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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.

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American culture in the 1990s faces a turning point between two dramatically different alternatives: We can either attempt to maintain the competitive, materialistic values of the industrial age, or we can work toward a society that is more cooperative, democratic, and ecologically sane. At present, industrial-age values continue to dominate public consciousness, while the new culture is familiar to only a relatively small group of rebels and pioneers. The mainstream news media continue to focus attention on the demagogic posturing of politicians, the self-serving decisions of corporate elites, the outrageous salaries and antics of athletes and entertainers, and huge lottery jackpots — but those of us on the growing tip of the new culture know that the fate of humanity depends on the emergence of another set of values altogether.

It is becoming clear that the materialism and greed of the modern age have nearly ruined the planet's ecosystem, and have brought about an unconscionable disparity of wealth, opportunity, and basic human rights — not only within the United States, but between the industrialized nations and the rest of the world. Our technocratic institutions do not truly serve human needs: schools are stultifying; social services are desperately insufficient; medical techniques are uncaring and, for many, prohibitively expensive; and those defeated in society's competition are

EDITORIAL

Education and the New Society

production and profit — and at the same time nurture the inner life of the human being. It cannot remain enthralled by technology and its power to manipulate nature — and still hold a genuine reverence for life. A culture is either fundamentally materialistic or life-centered, either technocratic or democratic. Thus the dominant values of modern American culture serve to frustrate rather than promote healthy human development.

But across this land, in small pockets of dissent and hope, people are building the foundations of a new society — a society that will be genuinely humane, democratic, and ecologically healthy. Consider the many grass-roots movements that have emerged in recent years:

The bioregional movement and the Greens, EarthFirst!, and Greenpeace, ecofeminism, social ecology, and the burgeoning animal-rights movement all represent a growing awareness that we must rediscover a sense of reverence for the Earth and its life. Thousands of people are turning to revitalized spiri-

ture has sanctioned. Consider the increasing popularity of natural and home birth, as well as the emerging consciousness of children's rights, and the dramatic growth and organization of the homeschooling movement; these are powerful examples of people reclaiming their humanity in the most essential aspects of their lives.

Consider, too, the "CoHousing" movement, founded on a desire to live in community rather than in smug suburban isolation, and the growing popularity of intentional communities. Consider the phenomenon of citizen diplomacy and other nongovernmental global initiatives, and the field of "organization transformation," and the increasing popularity of organic foods, and the many exciting publications that have started just in the past several years (*New Options*, *In Context*, *Yoga Journal*, *New Age Journal*, *The Quest*, *Creation*, *ReVision*, *New Realities*, *Holistic Education Review*, and many others). In all of these developments, we have the seeds of a new society.

Despite great diversity, these movements also share some common principles. They are grounded in a deep respect for life and for natural growth; they value diverse human potentials, creativity, and individuality. They are egalitarian rather than authoritarian, and they attempt to reach group decisions through democratic participation, if not consensus. They are concerned primarily with humane values such as compassion, simplicity, peace, friendship, caring, and love — and are not obsessed with material gain, economic self-interest, or competition for social status. They value personal responsibility within the context of cooperative community.

Holistic education is an integral part of this emerging new society. The ideas and practices described in this journal reflect these humane, democratic, and ecological values. We need to see our work in this larger context; the future of holistic education is linked to the fruition of this new culture. The task before us is nothing less than to build a democratic society on the basis of humane values and a reverence for life. We in education must work hand-in-hand with others committed to this great cause. Already, profound and inspiring efforts at such cooperation are being made on a global scale. Holistic educators — no matter

The task before us is nothing less than to build a democratic society on the basis of humane values and a reverence for life. We in education must work hand-in-hand with others committed to this great cause.

herded into overcrowded prisons. The developmental needs — and the basic human dignity — of millions of children are neglected or denied by a culture that is obsessed with materialism, "success," and military and economic superiority over other nations.

A culture cannot have it both ways: It cannot be obsessed with wealth and

tual teachings that offer a renewed sense of meaning, community, and love — and a new passion for peace and justice. Thousands of other people are turning to more holistic, more nurturing ways of healing their physical and emotional wounds, and in the process, they are breaking the cycles of dependency and abuse that the dominant cul-

what their particular backgrounds or loyalties to particular methods — need to join these cooperative efforts. The old culture of technocracy will not simply fade away; it is going to take a lot of work, and a lot of organization, to replace the dominant values of the industrial age with the new values of an ecological age.

This organization will need to take place on more than one level. At a primary level, groups such as the Network of Progressive Educators, the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, and the National Homeschool Association recently have succeeded in bringing together thousands of educators and parents who previously worked in isolation. These groups provide forums for like-minded people to learn about one another's work through newsletters and conferences, and to learn from one another's experiences. This is important work,

and I encourage readers to join these or other appropriate groups.

At a more planetary and visionary level of organization is the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE). This coalition, less than a year old, has the potential to become a powerful voice for all life-affirming educational practices throughout the world. Its aim is to represent our vision at the highest levels of national and international dialogue on education. Every holistic educator should join and support this effort, regardless of membership in any other network, because holistic education needs this strong, unified voice. If we continue to speak in fragmented voices and express only our own parochial concerns, then the dominant culture will continue to trivialize our ideals, and we will remain on the margins of the culture that much longer. We need a strong common voice, and GATE is that voice.

There is yet another level of cooperation that we will need in order to build the new culture. Educators need to work with environmental activists, with spiritual movements, and with social justice and children's rights advocates. Education is not merely a matter of pedagogical methods or a concern for developing the potentials of individual learners; in a truly holistic sense, *education necessarily involves critical issues of health, ecology, politics, spirituality, and community.* Neither holistic education as a movement, nor any of its constituent groups, will meaningfully endure if the new culture fails to emerge. If the technocracy succeeds in stifling those who work for the environment or for justice and peace (and in many ways it is trying to do exactly that), then society will move every closer to fascism, and in such a society there will be no place for holistic education — as Montessori and Waldorf educators discovered in World War II Europe. Unless we build a more democratic, person-centered, life-affirming new culture, our holistic educational methods will ultimately prove pointless.

We face a crucial historical watershed. It's here — right now, today. Let us recognize this poignant fact and, accordingly, work together with all who share our vision of a renewed planet.

— Ron Miller

Organizations

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

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

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

Global Alliance for Transforming
Education (GATE)
4202 Ashwoody Trail
Atlanta, GA 30319

For other organizations, see the *Guide to Resources in Holistic Education*, available at \$2.00 per copy from Holistic Education Press, 39 Pearl Street, Brandon, VT 05733-1007.



Photo by Joel Brown.

A Global Framework for Local Education

by Joel Beversluis

As we enter this last decade before the year 2000, many of us are increasingly conscious of both mind-boggling crises and relentless change. But we are also learning that crises contain not only danger, but also unprecedented opportunities for change. We seem to be at a point in time where circumstances are creating a nexus, a convergence of factors that is without precedent in history. What the future holds will be determined in great part by how well we as a species use this opportunity to think and act in new ways.

We cannot escape the awareness that these growing crises have the potential to cause enormous ecological and social conflict here and throughout the world. The list of threats and danger signals is common knowledge. We hear about the population bomb, toxic dumping, conventional or nuclear war and nuclear "winter," greenhouse overheating, species extinction, as well as the daily news reports of crimes of hate and greed. Technology cannot "save" us, but it seems rather to exacerbate the problems. We are realizing that, despite our material "progress," the human species is threatened most by its own inner decay and moral inertia.

Nor is the arena of education exempt from both crises and opportunities. With an eye on changing global and local realities, but also looking at the potential of the vast education systems, a growing number of educators and concerned citizens have new expectations for schools. As often happens, we are once again asking educators to shoulder burdens society as a whole hasn't managed to resolve.

It seems only common sense that in order for us and earth's ecosystems to survive gracefully, we humans must radically change our ways. But, we may well ask, Is there any hope? Is it possible for the species to change so substantially that we can stop and reverse the damage we are doing?

Think globally, Act locally

Through reading, travel, conferences, and activism, I have observed that growing numbers of people worldwide do have this hope. Furthermore, they have committed themselves to assisting in the process. There are others, from many countries, who base their determination to act responsibly not on hope or

Joel Beversluis lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he works for an academic book publishing company. He is a board member of the Institute for Global Education whose newsletter he edits. He has also written a journal titled The CoNexus: Seeking the True Meaning of Peace through Ecology, Politics, and Spirituality.

A growing number of people around the planet are adopting a global, holistic perspective for addressing the severe ecological and political challenges of the 1990s. This perspective emphasizes human rights, respect for cultural diversity, and a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the planet.

on the expectation of success, but on a strong altruistic sense that at least they must do the right thing. Many people have no need for theories about global thinking but are busy doing what needs to be done.

Beyond the borders of self-interest.

The necessary changes are possible though by no means certain — because the opportunities to think globally and act locally surround us. Each person who works for the well-being of others is engaged in altruism that, when applied on a large scale, can change the face of the world. The teacher who recycles and teaches ecological values is envisioning a better future, and the investor who chooses socially responsible funds is acting within the context of global needs. Each student with a pen-pal across the planet is learning empathy; those who nurture trees and reduce the impact of civilization on tropical forests are counteracting environmental disaster; and each child who cares for a pet is learning to think and act beyond the borders of self-interest. So it is, through the little things of life, that momentous changes can come.

The scope of the crises and the responsibility to create change can, however, be intimidating, pushing us back toward a narrow focus on self-interest. Or we doubt our impact: Does it make any difference what I think or do?

But we can also gain strength from the knowledge that we are not alone in this venture. When we look closely, we find that empowering and transformative ideas are emerging from that point of convergence where crises and opportunities meet. We are, many observers believe, in a nexus — a focal point where history can, and, in fact, must change course.

An emerging worldview

The ideas and people engaged in that process of change are pioneers of what appears to be an emerging global worldview. Becoming familiar with that array of helpful ideas and the large numbers of well-motivated people is highly energizing. It can counteract our doubts and push us beyond self-interest, so that we initiate changes of our own. The best energy in any transformative process flows not from ideas and knowledge, but through us when

we engage in the response (action) and reflection which must follow study. Any real change in consciousness must include deliberate action, and the only way we can act is locally.

Can a new global worldview really help us survive the crises that threaten? The answer encompasses many different perceptions, hopes, and sometimes conflicting beliefs, but the question does, nevertheless, demand our attention. If the answer is in any way yes, then it seems clear that educators can and must play important roles in the process. But before we address the role of education, what do we mean by an emerging global worldview?

The view from outside. At the most basic, primal level, we recognize our relatively new perception of the earth as a planet floating in dark and empty space. The colorful NASA photos of our bright blue-green planet have forever changed the image that comes to mind when humans think of the earth. Since the first space flight, more

History in-the-making happens before our eyes. We celebrate the good news and suffer the bad, together, as a family, in ways that have no precedent.

than two hundred men and women from eighteen nations have looked at the earth from the outside, and come back with changed perceptions. Sultan Bin Salman al-Saud of Saudi Arabia noted that

The first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were all pointing to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one Earth.¹

The human family. International travel, communications, and the media emphasize the commonalities among us. From our living rooms we see Chinese students and Polish babushkas, and our media and lifestyles cross their borders. History in-the-making happens before our eyes. We celebrate the good news and suffer the bad, together, as a family, in ways that have no precedent.

Common threats to our security.

The motivations for global thinking are not only political, economic, or philosophical. All members of the human family are facing common threats to our well-being. Furthermore, the drive for our own survival and that of our children runs deep within us. In every human heart, life impels us to survive; it may well be prodding us now to overcome hostilities and suspicion so that we can focus on the new crises that we face together.

Nations united. The manner in which nations relate to each other is changing through the proliferation of political treaties, trade agreements, multi-national corporations, and humanitarian gestures. Since its inception 45 years ago, the United Nations has worked as a forum for the resolution of international disputes. Even more important, however, is its role of planting the seeds of global cooperation in the fertile soil of international policy.

Holistic thinking and a paradigm shift. The intriguing concept of an emerging global worldview is sometimes characterized by the word holistic, because global thinking pertains to every part of our lives and world: our creativity and energy, our economics, religions, health, recreation, celebrations, political affiliations, and our interpersonal relations.

A paradigm shift is the change in perceptions that becomes necessary when a growing body of facts or theoretical knowledge no longer supports existing worldviews. Not all prior knowledge is abandoned, of course, when paradigms shift. Whatever remains workable is kept, though such knowledge may be re-interpreted or may take a complementary role. Now, as new ways of thinking about our relationships to life and earth are needed, the holistic, global worldview



Photo by Jennifer Lloyd, courtesy of Spectrum School, Rockford, Illinois.

represents the profound shift in thinking that seems both necessary and inevitable.

Revitalizing education for a new world. Circumstances and numerous advocates are demanding that our educational systems evolve into forms that will help our societies face the challenges of the future. Among the many demands are a few that relate directly to the need, among teachers and students, for global thinking. Primary among these is the demand that educational objectives transcend the accumulation of facts, the learning of skills, and even the preparation for work and life in the world *as it is*.

Rather, at its best, education will assist, like a midwife, in the transformation of the mindsets — the consciousness — of students, and thus change their relationships to the world. This education is for the world as it should be. Our world is in trouble; it requires radical solutions, brought about by new ways of thinking that are neither conservative nor liberal. It is becoming imperative that society and the systems of education create agents of change.

Think radically. Why do we need radical thinkers? In many ways, including environmental, social, and moral, we live in a wasteland. How many students recognize that our dominant commercial culture has spread a toxic mindset? What were once considered vices have become our culture's virtues. We are told, and we tend to believe, that the good life means acquiring, having, and disposing of things; we believe that competition is the best way to meet our highest good — self-interest; and we prefer to believe that we Americans have *enlightened* self-interest. In fact, however, our actions often betray that we value *having* things over *being* human.

When we accept this toxic gospel as individuals, it leads to personal and social traumas, particularly for children and for the earth. In the corporate world, the doctrines of individualism and self-interest lead to great profit for some and to growing unemployment and poverty for others; and, in the context of profit-dominated decision making, the earth suffers greatly. On the international level, the United States and other developed

countries often cloak corporate and strategic self-interest in a flag, creating rationales for old-fashioned imperialism in what we think are our backyards. And global militarism has created the biggest consumers and least responsible polluters of all.

There is a great cultural and spiritual emptiness in the dominant culture, particularly in the United States where I live. Why else would we give so much of our energy and value to passively watching professional sports and commercial entertainment? Why else do I look to reggae and Latin American music, to Arabic pita bread and Chinese restaurants? Aren't we, in fact, hungry for spiritual meaning and a new cultural character when we look to traditional family values, to Native American traditions, to Eastern philosophies, to mythology, or to a new, holistic paradigm? Even religious awakenings, whether fundamentalist or New Age, and environmental and political movements express our great need to restore meaning and to clarify values in the wasteland of the dominant culture.

which may be taught within existing subject areas as well as through new, inter-disciplinary studies. Those components are derived from the following general principles.

The ecological worldview. Much has been written about the reductionist and linear worldview that has made science and technology possible, yet has also substantially contributed to the industrial and social disasters we face. An excellent article by Edward T. Clark and W. John Coletta, *Ecosystem Education: A Strategy for Social Change*, describes its values as individualism, nationalism, free enterprise, unlimited growth and progress, and competitive achievement. Readers will recognize these values as pervasive throughout our cultural and educational systems.²

The counterpoint to that worldview, the ecological worldview, is more ancient, found in many traditional cultures, yet is also more complete and up-to-date. It is now returning with new force to science, the social disciplines, and especially to environmental studies because of its holistic, systemic approach, and because of its

Common Future, the World Commission on the Environment and Development applies sustainability to resource use, economic development, and environmental impact. In this application, *sustainability means development for the current generation which does not cut off the opportunities for equal development by all future generations.*³

This fairly simple standard requires a discipline that neither businesses, governments, or consumers have mastered. It is quite clear to all who care to look that current patterns of consumption, resource use, and environmental degradation are not sustainable for future generations.

Human rights — Beyond the borders of self-interest. The new constitution of Namibia declares that every child has the right to a name. A United Nations declaration states that everyone has the right to nutrition, clean water, and shelter. Other statements move beyond such primary needs and rights into personal freedoms and protection from torture and abuse. Some documents — obviously coming from the more fortunate corners of the world — go so far as to talk of the rights to equality, peace, justice, education, access to resources, the development of individual potential, and the pursuit of happiness. Though we take these rights to be self-evident and inalienable, by many standards across the planet, they remain luxuries.

Most people will claim these rights for themselves, but not all in our society and government are committed to them for everyone else on the planet. A global worldview will acknowledge that *all* human beings have the same basic needs, rights, and fundamental aspirations; furthermore, the global worldview suggests that we do not need to compete for these rights, but can most effectively guarantee them for ourselves and others through cooperation and respect for the uniqueness of others.

Future generations also have rights, though we tend too easily to disregard them. Nevertheless, we would be wisest and most protective of the rights of our grandchildren (and theirs) if we routinely questioned the impact of our decisions and actions on generations to come. With this future-focus, sustainability becomes a part of the

At its best, education will assist, like a midwife, in the transformation of the mindsets — the consciousness — of students, and thus change their relationships to the world. This education is for the world as it should be.

If we perceive the task of education as preparing students for this status quo, for the dumping grounds of our exploitive, industrial societies, that is what the world will get from us. But if we can transform our own mental maps to envision a worldview that has as its goal the establishment of a sustainable global society, humane culture, justice for all, and true peace, that is what our students will see and what we will create in our institutions.

Education with a global worldview

In addition to the broad goals and contexts described above, global education can have specific components

widely applicable principles. Its values are derived by scientists of various disciplines — biologists, chemists, and anthropologists, among them — through observation of the characteristics of successful ecosystems. What clearly works best throughout natural systems — including human societies — are the fundamental principles of interdependence, diversity, cooperation, equilibrium, and limits.

Sustainability. Among the ecological principles that we have ignored is the fairly straightforward concept that systems must be sustainable if they are to thrive. In a very important report from the United Nations, *Our*

social contract among humans, an obligation that should be as operative as the Bill of Rights and civil rights legislation.

Peace studies and conflict resolution. As we look at the causes of conflict in many parts of the world, we see that the implementation of universal human rights constitutes the only sound basis for establishing true peace. Within the classroom as well as in society, peaceful relations cannot be built upon injustice or despite conflict. Mediators, from children on the playground to principals to international diplomats, need theory and practice to develop the skills of conflict resolution. Peace making, like wars and their history, can be taught as a legitimate course of study.

Multiculturalism. *New Options* newsletter, edited by Mark Satin, promotes a humane, ecologically sustainable, and democratic world. The June 1990 issue described a series of 20 interviews with prominent advocates of multiculturalism. All agreed on one premise: Multiculturalism will make each of us, this country, and this world a better place to live. Satin claims that multiculturalism may be the next great social movement of our time. If so, if indeed any social movement is to be great, it must have at least these objectives: (1) It must embrace and even celebrate cultural diversity, and find that complexity enriching; (2) It must identify the connections between pluralism and the justice issues, including racism and group

even our educational systems suggest that people are inadequate unless they fit into the dominant culture. And racism is expressed in numerous and subtle ways.⁴

New cosmologies. Closely tied to the ecological worldview are descriptions of the character of the cosmos that see all systems of life, matter, and energy as interconnected in many subtle and profound ways. Physicists since the early 20th century have known that Newtonian physics don't work in either the macrocosm or in the microcosmic world. Its mechanistic premise that matter is made up of disparate entities, and, by extension, that we are also separate from each other and from our world, is a dysfunctional worldview.

Physicist Fritjof Capra, in *The Tao of Physics*, describes the new world of quantum physics as follows:

In contrast to the mechanistic Cartesian view of the world, the worldview emerging from modern physics can be characterized by words like organic, holistic, and ecological.... The universe is no longer seen as a machine, made up of a multitude of objects, but has to be pictured as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood only as patterns of a cosmic process.⁵

Theories such as the Big Bang hypothesis attempt to describe the observation that our universe is continually expanding, but they also raise questions of cosmic proportions: expanding from what? and what does

explosion that occurred some 15 to 20 billion years ago. We are all one! Western science has followed in the footsteps of the Eastern mystics-psychologists and paved the way for a truly unified worldview — one that is leading us out of the mechanistic age and into the information age, into interdependence and cooperation.

Learning from traditional wisdom.

Dr. John Taylor, Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, reported at the conference *Seeking the True Meaning of Peace*, held in Costa Rica in 1989, that indigenous peoples must be seen not only as victims of European and colonial conquest, exploitation, and genocide, but also as our partners in facing our common crises. Based on their wisdom and experience with the earth, they are equal participants in the solutions, with much to offer the present and future.

Dr. Taylor described points of commonality among traditional peoples, including the knowledge of natural and effective medicines, and similar spiritual traditions. However, the primary commonality among traditional cultures is the worldview that they are caretakers of the earth. Throughout history indigenous peoples have seen themselves as just one, integral part of the natural systems. Consequently, they have tried to act for the long-term, mutual benefit of humans and the living systems of earth. We must therefore learn from them, Taylor declared, to revitalize our understanding of the proper relation between humans and the earth.

Traditional wisdom of the indigenous peoples, attributed to Chief Seattle, has also been taught in other forms by mystics from other traditions.

All things are interconnected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the people of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

It is most intriguing that these same concepts are confirmed by post-modern physics and the earth sciences, as well as by pragmatic observations of the ecological realities of our life together on this planet.

Dr. Taylor also suggested that we repent of our Western arrogance about how we can fix everything.

A global worldview will acknowledge that all human beings have the same basic needs, rights, and fundamental aspirations.

antagonisms, militarism, and economic injustice; and (3) It must recommit our culture and our people to enhancing each other's well-being.

The opposite tendency, "monoculturalism," has many unhappy results. We have repressed ethnic vitality and history. Immigrants and minorities have given up their identities for the Anglo/Northern-European image. The media, economic pressure, and

that have to do with human life and consciousness? Phil Gang, a creator of global education materials, gives one answer in the pages of *Holistic Education Review*.⁶

The most immediate connotation is that it must be expanding from a singular origin. That is, the universe had a common beginning, and all of us and everything we see, touch, smell, and know are further articulations of an

Rather, we should first learn the error of our ways from those most affected by our mistakes. We can also learn much from people like the aborigines of Australia and Native Americans, often led by women, who are taking the lead in showing the way to peace. Such wise ones are most able to show us the violence and pain suffered by humans and by the living earth.

May serenity resound. One such woman is the venerable Ugowiyuhi Dhyani Ywahoo, Clan Chieftainess of the Etowah Cherokee Nation. A radiant woman, Dhyani was trained and is encouraged by her people to teach the ancient traditions and prophecies of her people; she presents them

mother? Dhyani also spoke of a persistent calling in the subconscious mind of our species like an archetype or racial memory, or perhaps it is the voice of the Life within us — whispering in the hearts of all, like the ceaseless prayers of a grandmother for clean water for her grandchildren.

In the classroom

Worldviews in a pluralist society. Is it not time for the community of educators and educational publishers to recognize that the respectful study of diverse cosmologies, value systems, and religions has a legitimate and even necessary place in the curriculum? Public education has too easily

connections between ecology and development, between justice issues and economics, between personal worldviews, habits, and global realities. The wonder of it all is that seeing the connections stimulates engagement with the issues, creates new understanding, and empowers learners to respond creatively.

Creativity and response-ability. Among the most profound capabilities of humans is the capacity to create. Our ability to synthesize information, feelings, and beliefs, our manipulative dexterity and technical capacities, and our power to formulate new and pleasing structures is indeed remarkable. But when we look at our technology and its environmental impacts, when we see military machines designed for massive death, and when we see the impact of greed on systems of life, we see that we also have great creative capacity to destroy. Nevertheless, by means of our capability to observe our creations and correct our relationships, we also have a unique ability to respond to familiar and distressing situations in new and different ways.

Consequently, these fundamental lessons bear repeating in all of our institutions, but particularly within classrooms:

- Creativity, skill, and opportunity usually take place in ethical contexts, with ecological consequences.
- We cannot afford to leave responsibility in the hands of governments or businesses, but must, as individual inhabitants of the planet, carry our share.
- The *sense of responsibility* is a quality that can be nourished through interdisciplinary knowledge combined with the deliberate development of compassion.
- The empowerment that must accompany the sense of responsibility can develop only through personal engagement with the issues and with the subjects of our empathy and altruism.

Values for a possible future. Within most school systems the possibility of teaching values touches very sensitive territory. In a pluralistic society, whose values shall we teach? Or should we just encourage students to clarify their own, based on their experiences and varied influences? We

The assumption that all matter and therefore all disciplines can be reduced to discrete components has been one of the major failures of education, science, and philosophy over the last several hundred years.

as the wise ones among her nation have always shared their medicines and foods as gifts of the heart. One of the old prophecies now fulfilled is the beginning of a new 500 year cycle. In this tradition, generations now living are the seeds that need much love and prayer to stimulate new growth and new ways of living.

Dhyani Ywahoo also described how energy spirals down from heaven and flows up from earth creating life, and that heaven and earth meet within us. She described our double-bind: we see what is right, but we are addicted to the things that make life easy and luxurious. Dhyani's words reminded me of an apt description of our carelessness: "The great offense of the bourgeois (middle class) mentality is taking things for granted."

To cure that disease, the chieftainess prescribed a special medicine called "appreciation" — the gift of an appreciative heart that can help heal the illusion that humans have dominion over the earth, our mother, for who would try to exploit their own

ignored them, even though they are integral to the understanding of world history, of traditional and contemporary cultures, and of the history of science. We have done this to maintain the separation of church and state and to avoid offending minority viewpoints, yet in ignoring the many religions and value systems, we have denied the heart of pluralism itself: the paradox that we humans have great cultural diversity, yet are essentially interconnected and interdependent.

Drawing the connections. As we look at the variety of topics raised in the class of ideas loosely described as a global worldview, it becomes clear that the topics and issues do not exist in isolation. Indeed, the assumption that all matter and therefore all disciplines can be reduced to discrete components has been one of the major failures of education, science, and philosophy over the last several hundred years. The problems we face and the opportunities for new ways of thinking and acting require interdisciplinary study. We must draw the

cannot simply ignore the topic, because mindsets and values are always operative in human interactions. We are always voting with our time, energy, or money, and all of our choices reflect the meanings and values we live by. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of our cultural values shapes our world and future, so let us not be shy about clarifying them and acknowledging their impact. Indeed, let us try to transform those that are problematic and affirm new ones based on principles derived from the convergence of our best philosophical, religious, and scientific thinking.

Are there universally acceptable principles? The preceding discussion about crises, opportunities, the ecological worldview, personal responsibilities, and values — what I've described as an emerging global awareness — provides a context for global education within our school systems. The *Declaration of Human Responsibilities for Peace and Sustainable Development* (printed in the Winter 1990 issue of *Holistic Education Review*) is a more detailed statement of principles, developed for presentation to the United Nations and the world community for our reflection and action. The Declaration is a significant and sophisticated attempt to identify universally acceptable principles for our human community, based on our rich traditions, experience, and wisdom, yet also considering changing global circumstances and the requirements of the ecological systems of the earth.

Educational objectives. In addition to identifying principles and responsibilities, the Declaration is increasingly regarded, by an international community of innovative educators, as a framework for the development of global curricula. The University for Peace is now developing a project based on a set of educational objectives derived from the Declaration. The Global Education Program for Peace and Universal Responsibility assumes that the overriding mission of education for the present and future generations must be to provide

the insight, knowledge, and skills necessary to consciously and deliberately create a healthy vision of the future we desire, and to make that vision manifest.

The educational objectives are designed to foster in individuals their capacity to:

- Comprehend the interdependent nature of the Universe, in which all living beings depend on one another for their existence, well-being, and development.
- Accept the fact that human beings are part of nature, upon which human culture and civilization have been built.
- Understand the sustainable functioning of natural systems and their importance for the maintenance of life itself, and recognize that every manifestation of life on Earth is unique and essential and therefore must be respected and protected without regard to its apparent value to human beings.
- Recognize that all human beings belong to the human family, and that we depend on one another for our existence, well-being, and development.
- Value each human being as a unique expression and manifestation of the creation, with her/his personal contribution to make for the development of life on Earth.
- Accept that all human beings (a) are the beneficiaries of fundamental and inalienable rights and freedoms; (b) have the same basic needs and the same fundamental aspirations for their fulfillment; and (c) are the beneficiaries of the right to development which seeks to promote the full potential of each person.
- Recognize that responsibility is an inherent aspect of any relation in which human beings are involved. As an inalienable creative personal quality of every human being, there is no limit to its scope or depth, and it grows and derives strength through involvement in activities.
- Develop the qualities of altruism, compassion, love, and creativity as the

basis of a sense of universal responsibility towards the world as a whole.

- Understand the crucial nature of the alternatives facing humanity at this critical time in history, as a basis of discernment of personal responsibility to orient one's conduct towards peace and sustainable development.

- Develop a sense of responsibility and capacity (a) to think and act in a peaceful manner, and to voluntarily live with simplicity, geared to the fulfillment of the necessary conditions for health and personal development; (b) to act in a manner consistent with the observance, respect, and promotion of those rights inherent to all human beings, and to gear one's consumption of natural resources accordingly, thus contributing to the ability of all human beings to fulfill their basic needs; and (c) to act in a rational manner to assure a sustainable life on the planet.

- Foster one's personal capacity to participate with solidarity in an active and creative way in all the social organizations to which one belongs, for the purpose of contributing to the development of collective responsibilities for the achievement of peace and sustainable development.⁷

The Declaration concludes with these words: Let us be faithful to the privilege of our responsibility.

Notes

1. Kevin Kelley, ed., *The Home Planet* (New York: Addison Wesley) 1989.
2. James C. Coomer, ed., *Quest for A Sustainable Future* (New York: Pergamon) 1981.
3. U. N. World Commission on the Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Available from Palais Wilson, 52, rue des Paquis, Ch-1201 Geneva, Switzerland, and from the United Nations).
4. *New Options*, issue no. 68 (Available from New Options, Box 19324, Washington, DC 20036).
5. Fritjof Capra. *The Tao of Physics* (New York: Shambhala) 1976.
6. Phil Gang, "The Global-Ecocentric Paradigm in Education," *Holistic Education Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1.
7. Abelardo Brenes, *Global Education Program for Peace and Universal Responsibility* (GEPUR, University for Peace, Box 199-1250, Escazu, Costa Rica).

Falling in Love with the Subject

Rhythm and Romance in Education

by Diana Cohn and Charlie Hutchison

The lack of attention to the rhythm and character of mental growth is the main source of wooden futility in education.

- Alfred North Whitehead¹

Unless the eye catch fire
 The God will not be seen.
 Unless the ear catch fire
 The God will not be heard.
 Unless the tongue catch fire
 The God will not be named.
 Unless the heart catch fire
 The God will not be loved.
 Unless the mind catch fire
 The God will not be known.
 - William Blake

The Earth is full of rhythms — the rhythms of day and night, of the moon and tides, of the seasons, and of life and death. There are the organic rhythms in the human being — of sleeping and waking and of breathing in and out. And there are the more delicate rhythms of learning — of active searching, of quiet pondering, and of taking ideas apart and putting new ones together. Awareness of rhythm in the classroom, in the child, and in oneself is the key to being an effective educator.

In 1984 the authors of this article were colleagues in a small Waldorf-inspired school in rural Maine. In addition to being influenced by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Waldorf school movement, we were very much inspired by the ideas of the process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. Seven years later, after working in both rural and urban classrooms, our teaching is still strongly influenced by Whitehead's far-reaching ideas.

Whitehead was essentially a holistic educator. At the core of his pedagogy was the notion of rhythm and the belief that growth is a continual sequence of overlapping and interlocking cycles. In his book, *The Aims of Education*, he wrote:

Life is essentially periodic. It comprises daily periods, with their alternations of work and play, of activity and sleep, and seasonal periods.... There are also subtler periods of mental growth, with their cyclic recurrences, yet always different as we pass from cycle to cycle....²

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Alfred North Whitehead's "process" philosophy describes a three-stage rhythm in learning: romance, precision, and generalization. "Romance" — the initial stage of interest, discovery, and passion — is a vital part of the learning process, but it has been neglected by conventional schooling.

Whitehead named the components of his threefold learning cycle romance, precision, and generalization. The cycle is rhythmic because the alternating dominance of each of these stages is what facilitates growth. Different times of the day, different times in life, and different stages in an encounter with new knowledge all require different approaches from the teacher. Whitehead insisted that the first meeting a student has with new material must be one that inspires love or awe in the student's heart. After this feeling has taken hold, disciplined work is required in order for skills to be obtained.

In the first stage, then, there is exploration without systemization: experience with adventure and freedom. Whitehead wrote:

The stage of *Romance* is the stage of first apprehension. The subject matter has the vividness of novelty; it holds within itself unexplored connections and possibilities, half disclosed by glimpses and half concealed by the wealth of material.³

In the *precision* stage, skills are acquired through the discipline of practice and experimentation. No amount of love of music will produce a concert pianist unless he or she practices the scales, but as Whitehead pointed out, "A stage of precision is barren without a previous stage of romance."⁴ Virtuosity without passion makes for a very dull concert.

In the last stage, *generalization*, there is "a return to romanticism, with the added advantage of classified ideas and relevant technique. It is the fruition which has been the goal of precise training. It is the final success."⁵ Whitehead spoke of the joy of romance returning in the generalization phase, firing anew the cycles of novel interest and research.

In the first stage of learning the child must be able to see, act, and explore by him or herself. When the discipline of precision is imposed before the romance stage has been allowed to run its course, interest is stifled and learning loses its joy. It is the passionate nature of the romance stage that energizes and supports movement through the difficult and often discouraging precision stage (e.g., learning the scales). Romance

allows the creative impulse to come forth from the child; precision is the discipline necessary to channel creativity into form. Generalization is the beginning of active wisdom — growing glimpses of the whole.

One should not make the mistake of imagining that the term *romance* relates only to personal feelings, such as joy and excitement for the learning at hand. In addition to instilling these important feelings in students, a teacher must try to develop the students' awareness of beauty, harmony, and balance, and an understanding of their connectedness with the world. When romance, in the sense of *reverence*, is at the core of an educational process, it can lead a child toward a genuine understanding of inner self and one's place in the flow of culture and history.

Although Whitehead wrote *The Aims of Education* more than 60 years ago, it might well be asked: Can his theory be useful for the teacher of the 90s? We think it can. In *Writer's Workshop*, in mathematics using concrete manipulatives, in elementary school social studies, and in junior high

school uses in the world, and (c) they are given the chance to test their thinking and actions against real and important issues and values. When there is a balance between romance and precision (freedom and structure) in children's learning, romance leads to initiative and precision leads to self-discipline.

Romance in writing

One can find Whitehead's learning cycle in the underlying philosophy of the *Writer's Workshop* (sometimes known as *Writing Process*), an integrative method of teaching writing now widely used throughout this country and others. The *Writer's Workshop* approach allows young children to write about experiences that have meaning for them and in which they have an interest. As Whitehead said, "interest is the *sine qua non* for attention and comprehension."⁶

Sam, a first grader in Maine, was writing a piece about his pet rabbit who scratched with his teeth. Sam was very excited to be sharing his story and was determined to figure out how to "make it real" by writing it

When the discipline of precision is imposed before the stage of romance has been allowed to run its course, interest is stifled and learning loses its joy.

school science, the efficacy of this approach to teaching has reasserted itself to us over and over again. At all ages and with all subjects, it has been our experience that children learn best when they are engaged through their whole selves with the matter at hand — when they are drawn thoroughly into the subject through the joy of their hearts *before* being asked to apply disciplined precision in their thinking and doing.

No matter what the lesson, we have found that children are more alive and open to learning — and their involvement (and discipline) is greatest — when (a) the lesson appeals to their reverent imagination and sense of wonder, (b) they know themselves to be practicing skills that have admira-

down. Sam especially wanted help with that strange *th* sound. Because of his intense interest in his rabbit, learning the skill became a joy rather than a chore. After completing his first draft, Sam reread his piece as an editor: The precision stage had begun. He circled words he thought "looked funny" (misspellings) and added periods and capital letters where he thought they belonged. Not all of Sam's "funny" words were in fact misspelled, while others, not circled, were.

Many teachers intuitively know the importance of sensitivity in pointing out skills to a child, but Whitehead systemized this approach. At the romance stage, it is important not to overload children with grammatical corrections, but rather to validate the

choice of story content and point out ways that the content might be expressed more fully. Only then can the precision stage begin, with young children gently introducing elementary spelling and grammar lessons and older children continuing the same more vigorously.

The precision stage was not over for Sam. After revising his piece to sound just the way he wanted, and correcting the grammar, he then had to illustrate his book. He spent two writing sessions on his illustration. Finally, he shared his completed book with the class. Sharing was the culmination of the process, the "final success." The book became part of the classroom library, and the joy that came from completing it and the validation of a life experience fired Sam's desire to write another piece.

As the Writer's Workshop continues and deepens over the school years, children continue to gain knowledge about the mechanics of writing and the many different styles with which they can experiment. Through their involvement in their own creative writing process, they begin to read other authors with a more critical eye and to model their own writing styles on authors they admire. With this approach to writing, the romance stage is allowed to run its course. Thus, when the precision stage is introduced, the children's motivation to learn these skills is linked to their enthusiasm for the content of the writing itself.

In the Writer's Workshop, children draw on their own life experiences (highly significant and "romantic" to them), or on their own imaginative creativity, as the basis for learning written communication skills. Not surprisingly, teachers at all grade levels report that motivation problems are either absent or much reduced. The child who owns his or her own story will be far more interested in perfecting its presentation to the world than the child working with sentences drawn piecemeal from a textbook.

Romance in math and science

Whitehead's threefold learning cycle also can be utilized in teaching math. One skill required of first graders is to be able to sort and classify

objects. Many of us grew up with textbooks that attempted to "teach" this "skill" by picturing a number of objects such as square and round things, which we were asked to sort by type. Today's textbook manufacturers know a thing or two about motivation, so furry and sweet have replaced round and square, but such seductive appeals should not be confused with romance. The romantic is always an appeal to our sense of what is truly good or important, not to the gratification of our fleeting desires. Furthermore, by pre-directing the

math shelf and began to distribute them to a group of five children. She became the storekeeper and "sold" the buttons to the others. During this game the children decided on the worth of the buttons according to their size, color, texture, shape, and uniqueness. The skills of classification and sorting emerged naturally from the children's own imagination and experience. Sorting was no longer an arbitrary intellectual process, but something in which they were passionately interested. The game, of course, had additional virtues in that



Photo by Peggy Solomon. Courtesy of Little Red Schoolhouse, New York City.

child's choice of categories, the textbook precludes any possibility of imaginative or creative categorization by the child: Reality is wholly imposed from without.

One afternoon Diana set a box of buttons of all shapes and sizes on the floor of her first-grade classroom for the children to play with and observed what happened. Nadejda immediately took the plastic money coins from the

it "practiced" money management and cooperative decision making.

Some such exercises sometimes happen spontaneously, as this one did; others have to be set up by the teacher. Although some structure is necessary to focus the learning process, the more specific the instructions and the more inflexible the materials, the less opportunity there will be for the children to use their greatest pow-



Photo by Peggy Solomon. Courtesy of Little Red Schoolhouse, New York City.

ers: invention and romantic immersion in the world. The aim of the textbook is to “teach” a “skill” whose acquisition can be assessed quantitatively at a later date. This goal has nothing to do with real life classification, which is not a skill but a “discovery” — a search for pattern and relationships. We classify because doing so enables us to understand, make meaning, and communicate about our perceptions.

There are no right or wrong ways to sort buttons. One child was more interested in the number of holes in the center than in the color or shape. What is important in this kind of exercise is to validate the classification system that the children invent and to make this the basis of further precision or skill work. Ultimately, two skills are important: the skill of accurate observation (the color, size, shape, texture of the buttons) and the skill of flexible classification (some

buttons can belong to more than one category). The more the children create these lessons from their own imagination, the more they will be interested in and retain the skills they are learning.

Imagine a junior high school science class of fifteen students sitting on the floor of a tiny office in total darkness. The windows have been blacked out with thick cardboard, and the cracks under the door have been sealed. The students are squashed together on one side of the room facing the wall on the other side. Behind them, a thin, almost invisible beam of light shines through a small aperture cut in the cardboard covering the window. They have been told to stay out of the way of the beam and to watch the wall opposite the aperture.

Outside the room, on the other side of the window, an assistant teacher and three students are practicing a

dance routine in the sunshine. They face the covered window of the office and wave their hands and feet in that direction. They cannot see into the room, and the students inside cannot see out.

Inside, the students are restless. Their eyes have not yet acclimated to the darkness, they can see nothing. Someone sits on another’s foot and evokes a grunt of protest. Someone else feels a hand on her and shrieks. There is a lot of giggling and back-chat: everything one might expect from fifteen children squashed together in a dark room. Minutes pass, still no one can see anything. Some students begin to ask why they are there; others seem to have forgotten that there might be a reason. After about four minutes someone calls out in astonishment, “Hey look at those shadows on the wall.” Everyone looks at the back wall, and soon they all can

make out strange moving shapes dancing across the wall. There is a lot of noise as everyone expresses a reaction.

"Are they really shadows?" Charlie asks, during a lull in the excitement.

"No," says Syreeta, "You can see their faces and the writing on her tee-shirt! Hey that's Kenitra, [giggle], and there's Jerry! Hey, man, [suddenly very serious] this is weird!"

The students are inside the "camera obscura." What they are seeing on the wall is a clearly defined image (upside-down) of Jerry and the three dancing girls on the other side of the covered window. The image is not very bright, but by looking closely, the expressions and all of the movements made by the dancers can be seen projected onto the wall. The students are inside a giant pin-hole camera watching the events outside the room displayed on the rear wall of their "camera," through the agency of nothing more elaborate than a small hole in the material covering the window. There is no lens, no shutter, no "black-box," nothing fancy or complicated to come between the perception that the students are sharing and their ability to conceive of how such a thing could come about. This extraordinary experience allows students to test both their reasoning powers and their conceptions of what light is and how it behaves.

The "camera obscura" is an example of an experience that can be used to bring romance to a subject that might otherwise be abstract and dry. In the three times that one of the authors set up this experience (twice for junior high school students and once for science teachers), there was not a soul who didn't come away astounded by what he or she had seen and bursting with questions about how it could have happened.

Although the physical basis for this phenomenon is quite simple to understand, it is important to avoid explaining it to the students. The point is to get them to examine the evidence of their senses and to create and challenge the hypotheses that occur to them. This latter process requires considerable discipline and can be very frustrating, because students always want to be told "the

answer." It is the romance of that initial experience, the feeling of awe in the presence of something truly amazing, that can carry a student through the precision stage.

The romance of this experience is very different from that involved in the Writer's Workshop, in which it is the student's personal attachment to the subject (e.g., love for the rabbit) that engages his or her imagination. The romance of the "camera obscura" is the romance of pure thinking, the experience of something truly unexpected coupled with the belief that it can be understood rationally.

The imaginative link

Elementary school students do not have well-developed conceptions of cause and effect: Although they are continually taking things apart to find out how they work, their interest is practical. It primarily has to do with the concrete understanding and mastery of their environment, not the formulation of abstract hypotheses. Elementary students are far more interested and attuned to issues of justice, beauty, and heroism than to ideas for their own sake. Thus, these issues become the ideal medium for instilling interest in the world in preadolescent children.

In order to enhance the development of these feelings and to help students feel linked to people and events they need to know about, we have woven biography and myth into the study of science, history, and geography. The personal identification with real or imagined heroes and villains, from Harriet Tubman to Hernando Cortez and from Pythagoras to Marie Curie, gives students an imaginative link between the subject of study and their own lives. It makes the subject their own and hence romantic in just the same way that writing about his rabbit made learning the *th* sound a more personal experience to Sam. It also has the highly significant effect of providing insight and role models for all of the moral and emotional issues and dilemmas that every child faces or will face in life.

The interest in practical mastery and in moral values *does not* diminish in adolescence, nor is "logical thinking" completely out of place in the

younger grades. Rather, the emphasis is a matter of balance and rhythm. Younger children are far more affective than they are cognitive, so we should place an affective accent in the melody of activities we compose for them in school. When adolescence opens up a new cognitive maturity, the accent and the melody should shift. Romance may then be induced through the beauty of ideas themselves, as illustrated by the junior high school students' responses to the "camera obscura."

Most educational systems tend to stress precision, which is certainly an important feature of any educational structure. We, on the other hand, have dealt primarily with the first of Whitehead's three stages: the need for children to fall in love with the subject in some way. For education to be holistic, precision must be interwoven in constant rhythmic cycles with the romance of which Whitehead spoke. However, romance does not imply merely providing children with "fun" experiences. It entails children making the subject their own by making a deep connection inside themselves between the subject at hand and some issue of importance or beauty in the world at large. As educators, we must facilitate a process that enables our students to find meaning and beauty in the world around them and hence aspire to those qualities within themselves.

For true learning to occur, learning that is meaningful in both a practical and a spiritual sense, children must experience the balance between freedom and structure in their education. When romance *becomes* initiative and precision *becomes* self-discipline, then the capacity for generalization, which is the incorporation of romance and precise skill, will lead children to undertake their own creative work in the world.

Notes

1. Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (1929; rev. ed., New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 17.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Creative Teaching

Education as Science and Art

by David W. Anderson

Undoubtedly, several factors contribute to the frequent debate about teaching as art or science. I remember, from the early stages of my training, how some of my professors tried to establish in my thinking the notion of education as a science. The scientific method was presented as applicable not only to learning theory and investigation, but also to teaching theory and practice. Much of this came in the wake of the application of behavioral theories to education and the consequent emphasis on precisely stated objectives, measurement, and accountability. Educational jargon was amended to include terms and concepts adapted from both scientific endeavors and industry, for example, analyzing and sequencing tasks, counting and charting behaviors, management by objectives, systems approaches, and programming.

I also remember being unconvinced that teaching is as cut and dried, as predictable, as is depicted in this teaching-as-science view. I respectfully listened and dutifully learned what was being presented by my professors, but I remained somewhat skeptical that human beings and the dynamics of teacher-learner interactions could be reduced to the simplicity of stimulus and response. I remember echoing in my mind the remark of at least one professor that, as a future educator, I was as much a scientist as those who work in a chemistry or physics laboratory. Nevertheless, the reductionist view that accompanied the use of behavioral "technologies" in the classroom left me with an uneasy feeling that something was missing.

Twenty years and a great many behavioral objectives later, my dissatisfaction continues with behavioristic reductionism and a purely scientific approach to working with children and youths, particularly those whom we regard as exceptional learners. This is not to say that there is no scientific basis to education or to the methodologies we employ. Nor is it to imply that there is no need for research into educational aspects of human development, into neuropsychological components of learning and development, or into teaching methodologies and materials. Teaching-as-science does refer to that impressive and still broadening knowledge base. The competency statements

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Creative teaching involves a careful balance of *art* — an open sensitivity to the needs of the individual and of the moment — and *science* — a disciplined observation of the effects of our practice. Effective teaching requires cultivation of the teacher-learner relationship, allowing each person to be fully present and active in the encounter.

identified by schools of education, state certification boards, and regional and national accreditation groups are often built from this teaching-as-science concept. All teachers, we hope, from kindergarten through graduate school, are able to demonstrate at least minimal competence on such lists of skills.

But such a view fails to capture the "big picture" — like seeing the trees but missing the beauty of the forest. I submit that those who are competent in the science of teaching but who lack the artistry of teaching may be only marginally effective in positively influencing and shaping the cognitive, affective, and spiritual life of children. By the artistry of teaching, I refer to its creative and imaginative aspects. Like the artist who, from an empty canvas, a blank paper, an unformed lump of clay, a piece of driftwood, or a melodious phrase, can create something of beauty and wonder through utilizing his inner vision and skill (artistry) — so the artist-teacher uses her medium, her teaching skills and teaching self, to see the vision of what her students can become, and sets out to help them further their development as persons of beauty and wonder. This artistry enables the educator to adapt her methods and materials to the uniqueness of her students; to solve creatively the problem of encouraging Johnny to move from here to there in skill development; to explore with Jane new ideas, concepts, information, or experiences that will challenge her to learn, to experiment, to risk reaching out and restructuring her understanding of the world, to question, and to wonder. This certainly goes beyond the scientific skill of analyzing a task and presenting to the child a series of facts — often presented and learned in isolation from the real, practical world, and in a way that dampens the child's interest and enthusiasm rather than encouraging it. Elsewhere I have discussed the importance of the imagination to the education and development of children.¹ This article explores the artistry of teaching and underscores the importance of imagination for the teacher.

The science of education

Nicholas Gage clearly expounded upon the scientific basis of education.²

Beginning with the rationale that scientific endeavor deals with knowledge about relationships among variables, Gage explained how the scientific basis of teaching involves the relationships that exist between what a teacher does and what the student learns. The *independent variable* includes

ingredients of "good teaching" is clear and, as a teacher-educator, I *am* concerned that my students develop these techniques. But it is equally obvious that these elements focus solely on the teacher as an "educational mechanic," as if, by the teacher's expert demonstration of

We need to remember that our students are complex individuals who vary in experiential background and ability to profit from that experience; in learning style and abilities; and in educational or developmental needs.

teaching practices; the *dependent variable* involves students' achievement, attitudes, and behaviors. In short, the scientific aspect of teaching focuses on the mechanics of the teaching act: how to organize a course, plan a lesson, manage a class, question students, provide corrective and performance feedback, evaluate performance, and so on.

As with any science, there is a growing body of literature on this scientific basis of education, often referred to as *effective teaching*. A summation of this body of knowledge is provided by Davis and Thomas, who include the following in their list of characteristics of effective schools: an academic atmosphere, high expectations, a safe and orderly environment, high rates of academic engagement time, emphasis on the basics, good classroom management, and monitoring of student progress.³ Davis and Thomas reviewed the research demonstrating the link between these factors and improvement in student achievement, behavior, and attitudes — consistent with Gage's notion of showing relationships between variables. According to the evidence available, effective teachers begin and end lessons promptly; provide clear, sequenced instruction at a lively pace; organize and structure the learning experience/activities; maintain efficient, automated routines; and insure that an adequate success rate (90 to 100%) is maintained.⁴ That these are essential

these techniques, *schools, classrooms,* and lessons will run more smoothly. This narrow view fails to consider the student's contribution to the teaching-learning act, and the relationship between teacher and learner.

Much of the research into effective teaching has come on the heels of the nationwide criticism of American education. Most of this research has focused on directly observable and measurable behaviors to enable the collection of precise data for statistical analysis. There are, however, certain weaknesses or limitations to this approach — not the least of which is that education deals with human beings who bring with them a host of intervening variables not amenable to scientific control. Just as applying the reductionist approach of behavioral theory and analysis leads to too simplistic a view of teaching and education, so too does an overemphasis on the mechanics of effective teaching. Both hold to the assembly-line model of schooling, dwelling more on the "product" and on "quality control" than on enabling or encouraging students to strive toward their full potential in all domains. The objectivity promoted by such analyses of teaching and education allows the educator to maintain distance from the process — in the same way that labeling individuals according to their differences (real or imagined) becomes a "distancing phenomena."⁵ Teachers can easily use this thinking to distance them-

selves from the outcomes of formal education, claiming that the fault for those who have failed to learn is with the raw materials (the students) rather than with the craftsmen (the teachers).

We need to remember that our students are complex individuals who vary in experiential background and ability to profit from that experience; in learning style and abilities; and in educational or developmental needs. Neglect of these differences and reliance on the reductionistic approach leads to viewing children and education as "closed systems." Samples' comments are to the point:

Control is the primary concern of closed system thinkers. The most closed of the psychological theories, behaviorism, is totally committed to control.... The bankruptcy of behaviorism is that it is anti-evolutionary. Its fundamental outcome is the preservation of a narrow and specialized kind of conformity and sameness. It designates the parent or teacher as the administrator of a technique rather than a dynamic player in an open-ended process of evolution within the brain-mind system.⁶

I am not suggesting that outcomes are not important, nor that teachers do not need to be concerned with accountability. But teaching — educating — is not simply increasing the number of facts a student has at her or his disposal. Many young teachers have the mistaken notion that a cookbook approach is what really matters in the classroom. That is, they are overly concerned with the mechanics of "how to do it." Perhaps this view is fostered by the structure of many teacher-training programs, which move the prospective teacher through a series of "methods" courses, usually among the last to be taken before student teaching and often called "professional education" courses. An overemphasis on techniques can foster the belief that rigid adherence to those skills shown to be characteristic of effective teaching is all that is necessary for success in teaching. Novice teachers, seemingly driven by concerns such as, "How do I teach such and such?" or, "How do I get Johnny to do this or that?" appear to be seeking a general instruction manual — a Betty Crocker teaching cookbook complete with recipes by

which to structure their teaching and guarantee success. Our correspondence with graduates during their first year of teaching often reveals a feeling of unpreparedness to deal with some area of the curriculum or a particular classroom situation. They suggest restructuring or adding courses to our program to emphasize areas in which the new teacher feels less prepared.

Hopefully, this indicates that our graduates recognize teaching as more involved and complex than they first thought (many seem to approach teaching naively), and that they recognize the need to continue their own learning. However, this attitude also suggests the belief that there exists a precise set of "how-to's" to follow in teaching that apply to every child, everywhere. Perhaps if we were

pacings and reinforcement, but to help students to learn, develop, and mature — and to encourage them in their pursuit of personal excellence.

It seems more important that teachers begin by asking questions such as, "Why am I teaching this? What is it that I would like these particular students in my charge right now to learn? What will it do for them? Why is it important for them to learn it? Why will this help Johnny or Suzie or Algie to grow and to live a more personally satisfying and productive life?"

At the beginning of an advanced curriculum development course that I teach, I ask my students to write what they believe a graduate of the public schools should "look like," then challenge them to consider whether the curriculum they follow seems to lead



Photo by Jennifer Lloyd, courtesy of Spectrum School, Rockford, Illinois.

simply teaching reading or mathematics or science, this would be possible. Perhaps if teaching were no more involved than speaking into a tape recorder, this would be so. In fact, we are teaching live human beings. Our task is not simply to present sequentially arranged content with proper

toward that end. Very seldom have these graduate students ever addressed these questions before; very often they admit that there is neither an obvious nor a strong connection between what they teach (and the way it is taught) and what they view the purpose of education to be. Yet

without acceptable, valid answers to the "why" and the "what" questions, there is no need to consider "how" to teach. Perhaps these are questions that require responses before any attempt is made to restructure American education. Once the teacher has adequately (and honestly) answered questions such as these, his or her creative attention can be directed toward developing interesting and innovative ways to arouse and capture students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Accentuating the mechanics of teaching also has the danger of leading to a dry, unstimulating classroom approach that emphasizes facts and often fails to engage students actively in learning. Frequently, students in such a situation fail to see the relevance of what they are being exposed

connection of the learning to real life. One wonders how many of those who are achieving high grades in school can be considered truly educated persons or are merely walking trivia buffs!

The art of education

None of the above is to argue against there being a scientific basis for teaching or for assisting student teachers to develop skill in the competencies judged to be needed for effective teaching. However, I believe there is more to being an effective teacher than simply mastering those skills. The human element (on the part of both teacher and students) may make it impossible to fully analyze effective teaching in a way that would enable us to mass produce effective teachers. (A dozen years of helping to prepare

hypothesis testing, but these "scientific" activities must be guided by creative and imaginative artistry.

The scientific basis of effective teaching acknowledges that students must be active if true learning is to occur. This notion of activity, however, must not be limited to physical action as in manipulating materials, searching through library sources, or creating a product of some kind. Active learning also needs to be understood as responsive learning; the student's total involvement or investment in learning, including not just the cognitive and physical aspects of self, but the affective and spiritual as well. True learning is that which is most meaningful to the student and entails a sense of excitement, wonder, even pleasure — despite the effort that might be required as part of the learning experience.

Why is it that many preschool children enjoy "playing school," but soon after beginning in the grades, lose that joy and playfulness? As a youngster, my daughter would bring home from school on Fridays the week's worth of worksheets, often so many that the staple could hardly pass through the entire stack. Although this raised questions in my mind about the type of teaching that was going on in her classroom, it seemed to be perfectly acceptable to my daughter. She appeared to enjoy school despite what seemed to be a boring routine of page after page of dittoed work papers. By the time she reached high school, however, her pleasure in schooling had diminished considerably. I cannot help wondering if the dryness of the classroom, coupled with the questionable attitude she reported several of her teachers manifested toward students and teaching, had finally sapped her interest in what the school had to offer. None of my children have experienced any significant learning difficulties, but if good students are being turned off by much of what currently passes for teaching, what of those who do have academic problems, either because of officially recognized disabilities or because of environmental or cultural differences?

Gage spoke of teaching as an instrumental or practical art that "departs from recipes, formulas, and

Active learning also needs to be understood as responsive learning: the student's total involvement or investment in learning, including not just the cognitive and physical aspects of self, but the affective and spiritual as well.

to. Consequently, many become bored and "tune out," thus presenting the teacher with discipline problems. The classroom, with its diversity of personalities and experiential backgrounds, and its myriad of interactions, has the potential to stimulate much positive growth and development in all domains (cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual). Instead, it fills with stagnation as teachers depend on workbooks, ditto-masters, "canned" materials, and teachers' manuals. Although classroom materials and texts are attractively packaged, they may fail to involve the students beyond the cursory level, particularly if the teacher is reluctant to stray creatively from the programmed format of the package. Students may not be led to invest themselves in the learning activity or may do so only "for the grade" because they are unable to see the

college students for the teaching profession has convinced me of this!)

The science of education refers to the mechanics of teaching (the specific teaching competencies) as well as to the subject matter itself (the knowledge base). But teaching also involves an artistry, which centers on the teacher's ability to present material creatively and captivantly. Gage maintained that education is an "instrumental, practical art" (as opposed to one of the "fine arts").⁷ Artist-teachers stimulate their students' thirst for learning in order to engage in the learning process. Artist-teachers recognize problems their students may have in grasping the material or concepts being presented, and work with the students, often in imaginative ways, to overcome these problems. This requires that teachers be keen observers of student behavior and adept in problem solving and

algorithms" and "requires improvisation, spontaneity, [and] the handling of a vast array of considerations of form, style, pace, rhythm, and appropriateness."⁸ Rubin explained the artistry of teaching as involving "(a) the choice of educational aims that have high worth, (b) the use of imaginative and innovative ways to achieve these aims, and (c) the pursuit of their achievement with great skill and dexterity."⁹ The essential dimension of artistry, in Rubin's view, is the

presented to the students, and models interest, playfulness, and pleasure in learning, it is likely that the students will be similarly inspired and approach the new learning experience with equal animation. Says Rubin, "Imagination gives birth to the uniqueness, idiosyncrasy, and personalized style which are the wellspring of artistry."¹¹

Artist-teachers do not need to be convinced of the importance of the teacher-learner relationship; they

than a yearning for graduation to bring an end to schooling.

The ecological perspective reminds us that teachers are as much a part of the learning environment as the materials, textbooks, and students themselves. Teachers must use themselves along with the curriculum and methodology to establish a warm and loving, open and honest relationship with their students. In this way, the classroom avoids becoming a sterile, cool atmosphere in which noninvolvement is paramount. It is doubtful whether a person can truly *teach* his or her students without first establishing a personal relationship with them. It may be possible to *instruct* students in certain skills without this relationship — even an impersonal teaching machine or computer can do that. But education is more than simply imparting a sequence of skills to children.

The use of computers as teaching tools has increased in the past decade. Among the advantages of computers are their novelty in presenting information and tasks to be accomplished, the activity of the screen characters, and the interaction of computer program and computer user, including the provision of immediate performance feedback. Computers are helpful in developing higher order thinking skills, and the interactive element makes computers more highly desirable than reams of inanimate dittoed worksheets. If not used judiciously, however, the absence of *human* interaction can limit their overall value. A child cannot have a relationship with a machine.

Children are human beings and, as such, need interaction and involvement with other human beings — both their peers and sensitive, caring adults. A positive teacher-learner relationship addresses that need. Real teaching, real learning, exists within that relationship — within a life context. The relationship of teaching involves continuous interaction between adult and student in which each assumes an active and responsive role as learner (and in which either may become the teacher). Artist-teachers view both their students and the teaching-learning process as a joint venture, an open system in which there is always the potential for continued growth.

***R*ather than distancing themselves psychologically and emotionally from their students, artist-teachers enter the learning experience with them, becoming models of enthusiasm and imagination in the quest for knowledge.**

teacher's ability to use unexpected opportunities to their fullest: "to capitalize on the ripeness of the moment ... to temper a plan, precipitate serendipity, or exploit chance situations when they occur." Rubin cited four primary attributes of teachers who have attained the highest level of artistry in teaching: the ability to make teaching decisions intuitively; a strong grasp of the subject matter coupled with a perceptive understanding of the students themselves; assurance of their own competence and the expectation of success in their teaching; and being "exceedingly imaginative."¹⁰

I wish to stress this last point. For students to be engaged actively and responsively in learning requires that they make a total investment in the activity or experience. Teachers need to present their subject in a way that entices students to become so involved. The more creative and imaginative the teacher is in selecting educational goals and ways by which to achieve these goals, the more likely that the students' emotions will be stimulated and their curiosity aroused so that they are ready to become involved — to "jump in with both feet." If the teacher is excited and enthusiastic about what is being pre-

intuitively know that relationship to be crucial. Rather than distancing themselves psychologically and emotionally from their students, artist-teachers enter the learning experience with them, becoming models of enthusiasm and imagination in the quest for knowledge. They create learning opportunities and situations that attract and engage the students' minds. By appealing to the imaginations of their students, and presenting information in a creative way, teachers help their students become more enthusiastic about and involved in what they are learning. Teachers, by becoming more spontaneous and creative, may also become more attractive to their students and viewed as more human and approachable.

Through their own involvement and interest in learning, and their free use of imagination, artist-teachers become models for learning and educational risk taking. As a result, learning becomes more personalized, more a part of the learner, making one better able to understand and integrate the information being dealt with into one's cognitive, affective, spiritual self. Students may develop more openness to becoming educated and acquire an attitude of lifelong learning, rather

Conclusion

A few years ago, I visited a school in London, England, for students with physical disabilities. I was amazed at the artwork that adorned the halls of this school, all of which had been created by the students. After meeting their talented and energetic art teacher, and participating in a seminar/workshop which she taught, I understood how these severely disabled students were able to create such masterpieces. Not only was their art teacher creative and highly motivating as she involved herself with the children in their work, she also was highly imaginative in what she envisioned the children as being able to do. The disabling conditions of her students only seemed to challenge her to greater imaginativeness. She saw no limitations in her students, only their creative potential as student-artists. Her classroom contained the usual assorted art supplies: construction paper, drawing paper, crayons, watercolors, oil paints, tempera paints, drawing pens and pencils, and modeling clay. But her room also was packed with objects liberated from rubbish piles and "throwaways" from numerous establishments. She found uses for old clothing, scraps of material, a discarded wind-up phonograph, pieces of lumber, and so on.

By granting free rein to her own imagination, this artist-teacher (herself an artist) stimulated excitement among her students, many of whom had severely limited movement. As an example of her creativity, she rolled a piece of paper into a tube of about eight inches in diameter, fastened it to the old phonograph, set it on slow speed, and allowed it to rotate. This was for use by a youngster who had cerebral palsy and could voluntarily move only his head in up-and-down motions. By holding a paintbrush with his teeth, this student was able to paint on the rotating paper and share with his teacher, classmates, and parents the joy of creating something of artistic worth. Truly, this was an extraordinarily gifted teacher (and gifted artist) who knew the value of imagination and relationship in teaching.

We must recognize the importance of imagination to problem solving and

problem generation (creativity), to understanding the world, to goal setting and planning, to conflict and stress resolution, and to social development.¹² To become artist-teachers, educators need to liberate their own imaginative capacities as they approach students and the teaching-learning process. Education is both science and art, but I believe the artistry of teaching has been neglected, both in practice and in the training of teachers. Teachers need to appreciate the artistic element and allow their creativity to be expressed in their teaching relationship with students. By becoming more creative, imaginative, and spontaneous, artist-teachers will become more effective and students will become better and more encouraged learners with a positive view toward learning that will last a lifetime.

Notes

1. D.W. Anderson, "Imagination Running Wild," *Holistic Education Review* 2, no. 3 (Fall 1989), pp. 5-13.
2. N. Gage, *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978), and "What Do We Know about Teaching Effectiveness?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (1984), pp. 87-93.
3. G.A. Davis and M.A. Thomas, *Effective Schools and Effective Teachers* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1989).
4. *Ibid.*, chapter 5: "Effective Teachers," pp. 115-155.
5. L. Buscaglia, *Love* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1972), p. 28.
6. B. Samples, *Openmind/Wholemind* (Rolling Hills Estates, CA: Jalmar, 1987), pp. 40, 42.
7. Gage, *Scientific Basis*; and "What Do We Know"
8. Gage, "What Do We Know," p. 88.
9. L.J. Rubin, *Artistry in Teaching* (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 16.
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11. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
12. Anderson, "Imagination Running Wild."

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Developing Creative Imagination

by Robert E. Valett

Creative imagination is a natural human ability that develops with time and experience. It requires an open receptiveness to sensory impressions and paralogical thought processes and springs from creative human inclinations, propensities, tendencies, and potentialities that are shaped by life and education.

Creative imagination also requires spontaneity, integration, self-acceptance, and personal courage to engage in the following mental operations: *Fantasy* (the ability to create wishful, ingenious, visionary, exaggerated

thoughts and images); *Originality* (the ability to think in novel, independent, divergent and flexible ways); *Reverie* (the ability to enter a state of dreamy, intuitive, inspirational reflection and meditation); *Playfulness* (the ability to move and act in an open, frolicking, delightful, or humorous way); *Creative Language* (the

ability to use language forms to express associative, symbolic, or allegorical/metaphorical ideas and relationships); and *Transcendence* (the ability to explore, to inquire, to wonder, and the will to transform knowledge and experience).

It can readily be seen that these kinds of mental abilities are ones that are generally found in young children before they are unduly conditioned by their culture. With formal schooling, thought control and shaping begin and the person may actually be punished as he or she grows older and fails to conform to the prevailing conventional ways of feeling, thinking, and acting. In this way, our natural creative instincts and intuitions are frequently inhibited and thwarted, if not actually destroyed.

As a result, many children with creative potentialities actually suffer through their school years but are still able to make major contributions to self and society. Thomas Edison finally dropped out of school when it interfered with his imaginative explorations. Winston Churchill endured a conventionally restrictive education and later stated that although he hated being taught, he loved to learn. The writer William Saroyan left elementary school (and never returned), so that he could spend time in the public library reading and writing creative works. Many other individuals have rejected formal education programs and left high school early to establish new electronics firms or other businesses, or to engage in compelling exploratory and creative experiences.

It is becoming increasingly clear that imagination and intui-

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Creative imagination, a vital aspect of a full, healthy life, draws upon multiple human capacities which have their sources in subconscious processes. Education can tap into these processes and develop these capacities in a coherent and structured way.

tion are vital to human understanding and behavior. Although the usual popular opinion is that they are chiefly childish and immature tendencies of little value (except possibly to poets and artists), creative imagination is equally vital to all advanced work in science, where it supplements the "rational" intellect and its application to specific problem solving. It is now well documented that even physics, the strictest of all sciences, depends to an astonishing degree upon intuitive imagination working through the unconscious mind.

Accordingly, some educators have become increasingly concerned about the actual regressive and destructive nature of the curriculum which is limited to conventional "left-brain" informational and analytical skills, or which devalues or is actually hostile to a creative, holistic approach. Numerous researchers are now insisting that parents and teachers should give more attention to the inspirational phase of creative imagination and should become more interested in the creative process itself rather than in the product alone.

The great cellist Pablo Casals proposed that we teach children that they are unique marvels who have evolved over millions of years with no identical counterparts. The philosopher Henri Bergson also advocated that humans be more fully educated regarding their place in the perpetual evolutionary creation of novelty and possibility — and that the vital life force within us can be used and channelled. These views have also been supported by psychologists such as Carl Jung and Abraham Maslow, among others. Jung argued that since all the works of humankind have their origin in the inherited powers of creative imagination, we must be very careful not to discourage fantasy in children. And Maslow wrote that education should promote development of the spontaneous, unpremeditated creative expression of the self, wherein esthetic perceiving and peak experiencing are seen as central rather than peripheral aspects of human life and education.¹ Another psychologist, J.P. Guilford, demonstrated that the structure of human intellect includes divergent thought and transformational abilities that an imaginative and

challenging teacher could develop through productive thinking exercises.²

Sources of creative imagination

The source of creative imagination, energy, and intelligence is to be found within the psyche, or central self, of each person. Creative imagination is an intuitive function which springs from the deeper levels of our subconscious and finally culminates in both the impulsive and rational actions of everyday life. Jung has demonstrated that when this force of our collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age (or on any human problem-solving situation), the event is a creative act which may be of importance for the future of humankind.³ For example, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Goethe's *Faust* were attributed to unconscious creative forces and greatly influenced the perspective of their times. Likewise, Shakespeare referred to his own unconscious creative source as an "affable familiar ghost which nightly gulls him with intelligence" (Sonnet 86).

The primary source of creative thought and imagination lies within the unconscious personality itself and not in the self-conscious logical mind and rational efforts of the individual person. Accordingly, education must

excitement, molecular movement increases and notions encounter one another. Then, when certain notions attract each other, an idea is born. Harmonious notions and ideas become streams-of-thoughts which move through the mind like music, changing the moods of the person encountering them.⁴

Creative thought, then, consists of notions of molecular energy that can be perceived as mental images originating in particular sensory impressions. The initial sensory stimulation may determine the impression made on the nervous system and its significance for later recall and application. The psychologist William James aptly described how sensations, once experienced, modify the nervous system of the organism so that imaginative copies of them arise again in the mind after the original outward stimulus is gone. James also described several major types of imagination inherent in all persons:⁵ *visual images* (Close your eyes and imagine what was on your breakfast table this morning); *auditory images* (Try to recall and hear a favorite tune or song); *motor kinetic images* (Imaginatively enact driving a manual shift sports car); and *touch/haptic images* (Imagine stroking your dog or cat).

Sensory impressions vary according to type (visual, auditory, kinetic, haptic), novelty, exaggeration, time, and duration. For example, a novel

Education must be balanced and holistic, involving, and attempting to develop, one's unconscious processes and potentialities.... Imagination is an inner power that helps us to feel and shape reality.

be balanced and holistic, involving, and attempting to develop, one's unconscious processes and potentialities through such means as dramatic arts, music, play, invention, creative writing, and similar activities.

The physician-biologist Lewis Thomas has creatively described thought itself as consisting of molecules called *notions*. When the mind is heated up a little with interest and

and exaggerated sensory impression is most often a lasting one. That is why most effective learning takes place in stimulating situations involving some form of kinetic or dramatic involvement and fantasy. Ghost stories, science fiction films, and adventure novels are usually exaggerations of reality and therefore carry more lasting impressions. So, too, we find the catchy tune, an unusual vacation, or a

strange and eerie experience easy to recall.

A taxonomy of educational goals

For instructional purposes, it is helpful to consider a taxonomy that classifies educational goals in a pragmatic format. Nine major goals useful in teaching creative imagination and problem-solving skills are presented below in a developmental hierarchy. These skills are classified on the accompanying chart (see Table 1).

1. Sensing — “Imagination is a power in the mind which assembles images by means of sensations” (Mary Warnock)

Goal: To be able to imaginatively experience varied sensory impressions through physical contact with the environment. Rationale: The basis of all creative imagination is to be found in personal sensitivity to and awareness of environmental sounds, sights, smells, textures, and movement. Pupils need to attend to, and integrate, the forms, patterns, and rhythms of their time and space. Strategies: Get in touch with body rhythms such as muscle movements, breathing rate, heartbeat, etc. Listen quietly to natural sounds in the immediate environment. Smell foods and flowers. Touch and explore things while wearing blindfolds. Observe, draw, and construct things upside down or backwards. Taste different foods. Imagine that you are an astronaut or an animal exploring a new sensory environment, etc.

2. Thinking — “An image is a conscious abstract representation of thoughtful intent” (Jean Paul Sarte)

Goal: To be able to understand and imaginatively interpret the patterns and relationships between things and concepts. Rationale: Creative thinking and problem solving require the comprehension, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge or information followed by speculative and novel application. Productive creative imagination is usually evaluated and verified with time and experience. Strategies: Figural thought focuses on patterns and pictures such as cloud formations, designs, images, dreams, and objects. Semantic thought manipulates words such as novel questions, verbal expressions, and definitions. Symbolic thought involves formulas, mathematical expressions, codes and metaphors. Imaginative thinking

strategies should involve figural, semantic, and symbolic activities such as drawing, storytelling, computing, etc.

3. Feeling — “We are all worms but I do believe that I am a glowworm” (Winston Churchill)

Goal: To be able to experience feelings and emotions and to imaginatively “get in touch” with one’s heart and creative spirit. Rationale: Imagination is an inner power that helps us to feel and shape reality. The feeling of well-being and personal significance stems from our awareness of and identification with our “self” and the natural forces of the universe. Strategies: Explore personal feelings, intuitions, and impressions about things. Provide quiet/silent times for meditation and self-contemplation. Imaginatively explore the feelings of others such as friends, aliens, pets, etc. Role play the possible feelings of artists, poets, and other persons who have created something of value. Engage in creative laughter and humorous expressions such as jokes, cartoons, comedy films, etc.

4. Playing — “I’ll play it first and name it later” (Miles Davis)

Goal: To be able to enjoy creative and imaginative play and fantasy. Rationale: The human mind craves novelty, play, and mirthful diversion. Playful discovery and invention increases self-

knowledge and creative problem solving. Play is intrinsically rewarding and stimulates learning. Strategies: Provide ample opportunities to playfully manipulate, explore, and experience the environment in varied and imaginative ways. Promote dramatic portrayals of stories, fantasies, puppet and talent shows, etc. Use popular games, educational toys, video-electronics, sports, and teams as part of the educational process. Encourage pupils to create and teach new games, etc.

5. Communicating — “The right words excite the imagination” (Norman Cousins)

Goal: To be able to effectively communicate with others through the use of oral, written, and body language. Rationale: The ability to express one’s thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and imaginative ideas is a fundamental part of education. Accumulated wisdom, cultural values, and problem-solving techniques are transmitted through various kinds of spoken and written languages. Creative writing and speaking require the integration of imagination and reasoning. Strategies: Facilitate verbal communication and expression of life experiences, interests, and concerns. Encourage the imaginative exchange of ideas, dreams, and novel associations. Value the production and expression of divergently creative

Table 1. *Creative Imagination and Problem-Solving Skills: An Instructional Taxonomy*

Instructional Goals	Level I: Intrapersonal (Self) Skills	Level II: Interpersonal (Social) Skills	Level III: Transpersonal (Universal) Skills
SPIRIT Affective Domain	3. Feeling Responding Identifying Willing Poetry and Contemplation	6. Relating Cooperating Sharing Loving Social Sciences	9. Idealizing Valuing Dreaming Aspiring Philosophy and Music
MIND Cognitive Domain	2. Thinking Speculating Fantasizing Originating Science and Math	5. Communicating Speaking Reading Writing Language Arts	8. Transforming Designing Theorizing Changing Creative and Industrial Arts
BODY Psychomotor Domain	1. Sensing Assimilating Intuiting Orientating Art and Health and Dance	4. Playing Adapting Exploring Inventing Sports and Drama	7. Renewing Growing Evolving Recreating Outdoor Education

imagination. Promote written language expression activities — recognizing spelling and grammatical expression as secondary priorities. Provide time for story telling, oral reading, charades, drama, and other forms of creative communications.

6. Relating — “We live by admiration, hope, and love” (William Wordsworth)

Goal: To be able to socially relate to other persons in cooperative, helpful, and caring ways. Rationale: Much of the success of personal, family, and community life is determined by how well persons get along with each other. Being able to imaginatively predict the consequences of one's actions is a critical social skill. Strategies: Model and reward cooperative projects, activities, and behavior. Plan home, school, and community improvement and responsibility programs. Role-play conflict resolution, empathy, and sharing. Engage pupils in challenging and imaginative lessons on providing for the common good, community welfare, peace, history, civics, etc.

7. Renewing — “Live naturally” (Henry David Thoreau)

Goal: To be able to imagine and become renewed and to restore one's vital energies. Rationale: Human life is a continuous cycle of self-creation, growth, and change. Persons need to learn how to recreate themselves through such means as healthful life styles, diet, exercise, humor, meditation, and purposeful involvement. Strategies: Search out and explore varied growth experiences and opportunities. Encourage outdoor encounters with nature such as walking, gardening, camping, etc. Conduct field trips and travel excursions to parks, hospitals, and new places. Provide daily exercise breaks and activities.

8. Transforming — “From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines, going where I list, my own master, total and absolute” (Walt Whitman)

Goal: To be able to imaginatively change and realistically transform oneself or a thing into something new or different. Rationale: Persons are engaged in a continuous creative process of adaptation and environmental change. We constantly design and construct objects, buildings, and new life styles. Productive problem solving requires contemplating existing patterns and relationships and transforming them to meet new and emerging

needs and demands. Strategies: Challenge pupils to suggest imaginative changes or transformations of themselves, their family, school, community, and the larger world in which they live. Reward divergent and innovative ideas and products. Provide opportunities to build, construct, and redesign models, tools, appliances, games, and inventions.

9. Idealizing — “Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?” (Robert Browning)

Goal: To be able to imaginatively propose personal and social goals and valued ways of life. Rationale: Civilization is a product of the human imagination and

giving free rein to their imagination. To promote these abilities, schools need to develop a more positive attitude toward the importance and values of creative thought and imagination — and to facilitate them within the curriculum.⁶

For educational purposes it is most effective for the teacher to present the stimulus material to be learned in somewhat exaggerated form. That is why good teachers tend to be “ham actors” who present the unusual, excite the imagination, and exaggerate the visual, auditory, or other images just enough to “register” in the human mind. Such vivid sensory

Human life is a continuous cycle of self-creation, growth, and change.

cooperative effort. For personal peace of mind and human survival, it is essential that we imagine ourselves significantly involved in creating our lives and the ideal world in which we wish to live. Strategies: Encourage and explore pupil hopes, dreams, aspirations, and values. Help pupils willfully propose and pursue goals and ideals. Celebrate personal and social accomplishments and occasions. Cultivate personal hopes, wishes, dreams, and aspirations.

It should be recognized that the above taxonomy is just one of many ways of classifying creative imagination and problem-solving skills. This taxonomy, like most others, contains some overlap and requires integrated instructional strategies. However, it does present some meaningful goals and possible objectives for use by the interested teacher.

Instructional strategies

Creative imagination can be developed and directed through appropriate instruction. Researchers such as Jacob Getzels and Philip Jackson have demonstrated that there is a low correlation, or relationship, between re-creative imagination (the ability to reconstruct symbols and ideas into new patterns) and intelligence tests. They have also shown that all children have potentialities for creative performance, boldness in thinking, and

impressions or images may arise from either internal or external sources. Most formal education programs consist of a series of externally imposed auditory, visual, and kinetic stimuli (which are seldom synchronized, integrated, novel, exaggerated, or exciting) to the student to learn.

Conversely, those mental images that stem from within the person are usually the most powerful educationally. The unique predispositions, talents, fantasies, dreams, and aspirations of the individual person are driving forces. On a more unconscious level, the primordial images of mythic heroes are also present in every individual as part of the inherited powers of human imagination and these exaggerated impressions continue to make lasting impressions.

Once a “creative imagination time” has been established, children quickly become adept at the techniques involved and require less direction and supervision. In most activities, however, an open and reflective attitude is required. This attitude can be initiated in a quiet period of directed mental imagery, which can be followed then by many forms of more active involvement.

Several directive instructions have proven fruitful in helping pupils recall unconscious feelings and images that can be used for numerous educational purposes. Some of the more simple

directive suggestions include asking a pupil to describe in detail: (a) your most important wishes and aspirations; (b) a vivid dream that you have experienced; (c) some recurring thoughts or ideas that have appeared to you; (d) the most unusual experience you have ever had; (e) some feelings or sensations that you have had that seemed to be beyond your control; (f) the visual images or impressions that occur to you during a three-minute period of quiet reflection and meditation; (g) sit quietly with your eyes closed and listen to a classical record (such as Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D minor) for a few minutes. Then open your eyes and use fingerpaint to create a picture reflecting the mood of the music; or (h) a time when you said something or acted in some way that surprised you in that it "slipped out" of your unconscious.

Other forms of highly imaginative instructional activities include futuristic thinking, and playing "famous

people." Pupils can be helped to imagine such futuristic things as their next birthday party, their next vacation, how garbage and pollution might be disposed of, what a person in the year 10,000 A.D. might look like, and even, how world peace might be established. Famous people games require identifying with, acting, dressing, thinking, and talking like noted historic or modern personalities.

The following are a few examples of commonly used learning tasks that require children to organize and synthesize facts and information in new and creative ways:⁷

- Select a series of common objects and ask the child to suggest how many different ways they might be used (brick, roasting pan, cardboard box, spoon, can, etc.).
- Present several pictures (park, moon, ocean, etc.) and have the child free-associate what might go with each one.
- Present a problem: If you came to a river and there was no way to get

across since there was no bridge, how might you cross the river?

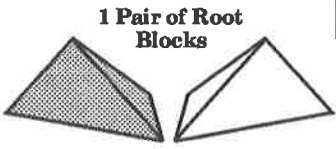
- Have children listen carefully as you read a paragraph of a current news article and then respond to questions (what, where, how, etc.) and speculate about what other endings might be possible under different conditions.

- Present a problem: Here are some materials to work with (clay, paper, glue, rock, crayons, etc.). Pretend that you are living in the future and you are going to take a trip to Mars. From these things, imagine and create something that you might need on Mars and then show me and tell me how you would use it.

- Present a problem: Pretend you are a Christmas tree that can talk. Describe your feelings and experiences to me.

- Have the child use fingerpaint to make a picture of a dream that he or she can remember and then tell all about it.

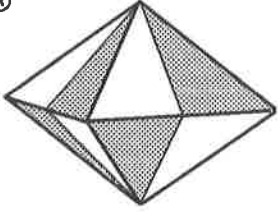
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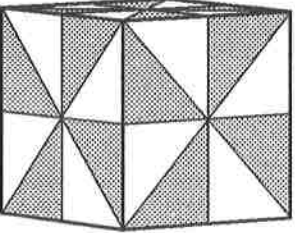
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has materials that may be adapted for teaching creative imagination. For example, stimulating pictures from old readers, papers, and magazines may be cut up and rearranged into new tales of fantasy or adventure. Humorous cartoons can be rewritten and presented in unique forms. Art and musical activities can be used to synthesize or expand upon traditional assignments. The teacher with creative propensities will use his or her own imagination to transform the mundane into novel possibilities for growth and learning.

Creative thinking can be taught. The first step is to teach children that they possess unique creative potentialities that can be developed through willful resolution and imaginative effort. Then, the teacher and educational system must provide an open and stimulating learning environment where curiosity, speculation, and experimentation are rewarded. True thinking requires the comprehension and exploration of the

relationships between thoughts, words, and ideas — not the dull mechanical repetition of regurgitated facts or exercises.

The creative spirit is strikingly portrayed in products that have transformed our way of life. Great music, soaring cathedrals, poetry, and innovative ideas and inventions all mark the progress of human imagination and civilization itself. Transformational works result from the uninhibited play and association of speculative ideas that are finally integrated into a new productive form.

We all have the need to communicate our thoughts, feelings, and aspirations more effectively. Humans continuously struggle to create and transform themselves and the world in which they live. In childhood, this process is initiated by playful interactions and tinkering with the immediate environment. As children grow and learn, their words, ideas, and problem-solving strategies are shaped and refined. This is desirable, of course,

unless their thoughts and spirit are stilted or destroyed in the process of unduly restrictive education.

Divergent thinking, fantasy, transformational experiments and expressions should all be expected and encouraged without undue concern for the "right" response or approach. The best education is one that stimulates the mind and fans the creative spirit to continue to actualize its own potentialities.

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Developing Geniuses

How to Stop the Great Brain Robbery

by Lynn Stoddard

With basic research as a powerful ally, we are learning how to cultivate the vast potential of all people at every age and ability level. Our new goal can be no less than to nurture the compassionate genius within each of us.

- Linda Macrae-Campbell¹

The industrial, assembly-line paradigm of education is about to pass the way of the dinosaur. Although there is still intense pressure to repair, restructure, and shore up a crumbling system, there is a rapidly growing social consciousness that soon will reach the "critical mass" and will usher in a new system of education.

People are beginning to question the wisdom of endlessly trying harder and harder to do the wrong things better and better. There is a growing resistance against continuing the mindless efforts to standardize students with lock-step core curricula, obsolete textbooks, letter-grade report cards, and standardized achievement tests.

Our obsession with curricula has caused an unhealthy emphasis on *curriculum development*, and a disastrous neglect of *human development*. This neglect of human development is a "great brain robbery" with horrible consequences such as suicide, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, abused children, battered women, and other violent crimes.

Although it is given lip-service, the development of human potential has never been a priority for our system of education. When the colonists established reading, writing, and ciphering as the first goals of American education, they set forth a philosophy that, over the years, has become a deeply ingrained national obsession with curriculum. It is a mindset that has effectively prevented our schools from nurturing the personal development of individuals.

When individual subjects or courses of study are viewed as goals of education, following the pattern started by the colonists, the focus is on content rather than process, and we neglect the elements that make education a deeply personal human

*Lynn Stoddard is a retired elementary school principal. He retired "early" (after 36 years) to begin a new career as a facilitator of revolutionary changes in education. He used his experiences to build a philosophy and framework for redesigning education, contained in the handbook, *Designing Education for Human Greatness* which will be published by Zephyr Press. He also has published several articles in educational and religious journals.*

Mr. Stoddard has served as president of several educational organizations, including the Utah Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. He was organizing the National Alliance for Redesigning Education when an opportunity came to help organize a larger group, the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE). He now serves on the GATE Steering Committee, works as a consultant, writes, and engages in many activities to promote a holistic vision for transforming education.

Modern education has been concerned with curriculum development to the detriment of human development. But now it is clear that people learn best through personal inquiry, in environments that support their self-esteem and healthy relationships with others. It is possible — and it is now necessary — to design an educational program around these basic human needs.

endeavor. The first and foremost of these elements is autonomous inquiry: the process of seeking information, making connections between the new data and concepts already in mental storage, and applying creative imagination to develop programs of action and personal meaning.

It is through personal inquiry that people develop themselves. Human development is self-development. In its highest form it is the process of getting in tune with our inner, spiritual selves. It is a process that cannot be imposed externally. Our traditional, compulsory system of education works against human nature by trying to impose learning. In so doing it fails to foster personal inquiry and self-development. It smothers curiosity and works in opposition to the built-in human drive for truth and knowledge.

It is this failure of our traditional system to nurture personal inquiry and individual self-development that results in student anger, frustration, loss of self-esteem, alienation, and hopeless boredom. Students feel cheated when the system fails to provide for their basic needs. Someday we may come to realize that many of our serious social problems are a scream for help in the only way that our youngsters know.

A new vision

Now a bright light is beckoning us to shift our attention from curriculum development to the full development of individual potential. In the spring 1990 issue of *Holistic Education Review*, I added my voice to the growing current that is calling for a transformation of education. I described a philosophy by which parents and teachers unitedly concentrate on helping students to develop three dimensions of human greatness: *identity, interaction, and inquiry*.² This process allows us to integrate various disciplines of curricula and invent strategies to accomplish the goal of helping students to grow in greatness. The "three I's" thus become a new paradigm, a change in mindset for redesigning education. As master goals, the three dimensions of human greatness allow teachers and parents to view curricula as means to accomplish goals, and to rid themselves of the knowledge-smothering

obsession of the industrial model: to view isolated subjects of the curriculum as goals (as "ends" in themselves).

It was this intense concentration on helping students to develop identity, interaction, and inquiry that led to the creation of the "Great Brain Project," in which students are invited to study, in depth and in their own ways, topics of their own choosing in order

prove their knowledge on written tests that measure nothing more than bits and pieces of inert knowledge. These tests have nothing to do with measuring analysis, synthesis, creativity, and evaluation of the big ideas, principles, and problems of people living together on a planet that is in great jeopardy. We have come to worship standardized achievement tests as the

These tests have nothing to do with measuring analysis, synthesis, creativity, and evaluation of the big ideas, principles, and problems of people living together on a planet that is in great jeopardy.

to become "Great Brains" — "specialists," "experts," "masterminds," and "geniuses." In this article I will amplify some of the concepts of my first article, and show why it is the duty of teachers and parents to help every child become a special genius and contributor to life on our troubled planet.

The problem with curriculum as goal

In traditional education, teachers generally lack a clear vision of their goals while they practice their trade. In seminars and workshops, when I have asked numerous groups of teachers and parents if they can name their state, district, or school goals of education, I am greeted with blank stares. Some teachers are even hard-pressed to define their personal goals.

The traditional mindset, put in place by the colonists, compels teachers to repress their ideals and act as though the course of study is the goal. "Most educators get caught in a [curriculum] trap. They become so engrossed in [curriculum,] they lose sight of why they are doing it, and the [curriculum] becomes a false goal, an end in itself."³ It has been so since the colonists established reading, writing, and arithmetic as the first goals of American education.

Another problem associated with viewing curriculum as the goal is that teachers are expected to ensure that all students learn the same things and

way to hold teachers accountable for shaping all students into a common mold — an impossible assignment!

Alfred North Whitehead asserted that "no system of external tests which aims primarily at examining individual scholars can result in anything but educational waste."⁴ In addition to the seriously flawed evaluation system, traditional education tries to guarantee conformity and standardization by setting identical graduation requirements for every student.

One does not have to look far to find that our traditional system of education revolves around curriculum, not around goals that people are striving to attain. Curriculum dominates everyone's thinking and effectively stifles progress. Almost every decision that teachers and administrators make is influenced by curriculum.

Our culture's obsession with curriculum is the major malignant disease of education. George Odiorne describes one of the effects of a purposeless organization:

Destroying or obscuring people's goals is the surest way of killing motivation. By centralizing management and extending only limited trust to lower levels, the company stifles any goal-setting on a widespread basis.⁵

From the beginning, the American system of education has been stagnant and paralyzed because of a lack of purpose and direction. It is a miracle

that we have survived as long as we have. Naisbitt and Aburdene, in their book, *Re-inventing the Corporation*, describe how organizations die when they lose sight of their goals. They show that the surest way to bring new life and vitality to an organization is to ensure that everyone in the company has a clear picture of the mission and is helping to accomplish it:

Creating the vision is the leader's first role. Next, she or he must attract people who can help realize it by adopting the vision as their own and sharing responsibility for achieving it...

The name of this critical process is "alignment." When alignment exists, there is a fit, a meshing between the company's goals and the individual's...

When you identify with your company's purpose, when you experience ownership in a shared vision, you find yourself doing your life's work instead of just doing time.⁶

Naisbitt and Aburdene describe the exhilaration that occurs when a person's job is linked with his or her life purpose: "It is that unparalleled spirit and enthusiasm that energizes people in companies to make the extra effort to do things right — and to do the right thing."⁷

Now we have a better understanding of why traditional American education is about to become extinct: Our system was never deliberately designed. It is a conglomeration of haphazard mistakes revolving around curriculum. It is run by a top-down, autocratic management system that has no vision to share with the workers and, as a result, is saturated with apathetic teachers and bored, alienated students. The current drive to repair and restructure the industrial model will ultimately fail, but perhaps not soon enough to prevent another round of wasted lives. We all have an obligation to help hasten the demise of a system of education that is more concerned with curriculum development than with the personal development of individuals.

A new paradigm

Education for Human Greatness is a paradigm for a system wherein teachers, parents, and students maintain the same clear purpose. It is a system that demotes curriculum to the role of servant instead of master and uses

evaluation to assess student growth in the "three dimensions of human greatness," not in curriculum.

The new paradigm was developed over a 20-year-period in two elementary schools in Davis County, Utah, as teachers and principal struggled against the policies and mandates of district leaders who were trying to perfect the industrial, standardized achievement model. The teachers' rebellion against the injustices and inequities of trying to force all students into a common mold led them to search for an alternative. The new vision gradually took form after several years of analyzing the results from parent surveys and questionnaires. Parents were asked to (a) prioritize lists of goals for their children and (b) respond to three questions in preparation for a partnership conference with the teacher prior to each school year:

1. What would you like the school to help you accomplish for your child this year?

2. What are your child's special talents, gifts, interests, abilities, and needs which should be kept in mind?

3. How can we work together to accomplish your goals?

When we compiled the responses on the priority surveys and the partnership questionnaires, we found that there was near unanimous agreement about what parents wanted for their children. There was over 90% agreement on the first three priorities!

The second priority was a cluster of social attitudes and skills, which became the second dimension of human greatness, or *interaction*: getting along with others, leadership, cooperation, courtesy, love, empathy, respect, friendship, and communication.

The third priority was a cluster of attributes for learning, which became the third dimension of human greatness, or *inquiry*: curiosity, eagerness to learn, and the powers of seeking, acquiring, processing, and using information to solve problems and develop personal meaning.

The three dimensions of human greatness — identity, interaction, and inquiry — became the master goals of an underground movement for teachers and principal to work in opposition to a school district that was trying its best to standardize students with a lock-step curriculum.

A new mission

While trying to find out what parents wanted for their children, the teachers and principal of the two subversive Davis County schools gradually realized that they were building a new mission for education. When they invented the "Great Brain" project to help students grow in identity, interaction, and inquiry, they began to form a mental image of human greatness. The teachers and parents were astonished to discover what children

The teachers and parents were astonished to discover what children could do when they were allowed to choose their own topics and engage in unrestricted, self-initiated inquiry.

The top priority of parents for the education of their children was a cluster of qualities, which became known as the first dimension of human greatness, or *identity*. It included the following: self-esteem, confidence, self-discipline, responsible moral character, and the development of individual talents, gifts, interests, and abilities.

could do when they were allowed to choose their own topics and engage in unrestricted, self-initiated inquiry. The process of becoming "Great Brains" did indeed help students to grow in self-image and confidence (identity), loving communication (interaction), and especially, in curiosity, eagerness to learn, and the power to process, organize information, and

create personal meaning (inquiry). The teachers began to surmise that these are the qualities of those who have become distinguished contributors to society throughout history.

In addition to these powerful insights, the staff members of the two schools raised a provocative question: Inasmuch as different groups of parents, over a period of years, were astoundingly consistent in their agreement about priorities, could it be that the sets of qualities represented by the "three I's" are universal drives built-in to the basic nature of every person? If so, any teaching and parenting that aims to help children grow in the three dimensions of human greatness is in harmony with human nature. If teachers and parents want the same thing for students that they want for themselves, then the traditional adversarial relationship between teachers and students, and many parents, is automatically eliminated.

This feeling seemed to be confirmed whenever teachers were able to override the district focus on curriculum and begin to aim for the personal development of individual students. The teachers noticed that nearly all students had the same drives: the drive to be an important "somebody" (identity), the drive for warm human relationships (interaction), and the drive for truth and knowledge (inquiry).

After 20 years of searching for an alternative to a system of education obsessed with curricula and standardization of students, a vision of a new mission emerged through the fog of a deeply imbedded tradition:

*Mission —
The Purpose of Education*
Develop great human beings who are valuable contributors to society.

*Master Goals —
The Three Dimensions of Human Greatness*
Identity • Interaction • Inquiry

This mission and master goals become a new paradigm for education. Education for Human Greatness has proved to be a powerful vision that helps people to abandon the curriculum-as-

goal mindset and provides purpose and direction for building a totally new system from the bottom up. We have seen this vision bring alignment among teachers, parents, students, and their individual life goals, to the extent that they were able to do many things that were incongruent with school district policies.

Some of the actions that emerged from a different aim were carried out in the face of opposition from district leaders. I will share just three examples. The parents and teachers at one of the rebel schools, Hill Field Elementary, decided to abandon the district-

tender, loving care. It didn't survive in the school district where it was developed because district leaders were caught in the tangle of the accountability movement and the agonies of trying to standardize students.

Fortunately, times have changed. We have entered a new era that encourages visionary thinking and site-based management. A school that chooses to follow the Education for Human Greatness paradigm now has a good chance of succeeding.

The most important requirement for breaking out of the curriculum trap is to formulate a crystal-clear vision of

All of these actions went against district policy, but district leaders were so uncomfortably aware of a growing unity and bond between teachers and parents that they felt it would be unwise to hold back the tide.

sanctioned parent/teacher organization and form an association that better met their needs. They also began to hold partnership conferences with parents during school time. At Whitesides Elementary School, the staff became fed up with letter-grade report cards and developed an alternative — report cards that attempted to assess student growth in identity, interaction, and inquiry. All of these actions went against district policy, but district leaders were so uncomfortably aware of a growing unity and bond between teachers and parents that they felt it would be unwise to hold back the tide. Unfortunately, each time the Education for Human Greatness philosophy began to take effect, the principal was transferred to another school, and the movement died because the new principals were hard-line followers of district policies.

Holding the vision

Education for Human Greatness is a vision of education that goes against the grain of a long, deeply imbedded tradition. For this reason it needs

purpose and direction and hold that mental image firmly at all times.

Education for Human Greatness is a vision that is easy to hold in mind because of its simplicity. It offers a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The second requirement is to share the vision. Naisbitt and Aburdene tell what happens when organizations proclaim and promote their visions: "When corporations effectively define and publicize their intentions, they act as magnets for self-directed, talented people who seek a creative outlet for their personal goals within an organization which shares their values."⁸ They also warn about losing sight of the company's goals: "Under the pressures of the average workday, it is tempting to react to the inevitable problems that arise by abandoning the vision, changing it, or ignoring it totally."⁹ These authors maintain that the vision needs to be not only "powerful," but also "persistent." This means that someone in the organization should act as navigator to keep bringing everyone back on course whenever they lose sight of their mission.

By keeping the Education for Human Greatness mission firmly in mind, each of the master goals is affected. To help a student develop an *identity*, or self-image, as a valuable contributor to society, we would thus emphasize the development of those personal talents and gifts that are most beneficial to our planet, and which, in turn, build self-esteem and confidence. When we focus on mission, our view of *interaction* is affected by the need to help students grow in love and respect for all members of the human family and relate to them in ways that build, rather than diminish, each member's feelings of self-worth. *Inquiry* is affected by the mission in that we will concentrate on helping students to acquire knowledge and wisdom for the purpose of making the world a better home for everyone.

purpose and direction, and want to accomplish it. They understand the dimensions of human greatness as well as teachers and parents do.

2. Educational opportunities for students are significantly increased when parents and teachers work together as full, equal partners who are trying to accomplish the same things.

3. Teachers, parents, and students concentrate on the mission, and do not allow themselves to become slaves to curriculum.

4. Evaluation is a process of assessing student growth in the dimensions of human greatness. It is not a way to compare students in their knowledge of isolated "facts" of an inert curriculum.

5. The nature of human identity demands that we view each student

as a major goal, teachers, parents, and advisers must model the kind of relationships they want students to attain. We cannot help students (and teachers) grow in love, kindness, respect, and cooperative communication as long as they are evaluated and graded by an autocratic superior.

Competition for grades among students works against the goal of positive interaction. Glasser explains why self-evaluation is the only way to promote quality work on the part of students as well as teachers. He tells about Japan's rise to the top in quality work as they eliminated inspectors, turned organizational charts upside-down, and shared the vision with everyone in the company.¹¹ Self-evaluation fosters feelings of self-worth as well as the processes of inquiry.

Realizing the dream

This new vision of purpose and direction for education makes a clean break with the curriculum-dominated, top-down management system with which most of us were raised. Education for Human Greatness taps a philosophy that lies dormant within human nature, and which has been smothered by a centuries-old focus on curriculum.

By concentrating on helping students to grow in the dimensions of human greatness, and by keeping the vision foremost in mind, the teachers, students, and parents of two elementary schools started the process of redesigning education. Even while working within a system that was putting great pressure on teachers to standardize students, several exciting strategies for helping students to grow in identity, interaction, and inquiry were invented.¹² As principal of these schools, I saw children, teachers, and parents blossom as they were swept up in a new vision for education. I know that the process of maintaining purpose and direction firmly in mind works. It is a proven way to break the stranglehold of the curriculum-dominated, top-down management system of the industrial model. It is offered as a new paradigm for those who wish to challenge tradition. It is, indeed, now possible to help each child become a genius and special contributor to society — if that is what we set out to do and hold the vision.

The nature of human identity demands that we view each student as a person with unlimited potential....

When we persistently concentrate on the vision, the brain begins to invent strategies for accomplishing the mission. The teachers, students, and parents of the two Davis County schools invented several strategies to help students grow in the three dimensions of human greatness. In this way they began to redesign education from the bottom up. A few of the strategies were very effective in helping students to grow in greatness. One of the strategies, the "Great Brain Project," is being used in many schools nationwide. Unfortunately, it is often used as an isolated program, separated from the total philosophy and mission. This subjects it to much abuse and misuse as people try to make it fit the industrial model.

Another benefit of holding the vision at the front of the mind is that it gives rise to certain operating principles that support the accomplishment of the mission. Education for Human Greatness is enhanced when the following principles guide the effort:

1. Education is magnified when students share the vision — when they have a clear mental image of the

as a person with unlimited potential — as a person having a unique set of "intelligences" to be developed, not as having a limited, fixed IQ.

6. Freedom of thought gives every person responsibility for his or her own thoughts, behavior, and learning. The central mode of human learning is personal inquiry, making choices, suffering consequences, and deciding what to do with each piece of new information.

7. Education for Human Greatness calls for bottom-up management. Students are given responsibility for designing their own learning, while teachers and parents, working as a united team, must be given full trust and responsibility for doing their jobs. School and district administrators serve as consultants, advisers, and servants to those on the front lines.

This last principle deserves a bit more elaboration. According to William Glasser, "boss-management" is the prevailing mode of control in our curriculum-dominated system, and it destroys student and teacher self-esteem and the desire to do "quality work."¹⁰ When we adopt interaction

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A Realistic Approach to Drug Education

by Ed Dodson

Our responses to the increasing prevalence of drugs as part of the routine of living range from stamp your feet and "Just Say No" to the "death to the dealers" cry of the Right. Recently there has been public and political confession that "education is the answer." Several approaches have been implemented over the past decade. We are told by those who ought to know that what we have done has not been useful in reducing the production, distribution, and consumption of drugs. Those of us in education, convinced we can make a difference, conclude that we are doing something wrong.

Most reasonable people, when they believe they are doing something wrong, stop what they are doing. But in our schools, we aim to correct what we do wrong by doing it longer (extend the school day), or more precisely (sharpen the objectives), or more efficiently (computerize it). It's a strange mentality that presumes by doing something wrong longer, more precisely, or with

greater efficiency, that will make it right. Institutions appear to be that way. It doesn't make it right; it only makes it possible to do something wrong for a longer time, with greater precision, or faster. The Pentagon proposes to control its budget by changing its procurement procedures; we attempt to initiate congressional ethics by raising salaries; we reduce the national debt by masquerading Social Security funds; we solve engineering problems and cost overruns by threatening whistle blowers. This is comedy, not a serious approach to serious problems. We can't solve substantive problems by procedural remedies.

What's wrong is compounded in education, for ostensibly we teach young people things that will contribute to their well being and to the health and continuity of the culture — that's what education is all about. Young people learn our mistakes faster than we intend. With respect to drugs, we have brought to the attention of students evidence demonstrating that involvement in drugs is foolish. We ask, "With all the evidence on drugs available, why don't students get the message?" Evidence is, after all, the ground for decision making. On the other hand, they learn that important things — what is taught? who

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Before we attempt to use education as the answer to our society's drug problem, we should look carefully at what society itself is teaching young people. Solving the drug problem will require a serious critique of society's values and new educational approaches that respect young people's needs and experiences.

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goes to school where? for how long? — are not questions decided on evidence. There are other considerations. Illustrations abound. Evidence has long demonstrated the folly of simplistic creationism. Yet the evolution/creationism conflict occupies the attention of literally thousands of school boards and more than a few courts across the country. Sound educational research has evidenced that student achievement is directly related to class sizes. Yet we quail at the thought of spending the money it takes to reduce class size. To proclaim the value of evidence insults the intelligence of our young people. We teach our perversity: If you possibly can, or even if you only want to, ignore evidence.

Let's look at what we teach about drugs in school.

We intentionally teach that drugs kill, but students learn drugs are not the only things that kill. Faulty O rings on space craft kill, poorly designed automobiles kill, toxic wastes kill, cigarettes kill, alcohol kills. The chances are high that we'll die from a cigarette habit, booze, a poorly designed automobile, a nuclear accident, a myriad of other things produced and sanctioned by society, sooner than we'll die from a drug overdose. Drugs kill, and kill senselessly. Are socially sanctioned products that kill less "senseless" because they are sanctioned?

We teach that drugs are illegal, but our students learn that most everything, at one time or another, has been illegal, and with adequate reasons. But times change. Interest rates now routinely charged by credit card companies used to be usury; what is illegal in one state — drinking while standing up at a bar, prostitution, gambling — is legal in another. The reasons for the changes vary, having nothing to do with morality or propriety, but with other circumstances.

We teach that drugs reduce productivity, that productivity and worth in business are measured in net worth. Teenagers know the minimum wage provides less than poverty pay, and some young people are exempted so they may be paid even less. The question is, "Productive for whom?" Why should they "go legitimate" when legitimacy promises no escape from want? Given connections, a 12-year-

old with no education or experience can earn more this week than his teacher. Net worth matters more than the threat of imprisonment. The crime of selling drugs is no problem. People commit crimes and are still cultural heroes. Getting caught is the problem.

What we teach about success in business indicates that participation in the drug traffic yields benefits consistent with, and appropriate to, the ethos of the economic community. For example, we teach the virtue of accumulating capital. There are no real indices to the capital accumulated by drug trafficking. We do know that some governments, some armies, some attorneys, some banks, some diplomats, some industries, some

ogy, however, between this and the plight of families owning farms in the United States, whose struggles to maintain their homes and livelihoods are increasingly discouraging.

The advantages of dealing drugs appear to far outweigh the disadvantages. Most of us believe drugs to be intrinsically evil. But many things we have or do are, by someone's definition, intrinsically evil, from abortion to zippers. Fortunately, those who think ill of zippers have enough love of humanity and tolerance for others not to impose their judgments on those of us for whom the zipper is a way of life.

Drugs are not harmless little charades, though our "war" against them has amounted to that primarily because

It is clear the problem is not one of individual aberration, but societal disposition.

peasants are supported by drugs. We are told a significant dollar amount of drugs is found and confiscated. Boats, airplanes, cars are confiscated, amounting to additional millions of dollars. Best estimates are that intercepted drugs represent, at most, 10% of the actual trade. Any industry with this cash flow has to be taken very seriously by investors. Without capital, there is no business.

We teach that the enterprising among us are those able to either meet an unmet need or create a need that has not otherwise existed. Can there be a need for drugs? Most of us think not, but the industry has created needs where there were none. That is simply creative marketing. Dealers are also equal opportunity employers: no restrictions on age, sex, race, religion, or class. This is a land where *anyone* can snort, smoke, shoot, or sniff.

We teach the value of participation in international trade. The drug industry recognizes no national borders. Its cultivation improves the lives of agricultural workers, particularly in certain underdeveloped countries. It is sad that profits are not more equitably distributed among peasants who cultivate the product. There is an anal-

the production and distribution of drugs is compatible with cultural values associated with the business community, reinforced by our schools. It is clear the problem is not one of individual aberration, but societal disposition. Putting a dealer, or ten dealers, or a thousand in jail, or sentencing them to death, is a change in the cast of characters, but leaves the play intact. Insofar as schools participate in the ethos of business, developing replacement players and supporting cast, excellent work has been done. Children enter early into the world of business through "innovative" programs featuring cooperation between businesses and vocational education departments. "Innovative" for-profit businesses are started by high school students for school credit. Community colleges cooperate with banks, stores, local offices, to place students in "real-world" commercial environments. The rhetoric of the marketplace is the rhetoric of the classroom. A major apologetic for staying in school is enhancement of income potential.

We need a new direction for school processes. Friends [Quakers] need to take a greater interest in public educa-

tion. We have things to say, a perspective to share. For the well-being of our young people and to preserve our culture, let's influence our schools to teach against the grain. We can use insights drawn from culture that articulate what we know about ourselves, the way we learn, what we learn, where we learn it, and how we learn it. We must be aware of what young people learn as well as what we intentionally teach them.

Focus on intrinsic worth

I don't mean "intrinsic worth" courses, or an "intrinsic worth program," but rather to weave through the curricula of schools and teacher education programs the idea that some things are worthwhile for themselves. The most fundamental value is that of the intrinsic worth of human beings. We have taught young people they are only worthwhile insofar as they do "x", whatever "x" happens to be in terms of cultural definitions of the moment for the age/sex group. They must be good producers; they must be good consumers; they're only

worthwhile as long as they *be* something *to* someone. Paradoxically, while behaviorism, because of its insistence on objective specificity, has contributed a great deal to the mechanics of teaching, it is a major contributor to the denial of intrinsic worth for that same reason. We are hard pressed to find rationale for attending intrinsic worth within our school environment.

Emphasize the value of the transitory

Any definition of maturity must include the capability of delayed gratification, but our textbooks, lectures, and "learning activities" define the term as postponing greed now to be greedier later. There are "now" things that contribute to life. I don't know if they lead to anything, or what the objectives might be in doing them. But you can't rerun a rainbow. If you miss it, it's gone, and there will never be another quite like it. While you can't own it, neither can you deplete it by using it, or by sharing it with others, and it's not toxic (unless it's acid rain). Kids know this to begin with, but we teach it out of them. Sixth graders

from Yakima were on a whale watch. More than half of them were sick, but when we were surrounded by 150 grey whales, not one youngster stayed below. They vomited all over the ocean, but they saw the barnacles; they heard the tails of the huge greys slap the sea when they sounded. Only once can that happen. Perhaps they learned nothing profitable, but it was an emotional as well as a conceptual experience for a moment, and that's enough. We need to weave sensitivity to the transitory through our educational programs.

Demonstrate husbandry

Husbandry is an archaic term, but for want of something better, there we are. By this I mean not simply conservation, not merely wise expenditure of resources, but along with these things, a sense of identification with one's environment; the world's not simply "out there," but part and parcel of what we are. We watch while a kid in a pick-up truck swerves to run down a woodchuck, or a cat, or a snake, and cluck our tongues. But is it

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so strange that kids objectify the world they live in when they themselves are so routinely objectified?

"Oh, that's what we should do: Be nice, except we have to teach kids how live in the 'real world;' 'it's a jungle out there.'" I'll make my final point. We have been thinking *ethos*, an

consumer constituencies for their clientele from data generated by the social sciences. It is time to insist that teacher education programs include cultural criticism as a requirement prior to teacher certification. It is neither desirable nor necessary for all of us to have the same notions about

we build out of what we have and what we do at the time. Frequently, it is the best we can do with what we have. But myths grow tired when they fail new circumstances. Constructs need periodic re-examination to test their applicability to new occasions. Right now, the occasion is the destruction of young lives by the prevalence of drugs and our inability to develop new sensibilities to take into account their motivations in our culture.

Instead of critiquing our myth, we say yes to our sickness. Because we are stronger than kids, we punish those available, nodding our heads to each other to confirm our piety. We proclaim war against the powerless to affirm our intent. The resources needed to deal successfully with drugs are at hand. Failing to use them, we will grow bored with the issue, impoverished by the expense, and frustrated by the futility of inept sycophants attempting to preserve an ethos that failed our kids.

The most fundamental value is that of the intrinsic worth of human beings.

underlying disposition that teachers might bring to every discipline, a frame of mind, an aroma of concern contributing to the intentionally taught. We now think to improve the intentionally taught — course, program, objectives.

Teach cultural criticism

Educational programmers don't take social scientists nearly as seriously as do advertisers who build

the direction of culture, or our roles in the continuity of culture. It is essential, however, for teachers at all levels to lift cultural idiosyncrasies above the limen of consciousness. Too often we ascribe to our culture a metaphysical status, as if it were something apart from what we've made it; then we teach "real world" involvement as if we were being tough-minded. Teachers must know that our real world is a cultural construct, a myth

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The Free School Community

by Mary M. Leue

In 1969, a handful of parents who had a dream of democratic education started a little school in the inner city of Albany. Twenty-two years later, the school continues to operate on a shoestring, but it has grown from a community of 7 children and 2 staff members to 45 children and 10 staff members. And it has become even more of a community than it was then. In addition to ten buildings clustered in a two-block area of downtown Albany owned by the school (income from which constitutes about two-thirds of the school's economic base), families in some way associated with the school own an additional ten buildings in the area and consider themselves part of the Free School community. This community, of which the school is the center, is the subject of this article.

Two things define us as a community: work democracy and total mutual support for families. The term *work democracy*, coined by Wilhelm Reich, is used to describe criteria for community on the basis of need and obligation. It is a pragmatic definition of peer-level status among adults and between adults and children, both in the community and in the school. A.S. Neill practiced peer-level status at Summerhill, where children are considered "ontological peers" by adults who deal with them both honestly and lovingly, and expect the same in return. This, as Neill made clear, is totally different from permissiveness. It is a practice that extends to all of the families living in the community or attending the school.

Total mutual support means that everyone in the community plays the roles usually assigned to specialists. In modern Western industrial society, we take it for granted that parents do the parenting, teachers do the teaching, and we call in other experts when we need them — doctors, lawyers, therapists, plumbers, carpenters, auto mechanics, bankers, insurance agents, and the myriad of other people who ordinarily play adjunctive roles in the lives of families.

Society's plan doesn't always work very well. Assembly-line psychology tends to replace human contact when one does the same job day in, day out. We all know how important it is to find a good babysitter, a good pediatrician, a good auto mechanic, a good insurance man, and more and more

In her 70 years Mary M. Leue, mother of five and grandmother of ten, has been a registered nurse, teacher, lay midwife, therapist, community organizer, editor, writer, bookseller, and desktop publisher. She contributed to Holistic Education Review's special issue on alternative education in 1988 (vol. 1, no. 2), and she is currently editor of Skole, a journal on alternative education. Mrs. Leue started the Free School, a small, alternative elementary-junior level school in Albany, New York, in 1969.

A small group of families in the inner city of Albany, New York, created an intimate, cooperative community, centered around an alternative school. For two decades, this community has emphasized the importance of honest human relations, self-reliance, and mutual aid. These values, reflected in the school, have had a lasting positive impact on its graduates.

frequently, a good marriage counselor. All too often, we have to put up with the people we can find, and end up struggling against the limitations of the role that they are able to play. And when income-tax time arrives, we get to look at how much of our annual income is spent on these outside services, and how much energy we spend accumulating the income to pay for them!

I think the biggest price we pay is the latter. For many, family life has become an experience confined to the

taught ourselves how to play all of the roles more effectively.

All of this has meant that our very limited incomes go a lot further than one would expect — and that we work very hard. But over time, we have learned to increase our joint prosperity and pleasure in other ways. We have our own natural foods store at discount prices, a small bookstore of titles we have found particularly helpful, a library with two rooms-full of books, a large audio and video tape library, and an extensive articles file to

to be a rare commodity in our society. Perhaps a New England Yankee upbringing gave me, as the most influential community member in our early history, a more highly developed belief in the efficacy of that commodity than other members had. Indeed, the teaching of common sense is our most important product. Recognizing how much we understand better than any outsider could because we know one another in depth gives us all a great sense of strength and self-direction, which is difficult if not impossible for most families to develop in such a fragmented society.

Caring for one another

When a child or an adult gets sick, we don't automatically rush him or her to a doctor. A number of us have been trained to perform a competent physical examination, and all of us know one another's liability patterns — the context in which the illness is occurring. We use herbs and homeopathics to treat a wide variety of symptoms, and most of us have done cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

We have a monthly parenting support group and a cooperative prenatal support group for pregnant couples. Two of us who are nurses show films and give talks to other groups on midwifery and natural birth; we two also do labor coaching for couples who are willing to find medical backup.

We have gradually developed a number of group resources that allow people to focus on living patterns, including personal growth and growth as a couple and as parents. We have, for example, a weekly therapeutic group that serves many community functions and, most crucially, gives us a way of steadily deepening our contact with one another, of sharing our inner lives so that a wide variety of viewpoints can be brought to bear on any problem. When a couple or a member of the community feels the need for therapeutic or healing support, no money exchanges hands because frequently the roles are reversed.

It was a bit scary in the beginning, taking the chance that we really could use enough common sense to decide what we could handle properly and

We have learned ways that work better than the societally approved ones in the crucial areas of maternity, parenting, and education.

hours outside of nine-to-five weekdays. Does this system work better than the old one? The statistics on divorce and child abuse suggest it does not, even though some families seem to cope very well. By and large, however, we seem to have changed problems, not solved them, though few of us have noticed this trap. Perhaps that is because, as always, it is the children who are the ones who recognize the problems and they can't do anything about them. As in the past, it will be up to them to develop a new pattern in response to their firsthand experience of what is wrong with the present one. Unfortunately, knowing what is wrong has never guaranteed that we will come up with a solution. It is as though we are doomed to solve the problems of the last generation instead of those of our own.

The people of my community didn't want to wait! We wanted to have the good life that everyone is struggling to get *now*. Paradoxically, that has meant taking on many more roles than most people think of doing, as a way of simplifying our lives as a community. We all teach, take care of one another's children, doctor them, take responsibility for their behavior, look upon them as our joint responsibility. We do the same things with each other as families, and gradually we have

which we constantly add up-to-date information. Recently, we started a mail-order business for these items plus equipment such as the birthing stool that we manufacture. Three years ago we set up a pooled investment group, which enables us to get higher interest rates on savings as well as give small loans and pay for our own insurance on a limited basis.

The difference is striking when you stop believing in the necessity of paying for specialists to take care of you all the time. Because none of us are tempted to claim exclusive right to be an "expert" for others, we all feel free to ask one another for support and advice in times of need. Nobody has any qualms about taking a child to a doctor, or consulting a lawyer, or going to the dentist when what needs fixing is clearly something that person can do better or knows more about than any of us — but we *have* demystified the roles played by these specialists. The reason it works so well is that we have learned through experience what to tackle ourselves and what to leave to someone with specialized skills. And we have learned ways that work *better* than the societally approved ones in the crucial areas of maternity, parenting, and education.

The personal quality most relevant to learning this kind of discrimination is *common sense*, apparently considered

what not to attempt in the way of "self-regulation." We all know so much about what can go wrong when people try to take control of their lives in the areas of education, medicine, and the law, that most of us truly believe we have no alternative but to leave all of these important things to "experts."

It has taken our group all of these 22 years to discover how much we could learn to do, and do safely and well. During the early years we lost a few members who did not believe that they could get what they wanted from us, but we have learned as much from these "failures" as from anything else. The gradual nature of this learning process has been perhaps the most important ingredient in our success, because the health, or optimal functioning, of the community is a function of the relative maturity of all of its members.

We do not view "health" or "optimal functioning" as a model in isolation from the issue of responsibility and autonomy. In other words, the polarity of pathology versus health must be understood in terms of autonomy and responsibility versus dependency and infantilism. The concept of self-regulation is as essential among adults as it is with children; both require much loving support and feedback on their impact on others. We have come naturally to realize how much health and happiness depend on one's capacity for mature self-regulation. Often, people who get sick a lot or otherwise have serious problems in our community are expressing dependency needs indirectly instead of learning how to deal with them openly. Denial of need is a very common characteristic among members of "modern" alienated society. Chronic illness and other maladaptive behaviors, such as alcoholism and drug addiction, are all results of this alienation. Emphasizing health or prevention of disease alone would not address this aspect of the wellness issue. Defining happiness or wellness as a function of maturity works better in allowing people to *learn* how to take care of themselves.

The other aspect of our community that creates our success in both attracting and keeping families as members is, I believe, the richness and

variety of resources we offer each other that are not available in the society at large. Aside from the school, which provides a sufficient, but not prosperous living for ten of our people, and a place for their children to grow up in a loving group of friends and teachers, we also have developed other resources that have enriched our lives as a community. In addition to the group enterprises and activities mentioned above, individual members of the community have offerings of their own. Three families share the care — and the milk — of a couple of

as putting on plays, making puppets, singing, doing sports, watching movies, reading out loud, playing games, and doing crafts, take up most of it. The adults have as much fun as the children, and staff burnout is unknown among us.

Most nonpublic schools have to worry about their financial support. We don't, because we have devised an internal source of basic support from the ten buildings that we own and from which we derive rental income. Tuition is on top of that base, so we can afford to charge very low tuition,

Total mutual support means that everyone in the community plays the roles usually assigned to specialists.

goats, as well as eggs and meat from a small flock of chickens. Many of us have backyard gardens and one family raises bees. Other families have developed their own enterprises, including a massage practice, a business selling efficient water heaters, and a wooden boat-building and repair business.

We also seem to foster individual enterprise in verbal creativity. Two (both former students of the school) have written one book, which is already in its second printing, and are working on their second. I started my own tiny publishing company and press, and have so far published six books of my own and three by other authors, as well as a semi-annual journal (*Skole*) for the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. The community as such takes no credit for this talent and energy, but it is clear to me that being members of a community who support one another by accepting our own uniqueness naturally fosters such enterprise.

The Free School

In the setting of this all-embracing community, the Free School becomes far more of a community center and less a traditional institution. Learning flows naturally out of the community atmosphere and is much less a goal in itself. Skills learning — which the children love — takes very little time in the total scheme, and activities such

which even people on welfare or working \$5-an-hour jobs can afford. We feel that having solved the economic issue as we have has given us tremendous freedom.

Now that the school has been in existence for 22 years, we have begun to grasp our ultimate impact on the lives of children. Because we have always accepted children with whatever problems or circumstances they may present, just as the public schools do, we have had among our alumni a fair number who easily could have been labeled as having problems. We have never sought out problem children, but we have never turned them down, either. It is of particular interest to look at how these so-called problem kids have turned out. Of course it is easier to remember the successes than the failures, but we continue to be amazed at how many of those we considered failures have come back dazzlingly "together." Whatever their original status might have been, one by one, they all seem to want to come back to visit, to get a look at the place where they were so happy or where they turned their lives around, eager to tell us how they are now.

Our aim is to take understanding of the small community with a school at its center out of theory and offer a model of how it can work superbly. In our case, that way of working *does not* include isolating ourselves, either

from parents or from people in general. We don't select children; we accept whoever comes. We warn their parents in advance what they may find if they stay — and some of them don't return, which is fine with us. Those who do are usually with us for life. Some stay for only one or two years and then go on, but they come back, and evidently still consider themselves "members of the family."

Similarly, we don't hire teachers, but we accept whoever comes, then teach them how to be with us. The ones who leave do so because they can't cope with the changes we insist they make. Most of our teachers have lived in the community for ten years or more. Finding money to live on has always been a joint responsibility, since the school belongs to us all. No one school employee receives more than \$150 a week, and a few, who live in school-owned apartments, receive

Since the entire school operation (like all of our community functions) is managed by members of the community, all funds are shared among ourselves according to a system that considers both need and ability. Thus, when one mother had her fourth child, she took off eight months to stay home with her baby, but continued to receive her money — and will create her own returning schedule according to both her and her child's needs.

A teacher might also be expected to find a temporary or part-time job for the summer when we run short of funds because of not having tuition income. On the other hand, when buildings have needed rehabilitation (as they all have), as many as five teachers have worked throughout the summer doing carpentry, masonry, painting, glazing, or whatever, and we simply have recouped during the school year when income was higher.

superb. It isn't necessary to search for "super-teachers" for our schoolchildren, nor do we need to find "super-parents" in order to study healthy child-rearing. Our community has a simple criterion for evaluating the ones who can do it: namely, that they take us seriously enough to come, stay, and learn. If they are parents or teachers, we ask that initially they take responsibility for following the recommendations we make for changes in their ways of looking at themselves, because children can't wait! Nothing follows from their refusal to do so, because interference would constitute an invasion of their autonomy, but it remains there for them to look at. And they do. Right now the parents of two children who have been with us for over a year are moving closer and closer to us because they can now see what we may have for *them* if they choose to accept it.

Wilhelm Reich said, "Love, work and knowledge are the wellsprings of life. They should also govern it." The principles by which our community lives and by which it is governed are indeed love, work, and knowledge. In the sense of dedication to the "wellsprings of life," our community could be said to be "ergonomic," even if we refuse to attach any label, Reichian or any other, to ourselves. Reich himself was never fooled by an ideological stance. He saw through to the human heart. It was part of his genius as a therapist and as a human being. So, when the issue arises as to what model we follow in establishing the values of the community — whether we are Reichian, for example — my answer would be that we are supremely non-ideological in following the way of the heart. If we had labeled ourselves as this or that, our effectiveness would have died long ago. Reich's friendship with A.S. Neill rested upon mutual recognition and respect — in a word, peerhood, which I find to be a pretty good basis for, and perhaps a definition of, love. Neither tried to convert the other in any way; they respected each other too much to do that. Their relationship was about sharing their insights with each other, not about conversion. There was nothing ideological about their relationship. In a number of areas Neill felt



Photo by Jennifer Lloyd, courtesy of Spectrum School, Rockford, Illinois.

half that amount. But we don't really pay salaries in the sense businesses usually mean by that term; rather, we divide up the income we get among everybody, with adequate allocations for the needs of the property itself. Here is where the concept of *work democracy* applies.

It has been a good system in many ways, not the least of which has been actually learning the skills needed to do the rehabilitation work.

It is my belief that people — any people, no matter how "pathological" their behavior patterns might be when they join us — are innately

unable to follow Reich, but his love and admiration never wavered, because, like Reich's own love of Neill, they came from the heart!

Well then, is our school, the center and original focus of our community, "Summerhillian?" For 22 years I have been answering this question in the negative. I can see many major differences between our school and Neill's. Does that mean that we have no significance in the history of child development? Neill himself cared not a whit what others believed; he plowed his own furrow as his inner promptings dictated. The unique value of Summerhill as a source of inspiration to schools comes as much from this quality as from any other source. Neill followed the promptings of his heart, mind, and inner spirit or genius. I realized how different our circumstances were from his, and decided for myself that the real issue was not how closely we followed his "product," but how closely we resembled his way of being with children in terms of heart and inner integrity — *peerhood* (my term for what he called *freedom*).

It is my belief that, like *transformation*, *freedom* is a tricky notion. The part people tend to leave out is that allowing real freedom means being who you are, regardless of how that may be. It means not following an ideal way to be, but being true to yourself. When you focus, as Neill did, on trying to tell other people what he did, it may sound like "how-to." If a child breaks windows, well, you break them with him. If she steals, you help her do it. Uh uh. It sounds that way because Neill takes for granted the inner source of those "hows" and "how nots," I believe. If one decides or discovers that how "one is" is in some way lousy, or cruel, or mean-spirited, or scared, or annoyed, or delighted, or exhausted, or fussy — well, that's how you are, or were at that moment. The question is not whether that is, or was, a good way to be, but rather, is that what you really wanted to be or do? And will you react the same the next time something comes up? If so, what does that mean about how you are with children — or with adults, for that matter? And what do you want to do about that? Would making some change mean being more yourself, or would it mean being under the thumb

of somebody else? The whole thing is an ongoing process of becoming more and more like yourself.

Freedom defined in this way simply means what I think Kierkegaard meant when he called freedom "dreadful": that you are free whether you like it or not. And when you begin accepting this, things change drastically. It involves taking responsibility for the damage wrought by authoritarian or otherwise un-self-regulated "freedom." In a community such as ours, this issue is addressed before it creates serious problems, and the ongoing process of getting and staying clear takes up most of our weekly group meetings. There is no way that such a system would work without self-governance. It would eventually succumb to the *Animal Farm* syndrome, in which "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others." Real freedom implies equality as well as responsibility. Peerhood is crucial to the equation. It is easier to operate democratically among people who traditionally have been accepted as peers. It is when we take on peerhood as a criterion for the running of an institution intended for "non-equals," such as children, that it becomes easier to subvert, sometimes in very subtle ways. We may indeed do this unwittingly, especially when the children

are vulnerable in some significant way, yet have few educational alternatives. It behooves us to look very searchingly at our practices.

John Dewey's definition of what we need as Americans strikes close to the heart of the matter. He said that you deal with people as ends, not means, as people not unlike yourself. His famous prescription for "educating the whole child" was as badly understood and uncritically adopted in the progressive education movement of the 1920s as Neill's at Summerhill was for a short time during the "Free School" movement. However one defines the end result, the essence of what Reich, Neill, and Dewey stood for was the same — personhood, peerhood, the I-thou attitude. Always, it seems to me, it is important to come back to the person who embodied the words, not simply to the words themselves: to the prescriber more than to the prescription per se. You have to go through the process that Reich, Neill, and Dewey themselves went through in trying, testing, learning, taking on, and finally "practicing what they preached," the best they could. For us, this is a never-ending process that involves every facet of our life together and constitutes our focus as a group of people who live, work, and exchange ideas and experiences.

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From Reading to Language Arts

by James R. Starzynski

The aim of this paper is to question the placement of reading activity in its position of central importance in our education of the young child, and to explore the motivation of parents and teachers in supporting this position. I will propose viable language-building activities that are essential to proper language development and, eventually, to the successful development of reading ability.

Formal education is dependent today on a single activity, whose success or failure will largely determine the ability of an individual child or an entire civilized nation to progress. The study of geography, the study of history, and the study of mathematics and science as taught in traditional schools is dependent on it. The development of social skills, mathematical skills, and scientific skills is dependent on it. Social life, economic life, and cultural life hang in the balance as human-kind collectively undertakes the activity of "reading."

With the stakes so high, why is the educational establishment in this country failing to cultivate a nation of readers? What are we, as educators, doing wrong or overlooking in teaching children to read? I submit that parents and teachers must look again at this process of reading and put it into its proper place in the sequence of language development. Difficult questions must be asked and answered before we decide that this highly symbolic activity should be introduced as the beginning of formal language instruction in our kindergartens and primary grades. Dr. Frances Ilg and Dr. Louise Ames write that it is

probable that a large amount of the so-called "reading disability" cases which are so unfortunately prevalent in our schools today come not from actual "disability" on the part of children who are failing their reading requirements in school ... but from the school's attempt to force unready children to perform at levels for which they are not prepared.¹

Consider parents' and teachers' motivation in stressing reading activity, even early in the child's development. Simply stated, parents know that reading is a normal activity for people of our time. Western civilization is inundated with printed material: newspapers, periodicals, novels, instruction booklets, storefront advertisements, and safety signs. From a psychological perspective, parents, I think, feel a great relief when their

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Educators as well as parents, influenced by the technocratic worldview of the "age of reason," have confined early language experience largely to the narrow and abstract activity of reading. But the child's full language development requires a firm basis of physical activity and meaningful spoken communication.

child begins to read. Experiencing a mixture of anxiety and joy, the parent has watched attentively as the infant brought the movement of its limbs from chaos to order during what Piaget called the "sensorimotor" period of life.² In listening to the development of speech patterns, parents may notice a corresponding integration of thinking, feeling, and willing activity in the child as it approaches its sixth year.

The child's ability to read indicates to the parent that the senses and the central nervous system are intact and that the head with its complex, integrative skills is healthy and awake. Learning can proceed normally. This

enth grade teacher? Let us, then, examine the motivation of educators in stressing the importance of reading at an early age. Teachers, whether aware of it or not, are responding to certain historical and psychological backgrounds for this emphasis.

An age of reason

Historically, the major twentieth century educational philosophies focus on the cognitive development of the human being via the physical senses and thinking.⁵ Modern education should be seen for what it is: a process that is cerebral, solitary, and

numbers of children in their classrooms. Although children before the age of eight learn much through "doing" rather than "thinking" — one can actually say that the intellect of the young child is more active in its limbs than in its head — few teachers possess the creativity or the courage to educate through the "doing-intellect" of the child, especially with a class of 35 robust seven-year-olds.⁶ It is, unfortunately, a rare occasion when a second grade child experiences the multiplication tables through vitalizing, rhythmical stamping and clapping while circling the classroom with classmates.

For instance, a five-year-old kindergarten student at a parochial school in Chicago displayed his schoolwork while describing his day. With a class of 25 students in a relatively small room, the morning began with "space orientation" and "directionality" exercises from a workbook. Alphabet letter copying from a different workbook followed, written number exercises came afterwards, and the day proceeded accordingly. Children were not allowed to leave their desks. Talking was limited to the practical exchanges between teacher and student. These teacher-directed, workbook-centered activities dominate the child's entire grade school career.

Yet reading by the masses is a relatively new activity in human evolution. Verbal communication and active ritual have been the main vehicles for the transmission of information, tradition, and culture since the beginning of civilization.⁷ They are the very parents of writing and reading, now subjugated in the educational process of the twentieth century to the role of forgotten ancestors. It is a tragedy of our time, often with damaging consequences, that the very letters of our alphabet are introduced to school children in their most abstract and least meaningful forms. Letters evolved from the picture-writing of the ancients, and possess meaningful characteristics in themselves.⁸ Could we not, as teachers, introduce the young child to these living qualities of the letters via outer movement and the inner movement of imagination, rather than treating them only as dead symbols?

Parents and teachers must look again at this process of reading and put it into its proper place in the sequence of language development.

realization by the parent provides the greatest relief of all. Still another reason for modern parents' interest in early reading is that reading provides a socially acceptable, intellectually stimulating, self-supporting activity for the child, independent of its family life and parents. We live in a decade in which family life is characterized by an increasing divorce rate, a high percentage of families in which both parents work outside the home, and a staggering number of children under three years old entrusted to daycare centers. Many parents are too busy, too tired, too inwardly restless to cultivate the family values and surroundings that nourish the child properly.³ Television and other media assume parenting responsibilities in an obvious way.⁴ In a less obvious manner, reading activity, both leisure and school-related, also replaces parental contact.

Of course, many of the parents' reasons in supporting early reading originate with the educational establishment. It is imperative in traditional education that children read before the formal learning process begins. Could the kindergarten teacher teach without the use of readers, workbooks, and ditto sheets? Can the sev-

reflective rather than physically and psychically nourishing, socializing, or future oriented.

We live in an age of reason, of information, of statistics, of sensibility — an age in which natural science has narrowed the image of the human being and his or her environment to consider only that which can be experienced by the physical senses, analyzed, charted and put into statistics. Verification (from *veritas*, truth) in modern terms depends on this process. Most educators today construct their philosophies and curricula on the ground of this emphasis and authority. Student teachers train under their auspices and in turn wield a heavy influence over their own students' image of humanity and the world. In this age of information, reading activity becomes the door to useful knowledge and career opportunity. Given the materialistic image of humanity, educators are primarily concerned with vocational or career development rather than with soul/spiritual development, i.e., the integration of thinking, feeling, and willing under the guidance of the incarnating ego.

A practical and immediate reason for the emphasis on early reading is that teachers now deal with large

An organic metaphor

Let us consider this problem through an analogy. Imagine the garden of a castle, glorious in its sights and scents at high summer. The smell of freshly cut grass hovers in the air. Flowers of all colors and forms adorn the edge of the garden path. Bees are buzzing, butterflies and birds are visiting their garden friends; a bordered pond reflects the majesty of heaven and earth. Children are playing here, romping with their friends until they are nearly out of breath. In one part of the garden, a child collects flower petals, immediately wanting to share

flowers and yellow ones grow in carefully planted rows, describe the path of flight that the larks follow as they fly over the north castle wall from the wheatfields beyond. This dear girl could tell everyone, if she were not so alone.

Ask yourself the following questions: how old is the child in the tower? How old are the children in the garden? Which experience — tower or garden — belongs to the younger child? Which to the older?

I submit that the garden experience of this analogy is the birthright of every child; it is the essential experience of percept before concept; it is,

The tower experience belongs much more to the present age, to modern education. To the very limited life experience of the child before age six, reading activity is concept without (or before) percept. It is a sedentary, solitary, vicarious experience of life, which has a rightful place in the procession of language development. However, this rightful place should follow the health-bearing and humanizing activities of movement, speech, story telling, and visualization.¹⁰ With all the perceptual and social skills they develop, these activities in the context of a harmonious home life are the mother soil of the child's language experience.

Let us consider the attributes of language development and reading activity presented side by side in the boxed inset.

In the light of this comparison, it is clear that the child's first steps in language development are taken at home, under the care of the mother and father.¹¹ The parents' speech and singing, their recitation of nursery rhymes and telling of stories, finger plays and movement activities assume great importance for the child's speech development. First experiences in lifting, crawling, walking, and speaking warrant careful parental

We live in an age of reason, of information, of statistics, of sensibility — an age in which natural science has narrowed the image of the human being and his or her environment.

the secrets he has discovered. A little girl balances on the edge of the pond, stepping carefully to meet the challenge of walking between two worlds. The garden's apple tree provides a shaded resting place for a boy who, in quite a lively manner, tells another about the giant beetles and woodpecker holes he has seen. Together they anticipate and plan what they will do next. Aha! A climb into the tree is in order.

Unbeknown to them, one girl slips away from the garden's activity and climbs the spiral staircase leading to the top of the castle tower. When she reaches the highest step, a round room with an open door invites her in. Empty as it is, the girl walks through the room to the open window opposite the door. She looks out of the window, down upon that same garden. There are her friends! They are running, chasing, hiding, panting, laughing, talking, teasing, spying, tumbling among the animals, plants, and stones of the garden. A smile comes to her face as this little one stands alone and unseen by the children below. She ponders the scene for a moment. She can easily decide where the boys should hide, observe that the red

in its movement, speech, story-telling, and visualization activities, the foundation of language development.⁹ This socializing garden experience belongs to all children for all time.

Language	Reading
Gains information	Gains information
Foundation of social life	Individualized activity
Involves sight, sound, sense for the other person; employs various inner and outer movements	Involves sight, inner visualization
Transmits feelings directly	Transmits feelings indirectly
Involves the limbs, breathing and circulation, thought life	More of a "head" activity

guidance. The parents' awareness that the child's language development is profoundly affected by its movement capabilities encourages both play activity and the imitation of chores done around the home. Whole body movement in a safe and harmonious environment rightly dominates the early years. The activity of reading lies in the future.

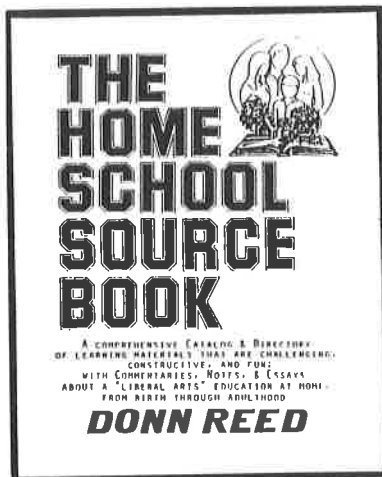
Children learn to love language, to listen, to visualize through the teacher's art of storytelling.¹² Imagination, vocabulary, and composition skills are highly cultivated through the spoken word of the tale or myth. A bridge into ancient and modern cultures is built through foreign language experiences. Poetry lives again in the sculpted sounds and rhythms of oral recitation. The word assumes creative power. Every truly holistic educator must grimace upon realizing that reading activity has largely replaced these "language arts" in the kinder-

garten and grades 1-3. As educators, let us put reading into its proper place in considering the totality of the growing child and the totality of that child's educational process.

Let us imaginatively picture language development as a carriage, with this character called "reading" majestically seated in all its world-wisdom, arms folded, nose up, in the back seat. We may be powerfully attracted to focus on this passenger, but let us not ignore the drivers of the carriage, who are the true guides of every child's reading development. Let us give them their due: it is verbal communication and physical activity that determine the destination of every child's journey toward the acquisition of language.

Notes

1. Quoted in Raymond S. and Dorothy N. Moore, *Better Late than Early* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1975), p. 96.
2. Ruth M. Beard, *An Outline of Piaget's Developmental Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), p. 33.
3. Moore and Moore, *Better Late than Early*, p. 89.
4. Martin Large, *Who's Bringing Them Up?* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1980), p. 18.
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11. Moore and Moore, *Better Late than Early*, p. 9.
12. Bruno Bettelheim and Karen Zelan, *On Learning to Read: The Child's Fascination With Meaning* (New York: Knopf, 1982).



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Holistic Language Arts

by James Moffett

Many positive actions are underway in literacy and language learning, such as the National Writing Project, the process approach in writing, the whole language movement, and reading and writing across the curriculum. These movements have in common something I have been publicly working for since the mid-1960s — personal, integrative education. The difficulties that they are encountering bring to a head an old conflict central to English education and in some ways to schooling in general. I will describe this as a conflict between the particle approach and the holistic approach — whether to teach the parts in isolation or through the whole.

Language parts are things such as the phoneme, the punctuation mark, the word, and the sentence — that is, phonics, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Other parts of discourse may be things like metaphor and diction, transitions and paragraph structure. Wholes are authentic speech acts or texts complete for their purpose — a conversation or a lecture, a poem or an ad.

What is called today the “whole language approach” corresponds to what I have always called a “student-centered” classroom. To work with whole language is to work with the whole person.

When the learning units are no longer language units but entire discourses, the curriculum has to be restructured around the learner as language user. It is this restructuring that is going on today. But the holistic approach is resisted from every quarter. To take right action, we need to understand this resistance.

Let me say once and for all that *whether* to teach the parts is not at issue, only *how*. Also, just because testing is piecemeal does not mean that teaching has to be. In fact, the holistic approach teaches the parts better than the particle approach. The logical reason for this is that a whole is context for its parts and naturally carries with it the meaning and motivation, point and purpose, that enable the learner to develop good judgment — in this case, about how to compose and comprehend. Even the facts of spelling, grammar, and vocabulary are better acquired and retained when the learner constantly and directly practices the target activities themselves: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and of course, thinking.

First, I want to describe more specifically what goes on in a

James Moffett is a national consultant and author in education. He has written books on English education, including Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading; Teaching the Universe of Discourse; Active Voice: A Writing Program Across the Curriculum; and Coming on Center: Essays in English Education. His recent book, Storm in the Mountains: A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict and Consciousness, describes opposition to a student-centered K-12 language arts program (Interaction), which he introduced in the 1970s. A graduate of Harvard, Moffett has taught at Phillips Exeter Academy, Middlebury College Bread Loaf School of English, the University of California, and San Diego State University. He lives in California.

Current efforts to reform language learning according to holistic principles are often frustrated by the continued resistance of the “particle approach.” This traditional view of education does not see the learner as an active participant in the creation and use of language. A holistic approach, on the other hand, is necessarily student-centered and experiential.

holistic language class, as I see it, starting with initial literacy. The main ways of first learning to decode and to spell are to follow a text as it is read aloud to you (the read-along or lap method), and to watch as your speech is being written down (the language-experience method). These two means alone will teach basic literacy, because they permit synchronization of the sounds and sights of the language. Eventually children refine this to the point of matching off the 40-odd phonemes of English with their particular spellings — that is, do their own phonetic analysis.

But this being read to and this dictating have to be a saturation experience, which entails such a classroom revolution that even the most strident advocates have rarely if ever made possible. How do we find the time to do them copiously, every day? Are we willing to throw out the basal reader approach and all the phony phonics worksheets and workbooks (including those transferred to computer software)? The public school or teacher who dares to take this leap of faith seems to be running a huge professional risk.

Another problem: How is one teacher to read to and transcribe for a couple dozen kids or more? Answer: Arrange for older students, seniors, and other literate citizens to buddy up routinely with primary children and read, write, and *talk* with them. Any literacy approach must include massive oral language experience — play talk, task talk, text talk, topic talk, and just plain people talk. This sort of whole discourse schools rarely make enough room for, because dialogue is hard to control, much less program. Besides, oral language isn't tested, and anything not tested is not taught.

I honestly believe that literacy could be successfully transmitted in this folk fashion alone, if classroom management permitted literate people to come in and act as temporary intermediaries between print and the child's oral speech until the child can take over this role. Moreover, this human rather than technical approach provides just the right transition between home and classroom, and it will make children feel much better about both literacy and school. Learning to read and write should feel like a

warm incorporation into the community of literate people of all ages.

What can help children to take over the intermediary role of the aide is a practice called *invented spelling*, which schools are borrowing from research with preschool children writing on their own from a knowledge of the alphabet. These children later learn to read and write better despite having to shift from their made-up spellings to conventional orthography. It seems that writing is a powerful way to learn to read. It is in the nature of the holistic approach that each language art should teach the others. If you can spell, then certainly you can decode, and the learner as speller/writer takes an active, initiating stance perfect for helping children to become independent.

The rest of a holistic language arts and English curriculum would see that this principle of learning by doing, by directly practicing the main target activities, would follow students right into college. The only way to offer such constant massive practice in speaking, reading, and writing in class is to throw out the activities of

the reading are forced to use a single hardcover book for the whole class, instead of being able to buy a variety of titles. Teachers who want to print up lots of student writing, not just the occasional "big lit mag," but all kinds of writing, all of the time, by all of the students, usually don't have the power to shift funds from composition textbooks to desktop publishing. Teachers who want their students to spend a lot of time discussing and improvising for oral mastery forego these in favor of particle activities that will be tested externally. Teachers who want to let students use class time to do real reading and writing are held to the timetable of some managerial system that has scheduled "comparisons" for 9:45 on Wednesday and "getting the main point of the paragraph" for 1:00 on Friday.

Making room may be a more acute problem in secondary classes than in elementary ones, where teachers have the same children all day and can have them do one thing and call it something else, especially in self-contained classrooms. The holistic

Like the particle approach itself, the single-age classroom with its subgrouping by test scores arose from institutional expedience. But we could change that if we wanted to. Only this time let us do it for educational reasons.

the particle approach, which take up the schedule and the budget. Because schools tend to buy their curricula in packages, this means throwing out materials made for reading instruction, and textbook series for spelling and vocabulary, grammar and usage, the latter often fraudulently called "composition."

I often talk with teachers all over the country who have been fired up by a summer institute in the National Writing Project, but who can't get process-approach or peer-response groups going because they can't make room for them in the mandated curriculum. Teachers who want to individualize

approach is making slowest headway in junior and senior high, because teachers there have students only 40 to 45 minutes, during which time they are supposed to "cover" literature and composition besides grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Serious oral-language work seems out of the question.

I have placed garbage removal first in an account of the holistic approach, because I know from experience that it is futile to rattle on about change as if all we had to do was put new goods on empty shelves. More positively, what are some of these common-sense things for which we don't have room?

Student-centered learning

Students work in small groups, but sometimes alone, and occasionally as a class to share products or when otherwise justified. Often, different working parties do different things simultaneously: They learn to decide with the teacher and one another what kind of talking, reading, or writing to do next. The teacher arrays the choices, including examples of various kinds of reading and writing, consults with groups, coaches one-to-one, keeps individual records of who has done what, and confers with each student about what she or he has been doing and might do in the future. Thus, individual programs are charted but intersect a great deal with each other, so that the curriculum is both more personal and more social than it is traditionally. Great emphasis is placed on student decision making with partners and alone, not only to ensure motivation but also because students read and write and talk far more on their own than when marching together as a class. This provides the massive practice that makes the holistic approach work.

Specifically, I would have students spend the most class time doing the following activities with partners. These build on read-along, language-experience, and invented-spelling activities:

1. Read a text aloud together, talking about it as they go.

2. Dramatize, extend, or translate a text into another medium.

3. Choose a text together, read it separately, jot down responses and questions in a reading journal, then use the journal for discussion when meeting again with partners.

4. Improvise a scene several times with tape recorder or video recorder, then transcribe the best version for others to use as a script, or show the videotape to others.

5. Do a rehearsed reading of any kind of text, whether written for performance or not; tape it and place it in the classroom library for others to enjoy and for weaker readers to listen to as they follow the text with their eyes.

6. Stage a text live, either by memorizing and performing a script or by using Readers Theater, Chamber

Theater, or Story Theater techniques.¹

7. Discuss a topic arising from students' reading or from their own writing and interests, and perhaps use this discussion to lead in another activity.

8. Choose a kind of writing to do collectively, taking turns as scribe and composing and revising recursively.

9. Choose a kind of writing to do separately, but first discuss potential material and strategies with partners; then respond as often as needed to drafts; and finally help one another to publish, perform, post, or otherwise disseminate the products.

10. Choose a kind of writing to do individually, but use partners in planning, revising, and disseminating the results.

These basic activities are infinitely repeatable, because they grow as youngsters grow and allow great variation and combination.

The teacher helps to bring the right people together with the right activity, sits in on groups to model the ideal participant, confers with groups and individuals about the decisions they are making, arranges for sharing

The homogenized education, the cookie-cutter curriculum defeats itself. If students know and read and think different things, they can pool skill and understanding powerfully. Everybody learns far more than they would doing all the same things at the same time, no matter how tidy that would look on the scope and sequence charts. Even high school and college courses committed to a specific corpus such as American or British literature would fare better if different working parties were to read different texts in that corpus and cross-fertilize one another. The best way to get youngsters to read the classics is to get them to read — to make book-lovers out of them through free reading.

From whole to parts

Let's look now at how this pluralism combines with the massive practice of holistic saturation to teach the particles. First, distinguish the transcription skills — spelling, punctuating, and paragraphing — which concern only writing, from grammar, usage, and vocabulary, which are learned and

To work with whole language is to work with the whole person. When the learning units are no longer language units but entire discourses, the curriculum has to be restructured around the learner as language user.

times, and maintains the full repertory of activities and texts. It is essential that the kinds of reading and writing range far beyond what is usually offered in school, so that virtually all of the kinds of discourse found in bookstores, libraries, and the rest of the verbal environment are made available. The teacher is free to do things that make this individualized but interactive classroom work. With a little briefing, other adults can help; and in the best of worlds, classrooms combine grades part or all of the time.

People learn most from differences. It is best if partners differ in background, perspective, and knowledge.

practiced through speaking as well. To learn spelling and punctuation, one has to be reading or creating text. The massive reading that only free reading affords will lock spellings into the visual memory as nothing else can. Ask any adult if a certain spelling is correct, and he or she will write it down to see if it looks right. *Visual memory*, particularly, must be built up if the language, like English, is only about 80% phonetic. Even then, the same sound may be phonetically spelled a half dozen ways, and the right one for a given word can only be memorized. Watching the page while dictating and being read to initiate the child

into learning how to spell and punctuate.

Besides visually following texts, the other main way to learn the transcription skills is to *create texts*; to be constantly groping outward from the oral sounds to the written equivalents without fear of errors. To learn the transcription skills, transcribe: Transcribe your own inner speech as an individual writing down thoughts; transcribe as a member of a group doing collective writing or taking down its improvisation from a tape; or transcribe as an interviewer doing reportage, as an older student taking dictation from a

into sentences or with internal junctures, with parenthetical or restrictive phrases and clauses, with rendering vocal intonation or logical requirements, with mandatory or optional punctuation? Individual diagnosis is incomparably more efficient than particle programs, which run all students through all the possible errors, all the dos and don'ts, when any one student needs to work only on a small fraction of these possibilities.

This practical, functional treatment of the sub-skills also characterizes the holistic approach in dealing with grammar, usage, and vocabulary, which

standard dialect grammar by ear and eye — but don't roll it off the tongue because that would be tantamount to changing community membership and personal identity. At any rate, the best way to learn the conventions of any target language or standard dialect is to converse with native speakers, read what they write, and identify with them enough to join your speech community with theirs.

It's almost impossible to find one's own mistakes in grammar or usage, since both standard and nonstandard speech habits, by their nature, are socially learned. Even well-educated people get lost in their sentences or forget to make agreements between their subjects and predicates, but these are psychological and logical problems not correctable by feeding information to people because any standard dialect speaker has grown up in the conventions. Analyzing and labeling the particles of language neither affects deeply ingrained speech habits nor straightens out the wickedly intricate difficulties of putting thought into language. So these problems, too, are only treatable, like those of nonstandard speakers, by more discursive experience.

Higher scores on the parts don't mean improved ability with the wholes, as usually implied. Phonics is not reading, and sentence combining is not writing.

younger one. Having to segment and render raw speech flow is excellent practice in spelling, punctuating, and paragraphing. Transcription allows students to focus on these skills in a context full of meaning and motivation but one that does not require them to compose at the same time.

Constant reading and writing teach spelling and punctuation, but oral exchange also plays a big role. As partners respond to each other's writing, they check out spelling and test out punctuation and paragraphing. In addition, I suggest that the teacher diagnose individuals' particular spelling and punctuation problems and show them how to do this for themselves and each other. It's a matter of clumping like errors together so that individuals can see their own personal patterns. Has a student misspelled a certain word because he or she mispronounces it, doesn't know the regularity governing it, hasn't memorized which of several variant phonetic spellings is the conventional one, confuses it with another word, or what? Relate punctuation to vocal intonation and meaning or to rhetorical intention, not to so-called grammatical rules, which themselves cause much of the bad punctuation because kids garble the rules. Is a student's problem more with segmenting speech

have the advantage of being learned orally as well as through texts. Contrary to mystique, grammar concerns nothing beyond the sentence, within which the only matters of correctness are word endings and word order. (Not *world* order — that's the mystique.) Much of so-called bad grammar consists of minority dialectal variation such as "three brother be walking," which is not a personal mistake, since millions of people in a whole speech community grow up dropping plural *s*'s and using that verb form. (In standard dialect one can say "three fish" or "three deer" without a plural *s*.) Most of the rest of what the public and even the profession call bad grammar is simply poor expression — inept, inaccurate, and illogical ways of phrasing and stating what one has in mind. Now these are real problems, but treatable only through authentic discursive practice.

The grammar of standard dialect can be rather easily learned from hearing speakers and reading writers of standard dialect, which, after all, dominates the air waves, the print media, and society at large. I suspect that most minority dialect speakers who are old enough to mix a bit outside the neighborhood, who have logged some radio and TV time, and who read, at least occasionally, know

Learning language by using it

Versatility in constructing sentences is the real learning issue of grammar and the real difficulty. It is not an issue of correctness, because one may write bad sentences that are all perfectly correct all day long, and because sentences are not poorly constructed in ignorance of conventions but from limited discursive experience and just plain thinking problems. Skill in constructing sentences comes from three things: (1) the collaboration of dialogue, whereby speakers amend and build on each others' utterances; (2) the imprinting from reading professionally constructed sentences that are more artful than most of what one hears in common conversation; and (3) the efforts, through both writing and speaking, to formulate one's thought, statement by statement.

Learners need to see examples of all the ways English can be fashioned into sentences and to have authentic occasions to practice fashioning them themselves — saturation reading and

writing do this best. Special drills like sentence combining are unnecessary and misguided. Constructing effective sentences should never be divorced from whole acts of real writing. Good judgment is the key and depends on a context that only a whole, actual discourse can provide. Sentence combining and other changes in sentence construction will occur frequently anyway in the writing workshops as students revise drafts in response to feedback. If this naturalistic way does not seem as thorough as a program in sentence construction, that is only because, once again, not enough time is devoted to it.

The same is true for vocabulary. I used to be able to tell which of my new students had been assigned and quizzed on vocabulary lists from the way they misused five-dollar words in their writing. People acquire vocabulary from conversing and reading and make it active by talking and writing. There are no better ways. The only reason schools came up with lists and quizzes is that they were undisposed to arrange for saturation in real discourse. True, any peer talk is limited, and one age group will pick up more vocabulary from conversing if the classroom contains mixed ages — older students and adult aides. This is true for all sorts of discursive learning, from more complex sentence structures to broader perspectives in thought.

In fact, it's not very smart to sort people by similarity, whether it's age or ability, for learning purposes.

Youngsters who are made to spend all day together with peers and who will usually seek their own kind after school anyway, are put at a great educational disadvantage by the very institution that is supposed to be fostering learning. A multi-aged classroom is not a radical but a reactionary idea — think of the one-room schoolhouse. Schools went to homogenized classrooms, not for learning reasons, but because they got bigger. Like the particle approach itself, the single-age classroom with its subgrouping by test scores arose from institutional expedience, but we could change that if we wanted to. Only this time let us do it for *educational* reasons.

I don't digress from vocabulary. An important aspect of language learning suffers when one part is singled out for instruction — the way we break down discourse meshes negatively with the similar way we break down the student population itself. Educa-

tion depends on mixing maturity levels so that the more experienced people can bring along the less experienced. How much can one adult really do for two or three dozen youngsters of roughly the same maturity level? To work best, the holistic approach needs to break up the break-downs, because the secret is circulation. School must be a pool, a knowledge pool, and for everyone in the pool to get the most out of it, the knowledge has to get around. It would help enormously if schools would arrange for students to do investigative writing, which entails visiting places out of school and interviewing people in the community. The pool has to extend beyond the school building itself; reportage is the most ignored kind of writing in all grades.

The vocabulary circulating in a third-grade or ninth-grade class, like other discursive experience, is more limited than it should be for a good oral learning environment. The main

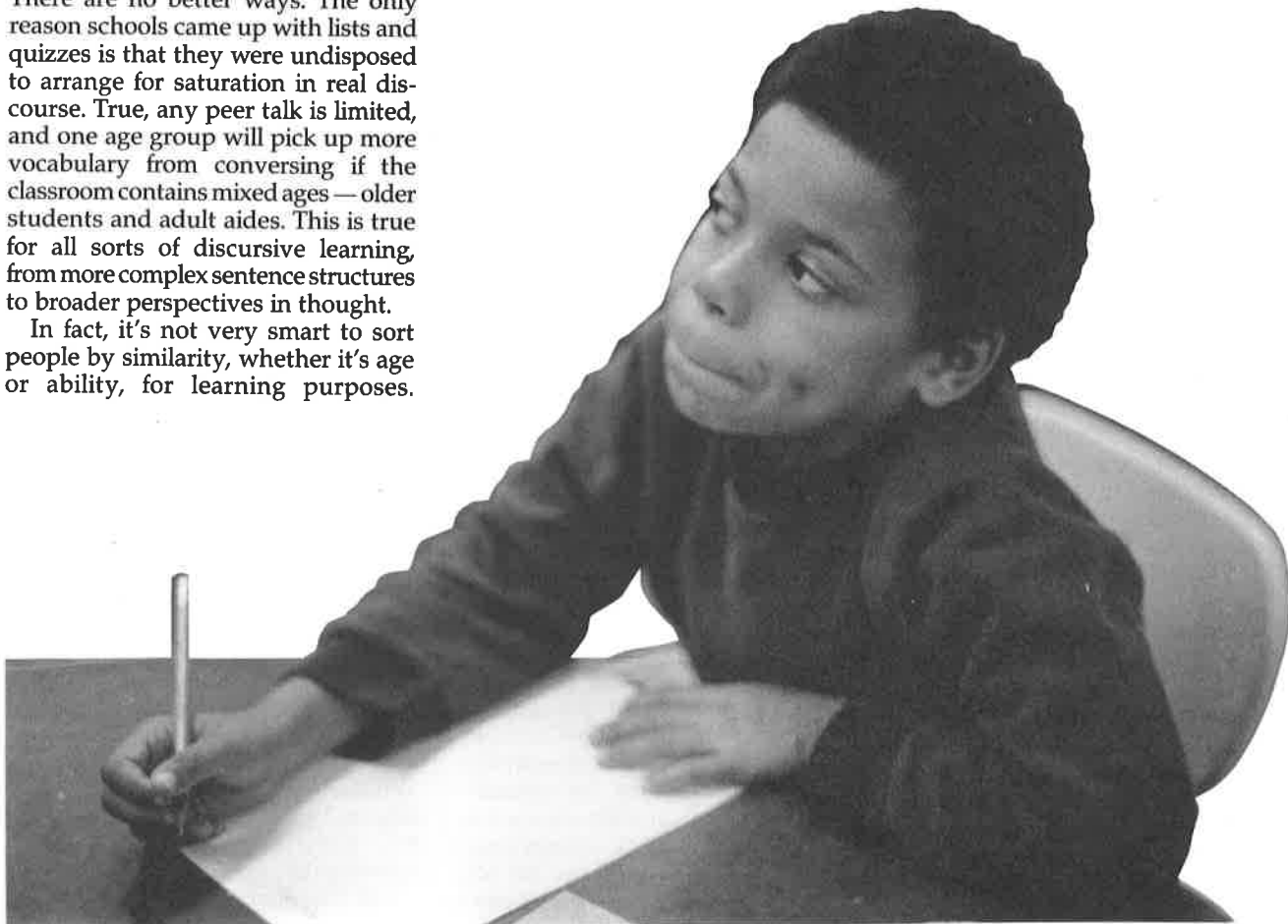


Photo by Peggy Solomon, courtesy of Little Red Schoolhouse, New York City.

source of new words and new sentence structures not heard in the monolithic classroom is, of course, reading. But again, reading is a magnificent teacher of spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, usage, and sentence structure only when done a lot, in class, all the time — not by pulling punches but by pulling out all the stops.

Assessing learning holistically

Now, how do you assess a holistic approach? First, a primary principle of any assessment: it should not distort, diminish, or displace what it assesses. Of course no current assessment I know of lives up to this, but it could if we found a way to make learning processes and evaluation procedures coincide, so that we and the students would do nothing more for assessment than we would be doing anyway for learning. The nature of holistic learning makes this possible: The whole goals, the language arts themselves, are to be assessed. But listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking can be broken down more specifically for purposes of both learning and assessment — by type of discourse.

Discourse can be divided into the kinds of speaking, reading, and writing mentioned before — interviews or memoirs, plays or factual articles. These types are still whole discourses and can be used for assessment as well as other purposes. For example, is a student heeding other players in an improvisation, bringing out the tone and diction of an oral history text in a rehearsed reading, becoming familiar with myths and legends, or writing how-to directions? In other words, you do not have to go down to particles or components to become specific; all you have to do is go down and across the repertory of *kinds* of speaking and writing, something only recently given attention in either teaching or testing. Students should eventually learn to play the whole spectrum of oral and written discourse. The California Assessment Program is now sampling eight different types of writing at a single grade level to influence teachers to diversify composition.²

Students who spend all their time talking, reading, and writing produce an enormous amount to look at. And what they produce is all the real stuff

that is the goal of the curriculum, not sub-skills alleged to add up someday to the real things. One reason that the conventional curriculum, based on the particle approach, has been a nightmare to assess is that students don't talk and write enough to have enough products to view. Reading is a receptive activity — so to evaluate it, we must constantly disrupt education with artificial tests designed to turn kids' heads inside out to see what, if anything, is going on in them. As productive activities, talking and writing should be a snap to evaluate — but not if students are kept in a passive, unproductive posture. Our conventional curriculum has favored reading outrageously because it is receptive and easily managed by doling out preselected texts — but it also leaves no traces. So, we invent pesky comprehension questions that make kids hate reading. This bias toward student passivity combines with the artificial breakdowns of the particle approach to make evaluation difficult and ineffectual.

The best way to evaluate is to look at student products and processes — their writing and their oral work as recorded on audiotapes and videotapes. Many teachers now keep individual portfolios of writing, which can

go to desktop publishing and frequently print up student writing, this too would provide handy booklets for assessing the writing of whole classes or schools.

Audiotapes and videotapes of discussions, of rehearsed readings, improvisations, and various other interactions or performances not only allow students to critique their own work and to respond to that of others, but also allow people outside the classroom to sample both products and processes. Too often we do not also think of assessing the processes, which usually are oral. Finally, tapes capturing small-group discussions of books and of peer writing, or improvisations and rehearsed readings, can be passed beyond the classroom to show teachers and students new to these processes how they work. This expedites inservice and innovation, while at the same time serving learning and evaluation purposes.

Avoiding commercial learning materials

Precisely because the particle approach breaks discourse down into artificial behavioral units that exist only in school, it requires, both to teach and to test, materials specially

If somewhere one generation of students went through an unflinchingly holistic curriculum, then the evidence for it would overwhelm us and show, moreover, that current goals and tests set scandalously low standards.

be passed on from grade to grade. The Province of Ontario has mandated writing portfolios, and the Educational Testing Service and the California Assessment Program are considering using them. To sample the achievement of individuals or of the curriculum itself, selections can be drawn from the portfolios. But portfolios are not kept mainly for outside assessment but for teacher-student conferences and other classroom use. If schools do

made for schools. The holistic approach can be implemented with trade books and other materials already available. In fact, my only reservation about the holistic approach is that it's so cheap that it may endanger the economy, which as you know depends on expensive solutions to unnecessary problems!

But the chief issue is not cost, but this: in buying a curriculum as they do, schools turn over to corporations the

determination of how children shall try to learn, and these corporations have their own reasons for preferring the particle approach. Most teachers were raised on commercial programs when they were students, probably had these materials surveyed for them as part of their teacher training, and found some of them installed at the school that hired them. It is difficult for educators to think independently of commercial materials, so imbued are we with them and so enmeshed are they in the whole institutional

themselves should be doing. As infants we all learned to speak by doing our own analysis of the speech data spontaneously produced around us and by putting this knowledge together to speak ourselves. Literacy should be much easier to learn than speech and it would be if schools allowed students to do an equivalent analysis and synthesis of written discourse.

But public schooling evolved parallel with the industrial revolution and tried to apply that successful mode of

course. Those are the tests we really should be teaching toward, because those are the ones by which we are judged. The reign of the particle approach has amounted to one very long and costly experiment, the lab for which has been the whole national school system. It has been tried and found deficient.

But what of the experiments we read about claiming to prove that isolated drills on phonics, spelling, vocabulary lists, sentence combining, and looking-for-the-main-idea improves scores on standardized tests? Of course these "work," because the particle approach, the research technique, and the standardized test are all of a piece, a closed and self-reinforcing loop. The teaching, testing, and researching methods all come from the same place in the cultural consciousness. Nobody knows how to break down discursive thought into units whose variables can be controlled according to scientific protocols. Thought was not devised to be convenient for experimenters. Particle research can prove only particle learning — and hardly impartially. Higher scores on the parts don't mean improved ability with the wholes, as usually implied. Phonics is not reading, and sentence combining is not writing. Phonics or vocabulary scores may rise following certain treatments, but will this partial sort of knowledge be remembered and applied later in real discursive situations? The experimental results don't answer that question. Or if they do, do they tell you the learning price paid elsewhere for the rise in scores here, the undesired secondary effects of focussing on parts, such as misconceptions about the real nature of comprehension and composition? Reading comprehension scores can go up from practice in doping out dummy passages while the desire to read on one's own goes down from resentment about the manipulation. In short, you don't get the whole picture, only the false impression that the particle approach works despite obvious evidence to the contrary from every quarter of our society.

Research issues

Research as we know it is short and segmental because research projects

We [as a society] want the young to become literate so that they can carry on the business of the world, but not so literate that they can investigate that world for themselves.

cycle of goal setting, scoping and sequencing, adoption, and assessment. Thus, teachers perpetuate the particle approach for lack of sufficient independence from this business bias.

But our dependence is our own fault. The profession and the public have favored the particle approach for psychological reasons that reinforce the economic. We could declare what materials we do or do not want or whether even to spend education money on "adoptions" — a very tell-tale term, by the way. If we did not have so many psychological investments in the particle approach, it would never have become so tightly locked into commercial investments — it is a bias of modern thinking built into our whole culture.

Modern science breaks down natural processes into their components in order to study them. Industrial engineering designs components that efficiently go into sub-assemblies which then go into final assemblies that become the products. Analysis is of course a major mode of thought, and the assembly line is a practical way to mass produce. But it is unscientific and impractical to impose this mode and this model on discursive learning. Breaking things down and building things up are exactly what students

operating with inorganic objects to the functioning of human intelligence. Small wonder that a bias so solidly built into the culture has become a personal mental block within us all. It makes learning through wholes seem wrong, unprofessional, and "unstructured" even though people clearly learn to do most things out of school by saturation practice.

The holistic approach is sternly told to prove itself — "Where are your pre- and post-test results?" — whereas the particle approach enjoys all the advantages of incumbency without having earned them. If it worked, we would know so by now, wouldn't we? Our country would not rank among the lowest of developed nations in literacy, as it does. By any really practical tests of talking, reading, and writing out there in the world beyond schools, we have failed badly, especially given this nation's resources. Can our graduates perform well the discursive tasks required for employment? Ask employers. Do students read on their own for their own satisfaction? Write when not forced to? Look for yourself.

The ultimate tests are not of phonics, spelling, grammatical nomenclature, vocabulary, and rhetorical formulas but of speech acts and whole dis-

are staked out that way, and funds are granted that way in order to get a quick, clear return on the investment. The short-term managerial style popular in business and government today favors the particle approach. An atomized curriculum fits, moreover, the classic drift of large institutions toward compartmentalization, standardization, and mechanization. Research in our day is not done by Ben Franklins and Luther Burbanks staking themselves; but by employees of institutions that make them do research in the same piecemeal way they make teachers dole out language. Maybe teachers and researchers themselves do not prefer short segments, but most managers of science, business, and education do because they work in a cycle of programming, budgeting, procurement, production, and evaluation based on this societal bias toward short-range research whose payoff can be quickly determined.

By contrast, have you ever considered what kind of research it would take to prove the holistic approach? Some public institution would have to consecrate at least several hundred if not thousands of students for at least their first eight years of schooling to holistic education. Now, in such an experiment, elementary teachers would not be permitted to hedge bets by mixing in particle practices — use the old basals on Mondays and Wednesdays — nor could secondary teachers cop out by saying, “We have an obligation to prepare our students for colleges, which aren’t holistic.” You can’t teach holistically *part time* and still prove that it works. By its nature, holism works long range and all over at once. But it’s unnerving not to be able to link up causes and effects as specifically as the particle approach has accustomed us to think we’re doing. We want to keep pulling up the plants to check the roots. Institutions are compulsively self-monitoring. We don’t want to wait longer and get more, we’d rather settle for less and be able to enter it into the log sooner. Results from a holistic experiment would build slowly, but would develop the higher kinds of thinking that are featured in traditional school district goal statements, but not actually accommodated by the particle

curriculum nor assessable by standardized tests.

Evaluation of such an experiment would have to be of the slice-of-life sort I described earlier, the periodic examination of samples of student discourse in all domains. But by what measures are we to assess this discourse? By what measures do we assess it *out* of school? Actually, I feel certain that if somewhere one generation of students went through an unflinchingly holistic curriculum, then the evidence for it would overwhelm us and show, moreover, that current goals and tests set scandalously low standards. But what school board, what principal, what staff would take this risk with such a large population over so long a period of time? Some alternative and experimental schools are accumulating positive evidence on a smaller scale that perhaps will soon prove the holistic approach to the satisfaction of others. Without this evidence from an uncompromised longitudinal experiment befitting holistic learning, the false impression remains that the approach cannot prove itself, but that the particle approach has.

Relinquishing control

The risk, finally, is much more than experimentation and assessment. The holistic approach not only goes against the ingrained thinking of our society, it requires us to transfer to our students far more power than teachers

massive practice required if you try to keep them abreast of each other, in unison. You can’t teach good judgment and make all the decisions yourself, teach students to think for themselves and then control the content of what they talk, read, and write about.

But a teacher’s personal fear of sharing power with students partakes of a communal fear the public has of losing control over the young. A main goal of schooling has always been acculturation, to direct the minds of youth toward the ideas and values adults have in mind. The traditional curriculum is very much the way it is for the purpose of controlling content. Particles are perfect because they avoid real subject matter and indeed most meaning at all. The smaller the language unit that is the learning unit, the less point and purpose it has. In addition, texts are preselected to limit subject matter to what is regarded as safe. Since writing has traditionally been mostly about the reading, controlling the content of the texts controls much of the content of the writing. Other writing is assigned by topics rather than by types, which would leave subject matter open. The hardest activity to control, small-group discussion, was not until recently considered a serious classroom possibility although it had long been recognized in government and business as the most effective way to get things done.

The fact that so much of this goes against common sense and common

You can’t teach holistically part time and still prove that it works. By its nature, holism works long range and all over at once.

ever have before. You cannot plan the subject matter students will talk, read, and write about in advance and still expect them to benefit from the chief advantage of wholes, the realistic context of meaning and motivation. Nor can you specifically schedule which students will be doing this or that type of discourse, because they don’t all need the same things, certainly not at the same times and in the same connections. Nor will they get the

learning experience gives some idea of the strength of this fear and of why the public and the profession have tolerated so long the huge abuses committed in the educational-industrial complex to maintain the particle approach. It’s not only good for business and bureaucracy, it safeguards our personal and societal state of mind from disruption by youth. We want the young to become literate so that they can carry on the business of the

world, but not so literate that they can investigate that world for themselves. But this very precaution has become a danger. If we don't empower the young to see and think for themselves early in life they may very well not be able to save this world we are trying to pass on.

The fear that students will take literacy in a direction we do not intend often takes an ethnocentric form called cultural literacy. The vain hope here is that if we just teach all students a minimal corpus of knowledge about "our heritage," they can keep it together. The problem is with "our" and the unspoken "their." This movement, strong now because America's pluralism and internationalism seem to threaten our unity, betrays a fear of "them," the losing of our children to other cultures, which can happen if students talk, read, and write in freedom. When you and I control the content of the curriculum so as to transmit "our" heritage, we call it *cultural literacy*; when people we don't

identify with do it, we call it censorship. In any case, the proposal to make sure all students know a certain modicum of facts, far from being new, dominates curricular theory, to the point of making school so unbearably arbitrary to many youngsters that they drop out of it. People who don't read, don't read the classics. And if we really want to transmit the essence of the Greek philosophers, then we should let students do what the Greeks did and go all out for free inquiry.

Notes

1. All described in James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner, *Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 4th ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational, 1991).
2. To exemplify a wide repertory of kinds of writing, I have anthologized samples of student writing from third grade into college in the four-volume series of *Active Voices* (Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1986-87); and samples of professional writing in *Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stories* and *Points of Departure: An Anthology of Non-fiction* (both in Mentor, New American Library/Penguin USA, 1966 and 1985 respectively).

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Further Reflections on the 1990 Chicago Conference

In the previous issue of this journal (Vol. 3 No. 4), we described the process that led to the Chicago Conference on "A Common Vision for Holistic Education," and presented the results of the conference, including the Chicago Statement, with some critical commentary. Other participants of the conference have been reflecting on the conference and its significance, and in this issue we present the thoughts of two of them.

Fred Reenstjerna and Ken Lebensold offer two quite different perspectives on the emerging holistic movement. Reenstjerna is acutely aware that important philosophical issues came up at Chicago but were not sufficiently addressed. He argues that these issues need to be examined critically if holistic education is to make a genuinely positive contribution to the solution of contemporary social problems. Lebensold, on the other hand, believes that there is already enough agreement around central holistic ideals for the movement to press forward now.

In other words, Reenstjerna emphasizes the need for greater clarity and coherence in our thinking, even if this takes time, while Lebensold emphasizes the urgency of getting the message out, even if it is not yet finely tuned. Certainly there is a tension, a dialectic, involved here: Holistic education does need to deal with its unresolved issues or it will risk becoming superficial — but it needs to do so promptly, or it will risk becoming irrelevant. The question before us is *how* to meet both needs. I invite responses to these provocative essays.

— R.M.

Some Critical Questions about Holistic Education

by Fred R. Reenstjerna

Fred R. Reenstjerna, a writer living in Roseburg, Oregon, is a member of the Institute for Research on Alternative Paradigms (Marshall University, Huntington, WV). His current projects include a book about research methods, to be published by G.K. Hall.

"Chicago. Where the World Comes to Trade."

That slogan shouted at me from an advertisement in O'Hare Airport, one of the busiest air terminals in the United States. It confirmed the appropriateness of entitling the declaration on holistic education drawn up at the Holistic Education Conference held here last year the Chicago Statement. Chicago embodies both the problems to be faced by education in the 21st century and the promises to be actualized by it.

Like the global social environment, Chicago is in transition from an industrial era to an informational one. Chicago, too, is appropriately multicultural. Its economy has been built by peoples of all continents, and its cultural life is a rich tapestry woven from ethnic traditions of music, dance, and literature.

Unfortunately, "Where the World Comes to Trade" was all too appropriate in another way as a slogan for the Holistic Education Conference. I felt out of place at the conference because I did not have a product to exchange —

I did not even have any preliminary market research. The Holistic Education Conference at times resembled a commodities exchange for the New Age, as vendors traded market leads, business cards, and entrepreneurial tips. (I remember one person exulting, "The Russians will buy *anything* right now!" and others exchanging ideas on mailing list marketing.)

There definitely is nothing wrong with money. However, all of us must be careful to recognize the inevitable, fundamental differences between the entrepreneurial/business worldview and the research or critical-inquisitive approach. Each approach will ask different questions, seek different answers, and operate within different boundaries when addressing how the external environment should be understood.

This fundamental difference between critical inquiry and entrepreneurship emerged frequently during the conference. Some individuals embraced the vernacular connotation of *critical* (to find fault), emphasizing that no one

could express any negative (i.e., critical) comments that might appear to question the ideas, products, or marketing techniques of conference participants. Such criticism, some people asserted, would give the appearance that we were less than a united front marching forth to claim the world for holistic education.

Critical has a far richer meaning than the vernacular fault finding, however. We speak of critical mass in an atomic reaction, we identify critical elements of an educational methodology — in short, we search for the most important elements of any complex system. Failure to question practices and beliefs, failure to understand the truly critical elements of holistic education, will ultimately cause this vital idea to be tossed onto the scrap-heap of educational fads. We cannot expect others to conduct this critical analysis of holistic education: We are the ones who must ask the questions and search for the answers.

Here is one example of a critical issue in holistic education: Why have two successful, working-class-oriented educational reform movements — Montessori and Waldorf — become (in the United States, especially) virtually synonymous with the emergent technocratic upper class? Maria Montessori had no dreams of producing technocratic *Uebermenschen* through her innovative educational plan. Quite to the contrary, she was deeply committed to mass education as a tool for individual actualization and societal enhancement. (Her first schools were for children in urban Italian slums.)

Conditions for the average factory worker in Germany in the 1920s could be as bleak intellectually as Montessori's Italian cities were economically. The impetus for the Waldorf movement was not a perceived need to develop the next generation of executives, but rather a need for effective mass education in an industrial setting. From this urban-industrial environment came a dynamic, effective program to develop the whole person through an interdisciplinary program that still seems as radical today as it did seven decades ago.

Why are not all schools in ghetto-like settings in the United States operating as Montessori or Waldorf schools, given the origins of both of those educational systems? What, if anything, went wrong? Is it the natural order of societal growth and change that any idea with intrinsic benefit must be co-opted by the forces in power in a society? If we cannot change historical inevitability, what do we think we are doing with holistic education? Must we be content to use its insights to train the "New Order" of techno-managers who will be working in global settings rather than national ones?

These are powerful questions. They are critical to the future of holistic education, and they influence the actual decisions we make. Consider, for example, the global communications network that was demonstrated at the conference. Today, anyone anywhere in the world with approximately \$7,500 can use their Macintosh computer, modem, and laser printer to talk with anyone else so equipped anywhere else in the world. When the per capita income in some U.S. states is about \$10,000, and when the per capita income of many nations in Africa is less than \$1,000, what does our network say about the globalization of a technocratic elite in the tradition of Montessori and

Waldorf? How many children (or teachers, for that matter) in Appalachia or Uganda are going to be connected to the global network? I am not asserting a global conspiracy to deprive the masses of quality education. Rather, I am asking — in the manner of a reasoned, critical inquirer, I hope — how we can expect the future to be any different from the past if we take no notice of historical developments.

I feel that the greatest potential contribution of holistic education is its emphasis on spirituality as a valued component of the learning process. More than environmental awareness, more than multiculturalism, this spiritual renewal of education is the key to human survival in the 21st century. As Oswald Spengler and others have pointed out, technology alone will never be the savior of modern civilization: Its linear answers to technical problems do not address the fundamental questions of human existence.

Industrial technology has been associated with Western culture for the past two centuries. This accident of history, however, should not obscure our awareness of the rich spiritual tradition inherent in the West. There are Western schools of belief that offer as much insight as Taoism, as much joy as Sufism, as much focus as Zen. I am concerned about the exclusive perspective on spirituality that was asserted by many conference participants, who appeared to believe that spirituality could occur only in a non-Western context. To ignore the spirituality of Western traditions is to deny ourselves and our students access to powerful tools for personal growth. To assert that spirituality can be found only in non-Western sources is an act of such ignorance that it calls into question the intellectual foundation of holistic education itself.

How can we claim to be inclusive, when we deny a significant manifestation of spiritual expression? It is as though a mathematician created some number that was "infinity less one" — an absurdity. Either we are all-inclusive, or we are selective, in our emphasis on spirituality in holistic education. If we choose to be selective, let us at least admit that, rather than claiming adherence to some paradigm of inclusivity when we are not inclusive.

The irony of this non-inclusive attitude was that our very meeting place had originated as an institution to train Roman Catholic priests and brothers devoted to sharing their own spiritual experiences with others. Perhaps the Western way appears to some to confuse religiosity with spirituality (a phenomenon unfortunately common to all established religions), or perhaps ideas often seem clearer to the convert (even those ideas that were extant but unobserved in the convert's original belief system). For whatever reason, the question of inclusive spirituality versus exclusive spirituality is another critical issue for everyone interested in holistic education.

On balance, my impression of the Holistic Education Conference is a collage of images and questions. There is much truth and much genuine substance in the ambitious expressions of the Chicago Statement. At the same time, there are searching questions — critical questions — drawn from the history of educational ideas and the nature of spiritual inclusiveness that must be addressed if the movement is to achieve its goals. We must not fail future generations by refusing to evaluate and explore the implications of our actions.

Viewpoints on Holistic Education

by Ken Lebensold

*Ken Lebensold began as a pure mathematician, receiving a Ph.D. from MIT in 1969. Later he shifted his focus to education, and in the past two years has been writing a book, *What's Possible in Education*, and responding to inquiries regarding education for Fritjof Capra's Elmwood Institute. He is now working at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California.*

As an outgrowth of the Chicago Holistic Education Conference (May 31–June 3, 1990), a group of us (the “Networking” group) undertook to create an organization or network with explicit goals and projects reflecting the philosophy of the Conference participants, and to invite others to become part of this network, now called the Global Alliance for Transforming Education. We agreed to write several articles that could be used to convey to others the nature of our vision. This article describes the identified points of agreement and disagreement about holistic education among those at the conference.

The focus of the conference was to identify agreements rather than discuss differences. A “mission” group composed the Chicago Statement on Education which we unanimously approved. This statement may be thought of as a tentative “charter” for our network. However, we are more connected by a common vision than by fixed principles, and we would presumably welcome anyone who shared that vision. That is, our points of agreement represent an effort at communication rather than exclusion.

Since important issues on which there was no consensus were not raised formally, I am piecing them together based primarily on informal conversations held during and after the conference. The description of each issue is followed by an approach to resolving it, reflecting my own thinking on the issue. These approaches are intended as starting points for discussion, not definitive solutions.

The first area relates to the subject of this article itself. Some people felt that the conference, in its efforts to build a common base for further action, unduly limited the opportunities for exploring areas of disagreement. The conference is over, but the degree to which we should engage in philosophical debate remains, itself, debatable.

My feeling is that there is a certain urgency to making holistic education an important player in educational politics. The existing system is beleaguered, and talk of restructuring is commonplace. If we wish to influence this process, we must act quickly.

The Chicago Statement suggests we have an adequate basis for action, which must be our priority. As we proceed with various projects, many choices will have to be made, and if a project is to retain its vitality, everyone involved will have to feel comfortable with these choices. Often, this will involve discussion of hard issues on which there is not general agreement. The purpose of such discussion will not be merely to deepen theoretical understanding, nor to win everyone over to a single viewpoint, but to make a decision that all can agree is the best the group can do at that time. This may require mental and verbal skills that are in fairly short supply.

Some day soon, of course, the vision of holistic education will be as widely accepted as the perspectives of traditional

education are now. At that time, extensive debate and criticism may well be necessary to deepen our thinking, incorporate our experience, and adapt to new circumstances.

This very process can be seen in the environmental movement: despite fundamental philosophical differences among environmentalists, the general public has little difficulty identifying an environmentalist or knowing what he or she stands for. At the same time, “greens” must continually confront hard questions in order to clarify their goals and expand their influence.

The second issue involves the tension between *spiritual awareness* and *political action*.

Those who emphasize the former say that a person’s political influence can only be as good as he or she is. What comes to mind is the oft-repeated statement that a peace activist cannot be effective if his or her actions reflect anger or hate.

Those who emphasize the latter say that spiritual work is purely personal and has negligible effect on the state of the world. Some deny the existence of a source of wisdom greater than the individual mind altogether, concluding that spiritual “practice” amounts to mere avoidance of responsibility.

Holistic educators generally deplore the separation of knowledge into “subjects,” arguing that all knowledge is interconnected. I would make the same argument about spirituality and politics: They are not separate. Every action reflects a source — something which caused the individual to choose that action over alternatives, and every action, however simple, has an influence on the world. Whether we are concerned with our own behavior as agents of social change, or with how students learn to become effective world citizens, any attempt to deny or play down the political or spiritual perspective will weaken us (and our students) as individuals and agents of change.

Certainly, the spiritual people appear to follow a game plan that is very different from that of the political people. The former speak of unconditional love and the brotherhood of humankind, while the latter wish to correct injustice and oppression. Yet what does not include concern for human suffering can hardly be called love, nor can any action born only of human perception and bias rely on being just. If either perspective rejects the other, it is being untrue to itself and will not accomplish anything of value. Let us educate our children to respect and develop both their political and spiritual selves, and the two will no longer be seen as competing, but will become one.

Individual and society

A third area of disagreement involves the tension between individual freedom and social harmony. Some

individual acts have a harmful effect on the community. The traditional remedy is to have enforceable laws that restrain such acts. This view recognizes an inherent conflict between the individual and society. As a result, it must always deal with concepts I find disturbing, such as rebellion, sacrifice, compromise, and law enforcement.

Holistic thinkers reject this method, believing that reliance on force not only restricts freedom, but destroys the bonds of love and respect that are necessary for a truly harmonious society. We believe that in such a society, members would have a deep affinity for their community and would not consider any action that might hurt the group to be in their own interest. Such actions would then rarely if ever occur. Rules might exist to clarify the group's purpose or facilitate its day-to-day operations, but the concept of enforcement would not have its customary punitive affect, if it existed at all. There are many examples of tribes, intentional communities, and other social groups and networks that function in this way.

For example, holistic educators generally agree that authoritarianism in schools is harmful, from the point of view of either the individual or the collective. Yet to pass laws requiring schools to give students and teachers more freedom is a contradiction in terms; we are simply shifting the locus of coercion from others to ourselves. When A.S. Neill founded Summerhill, he designed it so that staff and students would all be loved and respected as individuals and it would function as a participatory democracy. There were rules, and sanctions for breaking them, but these sanctions were born and applied out of a concern for justice and education, not blame and punishment.

Just as a society, through fear of destructive actions by its members, can create the harsh environment in which such actions thrive, so too an individual, through fear that he can only be an effective member of a harmonious society by sacrificing his freedom, may resist joining a group that can accomplish much more than any individual. There was

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an undercurrent at the conference that the attempt to develop a solid, common, emotional, and intellectual base for unified action was in and of itself a threat to individual freedom of thought, a sort of benign brainwashing. Groups can subvert the minds of their members to a group purpose, but they can also expand those minds so they see more possibilities and fewer limitations than before.

I believe that individual freedom and social harmony flower under the same conditions. Once we accept this premise, we are playing a different game. We no longer seek a set of rules that produce a good society if honored, but rather the bonds between people that will naturally result

in cooperation. These bonds are common values that increase when shared, thereby matching the interests of any citizen with all others. Such values include friendship, beauty, love, and personal accomplishment (but not the accumulation of private wealth).

As educators, we are connected by a common "holistic" vision or philosophy. Perhaps we are part of the Waldorf community, or use Lozanov's techniques. Some of us may see ourselves as "individualists," who value personal style. There is no reason why any holistic education community should restrict these personal characteristics. It can, rather, free us from seeing ourselves *exclusively* in those terms.

Another question is whether to work with the business community in seeking educational change. Large corporations are becoming increasingly involved in educational reform and, of course, possess important resources, including money. Misgivings arise because big business is dedicated to a fundamentally different philosophy, valuing profit and competition.

This conflict reflects others as well: whether to exclude those whose goals differ from ours, when a key element of our vision is inclusivity; and how to be effective in a world where money breeds influence but is not readily available for social change.

My view is that working with big business makes sense to the extent that such projects support our vision without compromise; there are numerous practical and theoretical reasons for this. The real problem is to choose our work carefully, keeping "one eye on the world as it is, and one on the world as we envision it."

Of direct concern to educators is the propriety of teaching and promoting holistic thinking when not everyone agrees it is correct. This seems to me more a question of practice than theory. All teachers transmit their belief systems to their students; I have yet to hear anyone seriously propose that this can or should be avoided. Our job is to acknowledge this, and to seek broad acceptance that interconnectedness and other "holistic" concepts are appropriate patterns of thought for the schools, without claiming that we are in sole possession of the "truth."

Another issue that seems to have the potential to divide us is whether to focus on general improvement of education or on providing minorities, "at-risk" students, etc., greater equality.

Once again, I cannot see how either of these goals can be seriously pursued without the other. Quality education for only a portion of the population teaches inequality and therefore cannot be considered good education by a holistic educator. On the other hand, simply transferring resources from advantaged to disadvantaged groups affirms that equality for the disadvantaged can only be accomplished at the expense of the advantaged. Any vision of education that accepts the premise that any student's human potential must be limited or sacrificed is not, to me, holistic.

Reviewing the items in this article, it strikes me that our areas of disagreement do not present a serious obstacle to our most urgent task: to create and promote a new set of images for education. Fine tuning will follow. Now is the time to emphasize strategy, and let philosophy play a supporting role.

Book Reviews

Coming on Center: Essays in English Education (Second Edition)

by James Moffett
Published by
Boynton/Cook-Heinemann
(70 Court St., Portsmouth,
NH 03801)
1988; 208 pages; paperback

Reviewed by Ron Miller

As these superb essays amply demonstrate, James Moffett has been advocating a democratic, learner-centered, spiritually influenced approach to education in his writings and lectures since the mid-1960s. Yet incredibly, in my extensive research on the history of holistic education, I never came across his work or even references to it! Apparently he did not receive the attention given to other dissident educators of his generation — Herb Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, John Holt, etc. — even though his work is at least as important as theirs, and in some ways more explicitly holistic. I am pleased to bring Moffett's ideas into the *Review*, not only here but in his original article in this issue, "Holistic Language Arts."

Moffett's central concern is the acquisition of language arts as an organic, personal, meaningful process. In his extensive discussions of "inner speech" (the stream of consciousness or "subjective inner life" of the individual), Moffett demonstrates that reading and writing can be powerful tools for achieving self-awareness as well as a critical awareness of the world. But in order to do so, they need to be taught as coherent forms of self-discipline which the learner freely takes on — precisely like meditation — and not as isolated "skills" constantly measured by mechanistic testing.

The meaning of a literary experience cannot be 'objectively' tested because it is not a merely semantic matter.... The cumulative and holistic effect of a great

literary work is, significantly, nonverbal ... *ineffable*, unutterable, as critics have said of *King Lear* and *Moby Dick*. By contrast, school efforts to teach and test 'reading comprehension' constantly betray the assumption that texts have but one meaning and that anyone reading correctly will discover that meaning. (p. 183)

Here, as in many passages throughout the book, Moffett provides important philosophical foundations for the *whole language* approach. (It is only natural that Boynton/Cook, a leading publisher for the whole language movement, put out this book.) Indeed, Moffett has been advocating whole language, without using the name, for almost thirty years.

The famous problems of learning to read and write so plaguing public schools are not *learning* problems at all, but *institutional* problems. Learning to read and write is far easier than learning to speak, being merely a media shift from ear to eye, but *appears* much more difficult when attempted in school.... [Learning to read and write] occurs as an organic part of total language experience. (pp. 21, 26)

But *Coming on Center* is not just for English teachers; beyond his excellent treatment of whole language principles in the teaching of reading, writing, and literature, Moffett launches into a thoughtful and thought-provoking critique of the nature of education in modern culture, addressing issues of concern to all educators. I don't know how many whole language people have as perceptive and radical an understanding of American education as Moffett provides here. He argues that public schooling is part of the "educational-industrial complex," serving the requirements of industry (particularly the defense industry) rather than the needs of individual learners.

Traditional schooling has shown no respect for writing [as a genuinely self-expressive activity], exploiting composition instruction as a way to service its testing system and as a way to spawn the pencil-pushers required to stock all those clerical jobs in industry and government, where you do not want thinkers. You just want people who have passed minimal standards — can read just well enough to follow direc-

tions and write just well enough to take dictation. (p. 84)

Moffett traces the roots of this technocratic reductionism to deep cultural sources. One is a nationalistic "mystique" — an obsession with "the values of Western civilization" and other slogans (we might add "cultural literacy") that serve to distinguish the national identity from foreign and alternative worldviews. Another source is the adult generation's strong desire to control the lives of the young. Moffett analyzes this tendency in the book's powerful closing essay, "Hidden Impediments to Improving English Teaching." He asserts that

both laity and educators fear the liberation of thought and behavior that students would achieve if talking, reading, and writing were taught most effectively — that is, if these powerful tools were freely given to youngsters for their personal investigation.... The public wants schools to prepare youngsters for jobs and roles such as it grew up among. It wants to perpetuate a world it understands, a world limited to a particular era and culture. This is, of course, the real meaning of "back to basics." (p. 200)

Moffett observes that many people favor a phonetic approach to reading instruction because it safely achieves a functional level of literacy while preventing a truly critical exploration of the deeper, more personal meanings in written texts.

Moffett offers a different conception of education, arguing that "Growth means change.... Even to know if or how he wants to change, the individual has to be at least partly awakened from the hypnosis of acculturation." For Moffett, "education ... should foster human evolution" (p. 95). Consequently, he is highly critical of the technocratic mentality underlying public schooling. In these essays, he blames the materialistic, analytic orientation of the educational-industrial complex for breaking learning into disintegrated bits and "skills." In the early 1970s, for instance, he opposed a program instituting "behavioral objectives" because of its "constant focus upon the child":

No one has ever tried to measure the incalculable negative effects of keeping children perpetually under this kind of

spotlight and of regarding them as score-sources while they are trying to grow up. This is not education but child molestation. (p. 11)

This is a ringing denunciation of the entire reductionistic thrust of modern schooling; it is the classic holistic argument that children cannot grow up normally in a system that seeks to mold them for its own limited ends. And Moffett, like all holistic educators, places a higher priority on normal human development than on the maintenance of institutions. He calls for a genuine individualization of instruction, by which he means allowing students significant choices in their learning, as well as meaningful experiences outside the confines of the classroom.

High-quality education requires that students circulate freely through the society they will one day run and critique it under the auspices of those who are currently running it. (p. 206)

He also advocates cooperative, small-group processes in the classroom, and a substantial decentralization of decision making on curriculum and policy.

Furthermore, it is extremely dangerous to buy curricula, especially since they are packaged by large corporations, which, in today's business world, are increasingly amoral. (p. 207)

According to Moffett, we must finally recognize that American society is an increasingly diverse mixture of ethnic groups and subcultures — that the "melting pot" is a myth. Once we admit this, he says, we will accept the need to destandardize curricula and textbooks, and we will begin to truly individualize learning in order to meet the expectations of these various communities. I think this is an important point; as I have written elsewhere, only by turning our focus away from cultural homogenization and toward the development of diverse human potentials, can we reduce the social and political conflicts over public education.¹

Underlying Moffett's critique is a holistic view of education, which he expresses quite clearly. As early as 1973, he was writing passages like these:

Learning is organic in the true sense of being a live organization, a system of

interrelationships. Further learning is *reorganization*. It may be handy to speak of *parts* of an organism, but to try to isolate them out *in actual practice* is a mad scientist's kind of fatal play.... The program I have been working on attempts to restore wholeness — whether it is the totality of the writing act, the interrelation of reading with speaking and writing, the continuity of personal life with school life, the unity of will and action, or the integrity of individual growth. (pp. 23, 24)

Comparing different methods of teaching reading (phonics, look-say, whole language), he comments that "the wholes teach the parts, not the

education for conscious attunement to both. (p. 127)

It is because of this spiritual perspective that holistic education seeks to free the inner life of each learner from the dictates of curriculum, testing, and "cultural literacy."

"I bear within me the exemplar of the human condition," said Montaigne. Descending deep enough within, the essayist links up personal with universal, self with Self. (p. 86)

In essence, Moffett wants to provide every student with opportunities to be an essayist, an explorer of the inner

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other way around, because the whole is larger and contains the parts" (p. 35). Later he says that "the main movement of growth is differentiation within an integrated whole. The whole is always there" (p. 51).

In my understanding of holism (which is disputed by some educators²), a *spiritual* orientation is essential. That is, unless we recognize that the deepest meaning of the universe, the largest, most inclusive Whole of all, is beyond the grasp of language and "rational" thought, then we are not holistic but more narrowly humanistic. Moffett supports this position:

I believe we'll soon have to expand our ideas of human growth beyond the ordinarily visible world until they embrace the full evolution of consciousness that we're really involved in. (p. 50) People are at once both human and what we call divine, that is, they participate in the social subsystem which in turn participates in the total cosmic system. The new stage of evolution at which we are arriving demands

life, rather than merely a test-taker or pencil-pusher.

The author also calls attention to the neglected but brilliant insights of Rudolf Steiner, and in a remarkable chapter ("Writing, Inner Speech, and Meditation" — chapter 9), he probes seriously into the meaning and process of meditation. He is a student of yoga and several times discusses the teachings of his guru. Still, he is cautious about discussing spirituality

because many people turn off at what seems to them spooky or religious, especially when earning their daily bread means getting kids to score well on tests of meaningless fragments. (p. 50)

I have devoted this much space to this one book, and quoted it so extensively, because I am genuinely excited to have discovered a holistic educator who has been laboring in relative obscurity all these years. (Moffett did achieve some notoriety when a reading program he had designed was

attacked and boycotted in West Virginia several years ago — in fact, he recently published a book about this experience — but I am more concerned with the influence of his holistic thinking, which until now has been negligible.) Moffett's understanding of education, and of its relationship to the larger culture, resonates completely with my own. The last two sentences of *Coming on Center* make the same point that I have tried to convey in most of my own writings:

Most educators already have a good idea of how learning stands to be improved and deeply long to make significant changes. Inasmuch as the obstacles involve our relationship with the society that commissions us to teach its youth, it is with that society that we must work out solutions. (p. 208)

Amen.

Notes

1. Editorial essay on "New Goals for Education" in *New Directions in Education: Selections from Holistic Education Review* (Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1991). For an excellent discussion of the inevitable political conflict in modern public education, see Stephen Arons, *Compelling Belief: The Culture of American Schooling* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1983).
2. See, for example, "What is Holism in Education? Correspondence Between Miller and Corsini," *Holistic Education Review* 3, no. 1 (Spring, 1990), pp. 21-28.

Learning All the Time

by John Holt
Published by Addison Wesley
(Reading, MA)
1989; 169 pages; \$15.95 hardcover

Child's Work: Taking Children's Choices Seriously

by Nancy Wallace
Published by Holt Associates
(2269 Massachusetts Ave.,
Cambridge, MA 02140)
1990; 153 pages; \$12.95 paperback

Reviewed by Ron Miller

There needs to be more contact between holistic educators and the rapidly growing homeschooling community. These two grass-roots

movements share some important common goals, and they have a great deal to offer each other. I realized this anew after reading these two recent books expressing the educational philosophy of John Holt.

Holt was an acutely sensitive and careful observer of child development. Shunning all preestablished psychological theories or pedagogical systems, he simply loved being with children, playing with them, learning with them — and he recorded his experiences and observations in some of the wisest books ever written on the process of learning. Holt's powerful advocacy of children's natural learning and growth made him the mentor of the emerging homeschooling movement in the 1970s; his organization, Holt Associates, with its newsletter, *Growing Without Schooling*, has inspired thousands of homeschooling families.

Learning All the Time is made up of short lectures and articles by Holt, which he started assembling into a book before his death in 1985. It focuses on young children (preschoolers, if I may use that phrase in this context) and considers how they learn about the world spontaneously, naturally, and joyfully when given room to explore and discover. The core of Holt's philosophy is expressed in these passages:

Children are born passionately eager to make as much sense as they can of things around them. The process by which children turn experience into knowledge is exactly the same, point for point, as the process by which those whom we call scientists make scientific knowledge.... Children do not *acquire* knowledge, but *make* it ... by observing, wondering, theorizing, and then testing and revising these theories. (pp. 95, 102)

Learning, then, is a passionate quest for *meaning*, not a passive accumulation of facts or skills. Holt suggests that children's learning is indeed *holistic*: "Children are not only philosophers; they are cosmologists, they're inventors of myths, of religions — literally" (p. 156). For Holt, the adult does have an important role in the learning process, as a facilitator and experienced resource, but true teaching serves the child's quest for meaning; the adult must not come into the

learning encounter with a prearranged set of expectations or lessons.

How, then, will children learn what they need to know in this complex modern world? Holt answers that children will simply *want* to know whatever is important to the adults in their lives. Any caring adult can help young children discover their world. So *Learning All the Time* is divided into sections on reading and writing, numbers, science and music, giving concrete observations and suggestions for enabling children to learn in each of these areas. While Holt would not pin a methodological label on his work, his approach has much in common with the principles of the whole language movement:

What we must do in helping anyone learn to read is to make very clear that writing is an extension of speech, that beyond every written word there is a human voice speaking, and that reading is the way to hear what those voices are saying. (p. 31)

Holt rejects the compartmentalization of language learning into "skills" and phonetic bits, and asserts that in a language-rich environment, literacy takes about thirty hours of practice to acquire. "Learning to read is easy," he concludes; it is the fragmentation of language into school-related tasks, which eradicates its meaning, that turns reading from an extension of natural abilities into an obstacle.

In other passages (for example, when he discusses self-correction of errors and manipulative math materials), Holt restates key aspects of the Montessori educational approach. He mentions Montessori only in passing, for he clearly seeks to avoid hardening his approach into a *method*. But the underlying philosophy is very similar, and understandably so: Maria Montessori's work grew out of her own painstaking observation of children, and the principles of human development are universally valid.

Holt is at his best in the closing chapter, where he criticizes the very foundations of public educational practice.

Schools ... have always operated under the wonderfully convenient rule that when learning takes place, the school deserves the credit ("If You Can Read, Thank a Teacher"); and that when it doesn't, the students get the blame.

The blame used to be parceled out in plain English ("It's because they're lazy")... More recently, however, educators have found another explanation for lack of learning: "learning disabilities." (p. 150)

Holt argues that these "disabilities" are intimately related to the *stress* and *fear* that children experience in school. Like previous progressive educators (Francis Parker, Caroline Pratt and, again, Montessori come to mind), Holt asserts that children engage the world with enthusiasm unless their natural curiosity is squelched.

A child only pours herself into a little funnel or into a little box when she's afraid of the world — when she's been defeated. But when a child is doing something she's passionately interested in, she grows like a tree — in all directions. (p. 156)

Nancy Wallace's *Child's Work*, a reflection on her own children's natural education at home, supports this view of learning. Deeply respected as

keystone of her entire method; and, in brilliant passages in her writings, Montessori argued, just like Wallace, that children's activities are really very serious *work* — their attempts to make meaning of the world — which adults must treat with utmost respect. Like Holt, Wallace makes statements about literacy that echo whole language theory: She observes that Ishmael and Vita "learn to read and write the way they learned to speak" (p. 48). A little later, in her description of Vita's artistic temperament and her habit of "making a picture out of every letter she wrote" (p. 57), Wallace could easily be speaking as a Waldorf teacher!

In other words, John Holt was not the first educator to reject the authoritarian, life-denying rigidity of conventional schooling. Modern home schoolers did not invent child-centered learning, which, can, after all, take place in schools. But home schoolers do offer an important perspective; many of them have firsthand experience with the arrogant profes-

reminds us that it is not our methods, nor our special training, nor our presumed expertise that sets holistic education apart from conventional education. The essence of any holistic approach is a loving concern for young people and a genuine respect for their individuality. Any truly caring adult, even if unfamiliar with the philosophical roots of holistic education, even without our methods, materials, techniques, or jargon, may be a genuine teacher and trusted friend of young people. Home schoolers remind us that our roots are not in our methodologies or philosophies, but deeper — in our human identity. If our methods do not lead us back to this essence, then we become arrogant professionals too. The message which Holt and Wallace send to us is *humility*: In the face of the miracle of human development, we must relinquish our reliance on expertise and technique. We must *see* our children for who they are.

On the other hand, I think holism could offer a lot to the homeschooling movement, too — specifically, more conceptual clarity and, in the long run, a stronger and more unifying philosophical base. Holism involves a recognition of the multiple *contexts* of human life. Holistic thinking starts, as do Holt, Wallace, and other child-centered educators, by respecting the individuality of the student. But I think we have a much richer, fuller understanding of the source of this individuality, and of its significance. Holism sees the unfolding person as a unique manifestation of a spontaneously creative cosmic energy, a life force that transcends our social and cultural limitations. This is the *spiritual* context of human life, which may be understood either in traditional religious terms or in the more empirical language of depth psychology.

Holt and Wallace simply accept children's self-unfoldment at face value, as a given, and never inquire into its deeper source and significance. It is simply common sense to them that children will develop creatively and naturally when treated with respect. They are not wrong, but such common sense does not carry much weight in our culture, which is far more interested in economic productivity and patriotism than in

When a child is doing something she's passionately interested in, she grows like a tree — in all directions. — John Holt

individuals with their own temperaments, likes and dislikes, and ways of learning, Wallace's children Ishmael and Vita have developed into talented, creative, voraciously curious young people. Wallace worked closely with John Holt and endorses his attitude toward learning. In this book she argues that children do not need to be "socialized" through imposed disciplines and academic tasks; they will achieve maturity at their own organic rhythm and pace through the self-discipline of their own chosen activities, if provided with adult *respect* and *encouragement*.

Like Holt, Wallace expresses views that could have come directly from earlier educational pioneers — but without recognizing these affinities. For example, in a fine opening chapter called "Seeing Our Children," Wallace emphasizes the importance of careful observation in truly understanding our children. Once again, it was Maria Montessori who made observation *the*

sionalism of modern educational practice, and they remind us what can happen when learning is taken out of the context of a caring human relationship.

Unfortunately, most schools, where the traditional teacher/student relationship prevails, are no different from hospitals, or any institution, for that matter, based on the inequality inherent in a professional/client relationship. From the time they enter school, children are expected to submit to the supposedly greater competence and authority of their teachers rather than encouraged to use their teachers' skill and knowledge in whatever ways make sense to them. (p. 21)

Schools, says Wallace, thus "teach children to mistrust their own intuition, by ignoring and ... even discouraging the child's highly experimental learning process" (p. 51).

It is important for holistic educators to hear this message (even though we would easily assent to it), because it

human development; indeed, child-centered educators have always been dismissed as simpleminded romantics by our culture. *Holism, however, offers a powerful critique of this culture* by recognizing that self-unfoldment is more than a romantic fantasy and actually represents the creative and purposeful evolution of the universe: Human development is thus more primary and more essential than *any* cultural prejudice or indoctrination. Child-centered educators argue that children *should* be given the freedom and respect in which to thrive; holism demonstrates that children *must* be enabled to thrive if we are to carry out our true purpose as a species, which lies beyond the limitations of our culture. This is a much stronger foundation for person-centered education to stand upon.

Holism asks fundamental questions about education. What is the ultimate point of it? What is the purpose of the careers or adult lifestyles that young people aspire to? How can young people deal with the global/environmental context of modern life, which is a critical (literally, life or death) issue facing the young generation today? Neither Holt nor Wallace address such questions. Wallace is rightfully very proud of her children's discipline, talent, and ambition as artist/musicians. But what is the artist's role during an uncertain period of cultural transformation? Even further, if the planet becomes uninhabitable within the next 25 years (which is a real possibility), there will be no need for art or music at all! This is not to argue that Ishmael and Vita should abandon their love of art and become environmental activists; but we know that most young people today are grappling with the terrifying prospect that they won't have much of a future, and they need us adults to talk with them openly about their fear.¹ Wallace gives no indication that this crucial issue has been addressed at all in her children's education; their artistic development seems to take place in a global and societal vacuum.

Wallace does address the social (interpersonal/communal) context of human development, but her position troubles me. Holism recognizes that true individuality goes hand-in-hand with interdependence, connection,

and fellowship. Individualism without empathy, compassion, or love represents an imbalance — indeed, it means alienation and fragmentation. In their desire to resist the forced and unhealthy socialization of public schooling, it seems to me that home schoolers need to be careful not to swing to the opposite extreme. Unfortunately, I find Wallace gravitating to, and then justifying, just such an isolating individualism. Although she has clearly given a lot of thought to the issue, and done what she sincerely thinks is best, I am troubled by her dismissal of what she calls her children's "so-called social lives" (p. 116).

In a chapter on "Choosing Friendships," Wallace makes it appear that her children were too deeply involved in their important artistic development, too mature, too serious, to have conventional friendships with their peers. They have pen pals and close relationships with their mentors and music teachers, but overall, "Ishmael and Vita preferred to play with each other or to hang around with Bob and me" (p. 121). I think something is missing in Wallace's description of her children's lives. Their development seems largely one-dimensional: In passage after passage, the author shows us how extremely bright, talented, sophisticated, and inventive they are. After a while, I found myself thinking (especially in regard to Ishmael) "Enough already!" Ishmael is depicted as a brilliant student of music who discusses modern composers and reads serious adult literature, but he also comes across as a conceited know-it-all who has an answer for everything. There is almost no evidence that he is a kind, loving, or compassionate person. (Obviously, I do not know the real Ishmael, only his mother's portrayal of him. It is that portrayal, Wallace's judgment about what is important to describe, that is at issue here.)

I want to pursue this a little further. Wallace states at one point that her children are actually "profoundly accepting and caring" (p. 131), but this assessment is simply not supported by any of her other descriptions; instead, the children come across as profoundly self-absorbed and more than a little compulsive. Any friendships they do have are shown to be

instrumental, utilitarian, and calculated; there is very little sense of human warmth in them. In this vein, I think it is significant that Ishmael's first-grade teacher (He was in school for one unhappy year before being pulled out) had called him "the most violent child she had ever met" (p. 77). Although Wallace does not address this charge (perhaps we are to assume that the fault lay entirely with the school environment, including the teacher), Wallace herself provides corroboration for the observation: In five different passages (pp. 14, 77, 115, 118, 119), some taken from Ishmael's own journal, we see a young boy highly preoccupied with violence and warfare, especially when children of his own age are involved. Certainly all children have healthy fantasies around the archetype of war, and it is possible that I am reading too much into these passages, but they stand out for me because they seem to be symptomatic of a young child whose "so-called social life" has been pushed into the background to make way for accelerated intellectual and artistic development.

I raise these issues in order to make two points. First, while intellectual or artistic excellence is certainly a worthy goal, we need to recognize, as Rudolf Steiner so well pointed out, that there is a developmental cost in pursuing it at too early an age. Holism values balanced, well-rounded development rather than excessive specialization. Human excellence ought to come before excellence in particular skills. Second, we need to recognize that our influence as adults is more subtle and pervasive than we are willing to admit, especially when we desire to be "child-centered." Clearly the Wallaces respect their children and have given them a nourishing learning environment, but the author appears to believe that her children *spontaneously* chose their sophisticated intellectual/artistic paths, with little adult prompting or modelling, when it is obvious that Wallace and her husband are serious intellectuals themselves, who place a high value on such things. Surely their home environment bears *some* responsibility for the children wanting to "hang around" with their parents rather than with their less mature peers.

This has turned out to be a rather harsh book review, but I am not making a blanket criticism of Wallace's efforts (or of homeschooling in general). I was interested in this book because I fully support her philosophy of "taking children's choices seriously," and I applaud home schoolers for making such a dedicated attempt (often in the face of social and legal opposition) to treat children with this respect. It is because I sympathize with her aims that I felt disappointed by some of her conclusions. I honestly believe that a more holistic perspective would have given Wallace a broader and deeper understanding of the issues I raised. Just as home schoolers have a lot to teach holistic educators about caring and humility, so can holistic educators help home schoolers think more carefully about some of the complex and subtle issues involved in human development. Our movements complement each other. It would help all of our efforts if we would give each other some friendly criticism.

Note

1. See, for example, Shelley Kessler, "The Mysteries Program: Educating Adolescents for Today's World," *Holistic Education Review* 3, no. 4 (Winter, 1990), pp. 10-9.

Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning: Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning

by Donald W. Oliver with
Kathleen Waldron Gershman
Published by State University of
New York Press
(Albany, New York)
1989

Reviewed by Jack Miller

Oliver and Gershman have written a challenging book that provides a unique vision of holistic education. The book begins with a powerful critique of modernity and argues that our culture is dominated by the metaphor of the machine. As an alternative the authors propose three complemen-

tary metaphors: the *dance*, the *living organism*, and the *machine*. According to the authors, "the dance is the metaphor of spirit, of transitoriness"; living organism is the metaphor of "self-organization and exchange"; while the machine is the metaphor for planning and developing a blueprint. Oliver and Gershman argue that the three metaphors need to be in balance in our culture instead of being dominated by the metaphor of the machine.

The book is rooted in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Central to this philosophy is the notion of *cosmology* and *cosmological thinking*. Cosmological thinking deals with the natural world in a scientific manner but goes beyond empiricism to speculate about "the origins of life, and why things are created and perish" as well as the "nature of a good society" (p. 57). This thinking, however, is also connected to personal meaning and action, as the cosmologist pursues inquiry with a sense of "existential urgency" as to how one should conduct one's own life. Process cosmology, rooted in Whitehead's worldview, sees "all creation as a flow, the dissolution of one occasion in the becoming of another" (p. 115). The universe is not viewed, then, in terms of cause and effect relations, but as an organic self-creating process. Important to this cosmology and the authors' view of education is the notion of *occasion*. Occasion, for Whitehead, is the ultimate creature of the universe and arises through interactions and interrelations.

Oliver and Gershman describe their view of process education, which contains a number of elements, such as being, self, learning, language, power, knowing, space, time, and change. All of these elements are to be considered in the development of novel occasion which is a central feature of process education. According to the authors,

The language of Western modernity would say: "The teacher teaches science to the student." In process terms, we would say that the teacher and student and blackboard and chalk are all doing science; all are part of a common occasion, sharing different aspects of it. (p. 163)

Occasions can only be anticipated in a general way, rather than specifi-

cally planned because they arise naturally. During an occasion we feel mutually engaged and it is usually only after the occasion has occurred that we can begin to reflect on it. Ideally, education should become a series of occasions that reflect the mutual intention of student and teacher. Teaching might, then, begin with the question "How might we have a novel and fulfilling occasion?"

Process education also seeks to develop different levels of knowing which may range from

simple vague feelings of discomfort to intuition; to the imaginative translation of feelings and intuition into images, stories, theories, and a sense of history, and then to the critical analysis of stories, theory, and history through philosophy and metaphysics. (p. 181)

Finally, there is "deep knowing" which involves the development of meaning.

The final section of the book surveys various educational approaches and relates them to process education. After developing a powerful case for process education, I found this to be the weakest part of the book. For example, the authors review holistic education and Waldorf education. Oliver and Gershman claim that holistic education is still rooted in modernity's notion of individual perfection. Clearly, the authors have not been examining the current literature on holistic education as found in this journal or in my own work,¹ which articulates a view of holistic education based on the concept of an interconnected reality. I also found the criticisms of Waldorf education superficial. The authors believe Waldorf education is closer to modernity in its "ritualized education practices." Certainly some followers of Steiner may have ritualized his thought, but to quickly dismiss an approach which has become the largest independent school movement in the world so quickly does not do justice to Steiner, nor to the Waldorf movement. At least Steiner gives us a *practice* of holistic education, which Oliver and Gershman do not. In a day of accountability I feel that educators seeking to develop holistic practice will need more guidance than Whitehead cosmology and the notion of occasion. In

my view, holistic educators need both perspectives (e.g., a cosmology) and practices. If we only offer a cosmology and very little practice, there is little chance that holistic education can be actualized. Oliver and Gershman have written a powerful and inspiring text. I hope that they may soon supplement it with various descriptions of how process education might be actualized in different contexts.

Note

1. *The Holistic Curriculum* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1988); Jack Miller with J.R. Bruce Cassie and Susan M. Drake, *Holistic Learning: A Teacher's Guide to Integrated Studies* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1990).

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The Promise of Theory: Education and the Politics of Cultural Change

by C.A. Bowers
Published by Teachers
College Press
(1234 Amsterdam Ave.,
New York 10027); 1984

Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education

by C.A. Bowers
Published by Teachers
College Press, 1987

Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture and Thought

by C.A. Bowers and David J. Flinders
Published by Teachers
College Press, 1990

Reviewed by Kathleen Hatley

Most critics of Western liberal-technocratic culture and the technical forms of education which it has spawned generally fall into one of two ideological camps: the child-centered "neo-Romantic" educators, or the more politically oriented neo-Marxists. Both groups support the notion of progressive social change, but child-centered educators generally place the locus of such transformation in the individual, while the latter focus primarily on the reconstruction, through democratic participation, of social structures. C.A. Bowers develops a critique of all three of these approaches (the technical, the child-centered, and the neo-Marxist) that suggests that they share a commitment to the same "trajectory" of cultural evolution (modernism) which has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster. His theories, developed in these three ground-breaking books, add an important dimension to holistic thought.

Drawing upon complex ideas from the sociology of knowledge, cultural anthropology, and linguistics, as well as ecological thought, Bowers guides us into an understanding of the multi-layered connections between culture, language, behavior, and thought. Reading his work, we begin to develop a clear picture of how the school curriculum functions as a reality-constructing process, and how teachers, as primary transmitters of language and culture, socialize students to a way of conceptualizing the world. He reminds us that much of what is passed on in school consists of taken-for-granted assumptions, and that areas which deserve to be seriously questioned, such as work, authority, time, family, nature and technology, are usually not critically examined. What is not talked about, says Bowers, can become as powerful a determinant in shaping thought as the overt curriculum.

Of special interest is his interpretation of how meanings are embedded in commonly used metaphors in the classroom, and of how these tacit meanings help to shape the realities of students. While many teachers have become sensitive to the ways in which language frameworks reproduce racist and sexist ways of thinking, there are other templates of primary

socialization that need to be made explicit. Consider for example, the use of a "machine metaphor" to describe the human body, or the use of military metaphors in computing. The "ecology of bad ideas" embedded in such dysfunctional metaphors decreases the ability of students to understand and resolve our critical cultural/environmental problems. Bowers's analysis of these processes and his recommendations for teacher education suggest concrete ways in which teachers could more effectively nurture a shift in the thinking of students toward an ecologically and culturally sensitive worldview.

While holistic educators may be anxious to effect such a "paradigm shift," it is worth noting that not all aspects of a belief system can be opened to question at once. The fine art of teaching, according to Bowers, includes a sensitivity to moments at which aspects of the belief system can be made "explicit," and attention to those moments of cultural transition when the individual is "between" established patterns of thought and behavior. Clearly, this aspect of professional knowledge goes far beyond the "management and methods" orientation of most teacher education programs. Because teachers have not, for the most part, engaged in a critical examination of the deep structure of their own belief systems, students receive simplistic interpretations of complex cultural issues and a limited vocabulary that "deproblematizes" these issues. While Bowers here shares with many radical thinkers a conception of the ideal teacher as a "change agent" or "transformative intellectual," he diverges somewhat from most progressive thinkers in his insistence that change must take account of cultural continuities that need to be preserved. "Finding the balance," he says, "between continuity and renewal, bonding and critical reflection, will be the real test of our ability to articulate the nature of 'communicative competence'" (1987, p. 157).

Bowers develops this idea of communicative competence in *The Promise of Theory*. In this book, he offers an interpretation of "cultural literacy" significantly different from the current academic fascination with the "Great

Books" of Western culture. Real cultural literacy, which Bowers thinks should be a primary goal of education, is the ability to "decode" the taken-for-granted assumptions and conceptual categories that underlie experience. The examination of such tacit assumptions by teachers and students creates openings — "liminal spaces" — in which students can gain enough conceptual distance from their internalized belief systems to renegotiate meanings. This "reconceptualization" enables the individual to participate fully and consciously in the reconstruction of social reality.

In *Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education*, Bowers offers a radical critique of the very foundations of liberal educational theory, examining the writing of four diverse and influential thinkers: Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire. He views their work as representative of "archetypal" discourses that have dominated educational thought. While most holistic educators may have dismissed the technicist, behaviorist orientation of Skinner, they are likely to find the analysis of the more emancipatory thinkers provocative. Bowers challenges us to relinquish, at least momentarily, *our own* taken-for-granted conceptual categories of "liberalism," "conservatism," and "radicalism" to take a fresh and insightful

look at intractable social/cultural problems, and suggests that the cults of individualism and critical rationality represented by these thinkers are inadequate forms of knowing in light of the present ecological crisis. He states his position clearly when he says that "the problems of inequality and restricted individual empowerment are not nearly as important as the cultural roots of our own alienation from nature" (1987, p. 159). This statement is probably at the root of the controversy that Bowers's work generates among radical educational thinkers.

In *Responsive Teaching*, Bowers and Flinders address critical teacher education issues for the 21st century, including the development of a knowledge base that includes a sensitivity to language, metaphor, culture, non-verbal behavior, the socialization process, and issues of power, control, and solidarity (the "deep ecology" of the classroom). Readers of Bowers's other, more theoretical works will find tangible suggestions here for rethinking student behavior, the teacher/student relationship, social control, cultural differences, and communication. They will find a radically new, yet ancient, notion of empowerment — a concept which, for Bowers, encompasses more than the uninhibited drive for autonomy and individual fulfillment sought

by many humanistic educators or the desire for egalitarian community envisioned by radical educators. While authenticity and cooperation are certainly part of his vision, he provides us with an expanded image of the individual as embedded in "information exchanges" (here he draws on Gregory Bateson's work) which include the animate as well as the inanimate, the past as well as the present and the implicit as well as the explicit. He proposes that ancient peoples as well as contemporary non-dominant cultural groups have had more complex ways of understanding energy and information exchanges, and thus developed more ecologically responsive patterns of culture. While not romanticizing primal cultures, Bowers suggests that "if we are to recover from the consequences of the hubris of Western consciousness, we must work our way back to an understanding of, and an appreciation for, those forms of knowledge that connect us with our habitat in long-term sustaining relationships" (from an unpublished manuscript, 1990). Any educator seriously interested in "paradigm shifts" toward a sustainable culture grounded in a deep sense of the sacred will benefit from a study of Bowers's ideas.

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The Whole Language Catalog

Edited by Kenneth S. Goodman, Lois Bridges Bird, and Yetta M. Goodman

Published by American School Publishers, a division of Macmillan/McGraw Hill (1221 Farmers Lane, Suite C, Santa Rosa, CA 95405) 1990; 445 oversized pages, \$34.95 paperback

Reviewed by Ron Miller

This book is a monumental achievement. It is the most ambitious, comprehensive, and informative publication ever devoted to child-centered learning. It stands as inspiring evidence that the grassroots whole language movement has come of age and is poised to bring about a dramatic revolution in learning — the revolution that progressive, humanistic, holistic educators have dreamed about all these years. Consequently, I recommend that every school — public or private, large or small — obtain this book and use it as a valuable resource for staff development and curriculum redesign.

The Whole Language Catalog covers a tremendous range of educational topics, from historical and philosophical concerns to practical approaches for teaching language arts and other subjects; from grading and assessment to the psychology of learning; from community and parent involvement to cultural diversity and environmental education; from computers to the arts. The *Catalog* provides multiple perspectives on all of these areas — over 500 educators, scholars, and parents contributed to it — and it offers a wealth of stimulating writings by some of the most thoughtful people in education. In addition, the *Catalog* contains an almost overwhelming treasury of resources — books, periodicals, videos, organizations, learning materials — and not only gives sources for obtaining them, but reviews each and every one.

Despite this diversity, the *Catalog* consistently advocates an approach that is strongly humanistic and person-centered; the whole language perspective sees every learner as an organically growing person engaged in a search for meaning and wholeness. This core principle of

whole language defines the movement as unmistakably holistic, and (as my own essays in the *Catalog* attempt to demonstrate) whole language has important philosophical affinities with all the great holistic pioneers, from Pestalozzi and Froebel to Montessori and Steiner. Editor Kenneth Goodman, in an inspirational "Declaration of Professional Conscience for Teachers" presented on the inside front cover, states very forcefully that

as teachers we hereby declare ourselves to be in opposition to the industrialization of our schools.... We will oppose methods, materials, and policies that have the intent or effect of rejecting the personal and social characteristics of our students.... We will do all we can to make school a warm, friendly, supportive place in which all pupils are welcome.

And Eliot Wigginton (of *Foxfire* fame) writes later on that

we have rejected forever those teaching materials that have sucked all the life from our language arts classes and have destroyed our students' enthusiasm for the work.... We will never return to materials and activities that anesthetize our students as surely as a surgeon's drugs. We will quit teaching first. (p. 220)

The Whole Language Catalog contains many of these bold manifestos — but it also offers far more personal and pro-

saic reflections on the art of teaching and the lives of children. It is organized into major themes (Learning, Language, Community, etc.), and within every section are sprinkled features that recur throughout the book ("As Teachers See It," "Classroom Demonstrations," "As Kids See It," "Young Artists," "Parents' Perspective," and many others). Contributions range from in-depth essays to short quotes and anecdotes. For the most part, the editors have handled this avalanche of material adeptly, and have grouped articles/resources/anecdotes together into sensible clusters. But the book is still daunting — there is simply *so much* material packed into it that pursuing any one topic or theme will take an awful lot of sifting and flipping around; it is very difficult to read systematically. I think the editors are correct in calling this a "start-anywhere-and-read-in-any-direction book." No reader who does so can help but be inspired.

The whole language revolution has arrived. If it succeeds, our schools will never be the same, for we will never again view young learners as passive cogs in the national industrial machine. *The Whole Language Catalog* may prove to be a significant contribution to the success of this revolution. I hope so.

Letter to the Review

"There was no method to be seen, what was seen was a child ... acting according to its own nature." (Dr. Maria Montessori, Secret of Childhood, p. 136)

Dear Editor,

Reference to Montessori in the Fall, 1990, issue in several articles seems to draw an undue distinction between the terms holistic and Montessori — as if "Montessori" were some sort of limited methodology within a broader field of holistic education. For those such as myself who use the term Montessori to identify Dr. Montessori's great vision of the new normalized child and the new education, this type of distinction seems superficial and confusing, to say the least.

If one wishes to reference education as a "means to free the human

spirit," any words that one may use to communicate such an expansive purpose would be subject to inevitable contradiction and limitation. There is certainly no inherent basis to categorically reject the term Montessori to apply to Dr. Montessori's visionary new education — rather than such superficial distinctions as certification and a set of prescribed materials.

For persons such as myself, Montessori is directed to a way of being with children as guided by certain underlying principles of nature. For those who find only methodology in this expansive possibility of being, using other words such as holistic will not change one's essential experience. At bottom, experience is what counts, not theory or words. And experience lies beyond all words.

As the term holistic education becomes more defined, recognized,

and associated with specific forms of teacher education and underlying assumptions, this term may gradually lose its ability to effect a profound change in human experience. Holistic education may then become yet another methodology in the same way that the term Montessori is so often seen today.

Perhaps if we stop changing the words we apply to certain experiences, we can learn to more effectively focus our attention on the communication of the underlying value and purpose that is intended by such terms as holistic and Montessori.

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