VOL. 3, NO. 2

HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW

SUMMER 1990

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

Front cover photo by Merry Lein, courtesy of The Full Circle School, Bernardston, Mass.

Holistic Education Review aims to stimulate discussion and application of all person-centered educational ideas and methods. Articles explore how education can encourage the fullest possible development of human potentials and planetary consciousness. We believe that human fulfillment, global cooperation, and ecological responsibility should be the primary goals of education, and we will inquire into the historical, social, and philosophical issues that have prevented them from so becoming.

Holistic Education Review (ISSN 0898-0926) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Annual subscription rates are $16 for individuals and $24 for libraries. (Canadian subscribers please add $4, and other foreign subscribers please add $7 for extra postage.)

Holistic Education Review is indexed in the Alternative Press Index (P.O. Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218).

Editorial and Subscription Office:
Holistic Education Review, P.O. Box 1476, Greenfield, MA 01302

Publisher and Executive Editor: Ron Miller, Ph.D.
Contributing Editors: Edward T. Clark, Jr., Ph.D., Philip S. Gang, Ph.D.
Editorial Assistant: Jennifer Lloyd, M.A.

Member Educational Press Association of America

EDPRESS
1989 DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER

EDITORIAL

Educating Ourselves, Not Just Our Children

I have had contact with a number of groups with urgent lessons they want to teach children. For example, they want young people to acquire a deeper respect for the natural environment, to learn about the nuclear arms race, or to develop mediation and conflict-resolution skills. These are laudable aims, but I have frequently observed that the strategy which these concerned educators adopt is based on a non-holistic, adult-centered conception of education: "Let's add a unit on conflict resolution (or nutrition awareness, or racism) to the curriculum." The unexamined premise in this approach is that if the teacher "covers" a subject, then the children will learn it well enough not only to pass a quiz, but also to incorporate it into their personal values and world-view even after they enter adolescence and adulthood.

It is probably better to cover these subjects than to neglect them. Most likely these curriculum "units" will plant seeds in the minds of some students that might some day sprout and nourish their personal values. But two larger issues are overlooked when well-intentioned educators merely pile up "units" into an already overstuffed curriculum.

First, we need to recognize that the underlying structure of the traditional school environment is itself a curriculum: it is the "hidden curriculum." No matter what the specific content of the lessons, the adult's act of delivering lessons to a captive and passive audience, who subsequently will be compared and judged on their ability to respond, is a lesson in authority, obedience, and conformity. One of the fundamental ironies of American public education is that it attempts to teach *about* democracy through a process that is anything but democratic. The underlying lesson of traditional education is, "Sit still, keep quiet, and listen while I (or the textbook) tell you what you have to know."

It is not enough to add democracy or environmental awareness or conflict resolution to this ever-growing list of things young people have to know. We must begin by radically transforming the structure of education. Schools should be extended families, not hierarchical bureaucracies. Classrooms should be buzzing laboratories for self-guided inquiry and cooperative projects, not silent lecture halls. There should be no grades or standardized tests, nor should children be rigidly separated by age, ability, or special needs. Let's start with *these* changes; then we can talk about educating for democracy and peace and environmental sensitivity, and really mean it.

There is a second fundamental issue which too often goes unrecognized. When we say that we want to educate *children* about the environment or war and peace, we are avoiding a more direct, and far more difficult, confrontation with the *adult* generation which more urgently needs such lessons. After all, it is not the children who have trashed the planet; it is not the children who have aimed nuclear missiles at each other! To educate them to rectify our generation's mistakes sends the clear message "Do as we say, not as we do." The issue here is our subtle and unintended hypocrisy.

In my view, holistic education is not primarily concerned with what we have to teach children. Holistic education, most fundamentally, raises deep and persistent questions about ourselves and the society we have created. Holistic education challenges us to reorient our own values away from the heartless materialism, competition, self-aggrandizement, and naked greed that characterize life in the modern age. It calls on us to cultivate instead a reverence for life, a deep respect for innocence and purity and simplicity which is so utterly lacking today. When we approach children in this spirit, we will not have so many lessons to teach them; we will realize that they have some profound lessons to teach us, or at the very least that they need to participate in a meaningful way in the lessons we would teach.

There is a certain appeal in seeing children as our hope for the future. Because young children are so impressionable and susceptible to our influence, many kinds of educators, from Jesuits to behaviorists to humanists, have claimed that they could transform humankind if only they were able to educate a new, unspoiled generation from an early enough age. Idealistic educators as diverse as Horace Mann and Maria Montessori have believed that lasting social reform can be achieved only by reaching the hearts and minds of children, because adults are hopelessly set in their ways. (To their credit, however, Mann and especially Montessori realized that *educators* must reform themselves in preparation for the holy task of teaching.)

If we truly hold a reverence for life, we will not be so quick to dash in and exploit our influence over young people. Who are we, anyway, to steer our children's lives in directions we have chosen? The holistic approach sees the child's innocence and dependence as an opening for Creation, not as an opportunity for indoctrination. If we have unfulfilled hopes and dreams for ourselves and our generation, then we must deal with this disappointment ourselves and let our children aspire to their own dreams.

Educators—even wonderfully humanistic, progressive, child-centered liberal educators—too often separate their work with children from their participation in society. We too often believe that our effort to influence *children's* values is simply "education," and therefore necessary, while addressing our *society's* values is "politics," thus controversial. I suggest that there is no such separation: Influencing our children's lives is just as political as campaigning to change adult minds. Working for social change is ultimately an educational task. Young people are educated by their culture as deeply as by their particular teachers and parents. If the adult world which they must someday join is characterized by competition, violence, and greed, then it is largely futile for us to teach lessons on cooperation, mediation, and ecology. They will spend their adult lives in the culture we have sanctioned, not in our classrooms. Our first task as educators must be to change the lessons that society teaches.

The holistic approach recognizes the connection between the political and the educational; it forces us to acknowledge what it is we stand for, because that is what we will most truly teach. If we believe in peace and justice and love, then let us teach these to one another and practice these with one another first, before we turn them into curriculum units. Do we have an unfinished agenda with which to burden still another human generation? Or can we learn to transform ourselves and our culture so that, as Rudolf Steiner so beautifully put it, we may receive our children with reverence and educate them in love? Holistic education aims for a transformation of humanity, starting with ourselves.

–Ron Miller

Holistic Education

A Search for Wholeness

by Edward T. Clark, Jr.

Edward T. Clark, Jr., Ph.D., is an educational consultant and author, contributing editor to Holistic Education Review, *and former professor of environmental education. His staff development program, Contextual Thinking, is a comprehensive educational strategy that enables teachers to design an integrated, meaningful, provocative, and relevant curriculum. For more information, contact Ed Clark Associates, 29 W. 112 Morris Court, Warrenville, IL 60555.*

In the Winter 1989 issue of *Holistic Education Review,* Editor Ron Miller defined *holistic education* by identifying what he considers to be four essential principles to the practice of this emerging educational approach. While I agree that each of these principles represents a significant facet of holistic education, I question whether they or any such group of terms are the *sine qua non* of holistic education. As Miller points out in a slightly different context, "There is a tendency among . . . researchers and educators to consider their work to be the essence of holistic education." Does Miller include his own thinking in this category? Whether intended or not, by labeling his principles as "essentials," Miller seems to draw an arbitrary boundary between true believers and all others. Although I do not believe Miller intends to be exclusive, his list of "essentials"—like any such list—is actually based upon a more fundamental and, I believe, far more profound assumption about the nature of the world: an assumption that everything in the universe is fundamentally interconnected. I suggest that this assumption represents the true essence of holistic education in all of its manifestations. Furthermore, I believe that the essence of holistic education lies at a deeper level of insight and experience than any selective list of principles, as appropriate as those principles may be. While this essence is implicit in each of Miller's principles, it is not explicit in any. Like the soil that nurtures a plant, this essence cannot be taken for granted but must be actively cultivated if the plant is to grow and thrive.

There are many varieties of holistic approaches and principles, but all are founded upon a common underlying assumption: The universe is a meaningful whole in which everything is connected. This assumption of wholeness and unity is directly opposed to the assumption of separation and fragmentation that prevails in the contemporary world.

To use another metaphor, this essence serves as the foundation and unifying principle upon which the edifice of holistic education rests. Since there are many components to any edifice, any attempt to develop a definitive characterization of holistic education, either by selectively identifying those facets which have personal appeal or by trying to add incrementally all of these parts together, is bound to raise controversy. Each of us lives in a different part of the edifice and therefore has a different perspective on the whole. Even those who share the same apartment will often perceive the details of the shared space somewhat differently.

This makes for significant diversity among holistic educators, which in itself is quite positive. We know, for example, that in ecological systems diversity makes for stability. Every cultural system, including education, is in some fundamental ways ecological in character (see my "Environmental Education as an Integrative Study," *Holistic Education Review,* Fall 1989); therefore, the greater the diversity in any cultural system, the more stable the system becomes. The more diverse holistic education is, the more stable it will be as a movement for change in education. However, if diversity is to be recognized as a strength rather than perceived as a basis for endless debate about what is or is not holistic education, we must identify our fundamental commonalities.

Unfortunately, as long as we focus on our differences, our commonalities will continue to elude us. This is evident in the Miller/Corsini debate reported in the Spring 1990 issue of *Holistic Education Review,* wherein one person's fundamentals are perceived by the other to be mere differences. Such discussions tend to divide rather than unify. This preoccupation with differences is a consequence of our culture's almost single-minded commitment to analysis as the exclusive skill required to understand anything. We have become equally adept at identifying the parts and either ignoring the whole or taking it for granted. To use the still useful cliché, we can't see the forest for the trees. Debates about differences will continue ad nauseam until we can identify some more fundamental criterion that is broad enough to enable us to honor our unity while we celebrate our diversity.

In his attempt to identify the principles of holistic education, Miller has catalogued some of the major rooms in the edifice called holistic education, but he has failed to identify its foundation. The foundation is what gives integrity to any building. It represents the unity out of which emerges the diversity which Miller addresses so eloquently. Until we can recognize and acknowledge this unity, we face the danger of endless debate concerning the shape, size, and relative significance of the various rooms (e.g., the four principles identified by Miller, each of which merely represents one facet of our multifaceted edifice).

The first principle

I would suggest that, like all cultural systems, the foundation of holistic education consists of certain fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world. While there are many such assumptions, at what may be the deepest level of one's understanding there is a single "first principle" upon which all other assumptions rest and from which all other assumptions emerge. Much as the structure of a building is shaped by its foundation, the structure of one's thinking and experience is shaped by this fundamental first principle. And, just as we often take building foundations for granted, we also tacitly accept the correctness of this fundamental assumption about the nature of reality. In our pragmatic world, we take for granted that the way we experience the world is the way it "really" is, rarely considering the existence, much less the relevance, of such assumptions. In short, we make no distinction between the shapes of our cognitive maps and the territories described by those maps.

At this deepest level of understanding, each of us selects, either consciously or by default, one of two alternative "first principles" as the foundation upon which we base our lives. This decision is crucial because the alternatives provide fundamentally different shapes for the mental models that mold our behavior. One's life is shaped by either an *assumption of separateness* in which the essence of reality is fragmentation, or an *assumption of wholeness* in which the essence of reality is unity.

Even the earliest human experiences recognized a fundamental dualism implicit in the nature of things—yin/yang, you/me, right/left, light/dark. However, all so-called primitive cultures and all of the world's great religions have been based on an assumption of wholeness. Although they had an infinite diversity of perspectives, interpretations, and expressions, they shared the insight that underlying all of the explicit dualisms is an implicit, fundamental unity. On the other hand, Western civilization has been dominated from its beginnings by an assumption of separateness. This assumption was given philosophical legitimacy by the either/or alternatives of Aristotelian logic and theological legitimacy by Augustine, whose distinction between the "city of God" and the "city of man" has become a cardinal point of faith in the Christian world. With the advent of modern science and its analytical perspective, this assumption was given pragmatic validity. Through the application of the scientific method, it was possible to demonstrate empirically that, at its most fundamental level, reality was no more than a set of irreducible building blocks, each of which could be characterized by its precise definition and empirical description. In the process of verification, the cognitive map (i.e., the analytical process), became so confused with the territory that today few recognize the difference. The result is that culturally we have become what Frank Tipler has called "ontological reductionists."[1] The essence of this perspective is the tacit assumption that the world actually is the way science has described it: a fragmented collection of jigsaw puzzle pieces in search of a picture. The consequence of this fragmentation on our thinking and thus our behavior is personal, social, and global competition, conflict, confusion, and exploitation.

That this reductionist assumption is the foundation of our present educational system should be obvious to even the casual observer. Why wouldn't it be, since this reductionist assumption provides the philosophical foundation for the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm upon which our entire social structure is built? As Miller rightly notes, "The holistic approach represents a new paradigm. In essence, it is the educational approach of a new culture...."

Holistic education—and the emerging paradigm—is based on the single assumption that, at some fundamental level, "everything is connected to everything else." Physicist David Peat referred to this assumption as "the law of the whole."[2] If this assumption is valid, then it follows that nothing can be truly under-

stood apart from this global context. Thus, holistic education reflects an attitude, a philosophy, a worldview that challenges the fragmented, reductionist, mechanistic, nationalistic assumptions of mainstream culture and education. Because there are many synonyms for wholeness, there are many ways to characterize this perspective: holistic, ecological, evolutionary, spiritual, integrative, global. Whichever term one prefers, the ultimate purpose of holistic education is to transform the way we look at ourselves and our relationship to the world from a fragmented perspective to an integrative perspective. Any curriculum content, classroom methodology, or organizational structure that reflects this fundamental assumption of wholeness falls legitimately within the rubric of holistic education. Given this perspective, the primary criterion for evaluating any educational practice is the following: *Is there an implicit, and preferably explicit, assumption of wholeness, that is, a recognition that in some fundamental sense everything is connected to everything else?*

The ultimate purpose of holistic education is to transform the way we look at ourselves and our relationship to the world from a fragmented perspective to an integrative perspective.

One of the barriers to any conceptualization of wholeness is the set of mental models or cognitive maps—what I call mind set—that shapes our thinking and consequently our behavior. Because all of us have been programmed to be "ontological reductionists," most of our personal, professional, and social behavior reflects this fragmented perspective. The first step in changing our behavior is to embrace a new mind set based on the assumption of wholeness (see my essay "The Role of Mindset in Global Education," *Holistic Education Review,* Winter 1988). The following sections present both a rationale for the assumption of wholeness and appropriate reinforcing mental models. If it is true that at some profoundly fundamental level the ultimate nature of reality is unity, then the assumption of separateness, though often pragmatically useful in our everyday world, is nevertheless an illusionary one and, in a world with nuclear weapons, a highly dangerous one.

Puzzle pieces, or unity?

Consider this analogy: Life is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. We spend most of our lives collecting and sorting pieces of the puzzle and, on occasion, putting a few pieces together. Occasionally in our effort to make sense out of the process of playing around with these pieces, we ask, "What do these pieces mean?" At such times, we find ourselves wondering if there is a "big picture" somewhere that could help us understand the pieces we have collected.

In all likelihood, we are too busy collecting and sorting pieces to spend much time speculating about meaning. Still, in the dark recesses of our innermost being, we intuitively feel that there must be some "big picture" somewhere. (As my four-year-old granddaughter said upon being given a plain paper bag full of jigsaw puzzle pieces: "Where's the picture, grandpa?") But we aren't strong on trusting our intuition anyway, and, since rational logic says that "what you see is what there is," we tend to dismiss these intuitive feelings as relics of a simpler era dominated by superstition and myth.

The *assumption of separateness* posits that there is no "big picture," no ultimate purpose or meaning to existence. Therefore, all meaning must reside either in the individual pieces of the puzzle themselves, or in whatever meaning we, as isolated individuals, choose to invest in those pieces. If this is true, then the only sensible goal of life is to collect as many pieces of the puzzle as possible and create what meaning we can from "our" particular pieces.

The *assumption of wholeness* posits that there is an ultimate *unity* to the universe from which meaning is derived. In the same way that each individual cell carries the DNA of the entire body, each person is an individual expression or representation of the wholeness. This unity is recognized in the ecological principle that "everything is connected to everything else." Using this insight, it becomes clear that at some profound level we are all working on the same jigsaw puzzle. Implicit in the assumption of unity and wholeness are meaning and purpose. Indeed, the only philosophical basis for belief in a purposeless universe is the assumption of separateness.

Now try this thought experiment: Imagine you are going to make a jigsaw puzzle. First image a picture of an Earth-like planet. Then draw this image, replicate it onto a piece of heavy cardboard, and, finally, with a giant cookie cutter, cut it into pieces of many shapes and sizes.

Now, imagine yourself taking an Alice in Wonderland trip in which you become small enough to enter and actually become one of those puzzle pieces. You take on its shape and characteristics, and it takes on your shape and characteristics. Now imagine that, as soon as you have done this, you forget that this was just a thought experiment, so that where you are now is the "real" world. From your new perspective, the world is an apparently random assortment of individual "pieces" or "persons" and "things."

In your efforts to make sense of all this, you spend a great deal of time and energy collecting as many pieces as you can, protecting your pieces and fending off others who seem to be grabbing for pieces you want. You figure that the only way you can make any sense out of your situation is to accumulate as many pieces as possible. After all, "The one who dies with the most puzzle pieces, wins," and those who seem to know what life is all about have said that "winning is everything." The only logical as-

sumption is that meaning comes from winning. So you work all the harder to collect more pieces, hoping that eventually you will "win"—whatever that means.

Then one day you begin to wonder about what you're doing. You suddenly think, "Maybe there is a bigger picture of which I am a part." The next thing you begin to wonder is, "If there is a larger picture, how do I (my pieces) fit into it?" So, instead of trying to collect more pieces, you begin to look for patterns, connections, and relationships. One day, you suddenly remember (i.e., put together again)—in a flash of insight—how it was before you imagined yourself as this particular piece of the puzzle. You remember that there was a big picture and you realize that intuitively you knew all along that everything was connected to everything else.

Any search for wholeness, regardless of its form, is a spiritual search or a "re-membering": an innate desire to "arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

The conclusion to the thought experiment is that each of us is like a jigsaw puzzle piece endowed with consciousness. In order to find where we belong, that is, our meaning and our particular connections and relationships, we have to start by intuiting and then imagining the whole. While the assumption of separateness seems to be rational and logical, the assumption of wholeness is intuitive and imaginative, reflecting what Joseph Chilton Pearce called the "intelligence of the heart."[3] Although rational logic is a powerful tool, it must be superseded by imagination and intuition because, ultimately, things aren't what they appear to be on the surface.

The object of this thought experiment is to suggest that the universe is, as its name implies, an indivisible whole that is manifested as multiplicity and which gives meaning to the parts. To function effectively, we need to understand the nature of both the underlying unity and the manifested multiplicity that we perceive on the surface of things. *This unity is the basic principle of the universe.*

Now try another thought experiment: Imagine yourself in space traveling toward a distant star. As you approach the star, it begins to appear round, and soon takes on the color of a big blue marble. As you approach, you begin to differentiate other colors, predominantly green, brown, and white.

As you begin to circle that ball, you can distinguish water and land. As you get closer, you can distinguish forests and plains and deserts and rivers and lakes. Then you get close enough to identify individual trees, buildings, and vehicles. Finally you are close enough to distinguish people. The closer you get, the more detail you see and the more you become aware of the individual parts, each a different piece of the whole planet.

When you land, you discover that everyone on this planet thinks of himself as a separate, unconnected, individual, isolated entity. The ethic of this planet is based on the principle, "Take care of Number 1, because, if you don't, no one else will." This ethic is manifested by each individual grabbing as much of everything as possible and then holding onto it for dear life. In large social groups this ethic is manifested in guns, tanks, bombs, submarines, and even laws designed to "protect" the "things" that belong to a particular person or group.

After living on this planet, you begin to take on its characteristic thought patterns and behavior. You begin to think of yourself as a separate, unconnected, individual, isolated entity and act accordingly. You forget the image that you once had of this planet from space: a single whole in which everything was connected to everything else. As your perspective changed, your reality changed to one of separateness, fragmentation, and isolation.

Now imagine yourself entering your spaceship for your return to outer space. As the ship takes off, you see trees turn into forests and forests turn into undifferentiated patches of green, which then become large land masses. As the planet fades into the distance, it changes into four colors, brown, green, blue, and white, until it becomes only a small blue marble floating in apparent nothingness. Finally, it is no more than a single point of light in the blackness of space. Then you "re-member" the parts into the whole. And you understand that separateness is an illusion born of a single, very limited perspective. And you know that separateness or unity is a matter of perspective and that it's all in your mind. Because you can change your mind, you are able to change your perspective by making simple thought experiments.

The voyage of consciousness

When a child is born, she emerges from a universe of wholeness. Call it God, unity, cosmic consciousness, life force, universal energy. Whatever the name, the reality is that of *one, wholeness, unity, totality.* The child's consciousness was once, and still is, a part of that unity. As she emerges from the womb, she becomes Consciousness manifest. Her first task in life is to explore her new environment, an experience that results in a general awareness that she is apparently separate from her environment. As we know, one of the earliest developmental tasks of infancy is learning to differentiate between self and the outside world. This is a dawning, emerging awareness which moves from undifferentiated wholeness to a recognition of separateness.

Soon the child's consciousness becomes so programmed by her experiences of the separateness of things that separateness becomes her "reality." This reality is reinforced by the assumptions, beliefs, interpretations, attitudes, actions, thoughts, and feelings of those around her. She quickly forgets the unity from which

she emerged, namely, her *Source*. She "buys into" the illusion of separateness and becomes as self-serving, as competitive, as self-protective as everyone else. And yet, deep within her being—perhaps buried in the genetic code itself—is the intuitive knowledge of wholeness.

In short, every event is a representation, a part of the fundamental unity that is the cosmos. Carl Sagan said it simply: "We are the universe contemplating itself."

When this knowledge of wholeness is reinforced by her bond first with her mother and her family and, as she develops, with the natural world, she is able on occasion to remember that wholeness intuitively. As she grows older, she learns the great myths of human cultures that were designed to help her remember her origins of wholeness. Thus, because the truth of wholeness is firmly embedded within her whole being and reinforced by her experiences, on occasion she is able to see intuitively, as through a glass darkly, the wholeness beneath the shadow of separateness. The more she is willing to use imagination and intuition to get in touch with this wholeness, the more she realizes that the separateness is only on the surface of things and is thus an illusion. Through thought experiments, she is able once again to get in touch with that experience of coming from wholeness and, in time, return to the Source of that wholeness.

She learns that, just as her imagination is able to manifest separateness, her imagination can manifest wholeness. As she touches this wholeness again, she finds power and energy beyond any she had ever known. Its source is cosmic, and she is able to tap into the waves of energy that surround her as readily as she can turn on a TV or radio.

What she may discover is that consciousness is the ultimate high energy field and that her mind, manifested as a physical body, is in reality a combination "tuner" and "transformer" with which she can tap that *cosmic energy* and channel that energy into the world. She learns that when she tunes in to the appropriate channel, cosmic energy flows through her and becomes manifested in countless ways so that, if the need arose, she could literally move mountains. Indeed, she begins to understand that her primary task in this reality is to be a channel for this flow of energy which will in time transform the Earth.

New paradigms in science

In 1948, astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle predicted, "Once a photograph of the Earth, taken from the *outside*, is available . . . a new idea as powerful as any in history will be let loose."[4] In 1984, astronaut Rakesh Sharma of India, traveling about in Soyuz T-11, wrote, "My mental boundaries expanded when I viewed the Earth against a black and uninviting vacuum, yet my country's rich traditions have conditioned me to look beyond manmade boundaries and prejudices. One does not have to undertake a space flight to come by this feeling."[5] And in 1985, Saudi astronaut Sultan Bin Salman al-Saud, traveling aboard Discovery 5, shared his experience: "The first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one Earth."[6]

Quantum physics now recognizes that the basic substance of the universe is energy. Thus, every "thing" in the universe is a temporary manifestation of energy in "physical" form. We are literally "star stuff." Indeed, the universe itself, in Thomas Berry's words, is "a single gorgeous celebratory event."[7] One of my colleagues was more prosaic. He would hold up a rock and proclaim, "This is a rock festival." Just as the universe is "a single, multiform event," so, Berry reminded us, "Everything from subatomic particles to galactic systems are energy events." Or, to use physicist David Peat's words, "Indeed, the whole universe could be thought of as unfolding or expressing itself in its individual occurrences."[8] In short, every event is a representation, a part of the fundamental unity that is the cosmos. Carl Sagan said it simply: "We are the universe contemplating itself."

Once we acknowledge this perspective, we can recognize that the boundaries which divide the sacred from the secular, the spiritual from the material, mind from matter, the individual from the larger community, and one nation from another are all arbitrary boundaries. Though they have been created for the sake of convenience and are thus not only important but absolutely necessary, these boundaries do not reflect the nature of reality. As Peat suggested, "The more analytical types of explanation . . . play an important role, but [only] within the general context of a more global description."[9]

Conclusion

There are a number of significant principles for holistic education to be extrapolated or deduced from this fundamental assumption of wholeness. For me, these principles take on substantively more significance once I understand them in the context of the "law of the whole." In his editorial, Miller has identified four which he considers to be essential. But there are other principles of equal significance. For example, once holistic educators understand the implications of what the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching referred to as "the connectedness of things,"[10] we are faced with a much broader spectrum of interdependent relationships than most of us usually consider. For example, there are the relationships that exist within an individual, such as those between the ego and the shadow and the very subtle relationships that exist between the mind and the body. Then there are interpersonal relationships between parents and children, among children, and between adults both in the family and in the larger community. Within the community there are the group relationships that exist between the school, the home,

and the community and between the larger social, economic, and political systems that shape our lives in powerful ways.

At least three relationships tend to be taken for granted and are just being recognized as having significant influence on the way we live our lives in the so-called information age. One is our relationship to and understanding of time. In his book, *Time Wars*,[11] Jeremy Rifkin pointed to the subtle but profound impact that is occurring with our changing concept of time. A few generations ago our ancestors measured time in seasonal cycles, but today it is not unusual for certain critical factors to be measured in nanoseconds. This significant relationship cannot be ignored if education is to be considered holistic. Then there is our relationship to information itself, that ubiquitous reality which has the capacity both to enslave and to enlighten us. We ignore this relationship at our peril. Finally, perhaps the most fundamental of all relationships is the relationship between humans and the planet Earth, a relationship that ideally serves as the model for understanding the myriad relationships implied in that profound ecological statement, "the connectedness of things."

The essence of holistic education lies at a deeper level of insight and experience than any selective list of principles, as appropriate as those principles may be.

This universal application is appropriate because, as Miller recognizes, at the fundamental level holistic education is "an overarching philosophy of life." Implicit in this philosophy is the insight that holistic education has the potential for transforming the world. Indeed, I would suggest that the ultimate goal and therefore virtually limitless potential of holistic education is nothing short of transformation—personal, social, and global. I say transformation because this holistic perspective ultimately requires a new relationship among people and our planetary home, the Earth. If William Wordsworth was able to recognize "the universe in a grain of sand," how much more of the universe is potentially visible in the eyes of a newborn babe or in the eyes of every human being on Earth—or, not so incidentally, in a rock, a tree, a bird, a mountain, or a sunset. This is the transformative quality of the assumption of wholeness. Anything less is not enough.

I affirm Miller's conviction that holistic education is fundamentally spiritual in nature. Indeed, I have concluded that any search for wholeness, regardless its form, is a spiritual search or a "remembering": an innate desire to "arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."[12] Thus it seems appropriate to close this essay with an excerpt from the "Theosophical World View." This statement incorporates certain fundamental propositions that are common to the "perennial wisdom" of all ages. As such, it provides us with what I consider to be an appropriate and comprehensive statement of the rationale, purpose, philosophy, and mission—the essence—of holistic education:

> 1. The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and interdependent whole.
>
> 2. Every existent being—from atom to galaxy—is rooted in the same universal life-creating Reality. This Reality is all pervasive, but it can never be summed up in its parts, since it transcends all its expressions. It reveals itself in the purposeful, ordered, and meaningful processes of nature as well as in the deepest recesses of the mind and spirit.
>
> 3. Recognition of the unique value of every living being expresses itself in reverence for life, compassion for all, sympathy with the needs of all individuals to find truth for themselves, and respect for all religious traditions. The way in which these ideals become realities in individual life are both the privileged choice and the responsible act of every human being.[13]

I can think of no better way to describe the foundation and unifying principle of holistic education. If we agree on this, then with the French, we can celebrate our diversity by proclaiming loudly and vigorously, *Vive la difference!*"

Notes

1. In Frederick Turner, *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness* (Camden, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1983).

2. F. David Peat, *Synchronicity: The Bridge Between Matter and Mind* (New York: Bantam, 1987).

3. Joseph Chilton Pearce, *The Magical Child Matures* (New York: Bantam, 1986).

4. Kevin W. Kelley, *The Home Planet* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1988).

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Thomas Berry, *Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1988).

8. Peat, *Synchronicity.*

9. Ibid.

10. Ernest Boyer and Arthur Levine, *A Quest for Common Learning* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, no date).

11. Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars* (New York: Holt, 1987).

12. T.S. Eliot, "Little Giddings," in *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909–1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952).

13. *The American Theosophist.* A bimonthly publication of The American Theosophical Society, Wheaton, Illinois.

A Search for Wholeness in a Culture That Is Not Whole

A Reply by Ron Miller

I consider Dr. Ed Clark to be one of the foremost thinkers in holistic education today. This is the fourth article he has contributed to *Holistic Education Review,* and, like the previous three, this essay thoughtfully explores crucial and fundamental issues. His work never fails to illuminate, and I think this is a particularly thought-provoking essay.

I agree with him that our *basic assumptions* about existence comprise a more foundational level of theory than the principles I elaborated in my editorial. In light of this, I should not have labeled those principles as "essential." Clark is entirely correct that the true *essence* of holistic education lies in its being a paradigm of wholeness, connectedness, and unity, in contrast to a worldview based on separation and conflict. (This basic distinction is also made, in slightly different terms, by Riane Eisler, who wrote of "partnership" versus "dominator" models as the basic foundation of any culture.[1])

But something is missing here. The distinction between wholeness and separation, precisely because it is so basic and foundational, is necessarily very broad and vague. To say that "Everything is connected to everything else" or that "There is an ultimate unity to the universe" does not give us very much useful guidance in making concrete decisions about curriculum, teaching methods, or human relations within the learning environment. In Clark's own terms, these assumptions provide the "macro-constraints" or broad outlines for our practice; they do not indicate how we can utilize our "micro-freedoms" (choices of concrete action) most effectively.[2]

The principles I listed in my editorial were intended to give this concrete guidance. While they may not be "essential," I think they are more *necessary* than Clark allows. He states that any given approach, as long as it is ultimately grounded in a worldview of wholeness rather than separation, should be welcomed with open arms rather than criticized; for example, he argues (both here and in his comments on page 43) that my questions about the Corsini 4R method obscure our commonalities and only serve to divide us. But I would reply that, given the particular cultural, social, political, and educational climate we face, some choices of concrete action are far more likely to be effective and enduring than others. I would further argue that we need to make these choices based on a critical, well-informed understanding of the actual, concrete historical and cultural situation we are in, not solely on the basis of our own ultimate ideals. This is the reason for my criticisms of "New Age" thinking (see p. 58) and of the comfortable isolation of many holistic education movements: It is not enough to hold a vision of wholeness and unity; we must also recognize the cultural forces that block this vision from realization. Unless we actively confront them, they will prevail. This is the first lesson history teaches us.

I often pause, when I find myself criticizing holistic allies in my editorials or book reviews, to wonder whether it really is necessary to emphasize intellectual distinctions rather than celebrate our commonalities. Doesn't such intellectual criticism violate the basic holistic principle of connectedness? But each time I have concluded that clear intellectual dialogue is an essential part of our task. Ultimately, in a spiritual sense, we are indeed all connected, all one—not only the holistic movements but also the "bad guys" (the materialists and bureaucrats and authoritarians, too)! If we want to live as saints in this world, we would make no distinctions whatsoever. But if we are to make concrete changes in our culture so that a spiritual, unitive, holistic worldview can truly flourish, then a critical analysis of social institutions and dominant educational approaches is of vital importance. And many ostensibly holistic approaches lack this critical cutting edge. In my opinion, this serious weakness needs to be addressed.

In my editorial, I named as key principles those which I believe *most directly confront* the pervasive concrete problems of contemporary education: (1) Education must nurture the development of the whole person; (2) a holistic approach involves a more egalitarian and cooperative relationship between adults and young people; (3) a holistic approach is grounded in a spiritual worldview; and (4) holistic education calls into question the destructive and materialistic facets of modern culture. I believe that these particular principles are necessary if we are to build an educational movement that is coherent, persuasive, and resilient enough to *actualize* the holistic paradigm in our present cultural climate. They are not intended to be a boundary to define the "true believers"; in fact, they allow great diversity in application. They simply represent the strategies I believe we will need to succeed, based on my own critical understanding of American culture.

This list is open to discussion; if someone wishes to suggest other such principles, I would of course want to explore the respective strengths and weaknesses of our proposals (I have even revised my own list slightly in other writings). Clark's suggestions to include the relationship of human beings to time and to the Earth are surely worth considering. But this does not mean that any given "room" in the holistic "edifice" (to use his metaphor) is as important and valuable to the holistic cause as any other. I think it is legitimate to argue that an otherwise humanistic or integrative approach

(for example, 4R) is deficient—that is, not as fully holistic as it could be and needs to be—if it fails to confront the core problems of contemporary education in a direct and convincing manner.

In any case, aside from our difference of emphasis, I do think Ed Clark's portrayal of the holistic vision in this essay is a masterful exploration that deserves to be read and pondered by everyone concerned with education.

Notes

1. Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

2. Edward T. Clark, Jr., "The Search for a New Educational Paradigm: The Implications of New Assumptions About Thinking and Learning," *Holistic Education Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1988), p. 25.

Editor's note: *The special feature section on learning styles, originally scheduled for this issue, will appear in vol. 3, no. 3 (Fall 1990).*

"Play Is When We Don't Know That We Are Different from Each Other"

The Delicate Art of Becoming a Playmate

by O. Fred Donaldson

O. Fred Donaldson, Ph.D., is a play therapist, educational consultant, author, and aikidoist. He has taught at every level of education from preschool through graduate school. He currently plays at the Valley Intervention Program (V.I.P.–TOTS) in Hemet, California, and travels extensively to conduct workshops on his ongoing research and to play with children, dolphins, and wolves.

For the first couple of hours, David (age five), and I tumbled, wrestled, and climbed on and over each other. Then our play began to take on the softness of the approaching evening. Running slowed to walking, wrestling unraveled to hand holding, climbing relaxed to lying on our backs in the grass. Our minds played with the clouds as if they were piles of cotton that we held in our hands. We pointed out and shared our discoveries amid the clouds: horses running, then prancing and disappearing; tiger jaws opening and closing; whales breaching then dissolving. As our cloud creations moved eastward, David said, as much to them as to me, "You know, Fred, play is when we don't know that we are different from each other."

***

"Come on, Fred!" Three-year-old Tiffany handed me her lunch box, took hold of my fingers, and led me outside. We didn't talk as we stood on the sidewalk waiting for her bus to arrive. (Sometimes it is their nature for two playmates to enjoy each other's company in silence.) Our hands swung slowly and unselfconsciously. There was power in this simple act of holding and being held.

***

I first saw Angel (age ten) sitting cross-legged, rocking back and forth against a cement block wall. She was stroking the right side of her face in short, rapid strokes with her slightly closed hand. Her eyes rolled as if encompassing the entire scene, yet not seeming to allow anyone in. I knew that I was about to meet a play master, an encounter which required that I be fully present. I also knew that I wouldn't control what was about to happen. I wondered whether she would play with me, whether I would be good enough. I searched her for a hint of acceptance, but she didn't reassure me.

Angel was cautious. Every so often an almost imperceptible smile darted from her eyes. Suddenly we were up together, frolicking around the lawn like two frisky foals. At first we ran around at arms' length. Soon our touch moved from fingertips to hands; in time, we tumbled over and climbed on each other. Before she went home we held hands and shared hugs and a kiss.

These are three ordinary yet extraordinary relationships that express an indivisible ecology, in which, as in a Zen landscape, no

Play is the child's natural expression of joy and wholeness. Adults need to relearn how to play in order to understand and support children in gentler ways. Play may also help us to regain our youthful enthusiasm and sense of connectedness.

element dominates or damages the others. In the rhythms of such special moments, we discover ourselves and an essential kindness that profoundly connects us with others. David, Tiffany, Angel, and I are each a melting point—receiving, transforming, and giving love. To learn the nature of each being, we meet in accordance with its nature; there playmates exist.

Bruno Bettelheim wrote, "If we wish to understand our child, we need to understand his play."[1] If our children are important to us, their play becomes of paramount significance. But how are we to gain an understanding of their play? We have observed, researched, managed, and intervened—and still play remains largely neglected or ignored, treated as leftover time in the reality of the actual school day. These approaches have not and cannot provide us with the understanding we seek.

Although there have been many books and articles on play, its dimensions remain undiscovered, in fact, just barely imagined by adults. We have not tried the obvious. To truly understand play and thereby our children, we must be willing to become their playmates.

The meaning of play

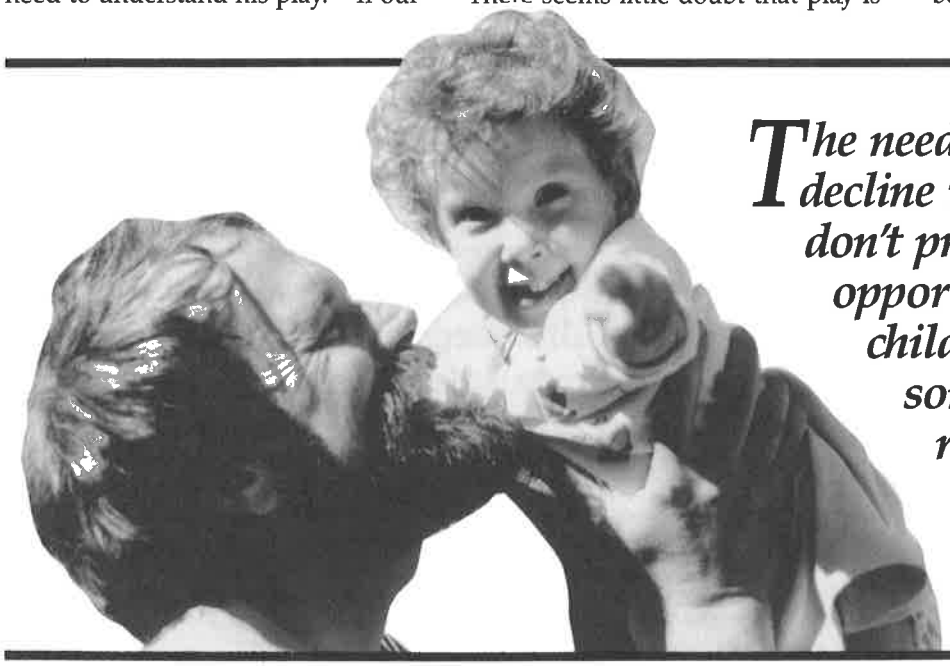
The playmate relationship is far more important than we have ever imagined. To be a playmate is to be admitted into another's life in a way that is, indeed, a gift. It is simultaneously a union with children and a reunion, a homecoming, to the concealed child within oneself who wants to come out. It is as essential and applicable to the world of the teacher as it is to the child. Friedrich Schiller, for example, has described play as the most profound and humanizing of all human activities. There seems little doubt that play is an essential element in creativity.[2] Indeed, "play, it appears, is of the very essence of thought."[3] Physicist Brian Swimme declared, "We will finally move into our destiny when we understand that we are to live in and as adventurous play."[4]

Why do we believe so strongly that play is important to the growth and development of infants and young children, yet seem so indifferent and opposed to it thereafter? If play is considered to be such a valuable learning process for young children, why do teachers remain aloof from it? Is it that we believe the benefits of play, including creativity, cooperation, initiative, imagination, and flexibility, are of no value for people older than six?

We suffer from a serious misunderstanding of the meaning and nature of play. We have thought of play as a process of socialization, as if it were through play that a child becomes civilized. Play has been described in many ways: as a simple activity done just for fun or to fill empty moments; as a child's tool for coping with and mastering his or her world; as childish, self-indulgent, and self-centered "kid's stuff"; and as a contest to win or lose. Such descriptions have defined play as a cultural activity. Consequently, the adult's role in play has been established as manager, coach, therapist, researcher, and observer. All of these put adults outside of the actual experience of children's play. From such a perspective we have looked in at play—sometimes with awe, but more often with scorn or fear.

We are afraid of play. We are afraid of not knowing how; of losing control, dignity, and professional distance; of hurting and being hurt; of touch and its sexual connotations; of litigation. We have approached play like the caterpillar which, looking up at the butterfly, cries out in apprehension, "You're not going to get me up there!" The caterpillar is correct; there must be a metamorphosis before flight. What the caterpillar does to the chrysalis, we must do to our fearful habits of thinking about and participating in play.

Teachers reflect this fear in attempts to police and manage chil-



The need for touch doesn't decline with age, and, if we don't provide positive opportunities for touch, children will find it somehow, often by reverting to violence and abuse.

Photo by Jan Hillis

dren's play while remaining untouched by it. Many of our messages concerning play are negative commands: Be careful! Don't play on the grass/with your food/in the classroom! The most common role for adults on playgrounds is one of policing, as evidenced by whistles, an upright stance, and aloofness and vigilance. In some schools teachers are told not to touch students. Teachers who feel peer pressure to dress and act professionally find it very difficult to get down to play. Ignorant of play's messages and patterns, many teachers are afraid of being hurt and of hurting others. Consequently, teachers miss the opportunity to share in the most important of children's activities.

When teachers are not policing children's play, they are managing or coaching it. Organized "play" at school is approached with the same "play to win" ethic that we use in the rest of our lives. Values of competitiveness, orderliness, and control make it very difficult to interact with the kindness necessary to play.

My experience has led me to a fundamentally different understanding of the meaning and nature of play. I first approached play with neither an academic background nor professional training. I had none of the usual agendas, preconceptions, or motives. I was neither doing research nor trying to change or teach children. I really had never given play much thought; I simply wanted to be with children. I just got down on the ground and tried to follow their lead. They didn't talk to me about play; they shared it with me. Looking back, I believe such openness allowed me to begin learning from them.

After seventeen years of playing with both children and wild animals, I am convinced that there is in the wisdom of life a vital element of play that has nothing to do with the idiosyncrasies of culture, something that is both revealed and concealed in everyday living; it is eternally valid, hidden, and yet omnipresent for those with the awareness to perceive it and the courage to undertake the adventure.

Connection, trust, and play

One could say that there are two ways of being in the world. The common way is to view objects, people, and events as separate and in conflict; but there is also what Lyall Watson has called "a rather special way," in which everything is considered to be part of a much greater pattern.[5] Play is part of this universal fund of knowledge that is common ground for all. The meaning of play lies in the fact that it is truly a "pattern which connects all living creatures."[6]

It is in thinking of this connection as a cultural artifact and psychoanalytical tool that we have drastically underestimated the power and potential of play. Play connects us to a much larger pattern than culture; it is an archetypal relationship with life itself. William Shakespeare showed us this in *The Tempest*, when Prospero "discovers through his loss and renewal of self a body of power existing beneath the world's surface of names and things, a body of power he can reach in play."[7] Play is a gift of Creation, not an artifact of culture. This makes being a playmate a very special relationship, and it is one that we have not understood.

Play ignores the categories with which we are taught to separate the world.

Play requires that we let go of our roles and expand ourselves trustingly into the unknown. But this is exactly what is so difficult to do, because life and relationships seem so dependent upon the control and security derived from knowing everyone's roles. The role of playmate differs from the culturally conditioned roles of adult, coach, teacher, therapist, or even friend. Distinctions such as age, sex, culture, ability/disability, or even species, which seem so important to our ordinary life, have no meaning in play.

To be a playmate is a way of being in the world characterized by compassionate intelligence or kindness in which one realizes that all life is of one kind. This compassion is a threefold consciousness of one's own strength, value, and connectedness with all life. To be conscious of self-worth is to be certain that one is lovable. No matter how distorted and convoluted our attempts, we all need to give and receive love. To feel deeply that one is lovable gives meaning and validity to one's own existence which is beyond doubt. To be conscious of one's connectedness is to feel that one belongs; this is not merely intellectual knowing, but heartfelt awareness of a common ground between all beings.

To be conscious of one's own strength is very different from thinking of oneself as a separate entity in a contest with the world. It is, rather, knowing that the universe need not be feared. It is believing that "life only demands from you the strength you possess."[8] When one has this sense of personal strength, then every crisis—as the Chinese character for *crisis* depicts—is both a danger and an opportunity. This threefold consciousness is not a cultural teaching to be memorized; rather, one comes to know it "by heart."

To be a playmate requires a sense of trust which is not, "I trust you to be who I want you to be." It is being vulnerable and giving up the preoccupation with security. No guarantees. This will be for many a new adventure in relating. At such a time it is very healthy to learn from and feel the beneficial influence of a child, and then, as Sören Kierkegaard suggested, "call him [her] master with gratitude."[9]

I am indebted to Paul, a boy in my kindergarten class, for sharing a powerful lesson in the meaning of the playmate relationship. Paul had leukemia, and his parents were afraid that physical play would hasten his death. For a number of months Paul and I interacted in a variety of ways short of rambunctious play. He snuggled in my lap as we read stories; we sat together and played cars and built sand castles; we held hands as we walked.

One day Paul asked me if I would invite his parents to school for a meeting. The following day he quietly told

us, "I want to play with Fred. I know that I am not going to live as long as the three of you, but I want to live as if I were." Paul's directness and clarity were convincing; his parents agreed to allow him to play with me. He played with such intensity the next day that he had to rest at home the following day. This pattern continued, coming to school for a day and staying home the next. Paul died in about a month.

Paul knew that the power of trust is deeply physical, poetic, and mythical, penetrating sinew and spirit far beyond the conscious levels of thought and feeling, returning him to his origins. It is, I think, what the dying Ivan Ilyich comes to understand in Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. As he is dying, Ilyich recalls a logic lesson that begins, "All men are mortal." As a youth he knew this fact. Nothing about the fact had changed, yet Ilyich had at least learned what these four words mean. He came to know, not more, but more deeply. Paul taught me, not more, but more deeply. He made a connection with me, and then, as Martin Buber pointed out, "the question about the meaning of life vanished."[10] He did not make my life easier, but heavier with meaning. Again, Buber's words describe my feelings: "You do not know how to point to or define the meaning, you lack any formula or image for it, and yet it is more certain for you than the sensations of your senses."[11]

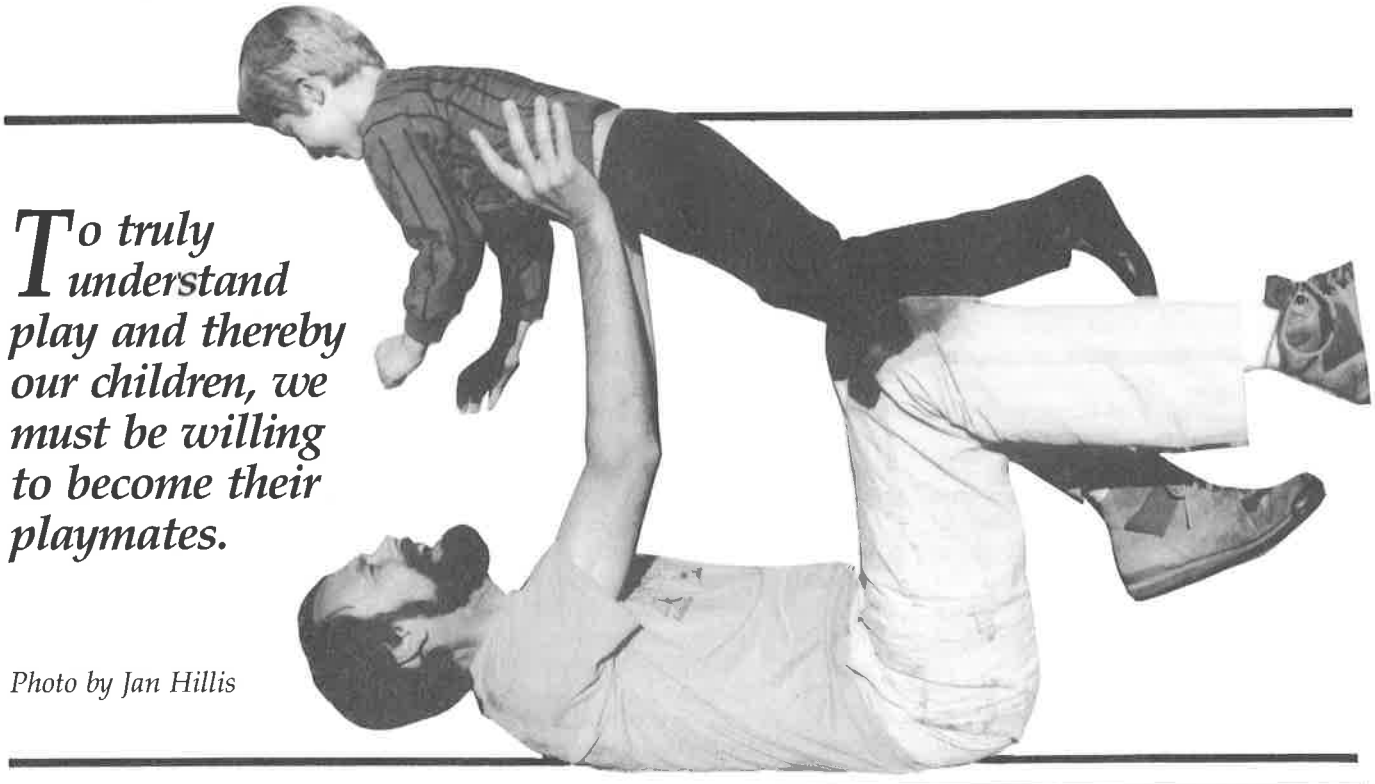
This kind of relationship is both transcendent (true for all times and places) and immanent (true here and now). It is an old, old story, an archetypal relationship that has deeper memories than one's own particular childhood. Play ignores the categories with which we are taught to separate the world. Paul and I played, for example, not as representatives of any categories, but simply as beings, and our play carried information about other children, dolphins, and even the stars. Play, which is the activity of evoking love, is the basic energy of the universe. To become a playmate requires a new and broader consciousness in addition to a deeply personal commitment to practice.

If you're going to play, play. If you're not, don't!

We approach play with the same linear, will-centered, and defensive methods, skills, and knowledge that *seem* to work so well in the other areas of our lives, not understanding that they are destructive to the very relationship we seek to establish. It should be clear that a playmate is not a teammate with whom one sides against another. Unlike sports and organized games, in play there is only one side and everyone is on it. Neither does a playmate remain separate; looking, analyzing, and judging play in order to answer questions such as, What am I going to get out of this? Is it going to be fun? Will I win?

One must *be* a playmate, which means letting go, stepping back, being quiet, trying softer, allowing time, getting down on the ground, and being in touch with children. But this is just what makes play an uncomfortable subject for adults. It is simply no use to play things safe; you have to come outside if you want to play. To be safe is not to play in the first place. To come out and play, like a child on the first morning of summer, is to say, passionately and enthusiastically, YES! to life.

The sense of kindness inherent in play requires a mental and physical "toughness" that is beyond our notion of weak and strong. No other activity calls upon such full and intense participation, such intellectual concentration, physical involvement,



To truly understand play and thereby our children, we must be willing to become their playmates.

Photo by Jan Hillis

and total emotional absorption. The rewards are practical, immediate, and lifelong. It is my experience from playing with hundreds of children and adults that an individual who experiences the playmate relationship even for only a number of hours shows significant and profound changes in attitude and behavior. Scarfe has called play "the only activity in which the whole educational process is fully consummated. . . ."[12]

Most of us are unconscious of our inability to play (i.e., we don't know that we don't know how to play). Until we see that we don't see, we can't see. The guidelines I have learned from my playmates are not very complicated, but their simplicity is disarming. The emotional counterparts to letting go of being an adult—getting down on the ground, stepping back from the urge to control, quieting inner chatter, and getting in touch with a child and giving up secure knowledge—are not easy.

Anyone can play. These guidelines are not intended to impart new knowledge but aim at a new orientation to life, so that what was always present, but unknown because of ignorance and fear, can now be realized. Coming out to play will stretch not only your muscles, but also your mind. Don't be surprised if you have aches in your body and a muddle in your mind before you really know what play is about. And, like a true adventurer, you will find that you know and feel much more than you can explain.

To begin with, there are no experts in play. Don't worry about not knowing what to do. The playmate does not correct what might otherwise be thought of as errors, he or she plays with them. Don't worry about generating or controlling play. You don't need to make excuses or justify your ideas or movements. Don't pause to think. It is important to adhere to these guidelines, because the aim is to cut through to your inner playmate to the place where your energy is unobstructed by cultural roles, restraints, and fears. In the process of playing, you learn how. It is that simple.

The apprentice playmate unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those not explicitly known to the master. These hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who uncritically surrenders self to the emulation of another. This isn't slavish mimicry but an irregular oscillation between boldness and caution. The apprentice needs a blend of courage and humility if he or she is to engage unselfconsciously in what seems at the very least a difficult task.

By following five guidelines, you will begin to experience being a playmate. The wonder of these guidelines is that, although they were what the children shared with me as a beginner, they continue to be the standards by which I play. The guidelines are: (1) be a beginner, (2) play attention, (3) keep in touch, (4) get down, and (5) allow time.

These guidelines have a fundamental underlying principle: If you want to learn something, go to the source. Basho, the great seventeenth-century master of haiku, said, "If you want to know about a tree, go to the tree." If you want to know about play, go to the children and play with all your heart. There is no substitute for the skillful playmate in helping one play through one's tenacious resistance to change. There is a wonderful luxury in being an acolyte of a young child, who may be one's own inner child and who has an uncanny ability to find that inner place that is vague or dark or puzzling and to shine a ray of light there. Little by little the child's trust expands this light, gradually dispelling the darkness.

The more empty of preconceptions and intentions you can be, the more spontaneous and alive your interactions will be. Craftspeople, musicians, artists, and writers know this as following the lead of the subject matter when the process itself makes certain demands; if one is not hypersensitive to it, then one loses touch with the process at hand. The point is to "try softer" in order to sense this harmony.

1. Be a beginner. Fortunately, we were christened with a sense of wonder. Pilgrims, poets, physicists, and preschoolers have shed the chrysalis of culture and exported themselves abroad into hitherto unimaginable playgrounds. Francis Bacon wrote in 1605 that "[K]ings could not obtain a greater honor than to be God's playfellows."[13] We can wonder what it would be like to travel on a light beam through the night with Albert Einstein, join Lao-Tzu wondering about a butterfly, share Copernicus' playful imagination as he envisioned the heliocentric solar system, or fly with the Wright brothers against conventional knowledge.

This sense of playful wonder is not perplexity or puzzlement to be resolved. Wonder is something to savor, like gazing at a star-filled night sky. When we see with our eyes we can only see what is there, but when we see playfully we are not limited by what is there. Then the mind is as pregnantly open as the blank backgrounds in a Chinese or Japanese landscape, in which most of the background consists of "nothing." Such a picture invites play by presenting emptiness out of which forms can be created. Like Oriental paintings, play's emptiness is not nothingness, but fullness with which to create. Once you have experienced such magical play, it is important that you do not place your trust in those who do not believe in play.

The secret to being a beginner is to remember that you never play with the same playmate twice. Life itself is always in the process of becoming. The playmate you are playing with now is different from who he or she was the last time you played, even if it was only an hour ago. This sounds self-evident and simple, but in practice it is extremely difficult. We try to think, plan, and become experts, not realizing that in the mind of the expert there are few possibilities, while in the mind of the beginner the possibilities are limitless.

2. Play attention. Potential playmates are everywhere, if we know how to see them. This awareness is not accumulated knowledge, nor is it something that requires great effort to attain. Like the other facets of play, the key is to try softer and get out of your own way. Be present with an open heart, and you will begin to take in your playmates and your environment naturally. Teachers, for example, can become playmates on playgrounds, in hallways, and in classrooms. A playmate is much more effective than a policeperson in providing an alternative to aggressive

behavior. When I want children to be calm and sensitive while moving from one place to another, I find it much more efficient to stand and walk with them, to hold their hands and touch them, than to stand apart and try to control and organize them. When I go onto a playground as a playmate, my patterns of touch, sensitivity, and openness become the model for children to follow. One kindergarten teacher told me, after beginning to use touch with her students, that she found herself somewhat humbled and awed by the realization of how small a shift in her position it took to make accessible such unsuspected energy and life.

play. Then it cannot help but be good for both of you.

Children's play includes a variety of experiences: quiet time as well as rambunctiousness. Learn to savor those private moments of pure wonder in which you dare not trespass but will be honored to share, such as taking walks to nowhere in particular, just moseying along holding hands and kicking leaves, lying on your backs and watching clouds float by, making snow angels, wistfully drawing on each other's backs, sitting in a tree and sharing, or snuggling in a cozy chair and reading a story.

Active play is a blend of rhythmical, fluid, and circular movements that

Organized "play" at school is approached with the same "play to win" ethic that we use in the rest of our lives.

As a playmate you play with particular beings—David, Sean, and Becky—not generalized categories of people, such as fifth graders or special education students. You play with each child as he or she exists at that moment. This means that you accept each child as the child is, not try to change the child into someone else that you want him or her to be.

It is so easy to find things to do that divert us from playing with children. Our interactions with children are often spoiled by our efforts to do two things at once. It is difficult to correct papers or talk to other teachers while playing with a child. Do not pretend to be playing when you are not. Play is an area of life in which there are no conditions. When you decide to play, play. Forget everything else. Get rid of distractions; stop whatever seems so important in your adult world and be with children. The time you share now, this very moment, is the most valuable thing you can give to anyone. This means to play with all your heart; then there is nothing of you left over to be involved in anything else.

Playing to prove your worth spoils play. Don't play because it will be good for you or the children; it won't. Don't get caught in an endless cycle of guilt, avoidance, and pressure; just

indicate a give and take between oneself and the nuances and parameters of another, learning the points of resistance, connection, and flow. Open hands and arms are used to support, not grab. At times my movements with a child, dolphin, or wolf seemed choreographed as though we sent signals to each other about what was to happen—before it actually happened. Apparent asymmetries are blended into a sequence of behavior essentially known as "your turn, my turn." But these "turns" are so well blended that they cease to exist as separate turns.

Join in it all; you will not be required to do anything beyond what you are able. You will be delightfully surprised when a child nudges you through places you would not have thought possible for you to squeeze, either physically or mentally.

3. Keep in touch. As the AT&T slogan, "Reach out and touch someone," suggests, touch has tremendous relevance for our well-being. We begin life as beings for whom touch is the primary sense. The same touch that calms the fetus soothes the mother-to-be. Touch bonds parents to infant and eases the pain of a young child's scraped knees. Touch helps to lay the foundation for trust and emotional stability.[14] It is the tangible evidence of our love for one another, and it is the most direct way of communicating/sharing our love. Touch is both a tactile and an emotional experience. In addition, play/touch is a visceral understanding communicated directly from heart to heart. We know that when we are "touched" by something or have had a "touching" experience we have felt it inside as well as outside.

Yet we seem to assume that we get all the touch we will ever need in infancy and early childhood. By the time our children are of school age, we vacillate between policies of "hands off" and "this is for your own good"—neither of which is effective in raising kind human beings. Both are based on and teach fear. By adolescence, the need for touch is ignored. James A. Prescott, a developmental neuropsychologist, feels that deprivation of touch is a basic cause of depressive and autistic behavior, hyperactivity, sexual aberration, drug abuse, violence, and aggression.[15]

The need for touch doesn't decline with age, and, if we don't provide positive opportunities for touch, children will find it somehow, often by reverting to violence and abuse. This kind of touching—elbowing, grabbing, punching, kicking, pushing, or pulling—is used to keep others at arm's length or to control them. Such touching is deeply shaped by fear. The inability to touch appropriately is so common that many school playgrounds and hallways have rules such as, "Keep your hands to yourself at all times." Out of frustration and fear, teachers grab, push, and pull children to stop aggression and maintain order. It is as though our sense of positive touch has actually "fallen asleep." Like a leg that "falls asleep," we experience a sensory cutoff that results in difficulty in initiating caring touch because the impulses are not adequately given or received. Children drop out and teachers burn out because they are simply tired of hurting and being hurt.

I suspect that if we were to provide the opportunities for teenagers to play and thereby experience the trust, gentleness, and power of its touch, there would be less abusive and inappropriate touch and fewer pregnancies in school. We simply don't know how to touch in ways that are suppor-

tive. When I play in junior or high school settings, teachers often express fears that the play will be sexual or violent. My experience with older students is that, given time, opportunity, and a safe environment, they are as responsive to play and its touch as are young children.

Through play we can learn a way of thinking and behaving that is neither dominating nor submissive. One group of children, after a play session, wrote about what they learned: "how to play, not fight"; "He [Fred] doesn't punch or kick—he just takes care of us"; "I learned not to be rough or hurt anybody"; "I learned that it is fun when you play like that instead of hitting each other." In the playmate relationship, the individual has a more accepting self-perception; values self more highly; is more skillful at trusting others; moves from defensive, aggressive, and awkward touching to gentle, sure, and blending touching; and is less fearful and less frustrated by stress.

A playmate gives kindness—an act of recognition of our individual presence in life—which ultimately none of us can do without. By making us part of another person's process of creation, we are confirmed and restored to our own sense of belonging. Touch is reciprocal; in touching one also is touched. Too often we approach touch as though only the children receive its benefits. This simply is not the case; an adult receives as much as a child. Through this mutuality, learning and trust take place. The mystery of play lies here, in the "inbetween." To be a playmate is to be especially sensitive to others and to realize that others may have built protective walls around themselves and that touch can be frightening and very intrusive. A playmate offers touch but does not impose it. Each playmate is allowed to play on his or her own terms.

Whether we are speaking of a premature infant, a five-year-old, or a teenager, touch now is always better than touch promised. We need more positive, caring touching at school. Every human being needs positive, caring touch every day.

4. Get down. It is not fun to play with knees. We often fail to realize the effect our size has on children. Play on the same level as your playmate. Then you will be reachable, literally and figuratively in touch with the child. It is only by getting down that we can be close enough to be attentive to the child's body movements and learn the constant adjustments that are required of us if we truly are to blend with children in play.

This is when it begins to get difficult. Many adults are very apprehensive about getting down on the ground. It is as though we were repatterning after a form of paralysis. We face a horrible empty space of not knowing what to do, and, even if we were to remember, we don't believe that we can move that way anymore. We are exposing ourselves, not how our egos would like to see us represented, but how we are as real human beings.

You can signal your willingness to play by how you present yourself.

Photo by Fred Donaldson

Simply get down on the ground in a comfortable, open sitting position, with your head tilted slightly to one side, relaxed, arms extended and hands open, with a smile in your eyes as well as on your mouth. This play posture is a window into the spirit; the eyes gaze with brightness but do not stare. I have found that this gesture complex creates an atmosphere of honor, respect, and openness to which playmates respond accordingly.

The movements are simple: lie down, roll over, sit, kneel, move about. Allow yourself to feel awkward. Do not remain in one place as though you were fastened to the ground with tent stakes. I pretend that I am playground equipment: slide, swings, climbing bars. I allow the children to climb on and over me. Such movements provide more than a postural change; they widen horizons. I also wear play clothes, ones that I get grass-stained or torn without concern. I remove all jewelry and pocket contents that could cause physical injury, or emotional suffering if damaged.

5. Allow time. It is easy to play with a child when we have nothing better to do; the challenge is to play when we are too busy, too frustrated, or too tired. Often, after we have finished a hard day working (at home or away), a child will run up and tug at our clothes and emotions, imploring us to play. "Not now, I'm too busy/tired/old . . . maybe later."

For most of us, play time is leftover time, to be taken care of later. Only, later seldom comes. Many adults share stories, tinged with more than a little sadness, of the last time that they or their parents put off play time until later. I recently received a letter from a grandmother who wrote, "My granddaughter and I played until she started school. She still asks me to play, but, for pretty poor adult reasons, I haven't. What really hurts is that the last time we visited she had two friends to play with, but she came to me and asked if I would go out and swing with her. I told her I would later, but I didn't." This is more common than we would like to imagine, and has more far-reaching consequences than we realize. Psychoanalyst Alice Miller shared the story

of Jurgen Bartsch, an imprisoned murderer of four boys, who at one point was finally able to reproach his parents, crying, "Why didn't you play with me one single time in twenty years?"[16]

I recently had an opportunity to play with a man who knows what it means to have "later, son" never come about. During a play session I asked D., who has had cerebral palsy since birth, if he would like to get out of his wheelchair and play with me. His "Yes!" response carried so much enthusiasm that I thought he might leap out of the chair himself. With his help I took him out of the chair, and we rolled around, over and under each other on the floor. We played, tumbled, and hugged like two little boys until we came to a natural rest period. We sat on the carpet breathing heavily and holding each other. Later at dinner, D. cried and told me that his father, who had died recently, had never played with him.

Just once say to yourself that play is the most important thing you have to do today.

Just once say to yourself that play is the most important thing you have to do today. And give yourself and a playmate time to play. Make everything else secondary. This means that playing with your daughter is more important than getting dinner. Playing with your son is more important than finishing that paper or writing that report right now. I know how hard this is at first, but we can choose to do it. I remember evenings when Etienne would give me a play signal while I was in the midst of cooking dinner. I would turn off the burners and go out onto the lawn with her. Or Anthony would come up behind me while I was typing my dissertation and give me a nudge, and we would be on the carpet. My children taught me that nothing was more important—certainly not dinner or dissertation—than playing together at that moment.

The kindness at the heart of the playmate relationship is love, and it is a kindness that is deeper than both sympathy and empathy. Like a living haiku, the relationship is born in the spontaneous meeting between an individual and the world. To play by heart is to realize the direct, heartfelt connection between *I* and *thou* that creates a new *we*.

The playmate relationship rests on the following principles:

1. Every human being wants to give and receive love, no matter how distorted and convoluted our attempts. Love awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed.
2. The universe is at play with us and it is nothing to be afraid of.
3. Touch is our most direct way of communicating and sharing love.
4. Every human being needs positive, caring touch every day.
5. Play is the activity of evoking love, which is the basic energy of the universe.
6. All that is required is that we let go and "fall in love" as deeply as possible.
7. The qualities of compassion, trust, touch, wonder, enthusiasm, grace, and love, which are inherent in the playmate relationship, are the most important possessions of our species.

Play comes with the gift of life; it is a response to the source of life's wisdom within each of us. To play in everyday life is to bridge the chasm between the love that we say we feel for our world and the disregard and fear we exhibit in our daily lives. Play is an act of nonaggression that enables us to become aware of the love in all things. We need to experience this in our lives. When the self plays, one is authenticated by all things and realizes an essential kindness. It is then that we can truly understand what Opal Whiteley meant when she wrote, "I feel the feels of gladness they do feel."[17]

Play as though your life depended on it. It does!

Notes

1. Bruno Bettlelheim, "The Importance of Play," *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1987), pp. 35-46.
2. F. Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, edited by E.M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (England: Clarendon, 1967), p. 215; and Anthony Storr, *Solitude* (New York: Ballantine, 1988) p. 71.
3. David Bohm and F. David Peat, *Science, Order and Creativity* (New York: Bantam, 1987), p. 52.
4. Brian Swimme, *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*, (Santa Fe: Bear, 1984), p. 122.
5. Lyall Watson, *Gifts of Unknown Things* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1976), p. 34.
6. Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1979) p. 9.
7. Eileen Jorge Allman, *Player-King and Adversary: Two Faces of Play in Shakespeare* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1980), p. 12.
8. Dag Hammarskjold, *Markings* (New York: Knopf, 1972), p. 8.
9. See Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), p. 132.
10. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner's, 1970), p. 159.
11. Ibid., p. 158.
12. N.V. Scarfe, "Play Is Education," *Childhood Education* (November 1962), p. 119.
13. See Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers* (New York: Random House, 1983), p. ix.
14. Sherry S. Cohen, *The Magic of Touch* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 34.
15. Ibid., p. 36.
16. Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984), p. 211.
17. See Benjamin Hoff, *The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow* (New York: Warner, 1986), p. 82.

Teaching and the Web of Life

Professional Options and Folk Alternatives

by William Ayers

William Ayers is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Elementary Teacher Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His book, **The Good Preschool Teacher,** *was published by Teachers College Press.*

My practice is based on a view that each individual is a unique territory to be mapped. This person is the subject of my study rather than a specific disease or particular symptom. Sometimes I'm not as useful as I'd like to be, not because I don't see the rash or hear the cough, but because I don't look deeply enough at the actual person before me, or I look in the wrong way. I need to see the whole person, and the whole context, and that can be very difficult indeed. But there are no standard diagnoses, no uniform treatments, and no short-cuts. Each one is different.

–Harriet Beinfield

Teaching is an ancient art, related to the arts of helping and healing. The teacher needs to respect the unique context of each individual student's life.

Harriet Beinfield and Efrem Korngold are practitioners of the ancient healing arts of herbalism and acupuncture. Each was born with healing in the blood: Efrem's father and Harriet's mother are psychotherapists. Harriet's father is a surgeon, as were both of her grandfathers. Both Harriet and Efrem grew up in a context of helping and healing. Taking care of people was a natural part of the webs of their lives.

My own life story involves teaching. As the middle child in a large and loving family, I had occasion to learn and to teach. Having grown up in the 1950s and come of age in the turmoil of the 1960s, teaching for me was a logical expression of commitment and caring, a concrete connection to the imperfect but abiding human movement for freedom and a better life.

I want to think about teaching, too, as an ancient art, and I want to consider the vocational choice to teach and to heal. Untangling some of the strands, reflecting on what we have been and what we have become, we—who live in a culture that glorifies the modern and presumes to have conquered nature and the past—may find ourselves illuminated, perhaps even humbled, by the ancients. Sharing a dialogue of healing and teaching, doctors and teachers, we may find ourselves enriched and energized.

As Harriet talked of rashes and coughs, of heat and cold—"wind and fire" in her colorful, metaphorical language—of the idiosyncratic relationship between persons and symptoms that makes each cough different in the diagnostic pattern, I thought about teaching and about how teachers need to remember that each person is unique. As an early childhood teacher, for example, I have participated in the miracle of learning to read hundreds of times. I tried to create a rich language experience and a healthy valuing of

reading and good literature in my classrooms. I read books, took dictation, made charts and labels, told stories, and found innumerable ways to encourage a sense of efficacy and authorship. And then, to be honest, I watched children learn to read, which was and is for me essentially mysterious. Amazingly, each one was different. Zayd, for example, learned to read early by gulping down whole words and paragraphs; Malik memorized books on his way to reading; and Chesa played with sounds. One child knew the words to the entire "top 40" of any given week, and he was delighted when I handed him a homemade book with the rock-and-roll lyrics typed out in large print; another child boldly accompanied paintings with elaborate hieroglyphics that moved toward recognizable letters and words only over time. Reading was confidently linked to discovery, and each moment was person and situation specific.

Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist, founded a school for the children of peasants on his estate a hundred years ago, and he was deeply influenced by what he discovered about teaching and learning there. Tolstoy believed that each child learned to read in a singular way. He observed that what one child experienced as an obstacle to reading, another found as an aid in the enterprise. He concluded that the best teachers did not attempt to discover the overarching perfect method for reading instruction, but rather had at their disposal the greatest possible number of methods, the ability to invent new methods to fit particular situations, and an understanding, finally, that all methods are ultimately simplistic and one sided. This is because teaching is not a method or even an accumulation of methods; rather, it is something akin to an art, a complex craft, or a talent.

Tolstoy was not interested in a technique for teaching reading that in some statistical sense correlated with reading achievement scores. He was not thinking about averages or aggregates, grand theories or stereotypes with which to package what we do. Rather, Tolstoy's reflections highlighted the indefinite and yet profound process of teaching individual children. Tolstoy dignified teachers as interactive inventors of methods in an uncertain and changing universe.

The more familiar and dominant behaviorist view, on the other hand, is exemplified in this excerpt on reading instruction from *What Works*, one of the U.S. Department of Education's offerings in the current discussion of school reform:

> Children get a better start in reading if they are taught phonics. Learning phonics helps them to understand the relationship between letters and sounds and to "break the code" that links the words they hear with the words they see in print.[1]

What Works embraces the scientific metaphor throughout, and here reduces reading to a technical or mechanical problem: an issue of decoding. The sense of real, breathing children, let alone the richness inherent in reading as a disposition of mind, is brushed aside in the interest of the general and the technical. The problems with *What Works* are its highlighting of technique, its seductive simplicity, and its closing of complexity.

Teaching is not a method or even an accumulation of methods; rather, it is something akin to an art, a complex craft, or a talent.

Even the title betrays it. Here is something easy, modern, efficient, inexpensive, perhaps painless. It works. At the birth of the nuclear bomb, Robert Oppenheimer is reported to have said, "It works." When I was a child we all had our tonsils out; today pregnant women routinely have amniocentesis. People kill their crabgrass with the equivalent of Agent Orange, and our air conditioners, automobiles, shaving creams, and deodorants are literally threatening life on the planet. But it is available. It works. Never mind the more jarring questions like: Why? So what? What for? With what effects? Abraham Maslow once said, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to treat everything as if it were a nail." No wonder we see learning disabilities everywhere we look today. We think we have that hammer.

Erik Erikson once described every patient as a "universe of one"; he had in mind the specific problems and possibilities rooted in each psychological being. Harriet, with her "unique territory to be mapped," also is concerned with a physical universe, the living homes of our intentions, the temples of our spirits. We would add, I think, a thoughtful universe and a moral universe. Seeing each person as a "universe of one" or a "unique territory to be mapped" frees us of the burden and the boredom of routine, as well as the multiple problems associated with treating other people like things. We are bothered by the implication of individualized solutions, because we know that the effectiveness of individual solutions depends on larger social, historical, and political realities. Conversely, the value and meaning of these larger realities depends on authentic, individual lives. We are bothered by proposing the same small changes that already have been subverted by larger social forces time and again. But we are also freed to build our community and our collectivity by engaging real people instead of organizing abstractions and shadows.

When we switch roles, when we become client to another's profession, the idea of being a "universe of one" is an exhilarating one. After all, I insist that I am more than my torn cartilage, more than my allergies, more than my grade point average or my political affiliation. When I am one-down it becomes singularly important to be seen whole, to emerge from the crowd, to be treated as a person in need of help, perhaps, but in need of connection, too. I don't want cruelty, of course, but I don't want condescension either. I want understanding; I want solidarity. When I am one-up, can I do any less?

Consider the fatalities, small and large, that we scatter behind us when we fail to try. I suppose this explains why I sat on the operating table recently and engaged in a cheerful discussion about literature with the orthopedist who was about to insult my knee. I had no questions about his ability to cut and trim. I wasn't sure he cared. Behind our chitchat, I was fairly pleading with him to see me as whole, as *I* see myself.

We are challenged to ask how we know our patients and our students, those we would heal and teach. Who do we see when we look down at the treatment table or out across the classroom? Do we see a distant, objective, malleable mass living small, scripted lives? Or does our undeniable experience of choice and imagination extend to others? Do we see cancer or strep throat? Do we see inadequate family background? Do we see a behavior problem, a good girl, or (popularly today) a gifted and talented child or a learning disability?

These are important questions for teachers, awesome questions, because we begin to notice just what it is we hold in our hands. Children, yes, but something more: the dream and the hope to become someone. The whole truth about a person cannot be known objectively; it is neither the result of standardized tests or statistical measures nor the sum total of his or her data. A person can only begin to be known in relationship to context, to ground, to experience, to intention, to other.

The world that teachers create speaks to the possibility of others inventing their own worlds. Our choice is the choice to shepherd other choices; our vocation is the vocation of vocations. That is a terrific responsibility, one that calls for humility and reverence—reverence for each child and humility in the face of each interaction. Teachers know they have found their own voices when they hear a chorus of other voices, of different voices, sometimes echoing, sometimes answering, eventually moving off in the distance. Only silence kills teachers. Yet it is precisely silence that the overly organized, technocratic system of education imposes. To insist on our voices—and to begin to link up with other voices—is to enter into risk and conflict. It is to move beyond method into the worlds of art and philosophy and politics.

Efrem contrasts the traditional and modern methods in healing:

> If I were to be run over by a bus, I would certainly want to be in New York City, close to a major hospital. There is no medicine in the world better able to intervene in crisis, none more successful in responding to life-threatening trauma and in bringing the full force of technology to bear in saving lives. The problem arises when machines, surgical procedures, drugs, and specialists become the model for medicine and for health. After all, it is the body that heals. We assist, but we don't control or dominate nature.

The physician is a helper, but it is the body itself that heals. Similarly, a teacher creates opportunities for experiences, environments for learning, and possibilities for growth and connection, but it is the child who learns. Healers and teachers are at their best when they empower others to get on with the business at hand.

Heroic intervention belongs to modern medicine. When I wrecked my cartilage I was glad for the microsurgery; when my friend ruptured a disk, modern miracle intervention was the best choice. In teaching, too, there are situations like these. The child who can't read because of a vision problem or a neurological disorder may well require a technical solution. But is that the equivalent of health? Is that education? The harm lies in overreliance and in splitting the person from the problem. The danger, in Don DeLillo's words, is in "removing lust from nature," desire from reality.[2]

Harriet described her feelings about her work this way: "It is more than what I do, it is who I am." Efrem added, "It is in part a discovery of myself." Choosing healing, choosing teaching, is for healers and teachers a way of intensifying a sense of vitality. Teaching isn't something we do from nine to three; healing isn't something we peddle by the hour. It is at the core of ourselves. Teaching and healing merge somewhat, for to heal is to teach, to restore wholeness; and to teach is to heal, to feed and to nourish.

Donald Winnicott described a healthy person as "taking responsibility for action or inaction." He included a "tingling life" and the "magic of intimacy" in his sense of health. Teaching is for many teachers a way of being healthy. Creativity in healing as in teaching is, in Winnicott's words, "the retention throughout life of something that belongs properly to the infant ... the ability to create the world."[3] Consciousness in teaching, as in healing, is more than critical thinking; it involves understanding context, biography, values, and vantage point; it involves the development of a fighting spirit, a willingness to act on what one knows, a linking of knowledge with feeling and with conduct.

Over 150 years ago, Seattle, the Native American leader, teacher, and healer said:

> This we know—the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. We did not weave the web of life; we are each merely a strand of it. Whatever we do to the web, we do also to ourselves.

These words remind us of our relational nature, our connectedness to one another and to a given world, our link to generations past and still to come, our contingency, our dazzling possibilities, and our responsibility to choose from the millions of possible paths. They remind us, teachers and healers, of the ethical dimensions of our work, and they call us to a life of thoughtfulness, connection, and compassion. They counsel us to approach our tasks with humility and reverence, but also with a little toughness. To see our situations as they are, suspended in the web of life, is to be energized, to roll up our sleeves, and to wade into our work again with renewed purpose and with passion.

Notes

1. *What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education, 1986), p. 21.

2. D. DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Penguin, 1985), p. 285.

3. D.W. Winnicott, *Home Is Where We Start from: Essays by a Psychoanalyst* (New York: Norton, 1986), pp. 27, 40.

Schools as Communities of Love and Caring

by Mara Sapon-Shevin

Mara Sapon-Shevin is Associate Professor of Elementary and Special Education in the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota. She is most interested in how teachers and society respond to diversity in children and in how teachers and others can create "inclusive schools." Mara is active in the field of cooperative learning, and often leads cooperative games workshops for teachers, counselors, parents, and day care providers. She is a board member of the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education. Mara is also active in community peace work and is a member of her institution's Peace Studies faculty. She takes great delight in being the mother of two activist, feminist daughters, Dalia, 10, and Leora, 7.

When my oldest daughter was in second grade, we attended the first parent-teacher conference in early October. After telling us about Dalia's excellent academic progress, the teacher said, "We are having one problem with Dalia; she cares too much about other children." As we sat there trying to figure out what the problem was, the teacher went on to explain, "For example, if another child breaks his pencil and starts to cry, she goes into *her* desk and gives him one of *her* pencils. And I tell her, 'Dalia, it's not your problem, it's his problem.'"

The conference ended on a positive note, but my husband and I returned home saddened, for the very values that we treasured most in our child, her tremendous empathy and caring (which we had nourished and encouraged), were seen as problems within the school setting.

I hope to share here a different vision, a vision of what schools could be like if they allowed children to be fully human. What would classrooms be like, and how would children interact in settings in which love and caring were considered not just acceptable behavior, but central organizing values? And I would like to discuss how schools interfere with children's natural ability and willingness to offer love and support to one another. What would schools be like if teachers, rather than blocking this potential, unleashed and fostered the best of what children can be for one another?

When education becomes a narrowly focused professional endeavor, schools do not allow children to be "fully human." Love and caring should be the central organizing values of a classroom.

Consider the following story which exemplifies the often difficult choices teachers make that can inadvertently block the very values they wish to foster. When my daughter was in kindergarten, she attended a progressive private school. Her kindergarten was team-taught by two wonderful teachers: Bonnie, an older, experienced teacher, was a model of everything a kindergarten teacher should be—loving, warm, unflappable, patient, and calm. Michelle, the younger teacher, was a perfect complement—energetic, lively, and full of excitement—she clearly loved the children in her class. One day Dalia came home all excited. "Good news," she announced, "Michelle is going to have a baby!" Michelle had shared the news of her pregnancy with the class, and they were all delighted. Intending to teach for as long as

Note: The author wishes to express her appreciation to Bill Ayers for his support and careful editing of the manuscript.

possible during her pregnancy, Michelle was happy to include the children in her joy and to share her progress with them.

Several weeks later, on a weekend, I received a call from Bonnie. She told me that there was bad news. Michelle had a miscarriage and lost the baby. I offered my condolences, and Bonnie went on: "We consulted a school psychologist.... He told us to tell the children that sometimes when a doctor tells a woman she is pregnant, he makes a mistake, and that Michelle was never pregnant." I listened in stunned silence. She was calling parents to, bluntly speaking, ask them to share in this falsehood, to lie to our children. I protested. First, I told her, I am uncomfortable lying to my child. Might not other mothers in the class have experienced (or go on to experience) miscarriage? Wouldn't such an explanation make children suspicious of doctors, or pregnancy, and of what they are told by adults? But, on an even deeper level, if we didn't acknowledge Michelle's loss and her sadness, how could she be allowed to grieve? How would the children make sense of their teacher's subdued behavior? What role would they be able to play in comforting her if there was no reason for her to be sad? Isn't dealing with sadness and loss part of growing into a full and healthy person?

Several hours later, another phone call. Another "expert" had been consulted and had offered different advice. The children were to be told that Michelle had been pregnant, that the baby hadn't lived long enough to be born healthy, and that she wasn't pregnant anymore. I thanked Bonnie for her reconsideration and was satisfied. The new explanation was the truth simplified to what seemed an appropriate level for kindergartners. Free to share the truth with Dalia, I then called her over. "Bad news, Dalia," I told her, "Michelle's baby didn't live long enough to be born, and she's not going to have a baby anymore." Dalia was stunned. "Oh, Mama," she said, "That's so sad!" "Yes," I agreed, "so sad." "Mama," she asked, "wouldn't you have been sad if that had happened to me?" "Yes," I agreed again, "so sad." We then discussed what Dalia might do to help make Michelle happy. Dalia suggested that a hug might help, or maybe a picture and a note that told Michelle that she loved her. I told her those seemed liked good ideas, and she ran off to draw a picture for Michelle.

On Monday, when Dalia returned from school, she shared with me how she (and many of the other children) had given Michelle "a lot of love" and how Michelle had seemed pleased to receive their hugs. Together the children and the teachers had grieved a little, cried a little, and healed a little. It was a powerful lesson in caring, and an exercise in carelessness had been averted.

Of course, there are other commentaries on this story. For example, why did Bonnie, the experienced teacher who knew her class of children so well, feel that she had to defer to an "outside expert" with a doctorate rather than trusting her own judgment (which she told me, would have led her to tell the children the truth)? But the most important point of my story is that the children in that class were nearly denied the opportunity to be fully human, to share another person's pain, and to figure out their roles in easing grief. What a loss that would have been. As it turned out, both the children and the teachers were allowed to be human. The children understood why Michelle was sad, and they felt empowered to help ease her sadness. In the name of "protecting" children from sad truths, however, they were nearly "protected" also from a lesson about love and caring.

Such lessons are not always easy, but they are always important. The first year I taught, I had a class of five- to seven-year-olds in what was called "mixed primary." Upstairs at the same school was another class of the same age, and, in that class, five-year-old Kevin was dying of cancer. Death is never easy to understand, and the death of a child seems utterly incomprehensible to both children and adults. But Kevin was part of that class, and the teachers were intent on making Kevin's life as rich as it could be, and his death as humane as possible for everyone.

Kevin was in and out of school that year; chemotherapy and radiation made him lose his hair, and he wore a little cap. The children asked many questions, and the teachers answered all of them. The class read books about death, and they wanted to know what happened to the bodies of people who died. The teachers tried to be honest. Parents were kept informed of what was happening and formed a web of support around Kevin's parents. When Kevin was in class, the other children rallied around him with love and support. They were not afraid of what was happening. They felt like participants in the drama; they were not excluded. When Kevin died, many of the children attended his funeral. It was a very sad day for the whole school. It was not a usual day, because five-year-olds are not supposed to die, and the children needed to be reassured and to understand that death—any death—was not to be taken lightly, and certainly not to be ignored.

A week after the funeral, the art teacher reported that one of the children in Kevin's class approached her and said, "I've been thinking. You know, Kevin's smock is still hanging on his hook in the art room. I don't know if it's better if we leave it there, or if we should take it down." Although on one level it is grievous to think of a five-year-old having to weigh the tension between holding Kevin's memory and getting on with life, it is wonderful as well. The teachers in that school created an atmosphere in which the children were free to be sad, free to grieve, and free to be human beings in all of the best senses.

When I shared this story with a group of pre-service teachers, several told of their own childhood experiences with death and loss. One student reported that when a classmate was killed over the weekend, the child's desk was simply removed, and no formal mention was ever made of what had happened. When I asked the class why they thought teachers might be uncomfortable talking about death with their students, they offered various explanations. "Because they don't know what to say," said one. "Because they're afraid they'll make kids feel worse," proposed another. Then, one student suggested an answer that I found pro-

vocative and insightful: "I think that teachers don't talk about a child's death because they're afraid that, if they do, they might cry in front of the class themselves." This seems to me to be at the heart of the issue. In order for us to allow children to be fully human with one another, we must, as teachers, be fully human with our students. "What," I challenged my class, "could be better than the teacher and the students all crying together?"

Probably all teachers can offer stories about what has happened when they have trusted their students enough to be honest and human with them. Once, when I was teaching a class of special education students, many of whom had what are now called "challenging behaviors," I came to school quite ill. I confided to my class that I wasn't feeling well, that my head hurt, and I felt dizzy. My class that day was the sweetest they had ever been. They talked in quiet voices, they brought me drinks of water, and they inquired regularly whether I was feeling better. Many of them offered little hugs and tentative pats on the back as well. By the end of the day, my head still hurt, but my heart was full.

What can classrooms be like when children are encouraged to be caring and loving? One particularly dramatic example is provided by a kindergarten teacher who has integrated several children with severe disabilities into her room. She reports that at first the children were wary of Darren, who had multiple disabilities, used a wheelchair, and had seizures. When he had a seizure they were afraid, she said, that he was getting hurt. She reassured them that, as a class, they wouldn't let anything bad happen to Darren, and they began to relax. She reported that, a month after Darren's entry into the class, all of the children had learned how to hold him, how to play with him gently, and how to communicate with him. One day, one of the children approached her and said, "Darren's in a seizure; it's about a minute so far. Should I get his blanket because Darren is having a bad day? Should I put him in the bean bag and give him a cuddle?"[1] This, to me, is the image of how schools can be: children unafraid of one another's differences and able to offer love and caring to one another.

How do we make this happen? In many ways, I think the answers are obvious. Perhaps the most basic answer is that we, as teachers, need to allow ourselves to be loving and caring without embarrassment, without apology. And then, as Rabbi Hillel said when asked to state the principles of right conduct while standing on one foot, "Love one another; all the rest is commentary." Part of that commentary, I believe, is that we try not to stand in the way of children's natural empathy and caring. We can try to create environments in which that caring is easy and natural to display. One teacher I know places her students in little clusters of desks pushed together. She calls these groups "families," and she has a basic rule in her classroom: If anyone in a family group has a problem (of any kind), it is up to the group to try to solve it before coming to her for advice or help. The nature of the problems that these families solve goes beyond not knowing what math page to do, or how to figure out the key on the map, although these have all been addressed. She has also seen these families of children rally around a child who was sad, upset, or worried about something—little heads buzzed together as they figured out what to do to help.

One often hears adults lament how cruel children are to one another. I am not denying that I have seen these behaviors too: children excluded, taunted, and teased. But I have also seen children be amazingly loving, supportive, understanding, and helpful to one another. I have seen big, "tough" sixth-graders helping little first graders with their math; I have seen "typical" children gently wiping the mouth of a child with cerebral palsy who drools; and I have seen children brainstorming to help a child who was having trouble with schoolwork. We must look at schools and teachers who create these environments of love and caring, and study what they do. We must ask these teachers what they do. And then we must listen.

Once while observing a classroom, I was struck within ten minutes by the fact that the children were so nice to one another. They sat on the rug at story time and they didn't push. I watched them sharing scarce materials with ease and grace. I saw children hugging each other and laughing together. I approached the teacher and told her what I had seen. I asked her what she had done to create this environment. Truly, I would have been disappointed if she had said that she had done nothing. But I was not disappointed. "Well," she said, "I tell them that this is their family and that, while we're in this room together, we have to figure out how to get along. It's a real priority in my room." The results were obvious. I saw another teacher, this one a teacher of preschoolers, discuss with three-year-olds which words were "exclusive" (words that pushed other children away), and which were "inclusive" (ones that brought people together). Figuring out how to make an inclusive community out of the classroom was a specific agenda; it was not considered secondary to some academic goal.

I don't think that creating classrooms of love and caring is a difficult task. Complex, yes, and challenging, but not difficult, because I believe that all human beings want to be loving and caring. Many things stand in their way, and many children (and adults) get hurt in such a way that it is difficult for them to be loving and caring; but I believe that the true nature of human beings is to be closely and warmly connected with others. As teachers, we are simply facilitating what can be a natural and organic process, a process of love.

Note

1. Marsha Forest, "Just One of the Kids," in *More Education/Integration* (Downsview, Ontario: Roeher Institute, 1987), pp. 121-124.

New Attitudes for New Students

by Yvonne S. Freeman and David E. Freeman

Immigrant children in our schools enter an educational system that is foreign, where the language is incomprehensible, where the faces of classmates are of many colors, and where parents feel unconnected and frustrated. It is alarming but not surprising that so many fail and drop out of school. While we talk about democracy and equal opportunity, in reality many of our students are barely given a chance to get out of the gate. The basic question is not how we can teach these students, but whether we really want to.[1]

Yvonne S. (Bonnie) and David E. Freeman co-direct the Language Development Program at Fresno Pacific College in Fresno, California, where Yvonne also directs the Bilingual Education Program and David directs the Secondary Education Program. Both are interested in whole language for second language learners and have published articles on the topics of literacy, linguistics, bilingual education, and second language learning that have appeared in professional journals and books.

The United States is a multi-cultural society that continues to attract immigrants from other parts of the world. Educators need to confront personal fears and prejudices in order to teach a diverse group of children effectively and with sensitivity.

This excerpt from *Crossing the Schoolhouse Border*, a research report on immigrant students in California, raises an important issue facing many educators in that state, where 5.3 million people—20% of the population—are foreign born.[2] Is it possible that some teachers do not want to teach language minority students? Most people go into teaching because they enjoy working with children or young adults and want to help them. Reluctance to work with minority children is a contradiction to the goals of teaching. However, many teachers whose classes are now beginning to fill with these immigrant students have expressed concerns based on fears and misconceptions about their new student population and the teachers' own new role. In some cases and for a number of reasons, teachers really would prefer not to teach language minority students.

In the course of doing in-service work with teachers in schools, teaching classes to graduate students who are in the classroom, and training future teachers, we have come across several recurring scenarios that involve teachers and bilingual learners. When we analyze these scenarios, common concerns, fears, and misconceptions begin to emerge. Once we identify why these teachers are reluctant to work with language minority students, we can begin to work to change their perceptions.

We have found that we can help teachers in our teacher-training and graduate courses to work effectively with language minority students by having them (a) read about second language learners, (b) study how learning happens, (c) write about their feelings and convictions, and (d) discuss their new knowledge and past experiences with others. In addition, we ask the teachers to focus on one second language learner and do a simple case study on that student. By looking at the individual child and recognizing his or her strengths, teachers begin to view all language minority students differently. Finally, we have learned that gaining new

understanding and changing attitudes take time. A one-day workshop, reading one article, or engaging in one discussion session is not enough to give teachers the help they need.

In this article we will look at some of the tremendous changes in demographics in California and some of the conflicts that those demographics have wrought. Next, we will describe five common classroom scenarios involving bilingual learners that we have observed in schools of Central Valley, California. Finally, we will detail what we have done with teachers to transform reluctance to teach immigrant students into enthusiasm for working with language minority students.

Changing school demographics

In California schools, 4.5 million students are from ethnically diverse backgrounds. One-sixth of these students are foreign born, and one-fourth speak a language other than English. In some school districts in the state, as many as 80% of the students are classified as limited English proficient (LEP) or non-English proficient (NEP). In one-third of all California school districts, at least one student in ten is labeled as LEP. These second language learners come primarily from Asia and Latin America. In fact, the past ten years have seen the largest ever migration to the state.[3] Already whites make up less than 50% of the students in California schools.[4]

While the number of minority students has grown and is projected to continue to grow, the number of newly credentialed minority teachers has not kept pace. In 1986-1987, 7,611 (85%) of the 8,967 teachers credentialed were white; 7.5% were Hispanic; 3.7% were Asian; and 4% were African-Americans. Of teachers hired in California, 82.6% were white.[5] Districts desperately try to meet affirmative action demands, but complain they cannot find qualified minorities to hire.

In part because of the lack of minority teachers to act as role models and to help students adjust to a new language and culture, the immediate future does not look hopeful for minority language students. In California, 45% of the Hispanic students are dropping out of school. Although the dropout rate of Asian students is much lower at 17%,[6] that figure lumps the entire Asian population together, a large proportion of which is not immigrant. In the 1986 California Assessment Program (CAP), results for grade 12 second language learners classified as fluent English proficient (FEP; see Table 1) showed that none of the Asian groups reached the 50 percentile rank, or average, in reading. The highest scoring group in writing was the Japanese, with a 54.2 percentile rating.[7] Although math scores were higher for Asians with the exception of Southeast Asians, the language skills for all second language learners was below average.

Table 1

Twelfth-Grade CAP Results, 1985-1986
Percentile Rank by Language Groups (FEP)

	Reading	Writing	Math
Chinese	38.3	50.0	71.2
Filipino	37.9	45.2	53.3
Japanese	45.4	54.2	72.1
Korean	41.1	53.0	74.9
SE Asian	28.5	34.2	56.9
Spanish	30.9	34.1	38.4

Despite the obvious need of language minority students for some kind of special assistance, the general public does not seem to be sympathetic. The rejection of the California Bilingual Education Program and the passage of legislation like Proposition 63, the "English Only" initiative, in 1986, reflects a climate found across the country. Many people believe that immigrants should learn English, get off welfare rolls, and become productive members of our society on their own. A common complaint goes something like the following: "After all, our ancestors did this, why can't they do it? Why should these new immigrants get special treatment when there were no special programs in the past?"

There is little empathy for the difficulties that are involved in adjusting to our complex, modern society. While a recent Harris poll done for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund revealed that Americans favor "special school programs for children living in poverty, including programs to reduce dropout rates,"[8] too few people, and too few educators, realize that even students who work very hard need several years to learn English well enough to succeed academically.[9] Immigrants can no longer succeed without an education as our ancestors could, first as farmers and later as workers in factories. Now success is possible only through education, and education means school success in English. The burden is upon the schools and ultimately upon the teachers.

Scenarios of teachers working with second language learners

Throughout California and other states experiencing a flood of immigrant students, teachers are responding in various ways. All teachers find these changes challenging; some are coping better than others. Not all teachers are reluctant to work with language minority students, but many are, at least initially. In our work with groups of teachers in schools with high populations of bilingual learners, five common scenarios have emerged. The following hypothetical accounts are representative of our observations.

Scenario #1: Teaching just isn't like it used to be. Mrs. Johnson has taught kindergarten at Baker School in the south end of town for fifteen years. When she first began teaching there, the neighborhood was primarily middle class and white, but over the years large numbers of minority families including African-Americans, Hispanics, and Southeast Asians have moved into the area,

causing a "white flight" to the north. The majority of her present students arrive with little or no English. She complains that they cannot do what her former students could. She remembers fondly the first days of school when children would arrive eager to learn, holding the hands of parents who offered support. Now, she complains, the students, especially the Southeast Asian children, enter the classroom reluctantly. They are either alone or with parents who don't speak English and seem anxious to escape as quickly as possible. Although she has an English-only rule for the classroom, Mrs. Johnson constantly has to remind students not to speak their native language. Her biggest complaint is that the children just don't seem motivated.

Scenario #2: All of these language minority kids make me look like a failure. Ms. Franklin is a second year, second grade teacher. Like most non-tenured teachers in the district, she has been assigned to a classroom of minority students, most of whom are Hispanic and Southeast Asian. Many of her students are classified as LEP. Although her teacher education program did not prepare her for working with second language learners, Ms. Franklin fell in love with these students as soon as she began to work with them last year. After she attended a couple of in-services, she began to read with the children, to let them write using temporary spelling, and to try to draw on their interests and knowledge. The children responded well to this type of program, and Ms. Franklin could see considerable growth in their English. But when the results of the monthly skills-based tests in reading, writing, and math mandated by the school were published, they showed that test scores for her students remained low. The principal talked about this with Ms. Franklin, and although he did not threaten her directly, Ms. Franklin now feels her job is on the line.

From the in-services she has attended and from her own experiences, she realizes that standardized tests do not test the progress of her bilingual students fairly. Still, she is tempted to try this year to "teach to the test" despite her feelings that worksheets and drills are not meaningful to her minority students. She is beginning to view her students as having deficits that could have direct consequences for her career. She is also beginning to wish that she could transfer to another school where there are fewer minority students.

Scenario #3: It's not fair to the rest of my class to give those students special attention. Mr. Martin teaches in a farming community where he has lived since he was a child. At the beginning of the school year, his sixth grade classroom consisted of a nice group of Anglo and Hispanic children, all of whom were fairly proficient in English and fairly successful learners. At the end of the first month of school, the principal told Mr. Martin that there were five sixth-grade migrant children who had just arrived from Mexico and that they would be placed in Mr. Martin's class.

A problem we have noticed is that school districts with immigrant students tend to lump all of them together and to see them as a kind of unified "problem" that must be dealt with.

Mr. Martin wasn't sure what to do with these new students whose English was extremely limited. Although the district paid for additional training on how to deal with the new students, he resented having to attend extra classes and learn new ways to teach, especially when he had been successful for a number of years. Why should he be the one to change? If these students couldn't meet the expectations of his class, maybe they weren't ready for it.

Nevertheless, the students were assigned to his class and the principal was not about to transfer them out. Because he was a good teacher, Mr. Martin felt guilty that the new students just sat quietly in the back of his classroom. On the other hand, it seemed to him that giving those students special attention wasn't fair to the rest of the class members, who were doing just fine with his traditional instruction. At the same time, the extra training he was receiving also made him feel guilty because it stressed that students should not simply be given busy work, but should be engaged in meaningful activities with fellow classmates. Because Mr. Martin's teaching style did not include much student interaction or group work, he became doubly frustrated at the prospect of having the deal with new students and also change his way of teaching.

Scenario #4: The bilingual teacher is looked down upon and gets all the trouble-makers. Sr. Gonzalez went into bilingual education because he himself had come to the United States as a non-English-speaking child and knew how difficult it was to succeed in school as a second language learner. His training had taught him how much instruction in the first language helps children academically and actually speeds their success in their English.[10] During his first two years of teaching, he enthusiastically worked with his fourth graders, supporting their first language and helping them to succeed in their second.

By the end of the third year, when he was tenured, his enthusiasm began to wane. Sr. Gonzalez was troubled by the subtle way his fellow teachers treated him. The bilingual program was considered a remedial program, and constant remarks in the teachers' lounge convinced him that other teachers did not really believe bilingual kids were capable of the kind of success other students could achieve. On top of that, Sr. Gonzalez soon discovered that Hispanic children with discipline problems were transferred into his class throughout each year, even though some of them were not second language learners. Whenever he objected, the principal would explain that, since Sr. Gonzalez was Hispanic, he could under-

stand Hispanic children better. When his assertion that his program was geared to help Spanish speakers to succeed academically (not with discipline problems) fell on deaf ears, Sr. Gonzalez began to feel that his expertise was not respected and that his classroom was considered a dumping ground. He put in a request to be taken out of the bilingual classroom.

Scenario #5: Don't expect too much of these students. Mrs. Williams is a pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor who works with children in grades K-8 in a school district with many LEP children. Most of the students she works with are either Hispanic children of migrant workers, or Southeast Asian children whose parents were peasants before coming to this country. Southeast Asian and Hispanic children of well-to-do parents are seldom placed in these pull-out programs. Mrs. Williams likes working with small groups of children and, in fact, volunteered to become a district pull-out teacher because the idea of working with small groups of polite, respectful children appealed to her.

Mrs. Williams has had no special training in ESL teaching but, because she has seen many second language learners over the years, she feels she understand their problems. She firmly believes that many non-English speakers enter school with no language and that second language parents do not really value education. "After all," she explains, "their parents don't speak English, nor do they read or write in their first language. What these children need is lots of oral language development in English."

In the pull-out classes, the students get practice in pronouncing words, and they often do worksheets that focus on phonics. Since the students don't have control of the oral language, Mrs. Williams does not devote much time to real reading or writing. "They simply aren't ready," she explains.

Mrs. Williams and her students appear to have reached a truce. She won't push too hard or expect too much, and they will be orderly and complete the assignments she gives them. Furthermore, the regular teachers from whose classrooms the students are pulled out are happy to be relieved of the responsibility of teaching these students for part of each day. The parents of Mrs. Williams' students, who seem reluctant to talk to her and do not show up for the conferences she schedules, reinforce her belief that they do not care about their children's school success. Since the students, their parents, and the other teachers seem satisfied with her program as it is, Mrs. Williams sees no need to change and resents the suggestion that she isn't really teaching her ESL students anything.

Because they looked closely at one bilingual child, these three teachers now realize that they have a responsibility to look at all children in their classroom, including second language learners, as individuals in order to help all of them achieve their potential.

Getting teachers to change

Although many teachers do an excellent job of teaching language minority students, many other teachers are quite similar to the five we have described. What these five types of teachers have in common is that, for whatever reason, they aren't prepared to teach the language minority students who keep entering their classes in greater numbers each year. It is our belief that many teachers cannot learn how to help minority language students until they overcome negative past experiences and misconceptions such as those described above. There are ways to help teachers take a different perspective on their immigrant students and on their own role as teachers. These include giving teachers opportunities for reading and writing and for studying individual students. Most of all, teachers need time for change.

Reading and writing

First, when working with teachers, we choose weekly readings for them that tell the personal stories about the increasing numbers of immigrant children, emphasize their needs, and address some of the false assumptions that have been made about them.[11] Second, we ask them to write down their reactions to the readings, and then we, in turn, respond in writing. In fact, not only do we respond individually, but we also give the whole class a one-page response which attempts to answer the key questions and concerns various individuals have raised. For example, after reading one group's reactions one week, we responded:

> There were several recurrent themes in your responses this week. It is so easy for us as teachers to get so involved in what we are teaching that we can forget *who* we are teaching.... But when we look at who we are teaching we come back to what seems to have become our theme in this class, "Teaching limited English proficient children is a complex issue."

Our response to their reactions serves as a catalyst for discussions which are done in pairs, in small groups, and in the large group.

The written reactions from the teachers with whom we work help them to explore their own beliefs and what they want to accomplish with immigrant children. After one of the readings, Jane wrote:

> I have many responses to this assigned reading. In some ways I neither want to acknowledge them nor face them. My feelings range from optimism and hope, to pessimism and despair.... Will I be able to cope when confronted by immigrants' very real traumas, or by the unresponsive bureaucracy above me? The hope I see is that there is a vigor in the people whose stories are written here.... At

least in my classroom I can attempt to foster a supportive community to which these newcomers can safely belong.

Virginia came to a similar conclusion after the same reading:

> My overall feeling was again one of frustration at the task ahead. This time, however, I made a real effort to picture myself *doing* something about it! I have an idea or two. Hopefully, we all can begin to look into our own hearts and minds and see what we have to offer instead of throwing up our hands at the impossibility of things getting better.

Linda was even more specific and worked out what she wanted to do in her written reaction:

> I am on a committee to develop a district plan for language development for immigrant students. I hope that when I attend the meetings I can keep these things in mind: Create a safe and positive integrated school experience with a social climate respectful of diversity. Provide appropriate language and counseling support for as long as the students need it. Communication between school and home is very important. Develop approaches that will assure access and equal participation for all children in the program . . . and offering these students an intensive and high-quality English language instruction by appropriately trained staff is of the utmost importance.

> to keep them out. If the immigrants want to come to the U.S. and get an education, fine, but don't expect the U.S. citizens to foot the bill.

However, later in the course and after more reading and class discussions, James' reaction to another reading about bilingual learners had a completely different tone:

> In being teachers of the future, we are going to have to accept some simple facts. First, we will have in our classrooms immigrant students. Second, we are going to teach these students and help them learn regardless of their situations. . . . We can moan and groan all we want about our liberal borders and immigrant laws, however, the fact remains that these kids are in our schools. . . . We as teachers are obligated to put aside our assumptions and help these people learn.

James was one of several teachers who changed long-held beliefs once they became better informed about immigrants and had an opportunity to explore their own feelings and opinions in writing and in discussions with other teachers.

Case studies

A problem we have noticed is that school districts with immigrant students tend to lump all of them together and to see them as a kind of unified "problem" that must be dealt with. Therefore, we ask the teachers in our classes to do a simple case study of a second language learner in the hope that they will see for themselves that bilingual learners are individuals with different needs and strengths. By focusing on one learner over time, teachers become more sensitive to the needs of all language minority students.

Despite the obvious need of language minority students for some kind of special assistance, the general public does not seem to be sympathetic.

Not all of the reactions are positive, of course. However, over the course of the semester, the attitudes of some of the teachers change considerably. In one of his first reactions, James, a former police officer who had had only negative experiences with immigrants in his law-enforcement role, wrote:

> I feel that since these immigrants are coming to the U.S. by choice they should be responsible for adapting to our system. We did not force them to come here. We just don't do anything

The teachers make some important conclusions as they study individual students. Blanca, a student teacher, reported on José after observing him closely in the classroom she was working in: "It is obvious to me that José has a very low self-esteem. He is convinced that he is not smart. I also think that his misbehavior has a lot to do with how he feels about himself and the frustration he feels about being the slowest. . . . He needs lots of positive reinforcement to get him to feel free to risk."

After learning about Mai's traumatic, war-torn past in Southeast Asia and observing her in a special education classroom, another student teacher, Kathy, also formed some strong opinions. Kathy realized that the boring, repetitive lessons Mai was being given were not helping her to learn: "Mai needs to be read to from literary works that would be of interest to her. . . . I feel she can go far to meet success in acquiring a second language if emphasis is put on using more meaningful, real-life situations and challenging her. . . ."

Over a period of three months, Katie worked with Mony, a Cambodian kindergarten child, who had been in her own class for only a few weeks and then was transferred to another school. Katie was not satisfied with what she had learned about Mony in the short time she was in her class, and so she decided to sacrifice vacation time to learn more. After reading to Mony, writing in an interactive journal with her, and talking to her at length, Katie reflected on how this case study would influence her future teaching:

> In terms of the influence this case study will have on my teaching, I plan to . . . (1) Expend more effort in getting to know my students personally. (2) Provide individual time for each student. . . . (3) Never again assume that "what I hear" is "what they know." (4) Arrange my classroom/curriculum around whole, real, purposeful, meaning-filled experiences. (5) Find, value, and exploit each student's contributions and talents.

Because they looked closely at one bilingual child, these three teachers now realize that they have a responsibility to look at all children in their classroom, including second language learners, as individuals in order to help all of them achieve their potential.

Time leads to belief in potential

At the beginning of the courses we teach, the teachers with whom we work do not question the labeling of second language learners as limited English proficient (LEP). However, after the students have read about bilingual learners, written about what they read, and observed a second language learner over time, they realize that the term is negative. Although immigrant students may not speak English fluently, and though the instructional program they are in might limit them, they themselves are not limited.

At the conclusion of her case study, Teresa, a Spanish/English bilingual first grade teacher, summarized how reading, reflecting, observing, and time have influenced her teaching:

> Every one of the kids in my room started out with phrases. "I can't read. I can't write." It took six to seven weeks of school to convince them that they could read and write.... This case study has been a very valuable experience. Knowing I had to do a case study from the beginning of school really made a difference in how I perceived what was happening in my classroom. Articles we read were supportive and helpful when it came time to make some decisions.... As a result of this study, I am going to continue to take a closer look at *every* student in the class.

Teachers want to help children, but attitudes do not change overnight. When teachers read about second language acquisition, when they reflect upon what they are learning, when they have the opportunity to share with other teachers, and when they take a closer look at their students, they begin to see that second language learners have unlimited potential. Teachers become excited about their work with bilingual learners and look for ways to help them succeed academically.

Notes

1. Laurie Olsen, *Crossing the Schoolhouse Border: Immigrant Students and the California Public Schools* (San Francisco: California Tomorrow, 1988), p. 40.
2. Ibid., p. 12.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. Russell Minick, "Minority Teachers Hard to Find," in *The Fresno Bee*, 2 January 1989, pp. B1, B12.
5. Ibid.
6. Deb Kollars, "State School Reforms Leave Disadvantaged Behind," in *The Fresno Bee*, 18 December 1988, p. 1.
7. Olsen, *Crossing the Schoolhouse Border*, p. 86.
8. Gerald Jordan, "Most in U.S. Support Minority Aid—Poll," in *The Fresno Bee*, 12 January 1989, p. 7.
9. James Cummins, "The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students," in *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework* (Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, 1981).
10. Stephen Krashen, "Does Bilingual Education Delay the Acquisition of English?" in *Inquiries and Insights* (Hayward, CA: Allemany Press, 1985).
11. "We Came to America," (Fresno, CA: Fresno County Office of Education, 1984); Olsen, *Crossing the Schoolhouse Border*, p. 86; and Yvonne S. Freeman and David Freeman, "Bilingual Learners: How Our Assumptions Limit their World" *Holistic Education Review* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1989), pp. 33-39.

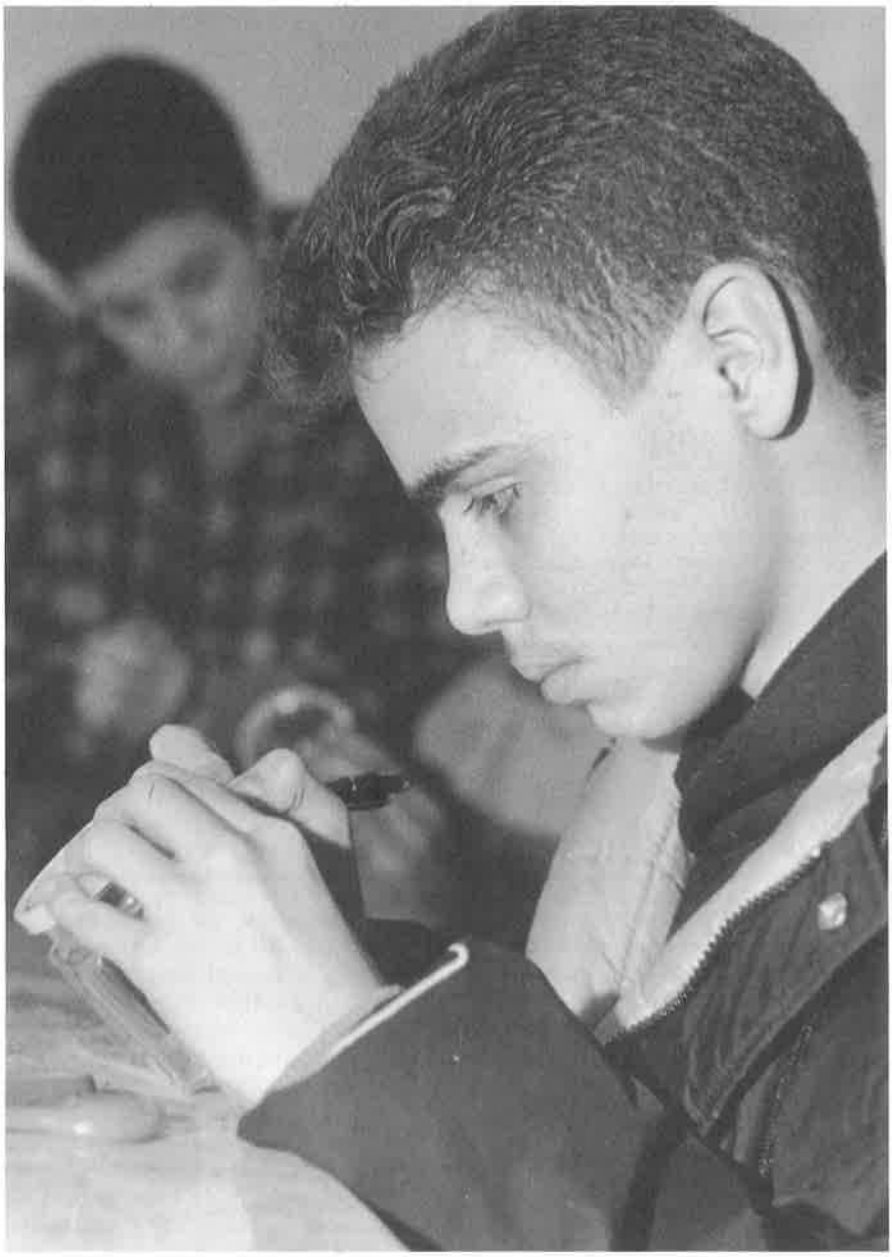


Photo by Merry Lein. Courtesy of Holyoke Street School, Holyoke, Mass.

A World Core Curriculum

by Robert Muller

Editor's note: *This article is an edited excerpt from a paper Dr. Muller wrote in 1982. He specified that this material is not to be copyrighted in order that it may be reprinted freely and given the largest possible exposure. The paper has indeed been reprinted in several publications already, but because it expresses so well a holistic approach, we are delighted to publish it yet again. And we encourage our readers to copy it and pass it along.*

The Robert Muller School World Core Curriculum Manual, *as well as learning resources, videos, and Robert Muller's books, are available from the Robert Muller School, 6005 Royal Oak Drive, Arlington, Texas 76016. The Robert Muller School has implemented a living model of the World Core Curriculum for preschool through 12th grade.*

***Robert Muller, retired Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, is a passionate advocate for international understanding and cooperation. He has served as Chancellor of the United Nations University of Peace in Costa Rica and has been involved in numerous conferences and global networks, inspiring thousands of people with his global vision. He is the author of* New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality, What War Taught Me about Peace, *and* Most of All, They Taught Me Happiness.**

Humanity has reached an epic historical point where our knowledge has reached the "infinitely large" and the "infinitely small," as well as the far reaches of the past and future. This vast new knowledge requires a new global, ecological ethic, based upon a deep appreciation for the miracle of life.

We have reached a point in human evolution when we must ask ourselves some very fundamental questions regarding the meaning of life and evolution itself. If we assume that all we have learned, all that is happening, all we are trying to do makes little sense, then there is no hope and the human species might as well destroy itself and disappear. If, on the contrary, we assume that some cosmic force or law or God or Creator in the universe has put in the human species certain objectives, functions, expectations, and destinations, then it is our duty to ascertain on a contemporary scale what these objectives are.

By giving us capacities to see, to hear, to feel, to think, to dream, to teach, and to invent, the universe gives us an indication of what is expected of us: It wants us to know and to understand the maximum range possible of what the universe is all about. We are driven to know more and more of our globe and of Creation, including the art of recombining cosmic forces through energy, matter, and life itself. Humanity has become the manager of this planet, a cosmic agent, a very advanced phenomenon in the universe. We are made to feel the thrill and benefits of this task, of being alive, of being human, i.e., a specially valuable, advanced, sensitive force or cell in that universe in which the consciousness of the universe and of time constantly grows.

If this is the case or if we suppose it to be so, then our next great evolutionary task will be to ascertain what this cosmic or divine pattern means and to prepare for it the right institutions, people, values, guidelines, laws, philosophy, politics, and ethics. This immense, unprecedented task is dawning upon us everywhere,

piercing the core of our earlier beliefs, values, and institutions. The present essay is one of these global perceptions born in someone who has been nurtured by world forces for more than a third of a century in the Earth's first universal organization.

Let me tell you how I would educate the children of this planet in the light of my 33 years of experience at the United Nations and offer you a world core curriculum which should underlie all grades, levels, and forms of education, including adult education.

The starting point is that every hour, 6,000 of our brothers and sisters die and 15,000 children are born on this globe. The newcomers must be educated so that they can benefit from our acquired knowledge, skills, and art of living; enjoy happy and fulfilled lives; and contribute in turn to the continuance, maintenance, and further ascent of humanity on a well-preserved plant.

Alas, many of the newly born will never reach school age. One out of ten will die before the age of one and another four percent will die before the age of five. This we must try to prevent by all means. We must also try to prevent that children reach school age with handicaps. It is estimated that ten percent of all the world's children reach school age with a handicap of a physical, sensory, or mental nature. In the developing countries, an unfortunate major cause is still malnutrition.

Thirdly, an ideal world curriculum presupposes that there are schools in all parts of the world. [Yet] this not the case. There are still 814 million illiterates on this planet. Humanity has done wonders in educating its people: We have reduced the percentage of illiterates of the world's adult population from 32.4 percent to 28.9 percent between 1970 and 1980, a period of phenomenal population growth. But between now and the year 2000, 1.6 billion more people will be added to this planet and we are likely to reach a total of 6.1 billion people in that year. Ninety percent of the increase will be in the developing countries where the problem of education is more severe. As a result, the total number of illiterates could climb to 950 million by the Bimillenium.

With all these miseries and limitations still with us, it remains important, nevertheless, to lift our sights and to begin thinking of a world core curriculum. I would organize such a curriculum, i.e., the fundamental lifelong objectives of education, around the following categories:

I. Our Planetary Home and Place in the Universe
II. Our Human Family
III. Our Place in Time
IV. The Miracle of Individual Human Life

I. Our Planetary Home

The first major segment of the curriculum should deal with our prodigious knowledge of planet Earth. Humanity has been able, of late, to produce a magnificent picture of our planet and of its place in the universe. From the infinitely large to the infinitely small, everything fits today into a very simple and clear pattern. Astrophysicists tell us how stars and planets are born and die. We know the physics, atmospheres, and even soils of other planets. Thanks to human-made satellites we have a total view of our globe, of our atmosphere, of our seas and oceans and land masses. We know our complicated climate. For the first time ever, we possess a soil and land map for the entire planet. We know our mountains. We know our total water resources. We know our deserts. We know our flora and fauna. We know part of the crust of our Earth into which all nations have agreed to dig holes of at least 1,000 meters. Our knowledge reaches far down into the microbial, genetic, and cellular worlds, into the realm of the atom and its particles and subparticles. We have an incredible, beautiful, vast picture of our place in the universe. If a teacher wishes to give children a glimpse of the tremendous expanse of our knowledge, all he or she has to do is to have them visit, on the same day, an astronomical observatory and an atomic bubble chamber!

We can now give children a breathtaking view of the beauty and teeming, endless richness of Creation as has never been possible before. It should make them glad to be alive and to be human. It should also prepare them with excitement for the vast number of professions which have arisen from that tremendous knowledge and its related and consequent activities.

Moreover, as it is vividly described in the story of the Tree of Knowledge, having decided to become like God through knowledge and our attempt to understand the heavens and the Earth, we have also become masters in deciding between good and evil: Every invention of ours can be used for good or bad. Outer space technology can be used for peace or for killer satellites, aviation for transportation or for dropping bombs, the atom for energy of for nuclear destruction, etc.

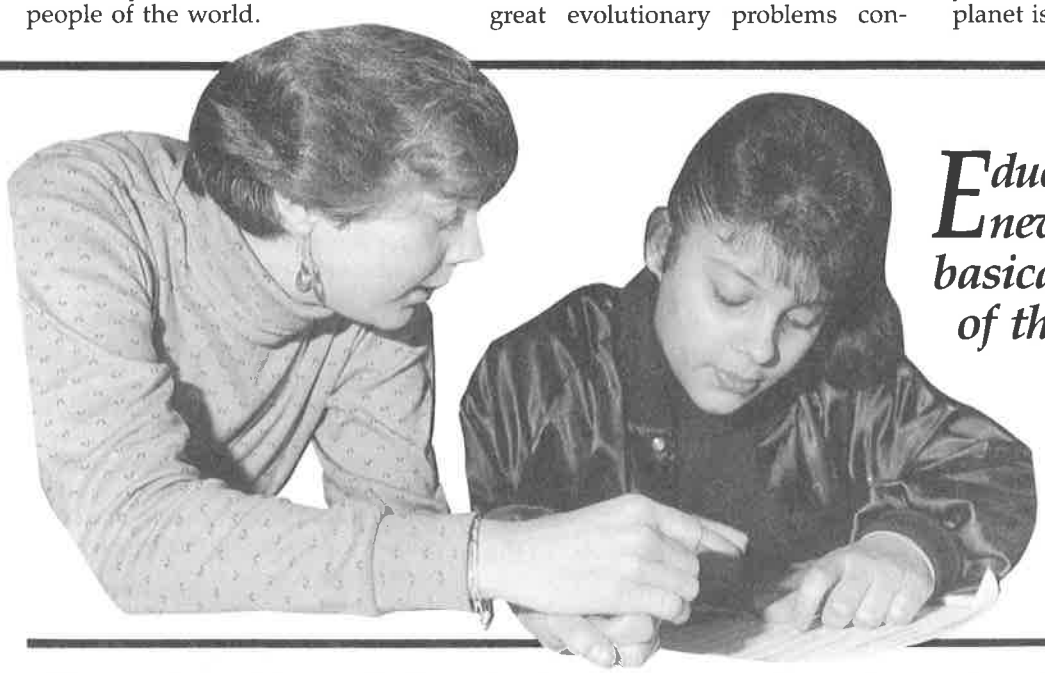
We have an incredible, beautiful, vast picture of our place in the universe.

This gives the teachers of this world a marvelous opportunity to teach children and people a sense of participation and responsibility in the building and management of the Earth, of becoming artisans of the will of God and of our further human ascent. A new world morality and world ethics will thus evolve, and teachers will be able to prepare responsible citizens, workers, scientists, geneticists, physicists, and scores of other professions, including a new one which is badly needed—good world managers and caretakers.

II. The Human Family

There is a second segment on which humanity has also made tremendous progress of late: Not only have we taken cognizance of our planet and of our place in the universe, but we have also taken stock of ourselves! This is of momentous importance, for henceforth our story in the universe is basically that of ourselves and of our planet. For a proper unfolding of that story, we had to know its two main elements well: the planet and ourselves.

We have learned so much about humanity since the end of World War II. As a matter of fact, a proper global education or world curriculum would have been impossible 30 years ago because there were no world statistics! Today we know how many we are, where we live, how long we live, how many males, females, youths, and elderly there are. We also know ourselves qualitatively: our levels of living, of nutrition, of health, of literacy, of development, of employment, etc. We even have records of our progress: We know how many literates are being added to this planet each year; we know that by eradicating smallpox the number of the blind in the world was reduced by half, etc. Incidentally, it was no small achievement to have accommodated 2 billion more people on this planet within a short period of 30 years! As a result of many international efforts, we have an unprecedented inventory and knowledge of humanity. That fundamental, up-to-date knowledge must be conveyed to all the children and people of the world.



Education of the newcomers is basically the teaching of the miracle of life.

Photo by Merry Lein. Courtesy of Holyoke Street School, Holyoke, Mass.

We enter the global age with 156 nations, 5,000 languages, and scores of religions. Other entities are rapidly expanding in response to new global demands, namely world organizations, multinational corporations, and transnational associations. All these groups are being studied and heard in the United Nations and its agencies. What this all means is as yet little understood. The theory of group formation, or entities, or sociobiology of the human species from the world society to the individual is still a rather primitive science.

The first task of the United Nations and of educators is to build bridges, peace, and harmony between these groups, to listen to their views and perceptions, to prevent them from blowing each other up and endangering the entire planet, to seek what each group has to contribute, to understand their legitimate concerns, cultures, values, denominators, and objectives, and to grasp the meaning of the vast and complex functioning of life from the largest to the most minute, from the total society to the individual, from human unity to an endless and more refined diversity.

What will be important in such a curriculum is the dynamic aspect of the relations between humanity and the planet: We now have good inventories; we know the elements of the great evolutionary problems confronting us, but we barely stand at the beginning of the planetary management phase of human history—demographic options, resources management, environmental protection, conflict resolution, the attainment of peace, justice, and progress for all, the fulfillment of human life and happiness in space and in time. The United Nations and its specialized agencies offer the first examples of attempts at global management in all these fields and must therefore occupy a cardinal place in the world's curricula. The earlier we do this, the better it will be for our survival, fulfillment, and happiness.

III. Our Place in Time

When I joined the United Nations in 1948, there was very little time perspective. The word *futurology* did not even exist. Some nations who had five-year economic plans were derided, because it was believed that no one on this planet could plan for five years ahead! How the world has changed since then. Today every nation is planning for at least twenty years ahead. Something similar is happening with regard to the past: In the seventeenth century, Bishop Usher calculated that the Earth was 4,000 years old; then the French naturalist Buffon estimated that it was at least several hundred thousand years old. Today we know that our planet is more than 4½ billion years old and we have developed a vast knowledge of our paleontological and archaeological past.

Thus humanity is forced to expand its time dimension tremendously both into the past and into the future: We must preserve the natural elements inherited from the past and necessary for our life and survival

(air, water, soils, energy, animals, fauna, flora, genetic materials). We also want to preserve our cultural heritage, the landmarks of our own evolution and history, in order to see the unfolding and magnitude of our cosmic journey. At the same time, we must think and plan far ahead into the future in order to hand over to coming generations a well-preserved and better managed planet in the universe.

It will take great vision and honesty to achieve the harmony and fulfillment of our journey in the universe and in time. We have come to the point when the prediction of Leibnitz is coming true. He had forecast that scientific enquiry would be so thrilling for humanity that for centuries we would be busy discovering, analyzing, and piercing the surrounding reality, but that the time would come when we would have to look at the totality and become again what we were always meant to be: universal, total beings. The time for this vast synthesis, for a new encyclopedia of all our knowledge and the formulation of the agenda for our cosmic future has struck.

IV. The Miracle of Individual Life

It is becoming increasingly clear that in this vast evolutionary quantum change the individual remains the alpha and the omega of all our efforts. Individual human life is the highest form of universal consciousness on our planet. Institutions, concepts, factories, systems, states, ideologies, theories have no consciousness. They are all servants, instruments, means for better lives and the increase of individual human consciousness. We are faced today with the full-fledged centrality, dignity, miracle, sanctity, or divinity of individual human life, irrespective of race, sex, status, age, nation, or physical or mental capacity.

Pablo Casals, the musician and poet, expressed this in very moving and emotional terms at the United Nations: "The child must know that he is a miracle, a miracle that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be another child like him...." Education of the newcomers is basically the teaching of the miracle of life, the art of living, and of human fulfillment within our immense knowledge of space and time. It is to make each child feel like a king or queen in the universe, an expanded being aggrandized by the vastness of our knowledge which now reaches far into the infinitely large and the infinitely small and from the distant past to the future. It is to make each human being feel proud to be a member of a transformed species whose eyesight, hearing, hands, legs, and brain have been multiplied a thousand times by telescopes, microscopes, radio, machines, means of transportation, and computers.

Leibnitz had forecast that scientific enquiry would be so thrilling for humanity that for centuries we would be busy discovering, analyzing, and piercing the surrounding reality, but that the time would come when we would have to look at the totality and become again what we were always meant to be: universal, total beings.

The objective should be to make us exude a resplendent joy of living, of being witnesses to the beauty and majesty of Creation and of our capacities. Knowledge, peace, happiness, goodness, and fully conscious, meaningful, responsible lives—these must be the objectives of education.

And here I would complete my core curriculum for the individual with the four segments so dear to the former Secretary-General U Thant who was a teacher:

Good physical lives (knowledge and care of the body; teaching to see, to hear, to observe, to create, to do, to use well all our senses and physical capacities).

Good mental lives (knowledge; teaching to question, to think, to analyze, to synthesize, to conclude, to communicate; teaching to focus from the infinitely large to the infinitely small, from the distant past to the present and future).

Good moral lives (teaching to love; teaching truth, understanding, humility, liberty, reverence for life, compassion, altruism).

Good spiritual lives (spiritual exercises of interiority, meditation, prayer, and communion with the universe and eternity or God).

An immense task and responsibility thus behooves all teachers and educators of this planet: It is no less than to contribute to the survival and good management of our planetary home and species, to our further common ascent into a universal, interdependent, peaceful civilization, while ensuring the knowledge, skills, and fulfillment of the flow of humans going through the Earth's schools.

The pressures for a proper universal, global education are being felt everywhere, from the United Nations and multinational business to local communities and individuals. It is a potent, invaluable trend of cardinal importance to our survival and future evolution. A world core curriculum might seem utopian today; by the end of the year 2000 it will be a down-to-earth, daily reality in all the schools of the world.

John Dewey's Laboratory School

by Donald S. Seckinger

Donald S. Seckinger has been a counselor of preschool children and has taught elementary students, early adolescents, undergraduate and graduate university students, and public school teachers in a variety of settings. He is especially interested in cooperative learning, team teaching, and the reform of teacher education. His wife and three grown children are all engaged, formally or informally, in helping and nurturing professions.

John Dewey was a transitional figure in the history of American education, standing between an older, agrarian phase of culture and an emerging scientific-industrial organization of society. His philosophy emphasized the adjustment of the individual from older to newer ways of living. In making this adjustment, however, Dewey attempted to preserve the ideals and practices of family and community life, modeled in large part by his own experiences growing up in a small New England town in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The Laboratory School which John Dewey and his wife opened at the University of Chicago in 1896 was an early model of a holistic learning environment. Dewey was influenced by holistic pioneers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Froebel, but held a pragmatic, critical attitude toward their work; his own work was more concerned with the social and economic needs of an emerging industrial society.

With the aid of his wife, Harriet, and a corps of dedicated teachers, Dewey was able to influence the development of a holistic educative setting in the Laboratory School they co-founded and directed at the University of Chicago from 1896 to 1904. The school was viewed by Dewey as a testing ground for his own ideas. Its curriculum was organized around the daily occupations of life on a small, human scale, and it followed the central progressive principle of learning by doing in a social setting.

Holistic educators continue to draw much inspiration from Dewey's writings, especially from his emphasis on experiential learning, community life, cooperation and mutual respect among teachers and learners, and aesthetic activities as a means of personal and social development. The practices of the Laboratory School were based upon what we might call a rehumanization of the curriculum. In the psychological sense, this meant starting the children out with simple activities based upon their own constructive, creative, and expressive impulses and then weaving these individual actions gradually into cooperative and more complex projects with their fellows. From a social and historical standpoint, this meant replicating the daily activities of earlier eras in human history, on the way to making connections and gaining perspectives on the more complex economic and social life of modern society.

Lawrence A. Cremin has described unfulfilled educative needs, both personal and social, that were no longer being met in the family, neighborhood, or shop. According to turn-of-the-century progressives, the schools had to take up these social and vocational preparatory tasks.[1] Dewey himself laid great stress on educative goals that included vocationalism and social efficiency, but also

went beyond them, referring to "an openness to the possibilities of the human spirit" that he saw unfolding in the activities of the Laboratory School.[2]

Dewey's writings about the school, especially the series of essays published as *The School and Society,* reveal both his genuine compassion and empathy for child life as an autonomous stage in human development to be cherished for its own sake, and his anxieties to retain the support of his upper-middle-class patrons. In answer to criticisms of laxity or permissive indulgence leveled by conservative critics, he painted a picture of purposive high energy:

> The difference that appears when occupations are made the articulating centers of school life is not easy to describe in words; it is a difference in motive, of spirit and atmosphere. As one enters a busy kitchen in which a group of children are actively engaged in the preparation of food, the psychological difference, the change from more or less passive and inert recipiency and restraint to one of buoyant outgoing energy, is so obvious as fairly to strike one in the face.[3]

Physically, the entire school was restructured to focus upon learning centers for active occupations. Furniture was no longer fastened to the floor. Walls were torn out. Studios and laboratories were expanded. Compartmentalization was done away with. Traditional subject matters were reconstructed so that they would be learned in the course of the activities in which the children were involved.

All of this is described in more detail in *The Dewey School,* by Katherine Camp Mayhew, who served as vice-principal of the school and supervised its curriculum development, and her sister, Anna Camp Edwards, who first taught history in the elementary grades and then followed through as a tutor to the older children in a variety of subject areas and in team teaching situations. Mayhew and Edwards especially emphasized four "native impulses" of children, which they derived from some of Dewey's essays of the 1890s. These were the social or sharing impulse, the constructive or play impulse, the impulse to investigate and experiment, which

John Dewey (1859–1952)

is actually a combination of the first two, and the expressive impulse, which is a refinement of all the others in the arts and sciences.[4]

They went on to describe particular examples of children following through and acting upon their own creative needs and desires and at the same time gaining knowledge and skills that would stand them in good stead in the future, when moving out into a changing and challenging society:

> From the teacher's point of view, the child was learning art as he drew, daubed, or modeled the idea that urged him to expression. He, however, unconscious that he was learning anything, expressed in line or color, clay, wood, or softer fabric, the thing that in him lay and in so doing, no matter how crude the result, tasted of those deep satisfactions that attend all creative effort. Little did the experimenting child realize that he was studying physics as he boiled down his cane or maple syrup, watched the crystallization process, the effects of heat on water, and of both on the various grains used for food.[5]

Mayhew and Edwards stressed the life of the school as a total and continuous experience, not merely a collection of discrete courses or teachers to which the child was shuttled back and forth. This continuity involved not only the ongoing activities of each school day, week, month, and year, but also, through simulation and role playing, the reconstruction of earlier environments in which people actually lived. This went beyond what passes for social studies today, however. The children actually cultivated crops in the school's gardens, processed the food they had grown, and learned to use scales and measuring devices they made themselves—reinventing and appreciating what primitive societies had wrought.[6]

Pragmatic, not romantic

In defending his work to the school's patrons, Dewey did not have to trim his sails. He did not romanticize going "back to nature," but instead truly believed that "the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand" would enable the children of the upper middle class—and eventually children in general as represented in the wider public school population—to control and direct the emerging industrial society for humane ends.[7] He added that for the individual there would be a "continual training of observation, of ingenuity, constructive imagination, of logical thought, and of the sense of reality acquired through first-hand contact with actualities."[8]

Dewey's approach to holistic education was pragmatic rather than existential or idealistically romantic. He meant it to serve both immediate personal and longer range social democratic ends. Dewey himself criticized Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other holistic educators who came under his influence, such as Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel, for romanticizing the inherent powers of nature to bring about the spontaneous and natural development of the person. At the same time, he praised them for identifying the organic, naturalistic, and developmental grounding necessary for any wholesome and humane educational program to proceed.[9] It therefore was

not inconsistent that Dewey's associates in the Laboratory School could employ holistic methods following in the tradition of these great educators while also differing from them in advocating education in and for the humanization of the existing social order.

Here is Dewey at his finest in wanting to set the individual child free of remote, abstract, unreal subject matter organized and presented for the convenience of adults and weighed down with the deadening hand of the past:

> No number of object-lessons, got up as object-lessons for the sake of giving information, can afford even the shadow of a substitute for acquaintance with the plants and animals of the farm and garden acquired through actual living among them and caring for them. No training of sense-organs in school, introduced for the sake of training, can begin to compete with the alertness and fullness of sense-life that comes through the daily intimacy and interest in familiar occupations. Verbal memory can be trained in committing tasks, a certain discipline of the reasoning powers can be acquired through lessons in science and mathematics; but, after all, this is somewhat remote and shadowy compared with the training of attention and of judgment that is acquired in having to do things with a real motive behind and a real outcome ahead.[10]

The American common school, Dewey truly perceived, was not and never had been a liberating institution. Its dry and desiccated routines needed severe shaking up. Millions of dropouts and millions more who have endured the endless boredom and mean-spirited exactions of the system over the years can testify to its inhumane character.

Art and life

Dewey saw a great need to bring back the crafts and occupations formerly conducted in the family and in the local community, not for vocational training but for psychological reconnection with the basic necessities of life. The industrial world will of course need more efficient and capable workers, as we continue to hear so much about today. But, more important, *a democratic society requires whole persons* who will be vivid and active personalities in the shaping of events, in the fight for social justice, and in the extension of the aesthetic qualities of life in the modern world.

Dewey continually referred to the amazement and incomprehension of visitors to the classrooms of the Laboratory School, who mistook the arts and crafts engaged in by the boys and girls as either an exercise in nostalgia for a bygone era or a preparation for menial tasks in the social order.

> There is nothing which strikes more oddly upon the average intelligent visitor than to see boys as well as girls of ten, twelve, and thirteen years of age engaged in sewing and weaving. If we look at this from the standpoint of preparation of the boys for sewing on buttons and making patches, we get a narrow and utilitarian conception....[11]

The American common school, Dewey truly perceived, was not and never had been a liberating institution. Its dry and desiccated routines needed severe shaking up.

One of the great problems of our own public education has been exactly this narrow utilitarianism, whether in sociological terms as training people to do what they are told in obedience or training them to be experts (as in certain shop classes), or in psychological terms as the development of motor coordination (knitting in first grade) so that their penmanship will better meet the expectations of our teachers.

Dewey sought to avoid just such pitfalls as he defined the larger and more generous aims of "manual arts" and crafts for all boys and girls:

> This work gives the *point of departure* from which the child can trace and follow the progress of mankind in history, getting an insight also into the materials used and the mechanical principles involved. In connection with these occupations the historic development of man is recapitulated.[12] (italics added)

He continued on to describe, in a most touching way for one of the greatest philosophers of our time, how he learned something new from a child—the reason why cotton was so much later in coming into use than wool in the making of clothing. The children themselves had worked long and hard to free cotton fibers from the boll and seeds and so had gained an understanding and appreciation that "one person could gin only one pound a day by hand" and that we therefore had to await the development of the cotton gin to produce this kind of cloth in quantity.[13]

There are three important dimensions to this little illustration: First, and most obvious, the children learned by doing in such a way that enabled them to understand and appreciate the convenience and economy of the industrial age, the positive side of labor-saving inventions. Second, when properly guided and facilitated by a sensitive teacher, they gained a hands-on satisfaction of craftsmanship and the joy of creating as they moved through the various processes of setting up their own little cottage industry for carding, spinning, and eventually weaving woolen cloth, which they actually did in the Laboratory School. Third, they lived and learned in an atmosphere where they could be listened to and taken seriously on their own terms by the significant adults in their environment, including Dewey himself.

Remarkably, Dewey devoted an entire chapter in *The School and Society* to "Froebel's Educational Principles," even though he felt that Froebel's conception of spirituality was a limiting factor in the development of progressivism.[14] His appreciation for the work of the great idealistic and holistic educator, most famous for the founding of the kindergarten movement, came from his realization that Froebel had articulated and achieved

his educative reforms by placing the child at the center of the learning process. The most important Froebelian principle, according to Dewey, was

> That the primary root of all educative activity is in the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material, whether through the ideas of others or through the senses; and that, accordingly, numberless spontaneous activities of children, plays, games, mimic efforts, even the apparently meaningless motions of infants ... are capable of educational use; nay, are the foundation-stones of educational method.[15]

Was Dewey a holistic educator? From the standpoint of expanding the child's potential universe from passive receptivity of traditionally organized and limited subject matter to active participation in vivid recreations of how history and language and science and math came into existence, definitely yes. On the other hand, his work may be looked upon as idealizing and glossing over the anti-human potentialities inherent in the onrush of the scientific industrial culture.

Dewey was not alone in his optimism and faith in the scientific method in dealing with social and political as well as purely material concerns. In fact, such views were prevalent at the turn of the century. Later in life, Dewey did move in the direction of cultural reconstruction, especially during and after the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Where Dewey's approach to holistic eduction was incomplete was in the spiritual mode of living, whether defined in theistic or in modern psychoanalytical terms. He dismissed the insights of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung and all the rest as not amenable to scientific measurement. Yet he did acknowledge that there was such a thing as the human spirit and such ideals as human freedom worth living and dying for. To that extent he still inspires and fascinates those who deeply care for the human potential in each of us.

The spiritual mode of living is characterized by a sense of awe and wonder in the fact of our own creation and in the mystery of our continued existence in a universe that appears in so many ways indifferent to our fate. This may be expressed as a religious attitude toward nature, toward life, and toward our place in the scheme of things. It may take the form of speculative theorizing or a thirst for social justice.

John Dewey, while personally a kind and caring husband, father, colleague, and friend, did not comprehend, and had little use for, the romantic, the visionary, or the contemplative aspects of the life of the spirit. Yet in his own quiet and restrained way, he asserted a faith in the progress of humanity and of democracy. His Laboratory School became a model, through the work of his more passionately engaged associates, for a holistic approach to child growth and development from which many of our contemporary schoolpeople might learn some valuable lessons.

Notes

1. Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Knopf, 1962), p. 117.
2. John Dewey, *The School and Society* (1900; rev. ed., Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 18.
3. Ibid., p.15.
4. Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School* (1936; reprint, New York: Atherton Press, 1965), pp. 40-41.
5. Ibid., p.44.
6. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
7. Dewey, *School and Society*, p. 11.
8. Ibid.
9. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1915: reprint, New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 58-59, 112-118.
10. Dewey, *School and Society*, pp. 11-12.
11. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
12. Ibid., p. 20.
13. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
14. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 58. Dewey's leading interpreter and graduate assistant in philosophy, William Heard Kilpatrick, wrote his doctoral dissertation under Dewey's direction. His subject was the educational philosophy of Froebel.
15. Dewey, *School and Society*, p. 117.

Home Schooling's Potential for a New Society

by Linda Winkelried-Dobson

In addition to home schooling three children, Linda Winkelried-Dobson is National Homeschool Association Outreach Correspondent. Her articles have appeared in **Home Education Magazine, New Dimensions, Good Housekeeping,** *and* **Holistic Education Review.** *She also addresses alternative subjects in a children's column for an Atlanta newspaper, and her company, Hugs for the Heart, provides innovative children's playthings for natural learning and spiritual awareness.*

I have a romantic vision of home schooling. When we began, I imagined my children and myself sitting next to the woodstove, snuggling and reading, or learning about fractions as we baked bread, and doing what comes naturally. Then, about two weeks into our home-school experience, we were in a store during normal school hours. A nice, elderly woman came over and asked us why my son wasn't in school. With a great big smile on his face he looked up at her and said, "Because I get teached at home!" At that moment, the reality of home schooling struck me right between the eyes and I saw for the first time the enormity of the task before me.

Home schooling offers a radical alternative to the failures of our public institutions. Rather than conditioning children to participate passively in the present social order, home education encourages "a flowering of each and every individual's uniqueness."

In spite of this reality, or maybe because of it, a lot of people are home schooling: Helen Hegener, editor of *Home Education Magazine,* estimated between 600,000 and 800,000 home-schooling families, and the *Wall Street Journal* reported 1 million home-schooling families back in October of 1986.

Although estimates vary, I don't think it is the numbers that are important. What is important to us as a society and especially to people concerned with education, is why. Why are so many people pulling their children out of school? The problem with this question is that if you ask ten different home schoolers, you will get ten different answers. Some say that schools are too religious, others that they are not religious enough. Many are still "hippies" after all these years, still against the "establishment," period. Some say schools are too strict, others that they are not strict enough. So I don't profess to speak on behalf of all home schoolers; that would be impossible for anyone. I simply reflect the ideas of one mother who, to date, has home-taught grades kindergarten through fourth.

To provide a brief background on my family's adventures in home schooling, I did send my oldest son, Chuck, to kindergarten in a suburban New Jersey school. Although he progressed well academically, I noticed slow and subtle changes occurring in his personality. As time passed, his education grew to encompass every foul word in the English language. He became very mean to his baby sister, whom he had idolized before school started. He whined, was irritable, and at times cried after being called the

Note: This article is adapted from a talk the author gave to a Rotary Club meeting last summer.

"kindergarten baby," among other things, by the older kids on the bus.

I began to question the very meaning of education, and I started to read everything I could get my hands on, whether it was child psychology, college textbooks, or what little I could find on home schooling. Then one day, when I came across the literal definition of education, the lights came on. *To educate* means to draw out, to bring out that which is within. I pondered this for a long time because Chuck's education just did not seem to reflect this definition. And I came to the conclusion that the educational system in its present state seeks only to condition young members of society to our current way of life. Well, this naturally led to an examination of our current way of life, the values we have created, and, most important, the results of our values.

It is increasingly apparent that our political and economic institutions are riddled with corruption and abuse of the public trust. We are uncovering stock-market fraud in every major city in our country, and we are in the midst of a very expensive bail-out of the Federal Savings and Loans institutions. Over the past two years, our religious institutions have produced scandal after scandal perpetrated by supposed men of the cloth. The natural environment continues to deteriorate because of our neglect and abuse.

Although this reality indirectly affects our adolescents and teens, they have bigger problems of their own! We are all aware of the issues of rampant drug and alcohol abuse, and the epidemic proportion of teen pregnancy and suicide. But here are a few facts that are not as well reported on the evening news:

1. The American Humane Association in Denver states there are 1.5 million children reported abused or neglected each year, and they warn that figure is far below the actual incidence of child abuse.
2. It is estimated that anywhere between 2 million and 6 million elementary school-age children are returning home to an empty house every day.
3. A 1987 report of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement tells us that 3,500 teenagers are dropping out of school *each and every day.*

Our children face a different school-age reality than you or I faced. They are growing up in a different world, one in which life changes from moment to moment. They must learn to be strong yet pliable, and that means free of particular patterns of thought. They have to be able to integrate knowledge that may not necessarily conform to prior beliefs.

Because we are conditioned to be led around by our institutions at a very young age, we reach maturity in the same condition. We sit around and say, "Oh, I hope our government will do something." . . . And we demand that our schools do something.

Education in its true sense is not conditioning to make everyone alike, but a flowering of each and every individual's uniqueness. We can look to nature as our guide on this. We plant seeds in the spring, when they have the most time and gentle conditions to grow and flourish to their fullest potential. Should we do any less for our children? Children must be free to blossom into whatever they are intended to be. And what is intended for them? Are they intellects? Walking computers filled with facts and the ability to figure? And if so, to what end? What purpose does this serve?

If we can just change our perspective, and have faith that our children come to us complete and whole beings from the beginning, then we will see education in a whole new light. Instead of trying to figure out what we can give them, we will stimulate the inherent gifts with which they enter the world (cooperation, creativity, curiosity, honesty, intuition): these are their birthright.

I believe we go astray the moment we put success on a pedestal as our goal. We become the perpetrators of the competition, jealousy, prejudice, and hate that leads to violence and ultimately war. We are so focused on the goal that we ignore the joy and wonder inherent in the journey.

Because we are conditioned to be led around by our institutions at a very young age, we reach maturity in the same condition. We sit around and say, "Oh, I hope our government will *do* something." We pray that our churches will *do* something. And we demand that our schools *do* something.

Unfortunately, our institutions merely reflect what we are. They only change as we change. At the heart of home schooling are parents who have recognized an urgent need to remold the status quo and place responsibility squarely where it belongs: on our own shoulders. In understanding our own programming, home-schooling parents desire to stop the programming of future generations for the sake of health, economy, ecology, and *spirit*. Now there is a word you do not often hear in a discussion on education. What about the spiritual aspect of our children? Today, kids who openly display their natural tendency toward spontaneity and freedom are labeled hyperactive and learning disabled. Imagine at six or seven or eight years old being told you are disabled.

Human beings become what they think they are

One thing about most home-schooled kids is that they think they are wonderful, not in a conceited sense, but rather in that they have a high level of self-esteem. They continually score higher than their conventionally schooled counterparts on the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale. There may be a lot of reasons for this,

but one in particular stands out: usually they are not graded. They are free to fail and start over again, no stigma attached. They do not fall into the "I have failed, therefore I am a failure" syndrome. Under normal circumstances, there is no one else in the home in the same grade, so they have no one with whom to compare themselves. Nor are they assigned to the bluebird reading group. Do you remember reading groups from school? How long did it take you to figure out which was the slow group? You looked around the room and you said, "There's Johnny. The bluebirds are the dumb group." And how did Johnny feel when he realized he was in the slow reading group?

Current educational practices are leading us to live at a superficial level. They are not helping us to uncover the deeper layers of our being, but our lives—particularly the lives of our children—are becoming increasingly empty for it. We need to establish a balance between the head and the heart, the intellect and the spirit.

At an address at Harvard University, Prince Charles of Wales stated, "Never has it been more important to recognize the imbalance that has seeped into our lives and deprived us of a sense of meaning because we have concentrated on the development of the intellect to the detriment of spirit." Intellectual development must be viewed as a mere drop in the bucket of true education. We need to take this wonderful whole-language-curriculum idea one important step further and address all aspects of our children, the whole child, so that children will emerge into adulthood fulfilled. Compassion, creativity, cooperation, and goodness are traits that flow *from* a person. We cannot sit children down and say, "Here, learn creativity, learn cooperation. Oh, now you're happy!" It just has not worked that way.

Even making concessions for the narrow scope of education, are our schools doing the job? I recently witnessed the startling answer on two occasions. I was in a store where a young man was training. He fouled up the cash register to the point that it wouldn't tell him the amount of my change. His trainer said, "That's all right, just count out her change." And the young man just stood there. After further prodding to no avail, the trainer explained the process. By the last coin, I think he finally got the idea. About a week later, in another store, a young woman was in the same predicament, and she couldn't get as far as the young man.

If we keep placing narrow confines on what we consider normal or successful, our future innovators are going to be painfully few and far between. A program on TV pointed out that Japan is tired of taking old technology and improving it. The Japanese economist's main point was that Japan's rigid educational system is going to hold it back. He stated, "Innovation comes from within; it cannot be imposed from without."

Questions

Q. The problem is now so many young mothers tend to work. What proportion of mothers can do what you are doing so well, and have the time and energy to do it? With mothers who are working, I would think it would be impossible.

A. The most current estimate I have read is 52% of mothers of school-age children work. With our society's current perspective, these are the ones on whom we focus. But that leaves 48%, a sizeable number, who can do this. I am not saying that home schooling is for everyone. It takes a great degree of dedication and a good dose of determination and persistence. It also takes a change in priorities. One has to ask, "Do I really need a new car every two years or a nicer house?" If the answer is yes, then Mom needs to work. If you can accept living with less material trappings and sacrifice some you may already have, you will find the time for the important things.

Q. What grades do you take them through? Do they eventually go on to high school or college?

A. They can; it depends entirely on the individual family. You may have heard of the Colfax family in California. Their boys went to Harvard after being home schooled all of their lives. Just as home schooling is an alternative, earning a GED is an alternative to the typical diploma. The majority's way is not the only way. Our kids can still take SATs and go on from there. Judy Gelner's new book, *College Admissions: A Guide for Home Schoolers*, covers the topic nicely.

Q. You talk about 48%. How many of that 48% are capable of what you are doing?

A. Again, this goes back to our view of what education is. If you are looking for that diploma, that piece of paper which claims you are qualified, then you are narrowing down the number. But if you look, instead, for an adult who cares strongly for a child, then turn to natural qualifications such as instinct, something we have forgotten all about. All other animal species care for, raise, and teach their children the ways of their world through life. Only humans compartmentalize learning to be done at certain hours of the day, specific days of the week. Discard these artificial boundaries and you will find a parent's love, instinct, dedication, and compassion overcoming all obstacles.

For those who find them necessary, there is a growing number of local and state support groups in every state. We have just begun the National Homeschoolers Association, a national support group whose only mission is to be of service to home schoolers. The association has started a mentor/apprenticeship program for teens to live and learn with adults eager to share their knowledge and trades.

Information is available everywhere today—Each month, I receive through the mail at least 20 catalogs teeming with resources. Our local school system also very kindly provides any books I want to use from their resources.

Q. You spoke about the child who fails and has nothing to fear, who has no reason to compete with anyone, but this happens to be the situation that the child will face in real life.

A. I feel that if you give children a very firm emotional and spiritual base upon which to build their lives, then they will be coming from good, naturally. I spoke earlier of a changing world, and one of the most wonderful realizations rippling across the globe today is that competition has been dangerously wrong. The people of the world are rapidly realizing that we are much better off cooperating than competing. Home schooling can prepare children not only to follow the more beneficial path, but maybe even

to be the leaders on the new path.

Q. I have a preface, a remark, and a question. My preface is that good education is always better than bad education, and concerned parents are an important ingredient of good education. My remark is that I would be more persuaded by your argument if we could look at primitive society, where home schooling is the rule much like normal schooling is here, and saw in them the absence of jealousy, competition, violence, and the other attributes you tie to home schooling. I don't see them absent. My question: If you went around and asked these people to identify role models, and I personally believe we develop ourselves by looking at prototypes, they would say that they matched someone's behavior. Aren't you denying your children the opportunity for prototypes? I have the sense that many of those listening in the audience here would acknowledge teachers as their prototypes.

A. I haven't studied primitive societies, but if, for example, seashells are the basis of their "primitive" financial system, you can readily see the problem with comparing the two different society's economies. I assume we would find that primitive education consists mostly of survival skills, where our education goes beyond that, just as our economy goes beyond swapping shells.

As to prototypes, let me first say that perhaps I could be a perfectly acceptable role model. But if you want to look outside the home, my children probably have more time to spend with a greater variety of prototypes than kids who spend five or six hours sitting in school. At times I still feel we are doing too much, but I admit that my old programming sneaks in often in this regard.

That is why my children attend swimming lessons, join the scouts, take arts and craft classes, and participate in the junior naturalist group. My children seem to relate to adults at a much different level than your typical school-age child. My children are very at ease with adults. I think a child has to be at ease in order to learn anything from experiences with adults. I do not see my children as at a loss for mentors or role models at all. In fact, I would say that they have more.

Letter to the Review

Dear Editors:

Holistic Education Review *is wonderful! While my post-B.A. education program attempts to conform me to the ineffective system, I've been turning to the sample issues you sent to renew my hope of a "better educational world." I refuse to believe that the scientific method is the only way to gain knowledge or that we must continue grading students! My professors have so much to learn and are scared of change. I continue to be the "brat" in class, questioning everything. It's so good to know that there are others out there envisioning holistic education for all students, and people of all ages. Thanks so much. Keep up the good work!*

With joy,
Rachel Hefte
Minneapolis, MN

What Is Holism in Education?

Part Two: Comments from Colleagues

The last issue of *Holistic Education Review* (vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1990) featured a dialogue between Raymond Corsini, an Adlerian psychologist and founder of the Corsini 4R system of education, and Ron Miller, editor of *Holistic Education Review.* In order to broaden the discussion of the issues they raised, the dialogue was also published in the Adlerian journal *Individual Psychology,* and both Corsini and Miller invited several of their colleagues to comment on the article. So far, three of Miller's colleagues have responded, and their comments appear below.

To summarize the original dialogue briefly, Miller argued that, in three ways, the theory and practice of the 4R method are not truly holistic, as he understands the term:

(1) Holistic education is based on a *spiritual* worldview; human development is understood as a spontaneously creative process that transcends both physical and cultural elements. The 4R literature, reflecting its Adlerian roots, is more oriented to social factors in development; it is thus *humanistic* rather than *holistic.*

(2) Holistic educators must recognize that public schooling serves the economic and political needs of the nation, and that a major effort is required to focus education on human development rather than societal goals. 4R schools, Miller claimed, do not address this issue but instead retain many of the "socialization" purposes and techniques of traditional education. They fail to address the problems of the traditional curriculum.

(3) Holistic education, essentially a *relationship* between people, needs to be open to change, conflict, and spontaneity. The 4R rules, particularly the "GO" signal, which gives the teacher authority to banish a child from the classroom, are too rigid.

Corsini responded to these criticisms with the following arguments:

(1) 4R education does recognize the inherent creativity of the developing person but simply uses different words. Adler himself spoke of *gemeinschaftsgefühl*—a sense of connectedness to the cosmos which is translated as "social feeling." Because *spirituality* is too easily interpreted as religious, the word *panima* might better describe this connectedness.

(2) 4R schools do serve the students' development before economic and political goals. 4R students are highly independent and are accorded full respect in the democratic environment of the 4R school. 4R schools even advocate for children when their parents' expectations become unreasonable.

(3) All social organizations need rules and sanctions, and the simple but consistent rules in the 4R school help children adjust to social life. The "GO" signal, in actual practice, has proved to be an effective tool for classroom discipline that respects the child's rights.

Miller agreed that the 4R method is a great improvement over traditional educational practices in many ways, but was still not convinced by Corsini's responses that 4R is truly grounded in a holistic philosophy.

Here, now, are some comments on the dialogue.

Edward T. Clark

As I read the Miller/Corsini dialogue, I was reminded of a David Suskind show several years ago on which Suskind held a "debate" between two scientists and two astrologers. As one might expect, the discussion quickly degenerated into an argument. A genuine debate was impossible because each side began with a different set of fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world. Only if these assumptions could have been identified as the central topic for discussion, could there have been any basis for a true debate.

To their credit, Miller and Corsini have sought a common ground. However, it seems evident that their perspectives reflect fundamentally different paradigms, each based on fundamentally different assumptions about human nature, the nature of the world, and thus the nature and purpose of education. Unfortunately, these assumptions were never identified, much less addressed.

The result is that this dialogue—like a debate—virtually forces the participants to defend the either/or alternatives required by analytical logic. Neither party really hears the other. Readers, too, tend to take sides. For example, I suspect that most readers of *Holistic Education Review* will "side" with Miller and most Adlerians will "side" with Corsini. This

Note: Edward T. Clark, Jr., Ph.D., is an environmental educator, author, and consultant from Warrenville, Illinois. Phil Gang, Ph.D., is the founder of the Institute for Educational Studies in Atlanta. Donna Sclarow Allender is with the Project Learn School in Philadelphia.

is unfortunate, because each perspective reflects only a different facet of the multidimensional educational process as it takes place in our culture. To argue whether one perspective is more "holistic" or not begs the real issue which is, to my way of thinking, what truth can each learn from the other.

It would have been helpful if Miller and Corsini had each begun the discussion by sharing his "vision of an ideal school." This vision would provide a context for understanding the specifics. Without this context, which provides meaning to the particulars, the dialogue degenerates to an analytical discussion of details that by nature must revolve around precise definitions. The reader is then forced to extrapolate from an analytical discussion the nature of each participant's context. Such an extrapolation is as risky as trying to guess what the picture of a jigsaw puzzle is from a random collection of pieces. The result is that the reader ends up imposing her or his own context on the dialogue, inevitably distorting the original meaning.

It is important for me to acknowledge my own bias before continuing. I found myself more comfortable trying to identify and describe Miller's context because it tends to reflect my own perspective. In trying to discover and discuss Corsini's context, I must depend more on what he does not say than on what he does say. It is difficult to be fair under these circumstances.

It seems that Miller's context can be best represented by words such as "holistic," "integrative," "future oriented," "global," and "ecological." For example, his ideal school is one in which "academic learning *is not even seen as being separate from problems of social life.*" On the other hand, Corsini's context seems to be represented by words such as "humanistic," "socialization," "mutual respect," and "democratic." His ideal school is one that "not only permits choices in what to learn and how to learn but also permits the choice not to learn." While Miller bends over backward to acknowledge that his context incorporates each of these concepts, which are central to Corsini's thinking, I find no evidence that Corsini's context incorporates the concepts that are fundamental to Miller's paradigm. Although within his humanistic context Corsini does seem to be holistic, the fundamental "infrastructure of ideas" that shapes Miller's thinking seems to be more global and therefore more inclusive than Corsini's. Obviously, this is the basis for Miller's claim to be more "holistic."

This is not to suggest that Corsini would not implicitly accept as important many of the concepts espoused by Miller. I expect that he does. However, as seems clear from Corsini's remarks in this dialogue, they are not a necessary component of the educational process; while for Miller they represent the *sine qua non* of what he refers to as "holistic education." As I read Corsini's remarks and the articles published in *Holistic Education Review* that describe the 4R educational system, I find an almost exclusive focus on the social/development components of education: the 4Rs (responsibility, respect, resourcefulness, and responsiveness). There is no question but that the child is the focus of 4R education. But is that enough? I suggest that, no matter how holistic it may be, socialization alone is not adequate for education in a global village where, according to Peter Drucker, "knowledge has already become the primary industry."

What is missing from 4R schools as characterized by Corsini is any concern for or understanding of the dynamic relationship between the child and the content and methodology of the curriculum. As Corsini stated, "The essential element of 4R consists of verbs not nouns, the nature of the relations between people and not curriculum content, books, teaching methods, and so on." What he overlooks is that verbs have no meaning apart from the context of sentences, which of necessity include nouns. One does not just learn, one learns something. One does not just teach, one teaches something. In short, in a well-constructed sentence, both the verb and the noun have equal importance since neither can stand alone. In the same way, *in the educational process, that which is taught and learned is as important* as the one who teaches it and the one who learns it.

Brain/mind research is increasingly recognizing that the content and shape of the ideas in our heads are major factors in determining our behavior. This suggests that the content and shape of the curriculum play a major role in shaping the nature of the teaching/learning process and, thus, the behavior of both teacher and student. In short, you cannot separate the content of what is taught/learned from the process of teaching/learning, nor can you casually dismiss the impact of the total teaching/learning experience, including the content, as being separate from the socialization process. This view that the content and methodology of the curriculum is essentially irrelevant was a major flaw in the philosophy of Summerhill a generation ago. I see little different in Corsini's description of the 4R schools. In an age where "information is our most important resource" and "turning information into knowledge is our most important skill," more than ever before, children need some direction in terms of what curriculum content is important and why it is important. To allow students absolute freedom to select what they learn not only is short sighted but also abrogates our responsibility as "mentors" who presumably bring some experience and wisdom to the educational encounter. On the other hand, to accept as adequate the curriculum content and teaching methodology in most schools today is, I believe, equally detrimental to the intellectual and emotional welfare of our children.

To claim that the 4R system is "value free except for the treatment of children and adults on the basis of mutual respect" is patent nonsense! There is no such thing as "value free" curriculum content or methodology. For example, Corsini seems oblivious to the values implicit in the division of the educational experience into three components: "academic learning," "socialization," and "creative subjects." If, as he suggests, "the system is the message," then one of the values that is tacitly espoused by the 4R system is that "creativity" is somehow separate from either the "academic" or "social" aspects of life. Does this mean that creativity can be expressed only in subjects such as art, music, and

drama? Given Adler's strong emphasis on creativity, I cannot believe that Corsini would subscribe to such a statement.

One arena in which the difference in perspectives on educational philosophy is most obvious relates to the "famous or infamous"—depending on you point of view—so-called third rule which Corsini defends so strongly. It seems to me that one of the fundamental human skills needed in our society today is conflict resolution. With the possible exception of the home, there is no better place for a child to learn how to resolve conflicts than in a supportive classroom environment dedicated to responsibility and mutual respect. Unfortunately, regardless of what a child might learn from the "GO" rule, its use mitigates the confrontation, interactive dialogue, and mutual respect required for successful conflict resolution. This reason alone is enough for me to question its validly in an educational setting. I am certain that "rule three" does work and, as Corsini emphasizes, it encourages independence on the part of the students. I cannot help but wonder if, in an increasingly interdependent world, independence per se is as much of a virtue as it was in Adler's time.

It seems clear that Miller brings to his philosophy a broader perspective based on a fundamentally different paradigm of ideas. He demonstrates that his perspective incorporates the best of Adlerian and 4R philosophy. On the other hand, although the 4R system with its emphasis on the social nature and creative potential inherent in human personality reflects Alder's major contribution to personality theory, it seems to ignore other equally significant components of education. Thus we might conclude that Miller's definition of education is "more holistic" than Corsini's. However, I am always skeptical of discussions that turn on precise definitions which by nature are exclusive. I prefer the sentiment expressed by Miller in an editorial in the Fall 1989 issue of *Holistic Education Review* (vol. 2, no. 3): "It's time to work together." I am not sure that "dialogues" such as this advance his goal.

Phil Gang

In response to the Miller/Corsini dialogue, I think we have to be very careful as we begin to shed the old factory form of education. Although the 4R approach looks new on the surface, it still harbors some of the old mechanistic paradigm in disguise.

Freedom of choice is not the only prerequisite for liberation in education. The factory model does not change just because we offer workers opportunities to choose the jobs they like within the manufacturing plant. It changes only when we empower all of the individuals—white and blue collar workers—to redefine their role in the context of the whole. This redefinition erodes the hierarchical structural form so that all participants share power, responsibility, and productivity.

The same is true in our schools. Empowering teachers and learners allows them to reconstruct the whole perception of school and their place in it. In *Education and the Significance of Life* (1981), Krishnamurti pointed out:

> In building enormous institutions and employing teachers who depend on a system instead of being alert and observant in their relationship with the individual student, we merely encourage the accumulation of facts, the development of capacity, and the habit of thinking mechanically, according to a pattern; but certainly none of this helps the student grow into an integrated human being. (p. 85)

It has been said that 95% of what is learned in school is based on the way things are said and the actions of the teacher. For the most part, learners pick up the message behind the words and retain that message. What is the message behind the orthodoxy of the "GO" signal?

What schools need is a holistic approach, one that embodies mind, body, and spirit, and one that allows learners, teachers, and administrators to participate in an unfolding process. This process must address spiritual development. If we reduce spirituality to a method or a subject or an idea, we are missing the point. Spirituality is a respect and reverence for life and for the unfolding consciousness of humanity. Although Corsini's arguments are strong, I do not get the feeling that the 4R philosophy includes this understanding of spirituality and its place in the development of whole human beings.

Donna Sclarow Allender

It is very exciting to me to be part of the dialogue between Ron Miller and Raymond Corsini. Over the 30 years that I been an educator, I have yearned to be part of public dialogue about real issues that affect the education of our children. Both men have indicated their real interest to stay the course and come to a place of commonality. I appreciate how they listen and respond to each other. However, my initial reaction to their first point of disagreement reminds me of what my father used to say: "It's like discussing how many angels can dance on the head of a pin!" And the pin with which they begin is the issue of spirituality versus creativity and their places in holistic education. It is never clear to either of them or to me where they disagree or agree. They seem to pass each other rather than truly engage. I tend to agree with Corsini when he says that their differences are semantic, but I think Miller's challenge to him remains. Corsini has not really addressed the practical applications of either his point or Miller's. He does not really show how spirituality/creativity is actualized in the 4R schools, nor does he satisfactorily address the theoretical bridge from what it should look like to what it does look like.

The story Corsini uses as "a perfect example . . . of the concept of holistic creativity of the personality" is essentially sad and for me does not deal with how we as educators nurture and foster this part of ourselves. If we are saying that children come to us with it or without it and that is that, then there is no need for us. But I know that we have a place in that part of every child's life, just as each child I touch touches that part of my life. I think Miller recognizes that there is more to it, but he too gets abstract in refuting Corsini's point. I agree with Miller's thinking: our job is to foster the connectedness, intrinsic love, and our remarkable energies in our students and ourselves. But Miller does not specify what in Adlerian psychology or 4R education indicates that it is not possible within them. Corsini expands our understanding of Adlerian

psychology by explaining his concept of *gemeinschaft* or general connectedness. But again, I do not see how this is part of everyday life in a 4R school.

I do not think Miller really evaluates carefully what democratic values mean in a school setting. He seems to accept that if it is not traditional authoritarianism, it is democracy. I sense his relief that schools exist that do not abuse children in traditional ways. Yet democracy is a real point of contention for me with the 4R schools as they are presented here. The system appears to me to be hierarchical rather than democratic. I am sure that the teachers use the pointed finger with care, concern, and respect; nevertheless, the way the rule is stated says to me that the classroom is the teacher's and the students are there at the will of the teacher. I know too that in our humanistic school the teachers can and do exclude youngsters from the group under certain circumstances. However, our rule, if it were to be stated, is that teachers and students are responsible to make every attempt to resolve their disagreements openly and immediately.

The students have a right to be in the classroom; it is their classroom as well as the teacher's. My sense of the 4R classroom is that it belongs to the teacher. The student has only the choice to stay in and accept what is happening or get out. That is a marketplace concept of education. But school is not a store to be patronized or rejected. For me, the democratic process involves students, parents, and teachers in an active ongoing dialogue about what is being taught and how it is being taught. It is a time-consuming, laborious process.

I am convinced by Corsini that the 4R schools foster independence, but I find no evidence that they foster interdependence, which is an essential expression of democracy. Corsini said, "Relationships must be on the basis of equality," and Miller agreed. And I agree. I more than agree. I challenge Corsini to demonstrate how that equality is expressed. To say that students have "the right to refuse to learn anything that is taught" says nothing. Everyone has that right everywhere. Of course they suffer the consequences. What Corsini did not say is what the consequences are in a 4R school, and in fact that too is not relevant. What is relevant is that students have a right to learn everything that is taught and anything they need. It is the job of the educator to provide the environment for them to access that learning. If they have to choose out because the learning is not meeting their needs, then it is time to change the learning! Miller made an important point when he said that the message that comes across is that students must stay on task and follow instructions. They can do that or leave. If there is an equality of relationship, can the student "GO" the teacher? Miller really questioned the "GO" signal in an important way.

Another concern I have about the 4R school philosophy is the negative regard expressed for parents. The parents are excluded in key ways, and the school acts as the parent in what appears to be a rather paternalistic manner. This distresses me for many reasons, but I will comment only on the practical effects of such a structure. When the child leaves the school, it is first the child and then the child's parents who suffer or enjoy the consequences of the child's education. Most often we cannot even remember the names of our teachers. It is therefore a practical matter that those responsible in the end must be part of the ongoing process at every step. The stated philosophy expresses such distrust of the parents in relation to the child. The teachers are just invited guests into the education of the child and, as such, should be more respectful of their hosts.

I am interested in following the continuing saga of the 4R schools. I imagine that they are good places for children despite the shortcomings Miller and I identify for ourselves. They may be good places just because there are people who are really focusing on what education means for themselves. Maybe, Ron Miller, that is a definition of holistic education that would encompass all of our ideas of the ideal humanistic school.

Conversations with Holistic Educators

by Ron Miller

In the mid-1980s, while researching the history of holistic education movements, Ron Miller visited a variety of schools in eleven states around the United States and interviewed nearly 60 holistic educators. These conversations contributed significantly to his understanding of holistic education and ultimately led to his founding of Holistic Education Review *in 1988.*

Educators in many types of schools have adopted approaches which they describe as "holistic." In discussing educational issues with these teachers, several key themes consistently emerged. These appear to be essential characteristics of holistic education.

"Holistic education" is not a method invented by some professor at a teacher's college or a formula given in any book. Rather, it is an approach to teaching and learning that comprises several key assumptions about human development and the relationship between the person and society. This approach is shared by a diverse group of teachers; they are "holistic" educators not because of their particular training or the materials in their classrooms, but because, in their own personal philosophies, they have arrived at these core common assumptions and applied them—each in his or her own style—to the task of educating young people.

Between 1984 and 1987, I met with nearly 60 of these educators and tape recorded our discussions. Each of the interviews lasted about one hour, and many of them were informal conversations in which the educators were encouraged to describe their educational and social philosophy. I began the interviews with open-ended questions about the educators' beliefs and then sought their response to specific questions about holistic education. These educators include a cross-section of the holistic movements that are active today: When asked about the most important influence on their ideas, about one-fifth of them named Maria Montessori (even though some of these were not trained Montessori teachers), and many of them mentioned Rudolf Steiner, John Holt, A.S. Neill, humanistic psychologists, and spiritual teachers. Several educators said that their own experience as students, teachers, or parents had been their original motivation for seeking alternatives to mainstream schooling, and a handful cited their participation in protest movements during the 1960s.

What is education for?

Like earlier generations of dissident educators, contemporary holistic educators believe that the purpose of education is to nurture the fullest possible development of personal potentials. This is the most important defining feature of the holistic approach. Although individual educators emphasize different aspects of human development, it is clear that the major concern of all holistic educators is the individual person, not the driving goals of mainstream American education: cultural assimilation, inculcation of work habits, national productivity and competitiveness, and so forth. When these goals were mentioned at all, which was rare,

they were seen as antithetical, or at best clearly secondary, to personal growth. For example, a progressive educator in Chicago stated,

> The purpose of education should be to stimulate and to nurture the talents—whatever they are—of as many children within the school as the school possibly can . . . to create a community and climate that stimulates and encourages the creative energies of children, rather than what you have now, which is a school system—a system in general—which tends to stifle, control, manage, direct, manipulate those energies.

A teacher in Seattle said of her approach, "It's not an education for the economic system; it's an education that develops the human being which . . . expands options, creates more viable alternatives. It's an education that thinks first about the individual, and then the individual within the context of a group."

Finally, the director of a Montessori school in Oregon noted,

> Mainstream expectations seem to focus on teaching competition, patriotism, doing what you are told, getting good grades, etc., and I/we are attempting to help children gain a knowledge of who they are, become joyful and centered and self-directed, and develop self-discipline, competence, and a sense of responsibility for their world.

What exactly does it mean to nurture human potential, creative energies, personal growth, and self-knowledge? What specific educational goals do holistic teachers advocate? One basic goal is *openness*, a desire to learn continuously and expand one's horizons throughout life. A principal in California said,

> I believe that education should be a process that allows everybody involved to continue to open more and more to what they are capable of and what they can do.... It's an opening for growth and for change and for learning more and more about being human, and relating to one another.

When asked about the purpose of education, another California teacher replied, "I'm excited by a student who thirsts to know more, who is raring to find out more, to try more, to be open to new possibilities, new experiences."

Learning, according to holistic educators, can be fun, self-motivated, and above all *spontaneous*, because it is a natural expression of the joy of living. Holistic educators point to the innate curiosity and openness of the young child, and they argue that a school environment must offer a climate of respect, acceptance, and emotional security in order to nurture that openness and love of learning.

"Basically, we're trying to get the youngsters to ask lots of questions, and not so much to give answers."

A teacher in North Carolina said, "I think it all has to do with a sense of being motivated to learn." In the "non-pressured, non-competitive" atmosphere of her free school, students "are more resourceful in finding things to stimulate them on their own. They're self-motivated. They have more direction as far as wanting to learn. I think they really have a love of learning, because they've been able to do it at their own pace."

A Boston teacher commented, "I think what happens here is there isn't such a separation of learning and living." This holistic notion was echoed by many of the educators I interviewed. A holistic school, as I learned on my visits, tends to have the atmosphere of a genuine community; it feels more like a family than a bureaucratic institution. Children often address adults by their first names and play and laugh with them. Discussions—whether in class, in school meetings, or during free time—are generally more person-to-person than an adult authority "talking down" to children. The children seemed to me to be learning in an atmosphere of joyful exploration and discovery.

It is when learning is presented as a series of assigned tasks and evaluated by the impersonal system of grading, say the holistic educators, that the love of learning is lost. A Montessorian in Georgia asserted that "learning does not revolve around finished products," as it is presented in traditional classroom situations. Traditional education, according to holistic educators, snuffs out the love of learning because it is almost completely concerned with content, with information. Educational success is measured by achievement tests, that is, by how much information students pick up and retain. This conception, say many holistic teachers, is fundamentally authoritarian because it is the adults rather than the students who determine which information is important enough to be taught and tested for; and, as cultural history informs us, it is the values of the dominant worldview that determine which information the adults will choose. There is not much interest in spontaneity or self-motivation when the goals of learning are already fixed. For the mainstream educator, it is not openness or spontaneity, but performance, that counts.

Challenging the traditional educational goal of information retention, the holistic educators I interviewed were clearly aware that, in the post-industrial age, technology, means of communication, lifestyles, and ideas change so rapidly that *information soon becomes obsolete*. In the modern world, it is not unusual to change careers several times during one's lifetime. Tools and technologies that exist only as fantasy in one's youth are consumer goods a few years later. New ethical dilemmas are created by advances in medical and biological sciences. In the 21st century it simply will not work to cram students full of facts that will be outdated before they finish college.

Instead of information retention, say the holistic educators, it is *adaptability*, or the development of problem-solving strategies, that should be a basic goal of education. Once students enjoy and desire learning, they need to learn how to continue learning: "I think that education first and foremost must help people to learn how to use their minds; must offer them learning strategies to use, to

learn and unlearn information; must be a process whereby they learn critical and creative thinking skills."

"Thinking skills" refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate new situations, "how to have an open mind to receive all kinds of information and sort it out and decide what you're going to do about it." As a Waldorf teacher in Sacramento put it,

> Basically, we're trying to get the youngsters to ask lots of questions, and not so much to give answers. We're trying to develop the strength in the young people so that they'll be able to see that when a question is asked there's a whole gamut from which the answers can come.

Adaptability means flexibility. In order to deal with rapid change rationally, ethically, and with a minimum of stress and disorientation, what young people need most from education is the ability to size up new situations and respond appropriately and purposefully. This flexibility applies to school settings as well as adult life. One of the frequent criticisms of child-centered approaches is that they spoil young people for the "real world." Parents are often concerned that, when their children leave the nurturing environment of one of these schools to attend a traditional program (whenever the alternative program ends), they will be completely unprepared for the rigors of the traditional classroom. But holistic educators unanimously insist—from their own experience, not simply from conviction—that most students leaving their classrooms adapt marvelously to any learning environment, even very strict classrooms. Discipline enforced by pressure and fear does not necessarily prepare students for the "real world"—certainly not as well as developing self-confidence, self-motivation, and critical thinking skills.

Another educational goal frequently cited in these interviews is *conflict resolution*, or greater awareness and sensitivity in interpersonal relationships. A holistic teacher in South Carolina described her own education: "Why was all that part of my life spent, so much time on facts and details—and that's basically what my education was like—when the main life skill, the most important life skill, is dealing with people?" In Seattle, a teacher agreed: "What is basic to people? Probably ... getting along with their neighbors. That's probably more basic, even, than learning to read and write."

Most of the schools I visited paid a great deal of attention to interpersonal relationships. A number of teachers said that, when behavior or discipline problems arise in class, the lesson is suspended until the group can deal with the issue, whether it is between teacher and student or between students. In some schools, any teacher or student can call a class or all-school council to hear his or her grievance. In two such meetings that I witnessed, it was evident that the group sought to hear all sides of the issue. Conflict resolution skills—willingness to take responsibility for one's actions and to listen to other points of view—replaces the rigid enforcement of authoritarian rules.

The traditional educator wonders how "discipline" can be maintained in such an environment. Isn't this the abdication of adult authority of which child-centered schools have always been accused? Actually, many holistic teachers are quite insistent on orderly classrooms and even on good manners. But almost all would agree that order and discipline are most truly achieved through *self-regulation* rather than blind obedience. Students are encouraged to act as responsible members of a community in which they have a stake. Many of the teachers I interviewed observed that they have far fewer "discipline" problems than the average public school classroom, even though many of their students had demonstrated learning and behavioral difficulties in other settings. It appears that the level of responsibility and respect given to individual students makes a major difference. A free-schooler in New York said, "I think what's called discipline problems is just a reflection of the conformism expected in the classroom. And that's unhealthy for kids; it's unnatural for kids, at least."

At the heart of all of these educational goals, although it was mentioned explicitly only a few times, is what I would call the holistic educators' intrinsic *reverence for life*. The importance of joy and spontaneity in learning, the respect for students' individual needs and personalities, and the holistic emphasis on all aspects of human experience are based on an attitude of reverence that is shared by most of the people I interviewed. A Seattle educator said that "the most important thing" in her educational approach "is that you first instill the mystery of life as a value. And then everything becomes interesting." Her colleague observed, "There's a tremendous focus in our school on just valuing life and valuing people's contributions, and seeing every aspect of life as a contributing factor to a whole." She then contrasted this approach with the competitive nature of mainstream schooling.

I would argue that American culture does not attempt to encourage an attitude of respect and reverence. It has been left to those who are inward-looking, such as the spiritual seekers who live in tiny enclaves in American society, to articulate this attitude of reverence. I visited a Yoga-oriented intentional community in California, where a teacher asserted that the purpose of education is "not just an academic kind of achievement, but a joy inside, a happiness, an enthusiasm for living and accepting the challenges of life that come, and the opportunities to develop socially, and loving relationships."

At a school in Boston run by members of the Sufi religious order, one teacher said,

> What's most honored here, what happens most here, what one of the ideals here is, is the art of personality.... One's life is the masterpiece that one works on for their entire life. And it's to create a beautiful personality that is the purpose of life.... Teachers are looking for the beauty that children bring with them on a soul level. They're looking for what their qualities are, not only what skills they're good at, but where they shine. Leadership, friendship, love.

For holistic educators, reverence for life means placing a high value on personal experience beyond academic and economic success. It means seeing beyond a child's intellectual performance in order to appreciate his or her whole, unique per-

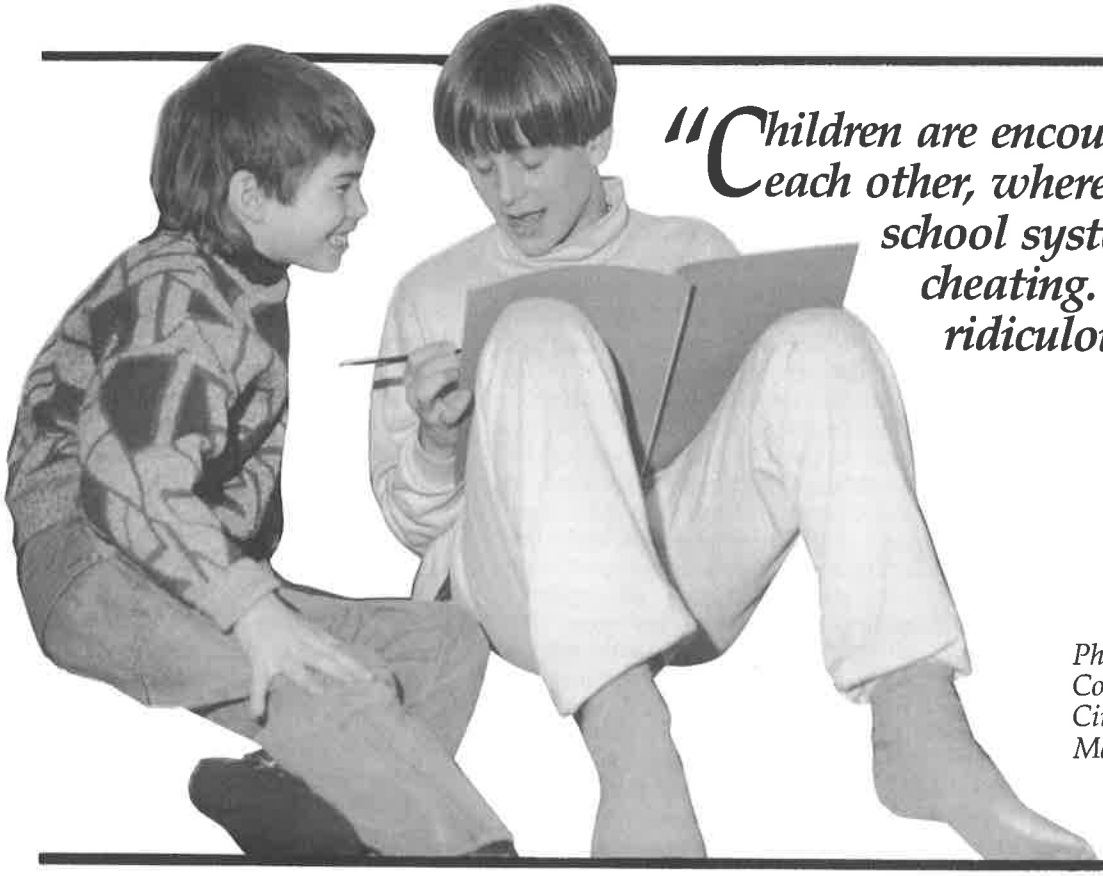
sonality, and then teaching the child that same appreciation for oneself and others.

This constellation of goals—openness and spontaneity, adaptability, problem and conflict resolution, self-regulation, and valuing of life—challenges the traditional definition of "basic" skills in education. None of the educators I interviewed suggested that reading, writing, arithmetic (or science, geography, history, and the rest) should be discarded from the curriculum. Without exception, they wanted their students to acquire and master these areas of knowledge, and they worked tirelessly to help them do so. But the question remains: Which is more truly "basic"—the cultivation of personal awareness and happiness or the acquisition of subject matter? Holistic educators argue that without self-awareness, the acquisition of knowledge is mechanical, alienating, lifeless, and destructive of humane values. They argue further that, when a person's emotional and spiritual qualities are nurtured, intellectual growth is spontaneous and does not need to be forced.

According to the principal of an alternative public high school in Colorado,

> Education is more a process of becoming aware of one's world, oneself, and discovering enduring relationships between the two, than it is the process of transferring knowledge from one person to another.... We need to provide a nurturing environment which allows people to discover who they really are.

Here, in essence, is the goal shared by holistic educators.



"Children are encouraged to help each other, whereas in a normal school system that's called cheating. And that's so ridiculous. ..."

Photo by Merry Lein. Courtesy of the Full Circle School, Bernardston, Mass.

Six aspects of humanness

This redefinition of what is "basic" in education has been an essential characteristic of the holistic approach, historically as well as among contemporary advocates. Education, they have said, should be concerned with the full personal potential of all students, and so it must address all facets of human development. This belief was expressed consistently during my interviews. Educators from many backgrounds stated that education must be concerned with "the development of the human personality in all its aspects" (a Montessori teacher in Atlanta). "I really like the idea of looking at the whole spectrum of what's important about people rather than just 'Can they do math?' and 'Can they verbalize?'" (an alternative public school teacher in Seattle).

Essentially, holistic education is about "addressing all of the child, rather than what I perceived as a mental education that I had been given, that cut off the emotions, the body; you had to sit there and shut up and not feel and basically just take in." (a Sufi teacher in Boston).

The holistic educator, with his or her reverence for life, asserts, "We have a whole child there, not just a brain" (a Yoga disciple in California). In these conversations, six aspects of human development emerged as central concerns of holistic education: intellectual, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual.

Intellectual. It is not fair to apply the label "anti-intellectual" to the holistic approach, as critics often have done. Not a single person I inter-

viewed expressed the belief that intellectual development is unimportant. The holistic educator argues, rather, that academic achievement should not be the *exclusive* aim of education, that it should take place in the context of overall personal development. Many of these educators told me that their students actually learn *more* effectively than most children in traditional classrooms. A teacher at a South Carolina Montessori school compared her class with her previous experience in public schools:

> As far as I am concerned, I ask [for] and get from these children far more academically than I [did] from the other children I worked with. Because the sky is the limit here. You take children where they are and you take them where they can go. We are not about the business of acceleration. That is not our purpose.... But in the public schools you don't let a first grade child look at a second grade book ahead of time.... I can take them just as far as they can go.

The key here is the holistic educator's belief—confirmed again and again by experience—that children have an innate curiosity and love of learning. Intellectual development, to these educators, is an organic process, an integral part of growth, and it needs to be cultivated with love and respect rather than driven by competition and grades. A nurturing school environment that allows learning to happen is more effective than a traditional classroom which attempts to produce learning and control it according to a predetermined curriculum.

> You can work for academic excellence without pushing that above and beyond everything else. If you are drawing that excellence out of the child, and it's their accomplishment, it's their development, it's their learning—it's right in step with their love of learning and their curiosity of the world around them, and wanting to know about how things work.... So it's not just pushing information into their little brains and pulling it out again.

Physical. When holistic educators speak of physical education, they do not mean gym class, recess, or intramural sports. They mean that physical development, like intellectual development and all other areas of development, is an organic, integral element of human growth. People, especially children, learn through activity and movement. "Learning by doing" was a motto of progressive education; Montessori wrote that "the hands are the instruments of man's intelligence." Holistic educators point to recent research in learning styles (e.g., the work of Anthony Gregorc, Rita and Kenneth Dunn, and Bernice McCarthy) to support their claim that many children desperately need physical activity in order to learn well. These teachers use a variety of methods to incorporate activity into the learning process. Whenever possible, lessons include projects, exercises, or simply discussions; passive reading and listening are kept to a minimum.

But physical activity is not merely a technique for efficient learning. Holistic educators believe that there is great value in developing awareness of one's own body. The founder of a free school in upstate New York, who is also a nurse and has worked with natural birthing methods, observed that the high rate of Caesarean births in modern society "has a great deal to do with the lack of contact with one's body." This avoidance of physical and organic awareness, and the confusion of body awareness with sexual promiscuity, reflects the Puritan heritage in American culture. The holistic paradigm opposes this suppression of the organic wisdom of the body. On the basis of the findings of Wilhelm Reich, Ida Rolf, and others that the body is the unconscious storehouse of repressed memories and emotions, holistic therapists make extensive use of massage, alignment, and many body-awareness techniques (such as Rolfing, Hellerwork, Feldenkrais, the Alexander technique) to aid emotional and psychological growth. (Highly relevant to this is the sophisticated work of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who argued that consciousness is rooted in the experience of the body.)

Holistic education may be seen in this context. If young people can become aware of the connection between their emotional and bodily experiences, then they will be more open to all of life's experiences and lessons and far more capable of dealing with stress and trauma throughout life. Physical education, then, is a vital aspect of self-awareness. Several schools I visited encouraged physical awareness through Yoga or lessons on nutrition. The Waldorf schools, with their use of Rudolf Steiner's "eurhythmy," have fashioned this idea into a fine art.

Social. On one hand, holistic education starts with the idea of individual personal development and rejects the traditional use of schooling to fit people obediently into the social order. On the other hand, holistic education recognizes that individual needs coexist with communal needs and social institutions. To holistic educators, there is no conflict here, because they see human beings as naturally sociable and community oriented. Social awareness and loyalty is another integral part of individual development. A Berkeley educator expressed the belief that there is

> a need for balance between an inner ... meditative, quiet learning and "selfish" activity, [that] then rejuvenates someone to give out again.... My belief is that when a person is whole inside themselves, that they naturally grow toward service and caring about other people.

Sociability, then, should not and need not be forced. But educators do need to remain aware that the school is a community, and as such it is a very important influence in students' lives.

> Young children, starting at four and five years old, have enormous social needs.... It seems to me that the school has a very, very real responsibility, whatever its philosophy is, to meet that need, to provide the children with experiences appropriate to their age which will give them some sense of connection....

Holistic educators encourage the development of the school community in many ways: meetings where students' viewpoints are heard, involvement of parents, and field trips and other communal activities. What I found universally, above all, was an emphasis on cooperation, in both the teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. Holistic schools have eliminated competition for grades and

honors, and in its place one finds students helping one another in situations such as older children tutoring or reading to the younger ones, kids who are exceptionally good at a subject or hobby sharing their knowledge with others, and groups of students working on projects and dividing the tasks. "Children are encouraged to help each other, whereas in a normal school system that's called cheating. And that's so ridiculous, because when you get into the real world, of course, helping each other is what we're striving for" (a San Francisco teacher).

Students are encouraged to act as responsible members of a community in which they have a stake.

Rather than dealing with disagreements as interruptions or violations of rules, many of the teachers I observed mediated between children, encouraging each to express his or her feelings and then to understand the other's. These teachers considered such incidents to be a natural and important part of the school day. Learning to live in community is as vital to education as getting through a math lesson. Reflecting on this attitude, several teachers contrasted their experience of holistic schools with their prior experience of traditional public schools.

> There was never the bonding between teachers, or the bonding with parents.... You as a teacher were trying to get through the curriculum and prepare the kids for the next teacher, so you weren't going to look shabby. You got those kids whipped into shape.... I never found a community there.... [Here] the priority is on establishing relationships with the people with whom you're working.

This teacher made the penetrating observation that the absence of true community in modern culture helps drive parents and teachers into a competitive frenzy over their kids' school performance. When they get to know each other on a closer basis than is usually encouraged by schools and other social institutions, then they are more able to treat all of their children as individuals with unique strengths and weaknesses. "Then they are able to relax and say, 'It's okay if my child doesn't take piano lessons at age five. It's okay if he doesn't know how to read at age eight.'" Holistic education offers a much deeper and truer experience of social life than does the typically large, impersonal, competitive public school.

Emotional. Since Rousseau and Pestalozzi, holistic educators have argued that the school environment is impoverished if it fails to nurture young people's psychological well-being. To begin with, most children do not learn as well in a climate of pressure, competition, and fear as they do in one of acceptance and caring. True learning requires self-esteem and emotional security, according to many of the educators I interviewed.

"When kids are angry, and upset, and feeling crummy about themselves or someone else, they're not going to learn. You can make it as fun as you want, [but] they're not going to learn anything." This is so obviously true, yet the traditionalist will insist that family and church, not school, are places for dealing with emotional needs. In contrast, the holistic educator recognizes that the child's life is an undivided whole: emotional growth and intellectual growth do not take place separately. All parts of a person's experience spill over into every phase of life. Furthermore, with modern society undergoing rapid change and stress, the traditional family and church may not be capable of giving a growing child the needed support.

> We still have not recognized what divorce does to our families, and both parents working, and conflicts between mother and father... and how it affects the child and what he can learn the next day, and what his curiosity is all about. Who wants to be curious if things in the world look so uncertain and violent and untrusting? I think we've gone a long way—as society has its problems right now—to curbing the natural curiosity that all children are born with.

To the holistic educator, *school is a place—often the only place in modern culture—where the needs of the growing child have the highest priority.* Rather than try to toughen children for the "real world," school should be a sanctuary where the human spirit can find the nourishment to fortify itself. This is not mere sentimentalism; the results are evident. Teachers reported to me that children given emotional nurturing have far fewer discipline problems and have "remarkable success" in academic work. A Seattle educator said that, even while teaching in public schools,

> ... one thing that I did with all of my students at the very beginning [was to focus] entirely upon them as emotional beings and make sure that we had strong emotional bonds together before I would try to take them into academics. Because of that kind of bond, there would be what some people would look at as miracles.

The holistic educator believes that children's curiosity, their joy in discovering the world, and their thoughtful, enthusiastic participation in their social group are not miracles but are the true essence of our humanness, at last freed from the insistent demands of one-dimensional, competitive schooling. In larger terms, this is a criticism not only of traditional education but also of American culture itself. Why prepare children to live in a harsh, competitive "real world," if what we really desire is a world of personal and social peace, a world where love may prevail?

Aesthetic. In public schools, programs in art, music, theater, and dance are usually the first to be trimmed when budgets become tight; they are the "frills," because success in the corporate, industrial world depends more on hard-headed calculation than on aesthetic sensitivity. But according to the holistic approach, the arts "tap and express the human soul" itself; the ability to express one's innermost creative impulses, and to appreciate others' expression of their deeper selves, is vital to a whole and happy life. The arts are exceptionally central in the Waldorf approach, but they are also important to all of the

holistic educators I met.

> Art goes on all day long here. It goes on the math papers, on the reading papers, on the writing papers.... It's given the same value as reading, writing, math, and all the rest of it.... The arts, and the music, and the being able to wander around here freely and exchange ideas ... make life seem so worthwhile to them.

Holistic educators want to cultivate the aesthetic sense—the innate human love of beauty and meaning for which modern industrial society has so little use. In the schools I visited, there was little formal instruction in art appreciation or technique. Rather, there was pervasive encouragement of self-expression. Students' art, music, poetry, and acting projects were treated seriously, as expressing their real personal feelings, interests, and qualities. For many teachers, creative projects are a valuable source of information about their students, what is going on in their lives, how they learn, and what they are interested in learning. Art facilitates emotional, social, and intellectual education. The themes of holistic education are always thus intertwined.

Spiritual. Here is the distinctive feature of holistic education. While traditional schooling shortchanges physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and even intellectual development, at least these areas are frequently given lip service in curriculum guides and public relations rhetoric. Not so the spiritual dimension of experience. This is almost universally equated with religious indoctrination and shunned because public education must not cross the barrier between church and state. But the holistic educators emphatically insist, almost unanimously, that "spiritual" has nothing to do with sectarian doctrine, and everything to do with our very identity as human beings. To purge education of the spiritual, they believe, is to deprive it of its most vital purpose.

Those I interviewed were associated with a variety of religious traditions and followed the teachings of various sages. But their answers, when I asked what they meant by "spiritual" and "spirituality," were remarkably similar. One educator expressed the common themes very well:

> I've worked with ... kids and they're filled with love and humanitarian feelings, and real spiritual, creative ideas that come out. And nothing in what I say does that. I'm just helping them tap into something that's in a very deep part of them that is not ordinarily accessed by pure rational analytical processes.... When they experience something as deeply moving, it's in a different realm from what they usually experience.... We really don't have the language to talk about what we're talking about. But we know there's something else.

Another teacher pointed to other qualities of spirituality, including, "understanding the connectedness of all things.... Children already know it. I mean, they all come in with a purpose, they all come in with a reason for being here. And so my job is to allow that to open up, to unfold." And a third stated, "To me, the spiritual dimension is higher human faculties of creativity, imagination, empathy, sense of unity with life."

These excerpts contain the themes that came up often in my interviews. Spirituality is associated with "love and humanitarian feelings," or, as another teacher put it, "the goodness of man." It is the belief that what makes human life valuable and indeed special, despite the conflicts and evils that seem to dominate history, is that every person possesses a source of love and forgiveness that is waiting to unfold and express itself. No matter what this source is called or how it is imagined, the important thing is that human beings are capable of loving and giving of themselves, and spiritual development means giving more attention to this possibility and less to the lure of ideologies and material satisfactions. In this sense, the source is "deeper" or "higher" than the demands of everyday life and therefore more mysterious. Reason, calculation, and possession of facts cannot bring it forth, and so it gets lost amid the clamor of daily life in modern culture.

Yet being mysterious does not make spiritual growth impossible. The arts, because they are nonrational and expressive, facilitate spiritual growth, according to these educators. In fact, one teacher defined spirituality as the "creative spark" within the child. *Imagination* is encouraged in holistic education; it is an opening of awareness, a willingness to let deeper (or higher) impulses enter one's experience. Making contact with these impulses is described as "moving"—it is charged with emotional meaning, and it is experienced as awesome or wonderful. We rarely associate this feeling with school work, nor with our adult lives. But if our culture, in devaluing the gift of imagination, has completely lost any sense of awe and wonder, what are our lives worth? Spirituality is a discovery, or rediscovery, of meaning and purpose.

Ultimately, spirituality means connectedness. It is a deep awareness that one's life is not aimless, that meaning is not dependent on national glory or material prosperity but comes from the knowledge that we are of the cosmos and that our lives participate in the unfolding of life in the universe. It is the awareness that all other people, all other living beings, are also part of that process; an awareness out of which grows an intimate bonding, a true community. Here is the source for the profound reverence for life that is the heart of holistic education. Spirituality, as these educators understand it, is not a set of religious beliefs or rules at all, but an opening to love. Surely this must be the highest aim of education.

Holistic education is based on a deep faith in the inherent goodness of human nature and in the natural, spontaneous urge to learn. Remove the Puritan assumptions about human nature and the hierarchical social order of industrial society, say holistic educators, and all people would show their untapped capabilities. "See, the thing about learning how to learn, the thing about understanding how you perceive and process information—suddenly, nobody's stupid. Nobody can't." But it is difficult to uphold such a faith in human nature, given the constraints of American culture. It requires a high degree of dedication.

> It takes a lot of faith in human beings in order to believe in [the Montessori approach]. And I know I didn't have it when I first started in Montessori. It has been through watching the children in these settings for twenty-three years now that has given me that faith.

Ultimately, it is the holistic educator's spiritual worldview that supports his or her faith in the child. "I mean, they all come in with a purpose, they all come in with a reason for being here. I'm real conscious of that. And so my job is to allow that to open up, to unfold."

A critique of American culture

Despite the upheaval of the 1960s and the blossoming of the human potential movement of the 1970s, holistic education today remains a "romantic" countercultural movement. To these people, education is an art more than a science, a moral endeavor more than a province for professional expertise. Although they occasionally mentioned recent, ground-breaking work on the varieties and flexibility of human intelligence and learning, they did not attempt to back up their claims with scientific studies or professional jargon; it is clear that holistic education is a wholehearted choice of values, not merely a technique.

Most of these educators did recognize that their choice of values was contrary to mainstream culture; nevertheless, as with their predecessors, there was clearly a difference between those with a "radical" attitude toward the culture and those with an "accommodating" temper. The radicals expressly seek to change American society, while the accommodating educators are mainly concerned with their own classrooms and small groups of children. They expect, or hope, that American culture will eventually catch on. The following are samples of the accommodating attitude:

"I guess what I've done so far in my career is try to work within that [public school] system and [have] not really confronted the question that you're asking, except to soften it for kids, and to make what exists as humane as possible and as fair as possible." and "I don't think it's as much of a political matter as it is a matter of fuller human development."

One educator agreed that his spiritual, holistic attitude is, "different from what many people have as their goals," but he said:

> The term *countercultural* doesn't seem to describe how I feel about my belief. I don't feel I'm fighting against anything. I'm working for something positive in my life, and it would be wonderful if other people gained the happiness and contentment that I feel from this. But I have no need to pressure or fight.

A teacher at the Yoga-based community I visited expressed the characteristic faith of the "accommodating" holistic approach:

> I think given enough people, changing towards a positive way, being more in tune to the higher sides of life and the divine side of life, that it can't help but bring about a certain change. That's not the focus, but it is evident that it can be the outcome of it.

Yet for other holistic educators, bringing about change *is* the focus of their work; they realize that fuller human development, given the beliefs of American culture, is *necessarily* a political matter. These radical educators recognize the historical and cultural barriers hindering the adoption of holistic ideals.

> I'm not sure that we can change the schools until we're also willing to change our society and realize that the school, as we know it now, was set up to service an industrial society. And it meant that everyone needed to be able to be in a room with other people doing about the same thing, trying to do it better than somebody else, being punctual, following directions—and our school system still is geared to turn out that kind of personality.

Although these educators would agree that social change ultimately rests on personal, moral, and spiritual transformation rather than mass indoctrination (otherwise I would not consider them holistic), they realize that educational reform will follow social change, not lead it. To them, there remain fundamental problems in American society that go beyond educational issues.

> What we've done is to create an educational system which is essentially a two-tiered educational system because it works for middle class children and it does not work well for lower class children and deprived children.... We're inventing an increasingly successful middle class moving into upper middle class and spending more and more bushels of money, and underneath is the subclass, which is growing larger and larger.
>
> I really see most of the decisions that are being made in this country made in terms of economics and in terms of business interests, and people in power financially being able to influence governmental policy. That doesn't seem like democracy to me.

Given these issues, radical educators are not as sanguine as accommodating educators are about their prospects for succeeding. "I don't think this society wants this kind of school because it helps them think for themselves." Consequently, while the accommodating holistic educator is content to work within the framework of American culture, for the radical, "it's a given that we have to make basic changes in this country." One teacher commented, "I feel like I want to be a reformer. I don't think it's just educationally based; it's more society-based for me."

For the most part, however, this group of educators was not made up of activists. I would call them *cultural* radicals in the sense that they, like Rudolf Steiner and many holistic thinkers, are looking beyond the surface of social institutions to criticize the underlying *materialism* of modern culture. They neither talked about electorial politics nor seemed interested in traditional left-wing solutions to the problems of capitalism. Instead, like many educators in the holistic tradition, they were critical of the inhumane competition for material success and status that characterizes Western industrial culture.

> There's something wrong with compulsive work and not being able to take care of yourself along with working. Work and making money and going for a long-term goal—that's way out in front of you, that's not living life as it is here. Those are the things I associate with the Protestant ethic. I feel like that is a very dominant cultural value. People [are afraid] that if they don't stay with their nose to the grindstone that they're just going to fall apart and go totally haywire and not have any motivation ... not having any faith in internal motivation, in internal rhythm.

The issue, we see over and over again, is trust versus mistrust in organic and spontaneous human experience. Several educators spoke of *empowerment*, meaning the cultivation of self-reliance and self-trust in one's own abilities and potentials and inner wisdom. The issue is whether individuals may follow their own unfold-

ing wisdom or must obey the authority of political, economic, and professional elites.

> I see it politically, I see it in many ways, that in society people seem to feel that there's a body of knowledge that supercedes the common person.... We don't allow ourselves to act on our ideas ... so in alternative education, what we're trying to do in some ways is to foster that notion of creating your own reality, making the world be the way you want it, not being a recipient of the world but a creator of it.

While the "accommodating" holistic educators are no less sincere in their devotion to the unfolding of every person, I argue that their apolitical stance is ultimately self-defeating. These conversations confirmed my belief that holistic education is fundamentally at odds with traditional American culture. Holistic education represents a different approach to life, an entirely different worldview from that which has dominated this culture for two centuries. It may well be that the holistic paradigm will emerge as the primary worldview of the post-industrial age, but at present its assumptions and deepest values are out of step with this society. They are inherently radical, even though some holistic educators do not like to think so.

Holistic Education Glossary

Holistic education is a comprehensive philosophy that finds expression in a variety of organized and unorganized movements, classroom methods, and approaches. The aim of this brief listing is to give a vivid impression of the diversity of holistic approaches and to suggest their interrelationships.

Alternative education

This term is used loosely to mean any school or educational method that is significantly different from conventional, mainstream approaches. Many public "alternative schools" are simply more relaxed and student-centered programs for dissatisfied high school students who are considered to be "at risk" of dropping out. In the holistic context, alternative education refers more specifically to a school or learning center, public or private, that adopts a different style of education for *all* students on the basis of genuine philosophical disagreement with the goals and methods of mainstream education.

Conflict resolution and mediation

Conflict resolution and creative problem-solving skills are advocated by a number of mainstream educational groups, and programs that train students to be mediators and peer counselors are increasingly popular even in public schools. This is a promising new field in public education. In holistic approaches, human relationships are a central concern, not secondary to academic concerns. Conflict resolution and interpersonal skills are an integral part of the holistic curriculum.

Critical pedagogy

This is probably the most provocative and radical intellectual trend in the scholarly study of education. The writings of Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Stanley Aronowitz, and others apply a hard-hitting, left-inspired analysis to public educational theory and practice. Because most of the work of these writers is highly focused on economic and ideological factors, it is not truly holistic. However, as students of this school begin to integrate its critical cultural perspective with more spiritual, human-potential concerns, the result is a powerful holistic analysis. (See, in particular, *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education* by David E. Purpel [1989], and "Realizing the Promise of Humanistic Education ..." by Lee Bell and Nancy Schniedewind, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* [vol. 29, no. 2, 1989]).

Developmentally appropriate curriculum

This concept draws upon empirical studies in psychology (especially the work of Jean Piaget) to demonstrate that children learn in different ways at different ages, and asserts that their natural development ought to be respected. Major national educational groups (e.g., the National Association for the Education of Young Children) and leading psychologists such as David Elkind have endorsed this approach; they argue that young children, in particular, should not be rushed into academics. Holistic theory has included this perspective since long before developmental psychology confirmed it: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Pestalozzi recognized the principles of human development, and Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner fashioned entire educational systems according to their deep understanding of, and respect for, the child's natural development.

Global education

In the late twentieth century, it is becoming clear that the problems confronting humankind transcend national and cultural borders and that our survival depends on global cooperation. Many programs to explore cross-cultural and international perspectives are being developed and implemented in schools across the country. This is a positive step toward holistic education, because a holistic approach strongly emphasizes the interconnectedness of life on Earth. Peace education is an intrinsic aspect of

a global education. A truly holistic global education program would teach cross-cultural understanding for its own sake, not, for example, to give business people a competitive edge in the emerging world marketplace.

Green education

For many years there have been programs in outdoor education, environmental education, nature study, and ecology—and they are all valuable. But, the green approach involves a more serious confrontation with the wasteful, destructive, consumer-driven habits of the modern age. Green teaching, exemplified by the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales and the Institute for Earth Education in Warrenville, Illinois, strives to impart a deeper respect for the Earth and the interconnectedness of all life. Green education is thus global education in its truest sense. It includes a deep concern for peace, justice, and the struggles of "third world" cultures, because these are all part of a holistic appreciation for the Earth and its life.

Humanistic education

In the 1960s and 1970s, the humanistic psychology movement (based on the work of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, Rollo May, and others) offered a more dynamic and positive view of human nature than the dominant behaviorist and Freudian models. The application of this approach to the classroom presented mainstream education with a new array of concerns and skills: self-esteem, emotional health, personal values, human relations, and imagination and creativity. Humanistic education was often called "integrative," "affective," or "confluent" education, indicating the integration of feelings and intellect in the learning process. Holistic educators, from Pestalozzi on through the free school movement of the 1960s, have always been humanistic educators.

Integrated day

About 1970, American educators enthusiastically adopted methods being pioneered by the British Infant Schools; known informally as the "open classroom," this approach was more technically called the integrated day. Children were free to work at their own rate, on projects, in various learning centers around the classroom or throughout the school. The classroom became more of a busy laboratory than a lecture hall. The integrated day experiment was rapidly dropped when teachers and students, unaccustomed to such freedom, couldn't seem to maintain discipline or improve test scores enough to satisfy conventional expectations. However, holistic educators have used the integrated day approach with much success (the Montessori method has refined it into an art) and tend to avoid having children sitting obediently in rows of desks. Currently, the integrated day is taught in the education program at Antioch/New England Graduate School in Keene, New Hampshire.

Learning styles

Over the past twenty years, our understanding of how the brain functions and how people learn has expanded dramatically. We have discovered that individuals differ biologically in their preferences for, and receptivity to, environmental stimuli. A number of psychologists and educators have applied these research findings to the educational setting, and this has resulted in new methods that address individual learning styles and multiple intelligences. These approaches can be a powerful tool for encouraging the unique potentials of each learner. Although these approaches can contribute significantly to holistic education, often they are simply grafted onto traditional educational aims and assumptions and used to impart the conventional curriculum more efficiently, rather than to allow individuals to grow more freely from within.

Montessori education

The Montessori method revolves around a "prepared environment"—using specially designed educational materials and allowing children freedom to concentrate on activities that serve their current development needs. This approach serves children from infancy through adolescence. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), a brilliant pioneer in educational theory and practice, was a medical doctor who observed children's physical and intellectual development with a trained scientific eye, but who also brought a deeply spiritual attitude toward education. Although this attitude is perhaps the real essence of her contribution, it is sometimes lost in application. Lacking this aspect, Montessori education may become rigid in practice and overly focused on intellectual development. There has been much debate within the international Montessori community over the extent to which the founder's original teachings may be modified or compromised—to meet the requirements of public education, for example.

Progressive education

From the 1890s through the 1930s, a strong reform movement known as progressive education attempted to make significant changes in American schools. Based largely on the work of Francis W. Parker, John Dewey, and other innovative educators, progressive education emphasized the needs of the growing child by replacing traditional teaching methods with interdisciplinary, cooperative classroom projects and field trips. Social studies and the creative arts were especially emphasized. In the 1930s the progressive movement became split between "child-centered" educators and a more radical group of "social reconstructionists" who, responding to the Great Depression, believed that schools should model alternatives to America's competitive, individualistic economic system. The progressive education movement declined in the 1940s and was discredited by critics in the 1950s who sought a return to "basics" in education. But only recently, a new Network of Progressive Educators has emerged to rekindle the idealism of the earlier progressive education movement. At its best (that is, when it integrates the "child-centered" and "reconstructionist" perspectives), progressive education is an expression of the holistic approach.

Rites of passage

In traditional cultures, significant transitions in a person's life are celebrated and supported by the community

in rites of passage. Birth, adolescence, marriage, and death are treated as sacred times—as openings to new and potentially higher levels of experience. Modern, materialistic cultures focus almost exclusively on the social and economic aspects rather than on the inner, spiritual significance of these transitions. This is especially obvious with respect to the passage from childhood to adulthood, where our lack of meaningful rites of passage is probably a major source of many of our teenagers' difficulties. Some holistic educators attempt to re-create traditional rites of passage, such as the Native American Vision Quest, or seek to create new ones in order to support and affirm their adolescent students' "coming of age."

Spirituality

Probably the single most essential characteristic of holistic approaches is their spiritual perspective. That is, holistic approaches are guided by a reverence for life—a deep appreciation for the natural, spontaneous unfolding of life. Spirituality may be expressed in traditional religious language and rituals, or it may be expressed in more empirical terms (e.g., transpersonal psychology); the important point is to see life and nature and the growth of every child as mysteries to be honored rather than as mechanistic systems to be regulated. When education is grounded in a spiritual perspective, external measures of success, such as grades and test scores, become far less significant, and the natural creativity, spontaneity, and imagination of childhood are given far greater respect and opportunity for expression. Spirituality may also be described as the desire for beauty, simplicity, humility, connectedness, and peace—an uncommon pursuit in a culture that values utility, profit, fame, competition, and winning.

Transpersonal psychology

While humanistic psychology is concerned primarily with personal and interpersonal growth, transpersonal psychology studies the more mysterious realms of religious experience, intuition, and altered states of consciousness. Pioneers in this field, which today is becoming established as a serious and disciplined study of transcendent experience, included Carl Jung, William James, Abraham Maslow, and Roberto Assagioli. Its findings have been applied to education by people such as Thomas Roberts and the late Beverly-Colleen Galyean and have led to the use of guided imagery and meditation in the classroom. Transpersonal educators have found that such techniques contribute to academic success as well as emotional well-being. A particularly good account of transpersonal theory and its application to child development is *The Radiant Child* by Thomas Armstrong (1985).

Waldorf education

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was a philosopher/scientist/mystic who lectured and wrote on an astounding variety of subjects from medicine and agriculture to theology and education. He founded a movement called anthroposophy, which he considered to be a spiritual science—that is, an empirical, verifiable understanding of the inner workings of the human soul. In 1919 he founded the first Waldorf School as an application of anthroposophic principles to education. Today, there are more than 400 Waldorf schools around the world. Waldorf education goes far beyond the usual curriculum and seeks to connect the growing child to the ongoing cultural and spiritual evolution of humankind. The method makes extensive use of classical legends and folklore, and it incorporates the creative and dramatic arts in every facet of instruction. Waldorf teachers are trained to be extremely responsive to the unfolding personalities of each of their students by establishing a lasting, trusting relationship with them. To accomplish this goal, the teachers move up a grade with their classes each year between first and eighth grades. Based on Steiner's teachings, the Waldorf movement has been a consistent critic of premature academic work for young children. Unfortunately, to a large extent the movement tends to remain isolated from other educational movements, even from its potential holistic allies.

Whole child

Basically, holistic education seeks to teach the whole child. This means that academic achievement is only one goal of education, that the social, emotional, physical, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects of the human personality need to be recognized as well. In modern society, "school" has been defined as the place where knowledge and facts are taught, where people are prepared for careers and to be useful citizens. Holistic educators assert, however, that this emphasis on intellect and vocation results in lopsided development of human potentials and that a complete redefinition of the school is needed.

Whole language

Although it is primarily concerned with reading and writing instruction, the whole language approach is based on a holistic philosophy. Advocates of whole language argue that instruction should be child centered and meaning centered rather than teacher and curriculum centered. They believe that reading and writing should be learned in the same natural, spontaneous ways that earlier language skills (hearing and speaking) are acquired. Whole language has roots in previous educational approaches (including progressive education) but only in the past ten years has it taken a definite shape and begun to spread rapidly—even in mainstream education. There is a danger that it could become the latest popular trend, ultimately destined (like the integrated day approach), to be diluted and finally abandoned. But there is also a chance that its holistic approach may spread throughout the educational system, leading to a genuinely holistic education even in public schools. (Whether the essential spiritual element can be adopted remains to be seen.) The whole language movement is a fascinating development that bears watching.

Book Reviews

The Joyful Child: A Sourcebook of Activities and Ideas for Releasing Children's Natural Joy

by Peggy Jenkins, Ph.D.
Published by Harbinger House (2802 North Alvernon Way, Tucson, AZ 85712), 1989;
257 pages, $16.95 paperback

Reviewed by Ron Miller

Here is a new book which holistic educators should find useful as well as provocative. *The Joyful Child* is a valuable source of activities, songs, stories, art projects, and other exercises that can help children develop self-esteem and self-knowledge leading to inner peace and joy; these concrete activities can help us put holistic educational theory into living practice. There are dozens of imaginative and fun activities, and I wish I had known about them during my days as a teacher of young children. Author Peggy Jenkins shows us how to teach, play, and *be* joyfully with children. She offers an especially insightful discussion of children's temperaments (drawn to some extent from Rudolf Steiner's important work in this area), in which she encourages adults to pay close attention to the unique personalities of each of the children we teach or live with.

The Joyful Child reminds me in some ways of two other books I recently read and enjoyed: Rahima Baldwin's *You Are Your Child's First Teacher* and John Allan's *Inscapes of the Child's World* (both reviewed in *Holistic Education Review* 2, no. 4, Winter 1989). Like them, *The Joyful Child* focuses our attention where it truly belongs—on the mysteriously emerging, growing soul of each child—and calls upon us to serve the young soul's development. It is a clearly written, practical manual for parents and educators who want to create more joy in their own lives as well as in the lives of their children.

But *The Joyful Child* is also more than this; it advocates a worldview that is more provocative and controversial than I think its author intends. I would characterize this worldview as a "New Age" sense of innocence. For me, the book raised a number of serious questions about the relationship between this popularized New Age philosophy and the holistic paradigm, which I see as a more serious and coherent intellectual endeavor. Although I do think that many of the practical suggestions in the book are worthwhile, its underlying philosophy left these serious questions unanswered for me.

To start with, there are similarities between holistic thinking and the New Age approach. Most basically, they are both grounded in a spiritual worldview rather than a materialistic and mechanistic one. They both take seriously the inner, spontaneous human soul and its connection to the mysterious unfolding of the Universe. In *The Joyful Child*, Jenkins unabashedly embraces this spiritual worldview. "To discover joy," she writes, "is to return to a state of oneness with the Universe. Pure joy is the true nature of God and is therefore our birthright as children of God" (pp. 3-4). Later she adds, "Since the true source of joy lies within, the greatest gift we can give children is the time, the techniques, and the encouragement to go within," (p. 63) and further, "The most important attitude we can develop, in my opinion, is to acknowledge God, Universal Mind, or whatever term you prefer, as the source of all creativity" (p. 148).

I agree with these powerful statements; they point toward a profoundly spiritual orientation that is utterly lacking in conventional education. In this view, the ability to "go within" is a far more basic skill, and has far more important consequences for our full and healthy development, than traditional academic skills or so-called cultural literacy. In other passages, the author further hints that her educational philosophy is wholly different from the predominant goals of mainstream schooling: She asserts, "Children are really here as our teachers and not vice versa" (p. 32); "It is important that we not present today's knowledge as the final truth, or we will fail in our soul's task to help open up human consciousness" (p. 40); and "Our rational, logical way of knowing is not nearly as important or trustworthy as our intuition" (p. 186). She closes her discussion by stating, "To release children's joy is more important than anything you do in the world" (p. 233).

Again, I would support each of these declarations as bold statements of a radically spiritual approach to education. However, when we express such ideas in the forum of intellectual discourse, we need to make it clear that we recognize how entirely *odd* they are. These are radical ideas about education; they would turn conventional schooling completely upside-down! In the intellectual, social, and political context of twentieth-century American (and all of Western) culture, these ideas are not at all self-evident; they must be grounded in solid reasoning and evidence in order to be heard properly, let alone defended seriously. In this regard I would contrast *The Joyful Child* with Thomas Armstrong's *The Radiant Child* (1985, Theosophical Publishing House): Armstrong similarly argued for a spiritual understanding of child development, but in a much more sophisticated, intellectually grounded way; his book is one of the clearest explanations of transpersonal theory.

Of course, Jenkins is not addressing her book to scholars but to parents who are already sympathetic to the New Age worldview, and in this limited aim the book is successful. But as an advocate of a more coherent holistic worldview, I see some problems with New Age innocence as it is expressed in *The Joyful Child*. By "innocence," I mean that New Agers tend to take for granted (as Jenkins does in a few passages) that the "Aquarian Age" is actually emerging, and that cultural transformation will inevitably occur because various spiritual forces and entities are on our side. Hence, New Age thinking is unrealistically optimistic. It is largely ungrounded in the social, economic, and political realities of our time; it is at heart a rejection of them, a refusal to confront them; it is a desire to achieve a conflict- and struggle-free utopian society. This vision is appeal-

ing, to be sure, and it contains some profound spiritual teachings; nevertheless, it is an incomplete understanding of our world. Intuition is important, but so is our "rational, logical way of knowing." Conventional schooling neglects intuition, but New Age innocence too often neglects critical intellect. A truly holistic approach must integrate them.

"To release children's joy is more important than anything you do in the world."

There are abundant examples of this innocence in *The Joyful Child*. I won't belabor the point, because I do not mean to attack the book too severely. But one passage that particularly bothered me was a story about a boy named Tommy who screamed and cried every morning when his mother left him at kindergarten. Although the teacher (probably correctly) "decided Tommy was just not ready for school," she tried an affirmation technique typical of some of the exercises Jenkins recommends: For several days, the teacher and much of her class chanted "Tommy enjoys school" over and over, loud enough to be heard over his continual cries. Sure enough, after a few days he quieted down and became a regular participant in the class (p. 82). As Jenkins observes, this story illustrates the receptivity of the subconscious mind; some of her suggested techniques, and in fact many popular New Age practices, such as affirmations and subliminal training, rely on this mental "programming." But I protest strongly against this manipulation of a young child's powerlessness!

To put it bluntly, little Tommy was brainwashed. His genuine emotional or psychological concerns about leaving home—whatever they were—were simply ignored rather than dealt with in open dialogue and personal encounter. Programming his subconscious mind was easier, and probably quicker, than dealing honestly and possibly struggling with his resistance. As a result, he was completely discounted as an autonomous individual. The teacher, by placing herself in a position of total psychological authority, programmed him to be compliant and responsive to the social demands of schooling. I find this terribly undemocratic.

Once we accept this bypassing of critical intellect and moral autonomy as a useful tool, what is to prevent the use of such techniques for genuinely sinister and evil purposes? New Age proponents are fond of positive thinking techniques because they believe that the Universe ultimately operates for our benefit, that loving "energy" is real but our physical and social existence ultimately is not, and therefore that none of us are victims of suffering unless we choose to be (Jenkins's approach draws upon these claims). However, millions of human beings *are* victimized by terrible injustice, and greed, and bigotry, and poverty, and violence! Human suffering is real, and much of it results from the abuse of social and economic power. In their innocence, New Agers fail to see the political implications of their techniques, that is, the decidedly unspiritual and un-Aquarian uses to which they may effectively be put. A holistic understanding must include a sober awareness of social and political realities and must address them.

I argue that it is part of our calling as human beings to confront our suffering, both within ourselves and as it exists in the world. The path to moral and spiritual wholeness is more complicated and more tragic than New Age innocence recognizes—it is a lifelong struggle that requires all of our intellectual and critical capacities, as well as our moral passion. Holistic education, unlike many New Age practices, seeks to equip us for this struggle over the long haul.

The Joyful Child is worthwhile reading for its useful exercises and its refreshingly spiritual understanding of children's development, but it should be read critically. The questions it raises unintentionally should be pondered intentionally by any seriously holistic educator.

Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person

by Thomas Del Prete
Published by Religious Education Press (5316 Meadow Brook Road, Birmingham, AL 35242), 1990; 195 pages

Reviewed by Ron Miller

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) was a Trappist monk, educated at Cambridge and Columbia universities, whose spiritual journey found profuse expression in his passionate writings. From the 1940s until his untimely death, Merton produced a steady outpouring of insightful books, essays, and poems on the social and moral problems of the contemporary world. His penetrating critiques, grounded in his monastic experience, offered a deeply spiritual perspective on the moral struggles of modern culture. His was an important voice.

In this new book, author Thomas Del Prete has drawn upon nearly 70 of Merton's essays, books, talks, and letters—some of them previously unpublished—to explore the central themes of Merton's thought and their relevance to education. As the title suggests, Merton's philosophy may accurately be described as *holistic:* Del Prete shows that Merton's primary concern was "the formation of the whole person," in other words, an inner process of self-discovery that cuts through the social and ideological falsehoods of modern life. Another name for this approach, sometimes used in the book, is *personalism*. For Merton, the human person, as a living expression of God's love, is of inviolable integrity and dignity. The truest purpose of education is to enable individuals to experience this love, this integrity, this dignity, this spiritual sense of wholesome—both within themselves and in relation to others.

Del Prete reveals that Merton actually wrote very little on education per se. If one reads this book hoping for

an elaboration of Merton's pedagogical theory and its relationship to contemporary educational practice (as I must admit I did), one will likely be disappointed. Instead, the book provides a rich and deeply thoughtful discussion of fundamental philosophical issues that underlie all educational problems. Merton was concerned with such things as freedom, love, authenticity, solitude, clear seeing and hearing, silence, communion and community, and the meaning of truth. Such topics generally are not included in discusions of education; Del Prete, like Merton, would argue that they should be.

In Merton's view, "the educative process must be grounded in a shared openness and a mutual personal regard" (p. 10). True education is not so much about facts and skills and the objective world as it is a *communion between persons* nourishing their discovery of existential truths. Merton said that "Our real journey in life is interior: It is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an even greater surrender to the action of love and grace in our hearts" (p. 15). This is the primary theme of Merton's writings, and Del Prete's book explores its application to social problems, the monastic life, the craft of writing, and, after all of these, the meaning of education.

Del Prete explores Merton's evolving understanding of the relationship between his contemplative life and the larger world. Originally, Merton rejected the materialism of the modern world and its manipulation of human beings. Yet eventually he saw that solitude and silence—most fully cultivated in monastic life but necessary in every well-intergrated life—opened him to greater compassion for humanity's folly and suffering. As one moves further inward, he found, one comes closer to the love and truth of God, and hence discovers a place of total unity with all of humanity. While the book recognizes the importance for Merton of the specifically Christian path he chose to follow, Del Prete argues that, for Merton, the lessons of love and unity are universal.

Non-religious readers will be relieved to know that this book, although published by Religious Education Press, is not overfilled with heavy-duty theology or numerous references to Jesus and the Bible. It is a sober, scholarly study of an insightful existential thinker who happened to be a Christian. On the other hand, I found myself wanting to know more specifically what Merton experienced when he spoke of grace, love, God, and Christ; I have a sense that he was offering a profound mystical interpretation of the Western religious tradition, similar to the Creation Spirituality of Matthew Fox. But the book does not go into this in any great depth.

Although the entire book is thought provoking, I found two chapters especially inspiring. Chapter 3, "Self-Discovery as the Purpose of Education," describes Merton's important distinction between the true self (the "inmost center" or divine "spark") and the false self of social identity and ego. Only the true self can experience genuine freedom or genuine love and unity. Most people live their lives as "individuals"—atomistic parts of mass society; in contrast, those who follow a spiritual path know what it is to be true persons. "Reflecting its mystical quality," says Del Prete, "the true self is discovered wholly in a loving personal encounter, the person in existential contact with God, the source of life" (p. 41). He is not talking about religious indoctrination but of an inward journey. Merton's insight into "true" and "false" selves is in fact a powerful challenge to the essentially indoctrinational nature of all of modern education: "We must provide an education," said Merton, "that strengthens man against the noise, the violence, the slogans, and the half-truths of our materialistic society" (p. 52).

Chapter 5, "Voice and Truth," elaborates on Merton's critique of modern society, particularly his pacifist perspective. "It is my intention," declared Merton, "to make my entire life a rejection of, a protest against the crimes and injustices of war and political tyranny which threaten to destroy the whole race of man and the world with him ..." (p. 93). Merton's *spiritual* critique rested on true nonviolence; that is, he insisted that we never fight against people but only against ignorance and prejudice. A truly nonviolent protest must arise from love and compassion deep within, not from political or ideological convictions. Ultimately, said Merton, it is the person who matters: "The institution must serve the development of the individual person.... The danger is that the institution becomes an end in itself. What we need are person-centered communities, not institution-centered ones" (p. 105). This critique has significant implications for our system of schooling.

Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person does raise two or three provocative questions which it is unable or unwilling to answer. I wish the book were much longer, so that it could explore Merton's thought in relation to Creation Spirituality, transpersonal psychology, phenomenological theory, and other holistic thinkers. But this is work for others to do; Thomas Del Prete has already performed a valuable service by producing a very accessible condensation of Merton's intimidatingly prolific work.

Teaching Children Self-Discipline ... at Home and at School

by Thomas Gordon, Ph.D.
Published by Times Books/ Random House (201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022), 1989; 258 pages, $17.95 hardcover

Reviewed by Ron Miller

Thomas Gordon is the designer of Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) and its variation for educators, Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET). More than a million parents and 100,000 teachers have taken these courses, which advocate a cooperative, democratic, nonviolent, refreshingly humane approach to child rearing. As Gordon's newest book makes clear, however, even these impressive numbers are not enough: Our culture still clings to its Puritanical obsession with power and control over children's lives. *Teaching Children Self-Discipline* is the outcome of Gordon's exhaustive inquiry into American society's coercive and abusive ways of raising children. In many ways it is a frightening book, even though Gordon, in his

gentle and thoughtful way, shows that humane alternatives are available and effective. What is frightening is that so many parents and educators still do not accept these alternatives.

Gordon's approach is so sensible, so obviously in tune with what we now know about human development, and, above all, so well grounded in a deep respect for the organic and spiritual needs of young human beings, that I want to share this genuinely holistic approach with every reader of *Holistic Education Review.* But, rather than reprint long passages from this wise book in the present review, I will give only a brief outline and then insist that you go out and get the book for yourself. In fact, I think every educator should have an extra copy to pass around to parents and should seriously consider beginning discussion groups around it. I think the book is that important.

Gordon exposes the false dichotomy between "authority" and "permissiveness" by which advocates of strict discipline cloud the whole discussion. He argues that the troubling problems of today's youth—drug and alcohol abuse, criminal behavior, apathy, and rebellion—are not caused by "permissive" parenting (because American parenting is far from "permissive"!), but by the harsh repression of children's natural needs and their self-esteem. As he rightly points out, the drug problem cannot be solved by moralistically telling kids, "Just say no" when their lives are filled with pain and loneliness because the adults in this society do not respect them or listen to them. This is so incredibly obvious, but it is wholly ignored in our society's fanatic "war on drugs"!

Most parents in this culture attempt to manipulate children's behavior through external control; that is, rewards and punishments. Gordon argues that any form of external control sets up an unequal relationship in which the adults exert and desperately defend their power over children. The main thrust of this book is to refute the standard claim that adults must direct children's lives "for their own good," using whatever means are expedient. Drawing upon a wealth of empirical evidence from developmental psychology as well as the experience of PET-inspired parents, the author demonstrates that children do not need to be externally coerced in order to become thoughtful, considerate, moral members of family and community. Gordon's approach primarily aims to enhance adults' positive *influence* on children by helping us become worthy role models and friendly guides who can share our own needs and feelings honestly with kids and listen empathically to theirs. This approach successfully nurtures self-discipline in young people, and it leads to families and schools in which openness, cooperation, and democracy may truly be practiced. You must read Gordon's book to get the full scope of his insights. They are indeed inspiring.

Here, I would like to examine the aspect of the book that frightens me. Throughout most of the book, Gordon offers *empirical* evidence to show why dialogue and cooperation are better than manipulation and violence: they are simply more effective. And yet I know that such humane, democratic methods always encounter serious *ideological* resistance in this culture, no matter how well the evidence supports them. I was becoming impatient with Gordon's pragmatic arguments, and wishing he would address this resistance. At last, I was not disappointed; in chapter 10, Gordon takes the gloves off and delivers a powerful critique of the Puritanical, authoritarian tendencies of our culture. His conclusion is chilling:

> I'm tempted to make a broad generalization that much of the resistance can be traced back to a single cause—namely, an almost universal distrust of, and lack of experience with, how democratic groups function.... I've come to believe that, to most people, democracy is an unknown. (p. 224)

I find this extraordinarily frightening. Here in the nation of the Bill of Rights and the Statue of Liberty, the supposed model of democracy for the world, *we do not even know how to live democratically,* and nowhere is this more obvious than in how we are raising and educating our children!

As Gordon accurately observes, this resistance to genuine democracy is intimately connected to the Calvinist-Puritan religious views that have wielded such pervasive influence in our culture. A strong conviction that human beings are inherently sinful, a strictly patriarchical and absolutist view of discipline, and a narrow, selective reading of the Bible have given orthodox Protestantism a harsh, bleak, authoritarian approach to child rearing. Gordon displays a number of quotes from the popular author James Dobson, who claims to advocate a Judeo-Christian approach to family life. Here is one of the typically outrageous passages from Dobson's books, as quoted by Gordon:

> When a youngster tries this kind of stiff-necked rebellion, you had better take it out of him, and pain is a marvelous purifier.... You have drawn a line in the dirt, and the child has deliberately flopped his big hairy toe across it. Who is going to win? Who has the most courage? Who is in charge here? (pp. 211-212)

Gordon points out that this despotic denial of children's needs, while too often practiced in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is not necessarily what the Bible teaches us. Indeed, in Jesus' own words, we find a far different approach to dealing with children:

> Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as the little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.... Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.... (Matthew 18:3-5, 10)

Jesus taught that genuine spiritual and moral growth is accomplished through childlike innocence and wonder, through love, compassion, empathy, and understanding—precisely not through violence and willful control. Holistic educators, like Gordon, whether or not they follow the Christian tradition, teach essentially the same message. Are authoritarians like Dobson and others mentioned in the book really interested in nurturing the highest spiritual and moral capabilities of young people, or are they simply obsessed with control and authority? If they are genuinely concerned with the maturing of moral judgment, it would seem imperative that they follow the *explicit*

teaching of Jesus as well as the *documented evidence* of developmental psychology, rather than continue advising parents to coerce and manipulate and beat their children! It is this physical and emotional violence against children, not alleged "permissiveness," that is causing the tremendous pain and alienation of our youth.

But there is more to this story than a small group of fanatics who compulsively beat up on children. As religious scholar R. Scott Appleby commented in his review of two recent books on Christian schools, "Religious ideals are not held in a vacuum." The desire to control children's behavior has socioeconomic as well as religious roots; in this case, lower middle class parents who experience "a profound pessimism about economic opportunities" seek to prepare their children to "perform competently and unquestioningly in the low-paying jobs that the economy offers them as a means of subsistence"—and strict "Christian" discipline is a potent means to this end.[1] So we are right back to Gordon's concern about democracy. There apparently are thousands (millions?) of Americans who do not expect their children to participate in any meaningful way in a democratic community. That they are attracted to the advice of Dobson and his authoritarian cohorts, rather than to more democratic approaches, is a telling sign that our democracy, such as it is, is indeed in serious trouble.

Teaching Children Self-Discipline does not explore these issues in depth, because the author is more concerned with presenting a positive case for his approach. But these are exactly the sort of social and cultural problems that "human potential" or "New Age" thinkers tend to neglect, and Gordon deserves credit for bringing them up at all. In addition to presenting a truly gentle and kind approach to child rearing, this book should stimulate every reader to ponder the larger questions that are too frequently overlooked.

Note

1. R. Scott Appleby, "Keeping Them Out of the Hands of the State: Two Critiques of Christian Schools," *American Journal of Education* 98, no. 1 (Nov. 1989), pp. 62-82. The books reviewed are Susan D. Rose, *Keeping Them Out of the Hands of Satan: Evangelical Schooling in America* (New York: Routledge, 1988), and Alan Peshkin, *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1986).

Your Child's Growing Mind

by Jane Healy, Ph.D.
Published by Doubleday
(666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103), 1989; 363 pages, $8.95 paperback

Reviewed by Launa Ellison

Jane Healy provides an in-depth description of the brain/mind development of children, from birth through adolescence. Often a child's spirit and psychological strength are sapped when adults purposefully control, or accidentally suppress, the individual child for behaviors that are beyond the child's biological control. Respecting biological parameters provides the foundation for the psychological/spiritual growth of the child. Too many adults do not understand the biological determinates, figure all children "ought to" adhere to the "average" determinate, or, sadly, understand differences but believe there is one "right" way for a child to develop and grow. Healy states, "Although it now seems absurd to insist that the way a child's brain functions is irrelevant to learning, this view was (is) tacitly adopted."

Healy provides us with a new opportunity to learn and understand the children in our lives. She explains that the first area of the brain to function fully is the "reptilian brain." This brain power focuses on heartbeat, temperature, foraging for food, establishing territory, forming social groups, and so on. These basic needs, identified by Abraham Maslow, must be satisfied before higher thinking can take place. In practical terms, students need to go to the bathroom (when they need to, not when the appointed time arrives), eat when hunger distracts them, move when they can no longer sit still, and feel safe in the classroom and at home.

Next the author deals with the human "limbic system" with the resulting implications of emotional security. There are biological structures that process our emotions. These structures begin to develop prenatally and continue maturation, or myelination, for years after birth. The extremely important reticular activating system (RAS), at the top of the brainstem, plays a critical role in a child learning to "focus" on a specific input rather than randomly attending to the millions of messages each human brain receives each and every second. The limbic system also significantly impacts our memory system and therefore ought to be understood by all educators. Healy suggests strategies to facilitate and complement the positive development of the child's emotional processing, the limbic functions.

The importance of our human sensory functions, represented by half of the neocortex, is developed along with the strength of our "modalities." My brain, for example, functions well with visual or tactile/kinesthetic input. I do not process auditory input nearly as well. Yet, I am in no way brain damaged. For whatever reason, my auditory circuitry or modality is not nearly as effective as my other brain pathways. When I shop for groceries and the check-out clerk states the amount, I find I always must look at the printed total in order to write the check. I teach graduate teacher education classes but I don't "get" auditory input easily. Healy explains the differences in auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic processing and stresses the importance of sensory stimulation.

Healy clearly and accurately explains the duality of hemispheric processing. She delineates the differences in right/left thinking processes while reiterating that we are always using our whole brain. She quotes Carl Sagan as labeling the communication between hemispheres, via the corpus callosum, as "a path to the future."

The author devotes 160 pages to the "so what?" of the developing child's brain/mind system. She deals thoroughly with the complex development of language and many questions relating to IQ/intelligence testing, including the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), the first new, fully validated individual intelligence test published since the 1930s. This test, commonly used in my district, the Minneapolis Public Schools, establishes separate scores for the child's preferred learning style, be it right "simultaneous" hemispheric processing or left "sequential" hemispheric tasks.

Finally, there are pages and pages that appropriately relate learning tasks such as memory, reading, writing, spelling, math, and creativity to the brain's increasing abilities.

Healy ends her excellent resource book with the following statement:

> The child's brain has an instinctive knowledge of its timetable, but the creative mind is more than a schedule of neural connections. I hope you will accept the suggestions in this book, and your role in your child's development, as part of a greater process, never perfect, never finished. *Learning is something that children do, not something that is done to them.* You have the wisdom to guide the process but not the power to control it. Listen, watch (with understanding), have patience, enjoy the journey—and the product will take care of itself.

Launa Ellison has been teaching elementary grades since 1964. She has organized conferences, given in-service workshops, and written articles and books on brain and learning research. She is editor of **Consortium for Whole Brain Learning** *and continues to teach in the Minneapolis Public Schools.*

Resources in Holistic Education

Starting with this issue, we are rotating resource sections in order to provide more space for articles. Listings under Publications for Educators, Peace and Global Education, and Children's Rights and Welfare will appear in the Fall issue. We invite readers to send in information about additional groups and publications.

Networks and Organizations

Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (AllPIE)
P.O. Box 59
East Chatham, NY 12060-0059

A nonprofit organization to encourage and assist parental involvement in education in public and private schools and at home. AllPIE offers pamphlets, a book catalog, a newsletter, referral services, conferences, workshops, and seminars on parental rights and involvement in education.

Americans for Choice in Education (ACE)
940 West Port Plaza, Suite 264
St. Louis, MO 63146

A coalition of educators (including Waldorf and Montessori educators), organizations, and individuals who believe that government operation and regulation of schools limits genuine educational choices. ACE supports tuition tax credits and vouchers; acts to expand awareness and networking among local efforts.

Association for Childhood Education International
11141 Georgia Ave., Suite 200
Wheaton, MD 20902

A professional association that advocates developmentally appropriate curricular materials. Offers a variety of publications on educational topics, including *Learning Opportunities Beyond the School*, a comprehensive resource guide for parents, teachers, and other child-care givers that contains practical ideas for facilitating learning in multiple settings.

Association for Humanistic Education
P.O. Box 4054, University Station
Laramie, WY 82071-4054

Sponsors annual conferences, journal, and newsletter. Members include public school educators and others with a broad interest in human relations and human potential issues.

Association for Play Therapy
c/o California School of Professional Psychology
1350 M Street
Fresno, CA 93721

An interdisciplinary and international society dedicated to play therapy and child-centered approaches to learning. Play is viewed as an integral component of healing and learning. Members include teachers, counselors, health care workers, and child life specialists. Sponsors newsletters and conferences.

Cooperative Learning Center
200 Pattee Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Disseminates research and sponsors teacher training in cooperative educational methods developed by David and Roger Johnson.

FairTest
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

The National Center for Fair and Open Testing explores the problems and inequities inherent in standardized testing of both students and teachers. Publications include the quarterly *FairTest Examiner*, biannual updates on various issues, as well as several investigative reports, such as "Sex Bias in College Admissions Tests: Why Women Lose Out" and "None of the Above: Behind the Myth of Scholastic Aptitude."

Individual Education International (IEI)
c/o Bill Kiskaddon
4404 242nd Place SW
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

A network of educators who are involved or interested in the Corsini 4R method. "Individual Education" is based on the principles of Alfred Adler's "Individual Psychology" and seeks an education that is more democratic and more respectful of students. Membership in IEI includes a subscription to the *Individual Education Bulletin*.

Institute for Democracy in Education
1241 McCracken Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701-2979

Brings together educators and parents to explore how education can prepare students as democratic citizens—through democratic methods of teaching. A grass-roots organization with no political affiliation. Publishes the quarterly journal *Democracy and Education*, a newsletter, and other publications; sponsors workshops and institutes, resource center, and speakers bureau.

Institute for Learning and Teaching
449 Desnoyer
St. Paul, MN 55104

Provides training in brain-compatible education methods, assists schools and districts with decentralized decision making and staff development, and publishes the newsletter *The Brain Based Education Networker.* Also publishes *Fine Print*, a newsletter that promotes experiential learning and choice in education. (For information on *Fine Print*, contact Joe Nathan, 1852 Pinehurst, St. Paul, MN 55116.)

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215

Promotes equity in education; explores the variety of social and educational issues involved in providing quality education to all segments of American society. Publishes the journal *Equity and Choice*.

International Affiliation of Alternative School Associations and Personnel
c/o Dr. Raymond Morley
Bureau of Federal School Improvement
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

A communication network among alternative education associations, educators, and parents. Assists states and local groups in developing alternative schools, programs, and services. Advocates for all facets of alternative education.

International Alliance for Invitational Education
c/o School of Education
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC 27412

Invitational Education is a humanistic approach based in large part on the work of William Purkey. It encourages the development of human potentials through a cooperative, "inviting" educational approach that nurtures self-esteem and personal growth. The Alliance offers a newsletter, books, and other publications as well as networking, workshops, and special activities.

International Association for Integrative Education
C.P. 345, 1290 Versoix (GE), Switzerland

Explores ways for education to address the ecological, intellectual, and spiritual crises of the modern world. Seeks to "provide opportunities for personally relevant and socially constructive learning" for adults and young people.

International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education
136 Liberty St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Promotes the study and practice of cooperative methods, where students work together in learning teams, and where educators support each other as well. Newsletter *Cooperation in Education* has insightful articles and resource listings. Conflict resolution and peace education are also addressed.

Joyful Child, Inc.
P.O. Box 5506
Scottsdale, AZ 85261

A nonprofit service organization designed to awaken self-esteem, love, peace, and joy in children as well as adults through publications, workshops, an international summer camp, and educational materials. Publishes the quarterly magazine *Joyful Child*. Emphasizes that joy is the "true essence" of humanity but needs to be cultivated more carefully in this society.

Learning Styles Network
St. John's University
Grand Central Parkway
Jamaica, NY 11439

Supports the application of learning style research in educational settings. Encourages teachers to become familiar with the different learning styles of individual students, as well as their own teaching styles. Publishes newsletter, research guide, software, and other materials. Sponsors conferences.

National Alliance for Redesigning Education
Box 582
Farmington, UT 84025

Promotes an educational system that recognizes the unique individuality of people and tries to help each person develop his or her full potential. Has developed a model, "Education for Human Greatness," which incorporates recent research on learning and human potentials. Sponsors workshops, presentations, and publications.

National Association for Core Curriculum, Inc.
404 White Hall
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Promotes interdisciplinary, unified, integrated, "block-time" studies in the secondary curriculum. Conferences, publications, and films.

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

A network of people committed to fostering the healthy growth and development of children from birth through age eight. Advocates developmentally appropriate educational methods for young children. Publishes journal, books, brochures; sponsors conferences, local groups, information service.

National Association for Mediation in Education
425 Amity St.
Amherst, MA 01002

Promotes the teaching of conflict resolution skills, programs for peer mediation. A national clearinghouse for publications, curriculum guides, and information on conflict resolution programs already in action. Publishes bibliography and directory, newsletter, reports.

National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools
58 Schoolhouse Rd.
Summertown, TN 38483

A network of parent cooperatives, free schools, home schoolers. Facilitates student exchanges and travel. Sponsors annual and regional conferences, a journal *(Skole)*, and a newsletter. Has published a directory of member schools with a resource listing.

National Peer Helpers Association
2370 Market St., Room 120
San Francisco, CA 94114

Establishes effective peer helping programs in schools and agencies throughout the country.

Network of Progressive Educators
P.O. Box 6028
Evanston, IL 60204

A new organization for educators from public and private alternative, open, and progressive schools. Aims to bring together all those who identify with progressive ideas, with a focus on teachers and children's learning.

New Horizons for Learning
4649 Sunnyside North
Seattle, WA 98115

Publishes *On the Beam*, which describes the latest research in learning and thinking skills; also a clearinghouse for seminars, workshops, and ideas for applying these findings. Sponsors extraordinary conferences.

Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.
Greenfield Center School
71 Montague City Rd.
Greenfield, MA 01301

Workshops and consulting to help schools set up developmentally appropriate curriculum, based on the work of leading developmentalists. *A Notebook for Teachers* describes this approach. Send for a free newsletter.

Renaissance Educational Associates
4817 North County Road 29
Loveland, CO 80537

An international membership association of educators and parents who know that their example of creative living invites others into meaningful and purposeful lives. Publishes *The Renaissance Educator* quarterly, sponsors an annual membership conference, hosts local activities in thirty places around the world, and offers a professional leadership institute each summer.

Montessori and Waldorf Education

American Montessori Society
150 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10011

Publishes *Montessori Life* about the Montessori movement in the U.S. Also supervises teacher-training programs and accreditation of schools; sponsors workshops and conferences.

Association for a Healing Education
Box 300A, RD 1
Glenmoore, PA 19343

A network for Waldorf educators and those using Rudolf Steiner's principles of Curative Education for young people with special problems and disabilities. Sponsors conferences, workshops, publications.

Association Montessori Internationale
170 West Scholfield Rd.
Rochester, NY 14617

American branch of the teacher training and accreditation organization originally founded by Maria Montessori in 1929.

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
17 Hemlock Hill
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Directory of Waldorf schools and teacher training.

International Montessori Society
912 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Publishes *The Montessori Observer* and *Montessori News*. Offers teacher training and conferences. A network of independent schools using a broader interpretation of Montessori's ideas.

North American Montessori Teachers' Association (NAMTA)
2859 Scarborough Rd.
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

NAMTA is an umbrella organization for the Montessori movement in the U.S. that publishes a quarterly journal, parent education booklets and videos, and materials on starting Montessori programs in private and public settings. Sponsors conferences and publishes a directory of schools and teacher training courses.

Rudolf Steiner College
9200 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Two-year Waldorf teacher training, as well as adult Arts Program and an ongoing program of lectures, workshops, and courses.

Waldorf Institute
260 Hungry Hollow Rd.
Spring Valley, NY 10977

Two-year Waldorf teacher training and early childhood program, Life Forms Sculpture Program, and School of Eurythmy. Evening program and courses.

Waldorf Institute of Southern California
17100 Superior St.
Northridge, CA 91325

Offers a one-year Waldorf teacher training program emphasizing classroom experience, and an anthroposophic studies course.

Waldorf Kindergarten Association of North America
9500 Brunett Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Publishes the *Waldorf Kindergarten Newsletter*, with information on lectures, conferences and publications, and articles exploring Waldorf educational theory. Also distributes articles and information sheets pertaining to Waldorf early childhood education.

Waldorf Teacher Training Program
Antioch/New England Graduate School
Roxbury St.
Keene, NH 03431

Home Schooling

Brook Farm Books
P.O. Box 277
Lyndon, VT 05849

Features *The First Home-School Catalog* ($8.00, postpaid) and *The Home School Challenge* ($8.95 plus $1.00 postage).

Holt Associates
Contact: Pat Farenga
2269 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

National network, resource center. Publishes *Growing Without Schooling* newsletter.

Home Education Magazine
P.O. Box 1083
Tonasket, WA 98855
509/486-1351

Comprehensive coverage of social and philosophical issues in the home-schooling movement, plus practical ideas and resources available to parents and activity pages for kids. Bimonthly; $24 per year. Sample copy $4.50.

National Homeschool Association
P.O. Box 58746
Seattle, WA 98138-1746

A networking organization dedicated to strengthening the home-schooling movement. Individual membership is $15 per year. Membership includes a quarterly newsletter, access to all services (family travel program, student exchange program, apprenticeship program, resource referral service, and special interest clubs), and the opportunity to participate in the annual camp-out/organizational meeting.

Environmental and Experiential Education

Association for Experiential Education
Box 249-CU
Boulder, CO 80309

Promotes educational approaches that engage the person in outdoor adventure and hands-on learning experiences. Publishes the *Journal of Experiential Education*.

Coalition for Education in the Outdoors
P.O. Box 2000
Park Center
Cortland, NY 13045

A network of organizations, associations, agencies advocating experiential and environmental education in natural settings. Sponsors a Task Force on Research which aims to strengthen the research base of environmental education. Publishes directory, journal, newsletter.

Human Relations Skills Network for Outdoor Leaders
ACA Illinois Section
36 South State St., Suite 1818
Chicago, IL 60603

Focuses on theory and practice in human relations for group leaders in schools, camps, outdoor centers, and religious institutions. Emphasizes personal and interpersonal skills necessary for effective group leadership in experiential education. Newsletter, conferences, and workshops.

Institute for Earth Education
Box 288
Warrenville, IL 60555

Develops and disseminates focused educational programs that help build an understanding of, appreciation for, and harmony with the Earth and its life; conducts workshops; publishes a seasonal journal; hosts an international conference; supports regional branches; publishes books and program materials.

National Audubon Society Expedition Institute
Northeast Audubon Center
Sharon, CT 06069

Wilderness programs for high school and college students and adults. Students form a cooperative travelling community for year-long, semester, and summer expeditions. Academics, arts, and ecology are learned through this experiential, holistic approach. Also offers B.S. and M.S. degrees in Environmental Education in conjunction with Lesley College.

National Society for Internships and Experiential Education
3509 Haworth Dr., Suite 207
Raleigh, NC 27609

A community of organizations and individuals concerned with "the effective use of experience as an integral part of education." Explores issues such as critical teaching and empowerment, service learning, participation in community affairs. Professional development, conferences, and publications (newsletter *Experiential Education;* also *Service Learning: An Annotated Bibliography*).

North American Association for Environmental Education
P.O. Box 400
Troy, OH 45373

A professional network serving environmental educators and others involved in environmental protection. Sponsors a newsletter, a conference, consulting, and other programs. Advocates a holistic, life-long approach to environmental education.

Northern Illinois University
Lorado Taft Field Campus
Box 299
Oregon, IL 61061

Masters degree program in outdoor teacher education. Also puts out an informative newsletter.

Outward Bound USA
384 Field Point Rd.
Greenwich, CT 06830

The largest and oldest adventure-based education organization in the U.S. Programs for youth, adults, and those with special needs, in a variety of wilderness and urban settings.

Roger Tory Peterson Institute
110 Marvin Parkway
Jamestown, NY 14701

Dedicated to connecting people of all ages with their natural world. Advocates nature education for young children and seeks "to nurture lifelong curiosity, passion, and caring for wild places and wild things." Institute is a natural world learning center developing an interdisciplinary educational approach; also publishes newsletter and offers Peterson Field Guides.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science
Woodstock, VT 05091

Publishes *Hands-on Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring the Environment with Children.*

Wilderness Education Association
Box 89
20 Winona Ave.
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

Promotes the educated use and conservation of wilderness lands. Develops curriculum materials and certifies Outdoor Leaders through a month-long college-level course in wilderness areas. Publishes a quarterly newsletter and offers a Wilderness Job Referral System.

Book and Materials Publishers
(Offering catalogs filled with resources for holistic educators and parents.)

Anthroposophic Press
RR 4, Box 94 A1
Hudson, NY 12534

The most complete selection of books on Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and the Waldorf educational approach.

Bergin & Garvey
670 Amherst Rd.
Granby, MA 01033

Paulo Freire's works, including *The Politics of Education* and others; also *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education* by David Purpel; *Education and the American Dream;* and other social-political studies of education; anthropological approaches to childbirth; and other subjects.

Brown Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 539
Dubuque, IA 52001

Has published *Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Lives: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities for Building a Peaceful World* and distributes curriculum guides on global education and American social issues published by the Center for Learning. Also offers an extensive catalog of books on Catholic religious education, including works on peace education from a religious perspective.

Dawn Publications
14618 Tyler Foote Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95959

Publishes books "helping people experience a sense of unity and harmony with all life ... a deeper sensitivity and appreciation for the natural world." Titles include *Sharing Nature with Children, Listening to Nature,* and *Sharing the Joy of Nature*—all by Joseph Cornell, and *Creative Nature Visualizations* by Garth Gilchrist.

Home Education Press
P.O. Box 1083
Tonasket, WA 98855
509/486-1351

Publishes books on home schooling and alternative education, including *Alternatives in Education, The Home School Reader,* and *The Home School Primer.* Also publishes *Home Education* magazine. Free catalog of home-schooling books—thirty titles by more than twenty different authors.

Hugs for the Heart
P.O. Box 85
Rainbow Lake, NY 12976

Offers a catalog listing games, books, puzzles, recordings, and other learning materials that encourage self-esteem, imagination, global and ecological awareness, and fun. Also, books on home schooling and sensitive child-rearing.

Interaction Book Company
7208 Cornelia Dr.
Edina, MN 55435

Publishes books, videos, films, and monographs on the cooperative learning methods developed by David and Roger Johnson at the University of Minnesota. Includes theory, research, and practical aplication of cooperative learning.

IRI Group, Inc.
200 East Wood Street, Suite 250
Palatine, IL 60067

Instructional Resource Catalog lists books and materials on cooperative learning, whole language, critical and creative thinking skills, and the STARS substance abuse program.

Jalmar Press
45 Hitching Post Dr., Bldg. 25
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-4297

Resources for teachers, parents, and children on nurturing self-esteem, peace, and creative (integrating right and left brain) learning and thinking. Catalog includes important works by Jack Canfield, Barbara Meister Vitale, and Bob Samples.

Michael Olaf
The Montessori Shop
5817 College Ave.
Oakland, CA 94618

Offers an extensive catalog of learning materials based on Maria Montessori's "prepared environment" for the child from birth through age 14. Also lists children's books, children's tools for household chores, music and art materials, and books for adults. Detailed descriptions aid in planning home-school curricula.

Mountain Meadows Press
P.O. Box 447
Kooskia, ID 83539

Has recently published two books of interest: *The Interactive Parent: How to Help Your Child Survive and Succeed in the Public Schools* by Dr. Linwood Laughy, and *Home School: Taking the First Step* by Borg Hendrickson.

National Women's History Project
7738 Bell Rd.
Windsor, CA 95492-8515

Catalog features curriculum resources, reference books, publications for children, and other materials that focus on a multicultural approach to women's history.

New Society Publishers
Box H
4527 Springfield Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Books on peace and nonviolent social change, including several titles for educators and young people.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor St. West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6, Canada

Titles include *The Holistic Curriculum* by John P. Miller and many works on Canadian education, French (and English) as a second language, and classroom activities. OISE also publishes several education journals.

Research for Better Schools
444 North Third St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

A private, nonprofit educational research and development firm. Latest listing of reports is "Teaching Thinking: A New Focus for Education," which highlights publications on critical thinking, writing, problem solving, and how to develop thinking skills in the classroom (including catalogs of resources and materials).

Resource Publications, Inc.
160 East Virginia St., #290
San Jose, CA 95112

Books with emphasis on cooperative ac-

tivities and communal celebrations, both for families and for educators. Recent titles include *Learning to Live Together at Home and in the World* and *Making Art Together Step-by-Step.*

Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.
135 Katonah Ave.
Katonah, NY 10536
800/336-5588

Reading programs and classroom materials fully devoted to a child-centered, meaning-centered, Whole Language approach—including "Ready to Read," the innovative national reading program of New Zealand. Also offers a large selection of professional and staff development titles to acquaint educators with Whole Language theory and methods, as well as in-service workshops. Publishes the quarterly newsletter *Teachers Networking: The Whole Language Newsletter.*

S.A.L.T. (Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching)
P.O. Box 1216 Welch Station
Ames, IA 50010

1989 International Resources directory contains listings of workshops, books and curriculum materials, periodicals, and other resources related to accelerative learning (based on the Lozanov "superlearning" approach, which uses relaxation techniques and other non-traditional methods). $10.

Sudbury Valley School Press
2 Winch St.
Framingham, MA 01701

A series of books and booklets that describe day-to-day life at an innovative alternative school, as well as the radical child-rearing philosophy which guides it. Current titles include *Free at Last, The Sudbury Valley School Experience,* and *Child Rearing.*

SUNY Press
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246-0001

Current catalog "New Visions for a Distinguished Profession . . . Education" includes several titles of interest, including *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Teaching* by Donald W. Oliver.

Teachers College Press
Teachers College, Columbia University
1234 Amsterdam Ave.
New York, NY 10027

A long list of important titles includes books by Douglas Sloan, an important writer in holistic education, and Betty Reardon on peace education.

University of the Trees Press
Box 66
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

Learning materials for teaching the whole child, including step-by-step books full of photos and illustrations, and tapes that teach children visualization and meditation.

Zephyr Press
430 South Essex Lane, Dept. N7B
Tucson, AZ 85711

Bi-annual newsletter on issues "at the forefront of education and learning." Lists many relevant books and curricular guides for sale, and includes networking information.

Upcoming Conferences

Various dates and locations
"Whole Language in the Classroom"

A four-day workshop conducted by Richard C. Owen Publishers, a leading distributor of whole language materials. Explains the child-centered, meaning-centered approach which has been adopted by the public schools of New Zealand. For teachers and administrators. Graduate credit available.

Contact: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc., 135 Katonah Ave., Katonah, NY 10536. 800/336-5588.

June 21–23; Athens, Ohio
"Teaching for Democracy: Classrooms of Community and Commitment"
Third annual Democracy and Education Conference

Seeks to draw together teachers, university faculty, parents, and students who are concerned with the role of public education in empowering democratic citizens.

Contact: Institute for Democracy in Education, 119 McCracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701-2979. 614/593-4531.

June 24–29; Boulder, Colorado
"Discovering Authenticity"
Third annual Intensive on Contemplative Education

Through an education which fully develops our personal awareness and environmental appreciation, teachers and children can wholly respond to the richness of educational encounters. Speakers include M.C. Richards, Maureen Murdock, Dee Joy Coulter, and Alice Renton.

Contact: The Summer Office, The Naropa Institute, 2130 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302. 303/444-0202.

June 25–30; Wallingford, Pennsylvania
"Sources of Renewal for Educators"

A retreat for all educators held at Pendle Hill, a Quaker center for study and contemplation.

Contact: Irene Ramsay, Pendle Hill Extension, Wallingford, PA 19086. 215/566-4507.

June 25–August 3; Seattle, Washington
Summer Intensive for Teachers
Courses on learning styles, global and multicultural education, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, adult learning, and more.
Contact: Antioch University-Seattle, Masters in Education Program, 2607 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. 206/441-5352 ext. 39.

June 27–July 1; Palo Alto, California
"Choice: A Gateway to Golden Opportunities"
Annual alternative education conference, exploring issues and possibilities in public alternative programs. Featuring William Glasser and Joe Nathan.
Contact: Tyra Seymour, 73-110 Amber Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260.

June 29–July 8; New York City
Center for the Study of Learning and Teaching Styles, 13th Annual Leadership Institute
Developing educators' abilities to identify students' and teachers' individual styles, to create programs that expend and match their styles, and to redesign classroom environments to respond to learning style differences.
Contact: Center for the Study of Learning and Teaching Styles, St. John's University, Grand Central and Utopia Parkways, Jamaica, NY 11439.

July 2–6; New York City
"The World's Children: Building Their Tomorrows Together"
XIIth World Congress of the International Association of Workers for Troubled Children and Youth
A major conference to facilitate international awareness and understanding of young people's needs, and to encourage constructive activities that improve the well-being of young people in conflict throughout the world. Over 100 workshops for educators, child care workers, counselors, administrators, and others. Distinguished presenters include (among many others) Dr. T. Berry Brazelton speaking on "Stresses and Supports for Families in the 90s." This is an opportunity to dialogue with dedicated practitioners from all over the world.
Contact: Arlin E. Ness, Congress Chairman, Starr Commonwealth Schools, Starr Commonwealth Rd., Albion, MI 49224. 517/629-5591.

July 2–August 9; Washington, D.C.
"Educating for Global Citizenship: A Peace and Conflict Resolution Institute for Elementary and Secondary Teachers"
The purpose of the institute is to enable educators to prepare their students for global citizenship. Develops skills in creative conflict resolution and creating curricula. Special topics include South Africa, the Middle East, and environmental conflict. The group will spend one week in New York, with special programs at the United Nations.
Contact: Adrienne Kaufmann, School of International Service, American University, Washington, D.C. 20016. 202/885-1622.

July 5–10; Baltimore, Maryland
"Cooperative Learning: Skills for Today, Skills for Tomorrow"
International Convention on Cooperative Learning
Sessions will explore the connection between cooperative learning and thinking skills, staff development and support systems, district and school change, classroom implementation, and research.
Contact: Mid-Atlantic Association for Cooperation in Education, c/o Neil Davidson, Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction, Benjamin Bldg., University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

July 5–7 and July 8–14; Fort Collins, Colorado
"True Education: Drawing Forth the Ecstasy of Being" and "Summer Concordia: A New Order of Leaders"
During the July 5th conference, Renaissance Educational Associates founder Alan Hammond will speak on the vital need to infuse daily living with the highest human values. The July 8th conference will focus on leading-edge thinking and practical skills for professionals in various fields who seek to refine the quality of their leadership.
Contact: Renaissance Educational Associates, 4817 N. County Rd. 29, Loveland, CO 80538. 303/679-4309.

July 7–15; Lake Tahoe, California
July 21–25; Williamsburg, Virginia
National Training Institute
For educators, concentrating on cooperative learning, whole language, and critical and creative thinking. Conducted by leading experts in these fields.
Contact: Illinois Renewal Institute, Inc., 200 East Wood St., Suite 250, Palatine, IL 60067. 800/922-4474 or 708/991-6300.