptive book, veteran public school teacher/ administrator Lynn Stoddard surveys the current state of public education in America and concludes that things have gone terribly wrong. His solution is to have parents and educators start by realizing that standardization in education is neither possible or effective. Only then can they focus on creating schools that truly educate for human greatness.

To create such schools Stoddard proposes that parents, teachers, administrators and school board members keep six cardinal principles constantly in mind:

- Value Positive Human Diversity and Cherish Every Student's Uniqueness
- Draw Out and Develop Each Child's Latent Talents
- Respect the Autonomy of the Individual by Restoring Freedom and Responsibility
- Invite Inquiry, Curiosity, and Hunger for Knowledge in the Classroom
- Support Professionalism as Teachers Live by these Principles
- Parents and Teachers Unite to Help Children Grow in Human Greatness

Educating for Human Greatness deserves an honored place on the reading list of every parent who really cares about the future of their children, every teacher and administrator who puts students first in their professional lives, and every school board member who wants schools to be places where student development is a reality, not just a slogan.

Teachers as People

Janet Alsup

Holistic education advances the radical notion that teachers are human beings who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Feminist professors Cheris Kramarae and Paula Treichler (1990) have defined feminism as the radical notion that women are people. I would like to suggest a parallel statement about teaching: Holistic teacher education advances the radical notion that *teachers* are people. This statement has guided my approach to teacher education over the last nine years. Teachers are not just curriculum delivery workers (Ginsburg 1988) or educational service employees; they are not merely babysitters or people who chose to teach because they couldn't "do" anything else. Nor are they just professional intellectuals or skilled pedagogues. They are also human beings.

Is this just a statement of the painfully obvious? Of course teachers are human beings. What else could they be? However, teacher educators and administrators don't always approach teacher education with this recognition in mind. Instead of mentoring new teachers and preservice teachers with an eye to their emotional, social, and personal interrelationships with their new profession, they focus on the more objective, abstract components of effective teaching: lesson planning, curriculum planning, classroom management, and the like. They overlook the ways in which teaching involves the emotional, spiritual, and even physical aspects of the individual.

Many before me have also argued that a teacher's identity is a mixture of the personal and the professional (Britzman 1991; Danielewicz 2001; Bullough, Knowles, and Crow 1992). To ignore either part of the mix can result in an overly simplistic and unsuccessful teacher education program. For some teachers, such a merging of subjectivities is relatively simple; their personal lives and sense of self are generally congruent with the conservative expectations of most secondary and elementary schools. This is usually true for white, female, heterosexual suburb dwellers. But the fit between the self and institution

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isn't always so comfortable. What happens if you are a student teacher who doesn't look like the teachers in the school where you are working? Or act like them? Or value what they value? How do you develop a teacher identity that is both accepted by the school and also is palatable to you? How do you get and keep a job without giving up the very essence of who you are?

The definition of the teacher-as-martyr does not only apply to female teachers anymore; unfortunately, it also affects young men who enter the elementary and secondary school teaching profession.

I never encourage my students to capitulate — to give up the personal beliefs that are often the very basis for why they became teachers in the first place — in order to "fit in" with the stereotypical teacher culture of many American schools. Unfortunately, though, some students decide against teaching because they see the demands and expectations of most teaching as too narrow.

I have increasingly come to believe that we need to encourage teachers, as they focus on their personal selves and identities, to engage in a degree of selfishness. I realize this may sound terrible. Everyone knows teachers are to be selfless and willing to give of themselves — their time, money, and emotional energy. Isn't that what a good teacher is? One who gives and lives for his or her students? I don't think teachers should be uncaring and cold. However, I also think our cultural image of the self-sacrificing teacher, much like the image of the self-sacrificing mother, is outdated, unrealistic, and, frankly, a little frightening. The "self-sacrificers" will eventually give so much of themselves that they have nothing left to give, becoming bitter, empty reflections of their former teaching selves. Such teachers are commonplace — those who seem to dislike their students, their jobs, and themselves. Many didn't start out that way. They chose to become teachers because they thought they could make a difference in the lives of students. They probably started their first year (and maybe their second or third) with high, even idealistic, hopes about what they could do for their students and, yes, for the world. They probably worked long hours each evening and on weekends. But then disappointment and disillusionment set in. They might have seen some individual student growth, but not enough to satisfy their high hopes; and the other students who didn't seem to learn, who didn't seem to like their classes or teachers, and perhaps even complaints from parents and administrators wore them down. They began to feel frustrated and angry. Then, the self-protective instinct kicked in. "Well, if no one appreciates me, I'll just stop. To hell with them!" Hence, the metamorphosis into a bitter teacher and person whose negativity not only affects her students but also acts as a kind of poison to the teacher herself.

While this parable might seem oversimplified, I see students each semester in my English Education methods classes, mostly young women, who insist that a good teacher must give herself to her students by putting her students' needs above her own. This insistence on connecting good teaching with emotional and physical devotion always reminds me of how our culture construes motherhood. The mother's life is given meaning because of the life she has given to someone else; in other words, her life is important only because she has given it away. If a mother, or a teacher, decides to make a decision that benefits herself more than others, she might be labeled uncaring, self-centered, and even cruel. She has let down her peers, and she should feel much guilt about her failure. And many teachers and mothers end up blaming themselves for perceived failures, even when the outside world doesn't share their condemnation. The cultural imperative for women to sacrifice self for other is so strong that many women have internalized the belief.

This definition of the teacher-as-martyr does not only apply to female teachers anymore; unfortunately, it also affects young men who enter the elementary and secondary school teaching profession. However, historically, teaching was women's work, and most elementary and secondary school teachers today remain women. In 1989 Warren wrote that

70% of elementary and secondary schoolteachers were women; according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2003), in 1999-2000, 75% were women.

In any case, the burnout is real. With only half of new teachers' careers lasting longer than five years (Gordon 1991), teacher educators must worry about the retention of new teachers. Attention to the self and recognition that the teacher is a whole human being are essential elements in the development of a satisfying, rich and productive professional identity.

My Study

To explore the nuances of teacher identity, I recently conducted research into professional identity development by following the experiences of six preservice teachers in the English Education program at the university where I teach. Mine was an interview-based, qualitative study, taking place over three years of the students' coursework and student teaching internships. These six students all struggled in different ways with their developing professional identity and integrating their personal ideologies with professional expectations as they moved from being students to being teachers. They struggled with authority, issues of physicality, and long-held, unexamined notions of good teaching prevalent in their families and among their friends. They struggled with how to find their own way as teachers and integrate their personal priorities and ideologies with what they thought the teaching profession would demand of them. They struggled with how to maintain their idealism and hope in an institutional culture that they were learning was often stifling and hostile to change and difference.

In this article, I will describe my interview experiences with two of the teachers—Carrie and Karen (pseudonyms are used for all participant names).

Carrie

Carrie struggled with issues of embodying a teacher identity, and her frustrations were most often connected to her sexual orientation. Carrie was a self-defined lesbian, who came out in high school. She was worried about how her "butch" or masculine appearance would be accepted in the secondary English teaching community, especially by her colleagues, students' parents, and administrators. This concern about fitting into the culture created anxiety about teaching and seemed to increase Carrie's worry, which led to a lack of self-confidence in the classroom. The culturally scripted identity for a secondary teacher assumes heterosexuality, and usually marriage and children. A new teacher who is lesbian or gay might struggle with the notion of the compulsory heterosexuality of the American teacher and attempt to hide his or her lifestyle. In the Autumn 2004 issue of *Encounter*, William DeJean writes that fear was the common denominator for the five gay male teachers he interviewed about their professional experiences. Carrie did not want to live a closeted or fearful life. She wanted a professional life in which she could freely express her personal subjectivities.

Carrie also experienced tension between her personal and professional subjectivities when it came to the English language arts curriculum; for example, she wanted to teach feminist and queer texts to her future secondary school students. To Carrie, suppressing these goals amounted to personal hypocrisy and the elimination of much of her passion to teach. Carrie describes her frustrations and struggles in the following excerpt from our first interview.

> Coming from where I'm coming from, and looking to the future, I feel like when I start teaching, I'm going to have to change my appearance. Because I don't feel like I'm going to be accepted in a classroom the way that I look right now. I think that I could change my appearance, to a certain extent, without feeling like I was giving up part of my identity. If they expect me to go in to work every day wearing a skirt or a dress, and having my bangs teased out, or whatever, I'm sorry but—you know, I just—I couldn't.

While these details are perhaps overstatements about codes of appearance for secondary teachers, Carrie feels that her bodily discourse is not the accepted norm in the secondary school.

Carrie's situation is very difficult. The connections she needs to form are between quite diverse identity positions that often seem irreconcilable. Without strong mentorship at both the university and the sec-

ondary school levels (and perhaps even at home or within personal relationships), it is almost unrealistic to expect that Carrie would be able to create and express transformative discourse. To complicate matters further, Carrie comes from working class background that values vocational training and getting a living-wage job after graduation. Carrie wants and needs to explore her personal subjectivities and how they may intersect with various professional choices, but she simply does not have the leisure to do so:

> I grew up in a lower middle class family, and I very much understood money and happiness as being together. What I told myself is when I graduate, I can do whatever the hell I want. I have no responsibilities to anybody at that point. If I want to go to the boat — to the coast and work the boats, which, you know, has been this lifelong kind of battered-down dream — then I can do that. But then what I had to realize was that I'm going to be graduating with somewhere like twenty-five thousand dollars worth of student loans. With that there I need a source of income that at least is going to let me pay three hundred dollars a month for my student loans. And that got me down again.

Economic realities affect Carrie's professional choices in a number of ways. While she would like to take some time to explore personal and professional options, taking such time is an economic impossibility. Carrie told me several times that she would like to go to graduate school and pursue advanced degrees in Women's Studies. However, currently, she is working for a moving company, with no definite plans to further her education. At this time, Carrie's professional development is on hold.

Karen

Karen was a student who self-identified as a political conservative: a white, working class student from the Midwest who, prior to coming to the university, had very little contact with people different from herself in race or class. Karen was not given many opportunities to discuss her own racial and ethnic identity or grapple with how her race, class, and gender influenced her political or educational views. However, a lack of attention to the preservice teacher's racial and ethnic subjectivities is not the most effective way to educate a new teacher, especially one with little experience interacting with people unlike him or herself. An emphasis on false objectivity or a "rhetoric of sameness" in multicultural education courses can make preservice teachers less likely to think about and question their own subjective positions. Their own race or ethnicity is not the issue; the issue is a tolerance of the race and ethnicity of others, namely their future students.

By examining one's own various and particular subjectivities, a person might recognize that he or she does not define "normalcy" and that there are a variety of types of people in the world with whom he or she will be asked to interact. Karen felt that much of the discourse about diversity during her college education was nothing more than "politically correct" identity politics. In fact, she often used the phrase "political correctness" when discussing her teacher education or the policies that guide public schools. She seemed to believe schools were fearful of lawsuits and other societal retribution if teachers and administrators didn't engage in so-called politically correct language or behavior. Karen seemed to feel censored in her discussions of difference; it was as if she couldn't talk about certain things because she was a white person, and she resented the feelings of white guilt such politically correct attitudes made her feel. In many ways, Karen had a point: Had she been asked, or encouraged, to confront her own subjectivities or identity positions, she might have been better prepared to work with diverse students and parents upon graduation.

Toward the end of the study Karen took a middle school basketball coaching job at a middle school with primarily African American students, and she began to work through her ideological tensions. In fact, she wrote me a long letter in which she tackled them. In December 2002, she wrote:

> I have told you that I was called racist every day. But the situation was that from the moment some of the parents came into our first practice, or when they came into the parent meeting I held, they judged the fact that I was white.

Karen was beginning to understand that she also has a skin color, and that it might be an obstacle to communication in certain contexts. She was beginning to understand that skin color was not something that she only thought about in terms of the "other"; it was also something she had to understand about herself. In other words, she was starting to figure out how to live in her own (white) skin and in her own body, as a teacher.

For the first time in her life Karen was interacting with people different from herself, different from those in her hometown. And she didn't quite know how to deal with them. She had to remove several students from the basketball team because of disciplinary problems, and when those students were also the African American students on the team, dissension resulted. In response, she defended her own actions and her commitment to fair and equal treatment. She appeared to be trying in good faith to enact a multicultural pedagogy, but the theories she had learned at the university didn't provide her with the tools to enact them in the real world. She had little idea about how to translate a multicultural philosophy into pedagogical action. Unfortunately, Karen had no mentor while she was coaching who could assist her with this phase of her identity development. One course in "multiculturalism" and frequent admonitions to respect diversity were not enough to help her embody an effective and well-rounded teacher identity. Her unexamined whiteness, well as its connections with class and ideology, inhibited her transition from student to teacher.

The Power of Metaphor to Explore Self

During my interviews, I observed that asking students like Karen to provide narratives of their experiences may help them reflect critically on their developing personal and professional identities. However, it was my impression that visual metaphors hold the greatest potential for facilitating teacher identity development. The student participants created a visual, photographic metaphor for their teacher identities toward the end of my study (Spring and Fall 2002). I gave each participant a disposable camera purchased at Walgreens, and I simply asked them to take photographs (one photo or an entire roll of film) that metaphorically represented themselves as teachers.

The use of visual metaphors was not original with me. Since 1980, and building on the work of Lakoff and Johnson, interest has continued to grow about how the creation and analysis of metaphors can nurture teachers' self-understanding and professional growth (Connelly and Clandinin 1988; Bullough and Knowles 1991). Metaphors have been explored as tools to enhance teacher professional identity development. When the students in my study were asked to create photographic images representing themselves as teachers, all six created and expressed metaphors that showed evidence of the meeting of divergent discourses, namely the personal and the professional.

Karen took two back-to-back photos — a local middle school building and a local river that runs through the town in which she lives — to make a point about her understanding of teaching and learning. She described the two pictures in this way:

> I think I took a picture of the school just because it's everything that I don't want to be. Just institutionalized teaching, I think that it's censored, and it's politically correct, and it's just everything that I don't want to be. I don't want to have certain hours; I don't think that teachers are on a clock. It's just not me. I don't know. And I don't like the hierarchy of schools, like, "I am the teacher, you are the student." I don't like that. There are just a lot of things about the actual school and how institutionalized it is that I don't like. The status differences between the students, you know? The cliques. Not showing the students exactly what it is that they are doing. I think that it's a societal thing. I think that society has its own cliques and everything, but the school doesn't do anything—schools don't do anything to intertwine people, and that's what I want to do.

> Well, I was thinking about water, actually. And how, you know, it's always changing forms. Sometimes it's evaporated, it's frozen, it's liquid. It's always moving, it's always changing in some way, almost spontaneously. It travels all over the world and it's in this huge cycle, and I chose to take a picture of a river, because that transports it [water]. Takes it from the streams to the river to the ocean, where it's evaporated and comes over the land again. I was just kind of thinking that's what I want to be. I want to be different forms to different people, and I want to try to move through the waterways and get to different people and show them what I believe. I took those [pictures] back to back.

Karen saw the two photographs as binary opposites: The first was what she doesn't want to be as a teacher and the second what she does want to be. I believe these metaphors are bridges, of a sort, between her philosophies of education and her narratives of experience, embodiment, and tension. I believe she was working out, though the metaphors, how she might be and what she might do as a teacher. She was exploring how she could make her beliefs about education consistent with her personal experiences as an educator. Her conception of teacher is bigger than a school building, and she saw herself as a teacher outside of the school walls, rather than inside.

She sees herself being a different type of teacher to different students and being unrestricted by building policies, political correctness, censorship, or time. As her narration of her experiences as a basketball coach demonstrates, Karen is still struggling with education in a traditional setting. However, Karen's paired visual metaphors demonstrate her willingness to go beyond social expectations and become more of a fluid presence — one might say a real person — who meets the needs of individual students. Her challenge is to enact her new, more complex teacher identity in a real-life professional setting.

At the conclusion of my study, I realized that asking preservice teachers to create and reflect on visual metaphors for their teacher identities could be a powerful discursive exercise as they attempt to connect their personal and professional subjectivities. Perhaps using metaphor is one way teacher educators can help preservice teachers develop a satisfying and productive teacher identity that both honors their personal beliefs and ideologies while also allowing them to meet the demands of the teaching profession, even if they choose to be an educator in a non-traditional forum.

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Do Free Schools Promote Chaos?

A Study of the Albany Free School

Kristan A. Morrison

Free schools are the educational expression of pure democracy in action.

The other night, I was channel surfing when I came across one of the religious stations and stopped. A Catholic archbishop was saying, "There is a type of education guaranteed to create juvenile delinquents — and that education is called 're-gressive education.'" Now, I have heard of *pro*gressive education; in fact, my recently completed dissertation dealt with progressive education, but I had never before heard the term *re*gressive education. After explaining how it permits all kinds of wanton freedom, the clergyman asked the audience if they knew who the founder of regressive education was. I was poised to hear "John Dewey," but he wrote on the chalkboard "Professor Lettem B. Brats." Although the archbishop ostensibly meant this as a joke, he hit a nerve with me, for I have quite frequently found myself on the defensive against similar critiques of progressive education and non-traditional forms of education.

People constantly seem to believe that progressive education, and the free school branch of it in particular, is characterized by the qualities described by the clergyman in the TV program: chaos, a total lack of discipline, and uncontrolled individual expression. Having studied the free school branch of progressive education in some detail, I know that such characterizations are untrue, so I take every opportunity I can to explain the true nature of these unique schools. Unfortunately, in today's standards-based and conservative restoration atmosphere, the defense of free schools is a lonely endeavor. But I know that we must defend what we believe in, so I will step up to the soapbox once again in this essay. My defense will draw upon my study of the Albany Free School in New York, where I spent three months as a teacher intern during the 2003-2004 school year, an experience that deeply informed my dissertation.

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What Are Free Schools?

I first encountered the free schooling or unschooling philosophy when I read A. S. Neill's *Summerhill School: A New View of Childhood*, and then roamed into the works of John Holt, Ivan Illich, George Leonard, John Taylor Gatto, Matt Hern, Chris Mercogliano, George Dennison, and Daniel Greenberg. Basically, free schools are places where the children are not compelled, as they are in traditional schools, to follow a standardized curriculum. Children in free schools are permitted to choose what, when, and how they study something. If they so wish, they do not have to attend regularly scheduled classes, take tests, or get grades.

Free school proponents argue that traditional schools are structured and organized around incorrect notions of learning and knowledge. Learning, to free schoolers, is not the memorization of "objective" facts that have been broken down into discrete, fragmented chunks. Instead, learning is the construction of knowledge or meaning through activities that stem from an individual's choices and interests. By constructing knowledge, individuals also construct themselves, a process called individuation (Lamm 1972). And in being allowed to individuate, these students are in a better position to help create a positive world, a world different from the one we now have.

Free schoolers further argue that when traditional educators force kids to memorize and then regurgitate fragmented information, the students are being forced into a mold of what it means to be a person in our society. More often than not, the knowledge imposed on students does not long remain, but the molding of their identities does. Can't we all remember times when we memorized something for a test and immediately after the test forgot all about it? We *did* learn something from these experiences, not specific academic content, but rather the lessons of the hidden curriculum—the unstated norms, values, and beliefs of the society, such as "do as you're told without question," and "get into the practice of seeking extrinsic rewards, for that is what real life in a capitalistic society is all about" (Giroux 1978; Vallance 1974; Jackson 1968; Illich 1971; Gatto 1992; McCarthy 1979). According to free schoolers, there is no notion of progress in the traditional educators' conception of education; schooling is for perpetuating the status quo. Free schoolers, along with other proponents of progressive education, question the moral rightness of perpetuating status quo systems in a society with very different intellectual, political, and moral ideals. These educators argue that education should foster the pursuit of truth along many different paths, promoting creativity, openness to conflicting perspectives, and the development of strong critical capacities.

Chaos?

When talking about my dissertation on the Albany Free School with people who have little understanding of progressive education, I am seldom able to get past saying that the kids don't have to go through a standardized curriculum or have to attend regularly scheduled classes if they so wish. At this point, many people seem to lock down. They ask, "Isn't such a school awfully chaotic?" or "Don't you think kids need to learn that when they get older and enter the 'real world' that they won't be allowed to do whatever they want all the time?" Like the clergyman, they assume that free schools simply allow children to express their instincts, drives, desires, and urges and that the adults in such schools exercise no discipline. Such an assumption is not totally unfounded; in fact, *some* free schools in the past tended in this direction. For example, Valerie Polakow Suransky, in *The Erosion of Childhood* (1982), described a free school in which the students were given free license, and teachers did nothing to suppress even the most disrespectful and anti-community actions of the students for fear that any assertion of adult authority would be tantamount to violating the ideology of freedom in the school. Ron Miller, in his 2002 historical study of free schools, found that a number of these schools faltered because of this dialectical struggle between authority and freedom. However, these schools and these instances were examples of situations in which the participants had only a partial understanding of the underlying free school ideology or philosophy. A. S. Neill wrote a follow up book to his best selling *Summerhill School* entitled *Freedom: Not License* in an attempt to clarify the free school philosophy. This book and my study of the Albany Free School illustrate how free schools

are not by default places of utter chaos, but rather places that constantly deal with a dialectical tension between freedom and authority, and that can, out of this tension, develop a synthesis in which students and teachers productively work together.

The Albany Free School

The Albany Free School began in 1969, really as a homeschool. A woman by the name of Mary Leue had a son who was unhappy with his school, one of the "better" schools in the Albany area. He asked his mother to teach him at home and she agreed. After a bit of bureaucratic wrangling, Mrs. Leue got official sanction for home schooling her child and he became "perhaps the first legal homeschooler in the modern history of New York State" (Mercogliano 1998, 5). A friend of Mrs. Leue soon asked her to take on her three children who were also unhappy with their schooling experiences and thus the school was born. Over the next few years, Mrs. Leue shifted from schooling these children, and others who later joined, in her home to schooling them in one old parochial school building and then in a second, where it continues to this day. The school grew in student population over the years and finally settled into the size it is now: approximately 55 pre-kindergarten to grade eight students and about seven to eight paid teachers, a paid cook, and numerous temporary and full-time volunteer/intern teachers.

The baseline philosophy of the school developed out of the teachers' beliefs about education and society. Many of the teachers had read about and been intrigued by A. S. Neill's Summerhill School, the Modern School (anarchist) in New York City at the turn of the century, and the histories of various other holistic/progressive educational movements, and they wanted to develop a school that exemplified some of the tenets of these schools and movements. Also, Mrs. Leue and the other teachers were very much active in the struggles for democracy and humanity that arose in the 1960s and they wanted a school that typified the values of those movements: dignity and autonomy for all people through empowerment and individual choice, as well as a sense of communion with others and the natural world.

> Mary [Leue] envisioned an egalitarian model in which kids would be free of competition, compulsory learning, and social class-based status rewards. She thought that school should be a place where the students could choose responsibly from open-ended sets of options, because only in this way would they ever learn to chart their own life courses. (Mercogliano 1998, 9).

My Observations

From August to November 2003 I was an intern teacher at the Albany Free School. The staff of this inner-city school, which has a majority of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch, allowed me (and, in fact, warmly welcomed me) to be a participant observer in their midst. I took part in the full life of the school and tried to become a Free School teacher in my thinking and actions. During my time at the Albany Free School, I tried to explore virtually every aspect of the school, ranging from the inherent assumptions about learning and knowledge, the roles of the teachers and the students, and the content of the curriculum, to the materials used and the coordination of learning settings and timings. My observations of the school's governance, the students' curriculum choices, and the avenues for students' emotional development provide powerful evidence that free schools do not "naturally," by virtue of their philosophy, decline into places of chaos and uncontrolled license.

Governance

At the Albany Free School, each person's voice or opinion is equally valued in discussing rules and practices and there is no hierarchy of individuals. For example, prior to the September beginning of the 2003-2004 school year, all teachers and intern teachers met for two weeks to get the school ready for the new year (painting, cleaning, and rearranging the physical space) and to affirm and create procedures for the year. We discussed a number of new procedures and rules at considerable length. I remember being surprised that the co-directors of the school did not come in with a pre-set agenda of items to be discussed. True, they each had topic ideas in mind, but so too did all the other staff members, and each item was given equal consideration. One new rule discussed at length was that the children would not be permitted to play computer games unless the

game could be proven to be free of mindless repetition and to have educational merit. Also students were not to play handheld video game devices (e.g., Nintendo Gameboys) during the school hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Another rule was that students could not pay others to do their lunch duty; they had to take their turn. A final new rule was that outside food or drink was not permitted simply because too many kids the previous year had eaten too much "junk food," and too many wrappers and bits of food were found lying about. All these rules were added to the list of rules in place from previous years, which included:

- The "stop rule." If a person (student or teacher) was doing something to another person (student or teacher) which that latter individual did not like, then the latter had the right to tell the former to stop. If the person would not stop, then the "victim" could call a Council Meeting.
- Running and loud noises/activities are only allowed in the backyard as they are too disruptive inside.
- No cursing in the backyard, and in public in general, out of courtesy to the neighbors.
- No harassing the neighbor's dog.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Sign out all games.
- No kids in the supply closet.
- Respect stop signs on doors. If there's a stop sign posted on the door to a room, that means that a focused activity or lesson is going on and no one is to disturb until the stop sign is removed.
- Lunch duty. Each first through eighth grade student has one day a week in which he/she must take part in cleaning up the eating area after lunch is over.

On the first day of school, the first through eighth grade teachers and students all sat down together in a room and discussed the old and new rules. There was a bit of grumbling on the part of the kids about some of the new rules, but upon hearing this, the teachers were quick to assert, "There are no victims here! If you don't like a rule, then you know that you can call an All School Meeting at any time and attempt to change the rule democratically." So, while teachers and staff did initially set the governance tone for the school year, the students were invited to re-shape any of the rules and procedures. All School Meetings enabled students to get involved and voice their concerns on all school operations and policies. These meetings are called whenever a student or teacher wishes to call one, or they can be planned in advance. The meetings are not mandatory, so when students and teachers hear that an All School Meeting is going to take place they choose to attend or not. The All School Meeting begins with the selection of a chairperson. The chairperson then asks for agenda items and lists them on the board, after which each item is discussed and voted on.

Education should foster the pursuit of truth along many different paths, promoting creativity, openness to conflicting perspectives, and the development of strong critical capacities.

During the three months I was at the Free School, the students called only one All School Meeting, which dealt with the rules banning hand-held video games and outside food and drink. In this meeting, only about six students initially attended, whereas nine teachers (mostly interns who were curious about how such meetings were run) were present. As the meeting went on, though, some teachers left, and other students joined in. After much discussion, votes were taken and two new rules were passed: Handheld video games could be played between 2 and 3 in the afternoon, and candy and gum consumption would be allowed in school. Both these rules included student-suggested amendments that imposed some limits or consequences (for example, if candy or gum wrappers were found lying about,

then the ability to have gum and candy would be suspended for two weeks for the whole school; and if handheld video game playing went on prior to 2 p.m, then the game would be taken away from the individual for a week).

Decisions made at All School Meetings are binding and are enforced by both teachers and students. If a violation of one of the rules (new or old) occurs, anyone has the right to call a Council Meeting to discuss what happened and decide as a whole school what should next occur. Power of governance (rule making and enforcement) is thus held equally in the hands of both students and teachers at the Free School.

Curriculum Choices

The Albany Free School encourages students to choose and develop their own curricula. Many people who hear about this characteristic of free schools incorrectly jump to the conclusion that the students don't learn what they need to know (i.e., don't learn the traditional academic subjects). On the contrary, Albany Free School students actually experience a much richer and fuller range of subjects and activities than they would in a traditional school, and they also learn traditional academic subjects.

Traditional Academic Subjects

Students at the Albany Free School come into contact with the traditional subjects and skills in a number of ways. I will describe some of the key avenues.

Student Requests

Some students explicitly request to be taught traditional subjects or skills, such as algebra, geometry, and arithmetic (multiplication and division especially), handwriting skills, history, literature, and science. I and other teachers worked with a number of the students on these subjects. For example, some fourth grade girls asked to work with me, for a while quite regularly, on memorizing their multiplication tables and doing long division. And nearly all the students worked on reading either in a phonics class, like the ones a teacher named Missy often taught to her 1st and 2nd grade students, or by being read to and practicing reading oneself in various settings.

Teacher Suggestions

Exposure to traditional school subjects also occurs because of teacher suggestions. Teachers frequently ask students if they wish to read something, or practice some skill, and teachers also quite often bring in materials or activities in certain subjects that might pique the students' interests. For example, in October, Missy proposed a spelling bee, which excited and involved a number of the students. Teachers make such offers as these out of their own personal interests in the subjects, but also out of personal interactions they have with the students, which indicate to them that the student may also be interested. For example, a 7th grader named Loman and I were speaking one day and he mentioned that he had recently purchased a survival kit at an Army Navy surplus store. I, too, am interested in survival gear and stories and I asked if he had ever read the great survival story called *Hatchet*. He said he had not, and initially he did not show much interest in reading it with me, but I occasionally raised the idea at later points in conversation with him and he ultimately expressed some interest in reading the book, which we (and other students who were intrigued by the topic) proceeded to do. We later went on to read the sequel to *Hatchet*, called *Brian's Winter*, and another survival story called *The Cay*.

Free Play

Ironically, much of student exposure to traditional subject matter occurs through free play. Early in my involvement with the Free School I began teaching a couple of six-year-olds, Colleen and Ajay, how to play chess. They were very keen to learn because many of the older kids played semi-regularly and they were intrigued by this game that so many seemed to enjoy. Once they had learned the rudiments of the game, Colleen and Ajay often asked me to run a "Chess Practice" session with them, which basically involved them playing against one another and me watching, correcting, and advising as they went along. In one of our first chess practices, Ajay and Colleen asked me to "keep score." Puzzled at first by this request — I was not familiar with keeping score for chess — I told them you do not, generally, keep score, but we could figure something out. So I wrote the name of each game piece on the chalk-

board in the room, and assigned each one a relative point value (e.g., pawn, 1 point; bishop, 10; queen, 15; king, 100; and so on). When the children captured a piece, I asked them what piece it was and what point value it had. These were six-year-olds who were in the process of learning to read, partially phonetically, and so they would say the name of the piece, recognize the letter sound they heard at the beginning of the name, and then look on the board and pick out the piece that started with that letter. Then they would recognize and read out its point value and I would write down that point value. Then when the next piece was captured, I said something like, "OK, you have four points and now you got one more for that pawn. How many points do you have now?" And so the students added in their heads or on their fingers and declared their score. Now, where did the activity of chess turn into a reading lesson and into a math lesson? They were all of one piece, flowing fairly naturally one from the other.

Besides chess, the school has an excellent collection of games that gives kids practice in math, spelling, word formation, handwriting, creative writing, and categorization. Besides such standards as chess and checkers, the school has the games of *Life* (which involves a lot of counting), and *Scrabble* (great for spelling, vocabulary development, and math for keeping score); and then some more unique games such as *Quiddler* (a card game somewhat similar to *Scrabble* which involves spelling, word formation/vocabulary development, score keeping, and logic for strategies), *Blink* and *Set* (both are visual perception/categorization games), and the games of *Once Upon A Time* and *Dungeons and Dragons* (very detailed, creative storytelling games). Free play unconnected to games also develops academic skills. For example, playing with *Legos* builds students' spatial understandings and artistic senses; and playing "made-up" games develops students' imaginations and verbal skills.

Free play also means free interaction with others, including adults, and a great deal of academic learning occurs during such encounters. Kids simply stumble on to academic subjects over the course of the school day. For example, one morning in early November, I was sitting at a computer writing a letter about some apple pies that a group of students and teachers were planning to make in order to raise some money. One of the 8th grade boys, Walter, wandered over to where I was and was just watching me as I typed away. Apparently he was reading over my shoulder, for he made some comments about the contents of my letter, quibbling over certain points and arguing that I should phrase something differently. This got us into a discussion of semantics and composition. We talked about run-on sentences, the effective and ineffective uses of repetition, and so on. In essence, we had a mini-composition and grammar class from this, perhaps 20 minute, unplanned interchange.

Another example of this sort occurred when 6-year-old Sarah helped me carry out my lunch setup duty one day. She came upstairs with me to set up the tables, and I had her write labels for the vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods and also had her count out silverware for each table. At one point, she ran out of forks at one table, so I asked her how many additional forks were needed. This required her to do a bit of arithmetic. So, just in helping me set up lunch, Sarah got practice in her handwriting and her mathematics skills. (For a discussion of children's spontaneous construction of arithmetic through free interactions and practical life activities, see Kamii 1985, Chapter 8).

Field Trips

Field trips also provide the students with opportunities to come into contact with traditional academic subjects. The students at the Free School have ample opportunities to leave the school building and go on field trips both to places within walking distance and those farther away. I frequently accompanied students to the New York State Museum, a quick five-minute walk from the school. At the museum are extensive displays on such things as the 9/11 tragedy (which teaches history and reading in that the students have to read the descriptions, or be read to), the Iroquois and Mohawk Indians who are indigenous to New York (teaching history, cultural studies), the minerals and gems of New York (which teaches science, and geology), the birds of New York (which teaches science/zoology), fossils found in New York (which teaches prehistoric botany and zoology, and geology), and neighborhoods of New

York City (which teaches social history and cultural studies).

The teachers also plan frequent hikes and nature walks to various locales both inside and outside the city and the teachers quite often give little explanatory lectures on the botany, geology, and zoology of an area as the field trip progresses. More mundane field trips also give the kids exposure to traditional subjects. For example, shortly after the school had made a trip in October to pick apples at a nearby apple orchard, a group of students and teachers decided to make apple sauce. We had the apples, but we also needed some spices, and sugar. So a group of three children (one aged 6, and two aged 11) and I walked to the neighborhood grocery store where we did some reading of aisle information and labels, comparison pricing and addition to figure out what we could afford and what was the best deal. Errands to other various neighborhood locales, such as the post office or library, again provided students with some exposure to traditional academic subjects and skills (most particularly reading and math).

The curriculum choices the students make through activities such as field trips, free play, and requested or teacher-suggested classes, personally connect the students to the knowledge they are gaining. Because the knowledge comes from their own personal interest and choice, students value it more. How different from the traditional school, where students usually feel so disconnected from their lessons! Moreover, the Free School students' frequent exposure to traditional academics gives lie to the common view that when students are allowed to freely pursue their interests their learning lacks rigor.

Not only do the Free School students come into contact with traditional curricular content, they also take part in activities and subjects that tend to be valued less by traditional schools — subjects such as physical education, the arts, practical living, and their own emotional development.

Physical Education

In traditional schools there is some attention paid to the students' physical bodies, but not a great deal. For example, students do get classes in physical education, but the time devoted to this is relatively minimal compared to the amount of time students are expected to remain largely stationary. There is little recognition in traditional schools of how important physical movement and physical expression are. Physical education and recess time notwithstanding, traditional schools, broadly speaking, do not value the body; in other words, they place little value on the concept that all knowledge is body-mediated and a person can learn a great deal by focusing on and using his/her body. A significant mind-body split is evident in traditional schools, with the mind being valued much more than the body. The hidden curriculum in traditional schools teaches children to ignore the needs of their bodies; and thus children in these schools become alienated from their own physical selves (Shapiro 1994).

The Albany Free School, by contrast, allows for a great deal of physicality. The Free School students have the freedom to move their bodies and experience things kinesthetically all the time. They can wiggle and dance and run and lounge and stretch and stand and sit whenever they like (within the limits of safety and respecting the rights of others). The Free School teachers believe that a child's free movement is necessary to his/her growth and emotional well-being. Thus I saw a great deal of physical movement in the kids themselves, in terms of moving freely from room to room and moving freely while in a class setting. I want to make clear, however, that the free movement of the students was not frenetic or chaotic, as many critics of free schools assume. Such frenetic movement, I believe, only occurs when children who are tightly reigned in are given rare moments of freedom. Then, bodily expressions virtually explode out of the children for they have been so bottled up prior to this moment of freedom. In contrast, at the Free School the kids' movement was very "natural" in appearance, and by this I mean the movements were expressions of the children's ages, their temperaments, and the activities in which they were involved in.

There is a strong recognition at the Free School that physical play, by oneself and with others, is healthy, normal, and vitally important to children's growth. Opportunities abound for the children to take part in somewhat organized physical games (such as basketball, football, soccer, baseball, ultimate frisbee, and a Low Ropes course) and in many other not so organized movement activities (such as

riding skateboards or scooters, hiking, walking, tumbling, swimming, gardening, playing dress up, running around the parks, playing on swing sets or jungle gyms, and outside horseplay). At the Free School, the children integrate their physical selves into everything they do, and their bodies thus become a source of learning as well as the content of that learning. Physicality is both a subject and a manner in which subjects are learned.

The Arts

The arts are another of those subjects or approaches to learning that show up to a small degree in traditional schools, but which infuse free schoolers' visions of what schools should be doing. The Albany Free School values the arts as a means of expression and as a vehicle for personal growth, and it embraces all sorts of artistic expressions, including movement, music, crafts, and sculpture.

There is an art room in the school that is filled with materials for drawing, painting, sketching, sculpture, pottery, and collages. Students do need to request supervision for use of the supplies, but most teachers are happy to oblige them. Teachers also frequently offer activities in the art room, such as making junk-item or nature-item sculptures, pottery classes, plaster carving, printmaking, sewing, knitting, origami, and mask making. Students also take part in film making with the school's digital camcorder and software for editing movies.

The Free School also provides musical opportunities for its students. On occasion I would sing songs with students as we sat doing another activity, like drawing, knitting, or sewing. Around the winter holidays one of the parents establishes a chorus and practices with them. There is a piano in the one of the rooms that kids are free to play, and, while I was there, two of the 7th/8th graders had piano lessons as apprenticeships. Some teachers play the guitar and can often be found playing them and singing and offering to teach how to play the guitar to students who show an interest. Other teachers are into drumming and will frequently bring a number of drums with them to school and they and a group of students will engage in impromptu jam sessions.

The Free School teachers also provide students with many opportunities to observe professional and amateur artists in action. While I was at the school, there were numerous field trips to plays, dance performances, art museums, and outdoor and indoor sculpture parks.

Practical Life

Another subject area or activity that often falls outside the normal scope of traditional school and which the Free School students may choose to come into contact with is the study of "real world" issues. The Free School is not a place where one just learns the 3Rs, and where one never learns how to truly live in the world. The Albany Free School provides opportunities for students to learn practical living skills and study subjects that will aid them in understanding their world. If students show an interest in activities such as cooking, automobile repair, bicycle repair, gardening, then the teachers help them seek out opportunities to practice and develop those skills. Students also explore the world outside the school through the many offered field trips, including all the ones already mentioned, as well as trips to the local soup kitchen, the city dump, the police horse farm, and a nearby bird sanctuary. All the students also get practice in economics by planning, organizing, and raising funds for their various class trips. Each class works as a group, putting on events like dinners, bake sales, and movie nights to raise the funds needed for everyone in the class to take part in the trip.

Emotional Expression and Conflicts

Critics of free schools complain not only about freedom of curriculum choices; they also contend that the schools are overly permissive and chaotic because they allow children to freely express their emotions. However, at the Albany Free School, the student expression, whether it has to do with subject interests or interpersonal emotions, must always be tempered by concerns for the community. For example, a child is not permitted to indulge in personal interests in a manner that infringes upon the rights of others (such as monopolizing an activity or damaging another's property). Nor is a child permitted to express her anger toward another in an unfettered, "out of control" way (such as hitting or verbally abusing another child). If a child does begin to in-

fringe upon the rights of others while she is expressing herself, then there are some well-established options that the infringed-upon can initiate in response. These mechanisms include Council Meetings, the Problem Wall, and the Wrestling Mat.

Council Meetings

Council Meetings are an outlet for anyone (student, teacher, or staff member) who wants to resolve a conflict. The meetings may be called at any time, and everyone must drop what they are doing to attend. The meetings are run by Robert's Rules of Order and last for as long as it takes to solve the issue. In these meetings there is great emphasis on the students becoming able to deal with problems by naming their feelings and acting truthfully on them, sorting through alternatives, and understanding and empathizing with others.

The Problem Wall

In one of the rooms in the school, half of a big chalk board is called the Problem Wall. Here, the only things that can be written are problems particular students are having. In most cases these are problems over which students do not wish to call council meetings, but are problems that are bothering them nonetheless. The problem remains written on the Problem Wall until it is somehow resolved. For example, two six-year-olds (Ursula and Sarah) were having trouble getting along with another. Apparently, one day Sarah had shoved Ursula, but Ursula did not want to call a Council Meeting, I think because she was intimidated by the formal procedure, so I suggested that she write her problem on the Problem Wall. She told me what she wanted to say and I helped her to spell the words as she wrote them on the board. Later on that morning, Sarah recognized her name on the board and asked someone what was written. Upon hearing it, she got mad, and wanted to have it out with Ursula. A teacher intervened and they had a mini-council meeting, just the three of them, to resolve the problem.

The Wrestling Mat

Another outlet for working through conflicts is the Wrestling Mat. The wrestling mat, I found, served as a way to express aggression in a controlled setting. Although physical fighting itself is not outlawed at the school, I rarely saw it happening. The teachers, when they saw a fight brewing, would attempt to engage the children in exploring alternative ways for them to express their aggression, and one such way was a timed and refereed wrestling match. I noted in my journal one day in early October that

> I observed Missy mediating a fight between Dierdre and Sarah [both six years old]. Apparently they had both hit each other. Missy exhorted them to use their words. She got out the story that Dierdre had told Sarah that she didn't want to be friends with her. So Sarah hit her and Dierdre hit back. Missy told Dierdre how hurtful those words were, but also told Sarah that hitting was not the right thing to do. She said that if they wanted to use their bodies, then they could do so on the wrestling mat first thing tomorrow.

The two girls did wrestle the next day and at the end of their match they were both all smiles.

Emotional wholeness thus becomes another nontraditional subject at the Free School, while at the same time this "subject" serves to allow for community control/cooperation, and serves to work against chaos and over-permissiveness.

Conclusion

I will probably never know if the TV clergyman I observed was speaking about free schools, for I turned the channel too soon. But I do know that many people share his views. They, too, view free schools as bastions of license. My experiences, however, suggest that free schools are much more complex. They foster the growth of individuals to make choices, think for themselves, express their true feelings, and resolve conflicts while working within the context of the larger community.

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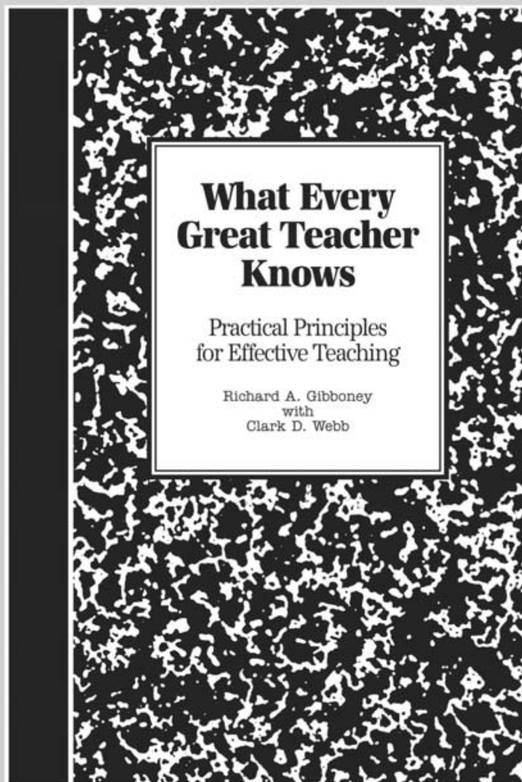

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Educating from Within

The Inspiration of Janusz Korzcak

Leora Trub

Korzcak's legacy extends beyond the the death he voluntarily suffered with his students and includes his habit of respecting and empowering the children in his care.

This summer was the fourth time I stepped into Janusz Korczak's orphanage in Warsaw, Poland, with the same trepidation and fear. While desensitization had dulled my emotions at other Holocaust sites, this visit to the orphanage was just as spellbinding as it had been in the last three years.

As I entered the large rectangular room, with its high ceilings, I was immediately drawn to the back wall, which was covered with black and white photographs of the children. As always, I had difficulty reconciling the pictures of well-dressed, well-fed children, their happy grins stretching from ear to ear, with images normally evoked by the word *orphanage*.

And I felt an even greater contradiction: The happiest children evoked in me the deepest sadness, and the greatest repugnance. Sweetly and innocently, the children played on, smiling for the camera, unaware that their lives would be cruelly cut short as gas would fill up inside their young lungs. As in past years, I found myself propelled towards the laughing eyes of the same small girl, captured by the photographer in the fleeting moment when a child diverts her focus from a game of tag or hide-and-seek, revealing the shape and texture of a child's pure enthusiasm and joy. Once again, as my eyes locked into hers, I was held captive. I wanted to look away before the inevitable buildup of pressure in my eyes and my head, caused by the threat of tears.

But I didn't, as I never do. Instead, I was ripped from the present, and hurled into Warsaw, August 5, 1942. The same girl appears before me, walking solemnly, her once laughing eyes now aged and cheerless, clutching the hand of the only parent she has ever known, Janusz Korczak. One hundred and ninety two children, toting little flasks of water, books, diaries and toys in silent resistance of their

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condemnation to die, follow solemnly in the slow procession. Led by Korczak and seven teachers, the children sing as they march, waving a flag with the Star of David high above their little heads. They do not try to run away; they do not cry; they simply huddle closer towards their father, trusting that he alone will protect them from the evils that lie ahead.

Korczak's decision to die is just one piece of the puzzle in the attempt to understand him as an individual whose educational philosophy was an extension of his self.

I follow the girl as she travels a path of no return, a path haunted by the ghosts of the thousands of prisoners who traveled it before her. It begins at the orphanage, located in the Warsaw ghetto, and ends at the Umshlagplatz, where trains are systematically deported to the death factory of Treblinka, where 800,000 prisoners — mainly Jews and a few thousand gypsies — will be killed in less than one year of operation (Dawidowicz 1975, 149; Gilbert 1982, 169).

Once at the Umshlagplatz, a German hands Korczak a piece of paper signifying permission to return to his home, for a bribe has been pre-arranged for the prominent doctor and writer two years prior. But Korczak shakes his head and waves the German away, refusing to leave his children even for a moment, lest they panic without their father, now 64 years old. His decision is regarded with disbelief; surely no sane man would ever give up his very life for children who are not his own.

Korczak and his children climb into the cattle car, and, swaying with the movement of the train, the children listen to Korczak tell them one last story in which good prevails over evil. They disembark to the stench of decaying bodies, emanating from piles of putrefying corpses of those who were shot and awaiting mass graves because the gas chambers did not work fast enough (Lifton 1988, 347). By now, even the children with the strongest faith must tenderly accept their fate.

As both a student and Holocaust educator, I suffer from the all-too-familiar craving to comprehend the extent of human cruelty, a task at which I am destined to fail. In the eerie post-Holocaust heaviness that now saturates the orphanage, tormenting myself by confronting the children leaves me with no greater understanding.

Nevertheless, it is here — not in Auschwitz or other site of major atrocity — that I feel the greatest pull. Four thousand other children from institutions in the Warsaw ghetto were also deported on that fateful day, but it is Korczak's 200 children who will retain a visible historical presence. For me, the orphanage is a memorial that enables my terror to be clouded by reverence: reverence for a man whose morality saw no bounds, whose life and self-imposed death overcame Nazi brutality with pure goodness. The pictures of the children are testament to the heroism and selflessness of the father.

The righteousness of the last decision Korczak would ever make is undeniable, but one who finds heroism only in Korczak's death acutely fails to grasp his heroism in life. Misha Wroblewski, a teacher who was last among the survivors from the orphanage to have seen Korczak alive, made the following point years after the war:

> You know, everyone makes so much of Korczak's last decision to go with the children to the train. But his whole life was made up of moral decisions. The decision to become a children's doctor. The decision to give up medicine and his writing career to take care of poor orphans. The decision to go with the Jewish orphans into the ghetto. As for the last decision to go with the children to Treblinka, it was part of his nature. It was who he was. He wouldn't understand why we are making so much of it today. (Lifton 1988, 10)

It is crucial to keep in mind that his last decision, while extraordinarily powerful, may be but the strongest illustration of a lifetime filled with moral convictions and actions. In living testament to Wroblewski's words, Korczak's decision to die is just one piece of the puzzle in the attempt to understand him as an individual whose educational philosophy was an extension of his self.

In the Winter 2004 issue of *Encounter*, Joop W. A. Berding accurately depicted Korczak as a flexible educator and experimenter: Korczak constantly evaluated his educational techniques in search of how to best understand and meet the needs of his students. I am grateful to Berding for his efforts to resurrect Korczak from a place of neglect, for American educators have failed to recognize his magnitude up to this point. I offer the following remarks in attempt to join Berding in continuing to flesh out the sheer brilliance of Korczak's educational philosophy, which I believe would deeply benefit any educator or other person who is committed to bringing meaning and social justice to today's children.

Recognizing Children as People of Today

Korczak's educational philosophy rested upon the following doctrine:

> Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. The unknown person inside each of them is the hope for the future. (Joseph 1999, 4)

Korczak's conviction that loving a child is unavoidably linked to respecting that child's autonomy was central to his development of progressive orphanages designed as just communities in prewar Poland. It laid the bedrock for his establishment of a court of peers, which ran according to the following code of forgiveness:

> If anyone has done something bad, it is best to forgive. If it was done because he did not know, he knows now. If he did it intentionally, he will be more careful in the future…. But the court must defend the timid against the bullies, the conscientious against the careless and idle.

One thousand articles followed in the court's code, ranging from most lenient to harshest in their judgment. The punishment for the first 100 articles was only the court's disapproval; for articles 200-800, punishment ranged from the posting of the name of the guilty on the bulletin board to being deprived of privileges for one week and having one's parents summoned. Article 900 forced the guilty to find a supporter among the children to vouch for him, and Article 1000, which was only known to be used only once or twice throughout the years, carried a verdict of expulsion (Lifton 1988, 133-134).

Children were given the right to protest punishments or decisions made by adults, and could call for judgment upon themselves, any child or teacher, or any grownup. The accused would be tried in a court of peers, the judges appointed by drawing lots among those who had not had a case brought against them during the week. Korczak, who established the court with the intention of teaching his children respect for the law and for individual rights, was himself tried on a number of occasions (Lifton 1988, 136).

The founding of the first national children's newspaper was likewise guided by the same principle, designed by Korczak to alleviate in children their lack of confidence and fear of self-expression. Children not only were the writers of *The Little Republic*, but made up the entire editorial board as well (Cohen 1994, 286). It was a code that fed into his work in juvenile courts defending children's rights, and his controversial psychological testimony in defense of a boy who killed his principal, for Korczak saw the boy as the victim of an uncaring, insensitive adult (Lifton 1988, 143).

Korczak had no patience for the insensitivity of adults to children, and thus created a children's republic whose rules served the children, not the adults. Educators hired by Korczak found themselves assigned to do the same chores as the orphans, and many were shocked to find that the patience Korczak had with the children did not exist for them when they disobeyed a rule, like coming late for dinner or curfew. New educators were given three months to prove themselves before the children voted on whether or not they could stay. As Korczak wrote (1992, 179), "A teacher eagerly adopts the adult's privilege: to keep an eye on the child, not on oneself; to register the child's faults, not one's own." Korczak afforded his teachers no such privilege, who knew better than to act out of anger or internal strife when dealing with a child, however unwittingly.

The high — some would say too high — expectations that Korczak had of his educators was decid-

edly contrasted by his reasonable and highly realistic expectations of children. As previously pointed out in the discussion of his court of peers, Korczak expected children to make mistakes and believed in forgiveness above all other methods of upholding justice. For example, if a child had a fight, Korczak did not make that child promise not to fight ever again; rather, he and the child would together come up with a goal that was realistically within reach.

He had no patience for the insensitivity of adults to children, and thus created a children's republic whose rules served children, not adults.

He did this by establishing a gambling casino, where each child bet on a personal bad habit with the goal of overcoming it. The wager was a few candies. One week, an eight-year-old "rascal" named Jerzy bet Korczak that he would only have one fight during the week. To which Korczak responded that he could not accept such an unfair wager, since the child had beat up at least five boys each week for the last two weeks, and it was unlikely that he would win. He suggested that the boy try for four fights, and after quibbling back and forth, they compromised on three (Lifton 1988, 125).

By helping his children set realistic goals for themselves, Korczak greatly increased each child's chance for success, leaving the child empowered to feel in control of his or her own actions. In this case, had Korczak accepted Jerzy's original bet, the child, after getting into one or two fights early in the week, would realize that winning the bet was futile, and he would make no further attempt to control his impulse to fight. By raising the number to three, Jerzy was allowed to make mistakes with no retribution; in fact, he could get into three fights and still win his bet! This would facilitate his setting limits for himself, taking greater care to control his impulses.

Korczak understood that insistence upon a child's ability to always be rational was in essence placing the child under adult expectations that simply are not attainable. Korczak saw that children are used to making trite promises which they know they will not keep, propelled by their inherent sense of the insensitivity and unforgiving nature of the adults in their lives. In reversing this, Korczak showed his children that he implicitly trusted them, and respected them enough to only allow them to make demands for themselves that were reasonable.

This level of insight into children was prophetic; Korczak achieved something that would take decades to find its way into mainstream parenting and teaching, much less public policy. He felt it was wrong to take advantage of a child's subordination in any way, and demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the delicacy of the relationship which develops between adult and child. He wrote,

> If a child trusts you with his secret, be grateful. For his confidence is the highest prize…. But do not extort it, for the child has a right to his secret. Do not plead or threaten, as each is equally bad. It will not bring the child closer to you, but rather move him away. (Joseph 1999, 6)

By leaving behind the adult world of pragmatism and rationality, Korczak gained access into the fantasy world of children. In his orphanage, Korczak allowed children to choose their own portions of food, but insisted that no child leave any food uneaten on the plate. Helinka, a normally well-behaved child, habitually ignored this rule by leaving her crusts uneaten. Joseph Arnon, an educator who worked under Korczak, remembered his boss coming to him and asking him why he thought Helinka didn't eat her crusts. In effort to impress Korczak, Arnon suggested many possibilities, but Korczak rejected them all, speculating instead that Helinka endowed the crusts with special mystical powers. Together, they approached Helinka and learned that she was afraid that witches lived in the crusts, which her grandmother had told her about.

Faced with the task of proving to the child that there were no witches, Korczak assured her that

> witches do not live in these crusts. They would never dine in such a humble place as ours. Witches eat caviar in castles in the mountains, very far from here, or in royal palaces like the

> ones our kind used to reside in. So now you can eat all your bread. (Lifton 1988, 149)

Korczak's response would likely be admired by contemporary child psychoanalysts. It worked on two levels. First, Korczak accepted the existence of witches, thereby bringing himself into a common understanding with Helinka. If he hadn't respected her belief, his chances of convincing her that it was okay to eat the bread would have been greatly diminished. Moreover, Korczak did not undermine the credibility of the child's grandmother. He understood that Helinka wouldn't overcome this childhood phobia if it meant compromising her relationship to the grandmother (Lifton 1988, 149).

Roots of His Insights

Korczak's insights into children grew out of his own experiences as a child and of his early observations of other children. As a young boy from an assimilated Jewish family, Korczak (who was then Henryk Goldszmit) was disgusted by the way children were treated by adults from the very first time he entered a school building. This compelled him to write of the powerlessness of children, subjugated and suppressed in a world filled with adversarial adults. Driven into his internal world due to the difficulty of confronting his reality of a mentally ill father who was in and out of institutions and the death of his grandmother, Goldszmit avidly kept a journal and immersed himself in writing poetry when he was a teenager (Lifton 1988).

He first started working with children as a tutor when his father's medical bills began to threaten his family's financial stability, and here he found his calling. He began to write pedagogical articles motivating parents to take a leading role in shaping their children's minds and character, and described strategies for helping children love to learn. After his father's death, Korczak entered medical school, but did not stop writing. He chose the Polish surname by which he is still identified today. Frustrated by his medical school professors, whom he found to be pompous and detached from the suffering and anguish of their patients, Korczak began to devise his own method of interweaving the sensitivity of his writing into action. He began talking to impoverished children on the streets of Warsaw, listening to their tales of how they were driven to lie and steal by poverty and neglect. He decided that children could only be saved through education in the younger years, and wrote his first novel, *Children of the Street*, to explicate this belief (Lifton 1988).

Obsessed with the suffering of children, Korczak would go on to write many texts which have became treatises guiding educators and other adults in how to love and teach children by using a methodology now referred to as moral education. As one of the first to argue for the need for a declaration of children's rights, echoes of Korczak's ideas in *How to Love a Child* (1919) and *The Child's Right to Respect* (1926) suffuse the Declaration of the Rights of the Child drawn up by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959. In these writings, Korczak demanded that children have the right to respect, to love, to live in the present, to make mistakes, to fail, to be taken seriously, to be appreciated, to have secrets, to be educated, to resist educational influence that conflict with his or her own beliefs. (Lifton 1988, Appendix).

Korczak did not consider himself to be a teacher, but rather an educator, characterized by a life's pursuit to draw something greater out of his students, and not an hourly worker getting paid to drill information into children (Lifton 1988, 145). It is a distinction that is appreciated today in the world of education, and Korczak will forever remain a visionary for educators, psychologists, and even parents looking to infuse their children with a love for learning through kindness, patience, respect, and love. Likewise, we depend on our children for guidance in this process; as Korczak said, "Without the participation of experts we won't be successful. And the expert is the child." (Korczak 1992, 174)

An Illustrative Case

Year after year, I step back in time, doing the best I can to recreate what went on in Korczak's orphanage in prewar Poland for 50 American high school students, most of whom will only travel to Poland once in their lifetime, and will remember a tiny fraction of the names and places they learned when they are there. Once, a tenth grade girl showed me her journal, in which she had written,

> Korczak seemed to me to be a God-like figure, breathing new life into children who probably would have been good as dead had they been placed in any other old orphanage…. I am sure that these children would have been doctors and lawyers and writers….

This student understood the significance of an educator in a student's life. I, too, cannot help but think that Korczak's children would have grown up to be extraordinary adults: the heroes of our time, who would have integrated sensitivity and justice into science, education, law, or whatever their life's pursuit.

But I wish to stress Korczak's belief that children will only be able to fulfill their full potential if adults recognize their autonomy and capacities *as children*. In the spirit of Korczak, I offer the story of Craig Kielburger, whom I believe to be a prime example of what a child who is kept safe from condescension and low expectations, can accomplish. In 1995, this 12-year-old resident of Toronto opened the newspaper and happened upon an article that shocked him: 250,000 children around the world were being used as slave laborers, and the punishment for speaking out could lead to murder. Craig's horror was akin to what one might expect of any child — or adult, for that matter. What made Craig palpably *unlike* other children, however, was that, undeterred by his age, he decided that it was his responsibility to do something. He got some friends together, and they founded an organization which they called *Free the Children*. They started by petitioning world leaders to help end the exploitation of children, writing letters to newspapers, posting flyers in public places and giving speeches in schools and community groups about what they had learned.

Six months after the founding of the organization, this 12-year-old impressed 2000 union members so much that they donated $150,000 to help build a rehabilitation and education center in Alwar, India, for children who were freed from slavery as carpet weavers. Two months later, Craig — who still wasn't allowed to take the subway by himself to downtown Toronto — convinced his parents to let him go to South Asia, where he met personally with child laborers and got their input on how children in other countries could help them.

It's incredible that it was a 12-year-old boy who spearheaded these efforts, which has now blossomed into a large, active organization, based on Craig's belief that all young people should have a voice and an opportunity to participate in issues that affect them in their communities, their country, and their world. What made this particular child so different from his self-involved, Nintendo-playing, 12-year-old counterparts? What made him care so deeply about children in countries on the other side of the world whom he would never meet — that he alone decided to do something about it? How did he come to believe that he really could make a difference? Was it that he had such an inherently outstanding and unparalleled proclivity towards caring? Or was there an adult in his life who believed in him, who enabled his belief in himself?

Korczak demanded that children have the right to respect, to love, to live in the present, to make mistakes, to fail, to be taken seriously, to be appreciated, to have secrets, to be educated, to resist educational influence that conflict with his or her own beliefs.

By no means do I claim that all children have the capability or the drive shown by this child. But I strongly believe that we must ask ourselves these questions, and allow the impact of their answers to dictate our approach towards believing in our children. In an introductory letter explaining the goals of *Free the Children*, Craig Kielburger (1995) wrote,

> Through the hard work of dedicated young people and remarkable adult supporters, the organization has quickly grown into a unique international network of children helping children with 100,000 youth involved in 35 countries. The phenomenal growth of *Free the Children* has proved that young people want to

> be involved in social issues and have the necessary skills and talents to affect positive change. In the past, however, the infrastructure and opportunities for young people to do so were missing. *Free the Children* has filled this gap, and as a result, the work of the organization directly affects the lives of over one million young people every year. A special thank you to all of our supporters for believing in the ability of youth to become active global citizens.

Kielburger was remarkable in that he was not content to wait until adulthood to pursue great things. As Korczak believed, so Kielburger worked to prove to people that children are not merely the adults of the future, but the children of today. In his undying devotion to his children, Korczak would in the end be forced to die with his children. But his cause continues to live on in the educators of today, who are honored with the worthy and demanding task of bringing forth righteousness and astounding capability from the youngsters of this generation.

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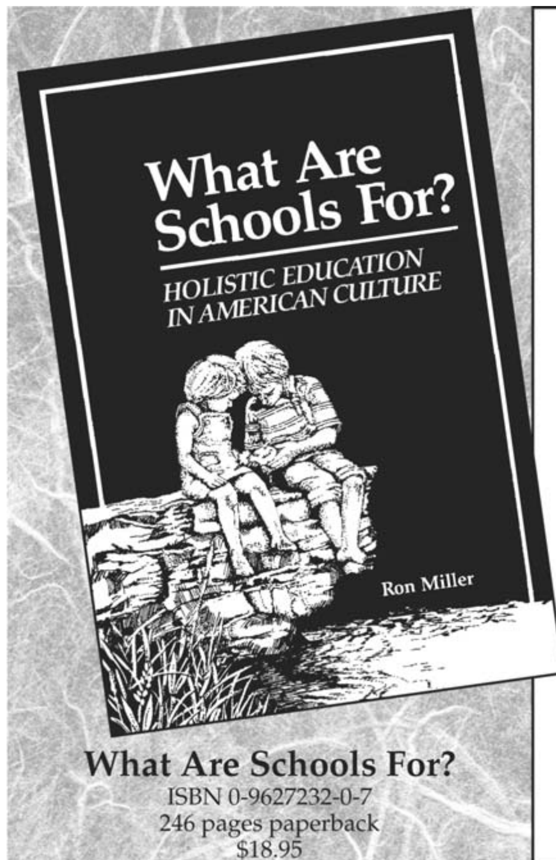

What Are Schools For?

Holistic Education in American Culture

by Ron Miller, Ph.D.

This is the definitive history of holistic education and its pioneers over two centuries. Ron Miller, founding editor of *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*, provides a thorough overview of the various educational movements founded on person-centered, progressive, global, and spiritual principles. Using a broad American Studies perspective, Miller explores the cultural worldview underlying mainstream American education and carefully describes, point by point, how holistic education approaches offer a radical alternative. *What Are Schools For?* is a stirring call for a revolution in American education.

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Contemplative Practices in Teacher Education

John P. Miller and Ayako Nozawa

Contemplation is a form of self-learning that helps students deal with the stresses of life and makes teaching a joy and delight.

> Contemplation is the highest expression of man's intellectual and spiritual life. It is that life itself, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness and for being.
>
> —Thomas Merton, 1972

In this paper we will address the question of how contemplation and other spiritual practices can be integrated into higher education and teacher education in a manner that is respectful of people's spiritual and religious beliefs. Contemplation is defined here as "beholding, often with a sense of awe and wonder, where we become one with what we are seeing."

Why Contemplation and Spiritual Practices In the Curriculum?

Our main argument for including contemplation and spiritual practices in the curriculum is that they offer an opportunity to make our education truly holistic. Although we give lip service to educating the whole human being, in fact much of our education system is limited to head learning. One could argue that even this form of learning is very limited and in many cases our elementary schools focus only on the acquisition of a few basic skills and factual recall. This form of learning is driven by primarily an economic agenda. We constantly hear the mantra that

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students need to be trained so that they can compete and participate in the global economy. This narrow vision of education has played a role in the corporate corruption that we see today. With the emphasis on individual achievement and test scores our system is basically one of student competition. Our students today are rarely exposed to the larger vision of what it means to be a human being inhabiting the earth and the cosmos.

This was not always the case. Pierre Hadot, the French philosopher, makes the case (2002, 65) that ancient philosophy was not just an intellectual exercise but was primarily a spiritual practice: "To live in a philosophical way meant, above all, to turn toward intellectual and spiritual life, carrying out a conversion which involved "the whole soul" — which is to say the whole of moral life." Philosophy then could be called an education of the soul. Hadot describes various spiritual exercises and forms of contemplation that Greek philosophers pursued in their work. One form practiced by Pyrrho involved self-talk; another was simply being silent, a form that Socrates practiced.

The stoics liked to practice an expansion of the soul into the cosmos; they would contemplate on the stars. Marcus Aurelius (Hadot 2002, 204) wrote:

> To embrace the paths of the stars in our gaze, as if they were carrying us along in their revolutions, and constantly to think of the transformations of the elements into one another — such representations purify us of the stains of terrestrial life.

We believe that the Greek academy and the ancient Buddhist University of Nalanda can help us find a new vision of the modern university. Nalanda was founded in the 5th Century BC in what is now northern India and at one point it had 10,000 students and 1500 professors. At Nalanda meditation was practiced along with scholarship as the university contained both libraries and meditation halls. The senior author had the opportunity to visit the ruins of Nalanda in 1993 and you can still see the outline of these halls and the libraries.

Contemplation in Teaching

Since 1988 the first author has required students in two of his graduate courses to meditate. These are courses for experienced teachers in the area of holistic education. The courses are not required but electives in the program. The rationale for this process is based on several principles in an attempt to move away from just "head" learning to reaching the whole person.

One important reason for requiring meditation is that it can be a form of self-learning. For example, vipassana meditation is based on the notion that we can learn and grow by simply mindfully watching our own experience. As we notice our own thoughts and agendas, we can gain deeper insight into ourselves and the nature of experience. In this context, meditation is a form of inquiry. In contrast, the model for much of learning at the university level is that the professor and the text are the authority and the student must learn from these authorities. Meditation provides one alternative to this model and instead recognizes that we can learn from ourselves and our own experience.

Another reason for engaging in contemplation is that it allows students to deal with the stresses in their lives. Research indicates that meditation is an effective tool in enhancing physical and mental well being (Benson 1976; Walsh 1999; Murphy and Donovan 1997) and given the pressures that students face today this aspect of meditation should not be overlooked. The vast majority of students in classes taught by the senior author have seen the positive effects of contemplative practice in simply being able to address stressful events that come up in their lives. For example, consider the comments of a secondary school vice-principal who faced many stressful events during the day. He wrote in his journal that as the pressures of his job increase he finds the "*need* to engage in meditation more frequently."

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

> You do not feel set off against them [the students] or competitive with them. You see your-

> self in students and them in you. You move easily, are more relaxed, and seem less threatening to students. You are less compulsive, less rigid in your thoughts and actions. You are not so tense. You do not seem to be in a grim win-or-lose contest when teaching.

When we teach mostly from our egos, our work inevitably becomes tense and frustrating; conversely, when we teach from the original Self our work can become an act of joy and delight. Teaching from this deeper place, we experience connections with our students and our colleagues. The rationale for Self-based teaching has been explained in other contexts (Miller 1993; 1994; 1995).

Introducing Meditation to Teachers

Students are introduced to six different types of meditation which include meditation on the breath, lovingkindness (sending thoughts of peace and wellness to self and others), mantra, movement (e.g., walking), visualization, and contemplation on poetry or sacred texts (Miller 1994; in press). Some students work out their own forms and integrate meditation within their own spiritual or religious practices. Although sitting meditation is encouraged, some students do movement meditation. For example, one student swam every day from a meditative stance. Whatever form students choose, meditation can be seen as letting go of the calculating mind and opening to the listening mind that tends to be characterized by a *relaxed alertness.* Once the students have settled on a method they are encouraged to work up to about 30 minutes a day of meditation practice. As already mentioned, the senior author also introduces students to the Buddhist lovingkindness meditation where thoughts of well-being are sent to oneself and others. Each class begins with this meditation and students are encouraged to begin or end their own individual meditation with it. Finally, students are also introduced to *mindfulness* practice which is being present in the moment in daily life. This means focusing on what we are doing without falling into automatic pilot where we can function without awareness. Mindfulness can lead to deep attention or what Csikzentmihalyi (1990) calls the flow experience.

To date over 1200 students have been introduced to meditation practice in these courses. Only two students have asked not to do the assignment; one student had been sexually abused a year before and did not feel comfortable with the practice. The other student was a Christian fundamentalist. Thus far, in informal feedback, a small fraction of the students have described initial ambivalence," but there has not been a student who has reported an overall negative experience with the practice during the course. Most of the students are women (80%) in their 30s or 40s. While most of the students come from Ontario, but there have also been students from Brazil, China, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Lebanon, Japan, Kenya, Korea, and Malta. Students come from a variety of religious backgrounds including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Judiasm, Muslim, and Native American. The majority, though, are Christian with Catholicism being the largest denomination.

Students are required to keep a journal which focuses on how the process of meditation is going (e.g., how the concentration and focus are going, how the body is feeling, etc.). The journals also focus on how meditation has affected them. Some of the themes (Miller and Nozawa 2002) included

- Giving themselves permission to be alone and enjoy their own company
- Increased listening capacities
- Feeling increased energy
- Being less reactive to situations and generally experiencing greater calm and clarity.

A few years ago we completed a study that involved interviewing students who had continued with their meditation practice. The study focused on the following questions.

- What is the nature of your meditation practice? (e.g., type and frequency)
- Have you engaged in any meditation instruction since the class?
- What have been the effects of your practice on your personal and professional life?
- Have you experienced any difficulties or problems with the practice?

Letters were sent out to 182 former students asking if they would be interested in participating in an interview related to these questions. Because the research project involved a face-to-face interview, the study was limited to former students living in the Toronto area. From this group 40 letters were returned because the students had moved. In the end 21 former students (17 women and 4 men) agreed to participate. Of the 21, eleven were teachers at the elementary or secondary level, four were teaching at the post-secondary level, four were administrators, and two were consultants.

The participants were interviewed by the second author. The interview lasted between 30 and one and 90 minutes. To supplement the information gathered from the questions above, the following material was also collected: (a) meditation journals from the course, (b) summary reflections on the meditation submitted as part of the course, and (c) the interviewer's reflections on the interviews.

At the time of our study, only one of the 21 students had discontinued meditation practices. All the others were continuing with it at least two years after they had taken the courses, and most of our sample were still practicing meditation at least four years later. Sixty-two percent of the students reported that meditation helped them become more relaxed and calm in their work and their personal life. Many of these teachers stated that they were less reactive to troublesome situations in the classroom (Miller and Nozawa 2002). Although the study is in no way definitive because the sample was small and consisted of a self-selected group of voluntary participants, the findings are congruent with the general research on meditation cited earlier (Benson 1976; Walsh 1999).

We would like to now to present profiles of three of these students and have chosen students who come from different backgrounds in terms of culture and religion to demonstrate how contemplation can be introduced to people from various religious and spiritual backgrounds.

Sally

Now retired, Sally was a principal at a public elementary school from K-6 for four years when she took part in the study. A quarter of the school's population were special needs students. She felt that "the job of the principal is to reflect and that principal should be calm, as once she loses it, everybody else has permission to lose it."

She started meditating using a simple form of breathing in my class. She did it when she felt stressed. She said: "When I move into a meditative state, I feel a little energy, or I feel something in my brain that happens, in my body that happens. And I'm there. And I'm aware of this shift." Three times a week, she also was practicing Reiki, which is a form of meditation for her. She first learned it in order to handle children who were out of control through touch.

She described herself as a very intense person and the meditation helped soften the intensity. One person at another school said that she was lighter, and calmer. She works toward that softer and calmer nature in her role and tries to see things in terms of community. She based much of her work as principal in a holistic perspective. Sally comments that "The issues of connections, balance, and inclusion and voice…. It's through those holistic education principles that I see the school, and how I see the teachers and the children."

There was a teacher on the staff who is Buddhist who had a strong impact on Sally and the school. He chairs the junior division meetings and serves tea there. There is emphasis on simply being present, an important Buddhist practice, at these meetings.

> It always starts with a calmness, there is no agenda…. It's just being there and being together. It's not team-building, it's just kind of being together, it doesn't have a name.... I think the way that people treat each other is so important here. We adapt to change, and embrace change, we don't resist — we look for being present to everything.

Sally does not believe in putting a label on herself when it comes to her spiritual beliefs. She has had many different influences in her life. One book that had an important impact on her life was Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*. Some of the literature in leadership has also been important, particularly *The Tao of Leadership* and Daniel Goleman's *Primal Leadership*. Her husband has also been a significant influence in her life.

She is convinced that that meditation is very important for leaders. She realized how important it is for people to see that leaders can cope with difficult situations.

> It takes long time for people to get calm, but they won't get calm if the leader isn't calm.... It makes you more creative in your problem solving; for example, out-of-box thinking. And it makes you more equitable. You see the staff as real individuals, real human beings.

She tries to get consensus with her staff rather than laying a decision on the group. "We just talk it out and see what they want to do.... We don't have to make decision right away, and we let everybody be included…."

In her personal life she feels that the meditation allowed her to cope with very heavy demands of being a mother of three, a wife, a graduate student, and a principal. It made a difference in softening her at home and in her personal life.

> My husband said to me on Saturday, "You're really anxious, you should meditate…. That's provided the balance for us in a relationship…. We kind of sort stuff out in terms of problem-solving in a gentler way within.

She feels that finding time for meditation is a challenge. Going home in the car, she let meditation and a contemplative state of mind sift through what happened in the day. She also listens to her favorite Bruce Springsteen CDs, such as "If I Should Fall Behind" or "Tougher Than the Rest," which has ideals and values that she believes in. She uses them just like a mantra.

> I was crying … if one of the teachers falls behind, let's walk in stride, it is hard to see your footsteps. And you walk through life, and sometimes life is hard. And so if I should fall behind, reach down, wait for me, and I'll wait for you…. That gave me that image of people all moving through life together, and if someone drops back or gets lost, then people reach down to bring that person forward.

She is humbled when she sees how the music reflects reality.

Diane

Diane is from Panama where she was raised as a Catholic, a religion that she still practices. She worked as a teacher for 11 years in her home country and in Canada she taught Spanish for four years. Now as the general manager of a very big international company, she meets a lot of agents and brokers every day and travels all over Canada and the USA. She is also completing her graduate degree in the field of second language acquisition and teaching.

Before meditation was introduced in the course, she was a very busy woman, running from one place to the other. She said that she never paid any attention to anything more than fifteen minutes. Diane says: "I even cry when I believe that I missed so much of my kids' time when they were babies. I don't really remember that well, because I was on the move all the time."

Since the class, she has been meditating every day for 25 to 30 minutes using visualization and breathing exercises, which she says made a tremendous change in her life. She feels the need to be mindful and to care about people, nature, and everything around her. She says that she now honors everything that gives her life and everything that lives. She says she learned to even appreciate the experience of how the air moves her hair.

> …the impact on me is very powerful. I remember one day that I just watched my kids. I watched them sleeping, I observed them, for so long. I looked at their eyes, nose, hair…they look like angels.… Sometimes I just sit down outside and look at the skies …[and] I remember that everything is grace.

She describes her change as coming from the inside and how mindfulness has affected her.

> I hear sounds that I never heard. I hear the animals; I listen to everything that is there, that I never paid attention to before. I touch and feel…. I know that I'm living and I don't have a word to express what this means to me really.

When she sees people on the subway she does the lovingkindness meditation. She said: "When I see each person in the subway, I look at them and pray

for them. And I see a brother and a sister, and a family everywhere."

She talks about the change in her professional life as a teacher and a manager.

> And in the classrooms … I'm not there just to give a lesson. I'm there to give love, and to care. And I know that they see me, more than a teacher now. They have a mother, friend, someone to trust them….

She mentions that how she listens to others has changed.

> I used to talk non-stop, not even listening to others..... I have learned to hear. I listen to my students. Now I know who has a grandfather here and who doesn't…. But it's so important for me now to just sit down with my students.... Whatever they want to tell, if it makes them feel good and relaxed.

She says that the transition from a hectic woman to a peaceful one was hard at the beginning yet, she kept the practice because she is convinced of its positive benefit. She does not regret the change at all.

Nadia

Nadia comes from a Muslim country, Kuwait. When she was living in England during the Gulf War in 1991 she volunteered to teach people in her own Kuwaiti community. She also taught family and friends when they needed help. Since she came to Canada, she has taught ESL to people in her community. Now she is focusing on studying the piano and music theory.

She uses walking and breathing meditation, repeats mantras, and tries to bring mindfulness into daily life. Much of her practice focuses on mindfulness and she has found it very helpful in practicing the piano. Nadia comments:

> The mindfulness really helps, because it is simple and can be an integral part of whatever I'm doing, even cooking. I do the cutting; I focus on the smell of the vegetable. It brings me joy, even when I wash the dishes; it makes me happier when I focus. I drift off, of course, but then I bring myself back.

In her personal life, she points out that her family was influenced by her meditation practices since she and her husband learned mindfulness together. She said, "My husband was enlightened by many of the things I learned and passed on to him. He helps me a lot in his own way…. We learned mindfulness together. He easily incorporates it in his daily activity."

Her husband said that she is changing a lot from what she used to be. She used to worry a lot and now she is trying to focus on the moment rather than being absent-minded and anxious. When she went back to Kuwait, a few of her family members noted that she seemed more relaxed and happier.

> It changed my life a lot in many ways from the inside. I know I'm less anxious and worried, and whenever I let my mind work in the future or in the past, I get upset again and down, and then I have to bring myself back. When I'm thinking of the past or the future …I can simply bring myself to the present with a few breaths, breathing deeply, and then focusing on the moment and just doing it without letting thought distract me; that's very helpful for me.

Nadia is more mindful now, and she finds it easier to be present. She reminds herself whenever her mind drifts off to come back to the present. The more she becomes mindful, the easier it gets to include mindfulness in her daily activities. She thinks that it is our nature to be in the moment as young children are naturally mindful. As people get older, they change because of many factors, such as trying to meet the expectations of others.

She explains that an element of the practice is simplicity, which we cannot complicate by using a lot of words. The next comment describes that the important lesson is in the experience itself:

> I don't need to even describe it, that's the good part. We understand it and we do it. Quieting the mind, actually, is very important. I don't think we have to, though. It's not, "have to," because that's what brought me to trouble in the first place. If any thought comes in, you don't force it out, you let it smoothly go out. It's not having to or forcing something.

What she says relates to accepting what seem to be obstacles. She talks about accepting herself:

> It's OK…. That's one of the things I'm beginning to tell myself. It's a very powerful thing for me. When I make a mistake, I am very critical about myself, and this is what I'm changing, and I know it's in the process. I'm telling myself it is OK when I make mistakes.

She adds that allowing ourselves to be who we are can be difficult. "Sometimes we need permission from others to allow ourselves to rest and be who we are. This is very difficult." Meditation seems to help in the process of accepting ourselves.

Finally, Nadia comments on the relation between her faith and the mindfulness practice.

> In Islam, there are many instructions that Muslims are encouraged to do. For example, when we want to enter a room, it's encouraged to enter with the right foot first, and say a kind of short prayer…. I believe that these little prayers and acts are a way to stay present, to be mindful of what we're doing. So, I think that mindfulness is an integral part of any religion.

For Nadia, then, meditation and mindfulness support religious practices.

Conclusion

This research describes one way teachers can go beyond the narrow vision of the human being that dominates today's educational rhetoric. As mentioned earlier, the ancients in Greece and India had a broader vision of the academy; however, we need to find a holistic vision that is appropriate for our time and the pluralistic nature of the world community. There are many ways that a broader and more inclusive approach to learning can be restored to the academy and we have offered just one in this paper. We encourage professors and teaching assistants to explore other forms of contemplation and holistic learning. Our small sample findings and case studies indicate that contemplation and spiritual practices can be offered in a non-dogmatic way in public institutions and deepen the educational experience.

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Reasons to Turn Off the Screen

What a Mother and Child Psychiatrist Has Learned

Mary G. Burke

How television affects children can be glimpsed by asking what TV is really teaching youngsters, what children are *not* doing when they are watching, and how TV affects their brains.

When I talk to parents and teachers about television and children, I divide my discussion into three parts: (1) What children are learning while watching TV; (2) What they are *not* doing while watching — that is, how screen media might interfere with developmentally important activities; and (3) What watching the screen is doing to their brains. I will review the first two topics briefly, for they have been well documented by numerous other researchers, and spend more time explaining the third.

What Children Learn by Watching

Of significant concern is aggression. Even G-rated shows (with the exception of those specifically written for preschoolers) contain large amounts of aggression (Yokata and Thompson 2000). Aggression on TV — and in movies and video games — is attractive, generally goes unpunished, and is presented as an effective tool for solving conflicts (Yokata and Thompson 2000; Villani and Joshi 2003). The evidence that children become aggressive after even moderate TV screen exposure has been demonstrated repeatedly, both in large sociological studies and in smaller controlled studies (Villani 2001;Villani and Joshi 2003; Robinson, Wilde et al. 2001). These aggressive tendencies, moreover, extend in the adult years (Villani and Joshi 2003). And despite networks' periodic efforts to include "family friendly" shows, children also learn that people play race- and gender-stereotyped roles, that attractive female figures should be very thin, that shopping makes you happy, and that the world is a scary place (Grossman and Di Gaetano 1999). Other behavioral issues associated

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with media in children include excessive requests for toys (Robinson and Saphir 2001), requests for junk food (Borzekowski and Robinson 2002), and attention problems (Christakis et al. 2004).

What Aren't Children Doing When Watching?

Most fundamentally, they aren't moving. Children are normally high-energy creatures, but children watching the screen are still. Childhood obesity has been clearly linked to screen media use (Dietz and Gortmaker 1985; Robinson 1999). In fact, there is even evidence that TV watching slows down basal metabolism (Klesges, Shelton, and Klesges 1993).

The evidence is that children become aggressive after even moderate TV screen exposure.

Children watching TV aren't using their hands in three dimensions. Children, especially children under the age of five, need plenty of time to engage in increasingly complex manual activities: from clapping games to building, banging, weighing, molding, digging, stirring, and simply touching, with a variety of materials. These activities are necessary for sensory-motor integration and planning in a three-dimensional world. TV and computer game screens restrict development to a flat, two-dimensional surface.

Children aren't experimenting with a variety of sensory stimuli. Normally, children love to play with a wide variety of sensory materials, in multiple modes, solving small problems they set themselves, under conditions that are *not* determined by a program (as in an interactive game). Cause and effect, texture, sound, weight, balance, color, velocity, and taste can only be experienced simultaneously in the real world. Early development in front of a screen poses the serious risk of narrowing the child's sensory experience. The flat screen cannot, for example, replicate the rich experiences of a simple activity such as digging with a stick in moist dirt — experiences such as texture, weight, sound, temperature, and sight, as well as all the background sensations (see Davy 1985; Cuffaro 1985). Rich sensory experiences should be part of a preschool curriculum, as well as home activities. But 70% of U.S. day care centers use TV in a typical day (TV Turnoff Facts and Figures 2004).

Children watching TV are not working. Screen media provide quick gratification, requiring minimal effort for the reward of entertainment. Children need to learn that some tasks require hard work, and the capacity to tolerate frustration.

Children watching are not resolving conflicts. Children need to spend many hours learning how to stand up for themselves, cooperate, share, make mistakes, apologize, stay away from trouble, without constant adults prompts. Children who turn to the screen, instead of to their peers for companionship, are never learning these essential social skills, and can find themselves at a significant disadvantage.

Children watching are not communicating with their parents. The average American child spends about 28 hours weekly purposefully watching TV; the average U.S. home has the TV on 7 hours and 40 minutes *daily*. However, parents and children only spend 38.5 minutes *weekly* in meaningful conversation (TV Turnoff Facts and Figures 2004).

Children watching are not using complex language. TV language rises to a fourth-grade level (Healy 1990). Abstract thought requires skills beyond this level.

Children watching are not reading, drawing, or making music. Children are losing their capacity to develop their talents and express their inner experience creatively.

Children watching are not imagining. Children are forgetting how to "make-believe," basing their games increasingly on movie and television characters, or even re-creating video games in their pretend play. The healthy growth of imagination allows children to develop their own imaginary characters, their own symbols, their own narratives — which have special meaning in their own lives. I even see this in my therapeutic work with children, where symbolic play enables children to resolve traumas, worries, and conflicts. In my play therapy with children, I have noticed dramatic declines in children's ability to produce their own characters and stories. Thus, a child becomes unable to tell me through his play what her experience has been — I am left trying to sort out her experience from the Disney movie or Star Wars images that dominate his play and imagination. The capacity to make-believe is essential for

problem solving and self-soothing. Children who are deprived of this tool can find themselves more easily frustrated and losing control of their emotions.

What's Happening in Their Brains?

As we learn more about brain development, two very important principles have emerged. The first is that the brain develops in an "environment-expectant" fashion. This means that the brain biologically "expects" to have certain normal experiences, which are necessary to lay the foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive development (Bowlby 1980; Stern 1985). The second is that the brain develops in a "use-dependent" fashion. This means that the environment will profoundly affect the actual architecture of the brain — which pathways get developed and used, and which pathways are "pruned" for lack of use (Siegel 1999). Putting these two principles together, children who grow up in an environment that is significantly different from the environment that the brain "expects," will develop abnormal pathways and architecture — even if those pathways are only subtly different.

What does the brain of the infant and young child "expect" or need to develop normally? It expects that the people around it will respond in a sensitive, individual manner to the child's signals. The child signals with facial expression, bodily motion, sounds, and expects that others will be attentive and responsive. The child expects the responses not only to match her communication, but to match her energy level as well. Child psychiatrist Daniel Stern (1985) refers to this as matching in "vitality," and observes that it contributes to the child feeling understood and recognized. Stern calls this almost instinctive communication between parent and child "attunement."

Through attunement, the child also integrates sensory modalities. Mother/infant interaction often include facial gestures, touches, caresses, sounds, and other sensations that come together in meaningful ways (Stern 1985). What's more, the shared experience between parent and child is the beginning of the cognitive process known as "intersubjectivity," — the experience of thinking about another's thoughts, and knowing another is thinking about oneself. It is the foundation for empathy, which is itself the foundation for moral behavior (Siegel 1999).

One does not have to be a brain surgeon to see how screen media interfere with all of these essential developmental processes! TV and movies never respond to a child, and "interactive" computer games can respond in only limited, pre-determined ways. All screen media lack both vitality, and the capacity to modulate their intensity. They include only two sensory modes, auditory and visual — with the visual generally predominating.

The healthy growth of imagination allows children to develop their own imaginary characters, their own symbols, their own narratives.

In addition, the television and other screen media are intrinsically arousing to the child's biological alarm system, the flight-fight response that all mammals experience when suddenly exposed to novelty and potential threat. TV shows, movies and video games are filled with sudden movement, vivid facial expressions of anger and surprise, and loud noise. All of these are stimuli that inherently trigger the child's "alerting response" (Grossman and Di Gaetano 1999), as advertisers and TV programmers know.

Imagine a small child watching a Saturday cartoon. He is bombarded with visual cues that trigger emotional responses: fear, anger, amusement. However, his own response to the screen has no impact on what happens next. Whether he is scared or happy, the characters continue in their pre-ordained drama. They will never respond meaningfully to him. This forces us to ask what impact screen media has on the child's developing ability to understand and empathize with the feelings of others — as his own emotional responses are ignored by the screen. Perhaps there is a parallel with the development of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), whereby children who experience an overwhelming trauma become emotionally numb, unless they have access to adults or an adult who can help them emotionally process their experience. In fact, researchers have

found posttraumatic symptoms in children who watch large amounts of TV (Singer et al. 1998).

What, then, is happening in children's brains? The neuron paths for emotion, empathy, and the capacity to understand others may be distorted by the lack of response and the over-stimulating nature of the screen (Burke 2003). Add to this the loss of skills described above, the impairment in communication with parents, and it is no wonder that children who have too much "screen time" are at risk for behavioral problems.

One does not have to be a brain surgeon to see how screen media interfere with essential developmental processes.

How much is too much? I like to divide it in developmental stages. The American Academy of Pediatrics (1999) recommended *no* screens under the age of two. I would extend that to say, no screens until children are more fully fluent verbally, at least until the age of two and a half years. From then until 7 or 8 years, children are in the stage, in Piaget's terms, of preoperational thought; they cannot always distinguish fantasy from reality, they have magical notions of cause and effect, and their imaginations are flourishing. In order to protect this important mental phase, screen media should be limited to "special treat" status only, with shows limited to particularly educational and worthwhile content. I have seen plenty of children with significant symptoms of anxiety after watching children's movies that were too scary, even though the movies were entertaining for their adult companions. It's my impression that the longer parents initially put off scary movies, the more easily children are both frightened and put off by them later on, and the less they desire the increasing stimulation of violent screen fare.

When children are between the ages of about 7 and 12, if you feel you really must allow them to watch, you are probably safe with a maximum of five hours weekly. (Some parents get the most mileage out of "special treat" status even during this age range, but every family is different.) Make sure you watch with your children, and talk about what you see, challenging screen stereotypes or bad behavior.

In adolescence, the rules are different — you don't want to add another battleground to the family. Instead, take the time to talk to teens about the role media plays in controlling behavior. An excellent resource is "The Merchants of Cool," a documentary available through Frontline on PBS. Another take on the issue can be found in *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers* (Quart 2003). Many teen activists are now questioning the ways that media dominate their thoughts. (For example, the rap poetry project "Youth Speaks," which can be found on-line with Youth Speaks as the search word.)

You don't have to take my word for it, or the words of the researchers. Try the experiment yourself. Turn off the TV at home for a month, while the children are awake, and substitute other family and individual activities. (You can find some at tvturnoff.org, and at the website for the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, at aacap.org, going to "Hot Topics," then "kids and culture," then "The Un-TV Page.") At the end of the month, you are likely to find your children are more fun to be with, that the household is more peaceful, and that homework gets done more easily.

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My Five Sons

Chris Mercogliano

It began like any of our frequent forays into the outside world. This time our destination was the local bagel shop, which generously donates their leftover baked goods to us so that we can provide morning and afternoon snacks to our preschoolers.

My charges were five boys, ages three and four, and the formation of this particular troop was neither random nor particularly fair. All the kids love going on the bi-weekly bagel run. However, these little guys had come in bursting with energy and I decided that getting them out of the building to burn some of it off would be in the best interest of everyone's well-being.

The boys were in no rush to reach our goal ten blocks away in the heart of the downtown business district. Most kids this age aren't terribly goal-oriented. They live in the moment. Magic and mystery lurk around every corner. Today a half-block of old streetcar tracks, which thankfully have never been removed, were good for five or ten minutes of make believe that brought to life some of the train stories we have been reading back at school. After that the peninsula of sidewalk that juts out into the intersection of Van Zandt and Grand became for them the prow of a fishing boat, and the street a wide river, so they stopped to throw a few lines in the water. It was mid-morning by then, however. The fish traffic was slow. A few big ones rolled by but they just didn't seem to be biting. And then there are always the trolls that live beneath the city's sewer grates. Just because the kids rarely if ever see them doesn't mean they aren't there.

I was perfectly content with our leisurely pace because I have a number of goals in mind whenever we venture beyond the school doors, and hurrying would spoil everything. There are the practical goals, such as learning to find one's way (I always let the kids lead) and to navigate safely across busy streets. But I also want them to gain experience in dealing with adults in the marketplace, and in chatting with the neighbors — which we make a point of doing if they are out sitting on their stoops. Mind you, these little visits aren't only for the children's sake. You should see the expressions on those old people's faces as they bear witness to the youthful purity and exuberance gazing up at them. Ultimately, what I want is for the kids to feel like they belong in this mad world of ours, to know that they already have an important place in it. In an era of warehoused youth, any real sense of connectedness is fast disappearing.

Now to the heart of this tale, when the unexpected — which is always to be expected if one is working with children correctly — occurred. It all started with Carl. Just as we were about to cross our third or fourth street, he grabbed my hand, flashed me the most winsome smile you will ever see and asked, "Chris, will you be my daddy?"

Knowing Carl's history all too well, how he was given up at birth and then spent two and a half years bouncing around the foster care system before his adoption by a woman without a male partner, I agreed without hesitation. "Being your dad will make my day," I replied. I'm not sure if I've ever shared with him that I am the father of two grown daughters.

The others raced ahead while Carl and I walked hand in hand, talking quietly about the things that fathers and sons talk about. Then at the next corner it happened again. This time it was Matthew, a Native American boy whose father lives on a reservation out west and has a severe problem with alcohol. It's been a long time since Matthew has seen or heard from him. Having already said yes to Carl, what choice did I have except agree to this second request?

Two blocks later Jose figured it was his turn: “Will you be my daddy too, Chris?” He visits his father on the weekends, but his mom and dad are in the middle of a bitter separation and divorce, and I think Jose’s loyalties are torn at the moment. When I told him I would love to be his dad he threw his arms around my legs and gave them a big squeeze.

As we meandered onward I suddenly flashed back to that old fifties’ sitcom I watched as a child. My Three Sons. I couldn’t keep from laughing aloud.

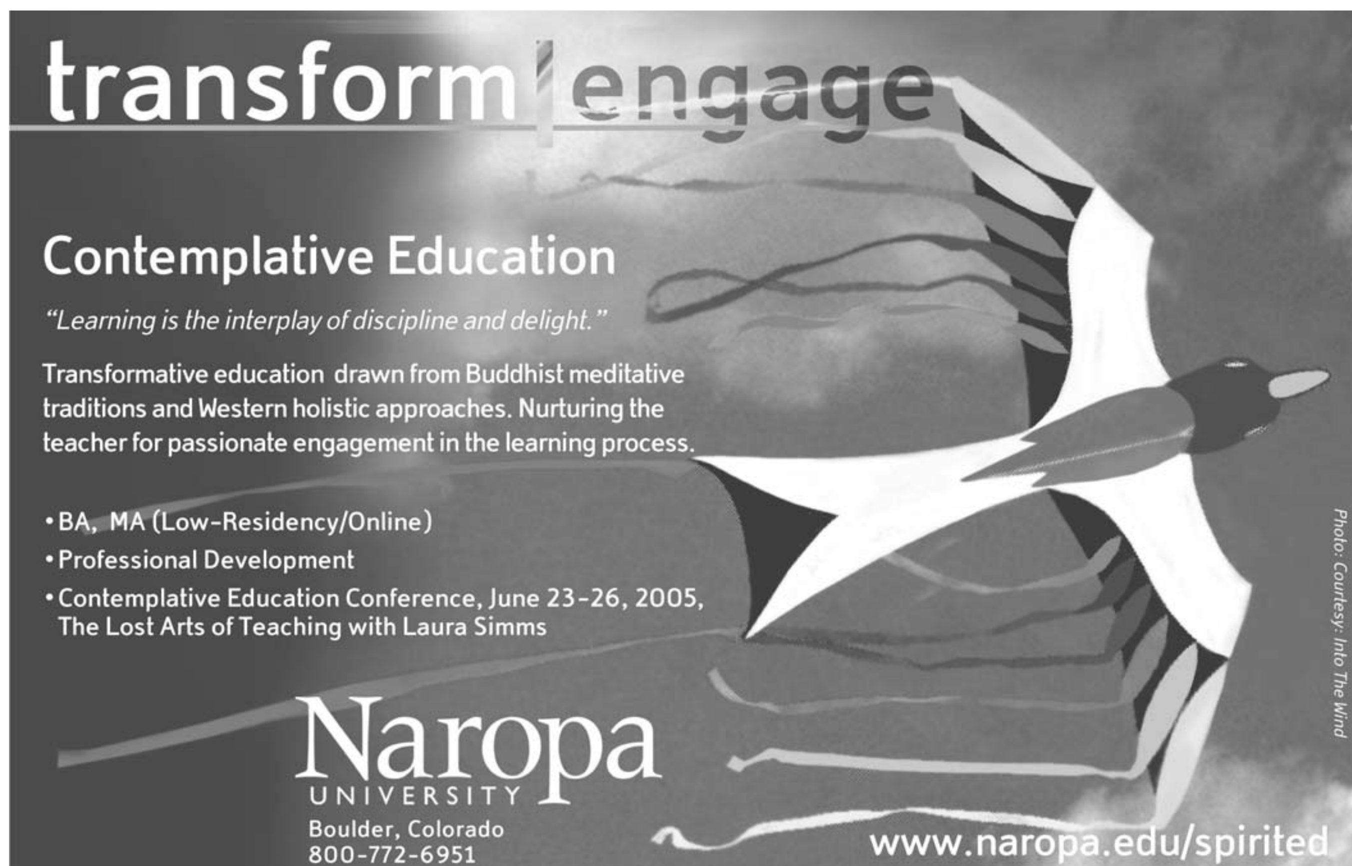
But not for long. Kavon, who spends the majority of our trips far out in front like an advance scout, finally caught on to what was happening. He is being raised by his grandmother and his father is in and out of jail, and so I suppose Kavon concluded that a spare dad might be a good idea.

And last but not least came sheepish little Brian, the youngest in the group. Brian’s mother and father were teenagers when he was born. Their relationship quickly fell apart after that, and since then his mother has remained single. Brian sees his dad every Saturday, but anyone who understands anything about children knows that a three-year-old boy desperately needs fathering more often than one day out of seven.

The moral of the story is that my five “sons” represent the millions of boys—and girls—across the nation whose childhoods are unfolding inside schools and daycare centers that fail to pay attention to the emotional reality of disintegrated families and absent parents, and to a child’s need to be touched and loved, and admired and appreciated.

Our conventional model of education virtually ignores the inner lives of children. Its primary preoccupation is with training the mind, and if the brain is too slow to respond, then it is the child that is deemed to have the attention deficit.

I beg to differ.



Giving Children The Space to Grow

Peggy Flinsch Interviewed by Caty Laignel

Peggy: The relationship with one's parents is the most important one in the life of the young child. It is a great joy when your child comes and wants to tell you something. But often as parents we can't wait; we ask. We want to know what is going on. So it seems to me that we push the children rather than let the children come to us. As parents we will miss certain things; there are certain things that won't be spoken of. But I think we will receive a great deal more if we do not force. And that is one reason why grandchildren are such a joy. You are just there and they come to you saying, "We want to see you. We want to talk to you." Children aren't going to tell anybody some of the early experiences they have. I remember the care I took to make sure no one saw where I buried the pill I was supposed to swallow. I was only five years old.

Caty: Is it important that children have a hidden life? That not everything be known?

Peggy: It gives the child a sense of his or her own power. That is something everyone is looking for. It starts early. That "I can." Don't you recognize it?

Caty: So, how can the parent help the development of that "I can" without its having to be a devious enterprise?

Peggy: It is natural to have a strong connection with one's child, but it is also natural that at a certain point the child begins to detach from this connection. As parents we are rarely ready for this healthy separation. It never occurred to me not to tell my mother important things. I used to wait on the stairs till she got home to tell her what she needed to know. But then there came a time when I didn't want her to know certain things.

Caty: I have a question related to that point that is for teachers and parents: How does one distinguish those experiences that are not to be talked about, explained, analyzed, softened? As adults we tend to do a lot of that. So how does an adult know when to leave something alone and let the child find his or her own meaning?

Peggy: Something can have meaning for the child that has no meaning for the adult. I was about five when I had my prayers at my mother's knee at night, and then I had private prayers after she left

Caty: So you are saying that children will do what they need to do, developing their inner life, regardless.

Peggy: Yes, of course. I suppose if one sees that one's child is deeply unhappy, one can be more direct. But the main problem is that I think that parents don't respect children. I think each child has his or her own life that, little by little, is going to be receiving influences from others besides the parents. Definitely each child has his or her own experience, his or her own baggage.

Note. This interview is excerpted with permission from the Blue Rock School's Annual Newsletter, 2003-2004.

Peggy Flinsch, one of the pioneers of child-centered education, founded the Princeton Nursery School in 1929 and the Blue Rock School in 1987. Ms. Flinsch has spent a lifetime articulating and promoting opportunities for children to develop their creative powers and make their own discoveries in the world.

Caty Laignel, Ms. Flinsch's granddaughter, has been the Blue Rock School's director since September, 2000. For more information on the school, write Caty at the Blue Rock School, 110 Demarest Mill Road, West Nyack, New York 10994, phone 845- 627 - 0234, or visit the school's website online at <www.bluerockschool.org>.

I don't want somebody opening my bags. If I have something in my bags I want to show, I will show it. It seems to me that parents have to respect that. Parents assume a proprietorship that they don't have. We don't own our children. Our children are in our care; they don't belong to us. We have an obligation, a duty to care for them until they can care for themselves, but we don't own the children. I think the mistake starts there: "my child" as a projection of my ego. There is a greed that certain parents have. They want to live those experiences of their child. "It is my child. So his experiences have to be mine also."

I think that the parents who leave their children to have their own experiences will be respected and honored more deeply than those who try to appropriate what is not theirs.

Caty: As parents we fear all the things that can happen to a child. It is hard to trust that difficult things are important. What is the role of the difficulty in a child's growth?

Peggy: It is a fact that children learn by working things out for themselves. I had a very free childhood in which certain special friends and I had games of hiding, games with risks. They are unforgettable to me.

Caty: What gets developed in that kind of play?

Peggy: Intelligence, decision making. We had a game in which there were two teams and if one team caught sight, or one member caught sight of a member of the other team, that member had to go over and become part of their team. So everything was in invisibility....

Children have to have their own experiences, and parents need to let them. Instead of protecting them from pain, if they have pain, we need to help them endure it.

I think we can start to understand this by accepting that the role of parent is a kind of temporary assignment, and although there is a certain permanence in the results of it, a parent has to recognize that in one form it lasts only a certain amount of time. It is the clinging to the earlier connection that always ends up doing a wrong, when the clinging is long past the need of the child and is something the parent doesn't want to give up. Giving up the illusion that the child is ours, part of us, is painful.

Poems from the Blue Rock School by Anais Irons

Haiku

Dragging shoe laces
through a mudpile
Footsteps behind me.
(Grade 5)

Blooming

Every flower has to bloom
When they are ready.
Now it's my turn, after
Watching my friends

I started here as a seed
And bloomed
As I went through the years.
It's time for a change
Of scenery
Not good-bye forever … just for
Awhile
(Grade 6 Graduation)

Anais Irons is a graduate of the Blue Rock School. Her Haiku won first place in the elementary school category of the Japan Society's Sixth Annual Haiku Competition in 2003. A judge noted: "The immediacy of a moment is often revealed in the lives of children based on what they choose to leave undone, in this case the shoelaces. The poet also adds an element of mystery. Whose footsteps, we ask ourselves? Do they belong to a friend or are they from an unknown source? It is fun to speculate." Anais's teacher at the time of the contest was Meredith Kates, and the poetry director was Gerald McCarthy.

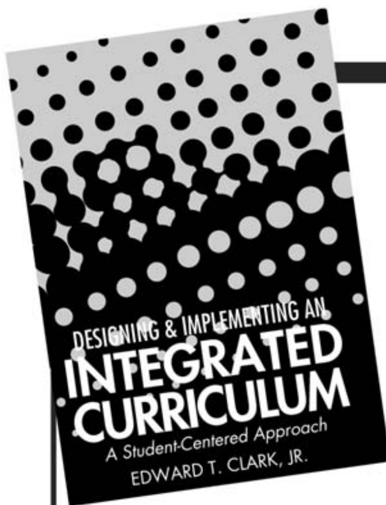
Caty: You are bringing up the idea of balance in parenting, how to respect one’s child, how to trust the child to become more independent from us and allow the child to have the space for his or her own experiences in life. You often speak of children’s play as a way for them to gain understanding. How can we support that as parents?

Peggy: I feel that children’s play is a part of their growing process and very important. When very small children first begin to pick up something, they should be allowed to do it in their way, in their time, and we should not interrupt them. Interrupting them is one of the worst things we do, interrupting them when their attention is just beginning to go in the direction of something. Someone will swoop something up and wave and jiggle it in their faces saying, “Cheee, cheee, cheee” or some such baby talk, interrupting them. We are so eager as parents to be part of everything. Let the child have his or her own experience. Watch from the sidelines. Be ready to come if any danger is there. If they are about to touch the electric plug, be ready, but do not get in the way; stay behind, not on top of.

It is the same thing in a way for teachers — how to play that observing/waiting game, letting the children have the chance to get it before we tell them. I think that is what the teachers try to do at the Blue Rock School, to let them get it. Discovery. Not to rob them of discovery with “Cheee, Cheee, Cheee.”

Caty: But we live in a state of constant interruptions. There is a schedule and many things to be done. So how do we live differently within that reality?

Peggy: I can be ready for the interruption by maintaining a contact with myself, here in my body, not only in my thoughts. Usually I’m not in myself at all, so I just go from one interruption to the next. We are not in ourselves most of the time. We are out, out somewhere, but not ready to be connected to ourselves. I mean very simply being in contact with my body. I am so carried away by whatever is going on. The language expresses it very well. We say “carried’ away.” Carried away from what? From ourselves. Children are more in themselves up to a certain age. Then the dispersion of things starts, largely caused by adults. The whole environment is calling us out [away from ourselves].



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A Student-Centered Approach

Edward T. Clark, Jr.

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—Kurt Anderson, Middle School Principal

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Letters

Freedom to Find Oneself

William Crain's editorial, "Winning" (Winter, 2004), in which he discusses the pros and cons of competition, makes a fine, but understated, point about the value of nature. In search of his own natural grace as a runner, Crain took to the hills, and he describes his transformation as due largely to the connection he made with the natural world. There can be no doubt that the beauty and serenity found in nature provides a perfect setting for personal growth and spiritual comfort. But, there's more to it. When Crain ran in the rocky hills, on the sandy soil, warmed by the California sun, he was free — free from competitive pressures, from the demands of a coach, from stopwatches, and watching eyes. In short, he was free to find his own way as a runner and competitor. One of the profound pleasures of the natural world is just such freedom.

I vividly recall my own experiences with nature as a child. Being outside, in the woods, the park, or my yard, was the most important thing in my life. Outside, by myself or with my friends, was the only place where the grown ups weren't telling me what to do and how to do it. I never felt particularly competent in their world, but in my outside world, I could do things; I could figure things out, and I was good at things. I made wonderful discoveries and solved difficult problems. I created incredible worlds and stories. I developed skills and knowledge. I knew where the crawdads lived, where to find cicadas, and where the turtles hibernated.

I believe that unstructured, unscripted time in the natural world is a child's first and best "child-centered" experience. For many children in today's overscheduled, micromanaged world, it is their only child-centered experience, and their only opportunity to engage in certain activities vital for personal development. Free from the rules and strictures of the grown-up world, yet supported by the innately comforting order of nature, children prosper by figuring things out for themselves, by discovering what has not yet been taught, by creating their own plans, and following their own path. Whether building a fort, catching minnows, or wandering the woods, self-direction is its own reward.

Sometimes the lessons learned during what many nervous parents and educators fear is aimless and unproductive time are not noticed for many years, and the lessons certainly cannot be measured by standardized tests. I recall, for example, that my family always told me, and I believed, that I "couldn't find my way out of a paper bag." But when I was out exploring as a child I often went too far, got lost, or turned around, and I always figured out how to get home. Remembering that as an adult allowed me to let go of my family's view, and I now navigate through life, if not expertly, with confidence in my ability to find my way.

Sadly, many children do not have any opportunity to play outside, unsupervised. Demanding homework schedules and man-made urban landscapes prevent many children from discovering the natural world for themselves. I am not suggesting that children be given complete freedom to spend all their time as they wish, but I believe that the peak experiences that Crain encourages us to promote among our students are rooted in the act of freely finding oneself in the world. Let's think about getting the children out to play.

Kate McReynolds, Ph.D.
New York City

Walking by Ourselves With Our Toes

Dear Editor,

I am happy to see your journal's interest in children's poetry, and I would like to provide an anecdote. As first-time parents of a 2½-year-old boy named Christian, we have been greatly amused by our son's efforts to invent new words to convey his meaning when he hasn't yet learned the conventional English words. Often a kind of poetry results. For example, on a warm Spring day, Christian advised us that he wanted to "walk by myself with my toes"—that is, go barefoot instead of wearing his customary sneakers. My wife and I loved this expression because it seemed to capture both his need for independence and a kind of Native American spirit. Since then, we don't go barefoot in our household. We walk by ourselves with our toes.

John T. Kolaga
Buffalo, New York

Seven Curricular Landscapes: An Approach to the Holistic Curriculum

by Clifford Mayes

Published by University Press of America (Lanham, MD), 2003

Reviewed by Robin Ann Martin

Clifford Mayes's *Seven Curricular Landscapes* uses the metaphor of "landscapes" to crisscross the rich and varied fields of educational curricula, from developmental psychology to transpersonal experience. Mayes's book provides a "map" that is both thought-provoking and helpful. Rather than providing any "canned" curriculum solutions, Mayes develops a framework for curriculum theory from which many questions, discussion ideas, and research topics arise. In fact, Mayes himself has formulated some of these questions and research topics at the end of each chapter.

As Mayes (p. 5) explains his overarching metaphor,

> I have chosen the metaphor of the landscape because I wanted to suggest that each approach to curriculum is, in one sense, an independent territory with its own native charms, dangers, and possibilities. Each terrain poses its own set of legitimate questions and houses its own set of relevant answers.

Subsequently, he also stresses the *overlapping* nature of the curricular approaches, along with contested and negotiable issues. For theorists and researchers alike, this book is quite valuable in its breadth. It covers not just the often-discussed physical, emotional, social, and procedural aspects of learning, but discusses the existential/phenomenological, transpersonal, and dialectic approaches to holistic curriculum. Because it covers so much ground, this book would be particularly well-suited to upper-level graduate courses as both review and overview for looking at the larger scope of education and curriculum development.

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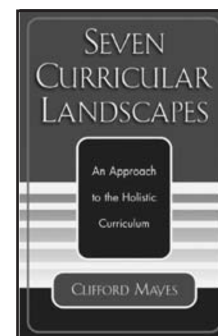

Fourth, Mayes brings us to the "Interpretive-Procedural Landscape" that corresponds closely to hypothetical-deductive reasoning and Piaget's "formal operations," Kohlberg's post-conventional moral reasoning, and Bruner's "Structure of the Discipline." Mayes also draws upon (among other approaches) Kant's "categorical imperatives" in the search for universal ethical principles.

The theme of meta-cognition is developed in the fourth landscape — just over halfway through Mayes's seven landscapes — and at this point Mayes had reached the peak of most classical developmental theories. My mind was abuzz as to how he could differentiate three more distinct landscapes and do it well, yet for the most part, he carries it off. It needs to be noted, though, that between Chapters 4 and 5, one takes a leap so great it seems astrologically equivalent to moving from the solid planets through the Asteroid Belt and arriving suddenly at the large gaseous planets. Even the tones of Mayes's voice go through a change when entering Chapter 5 such that for a reader somewhat versed in the latter land-

stronger if they had give more attention to earlier stratifying dynamics.

Second, Emery and Ohanian observe that the current reform movement centralizes power, but this, too, is a continuation and expansion of earlier tendencies. The establishment of our school system at the turn of the 20th century was premised upon the centralization of power on a local, city level. This centralization was justified in terms of scientific management. At the core was the view that efficiency was dependent upon the concentration of managerial power, and that concentration involved a control of knowledge, the separation of the planning of production and its execution. Scientific management constituted a system that usurped the knowledge dimension of production, turning workers into mechanized implementers. From this perspective, efficiency was contingent upon the concentration of decision-making power. The principles of scientific management were adapted to school organization in three ways: centralized planning, the specification of curricula and standards of teacher performance, and the utilization of the budgetary process as a planning tool (Snauwaert 1993; Tyack 1974; Karier 1986).

The current accountability, standards-based reform movement, which began in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, can be understood as an attempt to reinforce and to expand the bureaucratic nature of schooling. The specification of standards as accountability measures is scientific management revisited, at this point in our history on a national level. By controlling the criteria of evaluation, federal authorities control the content and the method of education. The current reform movement is an attempt to tighten and concentrate control via accountability. As Emery and Ohanian point out, this attempt on a national level insulates decision-making and thereby places it in elite interests. It renders local school politics even more marginal.

Third, the current reform movement's tendency to privatize is not unique, but is rapidly occurring in many spheres, from prisons to social security. Education's covert privatization agenda follows from the ideology of neo-liberalism. Privatized, free market choice systems attempt to transform public decisions into private ones decided by narrow self-interest. It breeds consumers rather than democratic citizens, which leads to an attitude and political position of succession from the common good in favor of individual gain. The only way to authentically empower individuals is through democratic political empowerment, not through privatization. Democratic empowerment is the promise of the common public school, and it is endangered by the current reforms.

From the perspective of holistic and democratic education, education should be devoted to the development of the holistic and unique potential of each student, and not their efficient integration into a hierarchical labor force. Teaching (and thereby learning) is not a routine technology; it is a creative activity, more like an art form than a rationalized technology. If teaching and learning are fluid, complex, and creative acts, then a bureaucratic standards-based system undermines authentic teaching and learning. Emery and Ohanian serve the interests of holistic education, and in turn democracy, by exposing the true nature of the current reform movement.

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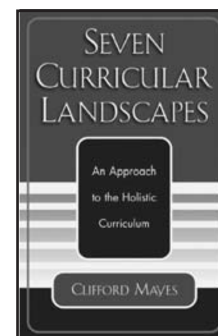

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scapes, it still feels as if the space and the thousands of asteroids colliding between these two sets of landscapes have somehow been glossed over. When is it that theorists and teachers, or parents and researchers, have looked so long and hard at the first four landscapes, or experienced something so fundamental in their own development that they take that leap from the first set of landscapes into the second? This is not a question that is addressed by Mayes, but one of many questions that arises in the reading of the book.

With the fifth landscape — "The Phenomenological", one enters into Postmodern Curriculum Theory, along with transrational meta-perspectives, "meaning" as a function of Consciousness and Heidegger's "Being-There." Existentialism and an introduction to Maslow's ideal of self-actualization are also introduced. Here, we begin to see how theorists like Noddings, Green, and of course Dewey all fit nicely into both the earlier "Transferential Landscape" while also having more complex elements found in the "ontological caring" of this fifth landscape.

Then, with the final two landscapes, Mayes crosses the threshold into "spiritual" curricula, which he calls the "Unitive-Spiritual" and the "Dialectic-Spiritual." He parallels the sixth landscape with Transpersonal Psychology (Maslow), the Perennial Philosophy (Huxley), and much of the writing done by Ron Miller and many of the authors appearing in this journal. In contrast to the Buddhist and Hindu theologies often represented in the sixth landscape, Mayes describes his seventh and last landscape as being grounded more in monotheism represented particularly by Kierkegaard and Buber, a landscape within which relationships are grounded by an I-Thou understanding of the other, the content of curriculum, and a "personal God."

Mayes also noted in the introduction of the book that his own background predisposes him to this particular arrangement of the landscapes, which could be a bit controversial in the way that he sets up particular religions, in the last two landscapes, as being so firmly in one landscape or another. Coming from a background in which my own studies have focused in recent years on J. Krishnamurti and the discourse of individuals from diverse religious backgrounds, I was at times puzzled that particular religions would be so strongly associated with the seventh landscape at all. However, Mayes (p. 156) attempts to resolve this issue somewhat by stating that

> In pedagogies that are founded on dialectic spirituality, the teacher's most important role is to speak to her students out of her solidarity with God. This does not mean using explicitly religious language or even conveying explicitly religious messages, but it does mean speaking with a spiritual authenticity that comes out of her "ultimate concern." Such speech, in turn, awakens students to *their* status as individual beings in relationship with the Eternal Individual.

I smiled inwardly at the challenge Mayes must have faced in even putting together this paragraph. It seems unavoidable to use words such as "God" or "Eternal Individual," which are, in some ways, explicitly religious in order to get his point across. For those who have begun to study the "religious" outside of a "God-oriented" language, there are moments when Mayes seems to be on shaky ground — describing the atmosphere of particulars rather than the general landscape. At the same time, it is indeed a balancing act of discourse to enter this terrain at all.

Based on my initial graduate studies in educational psychology (closely related to Mayes's descriptions of the first four landscapes) and a doctorate that specialized in holistic education (closely related to Mayes's last three landscapes), I found his book to be refreshing. It provides a fine review of numerous theories while offering a new framework for conceptualizing the benefits and dangers of remaining too rigidly within any single territory.

Using Mayes's own metaphor, one is apt to notice that when moving from the mountains to the plains to the wooded hills to the wetlands, there are similar features of grasses and trees, dirt and rocks, and birds and wildlife — often with greater commonalities between landscapes that are near to one another, though sometimes with vast departures as well when stepping from one to another. If one has ever gone from the Black Hills to the Badlands (located in present day South Dakota), moving from Mayes's fourth to fifth landscape felt to be that extreme. Yet, it is also analogous of moving from one alternative education set-

ting to another; without a landscape "framework," one might miss the complexities of how these differences are complementary (or antagonistic) to the needs of students and teachers living within each.

Mayes's blend of theories into landscapes will be particularly helpful for those who are new to holistic education; it will point them to the bigger picture. The book also will help those who are well versed in one or two landscapes to see the nearby terrains. For many others, who like to contemplate the nature of theory, there will be the ever-present dangers of getting caught up in grand, all-embracing ideas that can often keep one from simply looking at "what is." At times, readers may question whether Mayes has slipped too far into "the particular" and missed some of "the general" defining features within the latter landscapes, but even this seems fitting as one attempts to approach what is by its nature unapproachable by word or by will. Overall, the book is a well-developed discourse of meta-theory.

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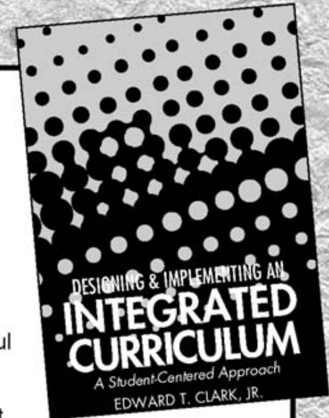

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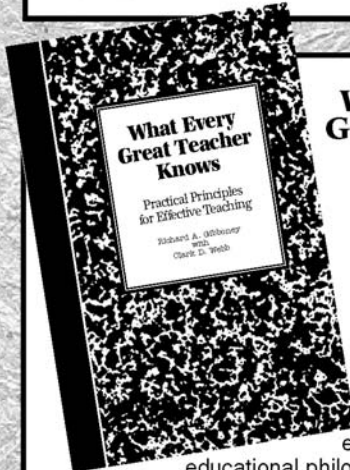

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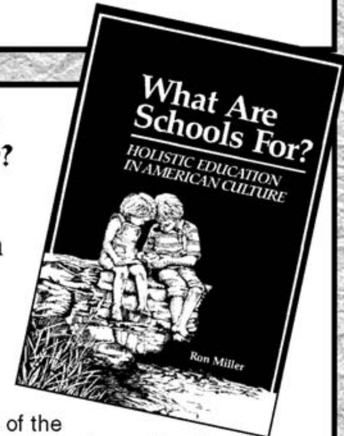

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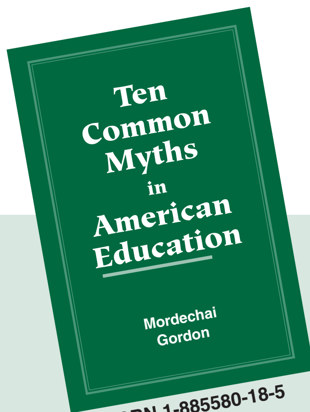

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Foreword by Joe L. Kincheloe

Introduction

Good Teaching Means Following a Recipe

Theories Can Be Applied Directly to Practice

Students Need to Know "The Basics"

Keeping Students Busy Enhances Learning

Confusion and Uncertainty Hinder Learning

Technology is the Cure for All Problems in Education

Good Techniques Are Those that Seem to "Work"

More Testing Results in Higher Standards

Multicultural Education: It's All About Heroes and Holidays

Easy Solutions Work in Education

Ten Common Myths in American Education

Mordechai Gordon

"Mordechai Gordon has emerged in just the last few years as one of the top educational foundations scholars in North America. His ability to get to the heart of an issue, to make educational and moral meaning in ambiguous situations, and to express his ideas in a clear, concise, and compelling manner is treasured by those of us interested in the social, cultural, and philosophical contexts in which education takes place.... *Ten Common Myths in American Education* presents Mordechai Gordon at the top of his game. Educational leaders, education students, and teachers need to read this book — especially at this ominous juncture in the history of education."

— Joe L. Kincheloe

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