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Cover artwork by Norma Montaigne, Pittsford, VT.

Holistic Education Review is an independent journal, having no philosophical or financial affiliation with any organization, institution, or political group. It aims to stimulate discussion and application of all person-centered educational ideas and methods. Articles explore how education can encourage the fullest possible development of human potentials and planetary consciousness. We believe that human fulfillment, global cooperation, and ecological responsibility should be the primary goals of education, and we will inquire into the historical, social, and philosophical issues that have prevented them from so becoming.

Holistic Education Review (ISSN 0898-0926) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December by Holistic Education Press, 39 Pearl Street, Brandon, VT 05733-1007. Annual subscription rates are \$26 for individuals and \$40 for libraries. (Foreign subscribers, please add \$9 to above rates.) Single-copy price is \$7. Second-class postage is paid at Brandon, VT, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Holistic Education Review, 39 Pearl Street, Brandon, VT 05733-1007.

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EDITORIALS

Passing the Torch

by Ron Miller

With this issue, my four-year tenure as editor of *Holistic Education Review* comes to a close. Starting next Spring, the journal will be edited by Dr. Jeffrey Kane, who is Dean of the School of Education at Adelphi University. I am confident that Jeff Kane will be a superb editor. He is an accomplished scholar as well as an educational visionary, with a strong background in Waldorf education and personal contacts with many important educational thinkers. He will bring to *Holistic Education Review* not only these intellectual strengths, but also a great deal of energy, dedication, and sensitivity. I'll let him introduce himself after this farewell.

For those readers who have come to appreciate *Holistic Education Review* as it has evolved up until now — don't worry! The editorial mission and focus of this journal will not be substantially changed. *Holistic Education Review* will continue to build bridges between the diverse educational movements and philosophies that make up the "holistic" educational community. It will continue to advance understanding and application of diverse person-centered, global, ecological, and spiritual approaches in education, and it will address important underlying questions and problems. It will continue to publish serious and provocative writing by today's leading-edge educational thinkers, without becoming too narrowly "academic" or "scholarly."

Even so, I would be the first to admit that *Holistic Education Review* is ready for an infusion of fresh ideas and approaches. There is no one right way to define and articulate this emerging holistic movement, and although my own perspective is quite broad and flexible, there are certainly weak spots in it. Jeff Kane, through his network of colleagues which includes a number of eminent scholars, will be able to fill many of these gaps. I can hardly wait for the opportunity to be-

come a reader of *Holistic Education Review*, because I fully expect it to be a tremendously exciting publication in the years ahead, one that will enrich my own thinking significantly.

There is also another major change in the *Review*, starting with this issue. It is no longer published by an ambitious amateur (myself), but by the highly professional Holistic Education Press, under the direction of Charles



Ron Miller

Jakiela. Charlie had served as my production and circulation consultant for much of the time I was publisher. During these years he became deeply interested in the ideas and approaches we were promoting in this journal, and I became ever more impressed by his experience and skill in the publishing business. So it was only natural for me to turn this operation over to him when the time came for me to go on to other work. I expect Holistic Education Press to evolve into an established and recognized force in the educational world, advocating for holistic approaches in the best and widest sense. The press will support all holistic, innovative, and alternative educators in developing a strong professional identity and legitimacy in the eyes of

the larger educational world. I urge all readers to support this endeavor by sharing *Holistic Education Review* and Holistic Education Press books with colleagues, parents, and students of education.

It has been a rewarding four years. In 1988, there was no recognizable holistic education movement; now, after our conferences in Chicago and Winter Park, there is a Global Alliance for Transforming Education, with regional and international chapters linking holistic educators from many diverse movements and taking their ideas to the mainstream as never before. The transformation of education is now a genuine possibility — although it will require a great deal more careful thinking, hard work, and personal and collective activism. *Holistic Education Review* has served as a focal point for this emerging educational revolution; I think the movement would have coalesced even without the journal — because the time is right and thousands of dedicated people are doing good work — but it has been exhilarating to find myself at the center of it, riding the tidal wave of transformation as it rushes toward the mainstream shore. I hope that editor Kane enjoys the ride as much as I have. But I'm ready for a change of pace; writing, not editing or marketing or even networking, is my true calling, and I look forward to my new work with great enthusiasm.

My work, by the way, will involve extensive research on a new book. Over these past four years, one philosophical issue has emerged time and time again as being particularly difficult and unresolved (and therefore intriguing to me): How might a holistic perspective shed light on the relationship between personal and spiritual development and meaningful social change? Many holistic thinkers have addressed the need for personal development, but they have largely ne-

glected important cultural and ideological questions. On the other hand, most critical theorists seem to lack an appreciation for the interior life and the spiritual/ecological context of human existence. I will try to integrate these two parallel strands of inquiry, for herein, I believe, is the essence and the distinctive contribution of holism. I will draw upon spiritual writings as

well as ecological and feminist literature. Among others, I expect to work with the ideas of Matthew Fox, Thomas Merton, Rudolf Steiner, and Carl Jung. It promises to be quite fascinating. In the meantime, my writing will still appear in *Holistic Education Review*. I will serve on the editorial board and will contribute book reviews and essays every so often.

But for now, I say farewell. I want to thank every reader for supporting *Holistic Education Review* over the years. Every writer, and every publisher, needs an audience, and without you I could not have done this meaningful and rewarding work. I am grateful.

Peace,

Ron Miller

The Road Ahead

by Jeffrey Kane

On behalf of the readership of *Holistic Education Review*, I would like to thank Ron Miller for his vision, integrity, and commitment as the journal's founding editor and publisher. Through his efforts this journal has galvanized a wide and diverse group of educators who at first had little more in common than a sense that there was far more to education than the so-called imperatives of "A Nation at Risk." *Holistic Education Review* has not only created an open forum for the exploration of educational issues grounded in human dignity and responsibility, but also helped create a common language that provides holistic concepts with both substance and subtlety. Each of us has found in the journal stimulating ideas, a source of courage, and a sense of emerging community.

It is in this context that I look to the future of the journal. *Holistic Education Review* is poised to expand the discussion of holistic education in the larger educational community. It is ready to challenge the rhetoric of reform. Indeed, it is time to challenge the common wisdom of standardized testing, disembodied curricula, and schools culturally homogenized by bureaucracy. It is time to raise the level of educational thought to meet the realities of multidimensional human beings rather than continue to reduce humanity to fit the limitations of our current paradigms.

In the name of efficiency, we as a nation have measured our schools by the grand illusion that they teach subjects rather than children — children

whose brief histories bear the indelible mark of world events as they filter through family, television, neighborhood streets, and disposable income. We have failed to recognize that the breakdown of the American family is sometimes hastily scribbled on homework pages; that racism can translate as silence and an unraised hand in the classroom; that abuse masquerades at times as disruptiveness; that a lack of spiritual substance often results in indifference and a loss of the capacity for simple joy.

Yet more fundamentally, each child meets the course of events within the context of an internal struggle, however tacit or vague, for understanding, purpose, and identity. Although language often fails to express the full import of the ultimate questions — Who am I? Why was I created? What am I to do with my life? — there can be no escaping them as they weave continuously into the fabric of daily life.

Herein lies the task of this journal: to address with clarity and uncompromising intellectual integrity the educational issues at the heart of our humanity. To do so is not to sacrifice rigor, but to demand creative insight tempered in the fire of public discourse. It is not to diminish academic standards, but to transform the measures of our own minds to free them from the arbitrary fixities of positivistic thought. It is neither to celebrate nor deny theory, but to ground it in the realities at once so common and grand as to regularly elude our perception or consideration.

As the journal assumes this task, it



Jeffrey Kane

will be guided by an editorial board that comprises a diverse group of scholars, researchers, and teachers (to be more formally introduced in the next issue). It is our goal to enhance and extend *Holistic Education Review* as a forum for substantive dialogue as well as the exploration of holistic educational alternatives to prevailing educational theory and practice. We believe that the journal can achieve a unique, much needed balance of intuitive understanding, intellectual acuity, and practical skill. The journal can also help us singly and collectively turn toward educational ideas and practices responsive to the depths and complexities of human being as well as to the high moral imperatives of our humanity.

Jeffrey Kane

The Teaching Presence

by Shelley Kessler

From every region of the United States we came — classroom teachers and school heads at every level from kindergarten to college, and professors of education who teach the teachers. Like the 75 others who came to Colorado for this conference on transforming education, participants in our small discussion group had, each in our own way, experienced the importance of addressing in our teaching the needs of the whole person: intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. But what specifically drew our group together was a passion to understand this last piece: spirit in education.

Holistic education, we agreed, must include the spiritual dimension. We knew this intuitively. But this new vision remained elusive and confusing to most of us. For two days, we visualized, wrote lists, consulted intuition, painted symbols, sang songs, and drew mind maps to capture the qualities that make up the spiritual aspect of

human development and to explore the conditions (apart from religion) that foster this development. Having completed a clear and compelling statement to describe spirit in education (see sidebar), we turned to the methods and techniques that could stimulate spiritual development and satisfy spiritual hunger in a secular classroom.

As we proudly completed our lists of methods, we realized that we had arrived again at the beginning. These and any other methods alone, we agreed, would be almost useless without a particular awareness and perspective in the teacher using the methods. We agreed that there is a kind of “presence” that seems to carry the class to a place where our spirits are called, moved, and fulfilled. As educators, we celebrate the precious moments when we happen upon them and honor those teachers who seem to live there most of the time. But how do we get there ourselves, or guide others to that place? What practice or perspective, what qualities of teaching or being do we develop to find this “teaching presence”?

It was thrilling for me to be among colleagues who share this quest. For the past six years as chair of the Department of Human Development at Crossroads School, this search for “the teaching presence” had been my personal challenge as I hired, trained,

Shelley Kessler has been chair of the Human Development Department at Crossroads School in Santa Monica, CA, since 1985. Supervising faculty and curriculum development in ethics, community service, and Mysteries, Kessler seeks to integrate mind, body, spirit, community, and heart in the development of personal and social responsibility in adolescents. Author/editor of The Mysteries Sourcebook, she is on leave from administration this year to work on a new book and to help other schools and communities initiate or strengthen their human development programs. Her article in the Winter, 1990, issue of Holistic Education Review — “The Mysteries Program: Educating Adolescents for Today’s World” — described the Mysteries Program in greater detail.

What does it take to place spirituality at the heart of the educational endeavor? In a groundbreaking human development course for adolescents, a holistic educator discovered that the key requirements are discipline, an open heart, and the quality of presence. These qualities need to be deliberately sought and carefully cultivated.

STATEMENT OF THE SPIRIT AND EDUCATION STRAND

GATE Conference, Winter Park, Colorado, June, 1991

We call for every person to be recognized as unique and valuable. This means welcoming personal differences and fostering in each student a sense of safety, tolerance, respect, and appreciation for human diversity.

Education is a process of helping each person to discover wholeness. Since the experience of wholeness is different for every person, it should be pursued according to each person's understanding. This requires education of the whole person. Just as the individual develops physically, intellectually, and emotionally, he or she develops spiritually as well.

Our work with children and youth reveals a longing for spiritual experience and development that manifests itself as a longing for

- deep connection to oneself and others;
- a sense of meaning or purpose in daily life;
- respite from the frenetic activity, pressure, and overstimulation of contemporary life;
- the fullness of creative experience;
- the mysterious dimension of nonordinary experience; and
- an experience of the wholeness of oneself and of life.

The absence of the spiritual dimension in our culture is a crucial factor in self-destructive behavior. Drug abuse, empty sexuality, crime, and family breakdown all spring from a misguided search for connection, mystery, and meaning and an escape from the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfillment.

One of the functions of education is to help people become aware of the connectedness of all. Fundamental to this awareness of wholeness and connectedness is the ethic expressed in all of the world's great traditions: What I do to others I do to myself. Equally fundamental to this concept of connectedness is the empowerment of each individual. If everyone is connected to everything else, then I can and do make a difference. A third consequence of the acknowledgement of wholeness is the acknowledgement of our responsibility to and for the natural world.

By fostering a sense of deep connection to others and to the Earth in all of its manifestations, holistic education encourages a sense of responsibility to oneself, to others, and to the planet. We believe that responsibility need not be felt as a burden, but rather as a sense of connection and empowerment by

- fostering the compassion that makes humans want to alleviate the suffering of others;
- instilling the conviction that change is possible; and
- offering the tools to make those changes.

Finally, wholeness requires the acceptance and integration of the paradox within ourselves, in one another, and in nature: our strengths and weaknesses, our highs and lows, our joys and sorrows.

These principles are rooted in the assumption that the universe is an integrated whole in which everything is connected. This assumption of wholeness and unity is in direct opposition to the paradigm of separation and fragmentation that prevails in the contemporary world.

and supervised more than 30 teachers in the "Mysteries Program." Mysteries is a human development curriculum for students aged twelve through eighteen, developed at the Crossroads School. A required course meeting once each week for two hours, Mysteries begins with the students: the cur-

riculum listens and responds to the personal mysteries of teenagers today: their feelings, fears, musings, wonder, and wisdom. To teach this innovative course, I looked for people with skills in adolescent development, active listening, group building, visualization, and self-esteem methods, and with ex-

perience using a variety of art, movement, and play modalities for personal expression and growth. Most important, I looked for people who already had, or were receptive to learning about, "the teaching presence."

In Mysteries, spirit is meant to be at the heart of the teaching experience, not at the periphery. Like all other health and human development programs, Mysteries educates students about sexuality, substance abuse, communication skills, stress management, and a host of other issues. But the Crossroads School breaks new ground in the field of junior and senior high school human development because it recognizes spiritual development in the adolescent, and through Mysteries, provides an opportunity to explore meaning or purpose in life and to feel a deep connection to oneself, others, and the wholeness of life.

In my own teaching and in my efforts to support other teachers, I had wrestled long and hard with this question of the teaching presence, or what I came to call the "spirit of Mysteries." The entire Mysteries faculty was intensely creative, bright, and committed. Each teacher was provided a comprehensive and continually growing set of methods, exercises, and curricula as he or she entered the classroom. But as I watched some teachers blossom and others run and hide, and as I watched myself feel "on" one day and "off" the next, I felt called to find words to describe this teaching presence and to guide teachers to discover and strengthen this aspect of their work. Ironically, the words began to flow with clarity after one day observing a class in which the methods were in place but the teaching presence was nowhere to be found. I share these thoughts about the spirit of Mysteries in hope that my colleagues in other subjects, grade levels, and settings may find sparks of the teaching presence that lies at the heart of education and which invites teachers and students alike to come into our wholeness — authentic and fully alive.

Not Mysteries

"What is Mysteries?" I ask myself that question anew as I witness a class that is so clearly not Mysteries. I must watch someone going through the

motions, using exercises designed for Mysteries — but the spirit of Mysteries has been utterly lost. The class does not have a beginning. It just starts. There is no gathering of the energies, the moods, the personalities. There is no attempt to look at each child, even in the process of taking roll. There is no effort to connect, to see who is really there today.

There is no circle. The chairs are arranged in an oval, with two boys on each end sitting outside the circle and two gaping holes next to the teacher, re-creating the usual separation of teacher and student. There is no attempt to shepherd them, to pull them in with either warmth or firm insistence that everyone be a part of the circle.

The children rock raucously at their desks — their energy not contained and therefore threatening to spill, fall, topple over, and cause harm. There is no call to stillness from the leader. People interrupt frequently, and one boy gets up and moves around. Side conversations erupt. And still there is no call to focus, to respect those speaking — no call to a sense of purpose.

As I watch now, I recognize the circumstances that lead to this moment. It seems that each year there is always one faculty position out of fifteen that is filled at the last moment because of personal changes, emergencies, or the need to add new sections. We do our best to train this teacher in the moments before school begins, but having never witnessed the program in action, he or she begins without ever having experienced the spirit of the program. As I visit this eleventh-hour teacher in his seventh-grade class, I come to a better understanding of what is called for in teaching Mysteries by seeing what is missing.

He begins the exercise — hesitantly, mechanically, going through the motions. It is an exercise about limits, about experiencing what it feels like to reach one's limit and be pushed beyond it. The group is asked to listen to a number sequence and then write it down. Each time, the sequence is longer until it goes beyond the capacity of memory. He asks me to read the numbers.

Reading the numbers, I realize the power of voice, and the way that each

thing we do can take on many functions. I want to help them calm down and focus, and I have trained my voice to transmit calm, clarity, love, and focus. I also want them to have an experience of success before they reach their limit. I ask them to close their eyes while I speak, to ensure they won't cheat but also to help them go into that still place and clear their minds. I ask them to take a deep breath, and then I read the numbers. I read the numbers in groups, to make them easy to remember — so that the children can feel good about themselves. They enjoy the game and in-

and discipline.

The teacher's lack of attention to the moment results in a lack of focus on what is going on; several children never say a word, and the teacher does nothing to bring them in. One boy sitting outside of the circle raises his hand repeatedly for long periods, and the teacher never notices him. At one point the class comes alive when a boy begs for the second or third time to read a story he had written. As he reads, the group is fascinated, fully engaged. Now he goes on to tell the true story in his life that inspired him. Another boy echoes a similar story. At

A teacher with an open heart will be warm, alive, spontaneous, connected, compassionate — able to see the language of the body, hear the feelings between and beneath the words.

stead of being frustrated by their limits, many of them get excited about the challenge and want to go further and further. They want to compete, to excel, to be recognized for their success.

When the teacher asks them why he had done the exercise, one boy says, "Because it's good for us to concentrate, to challenge our minds. Kids need to be quiet sometimes and concentrate." It was not the answer he was looking for, so he doesn't notice the wisdom in the boy's words. Here is an opportunity to acknowledge and build on the wisdom of a child and to teach a lesson about stillness, focus, and about the shift in the atmosphere of the room and how good it felt. It is an opportunity to recognize a call from this child for guidance to that stillness.

But it is not the answer he was looking for, so it goes by. And throughout, I notice a failure to be open to the moment, work with the surprises and wisdom that come up, and validate a child for his or her gifts.

As the class unfolds, I begin to realize that the three qualities central to the spirit of Mysteries are missing in this class: *being present, an open heart,*

this moment of personal engagement, a teacher who is fully present might respond by mirroring affirmations that acknowledge what is happening and by suggesting in the moment to expand this process. But this teacher fails to notice this opportunity and calls for a break. The momentum is lost.

A closed heart in a classroom is difficult to describe but easy to feel. It contributes to the difficulty of being present. It is a tone, a deadness in the voice, a mechanical quality of going through motions, asking questions, getting answers without ever really hearing the answers and what is being said between the lines.

A closed heart may come across as a lack of warmth and an inability to see and acknowledge moments of strength, insight, wisdom, or pain when children speak. The teacher appears more concerned with whether or not she is doing the "right thing" than with how the children are feeling and how he feels about the children.

After the break, several children come back quite late with bags of candy, and for the next 20 minutes, three of them sit together directly across from the teacher dropping can-

dies in their colas, watching them fizzle, and giggling together. The teacher ignores them and continues to ask other children to speak, which they do. When he does once try to discipline one boy, he asks him mildly, "Do you think you could take that cup out of here — it's disturbing others." His unwillingness to discipline reveals a closed heart. If he truly felt and respected the vulnerability of the children speaking, then he would never allow others to be so rude.

I have described what *Mysteries* looks like when the spirit of *Mysteries* is missing. Now let us look at these qualities — discipline, an open heart, and being present — which are so central to the creation of the "teaching presence" in the classroom.

Discipline

If we want our classroom to be a place for students to share what is deeply meaningful to them, to ask fundamental questions that might seem foolish, to respond with their heart and spirit to what is raised or presented, then we as teachers must begin by taking primary responsibility for creating an environment that is *safe*. The teacher alone cannot create safe space — it is a goal and a process that must be shared by the whole group. But the teacher is the *guide* to how to create a safe place for the human heart and the *shepherd* who protects those who are vulnerable when danger appears. For students and teachers to bring their full humanity — be fully present — in a school environment, safety must be established. Discipline is an essential tool in creating this safety.

Until discipline is established, until there is a climate of respect in a group, nothing positive can proceed. Respect is central to *Mysteries*; it is an end in itself, and it is a condition for the safety which allows for children to speak from the heart. Speaking from the heart is what makes a class come alive; it is what engages other children to want to listen. And when they listen to someone with an open heart, their own heart opens to that person and they feel compassion. What was respectful behavior becomes true respect for someone they may have previously disliked or dismissed.

What is required to foster this at-

mosphere of respect with a group of twelve-year-olds wild with candy and cola and the turmoil of change within and without? Adolescents in general, and young adolescents in particular, bring an intensity of energy and a developmental urge to test limits both to discover their ethical base and to break new ground of the possible and the acceptable. For me, teaching adolescents has involved a continual challenge to my own sense of what is right, acceptable, and appropriate in each new moment.

As a department chair, watching or listening to tales about hundreds of classes over the years, I have been surprised to witness that it is the presence or absence of discipline that determines the viability of a class or a teacher. Discipline alone is not enough for success. But those teachers who cry

must find his own words to convey simply and clearly the purpose of his class in all its dimensions. I tell my students:

We are here to create a place together that is safe enough for you to talk about what really matters to you, about what is close to your heart. To share your curiosity and wonder, your fears and worries, your hurt and confusion, your excitement and joy. We must all work together to make this place safe. I can't do it alone, nor can a few of you make this happen. If one person here is disrespectful, cruel, or indifferent, then it would be foolish for any one of us to share what is in our heart. It is my job as your teacher and guide to foster and protect the opportunity for safety of this group. I cannot let one or two people jeopardize this safety, and I will not allow that to happen.

Having stated the purpose, the teacher has an opportunity to create a



The author, Shelley Kessler (2nd from right) with educators at the last *Mysteries* Conference. June, 1991, Bolinas, CA. Photo by Denise Mantele.

help or keep a stiff upper lip until the semester ends and they can resign, or who insist until the end that they were given the worst combination of kids — those teachers have in common an inability or unwillingness to learn how to bring discipline to a class.

What is this quality of discipline that comes so naturally to some teachers and continues to elude others class after class, year after year? *Effective discipline includes clarity of purpose, a positive image of what discipline means, inner strength or self-esteem to be able to risk being disliked, and an understanding and willingness to use one's whole person in an expression of personal power.*

Clarity of purpose. Each teacher

partnership with his or her students to establish the conditions of safety that will allow this purpose to unfold. I ask the group to share their conditions for speaking about what really matters to them. Together we make a list, which looks remarkably similar from class to class and from year to year:

- no interruptions
- no "putdowns" or "bagging"
- no judging
- respect
- honesty
- the right to be silent, and
- honor the privacy of what is spoken.

I remind my students that only when *each* of us honors these ground rules can our classroom become a safe

place. As their teacher, I can't do this alone, but I will do all that I can to protect the sanctity of this agreement.

It is crucial that the teacher understand that his or her primary responsibility is to the group, not to individuals. This by no means implies an indifference to individuals — what makes the group work authentic is the genuine caring that we feel for each person. But when an individual is sabotaging the group effort, then the priority must be to protect the group, which indirectly benefits that individual as well. The child who is disrupting is calling out for limits on his or her destructive power.

A positive image of discipline. Many of us came to adulthood and teaching in an era in which discipline was a dirty word. Its connotations were authoritarian, repressive, and punitive. The word *discipline* conjured up a picture of someone with power using it to diminish or humiliate someone without it.

Many teachers are drawn to holistic education because they have a strong desire to empower children and to foster the natural growth and blossoming of an inherently good seed. They experience a contradiction between their image of discipline and their image of nourishing, encouraging, "drawing out," (the original meaning of the word *educate*) and empowering young people. One new teacher this year, when confronted with the need for discipline in an exceptionally rambunctious class of fourteen-year-olds, kept repeating that he didn't want to become a "drill sergeant." He had two images: the nice guy and the drill sergeant. He had no access in his mind or heart to an image of discipline that provided love, safety, and empowerment.

My own views on discipline began to change in the late 1970s when I worked to create a program for teenage mothers and their children. The woman who ran the early intervention program for the teens' children spoke

to us one day about discipline. A warm, gentle woman with great wisdom and humor that came from 40 years of experience with children, Dorothy, gave me an image that has stayed with me since. "Children do not always know yet what is safe for them, or others," she said. "Discipline and limits are a way that we create a circle of safety for those not yet ready to do this for themselves. Picture these limits as a big hug — strong arms encircling the child with comfort and safety."

In recent years, I have imagined this circle of safety as a circle of stones creating the safe and sacred space of the Native American medicine wheel. Alone at night in the wilderness, a seeker on a vision quest is instructed to create this circle of stones around him or herself for protection from the



Educators at a Mysteries Conference learn games to awaken playfulness, spontaneity, and creative self-expression. June 1991, Bolinas, CA. Photo by Denise Mantele.

dangers of the night. Teachers who seek a classroom that invites the full humanity of their students may find it useful to think of discipline as a means of creating a "sanctuary" or "sacred space" — a place of refuge and immunity from the disrespect and abuse of the heart and senses common to contemporary life. Some teachers think of building a "container" for deep learning to occur. (In some cases, the teacher might even want to share this image with students. But the terms *sanctuary*, *sacred*, and even *spirit* must be used with great sensitivity and caution in the educational setting. Some teachers and many students will shut down if they feel a religious ide-

ology is being invoked.) Each teacher can seek in his or her own heart and experience those images or metaphors that help him or her discover a positive outlook on discipline.

When we have a positive image of discipline as an act of love and containment, we begin to become creative and responsive to the style and degree of discipline needed with a particular child or a particular group. We are not defending our power as teacher, but rather helping group members to create the safety needed to allow them to be vulnerable and authentic with one another.

Although we know that these limits are coming from our love for both the individual and the group, the student who is disciplined often does not perceive it this way at first. Whether it is a firm call to silence, a refusal to

tolerate put-downs, or as a last resort, a directive to leave the room, the child may feel caught, shamed, or sometimes picked on. He or she may be angry and hurt, tell us we are being unfair or mean, or just give us a wounded, hurt look, which can be devastating to the teacher who wants to be a model of loving kindness. The student may dislike us for that day, or for that month, or for all the years until graduation. Although generally the group

will understand that the individual is being disciplined to protect their opportunity to be vulnerable and discover new things, some members of the group will be frightened or hurt by the sternness in our voice and will also end up disliking us.

How many times do Mysteries teachers hear the protest, "I thought Mysteries was a place we could do whatever we want to?" Many teenagers, especially in the middle school years, interpret the informality and relative lack of preordained content of life skills compared with the academic classroom as an opportunity for complete anarchy or free socializing. At first, they have no slot in the file

marked "education" in their brains for a class that places such emphasis on process rather than content and which takes such a playful approach to learning. Their idea of fun or of reducing stress is to do nothing, "kick back," or talk freely with their friends and do whatever they feel like doing.

So in the beginning they will look for limits, push the limits, and try to get the teacher to define the parameters of this new freedom. Particularly during this time, a teacher must have enough self-esteem and inner strength to risk being disliked in service of success for the group.

Self-esteem and inner strength. I have turned away applicants who had tremendous skill, sensitivity, and professional credentials because it was clear that their need for love and approval was so great that they would do everything in their power to please their students, and be the likable "nice guy." This style may work in some groups, but each of us has at least one crisis class during which our unwillingness to be firm gets thrown in our face repeatedly and forces us to reckon with our fear of being disliked. Our fear of failure goes to bat with our fear of being the "bad guy." At such times the teacher either has an important experience of personal empowerment or backs off and resigns.

Most of us attracted to this work have a track record of caring for others more than we care for ourselves. We are used to putting up with transgressions of our own limits and needs in order to be loving to the other. Almost all of us (I can think of perhaps three exceptions out of about 30 teachers with whom I have worked) wrestle with our tendencies to be like the classic co-dependent or professional enabler. Human development teachers must have the opportunity to understand this cultural/psychological pattern and to get personal support in dealing with these issues in themselves. When teachers become more empowered personally to identify their own boundaries, needs, and limits, then they can truly discipline from the heart. Developing the new "instinct" to protect one's own inner child from abuse and violation allows us to speak very genuinely to the child who is being rude, cruel, or disrespectful — both from our own immediate feelings

and from our new-found compassion for the other children in the room. Our students learn from our modeling that we can help and love people without submerging or violating our own needs.

Personal power: The whole person. Finally, a teacher must learn to use the full range of his or her own capacity to express personal power. This means using oneself almost as an instrument, playing with movement, humor, voice, eye contact, and display of negative emotion. This is perhaps the most difficult aspect of teaching to describe, for it entails trying to be authentic, while also seeing one's whole self as an instrument that can communicate authority.

Some aspects of *movement* are simple, such as standing up and walking around when one feels the group energy moving out of control and needing to know that their teacher can contain them. Standing while students sit communicates empowerment immediately; used moderately and with discretion, this technique helps students to relax and feel that they are in safe hands. (Since they are accustomed to teachers standing in many traditional settings, students who are feeling anxious about this class being "different" may be eased by a brief period of standing.)

Humor can be a wonderful tool for cutting through tension and joining with students in ways that dissolve their need to create a stand-off. Any humor that operates through humiliation, such as sarcasm, is of course out of place in a Mysteries class. Particularly when it comes from a teacher, sarcasm can have an immediate, devastating impact on self-esteem. But laughing together at our own weaknesses, tension, or the countless absurdities that come up and make us silly can create a real bond within a group of students and teachers. After attending a workshop that encouraged laughter in the classroom, I noticed a shift in my style from assuming that student laughter was derisive and distracting to regarding the giggles as an opportunity to share in a joyful release. Instead of stopping the giggles, I am ready to surrender myself to the laughter and encourage its spread to all of the students. When one gives space for laughter as a teacher, it be-

comes self-limiting, and everyone is more comfortable about moving on. The ability to use humor and surrender to student laughter is particularly essential in teaching human sexuality.

Effective use of *voice* in discipline can be paradoxical. At times, we need to project a louder, bolder voice to command respect; at other times, making our voice as soft and calm as possible will call students to focus. The main thing is to be aware of voice, to be responsive to the situation and to be open to experiment.

Eye contact is crucial. It establishes not only empowerment, but also connection and caring on an individual basis. Eye contact reflects confidence, and students respond to the inner strength of a teacher who is comfortable communicating this way. The most challenging discipline situations in classes occur, in my experience, when students are subsumed in a pack of troublemakers. They lose their individual sense of conscience and accountability, and often the teacher gets lost in the storm. Any effort to engage these children as individuals can help break the pattern and call them back to their better selves. Eye contact in the classroom is a first step; talking to them individually outside of class is often a necessary and very effective second step.

Display of negative emotion by the teacher is a crucial yet complex aspect of commanding respect and bringing students into focus. This is the area in which the teacher's maturity of character, self-awareness, and self control are most important. If a class is out of control, or just extremely unfocused, then a teacher has many emotional responses: disappointment, hurt, and anger. There are moments when expressing one of these emotions in a powerful way can have an impact on a class.

Negative emotions in the classroom must be expressed by the teacher's choice, not through loss of control. That choice must be made deliberately and thoughtfully with the students' best interests in mind. The teacher is not expressing hurt or anger to make him or herself feel better, or because of the genuine expectation that the students will help him or her out. When negative emotions about a group of children are building in a

teacher, he or she must have a safe, professional outlet to express and process those emotions: a supervisor, staff meetings, peer support, or a private therapist.

Whatever emotion he or she chooses to express to the class, the teacher must not be identified with that emotion internally at the time. Instead, the teacher has clarity and perspective inside, a trust in the possibilities for change and growth, while he or she may be projecting a negative emotion with real intensity. The ability to do this in a way that is authentic, not false or manipulative, depends largely on the self-knowledge and balance that the teacher has achieved in personal growth. When I am making the decision to show some vulnerability or anger to a class, I take time before class to center myself and to be sure that my heart is open and connected to each student in that room.

Once a teacher has established safety for his or her group through a positive approach to discipline, he or she has opened the door for the teaching presence. Knowing that their vulnerability will be respected and protected, both teacher and students can begin to connect deeply with themselves and one another, and risk bringing their full humanity to the classroom.

An open heart

An open heart is a condition that is deeply intertwined with presence. To be truly present, I believe, one must have an open heart as a precondition. A teacher with an open heart will be warm, alive, spontaneous, connected, compassionate — able to see the language of the body, hear the feelings between and beneath the words. An open heart is based in trust; it is the condition that allows a teacher to be trustworthy and to help build trust in the group.

To have an open heart, a teacher must be willing to be vulnerable and willing to care. To be vulnerable is to

be willing to feel deeply, to be moved or stirred by what a student expresses or by what comes up for the teacher in the presence of these students or the themes being raised.¹

Vulnerability. According to the dictionary, *vulnerable* means susceptible to injury, insufficiently defended. It comes from the Latin *to wound*. It implies danger and risk. This risk, this potential for wounding, is a clue to understanding why it may be difficult at certain times for some teachers, or for all teachers, to work with an open heart.

Choosing to be vulnerable in public, in one's work life, is a decision that most teachers, most people do not make. It is, in fact, one of the key distinctions that most people make between public and private life. At

safety and meaningful community. Sitting in a circle together on the ground, teacher and student alike follow the rules of speaking only in turn, speaking briefly and speaking and listening from the heart. In their Council Trainings for Educators, and in their article "The Practice of Council," Jack Zimmerman, founder of the Mysteries program, and co-author/co-leader Virginia Coyle, have guided many teachers to a new vision of leadership, grounded in the Shamanic tradition, which underscores the vulnerability of the teacher.

Council leadership grows out of the shamanic tradition, rather than the more familiar roles of teacher, priest or therapist. The latter usually create a distance between the leader and the group, a "distinction in authority" that sets the leader apart — particularly in regard to risk-taking. The Shaman, on the other hand, is fully on the journey with each member of the circle, facing all the dangers inherent in being personally vulnerable.³

A precondition of being a Mysteries teacher is having made this choice of vulnerability. In hiring teachers, we look for someone who has decided to risk being vulnerable in order to live life with an open heart; someone who has enough faith in

humanity and enough inner strength and clarity to want to peel away the unnecessary layers and build and strengthen the necessary ones.⁴ Vulnerability here is not to be confused with a failure to acquire the boundaries which keep a person grounded in their own needs, vision, or integrity. In fact, it is often not until a teacher has developed such boundaries that she can afford to be truly vulnerable to her students without losing her own center. When we speak of an open heart and of presence, we are speaking of choices and capacities that come from a particular vision of life, a particular path.

But even someone who has chosen this path, who has learned to be vulnerable outside the intimate sphere of family and friends, has days, weeks,

Resources

Crossroads School offers:

The Mysteries Sourcebook
Conferences and Workshops on the Mysteries Program
Reprints of a variety of articles on Mysteries and Council
Please contact:

Shelley Kessler at
Crossroads School
1714 21st Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404
(213) 829-7391.

The Ojai Foundation offers:

"Council Training for Educators" workshops, Fall and Spring
Speaking from the Heart — a 38-minute video on Council
An instruction booklet on *Council* by Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle

Please contact:
The Ojai Foundation
Attn: Wild Store
Box 1620
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 640-0197

home, we express a broad range of feelings and engage deeply with others; at work we are more likely to play a role or wear a mask that hides anything that could be construed as weak or negative and keeps us separate from others. One of the goals of Mysteries (and, I believe, for holistic education in general) is to break down this distinction, so that people can express themselves more fully and be open to the full expression of others in many more areas of their lives. This breakdown allows for the creation of meaningful community² — expanding the notion of "home" to a broader circle of safety and authenticity.

In Mysteries, the "council process" — a ceremony derived from the Native American tradition — is the central vehicle for creating this circle of

sometimes months when it is difficult or impossible to be vulnerable in teaching. When we are emotionally raw, when something is going on inside or outside our life that is painful, confusing, or disturbing, it is very difficult to be vulnerable to our students. We feel too fragile. On these days, to be moved deeply — by a student or by something inside us that resonates to a student or to an issue that is raised — might carry us to the edge and over it. We might want to cry, or scream, or run out of the room, or hide in a corner. These impulses or actions are unacceptable in a responsible adult, and frightening and destructive to children if one is the adult on whom they are counting.

When a teacher is feeling raw, he or she will build a wall around the open heart — a wall of defenses that will protect from wounds that would go too deep, or from impulses that are too dangerous to self and others. Since we all have such days, and sometimes weeks or months, how does a teacher deal with times of stress or depression in order to keep an open heart as much as possible? First one acknowledges it to oneself. Just knowing that this is a difficult time and allowing one's defenses to be conscious can make an enormous difference in keeping an open heart with others. So self-awareness and self-acceptance are crucial to the teaching presence. (Meditation becomes a useful tool in scanning one's heart to see, acknowledge, and sometimes heal what is current.)

Then one acknowledges this pain to others — to unload, process, and heal. It is precisely at times when one is raw or in turmoil that one should not share these issues with students (for the protection of both teacher and students). So a teacher must have resources — a friend, colleague, therapist, supervisor — and must be willing to use these resources. Many of our teachers over the years have said that the strong trust, caring, and camaraderie of the Mysteries team has been central to their success in the classroom. We work hard to build this team, to foster an environment in which teachers can share their vulnerability.

Built into our staff support and supervision process is a monthly council of the staff in which teachers can

share, if they choose, core issues of their life at the time. Many teachers have other resources, but by building into the educational setting a safe container for our teachers' emotions, we try to give some of the necessary support for maintaining an open heart. This is particularly important for our program because, in my personal experience and from observing teachers over the years, the very act of teaching Mysteries — exposing oneself to the

self disagreeing, saying that I have found that any person who feels safe enough to speak from the heart will be interesting to listen to. As I spoke, I felt an emotion rising in me from the accumulation of so many surprising moments when the love and respect I gave to a seemingly irascible, superficial, or dull young person allowed him or her to speak with a tenderness, depth, and wisdom that amazed me and moved me to greater love.

We have parted ways with many writers, thinkers, and educators in the New Age movement, and with some in the self-esteem movement, whose programs are based on denying the shadow through positive thinking.

volatile emotions of teenagers — seems to stir some of our deepest issues and blocks and also seems to awaken or intensify our inner thrust toward growth and fullness of expression.

During hiring interviews we routinely warn teachers that teaching Mysteries can be like jumping into the cauldron of their own deepest issues, stirring their own personal growth. If this is true, then it is inevitable that there will be times for each teacher when the challenge of teaching with an open heart becomes enormous. A teacher must have and be willing to use both internal and external resources during these times.

Willingness to love. The second aspect of an open heart is the willingness and ability to care. What does it mean for a teacher to be willing to care deeply about his or her students? Here it becomes impossible to talk about teaching without talking of love, because it is impossible to capture the teaching presence without being willing and able to love.

Recently I had a conversation with an elderly relative who declared that there are some people who are interesting to listen to and others who simply have nothing to say. I found my-

To be effective, a teacher must love the essential qualities of the age group with which he or she works and see these developmental qualities not as obstacles or irritations but as opportunities for growth and connection. Knowing the limitations to perspective, skill, or self-mastery inherent in the young, a loving teacher feels a deep respect for the essential humanity — the depth of feeling and capacity for wisdom — in even the smallest child.

This capacity, this willingness to love the children with whom we work, to relish and revel in the qualities of adolescent energy, volatility, and vulnerability is essential to the Mysteries teacher. I recall a moment on a retreat I took with twenty sophomores several years ago. En route to the mountains, we stopped at a convenience store for bathroom and snacks. As this horde of sixteen-year-olds got off the bus and entered the store, the clerks stiffened, and when they saw me, expressed their condolences for having to travel with and be responsible for a group of teenagers. I was startled into remembering how much our society has come to fear and disparage teenagers. I responded with a surprised smile and a comment

about having a great time. I was excited about the journey, delighted and at ease to be in the company of these young people teeming with life. And I experienced them as young *people*, according to I feel for people, not the fear or disgust that many people feel for teenagers (or children) as another species.

When I began teaching, I feared the middle school child; I have found many teachers who refuse to work with this eleven- to fourteen-year-old age group. I almost refused to teach them myself, but felt obligated as director of this new program to know what my faculty was dealing with firsthand. We have learned not to place someone in middle school without asking them first what age group

strengths and owning our weaknesses in these areas. It is not unusual for us to find students who can and will surpass us in these areas and become our teachers.

This love goes hand in hand with discipline. It must, in fact, be at the heart of discipline in order for discipline to be effective. We must not confuse love, or an open heart, with the lack of boundaries discussed above as co-dependency. This love does not tolerate or accept behavior that is abusive to anyone. But this love does accept (and can forgive) the person, the child from whom this behavior springs. It is a love and a discipline based on the belief, faith, or trust that there is a core of goodness in each child and a seed of growth; that there is an innate thrust

thinking.

Although we share their belief in the power of the mind to reframe negative patterns of thinking and feeling endemic in our culture, we believe that we must create a safe environment for young people to acknowledge the darker side of their nature in order to forgive themselves and each other and learn to contain and transcend these emotions. If we deny the shadow, then it will surface in ways that are surreptitious and often out of our control. It will catch us from behind, grab us by the tail, and swing us around until we lose our balance and our perspective. A teacher who is afraid of the shadow, in him or herself and in students, cannot really open his or her heart, cannot really afford to love. Learning how to work with the shadow in oneself and in the classroom is a central challenge for a teacher seeking full presence.⁵

Obstacles to caring. What are the obstacles to caring in the teacher? First is the fear of vulnerability discussed above. If we love, then we may become attached. If we become attached, then we may lose what we love. (During my first few years of Mysteries teaching, I was like one of the walking wounded during the weeks surrounding graduation — I had not yet learned to love without becoming deeply attached. I have since learned that the more directly and fully I can express this love, the easier it becomes to say goodbye without the pain of loss.) If we love someone, then we also may feel more vulnerable to the wound of rejection. We may feel that we give the person we love more power to hurt us because of how much we care; thus a fear of vulnerability may block our willingness to care deeply.

The second obstacle to caring (and to an open heart in the classroom) I have experienced and observed, particularly in new teachers, is the attachment to *ego*. I have seen this in two forms. One comes from the insecurity of a teacher who wants to “do it right,” to “be successful.” When we get preoccupied with our “competence” or “success,” we often forget to open our heart to the young people we are with. Particularly if they are “sabotaging” the “success” of the group, we may close our hearts to them. With one new teacher, I simply had to say to her

A teacher with an open heart will be warm, alive, spontaneous, connected, compassionate — able to see the language of the body, hear the feelings between and beneath the words.

they “love” to work with. And only if they “love” the untamed energy and volatility of this age group do we place them in the middle school program. And with the modeling of such colleagues who can see and respect the wisdom and vision in these young beings with careful structuring of time, space, and group size, I too have come to feel safe, loving, and delighted to teach the middle school child.

So how do teachers develop their capacity to love? How does one recognize a teacher with the capacity and willingness to love as part of his or her teaching?⁴

It has become a truism, almost a cliché, that to love others one must learn first to love oneself. To be compassionate toward others, one first must learn compassion toward oneself. To forgive others, one must first learn to forgive oneself. In Mysteries, we try to teach love, compassion, and forgiveness to our students. To teach these life skills, we must be working on them in ourselves, modeling our

toward creative growth in each individual; that if we can connect to or access that core of goodness and growth, if we can nourish, affirm, and acknowledge it, then the seed will grow and flourish into its unique potential.

Acknowledging the shadow. Built into this trust is the willingness to acknowledge what Carl Jung called the “shadow” side of human nature: envy, greed, hatred, prejudice, even sadness, depression, and lust. These qualities have been despised or disowned by people striving for “goodness.” The Mysteries program acknowledges the presence of the shadow in human nature and finds ways to deal with it directly and consciously, embracing and containing without denying or repressing it. Because of this, we have parted ways with many writers, thinkers, and educators in the New Age movement, and with some in the self-esteem movement, whose programs are based on denying the shadow through positive

kindly that it looked as though she was so concerned about doing a good job that she had forgotten to open her heart. She knew instantly what I meant and was able to begin the shift immediately.

The other way that ego can block the heart is when we become attached to a particular plan, technique, or approach in the classroom. We become invested in being "the teacher" — the one who knows. I discuss this at greater length below in the section on being present, but here I want simply to say that the ego can take control and shut down the heart. I have felt this in myself at times when I am determined to teach sex education or drug prevention; I have seen others become attached to council or guided imagery in the same way. This is not to say that we abandon these goals or approaches, but that we implement them with an open heart; if with our open heart we perceive that something else is going on that must be attended to, then we drop our preconceived goal.

Many of us have at times been confused by the paradox of caring deeply and yet being fully present, open to the moment. If we care deeply about our students, then won't we be overly invested in their happiness, in what we think is "right" for them to be able to let go and be fully present? At a recent workshop on conflict resolution for our faculty, Kenneth Cloke, a wise and skilled mediator, seasoned from years of dealing with every conflict from the international to the domestic, captured this paradox: "To be a successful mediator you must care as deeply as possible about the people involved, and not care a bit about the outcome."⁶

When we bring our open heart to the task of presence, we have learned to care deeply about our students, but we are not attached to any particular result.

Being present

"The present moment is one of power, of magic or miracle if we could ever be wholly in it and awake to it."⁶

"The way to experience oneness is to realize that this very moment, this very point in your life, is always the occasion."⁷

Being fully present — also described by some as "nowness" or

"wakefulness" — is the very heart of "the teaching presence." It is an essential condition for the teacher and an experience to be fostered in the students.⁸ What does it mean to be present and how can teachers develop this quality in themselves?

The dictionary gives us a clue under the obsolete meanings of the word *present*: "alert to circumstances; attentive; readily available; immediate" (*American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 1035). A teacher who is fully present is alert to the circumstances of what is happening *right now*, attentive to what is happening inside him- or herself and to what is going on in the room. The teacher has prepared for this moment prior to the class but is not attached to these plans if they do not suit the needs of the moment.

To be fully present is to be *open* to perceiving what is happening right now, to be *responsive* to the needs of this moment, to be *flexible* enough to shift gears, and to have the repertoire, *creativity*, and imagination to invent a new approach in the moment. Being present also requires the *humility* and *honesty* to simply pause and acknowledge that the new approach has not yet arrived.

Being present may not only mean letting go of, or changing, the sequence of a particular approach or exercise. It may also mean letting go of the goal, the purpose of that day's class. The teacher must be willing to wrestle with the decision about whether the original goal is more important than something that comes up in the moment. His or her capacity for discipline is essential here — one is not changing courses just because students complain or get sidetracked. The teacher carries at all times a larger vision of the purpose of the class that transcends the goal of this particular lesson plan. He or she is aware that larger forces and rhythms may be at work that create opportunities to learn better now what we might have planned for two months from now.

We were supposed to be doing sex education today, but Josh's grandfather had just died. The whole class is moved by his grief, so it is time to talk about death, about mourning, about understanding the steps and stages in which humans grieve and heal a great loss.

We were supposed to be giving our introduction to deep relaxation and guided imagery,

but the entire group begins to giggle as they lay side by side on the floor with their eyes closed, so I encourage them to laugh more and more and more, and they laugh for five minutes solid. I stop the music, stop the exercise, and we revel in the tension release of laughter, and they tell me that they feel like a group for the first time. They teach me that laughter can be a way to bond.

Being present means being able to see and acknowledge that when things are going "wrong" — the air conditioning keeps breaking, or the group is always tired because the class is scheduled for the last period of the day on Friday — there may be an opportunity for this group to learn a particular lesson, to discover how to meet a challenge that is unique to this group.

Being present means not coming into class with a load of baggage — preoccupied or exhausted by a conflict that occurred this morning. The teacher must find a way to clear the mind, clear the heart, and refresh the spirit so that he or she can be fully present in class. In some rare cases, this may mean sharing something about his or her state of mind with the students as a way to be grounded authentically in the experience and then move on.

One night during my first year of teaching there was a blazing fire in my community, the roads were closed, and I was unable to get home to my family. I was able to contact them and know that they were safe, but I spent the night in town and came in to teach that morning. I felt so disconnected, worried, confused, and disoriented that I knew I couldn't be present without telling my students about the fire. I started the class by asking for their help: "You kids have all grown up here in California with fires, floods, earthquakes. This is new to me. How have you coped with disasters in your life?" This class was a turning point for that group. Previously reticent about their personal lives and feelings, they jumped into this one with gusto. My authentic need, my vulnerability, and a very hot topic had brought them to life.

But it is indeed rare that sharing one's immediate issues is the appropriate strategy for becoming present. Most of a teacher's immediate emotional issues — a fight with a col-

league, a personal family matter, a troubling dream — are too private to be shared appropriately. The teacher might be at risk by sharing something so vulnerable, and the students might be at risk of being used for the support of their teacher. Particularly at a time in our culture when so many children are being enrolled to parent their parents, children need adult models who can take care of their own emotional needs in an authentic and graceful way without imposing them on children. A teacher must be extremely careful about sharing his or her present state and must have a safe means to contain and process these feelings before coming into class.

How does a teacher achieve this state of being present? I believe that there must be two approaches to this challenge. One is short term: What does one do that day? The other is a more long-term approach to becoming present, for the goal of wakefulness leads to a different way of being in the world.

Short-term approach to being present. The short-term approach will vary tremendously with each individual. I seem to have a very different style from most of my faculty, so I will share my approach with the caveat that it may be idiosyncratic.

About twenty minutes prior to each class, I make sure that all of my materials and lesson plans are in order. Then I put up my "Do Not Disturb" sign and put on my most soothing, hypnotic music, close my eyes, and breathe deeply. I try to take stock of what I am feeling, and then I do whatever works for me at the time to clear my mind completely. Sometimes I fall asleep for four or five minutes. Sometimes I just concentrate on my breath. If I notice that I am feeling disconnected to the particular group I am about to teach, I imagine the class sitting in a circle and I visualize making eye contact with each child. As I do this, I imagine my heart opening to each child. This exercise will often remind me or make me intuitively aware of some issue that is going on in the group or with an individual that needs to be addressed in some way today—something I would not think of when I am doing my lesson plan in a fully conscious, waking state. I do this "resting" or "meditation" for about

ten minutes, leaving myself another ten to come back into an alert, conscious state of mind.

This solitary process is all I need for most days. On those rare days when I am caught off guard and experience some sudden upset, I try to find a friend or colleague to share this with so my feelings can be processed and contained without bringing them into the classroom.

Although I recognize that many teachers do not need such an elaborate or deliberate process for becoming fully present, I do want to call attention to this need, to acknowledge that "nowness" may not just "happen" automatically, and to invite each teacher to create his or her own approach to clearing away baggage or fatigue prior to class.

Long-term approach to being present. The long-term approach is again varied and unique to each person. But I do believe that for a person to be fully present in this work requires an awareness of wakefulness as a goal and as a different way of being in the world, as well as a commitment to some path or discipline for reaching this goal. I believe that this path has both a *psychological* and a *spiritual* dimension, although in some people these may be intertwined and inseparable. The psychological dimension involves an open heart: creating some source of support for processing one's emotions and issues so that one can be more in charge of and more at peace with oneself. I repeat here that a school or department that creates a program such as this should take responsibility for providing at least some of this support to its teachers in the form of clinical supervision, frequent faculty meetings, council, or similar means.

The spiritual dimension is more elusive, but it is at the heart of this teaching, so it must be present in its teachers. Thich Nhat Hanh, poet, Zen master, and peace activist, aptly describes the purpose of "nowness" in his book *Being Peace*:

We tend to be alive in the future, not now. We say, "Wait until I finish school and get my Ph.D. degree, and then I will be really alive." When we have it, and it's not easy to get, we say to ourselves, "I have to wait until I have a job in order to be *really* alive." And then after the job, a car. After the car, a house. We are not capable of

being alive in the present moment. We tend to postpone being alive to the future, the distant future, we don't know when. Now is not the moment to be alive. We may never be alive at all in our entire life. Therefore, the technique, if we have to speak of a technique, is to *be* in the present moment, to be aware that we are here and now, and the only moment to be alive is the present moment.⁹

This future orientation keeps many of us from experiencing the fullness of the present, the fullness of life. Another great teacher, Chogyam Trungpa, speaks of how veneration of the past (which preoccupies much of our traditional educational model and way of raising children) is also an obstacle to being present.

We need to find the link between our traditions and our present experience of life. *Nowness*, or the magic of the present moment, is what joins the wisdom of the past with the present. When you appreciate a painting or a piece of music or a work of literature, no matter when it was created, you appreciate it *now*. You experience the same *nowness* in which it was created. It is always *now*.¹⁰

In a Mysteries class, we use a variety of warm-ups to help students let go of the past and future long enough to have a direct, immediate experience of themselves, one another, and life. We do not expect them to be present when they arrive, but instead take responsibility for helping them come into the present so that we can teach them effectively. In addition, "speaking from the heart," which occurs during the "council" process, has a remarkable ability to call both speaker and listener into the now.

Attention to *nowness* is a spiritual experience for most people. In those brief and rare times in my life when I have spent an entire day or several days in a state of being present, I have felt my strongest connection to my spirit, and to the exquisite gift of life.

For me, a daily meditation is a path for becoming more present.¹¹ For others, it may be running, hiking, playing a musical instrument, writing poetry, or keeping a daily journal: some process that allows one to clear the mind and be fully focused in the moment. I have met people who make their daily life a discipline of presence, who say they do not need to hide in a corner for twenty minutes a day to be present but prefer to stay

conscious, alert to presence in every moment.¹²

So there are many choices. But before we can discover the "teaching presence," we must recognize the value of being fully present, commit to seeking it, risk opening our hearts, and create or invite some discipline into our lives to move us along the path.

Notes

1. In *Embracing Each Other: Relationship as Teacher, Healer and Guide*, psychologists Stone and Winkelman emphasize vulnerability as "The Key to Intimacy in Relationship," and state that "it is one's vulnerability that makes intimacy in relationship possible, and conversely, it is this same vulnerability and apparent lack of power that the primary selves most fear in relationship." (San Rafael, CA: New World Library, 1989) p. 32.

2. In *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, M. Scott Peck says of community: "If we are going to use the word meaningfully, we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to 'rejoice together, mourn together,' and to 'delight in each other, make others' conditions our own.'" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 59.

3. Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle in "The Practice of Council," published as a pamphlet by the Ojai Foundation, reprinted in *The Mysteries Sourcebook*, and excerpted in the *Utne Reader*, March/April, 1991.

4. If I were to recommend only one book on love, it would be *The Road Less Travelled* by M. Scott Peck. I think this and other books by Peck might be required reading for any teacher of human development. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978).

5. Until recently it has been very difficult to find accessible writing on the subject of the shadow. Robert Bly's *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, edited by William Booth (Harper & Row, 1988) is an excellent introduction and a new collection called *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature*, edited by Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams (Tarcher, Los Angeles, 1991), offers an array of perspectives and insights on this little understood aspect of our nature.

6. D.M. Dooling, "Focus," in *Parabola* (Spring 1990). Issue on "Time and Presence."

7. Chogyam Trungpa in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984), p. 71.

8. When I write grade reports or evaluations on my students, being present is often a key criterion.

9. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987), p. 6.

10. Trungpa, *Shambhala*.

11. My own meditation practice does not follow any particular teaching or tradition. It is a continually evolving process, in which I incorporate new approaches I learn from different sources. For those interested in beginning a meditation practice, I recommend

Laurence LeShan's book *How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery* (New York: Bantam, 1974) because the author presents a thoughtful history of meditation in many different traditions and offers a variety of methods that allows a reader to choose and create what feels right for the individual.

12. For further reading on being present as a leader or teacher, I encourage you to read *The Tao of Leadership* by John Heider (Atlanta: Humanics New Age, 1985).

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

(Required by 39 USC 3685)

- 1A. Title of Publication: Holistic Education Review
 1B. Publication Number: 0898-0926
 2. Filing Date: 10/18/91
 3. Frequency: Quarterly
 3A. No. of Issues Published Annually: 4
 3B. Annual Subscription Price: \$40.00 Institutions; \$26.00 Personal
 4. Address of Known Office of Publication: 39 Pearl St., Brandon (Rutland), VT 05733-1007
 5. Address of Headquarters of General Business Offices of Publisher: Same as #4 above
 6. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor
 Publisher: C.S. Jakiela, 39 Pearl St., Brandon, VT 05733-1007
 Editor: Ron Miller, 128 Wildwood Ave., Piedmont, CA 94610
 Managing Editor: Jodi Thum, RFD 2, Box 1710, Bristol, VT 05443
 7. Owner (Corporation and all stockholders owning 1% or more of its stock): Psychology Press/Holistic Education Press, 39 Pearl St., Brandon, VT 05733; Charles S. and Nancy D. Jakiela, 39 Pearl St., Brandon, VT 05733.
 8. Known Bondholders, etc.: None
 9. Not Applicable
 10. Nature and Extent of Circulation (First figure = Average number of copies since second-class authorization; Second figure = Actual number of copies of single issue nearest to filing date)
 A. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 2568, 2568
 B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation
 B1. Sales through dealers, etc.: 160, 160
 B2. Mail Subscriptions: 1481, 1481
 C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 1641, 1641
 D. Free Distribution: 71, 71
 E. Total Distribution: 1712, 1712
 F. Copies Not Distributed
 F1. Office use, left over, etc.: 856, 856
 F2. Returns from news agents: 0, 0
 G. Total: 2568, 2568

I certify that the statements made by me above are true and correct.

Charles S. Jakiela, Publisher

Buddhist-Inspired Early Childhood Education at the Naropa Institute

by Richard C. Brown

The Naropa Institute's new Early Childhood Education program is seeking to incorporate the wisdom of the Buddhist meditative tradition into Western education.¹ It is our experience that this contemplative influence provides a much-needed dimension in modern education.

Although most teacher training programs offer technically sound methodologies suitable for the mainstream classrooms of the United States, it is still a common assumption that all that is really necessary in teacher training is an understanding of child development and effective teaching techniques. This almost exclusive focus on the mechanical aspects of teaching virtually ignores the inner preparation of the teacher. Therefore, the innovative and creative aspects of the methods courses intended to equip new teachers to teach freshly — creatively — and to inspire excellence are not really

incorporated. Where the personal journey of the student-teacher has been emphasized, it has met with suspicion or limited success, since this approach is so fundamentally alien to our cultural notions of training. We are immersed in a society concerned foremost with immediate results. The obvious shortcomings of Western education should at least tempt us to examine the benefits of the Asian contemplative traditions. Therein, we may discover the natural complement to our overly achievement-oriented approaches.

Previously neglected in teacher training was the Asian notion of "training of the heart." When the heart is opened and nurtured in teacher training, there is the possibility of connecting with the best in our children, with the disciplines of study, and with the student-teacher's own resourceful nature. Effectiveness in teaching is derived in large part from this directness, openness, passion, and sensitivity. The meditative approach deepens our training to inspire that kind of wholeheartedness.

Richard Brown, chair of the Naropa Institute's Early Childhood Education Department, has been adapting and applying contemplative Buddhism for the education of children and teachers in the West for the past thirteen years. A practitioner and student of Buddhist teachings, Brown taught in a contemplative elementary/middle school in Boulder for seven years, where he became head teacher. For the past several years he has been teaching rites of passage for eight-year-olds and developing children's gardening at Naropa's organic Hedgerow Farms. Previously, he taught in public schools and was an educational therapist. Brown is also actively parenting his two young children, Owen and Alicia.

The Naropa Institute is located at 2130 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80302.

Contemplative practices such as meditation, t'ai chi, and various arts enable the teacher to release preconceptions and engage the student with an open mind and heart. A new teacher education program at the Naropa Institute applies insights from the 2500-year-old traditions of Tibetan Buddhism to achieve this opening of the teacher's compassionate inner nature.

Contemplative aspects of the training

Teaching and learning at the Naropa Institute are based on five competencies inspired by Tibetan Buddhism: awareness of the present moment, critical intelligence, communication skills, resourcefulness, and effective action.² The fundamental competency on which the other four are based is awareness of the present moment, a discussion of which may clarify the notion of contemplation and how it relates to teacher training. In the words of Thomas Merton:

The first thing you have to do before you even start thinking about such a thing as contemplation, is to try to recover your basic natural unity, to reintegrate your compartmentalized being into a coordinated and simple whole and learn to live as a unified human being.... He must recollect himself, turn within in order to find the inner center of spiritual activity which remains inaccessible as long as he is immersed in the exterior business of life.

The true contemplative is not less interested than others in normal life, not less concerned with what goes on in the world, but *more* interested, more concerned.

The "reality" through which the contemplative "penetrates" in order to reach a contact with what is "ultimate" in it is actually his own being, his own life. The contemplative ... enters into contact with reality with an immediacy that forgets the division between subject and object.³

The primary contemplative component at the heart of the Naropa Institute's education program is training in sitting meditation. Sitting practice is a fundamental way to develop mindfulness and awareness and to become synchronized in our whole being. Although there is no expectation that student-teachers become practicing Buddhists, group and individual sitting and walking meditation are requirements for some courses in the teacher training. The style of meditation practiced is nonreligious in that no prayers, mantras, or visualizations are involved, no deities invoked, and no creed followed.

Beginning with ourselves. Sitting meditation is simply a mindfulness practice that works with our breathing and our everyday thoughts and perceptions. It is practiced initially to develop mindfulness, so that we know clearly what is transpiring with our active minds. William James's de-

scription fits this sitting practice: "The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the root of judgment, character and will.... An education which should improve this faculty would be the education *par excellence*."⁴

When we sit quietly, we gradually encounter the entire depth and range of our being, which remains active even though the body is still. Such encounters with ourselves instill enormous confidence and interconnection. This kind of individual exploration re-

ine peace with ourselves by sitting and discovering a true appreciation of our personal richness.

Working with others. Once we have made peace with our own style of being, then awareness and compassion extend beyond our own agendas and our teaching can take on an effective fluidity. We begin to be more present in each teaching moment without so much resentment in our hearts stemming from a feeling of separation from the act of teaching. This compassion is not based on good intentions, but on the experience

When the heart is opened and nurtured in teacher training, there is the possibility of connecting with the best in our children, with the discipline of study, and with the student-teacher's own resourceful nature.

quires wisdom, companionship, and courage. The wisdom comes from 2,500 years of the accumulated insight experience of the Buddhist contemplative tradition; the companionship comes from the closeness of the student-teachers and teachers on separate journeys together; and the courage comes from those who realize that only by deeply knowing themselves will they ever be able to know and teach others meaningfully.

Before we can teach others holistically, we must begin to familiarize ourselves with, and then unlearn, the habits that inhibit us from being truly whole as teachers. Are we able to personally transcend the shortcomings of our own educations and upbringings? Our personal heritage may have left us with obstacles to experiencing or teaching mathematics or art, or confusion as to how squabbles between children are mediated. If we can experience directly how we limit our own perception, inhibit our natural kindness, and disrupt our connection with others in the learning environment, this can be the first step in transforming those constricted patterns. Such a journey involves making genu-

of generosity arising naturally from our character. This is the basis for relating to children as they are, which, along with a clarified skillfulness in teaching, is the starting point for unfolding children's brilliance.

For us as teachers, it is paramount to learn to ride the waves of classroom energies — our own and the children's. If we try to fend off emotional intensity, chaos, or ambiguity, then we may often burn out or become very rigid teachers. Sitting practice does not give us solid ground on which to stand; rather, it prepares us to walk on the real ground of daily teaching, which is often quite rocky and uncertain in places. In sitting we don't try to control our minds, nor let them go completely; no suppression, no indulgence. We seek to become well-tuned creatures, both gentle and powerful. If we give up fighting, manipulating, and succumbing to emotional energies, then no harmful reaction or hardening occurs in ourselves or in the environment. Every situation becomes workable, whether it is the intense absorption of a child delightfully focused on a weaving activity or the desperate tantrum of one

whose anger and confusion pierce us to the heart. When we regard all energy manifestations without bias or threat, then it is possible for attitudes to transform and creativity to emerge. This is the essence of nonaggressive education based on sitting practice. The journey of the program is how one becomes a gentle, genuine, and powerful teacher.

The Naropa Institute's Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Arts program is designed to give new student-teachers the comprehensive training they will need in teaching young children. The teaching relationship based on contemplative practice takes on a slightly different quality. Because the teacher can perceive a learning situation without obstructing personal confusion, a clear, appropriate response can emerge. This view comes about by letting go of what may seem immediately comfortable or predictable for the teacher and trusting that the next moment will bring fresh contact with reality. When the teacher is not attached to a personal agenda but is acting in direct communication with the situation, his or her actions are subtly powerful. The teacher exhibits tremendous interest, connection, and inquisitiveness. Such a passionate and stable model is infectious for the children, and a natural affection with an edge of respectful formality develops. Thus, individual situations become lively, playful, and yet dignified.

Chogyam Trungpa said that to work with our emotions we must take responsibility for the style of our responses. We can begin to experience our emotions as they are rather than as if we had rehearsed them.

Traditional arts. Along with sitting practice, another contemplative component of the program is the required minor in Traditional Arts. These arts are examples of the secular contemplative training of the Shambhala tradition of Tibet.⁵

The Shambhala teachings are founded on the premise that there is basic human wisdom that can help to solve the world's problems. This wisdom does not belong to any one culture or religion, nor does it come only from the West or East. Rather, it is a tradition of human warriorship that has existed in many cultures at many times throughout history.

Warriorship here does not refer to making war on others. Aggression is the source of our problems, not the solution.... Warriorship in this context is the tradition of human bravery, or the tradition of fearlessness.⁶

This tradition embodies spiritual values in ordinary life, and it is particularly applicable to the secular but contemplative atmosphere of the Naropa Institute. Student-teachers have the option of studying and practicing Aikido or T'ai Chi Ch'uan (martial arts), Kyudo (Zen archery), or Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging).

Because they are themselves disciplines that have for centuries been ways to train the mind, they already embody the principles of mindfulness and awareness. Therefore, by practicing them in conjunction with basic sitting practice, we can begin to see how mindfulness and awareness can be carried on in physical activity, and we can continue this attitude in our daily life.⁷

These disciplines have been practiced by teachers and children alike over the past fifteen years at all instructional levels in contemplative schools connected with the Naropa Institute. The effects have been empowering and have transformed entire educational environments.

Intellectual inquiry in contemplative education

It is important to consider how the competency of intellectual inquiry grows out of awareness training. Intellectual inquiry, when grounded in the holistic experience of meditation practice, sees broadly, freshly, and straightforwardly. Sitting practice furthers an unbiased, precise clarity of thought concerning all of the complexity and subtlety of what we perceive. Intellect so trained observes patterns, clarifies situations, and senses potentialities.

Such holistic intellectual understanding is gained by relaxation of neurotic effort, the deluded attempt to maintain fixed notions. By relaxing, we allow ourselves to be touched by the totality of perception, and then reflect on it without needing to grasp it. This requires letting go of the ambition to know and of the certainty that we have things figured out. This approach stems from the experience that the nature of the mind is not such that it requires the strict maintenance of knowledge. The contemplative tradi-

tion suggests that we try direct knowing, not just "knowing about." Knowing arises from our natural connection to the world through our senses.

The student-teacher practices being critical, accurate, and frank simply by seeing things without clinging to the bias of previous experience, personal agenda, or well-intended motives. The student-teacher begins to distinguish between knowing what is actually occurring in the learning environment versus being deluded by his or her bias or assuming that his or her conceptual overlays represent reality. With such intellect he or she may become a teacher who allows children to cultivate that same kind of accuracy themselves.

This intelligence has the ability to pacify aggression. When the teacher sees through fixed points of view from a broader perspective, he or she is less likely to get trapped in someone else's ground rules, thereby avoiding aggressive or competitive formats. Being at home in a wider view, the narrow one doesn't intimidate. There is such unselfish strength and clarity in teaching that one does not have to prove oneself, dominate the classroom, or create artificially supportive conditions for oneself or the children. One can just explore the total learning environment with unbridled curiosity and precision.

Naropa's Early Childhood Education curriculum

Year one. In the Early Childhood Education curriculum, student-teachers begin the two-year program studying the foundation of the contemplative approach in the course "Buddhist Educational Psychology." Here the heritage of Buddhist psychology is applied to modern teaching. The Buddhist understanding of egolessness, nonattachment, and non-aggression leads to a paradoxically expanded confidence in who we are and what can be attained. Teachers learn to approach teaching by being mindful of their own preconceptions and emotional energies and with a fresh awareness of each teaching moment. Student-teachers begin by learning an approach to working with and making peace with their own state of mind. Then the way is pointed to extending that compassion skillfully to children in learning environments.

In order to begin with a fresh start, the student-teachers' involvement with children in learning environments during the first year is limited to observations only. By restricting interaction on the teaching level, the resurrection of old relational and teaching habits is forestalled until new awareness and training have become more established. The discipline of observation has been well developed at the Naropa Institute in several programs, including Environmental Studies and Buddhist Studies. This practice is an outgrowth of the insights of meditation practice and has proved to be a particularly useful training tool for Education students.

Student-teachers also take "Cultural Anthropology and Social

in children.

Maitri practice, another contemplative discipline, is introduced in the second semester of the first year in "Teaching and Learning Styles." Adapted for Westerners from the tradition of Tibetan Yoga, the Institute's *Maitri* training is a sophisticated method of cultivating awareness of the emotions and developing appreciation of ourselves and others. The practice itself involves assuming simple postures for an hour at a time in each of five differently colored and shaped rooms. Each room and posture reflects and elicits a discrete style of human and natural energy, based on the Tibetan understanding. *Maitri*, meaning friendship, comes with the delightful yet unsettling discovery of these emotional energies

of that energy style. The course, an extension of the "Buddhist Educational Psychology" course, is designed not only to uncover personal richness, but also to enhance teaching, environmental design, and curriculum development based on the wisdom manifestations of the five energies. *Maitri* study and practice is a tremendous contribution from the Tibetan tradition toward enriching the area of "learning styles" in education. In "Teaching and Learning Styles," student-teachers explore not only the traditional five Buddhist energy styles, but also selected learning style theory.

The other course of that semester, "Parenting," is designed to also be taken by parents from the Naropa Institute and the greater Boulder community. Student-teachers have an opportunity to interact with parents and learn about contemplative approaches to parenting issues. Thus student-teachers begin to bring their nascent contemplative understanding into the pragmatic world of the family.

Knowledge must be burned, hammered and beaten like pure gold. Then one can wear it as an ornament.

—A Tibetan saying

Intellectual inquiry, when grounded in the holistic experience of meditation practice, sees broadly, freshly, and straightforwardly.

Change" during their first semester. This course explores relationship patterns, rites of passage, global perspectives in child rearing, gender roles, the cultural construction of emotion, and effective social action. One of the main focuses of the program is to open student-teachers on many levels to a real appreciation and understanding of the diversity and richness of human experience. In developing an awareness of their immediate and global environments, student-teachers experience the conditioned quality of their cultural and personal heritage. The challenge in creating a new education is to discover and integrate the most awakened manifestations of global human expressions into a reinspired cultural heritage.

The course "Body-Mind Centering" explores an experiential approach to the study of early childhood motor development and an experiential study of anatomy. Here student-teachers experience their own movement patterns directly and discover means to develop and transform those patterns both in themselves and

within ourselves. The emerging realization that emotional energies of all sorts are the basis of our personal wisdom is the goal of the practice aspect of the program. Student-teachers are exposed to the profound experience of being friends with themselves which results in unconditional confidence in their intrinsic wisdom.

If we cannot dance with life's energies, we will not be able to use our experience.... Tantra teaches not to suppress or destroy energy but to transmute it; in other words, go with the pattern of energy. When we find balance going with the energy, we begin to get acquainted with it. We begin to find the right path with the right direction.... When one goes with the pattern of energy, then experience becomes very creative. The energy of wisdom and compassion is continually operating in a precise and accurate way.⁸

In *Maitri* practice, student-teachers can actually experience their own highlighted energies through distinct "filters." Thus children, no matter what their basic energies, can relate far better to a teacher who understands and has experienced his or her own version

Year two. In the first semester of the program's second year, student-teachers begin studying more specific teaching approaches, methods, and skills, as well as theories of child development.

"Holistic and Contemplative Traditions of Teaching" is a survey of related holistic and contemplative traditions. The primary focus of the course is the educational applications of the Shambhala teachings described above. For teachers, Shambhala practice evokes a sense of sacredness inherent in education, without any of the trappings of religion. The course examines the educational experiences of Shambhala schools, including the lab school described below, and particularly applies Shambhala principles to the teaching of young children.

In addition, the Montessori, Waldorf, and Krishnamurti traditions are explored by guest teacher/practitioners with special attention to their contemplative aspects. Such explorations include Montessori's view of the "absorbent mind" and of the importance of practicality; Steiner's development of the richness of the child's

perceptual and imaginative education; and Krishnamurti's understanding of the importance of teachers working with their own minds.

In the course "Child Development and Creativity," we explore the hallmarks of the psychological, social, cognitive, and motor development of young children. Evolving from the "Body Mind Centering" class of the previous year, this course provides a broader understanding of the unfolding human child. We discover how the development of children can be enhanced in creative, fulfilling, and appropriate ways.

In "Teaching Preschool Children," practical methods for teaching children are explored. The emphasis here is on practical crafts and integrating art into everyday life. The world of the child is presented as naturally artful with the potential of beauty in everyday undertakings. Doing ordinary things well leads to the notion of "art in everyday life."

Many of the Naropa Institute's student-teachers are not of traditional age but have had some experience with teaching or teacher training courses elsewhere. Regardless of background, the student-teacher accumulates throughout the program many resources and techniques to engage children. The student-teacher discriminates between various teaching methods and materials to provide children with a selected variety of activities and materials, rich in diversity and quality. The teacher endeavors to supply appropriate tools for children to create their world. It is at this stage that the student-teacher begins to work with groups of children.

In the final semester course "Children's Studies and Creative Teaching," student-teachers apply selected current children's research and cognitive studies to creative teaching methods. The course is taught in conjunction with the teaching internship, so that students can design and implement activities for children that actualize research concepts in an actual classroom situation. This course is the culmination of the competency of intellectual inquiry in the program.

Internship. Student-teachers spend most of the final semester of the program in internship, "Supervised Teaching Practicum," at Alaya Pre-

school, the Naropa Institute's laboratory school. Alaya Preschool, founded by Buddhist families fifteen years ago, has been gradually integrated into serving the broader Boulder community. Alaya Preschool is a place where contemplative practice of the five competencies is joined with the finest elements of Western preschool curriculum. Overt Asian contemplative influences include the sounding of the gong for a quiet moment before meals and the children's Ikebana arrangements that ornament the classrooms. The gentle atmosphere, the vivid art, and the empowered children and teachers are strong indicators of the effects of the approach, which flows primarily from the contemplative attitude of the teachers and administrators.

Effective action in an educational environment is the goal of all teacher training. Most teachers have altruistic motivations to begin with, but what happens when teachers are actually teaching? Action cannot be truly effective unless we have first discovered our own motivations for teaching. Often, the conceptual and technical training teachers have received is not sufficient to deal with the living energies of the classroom situation. New teachers often bring only enthusiasm and a conceptual understanding to teaching. The result is either burnout or an unintentional distancing as protection from the raw, intimate contact involved in actually teaching children. Often we are trying to filter and cushion the messages of the classroom to confirm our vision of who we are and what teaching should be. If so, we are limiting our effectiveness by this skewed sense of self-protection. But teachers do not have to protect themselves in such ways.

This is why in the Naropa Institute's program so much emphasis is placed on synchronizing our own energies before bringing that wholeness to the classroom. Effective teaching knows as much when *not* to act as when to act, and it includes stillness as well as action. Through a gentle but direct encounter with a world that is powerfully alive with change and beauty, we achieve a fearlessness which is also tenderhearted. Our gentle, rugged world is a very accommodating place—a rich storehouse for us all. If that is the attitude we wish children to have, then we should culti-

vate those qualities in ourselves. If our own energies are not constricted by fear, then we can bring all of our awareness, resourcefulness, intellect, and communication skills effectively into our teaching. We need training that equips us to bring our full, genuine presence into the educational environment.

The Naropa Institute's Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Arts degree certifies student-teachers for preschool teaching and administration. We are expanding our summer education intensives and teacher recertification opportunities, and we hope to soon begin developing a Master of Arts program. We invite everyone to join us in this journey.

Notes

1. The Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, is a small, private, accredited college offering upper division undergraduate and graduate programs with a contemplative approach to the arts, social sciences, and humanities. It was founded seventeen years ago by the Tibetan meditation master, scholar, and artist, Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche.
2. The five competencies are derived from the traditional mandala of five energies representing all aspects of existence, such as seasons, emotions, cognitive styles, and cultural styles. Each energy can move between liberated and distorted manifestations. For instance, the energy called *vajra* has, among others, the qualities of clarity and precision. However, when one begins to claim or cling to these qualities, arrogance and self-righteousness tend to arise.
3. Thomas Merton, quoted in William H. Shannon, *Thomas Merton's Dark Path* (New York: Penguin, 1982).
4. William James, *Psychology: A Brief Course* (New York: Dover, 1961).
5. Shambhala is the mythical, utopian kingdom upon which the Western stories of Shangri-la are based. As a contemplative tradition, it paralleled Buddhism in Tibet, and it stresses a pan-Asian warriorship based upon nonaggression, a noble heart, and spiritual practice of everyday life. Its applicability in the West has to do with its "nonreligious" quality and direct, nonphilosophical experiential emphasis. A contemporary presentation of its teachings can be found in Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche's book *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (Boston: Shambhala, 1984).
6. Chogyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*.
7. Jeremy Hayward, *Perceiving Ordinary Magic* (Boston: Shambhala, 1984).
8. Chogyam Trungpa, *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1973).

Possessing a Beginner's Mind

The Missing Link to Restructuring

by David W. Brown

*Reality is what we take to be true.
 What we take to be true is what we believe.
 What we believe is based upon our perceptions.
 What we perceive depends upon what we look for.
 What we look for depends upon what we think.
 What we think depends upon what we perceive.
 What we perceive determines what we believe.
 What we believe determines what we take to be true.
 What we take to be true is our reality.¹*

Education in America is experiencing a major transformation that should dramatically change the way we perceive schooling and learning. The current restructuring movement, or what perhaps should be called "neo-reformism," has the potential of offering some promising possibilities in our quest to educate and prepare students for the 21st century. Schlechty defines this restructuring as "altering systems of rules, roles, and relationships so that schools can serve existing purposes more effectively or serve new purposes altogether."²

One serious concern about this effort, however, is the danger of replaying the same hand that has been dealt time and time again in attempting to create new visions for education. This is to say that traditionally the same old "rules, roles, and relationships" common to American schooling have been clumped together and disguised with different labels in order to energize and muster support among educators, policy makers, and researchers. Such is the case with "back to basics," "cooperative learning," and "effective schools." According to Newman, these "slogans" succeed in galvanizing public opinion by offering new possibilities for action, but they tend to be so ambiguous that the risk is great that the new energy will be dissipated in contradictory directions.³ Is this what "restructuring" is going to do — simply dissipate, as have many other good ideas, because of empty and enigmatic rhetoric? Are terms such as teacher empowerment, cross-disciplinary study, decentralization, site-based management, integrated curricula, flexible scheduling, and parent involvement going to join the ranks of the other so-called "buzz words" of reform?

David W. Brown has taught in the elementary grades for four years and served as an elementary school principal for six years, both in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is an assistant professor of elementary education at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. His interests at this point revolve around researching the moral and spiritual aspects of the restructuring movement. His article "Toward a Paradigm of Promise" appeared in the Spring, 1989, issue of Holistic Education Review and is reprinted in New Directions in Education.

The "restructuring" of American education risks becoming another superficial reform effort unless educators and policy makers examine foundational assumptions with an open mind. Even the desire to ground education in "scientific" approaches needs to recognize that science itself is presently undergoing radical transformation.

To date, a clear definition of *restructuring* has not been offered. It has generally been up to the beholder to seise the mire of jargon for clues as to what the term actually means. One view of restructuring implies simply a reorganization of the existing system: Take what we now have, and have had, and relabel and revise. Another view is to

of this paper. And, since most contemporary educators rely upon "scientific" grounds for their research and practice (i.e., scientific testing methods, curriculum designs, prediction of outcomes, and control of behaviors), it is especially useful to consider some of the latest thinking in science itself to illustrate that revolutionary paradigm

ity, as well as the ability to see things always fresh and new.⁵ Those who possess a beginner's mind in exploring new challenges and changes in life see the events as they are, not as what they are perceived to be because of previous experiences. Zukav, for example, characterized Einstein as possessing a beginner's mind in the discovery of his theory of relativity. In describing such a person Zukav states:

In the moment of insight, he, and he alone, sees the obvious which to the uninitiated (the rest of the world) yet appears as nonsense or, worse, as madness or heresy. This confidence is not the obstinacy of the fool, but the surety of him who knows what he knows, and knows also that he can convey it to others in a meaningful way.⁶

Educators, legislators, and parents must approach restructuring with a beginner's mind. We must work together to view schooling with a fresh perspective — looking at the demands posed upon our youth in the 21st century and collaborating our efforts, free of the stifling and unproductive bonds of past bureaucracy and politics. We must go about restructuring in a way that is totally different from past reform efforts. We must not spend time trying to create something new, but rather try to understand and deal with what already is. We must deal with the reality that the fast-paced, information-rich world of today requires much more than a reorganized back-to-basics education. The economy, the nature of work, and the family's ability to support young people throughout their formative years have all changed dramatically over the past twenty years, and our educational system has not kept up with these changes.

Our educational system has been driven by a Newtonian mindset for centuries. We have followed the same guidelines, methods, and techniques in virtually all of our theory and practice. The current idea of focusing upon the products of complex instructional designs and then on the processes of instruction used to produce better products dates to the "machine theory" of Bobbitt and Charters in the 1920s. Our systematic testing and analysis of what is now referred to as students' "learning outcomes" typifies the relentless scientific method of

Simply refurbishing old tenets and dogma of past pedagogy will not bring about anything new.

change the existing system to accommodate the myriad needs and demands posed by today's students in order to survive in the 21st century. In other words, update or add to what we already have.

However, there is a third view of restructuring that requires a reconceptualization of the reality of schooling. It involves an actual transformation from one conception of education to something entirely new, unattempted, and virtually unimaginable. It requires more than altering existing rules and practices. In fact, it requires an inexorable rejection of the current, commonly accepted ways we go about conducting mainstream education — a metamorphosis. In spite of the honest and sincere efforts and promises of its creators to make it the most penetrating educational reform movement in history, restructuring lacks this crucial, most essential element.

To experience a veritable revolution in education reform (as virtually promised by advocates of restructuring), a total shift in how we perceive reality must occur. Simply refurbishing old tenets and dogma of past pedagogy will not bring about anything new. This practice only adds another horse to the proverbial merry-go-round of reform. To add more weight to this already dilapidated machine only compounds the problem.

The notion of "transformation" or "paradigmatic shift" in the way we think about, talk about, and practice education as it exists today is the focus

shifts are already occurring. The theory of relativity, chaos theory, holography, quantum mechanics, and the theory of dissipative structures are all examples of revolutionary shifts from the way scientists viewed the world under Newtonian guidelines. The astounding impact of each of these discoveries, in turn, unequivocally changes how things are observed, measured, and described, because these activities become impossible using the knowledge and instruments of the old Newtonian paradigm. Thus, scientists are forced to seek out new ways to measure phenomena and to invent new instruments and vocabulary to describe what they see.

This, in essence, is what restructuring must cause educators to do: It must cause us to invent new ways of dealing with the reality of educating children for the 21st century. It must cause us to step beyond reform and into a realm of incomprehensible possibilities. It must cause us to "slip the bonds of the known to venture far into the unexplored territory which lies beyond the barrier of the obvious."⁴ We must cultivate a "beginner's mind." This is the unaddressed element — the vital core — the missing link to restructuring.

What is a beginner's mind?

The concept of beginner's mind is most closely related to Zen practice. According to Suzuki, beginner's mind is the innocence of the first inquiry. It is a mind that is open, and it includes both an attitude of doubt and possibil-

research. This is what is in education; this is the reality that has been created, in part, because of the incessant reliance upon reusing old pedagogical methods and techniques to solve new and totally different problems.

It is now obvious that this style of reform is obsolete. It didn't work back then; it is not working now. We are not dealing with "widgets" or "mouse-traps"; we are dealing with moral beings with minds capable of accepting or rejecting what is presented to them. Newtonian science does not offer answers or solutions to the complex social and cultural challenges faced by our youth today and in the future. The solutions we seek are not necessarily scientific in nature — they are moral in nature. Therefore, educationally, we must approach the new circumstances of today and tomorrow with a new attitude, paying attention to the individual human needs of children instead of just the need to see that they perform on grade level.

Possessing a beginner's mind can enable our educational system to keep up with the changes facing our youth by allowing us to see today's situation as if it were for the first time, virtually untainted by past experiences. We could clearly see the obvious — the problems as they are — then design curricula that address these problems specifically. I believe that in doing this we would more likely realize what education really is — and give students the skills they need when they need them, not just because they are supposed to have them. Embracing restructuring with the zeal and innocence of the very first inquiry generates a new excitement and fresh outlook of an educational system that has become infertile and misguided. Isn't this what restructuring is meant to do?

What is a paradigm shift?

The first step in exercising the beginner's mind is to openly experience and accept a paradigm shift in the way we look at reality. A paradigm is defined as a way of seeing or a framework of thought. According to Foster, "The very concept of paradigm raises our awareness to more than one dominant way of seeing things."⁷ Paradigms are adopted or borrowed by researchers from various fields of in-

terest to help them in classifying different ways of seeing reality.

Kuhn contends that paradigms are what members of certain communities share and, conversely, these communities consist of those who share a paradigm. By communities, Kuhn is referring to the scientific community, the educational community, and the political community. Furthermore, Kuhn asserts that paradigms govern not a subject matter but rather a group of practitioners.⁸ In other words, paradigms act as the impetus, the intellectual glue, the directing force that guides the practice of researchers and practitioners in the formulation of theories and models. A paradigm shift occurs when a crisis situation invalidates the conventions of the old paradigm and forces researchers and practitioners to seek new methods and techniques to find a solution.

It is a legitimate concern that the restructuring movement will manifest itself as just another model rather than as a paradigm shift in the way that we define learning and schooling. It is evident that the crisis is upon us to shift, or change our methods and techniques, to prepare children for the 21st century — our old conventions no longer work! We are dealing with a dropout rate for high school students that has risen to over 50% in some areas. Learning is depersonalized and product oriented. Daily schedules have become so crammed that there is no time left for socialization or discussion of anything beyond the subjects at hand. We are pushed to produce, produce, produce! A paradigm shift much like the revolutions that have occurred in the sciences is due for education.

Several very significant and very dramatic paradigm shifts have actually occurred in the field of science in the 20th century. These discoveries shook and crumbled the very foundations of the Newtonian worldview. Of paramount significance is the fact that these discoveries were made by men who, in essence, possessed a beginner's mind in order to release themselves from the bonds of Newtonian thought. Men such as Einstein and his theory of relativity, Planck and quantum mechanics, Prigogine and his theory of dissipative structures, Heisenberg and his uncertainty prin-

ciple, and Gabor with his discovery of holography all proved to the world that there are ways of seeing the universe other than through classical mechanistic means. They proved that there are new and better ways to do things. They proved that reality is multidimensional and that it can be perceived differently according to the individual's unique perspective.⁹

The link to education

What are the potential ramifications of these revolutions in science upon the field of education? There are many. A basic purpose of this paper is to express the fact that education, from basic classroom instruction to clinical supervision and research, is strongly based upon science and the scientific method. Therefore, any shifts in scientific thought and inquiry must directly affect how we think about and go about educational research and practice. The examples of recent scientific revolutions do present sufficient valid evidence to encourage a long-awaited revolution in thinking among educators, legislators, and parents about how to educate children for the 21st century. Above all, these examples give proof that radical, seemingly impossible changes are possible, and are capable of revolutionizing things that were thought of as absolute law for centuries. Einstein's discovery that measurements are only approximations unless made within exactly the same space-time coordinates (which is impossible for educators) should tell us that we cannot rely solely upon standardized and individualized testing to measure student achievement or potential. It requires much more to accomplish this task — teacher observation and expert opinion, parental input, the student's personal insight and opinion, personality factors, and so forth. Even with all of this, however, it is still an approximation of the student's potential outcome.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle should make it clear to us that standardized and individual test taking are so unnatural and virtually inaccurate that they should be eliminated altogether as devices for determining the fate of a student's educational experience. Here again, scientifically, it requires much more to determine a student's potential in life.

Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures paints a clear picture of what the educational system has become: a massive, open system that consumes energy from the efforts of society. This, according to the theory, has rendered the system very vulnerable to change by means of outside perturbations. As yet, nothing has come along with enough "punch" to cause the system to shift to a higher order — to cause a paradigm shift. However, the restructuring movement, theoretically, does have this potential.

Holographics and chaos theory illustrate, through the hologram and through the nonlinear, how it is possible to look at reality from an entirely different, non-Newtonian perspective. Karl Pribram utilized this concept to help explain how the brain perceives the world and how the world is presented to the brain. Educators can also use this perspective to perceive how students learn, what causes success and failure, why we have more and more dropouts, and what causes reform efforts to fail in changing the system. To shift our attention to the out-of-the-ordinary instead of trying to "normalize" and make students the same could dramatically change the long-accepted goals and visions of mainstream education.

Human science

Another realm must be addressed if a true "paradigm shift" is to occur in education: the realm of the "human sciences," that is, the social, moral, existential, psychological aspects of our culture. The natural and physical sciences and the revolutions that have occurred within them do not necessarily address the problems presented by this aspect of reality. The natural and physical sciences are based upon knowledge: our knowledge of our world, or how we know it.

But in the area of values, ethics, morality, or power, something more than knowledge is involved, which science cannot provide. When we are called upon to act upon our knowledge, to build or rebuild a society, we must draw upon wisdom, moral courage, a commitment to certain values over others — all of which certainly draw upon, but then transcend, our perceptions, assumptions, and knowledge.¹⁰

This holistic interpretation further illustrates the point that the Newtonian deterministic, reductionistic vision is unquestionably inadequate in addressing the complex moral and ethical problems awaiting our children. Even though the major "revolutions" have occurred in the natural and physical sciences, their significance to educators is invaluable in that they give proof that dramatic, almost transcendental changes are possible, and they provide examples of the powerful influence of possessing a beginner's mind. The spiritual and moral aspects of restructuring, in my opinion, will become evident to educators as they begin to view schooling of children through the beginner's mind. It is inevitable. When we begin to see clearly the immediate individual needs of our students — such as life skills, group interaction skills, cooperation, decision-making skills, love, family involvement — hopefully it will be evident that these must be addressed before academics can be effective.

The educational imperative: The search for the missing link

As can be seen from the examples of paradigm shifts in science, a common practice emerges as a result of revolutionary new discoveries — the need to invent new rules, roles, relationships, instruments for measuring potential and progress, and minds open to accepting the unpredictable, the unknown, and the incomprehensible as possible representations of our reality rather than as nonsense to be eliminated.

Educators and educational researchers, teachers, holists, administrators, board members, and parents must, like scientists, open their minds to the possibilities of the unknown to bring about a revolution in the way we think about and go about schooling children for the 21st century. We must approach restructuring with a beginner's mind — a mind open to all new ways of viewing education and schooling; a mind that is free of all past reform attempts, rationales, and visions. Not to be free of these past experiences could cause us to repeat what we have done continuously in the past, that is, to reuse the same rules, roles, and relationships to solve new problems. This has not and does not work. According to Suzuki, "In the Beginner's Mind there are many

possibilities, but in the expert's there are few."¹¹ We have become experts in futility! We need a mind that sees what the needs are now, as if they were presented for the first time. This should be our goal of practice for the restructuring effort — this is the missing link.

Notes

1. G. Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979).
2. P. Schlechty, *Schools for the 21st Century* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), p. xvi.
3. F. Newman, "Linking Restructuring to Authentic Student Achievement." *Kappan* (Feb. 1991): 458–463.
4. Zukav, *Dancing Wu Li Masters*, p. 117.
5. S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (New York: Weatherhill, 1970).
6. Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, pp. 118–119.
7. W. Foster, *Paradigms and Promises* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1986).
8. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
9. For a detailed discussion of these fascinating revolutions in science, see K. Wilber, ed., *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes* (Boston: New Science Library, 1985).
10. R. Miller, "Some Reflections on this Discussion..." *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 (1991): 49.
11. Suzuki, *Zen Mind*, p. 21.

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Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Visions

Challenging Ourselves and Our Students

by Mara Sapon-Shevin

Cooperative learning strategies, in which small groups of children work together to accomplish specific tasks, have grown tremendously in popularity in the past five years. As an early proponent of cooperative learning (I have been doing workshops in this area for over fifteen years), I am delighted to see people rethinking traditional, competitive ways of teaching and organizing classrooms. And I am heartened by the increasing attention to children's interpersonal social behavior in school settings.

I am not happy, however, to see that in many cases cooperative

learning has been reduced to a prepackaged set of techniques: a compilation of procedures or lesson plans easily incorporated into existing structures and routines, uncritically implemented. Many of the ways in which cooperative learning is promoted and implemented demonstrate the failure of teachers and administrators to think comprehensively and consistently about the relationships between cooperative learning and the content and context of children's schooling experience.

We need to go beyond cooperative learning as patent medicine, good for whatever ails the schools. Cooperative learning as a philosophy and a set of practices can guide our exploration of educational and societal reform — and help us to reinvent schools and education.

Nancy Schniedewind and I have argued that a coherent cooperative educational philosophy would attend to the following variables in cooperative learning:¹

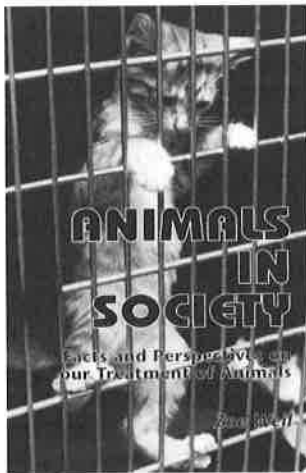
1. *The content that teachers use cooperative learning to teach.* Yes, cooperative completion of math worksheets is probably less deadly and less grueling than individual completion, but is that the most important type of math for student to learn? What content is actually of value, worthy of our students' (and our own) time and energy?

Mara Sapon-Shevin is a professor in the Division for the Study of Teaching at Syracuse University, and she is a board member of the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education. Her work focuses on creating fully inclusive schools and political activism in the areas of peace and justice. Her article "Schools as Communities of Love and Caring" appeared in Holistic Education Review (Summer, 1990) and was reprinted in New Directions in Education.

Cooperative learning approaches potentially involve a complete rethinking and transformation of educational practices. If educators conceive of it as more than another technique for improving instructional efficiency, then cooperative learning raises questions about curriculum content, teacher and student empowerment, and problems of the larger society.

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2. *The relationship between the content and the process of cooperative learning.* Instead of using cooperative learning techniques to study about the battles of the Civil War, why not use those same techniques to learn about conflict resolution, or alternatives to war? Does the content of cooperative study ever address *why* human beings benefit from working together, through the study of unions, for example, or the Red Cross, neighborhood associations, or boycotts?

3. *The place of cooperative learning in the classroom as a whole.* An hour's worth of cooperative learning is definitely better than none at all, but how about the rest of the day? Competitive behavior management programs, reading students' grades out loud, voting for the "kid of the week," and hanging up only the "best" papers are all common classroom practices that are incompatible with creating cooperative, inclusive classroom communities. Can we use cooperative learning principles to rethink everything that goes on during a school day so that we consistently promote interdependence, mutual respect, and a climate of encouragement and support?

4. *Student and teacher's roles in decision making.* Are students supposed to cooperate only because the teacher has told them that they have to, and that he or she will grade them on how well they do? Should teachers be told that they must use cooperative learning techniques and will be evaluated on their implementation by an outside evaluator such as the principal? True cooperative learning pays serious attention to giving students and teachers real voices in the decision-making process; all class members should have input into decisions about what is studied, how time is allocated, and who evaluates whom and how.

5. *The role of competition in cooperative learning.* How does rewarding teams or giving prizes to only some groups teach students the virtues of cooperation?² What effect does intergroup competition have on students' sense of community and cohesiveness? Can we implement cooperative learning in ways that allow students to experience the intrinsic rewards of working with one another, and avoid perpetuating a situation in which

children believe that cooperation is something they do *for* the teacher or *for* a reward?

These questions are of real importance, because we have seen that the implementation of cooperative learning — although clearly successful in raising students' achievement levels and promoting positive social relations — can yield benefits far beyond those outcomes.

Cooperative learning practices can build genuine communities of caring and concern, can help children to see their own lives and the world differently. By providing a model of democracy in which all voices are heard and all voices count, students can learn about mutual responsibility, about the ways in which their lives are intertwined, and about how they can support and help one another. At a deeper level, thoughtfully and consistently implemented cooperative learning can help children to rethink inequalities and injustices in their own experience and the larger world. Why do certain children get all of the school-based rewards and honors while others don't? Why are there many children of color in the special education classes and very few in the gifted program? Why do some people live in fancy houses and others on the street? Children who have experienced egalitarian, democratically oriented cooperative learning approach such issues with more finely tuned antennae and a rich set of conflict resolution and interpersonal problem-solving skills.

If we are interested in the possibility of using cooperative learning to radically restructure our educational system and our society, then both the preparation that teachers receive for implementing cooperative learning and the actual praxis are likely to be very different from presenting cooperative learning as just another teaching strategy, easy to learn and to implement. Rather than asking questions such as, "What cooperative learning method will increase student test scores?" or, "How do I manage students' behavior in cooperative groups?" the discourse might focus on questions such as the following:

- What kinds of cooperative learning methods and practice best allow students to experience control over their own learning and learn to make

meaningful decisions related to their own education and that of others?

- What kinds of cooperative learning experiences will lead children to be intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated and gain genuine satisfaction from helping others succeed?

- What kinds of cooperative learning experiences will help children to understand societal injustices, such as homelessness and unemployment, and be able to apply cooperative learning principles to their solution?

This discourse on cooperative learning is far more extensive and challenging than discussions of cost effectiveness and training procedures. At best, this kind of discussion would make us question many aspects of school design and programming that separate, rank, or isolate children: segregated special education and gifted classes, competitive athletic programs, grading and testing procedures. We would also have to ask about the kinds of support that teachers receive in the school day or week and how this affects their ability to provide support and encouragement to children. These kinds of questions could contribute to broad-based, comprehensive programs of school reform designed to create inclusive, effective schools for all students.

But sometimes the discourse is deadened before it even begins: At a recent cooperative learning conference, an educator explained to me how he was trying to "sell" cooperative learning to the teachers in an affluent, white, upper-middle-class suburb. They were uninterested, he decided on another strategy. He approached the parents in the district and asked them, "When your children grow up do you want them to be good workers, or good CEOs?" "Why, CEOs, of course," they responded, and from there he went on to convince them that good managers needed to have good social skills and know how to get workers to cooperate. This approach was successful; the parents pressured the teachers to provide their children with this invaluable training, and the educator gained entry into the school where he implemented cooperative learning programs for the students.

Some might argue that gaining entry is the important thing, and that

while the parents may have "bought" cooperative learning for less than democratic, altruistic reasons, their children would nonetheless benefit from a cooperative learning experience. But one wonders about the possibilities for talking about and thinking about truly *transformative* uses of cooperative learning when the initial entrée of cooperative learning into the school was couched in scenarios of future employment, which do little to challenge existing class structures or work relationships.

My vision of cooperative learning is much broader than preparing students to do well (even admirably well) in existing social and institutional structures. I am not interested in teaching students the why's and how's of cooperation only so that they can be better managers within hierarchical, often exploitive economic enterprises. I am interested in teaching children about cooperation so that they can, for example, be more thoughtful about an economic system that accepts a high unemployment rate as "normal," stratifies workers by race and class, and often focuses on production rather than workers. I am interested in having students make connections between what they have learned by functioning in cooperative classrooms and broader workplace issues such as childcare for working parents, adequate health benefits and medical care, and the benefits of decentralized and democratic (not top-down) managerial structures.

I am not interested in cooperative learning that allows us to continue doing "business as usual" with a few modifications, a couple of cosmetic changes. I am committed to education that is transformative, which allows students to move beyond the conditions of their own world to envision and enact a different vision. I am excited about the possibilities of changing not only *what* students experience in their classrooms, but also their ability to analyze and understand their own experiences.

For cooperative learning to realize its full transformative potential, however, it must be explicitly linked to other teaching and educational programs designed to build global awareness and social consciousness. The current range of programs of multi-

cultural and diversity education provides an excellent demonstration of the difference between education that is ameliorative and education that is transformative, and the ways in which cooperative learning could be connected to such objectives. Sleeter and Grant have identified five approaches to multicultural education and the vast variation among them.³ At one end of the continuum are programs whose goals are to teach children to appreciate and accept individual differences; children learn about different racial and ethnic groups and the importance of accepting people's individual differences. In contrast, some programs are explicitly antiracist and attempt to teach children to understand the nature of prejudice and discrimination and to become active advocates for social and political change.⁴ Teaching children about diversity can be conceptualized as teaching them to understand and accept differences (a human relations approach); or, alternatively, as teaching them about the social construction of differences, about the ways in which certain differences come to be valued and others to be stigmatized, and how these relationships can be explicitly challenged. Sleeter and Grant label the latter approach as "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist."⁵

Although the first set of practices, like many cooperative learning techniques, may lead to less friction and smoother social interaction, some of these approaches actually preserve and protect privileged categories in the process. An example of this would be talking about and treating racial, gender, or achievement differences as though they were fixed characteristics rather than socially constructed.⁶ The second set of practices, like more transformative approaches to cooperative learning, attempts to give students not only the knowledge and information they need, but also the tools for understanding and challenging the current condition. Differences in approach can be operationalized by considering our responses to the following choices:

- Do we want children to learn that "skin color doesn't matter" or even that all people should be treated well regardless of skin color? Or can we

teach children to understand the history of racial prejudice in this country and the ways in which prejudice plus power become racism — the reasons why lighter skin is considered superior to darker skin?

- Do we want children to be nice to “fat girls” and include them in their friendship circles? Or can we teach children to understand the social construction of “fatness” — how some people decide what women’s bodies should look like and perpetuate that image through media and advertising, how we are *all* hurt by narrow, rigid ways of looking at differences?

- Do we want children to experience cooperative learning as “preparation for entering a competitive job market” in the competitive world?⁷ Or do we want children to explore more democratic, less hierarchical ways of delivering goods, allocating responsibilities, and obtaining rewards?

- Do we want to structure our classrooms so that “high achievers” are working with and helping “low achievers?” Or do we want children *also* to rethink the whole concept of smartness and achievement, understanding that there are multiple intelligences and rejecting a linear continuum of intelligence and worth within their classroom?

I think that we can accomplish the goals of using cooperative learning as both a vehicle and a framework for teaching children to become sophisticated and skilled analysts and change agents. To do so will require attention to both the *content* and the *processing* of cooperative learning.

Attending to the content of cooperative learning means explicit teaching about the concepts of competition, cooperation, discrimination, sexism, racism, prejudice, and oppression. As such, our cooperative learning curriculum must be closely linked to a broader curricular agenda related to notions of equality and justice. Schniedewind and Davidson’s excellent books provide multiple examples of lessons designed to teach children concepts such as handicapism, ageism, racism, discrimination, prejudice, the power of collective action, community building, and peace activism.⁸ Cooperative learning lessons cannot be wholly successful if they embody sexism, racism, or ageism within their

very frameworks — by not attending, for example, to who does which tasks in the group, or who makes the decisions for the class.

Beyond the content of what is studied, teachers must also open up a space for discussion of their own teaching and their own classrooms. Having children experience cooperative lessons is important. Having children analyze and name *how* they interacted, *how* their interaction patterns differ from the ways in which they have typically interacted, *why* it is hard for them to work together, and *how* other school procedures and practices conflict with their experience in cooperative learning groups are all essential lesson components if children are to generalize their experience to broader issues.

Children must be encouraged to “process” not only how cooperatively their group functioned, but also how the principles of cooperation relate to other institutions and situations. After playing cooperative games, for example, children can discuss how these games differed from what they usually play, how both kinds of games feel to them, what makes someone a “winner” and someone a “loser,” and the effects of such designations on classroom community. Such a discussion may be far-reaching and problematic; children may question the sports program in their own school, how competition is used to build school pride often at the cost of group solidarity, or how money is spent on professional athletics rather than on housing and education. In one community, a recent controversy over the high school’s team name, which some considered offensive to Native Americans, opened up a valuable discussion about the relationship between school pride, racism, and athletics.

Cooperative learning cannot be something we do *to* children, like giving them medicine that is good for them. Cooperative learning must be something we do *with* children, letting them in on our thinking and our rationale, discussing our successes and failures, our dilemmas as educators trying to create community.

If we are to reap the full benefits of cooperative learning, then we must be willing to analyze not only our educational system, but also other institu-

tions within our society and their interrelationships. We must be willing to acknowledge the full political implications of what goes on in schools and allow students to participate in this discussion. Then, and only then, can we achieve the kinds of schools and the kind of world we want.

Notes

1. For a more complete discussion of this issue, see Mara Sapon-Shevin and Nancy Schniedewind, “Selling Cooperative Learning without Selling It Short,” *Educational Leadership*, 47, no. 4: 63–65; also Mara Sapon-Shevin and Nancy Schniedewind, “Cooperative Learning as Empowering Pedagogy,” in *Empowerment Through Multicultural Education*, edited by Christine Sleeter (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 159–178.
2. For an extensive exploration of the role and desirability of extrinsic motivation in the practice of cooperative learning, see Ted Graves, “Are External Rewards Appropriate or Desirable in a Cooperative Classroom?” *Cooperative Learning*, 11(2): pp. 15–17; also Alfie Kohn, “Group Grade Grubbing versus Cooperative Learning,” *Educational Leadership*, 48, no. 5: 83–87.
3. Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant, *Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class and Gender*. (Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing, 1988).
4. See, for example, Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989).
5. Sleeter and Grant, *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*.
6. See Elizabeth G. Cohen, “Continuing to Cooperate: Prerequisites for Persistence,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, no. 7: 134–136, 138, for a more extensive discussion of the need to address status variables directly within cooperative learning groups.
7. A flyer from the Rochester Public Schools lists as one of the reasons to use cooperative learning, “Preparation for entering a competitive job market.”
8. Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson, *Open Minds to Equality* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983); also Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson, *Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Lives: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities for Building a Peaceful World*. (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown, 1987).

Homeschoolers and Holistic Educators

Finding Our Common Ground

by Ron Miller and Nancy Wallace

In the Spring, 1991, issue of *Holistic Education Review*, Editor Ron Miller reviewed Nancy Wallace's new book *Child's Work: Taking Children's Choices Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Holt Associates). Introducing the review, Miller wrote: "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." The book review provoked letters from both author Wallace and her publisher, Pat Farenga of Holt Associates, beginning an ongoing exchange of correspondence in both cases. It was evident that whatever "important common goals" Miller had in mind, a great deal of patient dialogue would be necessary to lay the groundwork for defining and pursuing them. In several ways, homeschoolers and holistic educators hold very different perspectives on educational and social issues, and the two communities will need to make a sincere effort to understand each other. Miller and Wallace have sought to initiate this effort by publishing their dialogue, which is the basis of the article that follows.

Since the dialogue began with the book review, it is useful to summarize the review here. Miller endorsed Wallace's child-centered pedagogy, which was influenced by the work (and personal friendship) of the late John Holt. Miller pointed out that several key aspects of the Holt-Wallace position were philosophically congruent with the work of Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and "whole language" educators, and he encouraged homeschoolers to recognize this affinity. The main point of the review was that homeschoolers and holistic educators (i.e., those who are professional teachers working in school settings or are scholars) could use this affinity as a basis for learning from each other. Homeschoolers would remind professional educators that the essence of any holistic, child-centered approach "is a loving concern for young people and a genuine respect for their individuality"; this essence does not reside in professional techniques or certification by some organization. But conversely, educators who have considered the cultural and global context of their work from a holistic perspective might offer homeschooling parents some useful and important insights as well.

Miller argued that holistic thinking enables us to describe the spiritual, global, ecological, and communal contexts of human development and learning with more "conceptual clarity" than is usually found in homeschooling literature. Wallace's book, he wrote, does not make as convincing a case for homeschooling (or for child-centered education generally) as it could. By concentrating on the highly advanced artistic and intellectual development of her children, he said, Wallace gave the impression that other aspects of human development were of secondary importance in the educational process and that her own children's development was "one-dimensional." Miller was especially disturbed by several passages in the book which seemed to suggest that the children were "profoundly self-absorbed and more than a little compulsive" — that they were isolated from peer friendships and that their education appeared "to take place in a global and societal vacuum."

Response by Nancy Wallace:

Despite your careful, thoughtful review of my book and my general agreement with and endorsement of your holistic approach, you make several points I feel I must take issue with.

The first, which is perhaps the underlying thread that influenced your whole reading of the book, is your statement that my son, Ishmael, "came across as a conceited know-it-all" (Isn't one of the things we love about babies the fact that they really do seem to believe they *can* "know it all?") and that "there is almost no evidence that he is a kind, loving, or compassionate person." You use Ishmael's first grade teacher's claim that he was "violent" (fancifully, never physically) and the passages about warfare that I quoted from his journal to support your suggestion — something that seems uncalled for, since I expressly chose to lift those passages from his many pages of journal writing to illustrate how his early fascination with the formation of armies during battle fed directly into his later fascination with musical structure and form. My point was that we adults often misconstrue, as Ishmael's teacher did, the real purpose behind children's activities, interests, and concerns.

Like most young children, Ishmael used sticks as guns and whittled bows and arrows for himself. But at the same time he caught flies and ants in the house and set them loose outside rather than killing them. Then (as well as now) he shared everything he had and loved with his sister, Vita; he was ready to give the shirt off his back to anyone who asked.

You were incorrect to simply assume that the children's education "took place in a global and societal vacuum"; Ishmael and Vita stem from two generations of conscientious objectors, and Ishmael is a vocal draft resister who has decided to forgo student loans rather than legitimize in any way the military establishment. Both of my children are active Greenpeace members, and Vita is active in the children's rights movement. Even in the city, we compost our garbage, raise vegetables, and recycle as much waste as we can, and we spend our holidays at a local church cooking lavish holiday meals for AIDS shut-ins.

I would have written about these things, but my book was never intended to be about environmental or political issues. Nor was it intended to be a testament to my children's loving natures. On the contrary, I believe so firmly in the innate goodness of all children that it seems obvious to me that if we do indeed show our children the kind of love, respect, and consideration they deserve, then they will grow into adults who care deeply about their fellow human beings and the precarious state of our planet.

When you write that I pushed my children's social lives into the background "to make way for accelerated intellectual and artistic development," you imply that our childrearing approach was violent, not respectful, even though elsewhere in the review you acknowledge that we "respected our children and have given them a nourishing learning environment." Your attitude implies a basic mistrust of the children's intelligence and an inability to admit that children deserve the same right we do to make their own decisions about how they will spend their time and

Ron Miller, editor of Holistic Education Review, is the author of What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture and numerous articles on alternative education, most recently published in Mothering and the Journal of Humanistic Psychology. He and his wife, Jennifer Lloyd, have a two-year-old son, Justin.

Nancy Wallace is a mother, writer, and homeschooling advocate. She is the author of two books, Better than School and Child's Work, both inspired by all that she learned watching her two children, Ishmael and Vita, grow and learn outside of the traditional school setting. Although they are now sixteen and nineteen, she continues to be involved in her children's work and is currently writing fiction.

occupy their lives. We respected the fact that our children preferred the company of adults to most of their peers. We quickly learned that it is a grave mistake to expect children to be "friends" with everybody.

As to your statement, "If the planet becomes uninhabitable within the next 25 years, there will be no need for art or music" — implying that given the present sorry state of the world I encouraged my children to do useless work — all I can say is that should the planet become uninhabitable, there will be no need for holistic education or environmental action either. Meanwhile, the world *would* be uninhabitable without art and music.

Finally, I must take issue with your complaint that I did not discuss a spiritual foundation for the individuality of the human being. Whatever I may think, I respect my children's spiritual privacy too much to write about it.

Ron Miller:

Given what I *now* know about your children's lives, I can see how my review must have come across as hostile, insensitive, and totally off the mark. Based on what you describe in your letter, I would support your educational values wholeheartedly; indeed I share them completely! The problem is that these values were not well described in your book. Because *Child's Work* emphasizes your children's advanced intellectual and artistic development so strongly, and portrays other aspects of their childhood as being of secondary importance, it gives the impression that this is the educational model you advocate. That *Child's Work* "was never intended to be about environmental or political issues" reflects your judgment, as a respected author on homeschooling, about what kinds of issues are relevant or not relevant to child development and education. I reacted so strongly because I consistently find homeschooling literature neglecting cultural, environmental, and other issues that I consider to be of core importance. And that is the question I would like to explore with you further.

Like you (and most homeschoolers) I am deeply disturbed about the way this nation's school system treats young people. The entire focus of my work has been to try to understand *why* our society promotes such an anti-child conception of education. I have sought to uncover the cultural and ideological sources of modern schooling so that we can work effectively to counteract them. One

major lesson I have learned in my historical studies — and it has been confirmed repeatedly in my frequent contacts with alternative educators in many movements — is that the progressive/humanistic/"holistic" forces working against the system have almost always been fragmented, isolated, and largely unconcerned with the political and cultural dimensions of their ideas. It is clear to me that this isolation prevents us from having an effective impact; I do not believe it is enough for loving, good-hearted people simply to proclaim our faith in human nature, because this culture dismisses our perspective as "romantic" and naïve. We need to present a strong critique, based upon a sober and thorough understanding of the cultural forces that oppose our ideals.

In my opinion, holistic philosophy has the potential to help alternative educators — and homeschoolers — become a potent social and political force, not just a marginal group of dissidents. Holism, because of its ecological, global, and spiritual perspective, provides an intellectual depth that alternative educators have often lacked. My plea to the homeschooling community — which is what I sought to convey in my review of your book — is this: "Expand your perspective! Understand the social, cultural, and political dimensions of what you're doing. There is far more at stake in modern culture than whether our children become intelligent, talented, or successful (although we certainly want that as well). Join with other child-centered educators as we create viable alternatives to the monster of bureaucratic schooling!"

Modern civilization is at a crossroads. The ecological and moral crisis that threatens humanity today is escalating at a frightening pace, yet the industrial-hierarchical-nationalistic worldview, the source of this crisis, is struggling mightily to maintain its dominance. Many of us perceive that a drastically different worldview is the only way out of the crisis; a *holistic* understanding is called for. We can no longer patch up the old system or try to fix one piece of it at a time — the educational system, the family, or any other piece. It is educationally irresponsible to leave ecological issues, global issues, or moral and social issues out of our discussions of child development and education. We cannot afford to concern ourselves only with the survival of our families or of particular movements or communities; we must begin building a coalition strong enough to overcome the dominant industrial worldview, or all of our movements, along with all of humanity, will perish.

The reason I was frustrated with *Child's Work* — specifically with regard to issues involving "socialization," friendships, and well-rounded development — is that you *appeared* to be endorsing an atomistic, highly individualistic understanding of education. Certainly I recognize the importance of art and music in our lives, and I never meant to imply that children's choices of friends should be controlled. Nor did I mean to suggest that your approach was violent. My review would have been totally different had you put into the book what you told me in your letter. Rather, from my "holistic" point of view, the book seemed to present an *unbalanced* educational philosophy: individual achievement and choice unbalanced by social conscience or global awareness; intellectual excellence unbalanced by compassion; and methodical, calculating

intelligence unbalanced by spontaneity and play. I now know that the actual educational environment your children enjoyed was much different. I hope you will write another book that describes it more fully!

Finally, to address your last point: I did not mean that your book should expose your children's spiritual beliefs to the world. What I meant was that spirituality is the core of holistic thinking and what gives it its power. (See my article "Holism and Meaning: Foundations for a Coherent Holistic Theory" Fall, 1991, issue of *Holistic Education Review*). In your book, and in the writings of many other child-centered educators and homeschoolers (John Holt, for example), there is a very beautiful sense of reverence

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for the child, a very clear call for respecting every person's integrity. I only wish to go deeper into the meaning, the essence, of this integrity. Who is the true person? What is the mysterious source of each person's individuality? The materialistic worldview of modern culture has no answer to this — indeed, no genuine language even to seek an answer — and so it dismisses the question and considers all child-centered approaches as sentimental, romantic, and useless. The answer to this reductionism is found in the spiritual traditions of humankind. The child — every child — has an inviolable integrity, not because we romantics say so, but because every human being *is* an expression of the divine. This can be discovered if we are only willing to look. So, we are not simply "child-centered," we are centered on the mystery and wonder of life itself. Let the materialist culture try to dismiss *that* so glibly! It must be the essential foundation of our challenge to the dominant worldview.

Nancy Wallace:

Touché in the form of a gentle handshake. I think you raise some important points that I did indeed fail to deal with in *Child's Work*. Certain things that I took for granted — such as the idea that if I raised my children with love and respect then of course I could expect them to treat me and others accordingly — are really not ideas that I should have expected any readership to intuit or even to buy without question. No matter how much love and respect a family may offer a child, so few children these days are raised, as mine were, without suffering deleterious effects from out-of-home experiences in school, daycare, at neighbors' houses, and on the streets. Few children are raised, as mine were, without daily doses of television advertising and other social pressures to consume and disregard their health and the environment, without the kind of television violence and tastelessness that quickly teaches children to take for granted and accept their help-

lessness to effect change, and without the same kinds of violence and tastelessness in the streets where they live.

As you point out, in today's society it simply doesn't make sense to assume that children's choices can ever be honest, educated, aesthetic, and nonviolent in the broadest sense, which is what I did so naively in *Child's Work*. What I take strong exception to, however, is the suggestion that by having been raised in an environment relatively free of violence and tastelessness (a supposedly socially isolated environment), my children's choices were somehow limited. From what my children have shown me, quite the opposite appears to be the case: their choices were in fact broadened because they were allowed to remain true, thoughtful, and honest. Are the social advantages of school worth the risk? Ask my children.

Still, the reality remains that most children do go to school and that caring teachers who take on the task of influencing children in the midst of an essentially corrupt world might feel as if they were betraying children if they didn't actively help them to make humane choices. But what does it mean to actively involve oneself in the education and betterment of a young person? Does it mean, as it

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does in even the nicest and smallest schools, that adults give children work and activities that are not necessarily real or essential, but rather are deemed (for whatever reasons) worthwhile in and of themselves as exercises to help children develop their intellectual, creative, and social capacities and even to enhance their spiritual growth? If it does, then that is where even the best education system breaks down, since it is just that attitude that robs young people of their self-respect, their belief in their own ability to know what is good and right for them, and their recognition that they are capable of joining the adult world as responsible citizens. It instead puts the determination of what is best for them squarely into the hands of their teachers and other well-meaning adults.

Educating my children in the manner I describe in *Child's Work* meant that I never set out to decide what might be best for them — I never took on the role of active teacher or helper (although I was often an active collaborator in our shared work). Instead, I simply created for myself the environment I needed in which to live, to love, and to pursue my own work and then invited my children to join me there. Most children are to a large degree shut out from and rendered powerless by adult life. My children were a part of my life from the start. Whereas most

children's friendships are limited to other children, my children's friendships spanned all age groups. Although we readily put children into training for decision making, we seldom trust them to make real decisions that affect their own lives. No wonder, then, that many children end up rebelling aimlessly at what they think of as adult strictures. My children, on the other hand, never needed to "rebel," because all along they have known that they were never in training for anything — that the choices they make are real and that if only they work hard enough they can make change for the better. All along they have known that as much as I love them, they can come and go from my environment — they can build their own — and that much as I love and care for them, their lives are their own. Never, as their mother or teacher, did I ask them to do what wasn't real or necessary, but only what was necessary as part of a family and as a citizen of the world. As a result, they trust me and they trust themselves.

One of the issues with which I always grapple is how we can translate the homeschool model into a less anarchistic one: how we can broaden the model enough to put it to use in schools. Yet I would fool myself if I ever tried to convince myself that this might be possible as long as school attendance is compulsory. Only when children can feel — as they can in families and in their communities — that they are honest members of a school community, capable of owning and directing their school environment (which involves the freedom to leave it entirely), will it be possible even to consider such a transference of the homeschool model.

I was recently fired from an office job in a progressive school that boasted of no grades, no arbitrary class groupings by age, and no mandatory classes or homework. Yet I kept getting into trouble when I invited kids to help me with the office work, even when the kids had nothing better to do. They loved the work and were good at it. Naturally, they were great at fixing the copy machine and figuring out the computer, and they were perfectly capable of stuffing envelopes, answering the phone, and addressing envelopes; but time and again I was told that this was "grown-up work" and that kids simply couldn't be trusted to do it properly. At this school, apparently, children had a right to be bored and aimless. And this didn't even appear to disturb or shock the teachers, who assumed, I guess, that boredom and aimlessness were normal to any healthy childhood. Let the kids join the real, adult, human world and prove their real-world expertise, usefulness, and desire to act responsibly? Never.

This leads me back to the real-world role of the family in the lives of children. True, it is tough when a teacher, a social worker, or even a mother (as I am) sees hungry and spiritually deprived children. It is especially tough when one is working with children whose families are essentially nonfunctional. Yet in trying to help kids, it becomes all too easy to view them and their families as helpless and ineffectual, just as the adults in the progressive school in which I worked viewed their students. But as Christopher Lasch points out time and time again, the more that the helping professions (including teachers) help people, the less people help themselves and the less professionals believe that people *can* help themselves. Schools are an inevitable part of this process.

Holism, the passing on to children of a moral and ethical standard and the socializing of children into the culture, has been until recently the traditional, historical role of the family and one I feel would be harmful for even the best-intentioned school to try to take over, no matter how broken and distorted the modern-day family might appear to be. Until recently there were no compulsory attendance laws in this country, and — until theoreticians such as John Dewey gained prominence — there was no sense that children needed to be socialized within a peer group or that families might be inadequate to provide routine moral training for children. Granted, modern-day families seem more and more inadequate to do the job; yet, as long as we ask schools to expand their function, families will lose what remains of their own function, their *raison d'être*, and children will lose, once and for all, their natural pouch and point of departure. Can schools, even the most holistically inclined, ever replace the family pouch? I don't think so. But although I think that the crucial task ahead of us is to strengthen the family, I do believe that there are continuing and useful roles for schools in our society.

In choosing to focus *Child's Work* the way I did (excluding details about my children's moral, political, and spiritual development), I omitted a major aspect of my children's upbringing. Perhaps one reason I did so was because I hoped to direct the book as much to other educators as to families. I was also hoping — by focusing on my children's work and my active involvement in that work as a partner, not a teacher — to convince educators that the model of education I set forth could be used to reshape schools into institutions that would help children to pursue work that they already claimed as their own.

In this context, then, I see the medical school model of education as a helpful one, where schools would be available to people wanting to learn specific technical skills or needing to use expensive laboratory facilities that could never reasonably be duplicated in the home. I see the free university model, in which people would assume full responsibility for being educated but would have rich and inspirational community resources available, regardless of their age or experience. With institutions such as those in place, we could then return holistic education to its rightful owner — the family — and return the responsibility for being educated back to the learner.

Ron Miller:

I think that we hold some important values in common. I fully agree with you: To the extent that modern culture has "technologized" natural human functions — not only learning, but birth, death, healing, and nurturing — and assigned these tasks to professionals and experts, the family has been terribly weakened. As I pointed out in my review, the main lesson that holistic educators can learn from homeschoolers is that teaching and nurturing young people must neither become professionalized nor be uprooted from an organic human community life. But this does not suggest to me that schools are inevitably alien to healthy family life.

Perhaps the main difference between our perspectives lies in how we understand the relationship between the family and the larger society, including the school. My

sense is that many homeschoolers see the family as the last line of defense against the decline of civilization — and it may be true that a small number of very strong, very committed families are able to withstand the destructive forces of modern culture. But the institution of the family is not immune from the historical, economic, and social forces that have shaped the modern age. In many ways, the family has already been devastated by them; it was badly shaken early in the nineteenth century when men (and, in the working class, women and children, too) began to seek social and economic status (or *survival*) in the impersonal, mechanized institutions of the industrial age. You can't blame John Dewey for this!

I think you have voiced an idea that I encounter often in the homeschooling movement — that there is a natural *antipathy* between family life and any educational institution, no matter how "progressive" or "alternative." Dewey — and by extension, progressive, humanistic, and holistic education generally — has been a favorite target of family advocates for half a century. But I do not believe that Dewey, nor any serious holistic educator, proposed that the school should replace the family as the primary source

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of socialization and moral training. Instead, Dewey was *responding* to the profound breakdown of family and community life that the industrial age had already caused. He, and other educators such as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, were searching for a way to nurture human development — and to uphold humane values — in the midst of an entire culture that had grown relentlessly competitive, materialistic, and fragmented. They believed that schools could be places where people deliberately come together to build nurturing communities of learning for their children as well as for themselves. Schools, *rather than* being agents of socialization serving the state and industry, could be models of democratic and caring community life.

Indeed, the best holistically inclined schools that I have visited all involve families in genuine and meaningful ways in their community. The school becomes a community center, enhancing rather than replacing family life. In our modern culture, which generally hates children and does not know how to nurture them, holistically inspired schools are oases of support and concern for families — small communities where families can come together, pool their resources, share their diverse skills and interests, and

provide a loving environment for their children. These schools are true communities of learning; they are permeated with the "realness" that you are so right to emphasize. Of course, homeschooling families often get together, on a less formal basis, to achieve the same thing. And certainly I respect and fully support families' right to educate their children at home. But I do not see that there needs to be an antipathy between homeschooling families and schools that are genuine communities of learning. There is much more that unites the two groups than divides them.

Our first task is to identify the principles that we believe are essential and to articulate them in convincing ways. One of these principles, to be sure, is that the learner must have ultimate responsibility for what, how, and when he or she will learn. All holistic educators would agree to this, although some might see the adult in a more active supporting role than you do. But clearly the "progressive"

school that fired you for offering children a real learning experience does not understand (or at least practice) one of the key principles of progressive education. If such a school has trouble implementing its own foundational ideas, then it shows how deeply ingrained are the values of this culture! And so we need to confront those values — together. We cannot succeed at this huge task as educators alone, nor as academic critics alone, nor as families alone. This is the basis of my disagreement with much homeschooling literature, and it is the heart of all of my work. I am convinced that the entire culture, the entire worldview that supports this culture, is the true source of our alienation and pain. And the only way we will have the remotest chance to change this culture and truly heal ourselves is by joining forces with *all* people who hold humane, democratic, life-affirming values.



Photo by Joel Brown, Tucson, AZ

Holistic Discipline

by Frederick R. Reenstjerna

Many readers will no doubt be surprised at this essay's title. To some, "holistic discipline" may seem a contradiction in terms. To others, it may appear as one more example of the marketing binges in which U.S. popular culture revels — like the food fad of putting oat bran into everything. What's next, "holistic behavior modification," perhaps? One shudders at the possibilities.

Frederick R. Reenstjerna, Ed.D., is a writer living in Roseburg, Oregon.

Actually, the etymology of the word *discipline* is very instructive, and understanding its origin adds an important dimension to the idea of holistic education. Discipline did not originate as a synonym for punishment. Rather, both discipline and disciple came out of the Latin *discipulus*, meaning pupil. Both words originate in the Latin verb *capere* — to take hold of. Hence the verb *discipere* — to grasp intellectually. Thus, a disciple applies a discipline in order to comprehend his or her world, to give order to the facts and theories that he or she discovers. The *Barnhart Dictionary of English Etymology* defines the Latin noun *disciplina* as, "instruction given to a pupil."

Within the historical context of the word, therefore, discipline is a conditioning to which the student (disciple) submits in order to learn from a teacher. This is a radically different notion from the concepts of "instructional control" and "classroom management" practiced under the name of discipline in many traditional classrooms. In fact, the popular equation of discipline with punishment originates from the self-disciplinary practices in which medieval Christian monks engaged. In their vigor to renounce their earthly being and to focus on things eternal, many monks adopted regimens of physical punishment that included self-flagellation and deprivation. The object of this "discipline" was spiritual enlightenment more than punishment. Although it may not have been the most productive learning method, this discipline was the choice of the disciples/pupils, and as such had a certain internal validity. To outsiders, however, the visible acts of punishment became confused with their ultimate spiritual goals, and punishment came to be understood as a central goal of discipline — or at least, as the best route to enhanced spirituality.

The 1933 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* offers further insight into the concept of discipline. "Etymologically, discipline, as pertaining to the disciple or scholar, is antithetical to doctrine, the property of the doctor or teacher; hence, in the history of words, doctrine is more concerned with abstract theory, and discipline with practice or exercise" (vol. 3, p. 415). Thus, all discipline is the property of the student, not the teacher. The student employs discipline voluntarily to understand the doctrine, or teaching (Latin *docere* — to teach). The teacher (*doctor*) does not impose discipline upon the student; the student chooses to accept it along with the teacher's doctrine. The *OED* goes on to give a first definition of *doctrine* as "the act of teaching," and only secondarily to define it as "that which is taught or laid down as true."

With so much of our thinking about the essence of education colored by the specific details of the past 150 years, it is illuminating to return to the sources of preindustrial meaning. The pseudo-factories of modern schooling are manifestations of an intense but now-declining industrial economy. Those institutions, whose primary purpose arguably was to turn out docile, factory-based "good citizens" able to be punctual and to operate machinery, do not represent the norm in most of the history of education.

For most of civilization (i.e., for most of written history), education has been largely a personal relationship between a teacher and student. We will speak of "schools" of philosophy, referring not to buildings and punishment but to doctrines and disciples. As one example, from Western culture, the relationship of Plato to Socrates embodies this discipline–doctrine bond. Ultimately, as with Plato (and Plato's own pupil, Aristotle), the student's mastery of discipline enables the creation of a new doctrine, for which the former disciple or pupil is now the teacher. The relationship of the Buddha to the founders of Zen is a similar example from Eastern culture. Again, the doctrine–discipline dynamic showed its powerful interplay.

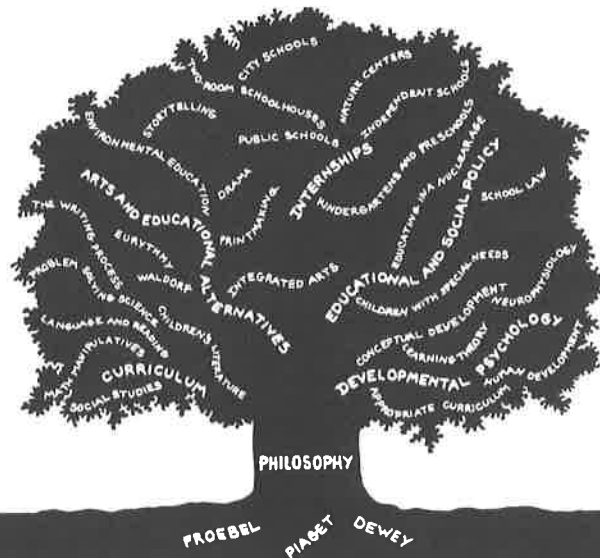
Holistic discipline? Of course; there is no more effective bond between a teacher and a student. One important focus of holistic education is individual empowerment, and no greater power is exercised by any student than to choose to learn from a teacher.

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A Critical Look at Holism, Part 2

In Vol. 4 No. 2 (Summer, 1991), *Holistic Education Review* featured a series of articles by David Purpel, Steven Gelb, Ed Clark and myself exploring the philosophical foundations of holistic thinking. Purpel, Gelb and I raised questions, from what I called a "concrete/historical" perspective, about the relationship between spirituality and personal consciousness, on the one hand, and social, political and ideological struggle, on the other. Clark responded to these questions from what I termed a "consciousness/personal" position. At the end of the discussion, I concluded that holistic thinking is essentially a tension between these two styles of interpretation, and that we must strive to maintain a balance between them. The articles stimulated responses from several readers.

In his paper, Steven Gelb referred to "the most trying two years of my own professional life" in his critique of the assumptions connected with the notion of "holistic paradigm." He singled out an exercise, assigned to students by a colleague during that period, which, he asserted, encouraged a crude dichotomizing between "old" and "new" paradigm thinking. I have since received letters from that colleague as well as a graduate student, strongly disputing Gelb's claims. They described the exercise in very different terms and stated that Gelb was uninformed — that his description (which was undocumented) was distorted. They also charged that it was highly unprofessional for him to vent his personal feelings about the unnamed institution at which he had worked. They questioned my editorial judgment in publishing these "inflammatory" statements, saying that such remarks "are out of place in a scholarship journal, or any journal for that matter."

In response, I carefully reread Gelb's article, spoke personally with both Gelb and his former colleague, and consulted several of my own colleagues. I came to the following conclusions: Since Gelb did not identify the institution or colleague, the primary issue here is not the objective accuracy of his claims (which may be impossible to determine, as this situation appears to involve differing perceptions or interpretations), but whether his report of the situation as he perceived it was relevant to the points he was making in the paper. My original judgment was that they were relevant, and I still believe they are. I stand by Gelb's integrity in reporting his own, clearly deeply felt, experience (which I do not believe can or should be completely purged from scholarly work). At the same time, in retrospect, I do admit that it would have been less "inflammatory" had the claims been stated not only anonymously but more generically, without reference to any particular place or experience, especially since the claims were not documented. I respect the integrity of those who saw the situation quite differently from Gelb, and I apologize to all who felt unjustly attacked by the passages in question.

To me, what is most important are the substantive points that Gelb was making. Whether one agrees or disagrees with him on these, I am satisfied that his essay has stimulated the kind of robust dialogue over the concept of holism that this journal has sought to promote since its inception. I regret that this fruitful intellectual controversy has stirred up personal resentment as well; I might have prevented this with more alert editing, and I am sorry that I didn't. In any case, the substantive dialogue continues; the following responses by Lous Heshusius and Kathleen Kesson deal with numerous key issues in developing the foundations of holistic education, and I hope they will stimulate further reflection.

—Ron Miller

On Paradigms, Metaphors, and Holism

An Analysis of a Critique

by Lous Heshusius

A world ends when its metaphor has died.

— Archibald McLeish¹

Do you remember how I began by asking your scientific questions but very soon we moved into the whole area of consciousness, society, religion, and culture?

— David Peat (asking David Bohm)²

Steven Gelb's article in the Summer issue of *Holistic Education Review*, entitled "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm: Holism and the Future," begs for a critical response. Gelb offers the constructive point that holistic educators need to directly address inequalities in society and take action. The reader, however, has to wade through a number of extraordinary views on holism and holists to get to it. After reading the article, I had the distinct impression that no matter what holism holds or holistic thinkers say, Gelb will construct a way to put them down. According to Gelb, an end to paradigms is the only answer. Only his position of postmodernism, in the form of critical pedagogy and critical thought in general, can help educators to build a better future.

Most of today's scholars quite agree that we need new metaphors, new paradigms. Paradigms are not "in the mind of the beholder," they are in the consciousness of an entire era influencing just about every niche of life.³ Paradigmatic assumptions emerge from metaphors that exist prior to thought and language. To quote Jones, a metaphor is an "evocation of the inner connections among things: an act of consciousness."⁴ We use metaphors (typically unconsciously until we are forced into awareness of them) as an avenue for creating the images that give rise to thought and language, even to mathematical language as Jones so clearly demonstrates. Metaphors of new paradigm thinking that replace the machine metaphor of the mechanistic worldview include the metaphor of the web, of artforms (suggested by Illya Prigogine and also by David Bohm), and the metaphor of the conscious organism.⁵

To argue, as Gelb does, that "paradigmism" needs to be done away with (How?) is a bit like wanting to see your own face without a mirror (the mirror being a paradigm-as-metaphor), pretending you can stand outside of conceptual and value frameworks. Perhaps it will be possible when humanity's evolution has reached pure, undivided consciousness, but that will be a while. A long while. Indeed, as Gelb notes, Bohm and Peat and so many others point out that established paradigms "hold the consensual mind in a 'rut.'" Also, any

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new paradigm brings with it its own limitations (What is new?), but limitations of paradigms have been extensively discussed in the literature. Bohm and Peat's analysis is as much a description of the power and reality of paradigms as of the blockages that they create. *Nowhere* are Bohm and Peat saying, nor implying, that we need to "end paradigms." Gelb quotes Bohm and Peat distinctly out of context, thereby distorting what they actually say. To quote Gelb:

Only an *end* to paradigms would allow, in Bohm and Peat's words, "for a plurality of basic concepts, with a constant movement that is aimed at establishing unity between them."⁶

Gelb's message implies that Bohm and Peat would agree with him that, unless we end paradigms, we cannot have a plurality of basic concepts. Now let us look at what Bohm and Peat really are saying by examining the full quote:

Given that the focusing of work in any given field, through the action of paradigms, gives rise to an excessive rigidity of mind, it was suggested that a better approach is to allow for a plurality of basic concepts, with a constant movement that is aimed at establishing unity between them.⁷

Their argument (which runs throughout the book) is for less rigidity and greater unity between paradigms. Bohm and Peat do not object to the concept of paradigms, but to Kuhn's notion of the universality of the "incommensurability" concept: the idea that a new paradigm is literally incommensurable with the old, and that major scientific revolutions always cause rigid divisions and insurmountable blockages.⁸ They are not even saying that incommensurability between paradigms many times may not be real. They are questioning if it is not possible to prevent or lessen the rigidity of paradigm blockages, and they provide a few examples where previously observed rigidities between paradigms could have been interpreted as less rigid than normally assumed. Bohm and Peat are proposing a refined version of Kuhnian understanding of paradigms in which incommensurability would be lessened by seeking commonalities between paradigms at a deeper level — a seeking helped by metaphorical thinking,

by the creative play of the intellect, by wisdom, and by open and friendly communication. (These are all phases that Bohm and Peat use. I can't start referring to pages because this central theme is woven throughout their book.) The argument here is not whether or not Bohm and Peat are correct in their views, but that Gelb misrepresents what they say.⁹

I must also disagree with Gelb's view and also Miller's on the relationship between paradigms and the rest of life, which is distinctly not "simplistic."¹⁰ Gelb and Miller reason from the mechanistic definition of what it means to be scientific: that is, they see science as "a body of knowledge" unrelated to "values, power, morality and ethics,"¹¹ or as the "scientific method" and as "science education."¹² In today's construction of science, the old unity of fact and value, of observer and observed, is restored. Science is understood as an engagement of consciousness and therefore as a moral act. There is no such thing as "a body of knowledge" outside of values, ethics, and power. Cognition is not separate from value and emotion. All references on new paradigm thought used for this paper provide us with a picture of science as reflective of our inner, invisible consciousness, and therefore of our values and morality, as is the case with any other human act.

Bohm and Peat also see the "tacit infrastructure of science" as influencing the rest of life. For example, they discuss the vastly different understanding of the concept of order between the Middle Age (or religious) paradigm and the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm, summarizing as follows: "These far-reaching changes have not been confined to science alone but have swept into every area of life."¹³ Conceptions of science have never limited themselves to "scientific method" or "science education." *Because* the construction of knowledge cannot be separated from values, scientific paradigms expand to worldviews.

Paradigms, then, through their metaphorical grounding, are not "things" that exist "out there," which we can do away with as we please. The paradigm within which we live is our consciousness. Only by raising our

awareness about the content of our consciousness can we make it explicit. Only in the act of becoming aware can we come to understand the limitations of the paradigm within which we are functioning, and change. The rediscovery of consciousness is central to any discussion on new paradigm thinking. Of course, as Gelb and Miller both remind us, one cannot propose a direct, linear, causal relationship between paradigm and human behavior, but that becomes a moot point. Today's science is no longer proposing direct linear causality for the study of living, open systems. Concepts of nonlinear, dynamic, mutual, or simultaneous causality have replaced the idea of linear causality. This is to say that the images and metaphors of paradigms within which we grow up constantly interact with our mind-brain development. The paradigm's ontological and epistemological assumptions merge with consciousness, and from there they influence outward behavior. This is no trivial matter.

None of this is to contest that underneath it all lies the deeper problem of individual ego-consciousness. To address that human dimension is beyond the scope of this paper as well as beyond my own area of knowledge. However, to acknowledge a deeper layer that influences human behavior is not to dismiss the influence of paradigms that interact with it. New paradigm assumptions work with rather than against (as do mechanistic assumptions) constructing a better world. They concur with rather than dismiss (as did the mechanistic worldview) the centrality of participating consciousness, and therefore of morality, in the construction of knowledge.¹⁴

Or are we to assume that Gelb's own position lies outside of paradigmatic boundaries? Has Gelb already gone "beyond" paradigms? To think one can reject the influence of paradigms and metaphors is to argue for plain materialism (unless the metaphor happens to be a materialistic one, such as the metaphor of the machine of mechanistic science, in which case the metaphor gladly helps to argue the case). It is to argue for only a concrete, materialistic foundation, which is what Gelb seems to be doing. Such a position is solidly grounded in the tra-

ditional paradigm. The emergence of new paradigm assumptions has the potential to lift our culture out from under exclusive reliance on materialistic traditions. (I am *not* saying here that we do not need a focus on and analysis of the material level).

Gelb's comment that "[the successes of social activists] are real, and the new order [the vision of holism] is not" limits what is "real" to the materialistic level, to what one can see, observe, concretely describe, measure.¹⁵ It is dismissing the power of spirituality, the power of metaphors, and the crucial concept of "tacit" knowledge, central to new paradigm, holistic assumptions, which is marvelously explained by Polanyi.¹⁶ Invisible, tacit knowing forms the ground not only of our personal and artistic and inner ways of knowing, but also of all formalized construction of knowing, and it is central in the merging of these ways of knowing in our consciousness. It is precisely the invisible metaphors and invisible fundamental ontological and epistemological paradigmatic assumptions (the "not real" in Gelb's mind), *whether we are aware of them or not*, that decide what we allow one another to count as real and how we construct the act of knowing. There is a visible "real" and a tacit, invisible "real." Both are extremely real, extremely important, and interdependent. It makes no sense to pit one against the other.

It is ironic, therefore, that Gelb quotes Krishnamurti — the Indian thinker who was David Bohm's close friend and co-author — in support of his view that we need to be social activists and revisionists. Krishnamurti, in all of his writings and his talks, points directly to inner consciousness, not to outward activity. According to Krishnamurti's teachings, correct outward activity comes about *only* through attention to one's inner consciousness and its motivations — not condemning these motivations but observing them as they occur. He often refers to this as "choiceless awareness." Krishnamurti offers no other methodology, and he promotes no activism. His entire message points to the sole importance of attention to the movement of thought until the mind comes to a state of silence, with no division between observer and ob-

served. It is in the very act of such nonevaluative observation that fragmentation can end; it is only then that our conditioning for violence can also be ended. It cannot be done by any willful act, nor by any outward action according to an ideal: Social activism, to Krishnamurti, is another "ideal" that is not going to bring about the kind of inner consciousness that leads to peace. (My comments do not constitute an agreement that social action is not necessary. I am pointing out that Gelb is misrepresenting Krishnamurti's teachings, teachings that would not support Gelb's position).

There is indeed much irony in Gelb's paper. I was struck by his position of exclusiveness (the "only hope" is his position) and dichotomous thinking (the "us" versus "them" po-

anistically informed ones.

With reference to educational practice, Gelb notes the production of a newspaper (put together in a whole language classroom) as an example of a "good product." Gelb accuses holistic educators for not valuing products, even worse, for saying that they don't need products because they only focus on process. According to Gelb, in holism "focusing on process is assumed to be good, and focusing on product is assumed to be bad." I have never heard a holistic thinker in any area of study say that products are "bad," nor that process needs to be "conceived without product": "Process conceived without product is impoverished."¹⁷ (As with several other statements in Gelb's paper, we are not told who said this and where.)

According to Krishnamurti's teachings, correct outward activity comes about only through attention to one's inner consciousness and its motivations.

sition that pervades the entire article) while attributing such thinking to holists. Although any paradigm is exclusive, as it is simultaneously a whole and a "part" of a larger whole (which it typically cannot see), holism seems precisely so valuable because it is more inclusive than the traditional paradigm. This is not to say that it takes in traditional mechanistic thought in unaltered form, but that it provides a far more complex picture of reality and of knowing in which diversity has a far greater chance to be acknowledged and valued. The comparison in the boxed inset in my paper, "Holism, Education, and Some Reflections on the GATE Conference," in this same issue, illustrates the far greater complexity of new paradigm assumptions as compared with mechanistic assumptions. The focus of the latter was indeed on simplicity. The table also illustrates the far greater diversity within holistic educational practices as compared with mech-

The heart of holism does not deny the value of the concept of product. Holism *reconceptualizes the relations* between process and product, between whole and part, and *that* is an entirely different matter. Holism points to interactive and interdependent whole-part relations within which the concept of "product" takes on a different form and function altogether. My understanding is that the relationship between whole and part, between process and product, is incredibly intricate. David Bohm's views on the relation between the explicate and implicate orders may be closest to an understanding of it. Ironically once more (since Gelb quotes Bohm and Peat in support, he thinks, of his position), if there is anyone who does see reality not just in flux, but *as flux, as process*, then it must be Bohm.¹⁸ His concept of explicate order — an abstraction of the invisible implicate order that he proposes — could possibly be conceptualized as "product," I think, but as a

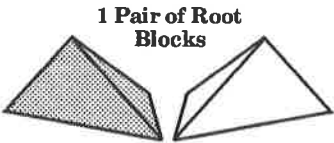
product that stands in a fundamentally different relation to process than we usually think of it. Along with many others, Bohm and Peat view holism and wholeness as necessary to construct a better world.

Gelb's example of the newspaper in a whole language class as a good product affirms rather than denies the concept of paradigms and of holistic and mechanistic assumptions shaping education. By contrasting the newspaper "product" to the "ubiquitous worksheet" Gelb is in fact describing educational practices informed by holistic and mechanistic assumptions. He decries (just as holists do) the mechanistic translation into a near exclusive focus on educational products (the worksheet) and advocates the holistic assumptions translated into educational process/product unity (the newspaper activity in a whole language class). That Gelb calls the worksheet "trivial, narrowly conceived" instead of "mechanistic" is fine with

me. It does not matter what label we use. We do need to give things a name, however. "Mechanistic" is as good as "trivial and narrowly conceived." It is better only in that it is a commonly used label and encompasses the rest of the paradigmatic assumptions as well. Major criticisms of mechanistic assumptions point precisely to the fact that they "narrowly conceive" and "trivialize" life. As is the case throughout Gelb's paper, it is proper when he uses certain concepts, but bad when holistic thinkers do. It is proper if Marian Wright Edelman has "visions" and "confronts," but it is bad for holistic thinkers to do the same. It is fine for Gelb to use science and refer to scientists in support of his viewpoint (he quotes physicists Bohm and Peat twice in a manner central, he thinks, to his argument), but if holists do so it is "science worshipping." It is not as easy to escape paradigms as Gelb likes to think. We are not in a position where we have that choice. That para-

digms are limiting, as is our consciousness, is another matter. The critical decision we *do* need to make is to decide which paradigm can most adequately help us to formulate the urgent issues of the time.

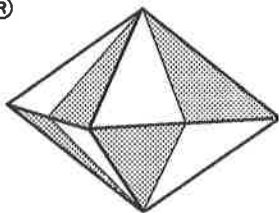
Paradigm shifts — shifts in consciousness — are difficult. The resistance and struggle involved have been well documented. Writers on the evolution of consciousness have always acknowledged such difficulties, including those involved in the shift to a more holistic consciousness. Berman, Prigogine and Stengers, and LeShan and Margenau, just to name some, point to the difficulty and uncertainty involved in the contemporary paradigm shift. Berman states: "We are not going to get this new paradigm for nothing, as it were."¹⁹ Educators too have referred to the struggles and the resistance involved for acceptance of new paradigm assumptions.²⁰ Also, there have been a number of dialogues in




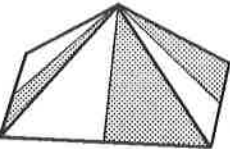
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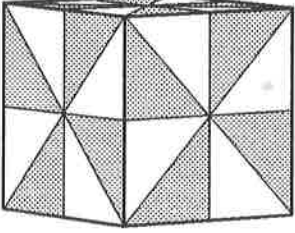
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educational journals that in fact document such resistance and struggle. Gelb is uninformed when he writes that to his knowledge, Ron Miller is the "only person" who presents the possibility of struggle and resistance with regard to the acceptance of the new paradigm.²¹

Gelb's invocation of Hitler in connection with the vision inherent in holism, was for me personally the most difficult to read. In discussing his view that we are not on the edge of an age of harmony, of a major shift in consciousness that will result in a better world, Gelb refers to a statement by Hitler to show that a "new vision" is not always for the better. Hitler said, as quoted by Gelb: "We are now at the end of the Age of Reason. The intellect has grown autocratic, and has become a disease of life.... A new age of magic interpretation of the world is coming." Although Gelb does not explicitly draw the analogy between Hitler's denial of the further value of the Age of Reason and holistic thinkers' denial of the same, and although he does not make explicit the analogy between Hitler's idea of "a new age of magic interpretation of the world" and holism's new interpretation of the world, the analogy is too obvious to be accidental, or so it seems to me. If Gelb would have wanted only to illustrate the fact that a new vision of reality is not always for the better, he could have used plenty of other examples. In case Gelb just happened by chance to use Hitler, his choice was at best in poor taste, and, let's say, just slightly offensive.

Intellectually speaking, any analogy between Hitler's vision and holism's vision is fundamentally flawed. This is so for at least the following reasons, for which I have relied on the incisive analysis of Nazism by the historian of science Morris Berman:²²

1. Although the energy may seem to be similar behind movements against the Reign of Reason (the energy to form a new world vision), the forms they take are not;

2. Nazism can indeed be seen as a reaction against the dominant rational culture of the time (as is holistic thought), but it is a reaction that gives emphasis to the *irrational* side of

human life (meaning here a compulsive hostility toward all reasonable judgment), not to the *nonrational* side (which holism draws from spiritual traditions as well as the arts and humanities as a legitimate expression of knowledge that is tacit and implicit); and

3. The "shift in consciousness" of the Nazi agenda related to a magic that consisted in the manipulation of the psyche of the German people through public rituals, symbolic imagery, and spellbinding oratory. This kind of magic is incomparable to the shift in consciousness implied in holism with its emphasis on spiritual, intuitive, artistic, inner, and tacit knowing. In sum, an analogy such as Gelb's illustrates the cardinal mistake in scholarship of focusing on the surface (very surface indeed) similarities between movements and not on the differences. Gelb would be well advised to leave Hitler out of it.

Regarding holism and paradigms, let me end with a quote from Briggs and Peat (they refer to what I call paradigms as "theories"):

Perhaps other theories will replace those we have explored here, theories which express wholeness more satisfactorily. Perhaps the fragmentary view will continue to dominate science. But the theories of wholeness are, at least, new expressions of an ancient insight and of a more ancient longing, one which will come now into dramatic conflict with the equally ancient longing to possess and control through knowledge and ownership the various separate things of this world, including ourselves.²³

No guarantee for a harmonious new world overnight, but hope for a better world in the long run. Whatever both holism and critical thought have to offer, we will need it.

Notes

1. Quoted in Jones, *Physics as Metaphor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 2.

2. D. Bohm and D. Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity: A Dramatic New Look at the Creative Roots of Science and Life* (New York: Bantam, 1987), p. 3.

3. Here I am also disagreeing with Ron Miller (in his response to Steven Gelb; see "Some Reflections on this Discussion ...," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 [Summer, 1991], p. 50), who views paradigms as "a set of perceptions and assumptions in the mind of the beholder."

4. Jones, *Physics as Metaphor*, p. 2.

5. I. Prigogine and I. Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1984). David Bohm likewise uses the metaphor of artforms to express the nature of knowledge construction, in J.P. Briggs and D. Peat, *Looking Glass Universe: The Emerging Science of Wholeness* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 150.

6. S. Gelb, "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm: Holism and the Future," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1991), p. 41.

7. Bohm and Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, p. 61.

8. Bohm and Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, p. 27.

9. For a different, boldly reasoned analysis of what keeps us tied to the construction of paradigms, one should read M. Berman *Coming to Our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989). Berman builds a very compelling argument that we construct paradigms to cover up the emptiness of our lives, which he sees as primarily a somatic emptiness. We no longer use somatic information as primary data. We are as afraid of the silences between paradigms as we are of the silences in our conversations with others. We fear the real questions, he says, which live in our bodies, and silences force them to the surface (p. 20). We talk on and on, and we create paradigms to feel safe, but if we would let the safety come from the body we would not need to "stuff the gap" (p. 312). What we need, Berman says, is an "embodied holism" — one that is both sensuous and situational (p. 306). Berman acknowledges that all we probably can work toward is a "paradigm of no paradigms" (p. 313), and that we will always need some form of coding for social and psychological life. He also qualifies his position by admitting that he might have overvalued the somatic experience as a vehicle for cultural integrity (p. 343).

My comments here are vastly insufficient to describe the theme of his intriguing work, but I wanted to note a perspective that differs from Bohm and Peat's desire to make breaks between paradigms less rigid, but which also differs from the Kuhnian perspective. None of these thinkers, however, trivialize the concept of paradigms; all acknowledge their immense influence on all of life, and none believe that we can do away with them tomorrow.

10. See note 3 in Miller, "Some Reflections on this Discussion ...," p. 49. Also, in his response to Gelb, Miller points to cultural sources rather than paradigmatic ones as the reason for our miseries (p. 49). Cultures, however, are inextricably tied up with paradigms, precisely because fact and value, cognition and emotion, are not separate. The mutual causality between capitalism, Marxism, patriarchy, and slavery and the mecha-

nistic worldview fostered by seventeenth-century science, for example, have been well documented. See also D. Kubrin, "Newton's Inside Out! Magic, Class Struggle, and the Rise of Mechanism in the West." In *The Analytic Spirit: Essays in the History of Science*, edited by H. Woolf (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 96-121; and S.R. Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

11. Miller, "Some Reflections on this Discussion ...," p. 49.

12. Gelb, "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm," p. 39.

13. Bohm and Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, p. 109.

14. For the inherent morality in today's conception of science, see N. Cousins, *Nobel Prize Conversations by Sir John Eccles, Roger Sperry, Illya Prigogine, Brian Josephson* (Dallas:

Saybrook, 1985); and L. LeShan and H. Margenau, *Einstein's Space and van Gogh's Sky: Physical Reality and Beyond* (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

15. Gelb, "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm," p. 41.

16. M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Also see M. Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World* (New York: Bantam, 1984), particularly chapter 5.

17. Gelb, "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm," p. 40.

18. D. Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1983), p. 48. Also see Briggs and Peat, *Looking Glass Universe*, chapter 2.

19. Berman, *Coming to Our Senses*, p. 301.

20. See M. Poplin, "Holistic/Constructivist Principles of the Teaching/Learning

Process: Implications for the Field of Learning Disabilities," *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 21, no. 7 (1988), pp. 401-416; L. Heshusius, "The Newtonian Mechanistic Paradigm, Special Education and Contours of Alternatives: An Overview," *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22, no. 7 (1989), pp. 403-415; L. Heshusius, "Holistic Principles: Not Enhancing the Old but Seeing a New: A Rejoinder," *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22, no. 10 (1989), pp. 595-602; and D.W. Oliver and K.W. Gershman, *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

21. See note 18 in Gelb, "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm," p. 42.

22. Berman, *Coming to Our Senses*, chapter 8.

23. Briggs and Peat, *Looking Glass Universe*, p. 271.

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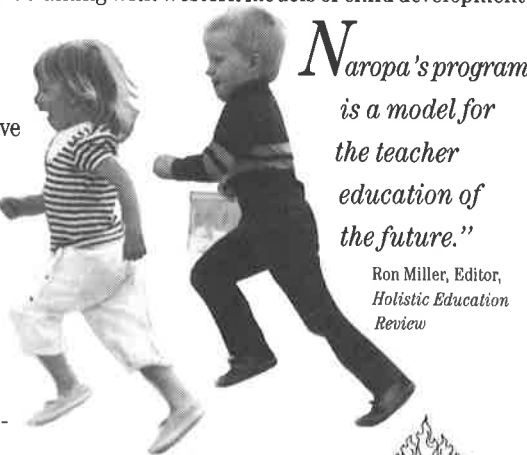
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The Unfinished Puzzle

Sustaining a Dynamic Holism

by Kathleen Kesson

It is probably true quite generally that in the history of human thinking the most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet. These lines may have their roots in quite different parts of human culture, in different times or different cultural environments or different religious traditions; hence if they actually meet, that is, if they are not at least so much related to each other that a real interaction can take place, then one may hope that new and interesting developments may follow.

—Werner Heisenberg

Holism and critical theory (including its latest offspring, postmodernism) are powerful streams of contemporary thought that share a common opposition to the Cartesian paradigm. Emerging from quite different disciplines (holism draws upon science and mysticism; critical theory has its roots in Marxist social and psychoanalytical theory; and postmodernism derives primarily from European literary criticism), there has been little interactive dialogue among them. The liveliness of the dialogue between Ron Miller, David E. Purpel, Steven Gelb, Edward T. Clark, Jr., and Lous Heshusius in recent issues of *Holistic Education Review* highlights the radical differences between these ways of apprehending reality, and hints at some of the convergences. While I must decline Miller's generous offer to "have the last word" on the subject, I will attempt to untangle the roots of the opposition between them and explore ways in which they might be not only complementary perspectives, but mutually essential to our evolving understanding of reality.

Holistic ideas, although embryonic, reflect powerful cultural currents and will be around longer than any of the people who have generated them. They will take on a life of their own; thus we have a responsibility to explore as many of the ramifications of our ideas as we possibly can. The explication of the core assumptions of the holistic movement and the exposition of the contradictions and conflict surrounding them offer a unique and challenging opportunity to model an alternative form of discourse, one that includes rather than excludes and transforms rather than negates. It is *ideas* that are on the line, not *people*, although it sometimes seems difficult to separate the two. I believe that it is especially important, during this time of massive cultural changes, to examine new "worldviews" for any seeds of oppression that may lurk dormant in them. Holism's tendency toward hierarchical thinking and its historical totalism lend themselves to easy distortions, and they require clarification. I believe that holistic thought will be strengthened by integrating the powerful interpretive analysis of critical theory as

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well as the deconstructive impulse of postmodernism. Gelb, Purpel, and Miller have begun this difficult task. In this short essay, I will try to uncover some of the points at which these various streams of thought diverge and converge, in the sincere hope that, as Heisenberg said, "new and interesting developments may follow."

Holism, unity, and hierarchy

Holism is distinguished by a compelling impulse toward unity. From Bohm's theory of an underlying implicate order, to Lovelock's theory of the planet as a living organism to Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures, we see an antireductionist trend that seeks to establish the primacy of the whole over the parts. The popularity of these ideas is not difficult to understand, given the multiple social and ecological crises that have been generated by fragmentation (our exclusive preoccupation with the isolated parts of things).

Holism as a philosophical alternative to mechanism was first proposed by Smuts in his book *Holism and Evolution* (1926), in which he proposed a continuum of relationships among parts from the simple to the complex, in which the unity among parts was affected and changed by the synthesis:

Holism is a process of creative synthesis; the resulting wholes are not static, but dynamic, evolutionary, creative.... The explanation of nature can therefore not be purely mechanical; and the mechanistic concept of nature has its place and justification only in the wider setting of holism.¹

Smuts's original premise, as well as recent developments in physics, biology, and ecology, concede the explanatory power of the holistic perspective in science. Problems occur, however, when such a perspective is invoked to explain the more complex areas of human consciousness or social theory. It is here that holism comes in for its share of criticism from both critical thinkers and postmodernists — criticism that proffers a valuable contribution to the evolution of holistic thought.

Despite its association with twentieth-century science, holism is not a new concept. As a mystic framework and as an organizing social principle, some form of it has been around for centuries. Aristotle's holism, for example, posited an interactive and organ-

ismic hierarchy of being that encompassed the cosmos, human beings, and the smallest grain of sand. This way of viewing the world evolved into feudalism, with the monarch at the apex and serfs on the lower rung of a descending order. Although certainly not feudalists, many holistic thinkers do support some version of the notion of a "Great Chain of Being":

Issuing from the Divine source/cause, the "ladder of being" or descending chain of life begins on the higher, invisible realms of being and extends to the visible kingdoms of nature.... The ladder may be climbed in both directions: upward into spirituality, or downward into materiality.²

Ken Wilber's theory of life and mind also posits a hierarchy of consciousness and form with nonliving matter at the base and pure consciousness at the peak,³ a model in which the "higher" transcends and incorporates the "lower" (see Table 1).⁴ Such a multidimensional interpretation is reflected in innumerable mystic philosophies.⁵ Wilber suggests that humanity is currently evolving from the mental stage to the subtle stage, a process pre-figured by the experiences of mystics who have developed their subtle, psychic powers. The interest of many holistic educators in developing the subjective capacities of children suggests that they share this premise.

Elegant and intuitively coherent as such hierarchical models are, they contain inherent problems that invite critical reflection. The privileging of the mental over the physical, of the spiritual over the mental, and of the modern over the primitive has engendered a number of historical abuses, as

both critical theorists and postmodernists are quick to point out. Gender differentiation has relegated women to the realms of physicality and emotion, and men to the higher status realms of mind and culture. Tribal people who have maintained close contact with the land for centuries have been viewed as "undeveloped." Historically, priests have sustained power, even over monarchs and intellectuals. The list of abuses generated by hierarchical thinking goes on and on.

Without disregarding the moral and ethical development that often accompanies spiritual/psychic expansion, we must at least acknowledge the potential for an emergent elite class of people who consider themselves "more holistic than thou." It is an important historical fact that personal revelatory experiences have often resulted in the most horrendous barbarisms. Inner "spiritual" experience is not automatically nor inherently moral, not only because it does not necessarily engage a person in the life of the community and society, but also because inner experience is necessarily filtered and interpreted through our individual ego structures. Nor is spirituality immune to corrupting external influences. The ease with which much of the "human potential" movement has been co-opted by market forces should encourage holistic thinkers to engage in a deep and thoughtful analysis of the complicated economic and cultural dynamics that influence (not determine) our reality.

While spirituality may be an important source of values for many people, values are also conditioned by culture, upbringing, social class standing, gender and innumerable other concrete and historical conditions. Thinking that praying, or meditating, or having visions guarantees pristine values and pure impulses is dangerous thinking indeed. At the point at which inner experience is translated into social activity, we must accommodate critical discourse, for at this evolutionary juncture, it is our only available means for synthesizing competing interests.

On the other side of the argument, I will comment on Gelb's link between a process philosophy in which the self becomes "part of the endless flow of the cosmos" and the demands of a

Table 1
Hierarchy of Consciousness

1. Physical — nonliving matter/energy
2. Biological — living, pranic, sentient matter/energy
3. Mental — ego, logic, thinking
4. Subtle — archetypal, trans-individual, intuitive
5. Causal — formless radiance, perfect transcendence
6. Ultimate — consciousness as such, the source and nature of all other levels

consumer culture. To support his point of view, Gelb, in "Not Necessarily the New Paradigm" (p. 39) quotes from a book (*Not Necessarily the New Age*) which attempts to debunk "non-traditional" spiritual beliefs on the basis of the verifiability issue (i.e. what can not be seen, felt, measured or predicted does not exist). While I'm not sure I know what the "typical New Age Philosophy" is, I suspect that I share with Gelb a desire to distance holistic educational thought from some of its excesses and extravagant claims. I believe that it is important however, to differentiate between two very different processes which share surface similarities. The dissolution of the self, or loss of ego structure (through drugs, brainwashing, withdrawal from social life — whatever) could well make one vulnerable to consumer conditioning, as Gelb suggests. The identification of the self, however, with an ever-enlarging field of awareness (different cultural groups, oppressed people, past and future generations, nonhuman life forms, etc.) increases the level of empathy and connectedness we feel.

While both dissolution and identification might tune us into "the endless flow of the cosmos," the former is a formula for the atomized consumer, while the latter is likely to generate a greater sense of social responsibility. Self-esteem and individual empowerment are pervasive themes in holistic educational thought. Coupled with a strong emphasis on social and ecological responsibility, holistic education at its best enables young people to discriminate between "mindlessness" (dissolution) and "mindfulness" (identification). I believe that a genuine holistic education must blend the "yin" condition of receptive awareness with the "yang" activity of the sharply focused intellect if it is to really succeed in this effort.

These two poles of experience, the receptive/spiritual and the critical/analytical, are at the center (how's that for a mixed metaphor?) of the controversy in the pages of *Holistic Education Review*. They appear irreconcilable. Postmodern thought shares the critique of atomism/reductionism with holists, but it also identifies the holistic impulse toward unity with the Cartesian drive for clarity and systematic knowledge. If ho-

lism is distinguished by an emphasis on such centripetal forces as unity, systematic harmony, sameness, truth, and being, then postmodernism might be characterized by centrifugal notions embodied in such terms as difference, multiplicity, contradiction, ambiguity, uncertainty, relativity, and becoming.⁶ Holistic thought equates the postmodern impulse into diversity with relativism and fragmentation.⁷ I must agree with philosopher Ronald McKinney, however, who views holism and postmodernism as "complementary facets of one reality," which "need each other if our knowledge is ever to do justice to the complex flowing movement of reality itself."⁸ There can be no real argument between the one and the many, I believe, for they are embodied in each other. If we follow the sophisticated and paradoxical logic inherent in both the holistic and postmodern perspectives we are led to both a "vision of connectedness" and an acceptance of "irreconcilable incompatibilities."⁹ I believe that we must become comfortable with such ambiguities.

A reasonable alternative to the simple opposition between the order and chaos embedded in the concepts of hierarchy and anarchy is the notion of *heterarchy*, which suggests a model of reality that is nontransitive, circular, and complex. Unlike hierarchy, heterarchy does not yield to one ultimate source of judgment. Unlike anarchy, it does not open to unlimited options, but rather defines constrained limitations on the range of possible choices.¹⁰ The notion of heterarchy can provide us with a useful check upon both the static tendency inherent in hierarchy and the incoherence inherent in anarchy, engendering a holism that is true to Smuts's original vision of a "process of creative synthesis" in which wholes are not static, but dynamic, evolutionary, and creative. Such a perspective would question "both the quest for organic totality as well as the need to unmake each pretender to ultimate wholeness" and requires an awareness of the provisionality of all positions (even the postmodernist one).¹¹ It would accommodate both the unity and the diversity which holism proclaims. It would surely engender the intellectual humility that Gelb wishes to promote.

Holism and the totalistic view of history

Gelb brings up another problematic aspect of holistic thinking when he discusses the totalistic view of history embedded in the notion of paradigm shifts. I believe that he brings up some important points. Holistic thinkers jumped on the "paradigm bandwagon" after the publication of Capra's *The Turning Point*, but have largely ignored the intensive philosophical debate sparked by Kuhn's original thinking in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.¹² Holists who put their faith in the "creative synthesis" aspect of paradigm shifts tend to downplay the deconstructive aspect of such shifts — "the proposer of a new paradigm stands on the shoulders of giants and then bashes them over the head" — and, while utilizing the concept of paradigm shifts to justify their personal vision of a better world, they ignore Kuhn's premise that evolution occurs "not toward anything ... but only away from something," a deconstructive notion if I ever heard one!¹³ Clark's analogy of holism to a jigsaw puzzle — "the most important piece of any jigsaw puzzle is the last piece" — reveals an inclination toward a totalistic worldview, toward closure and completion.¹⁴ Postmodern thought, in contrast, would celebrate the unfinished puzzle as a reminder that history is forever incomplete and reality infinitely open-ended.

If I may generalize, most holists share with modernists the Enlightenment belief in progressive, evolutionary change. Although radically different in content, Marx's Utopian social order, liberalism's enlightened rational polis, Christianity's rapture, and the New Age millennium all share a common structural component: the notion that history is linear and has a culmination point. Most paradigmatic thinking reflects this deeply engrained pattern of transcendence. This is why, as Morris Berman points out,

New Age "paradigm shift" finally won't work; no matter how radically different the content might be ... the form is really identical. Paradigm-shift is still part of the salvation mentality, a patriarchal mindset that tells the hero to persevere, find a new form of consciousness that will give him redemption.... The awareness that

this whole structure is an illusion is ... the real heresy we need to embrace.¹⁵

That we all function within sets of paradigmatic assumptions constructed by the complex interactions of tacit and explicit information flows, as Heshusius suggests, is clear. What is problematic is the notion, dear to many holists, of the universality of paradigms and paradigm shifts. The assumption of a worldwide transformation of consciousness, divorced from the contingencies of language and culture is, as Don Oliver suggests in his critique of the holistic education/human potential movement, embedded in a cosmology itself restricted by limiting metaphors: the metaphors of progress, of destiny beyond the present, and of linear history. Oliver rejects the assumption, advocated by some holistic thinkers, that humans can stand outside culture and the process of change "to control and guide it in the interest of a perfected (or at least maturing) humanity."¹⁶

I concur with Oliver on this, but it is worth noting that overarching paradigms do dominate cultural life at *particular* times and in *particular* places, and they are subject to radical revisions resulting from changing conditions. However, a new set of guiding metaphors, even a "better" set, is inextricably tied up with power, interest, privilege, values, and egos. Postmodernism, with its insistence upon hearing "marginalized" voices (those which subsist on the fringes of any paradigm), will at least continue to remind us of this uncomfortable fact.

There is no question in my mind that the holistic paradigm emerging from the synthesis of science and mystic philosophies is more inclusive than mechanism, is more complex, and offers a way through seemingly intractable human problems. I think that Gelb underestimates the depth and breadth of this emergent perspective, but offers us, along with Miller and Purpel, a pragmatic reminder of the limitations of consciousness divorced from action. On the other hand, scholars such as Clark emphasize the limitations of activism absent a spiritual focus. But the important issue, I believe, centers around our *relationship* to our paradigms, rather than the efficacy of one paradigm over another. Bohm and Peat, as Heshusius points

out, suggest a more flexible and tenuous reliance upon our paradigms that would enable a plurality of basic concepts and fluid movement among them. It seems to me that Gelb is basically in agreement with them when he critiques the "strength with which we hold our ideas." The subtle difference of opinion between Heshusius and Gelb is over whether Bohm and Peat are calling for an end to paradigms or merely a more fluid movement between them. This is really a thorny issue, and the more I think about it, the denser the thicket gets. An end to paradigms would mean an end to conceptual frameworks altogether, a condition that would involve the renegotiation of all aspects of reality from moment to moment. Clearly, this would be a tedious task. Yet, to move from one paradigmatic framework to another as one would don different hats, implies that conceptual systems exist outside of us, estranged from language, culture, and values. This, I believe, is an untenable position. Is the capacity to conceive of the notion of a paradigm itself embedded in a paradigm? I have lost some sleep over these questions, but I believe there is a way through the dilemma.

In an earlier book, David Bohm outlines a process of "destructuring the thinker," which would allow for an "unbroken flowing movement from immediate experience to logical thought and back, and thus to an ending to ... fragmentation."¹⁷ Berman calls for an "embodied holism," situational and sensuous, which might provide the somatic and ontological security necessary to lessen our dependence on, if not dispense, with paradigms.¹⁸ Berman speaks persuasively of the inevitable crystallization of lived experience into dogma, and of the necessity for a genuine and continual bodily engagement with the world. Krishnamurti, whom Berman calls the antiguru guru, engaged us in a continual deconstruction of our conceptual structures through conscious awareness of our mental patterns. Specific to education, C.A. Bowers suggests very practical ways in which teachers can begin to work with students to transform implicit paradigmatic assumptions into explicit ones, through attention to the metaphoric construction of social reality¹⁹

All of these thinkers emphasize the importance of what Berman calls "reflexivity": the "deliberate awareness of constructing and using a code (paradigm), and the having of that awareness as part of your code"²⁰ This reflexivity, I believe, will guide us toward a more direct apprehension of reality, the condition of "pure undivided consciousness," which Heshusius insists is a long time off, but that I believe is as close as the doing of it. Clark quotes Marilyn Ferguson, a guru of transformational thinking: "Our past is not our potential. Where we are going is more important than where we have come from." I believe that *where we are* is more relevant than either, and that as long as we dwell in the abstractions of either past or future, the fullness of the present will elude us.

Beyond dualism

We have been holding a very difficult conversation in this series of articles. Not only are the concepts we are discussing somewhat elusive, but as a community of scholars, many of us are committed to a mutual learning process characterized by genuine interactivity rather than competition or individual achievement. We find ourselves engaged in the *consciousness/personal/concrete/historical* process of getting beyond dualism, yet we are locked in a dualistic language structure that seems hopelessly inadequate to the task. For example, the rigid distinction that Clark appears to draw between subjectivity and objectivity — privileging subjectivity as a primary determinant of human knowledge and behavior — is a profoundly dualistic notion that ignores the complex interdependence of objects, experience, perception, consciousness, interpretation, and behavior. If I understand him correctly, he places anyone who recognizes such complexity firmly in the behaviorist camp, which is neither appropriate nor fair, because classic behaviorism denies the existence of subjectivity altogether. Such distinct categorizations of people into "activists who buttonhole politicians" and "philosophers who sit in their ivory towers creating holistic visions and designing holistic paradigms" ignores the powerful notion (from critical theory) of *praxis*, which is the dynamic relationship between the

ory and practice, or consciousness and action. Drawing an analogy between human beings of differing perspectives and distinct species such as monkeys and birds ignores the complex and dynamic assimilation and accommodation to new ideas that characterizes human consciousness-in-relation-ship.

One of the important questions concerns the process of inner transformation (a conversion-like experience from one way of seeing things to another): How does it occur? The idealist position is that all inner growth is revelatory and comes from a "spiritual" (not bounded by time or space) source. The materialist, by contrast, says that interaction with matter and form causes the brain to develop in certain patterns. Both positions neglect the full range of experience that influences human thought and behavior. The way out of the idealist/materialist duality, or the consciousness-personal/concrete-historical dilemma is not by privileging one over the other but by recognizing their inseparability. Only with this recognition will we move beyond such false dichotomies and rigid classifications as inner/outer, concrete/abstract, subjective/objective, process/product, personal/political, and holist thinker/critical theorist.

These dualisms are at the crux of many of the arguments presented in the series of articles under review. The process/product argument that Gelb brings up relates specifically to it. Let's assume (for analytical purposes) that *process* (mental activity) lies at the consciousness end of the spectrum and that *product* (the "stuff" of consciousness) lies at the matter/form end of the spectrum. Heshusius disputes Gelb's inference that most holistic thinkers favor a process orientation, but I would have to support Gelb's position on the basis of my experience at the holistic education conference in Chicago last year. At that meeting, an overwhelming majority of the 80 participants supported a statement to the effect that education should be concerned with process rather than content or product. There were only a handful of dissenters in the room, not because any of us advocated content over process, but because we viewed them as inseparable, as do Heshusius and Gelb. This example also lends

support to Purpel and Miller's premise, with which I agree, that holistic educational *ideas* lean heavily toward the consciousness/personal end of the spectrum, at the expense of an engagement with social and political realities.

Critical theorists, despite their brilliant theoretical analysis, have shied away from the possibility of synthesizing individual liberation and radical politics, and have neglected to develop a dynamic alternative vision for society.²¹ (Feminist theory is the major exception.) Holistic thinkers, on the other hand, have a powerful transformative vision, but generally fail to turn their critical attention upon themselves. There are many aspects of the human potential/holistic education movement that invite critical analysis, some of which I have touched upon in this essay. I do not view the efforts of critical thinkers in the holistic community as an attempt to create a "monoculture" or one correct brand of holism, as Clark suggests, but as an endeavor to introduce the kind of diversity that might add strength and dynamism to holism as a social movement. It would seem that each of these perspectives could add great depth to the other, but it is only when underlying assumptions are made explicit that this kind of interchange can occur. This series of articles has done a great deal to uncover the implicit dimensions of both perspectives. The very complexity of a world in crisis moves many of us to hold fast to cherished ideas, patting ourselves on the back for "listening to" and "honoring" each other. Genuine interactivity, however, implies transformation — constant, fluid, ongoing, and dynamic. Can we take the risk that this implies?

Notes

1. Quoted in Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 293.

2. Anna F. Lemkow, *The Wholeness Principle: Dynamics of Unity Within Science, Religion and Society* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1990) pp. 16-17.

3. See *Up from Eden* (1981), *Eye to Eye* (1983) (both published by Doubleday/Ancor), and *The Atman Project* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980).

4. Ken Wilber, ed., *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes* (Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala, 1985) p. 159.

5. Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* (1944) is often cited as a foundational text by such influential holistic thinkers as Lemkow and Wilber.

6. See Ronald H. McKinney, S.J., "Toward the Resolution of Paradigm Conflict: Holism Versus Postmodernism," *Philosophy Today* (Winter, 1988), for an in-depth explication of the similarities and differences between these two contemporary streams of thought.

7. See Huston Smith's *Beyond the Postmodern Mind* (1989) for an excellent discussion of postmodernism and the perennial philosophy. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.

8. McKinney, "Toward the Resolution of Paradigm Conflict," p. 310.

9. This argument is well developed in another paper by Ronald McKinney called "An Entropic Analysis of Postmodernism" in *Philosophy Today* (Summer, 1990).

10. I first came across the notion of *heterarchy* as an alternative to hierarchy and anarchy in an excellent monograph by Peter Schwartz and James Ogilvy entitled *The Emergent Paradigm: Changing Patterns of Thought and Belief* (April, 1979). Available from the University of Washington library, Seattle.

11. McKinney, "Toward the Resolution of Paradigm Conflict."

12. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, (NY: Bantam Books, 1983); and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

13. In a May, 1991, interview with *Scientific American* entitled "Profile: Reluctant Revolutionary," Kuhn addressed some of the misinterpretations generated by his 1962 book.

14. Edward T. Clark, Jr. "Holism: Implications of the New Paradigm," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1991), p. 48.

15. Morris Berman, *Coming to Our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West* (NY: Bantam Books, 1989).

16. Donald Oliver and Kathleen Gersman, *Education, Modernity and Fractured Meaning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

17. David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge, 1980).

18. Berman, *Coming to Our Senses*, pp. 312-313.

19. C.A. Bowers and David Flinders, *Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture and Thought* (NY: Teachers College Press, 1990).

20. Berman, *Coming to Our Senses*, p. 313.

21. Jeremy J. Shapiro, "The Slime of History: Embeddedness in Nature and Critical Theory," in *On Critical Theory*, edited by John O'Neill (NY: Seabury Press, 1976).

The 1991 Winter Park Conference of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education

Introduction

by Ron Miller

Every journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

When the 80 holistic educators meeting in June, 1990, issued "The Chicago Statement on Education," we knew that we had taken only the first small step toward the tremendous task of radically redesigning the educational systems of the world.¹ In the months following the Chicago conference, the twelve-person Steering Committee formally organized the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE) and began planning a second international conference on holistic education, to be held in the Rocky Mountains in Winter Park, Colorado. There, at the end of May and early June, 1991, 90 educational visionaries — including many who had not attended the Chicago conference — began working to give form and substance to the GATE vision.

Conference participants joined "strands" — special interest groups, each working on a particular facet of holistic education (ecological literacy, spirituality, philosophical issues, and so on). At the close of the gathering, the entire group heard reports from the strands and discussed ways to implement the various action plans that were proposed. Individuals volunteered to be regional coordinators to plan activities in local communities, and the steering committee chose Dr. Phil Gang to be the paid, full-time director of GATE. Since the conference, he has been working with the regional coordinators to build an emerging grass-roots coalition of visionary, progressive educators.

What follows are selected im-

pressions from the Winter Park conference. They convey the enthusiasm and purpose that were strongly felt there, and they suggest the kinds of philosophical questions that need to be addressed as this movement grows. There is an exciting sense, in this movement, that the GATE coalition may be able to achieve what no previous progressive educational movement has been able to bring about — a serious rethinking of the reductionistic assumptions and bureaucratic practices of modern education. The 1990s are ripe for substantial change in education; the global ecological crisis and the moral and economic problems of the times beg for fresh insight and vision. GATE offers such a vision, as expressed in the document we produced in Winter Park, "Education 2000: A Holistic Perspective" (see insert in this issue). Now it is our task to spread and expand this vision in the most coherent, thoughtful, and convincing way possible.

Mary Alice Bates gives an overall impression of the Winter Park gathering. Her report is followed by two others, which we can view as representing the heart and the head of the holistic education movement: Lynn Stoddard's "Synergy on Snow Mountain" describes a "spiritual, life-altering experience" as he and his strand worked on the topic of educating for self-esteem and personal greatness. This group came to the explicit conclusion that these concerns must lie at "the heart of the GATE mission." In the following article, Lous Heshusius calls upon holistic educators to give more serious attention and critical thought to some foundational ques-

tions. Like a few participants in the 1990 Chicago conference,² Heshusius cautions that such questions must be answered more fully and carefully if the holistic movement is to live up to its promise as a force for cultural transformation. Interestingly, she specifically singles out the concept of "personal greatness," which had so inspired Stoddard and his group.

Anyone familiar with my own position will know that I share this critical perspective.³ If the holistic education movement does not build its philosophical foundations more deliberately and carefully, then it risks becoming irrelevant, impotent, and even antithetical to a genuine transformation of our culture. Yet holism is whole precisely because it has a heart as well as a head. I wonder: If the Secretary of Education, or the bureaucrats and technocrats who determine educational policy in schools today, could have taken part in Stoddard's group and shared the joy, the warmth, and the love that emerged there, perhaps they would have been awakened, for the very first time, to entirely new possibilities for education.

I share Heshusius's concern that "human greatness" could be digested by our competitive, individualistic culture. (See Mara Sapon-Shevin's article in this issue for a similar critique of cooperative learning techniques.) We need a critical perspective on the cultural context of education. But Stoddard has, in fact, attempted to clarify the concept of "human greatness" in two strong articles in *Holistic Education Review*.⁴ In his view, personal "greatness" is not rugged individualism, but rather involves a com-

munal bonding just as he experienced it in his strand group. "Interaction," along with "identity" and "inquiry," are the pillars of human greatness.

In short, as I am sure both Stoddard and Heshusius would readily acknowledge, we need the heart and the head, working together. The following perspectives do not reflect an intractable opposition, but a difference in emphasis. I would agree that in our enthusiasm at both Chicago and Winter Park, the heart took precedence, and it needs to be better balanced by a more critical intellectual effort. But no one is suggesting that the holistic education movement can or should proceed without its heart.

Notes

1. The full report on the 1990 Chicago Conference was published in *Holistic Education Review* 3, no. 4 (Winter, 1990).
2. See Fred R. Reenstjerna, "Some Critical Questions about Holistic Education," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1991); and Ron Miller, "Commentary on 'The Chicago Statement on Education': Where Do We Go from Here?" *Holistic Education Review* 3, no. 4 (Winter, 1990).

3. See David E. Purpel and Ron Miller, "How Whole Is Holistic Education?" *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1991); Ron Miller, "Some Reflections on This Discussion," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1991); "Holism and Meaning: Foundations for a Coherent Holistic Theory," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 3 (Fall, 1991).

4. Lynn Stoddard, "The Three Dimensions of Human Greatness: A Framework for Redesigning Education," *Holistic Education Review* 3, no. 1 (Spring, 1990); and "Developing Geniuses: How to Stop the Great Brain Robbery," *Holistic Education Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1991). See also his new book, *Education for Human Greatness*, Tucson: Zephyr Press. Also available from Holistic Education Press.

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PROGRAM INFORMATION



Global Alliance for Transforming Education
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Impressions of the GATE Conference

by Mary Alice Bates

We came to the Colorado Conference from the points of the compass, crossing oceans, rivers, and mountains, and state and national boundaries. It was a pilgrimage of discovery and creation, not of homage or worship. We brought our hopes and dreams, our ethics and values, and our hurts and disappointments. To paraphrase Mark Antony: Some of Education we came to bury, some of Education we came to praise, and some of Education we came to transform into a better reality.

We came at different developmental levels in our understanding of the holistic paradigm. Some came in groups to develop a personal vision to implement in a particular place. Some came for curiosity: Were these just crazy ideas that would evaporate when exposed to air and sunshine? Some came for validation: the acknowledgment that progress had been made along the spectrum of transcendence. Others came to cheer and coach not only the haltingly slow initial steps, but also the giant strides and quantum leaps.

We came as individuals with a personal commitment. We came as small groups with multiple agendas. We brought spouses to share this journey of discovery and commitment. It would be incorrect to assume that we all came with all of the same values, experiences, and priorities, yet we all embraced the same mission: *to proclaim and promote a vision of education that fosters personal greatness, social justice, peace, and a sustainable environment.*

The symbolism of the circle was ever present. It repeatedly emphasized the inclusive nature of GATE. It prohibited anyone from being forced into a corner to defend an idea or a stance. It kept the ideas and electricity flowing as we came forward to identify our active involvement in various groups of progressive, alternative, Montessori, and Waldorf educators and homeschoolers. It identified our connections to other countries with members from Canada and Japan in our presence and our contact with the Helsinki conference just concluding. We eagerly awaited the statement faxed to us from the Helsinki conference, which summarized its action plans.

Several of our members brought greetings from other countries and education groups who wished us well and encouraged our efforts. They asked for our insights and sharing as our mutual members returned to planned conferences. I felt a connectedness to an almost cosmic group. I felt the vibration of connections of monumental proportions.

As the plans for the following days were detailed, I tried desperately to clone myself so that I could participate more fully by joining each and every group. I was loathe to miss even one idea that would

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be generated. In the final choosing, however, I joined with Phil Gang, Nina Lynn, and Dot Maver to develop the blueprint and the network.

As the largest of the strands, we stayed in the largest room. We drew our circle close together, not to exclude ideas or individuals, but to keep our relationship close and warm. It would have been easy to be intimidated by the size of our room or the scope of our responsibility.

We began with the report of work in progress, the dimensions of the previously perceived parts, and a suggested method of consideration. We understood the task of our strand to be to identify other groups throughout the world with commitments to, interest in, or responsibility for education. We were to develop the means and methods by which we would interact with these groups to develop and implement a transformed system of education that will fulfill our mission: the transformation of education from the old industrial model to an ecological model that empowers individuals to think systemically and to live whole lives.

The visual presentation depicted the task of transforming education as the central hub of an eight-spoked wheel. It included circular connections at several levels around the wheel, implying interaction from individual to meta-organizational levels. The tentative nature of the report and diagram was emphasized again and again, so that we were sufficiently assured that ours was not a "rubber stamp" task. We were to react and interact to more clearly define the central goal, the groups with which we would network, and the master plan for all communication and interaction.

When the whole group came together near the end of the day, we found that others had struggled mightily with the definition of terms. We all used the terms *holistic* and *spirituality*, but we did not totally agree on the meanings. Perhaps we could agree on the adjectives that describe them and thus ease their communication to others. What had been accomplished would make our task easier. Yet, our assignment appeared so large that the decision was made to divide it into many smaller units so that we could complete it by Sunday.

Late Friday several other members

of GATE arrived to swell our ranks not just with numbers, but also with profound thoughts and purposeful plans. Was the decision to break into groups the deciding factor? Was the arrival of new members and ideas the motivating influence? Or were we at the point of readiness to make solid decisions? Whatever the cause, things began to happen, agreements were reached, and progress was made.

Other strands completed their work or found that they must join us in order to complete the task. So, bit by bit and strand by strand we reassembled the parts into a totality.

Saturday saw much unstructured time being consumed at the duplicating machine and the computer. The

close. Each grasped a colored strand of crepe paper to symbolize the wheel and its spokes as we individually and collectively wove the fabric of our dreams for transformation.

The spiritual connections within the group were so strong that breaking the physical bonds was difficult for many. Yet we each left with a personal commitment and mission to bring the message to as many as we could reach.

Since returning home I have found two visualizations that summarize two important concepts that we developed in Colorado. First, we will look as much to internal development as to external sculpting. If we look carefully at the ancient practice of Chinese foot binding, we find the aim to make women more dainty

Our mission: the transformation of education from the old industrial model to an ecological model that empowers individuals to think systematically and to live whole lives.

workroom was a sweatshop all night as groups formed, stormed, and normed. Respite times were offered in corners, over food, during walks to the dormitories, and while sitting on logs in the parking areas. A frenzy of conversation substituted for sleep.

The finite hours were drawing to a close, and friendships, personal and professional, had to be cemented before returning to our homes and jobs. There were resources to be acquired and orders to be placed so that important ideas and materials would not be lost or forgotten. Videotapes had to be previewed, books scanned, and important human resources annotated in our record of the week.

Our final meeting was with others from our geographical regions. We made hurried plans for future meetings in our home territories, exchanged last bits of information to tide us on our trip home.

We came together for a last time in the main hall to celebrate our time in planning, conceiving, and birthing this master plan. We shared quotations, visions, tears, and laughter as we brought our week to a

and beautiful. But if we look within the feet of the women so beautified, we find not only the reshaping of the foot, but the crippling of it as well. As schools have shaped and sculpted students into final products, many have been crippled in the reshaping process while others have been rejected or destroyed.

Secondly, with credit to Rafael Aguayo and his book, *Dr. Deming: The American Who Taught the Japanese About Quality*, I offer the idea that to transform education from one state into another requires a total transformation in the same way that a caterpillar can metamorphose into a butterfly. A butterfly cannot maintain a hundred legs and still fly properly.

The metamorphosis we envision will not happen only in the privacy of our individual cocoons, although it must begin there. May I urge each of you to join in this important task, lending your literal and figurative shoulder to the wheel as it turns our education systems from the industrial model to the holistic model.

Synergy on Snow Mountain

by Lynn Stoddard

Something wonderful happened to me on top of Snow Mountain! At 9,000 feet, in the clear air of the Colorado Rockies, I participated in a spiritual, life-altering experience with ten extraordinary people. Ashisha, Betty Bailey, Mary Faddick, Tom Finucane, John Hartom, Ray Martin, Linda Michael, Terri O'Fallon, Mac Swengel, Cheryl Young, and I worked in a "strand" group to build a philosophy statement and an action plan around this question: "What are the critical elements of a system of education that fosters the development of self-esteem and personal greatness?" We were one of several strand groups working to promote the mission of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE).

As we began our work, it soon became clear that those who chose to serve on this committee were remarkable in their commitment to fostering self-esteem and personal greatness. Our group throbbed with the energy of eleven enthusiastic persons united in a common cause. With the help of John Runyan and Terri O'Fallon, who was co-facilitator of our group, we were able to ignite the fires of synergy and achieve a natural "high."

At the conclusion of its work, each strand group made a presentation to the total body of the conference. Our group gave an entertaining, creative report complete with a rap poem in heartbeat rhythm. The "product" of our efforts was unusual, but I do not wish to report on the product — it will be woven into the total "manifesto" and reported elsewhere. Instead, I would like to try to convey a feeling for the "process" and what it did for each one of us, or at least for me personally. This is the "product" that, I believe, really counts — the product of changes in the lives of people.

Mary Faddick, the warm, loving director of Foothills Academy, a private school in Wheatridge, Colorado, explained to our group that the original meaning and Latin root of the word *education* is *educare* — to draw forth. This original meaning of education best describes the process that emerged in our group as each person tried to draw forth the greatness of the others. The process of searching for the good in others — the gifts and talents, the love and creativity — was a mutually life-affirming act that stimulated growth in what I call the three dimensions of human greatness: identity, inquiry, and interaction.

Phases of a holistic process

Our work emerged in five phases that continually recycled during the few hours that we were together. Space will allow me to comment only briefly on each phase.

Phase one: Getting acquainted, searching for identity. This is the foundation phase that made it possible for every member of our

Lynn Stoddard is a retired elementary school principal who is now working on a second career as an author, consultant, and activist trying to stimulate revolutionary changes in education. He presently serves on the Steering Committee of the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE). He is the author of Redesigning Education: A Guide for Developing Human Greatness, published by Zephyr Press, Tucson, Arizona.

group to not only "connect," but also to bond with love to every other member. It was the phase wherein we molded ourselves into a team.

In phase one we searched for the individual identity (greatness) of each member as well as for our group identity. At the time I was nervous that perhaps we were taking too much time for identity building, but now, as I reflect on what happened, I believe that this part of the process was what made other accomplishments possible. We took time for group members to tell about themselves and their aspirations for the conference. Although we used more than half of our time on this phase, I now realize that we could have profitably spent even more time drawing forth the personal identities of one another.

Phase two: Focusing. In phase two we attempted to hold up a clear picture of our assigned task: to develop a philosophy statement and an action plan for a system of education that fosters self-esteem and personal greatness. We also suggested some steps to follow: (1) list common practices that work against the development of self-esteem and personal greatness, (2) list practices that build these qualities, (3) write individual philosophy statements, (4) combine the best from each individual statement, and (5) make an action plan for accomplishing personal-greatness schools.

Phase three: Sharing knowledge/experience. In phase three we made lists of all the possible ways to foster self-esteem and greatness and wrote personal philosophy statements. During this process we again drew forth the three dimensions of human greatness as we tapped reservoirs of individual experience and personal beliefs.

Phase four: Synthesis and creativity. In phase four we began to combine the personal greatness of each member of our group into a product for sharing. It was during this phase that we took the best knowledge and talents from each person and arranged them into a collage of greatness — a symphony of love. It was here that we discovered the identity of our group.

Feelings and energy became so strong at this point that group members expressed a desire for our strand to become the heart of the GATE mission and to continue communicating and working as a group after the conference.

Phase five: Reporting/accountability. Phase five involved subdividing our group into three small teams according to the individual gifts and talents of our committee members. Teams were to design the philosophy statement and action plan, and to create an interesting as well as entertaining way to share our "product" with the total body of the conference. In each team we found individuals with the particular talents that were needed — individuals with creative, poetic, musical, and artistic talent; writers, promoters, and editors. By recognizing and using these abilities, we were

able to draw forth the many facets of greatness and weld ourselves into a strong team.

On rare occasions, when the right combination of people come together in the right place, at the right time, under the right conditions, marvelous things happen. Such was the case when eleven extraordinary people elected to join a strand group to focus their spirits, minds, and energies on a top priority of the GATE mission: to "proclaim and promote a vision of education that fosters personal greatness." The exhilarating, peak experience of the conference for me occurred during the meeting of this strand group. We achieved synergy and became more than the total of our parts. I will always remember and cherish the friendship of the ten extraordinary people who drew forth the personal greatness of one another on Snow Mountain.

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Holism, Education, and Some Reflections on the GATE Conference

by Lous Heshusius

My attendance at the Global Alliance for Transforming Education (GATE) conference in the beautiful Rockies propels me to write this paper, which reflects my own "coming to holism" over the past fifteen years. Since some of my reactions to the conference will appear to be of

a critical nature, I would like to provide some background information, suggesting why I may be in a position to offer these comments. Elsewhere I have written on the influence of both mechanistic and holistic paradigmatic assumptions on the day-to-day instructional and assessment practices in our schools.¹ I have also been teaching the graduate course "Paradigms and Education" for the past seven years at York University to students who are all practicing teachers or school administrators. This teaching experience has been invaluable. Through it, I learned, many times over, how easy it is to take new concepts and use them as labels for old practices, and how many educators do just that. This has convinced me that unless the old is thoroughly understood in great detail, the "new" will not really be grasped. New terms will merely be used at a surface level to refer to existing practices.

My own understanding of holism has been formed by the study of philosophy of science and today's sciences of complexity; my interest in spirituality and Eastern thought (my own children attended a Krishnamurti school and a Waldorf school), ecology, and ecofeminism; and (not in the least) my experience of having to teach under the dictates of PL94-142 as a special educator, from 1980 to 1984. The latter forced me to try to understand as deeply as possible *why* we had to engage in the most objectifying and alienating of activities, fragmenting both curriculum and children. These interests brought me to analyze educational practices in terms of paradigms-as-metaphors.

Many educators use the term *paradigm* following fashionable Kuhnian thought, although they actually exclusively refer to what in "pre-Kuhnian times" was called a theory, a model, or a strategy.² I use the term *paradigm* in the same sense that several scientists and many historians and philosophers of science use it: paradigm-as-metaphor, paradigm at the level that provides answers to the most fundamental questions one can ask about the metaphysical level of how we perceive reality. These questions include:

1. What do we decide can count as real (and by implication, what not);
2. How do we decide to allow one another (and not allow one another) to make knowledge claims about what we construct as real; and

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Assumptions of the Mechanistic Paradigm	Assumptions of the Emerging Holistic Paradigm
<p>Guiding Metaphors: Machine, clockwork</p> <p>Nature of Reality and Whole-Part Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is objective. Fact can be separated from value, the observer from the observed, the knower from the known. Knowing comes about under conditions of detachment. Knowing is having control over. ● is understood through a mathematical symbol system. ● is reductionistic. The dynamics of the whole can be understood from the properties of the parts. Parts are seen as having an independent reality. Purpose of knowledge construction is gaining mastery over the parts. Knowledge of components adds up to knowledge of the whole. The whole is not more than nor different from the sum of its parts. ● is predictable and can potentially be known with certainty with the gathering of sufficient data. 	<p>Guiding Metaphors: Web, conscious organism, dance, art forms</p> <p>The Nature of Reality and Whole-Part Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is epistemic and participatory: Reality is dependent on our construction of it. Fact cannot be separated from value, nor the observer from the observed. "Method" itself is a human agreement. There are many valid ways of knowing, including the nonrational and intuitive. Knowing comes about through tuning-in, caring, and understanding interdependency. ● is holistic: The whole is more than and different from the sum of the parts and cannot be explained by the parts. "Parts" are properly relations, which can only be understood within the dynamics of the whole. There are, properly speaking, no "parts" that have an independent existence. ● is inherently orderly and complex. This order of organized complexity may be discovered. Order cannot be externally forced.
<p>The Nature of Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is deterministic. All events have direct causes and consequences. ● is additive, incremental, sequential, and continuous, making the idea of prediction and control possible. Progress is brought about under conditions of external control through the use of "method." ● is the same regardless of personal meaning and context. 	<p>The Nature of Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● occurs through dynamic and nonlinear interrelationships. Progress occurs through disequilibrium and is transformative, integrative, and purposeful. Novelty and unpredictability is part of nature. ● is nondeterministic. The whole reorganizes itself through self-organization and self-regulations and is characterized by emergent properties unique to its specific level of complexity. Results of transformation cannot be predicted or controlled from knowledge of initial conditions or from knowledge of parts.
<p>The Nature of the Living Organism/System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is reactive. 	<p>The Nature of the Living Organism/System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is immanently active, inherently goal directed, self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-preserving. ● is that of an open system, continually exchanging information with its environment.
<p>Understanding Learning and Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attempts to objectify knowledge and learning; only that which can be reliably measured gains the status of formal knowledge; categorization of exceptionalities by objective diagnoses; right/wrong answers, errorless learning. ● quantification and ranking (statistically significant findings, frequency counts, test scores) as indices of children's real abilities; diagnostic testing. ● learning equates mastery of sequences of processes, behaviors, of learning strategies and of predetermined, known curriculum outcomes; focus on deficits within the student; isolated skill training, worksheets, bottom-up approaches to literacy; task analysis. ● predictive instruments: Prediction is based on quantitative measurement of initial conditions and on the belief in the possibility of external control over processes; search for causality in diagnosis; answers to problems lie in "more research" and "more data." ● search for single causes of learning problems; causal linkages between diagnoses and instruction; task analysis, mastery learning; precision teaching; programmed and sequentialized materials; controlled vocabulary; daily charting; direct instruction; "individualized" education (meaning the same for all students but at their own pace), decontextualized learning. ● behaviorism, stimulus control, reinforcement, input-output models; unidirectional control of curriculum by teacher. 	<p>Understanding Learning and Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● learning is the personal/social construction of human meaning, which occurs on many levels (intuitive, emotional, rational, spiritual, kinesthetic, physical, artistic) and is propelled by a person's sense of purpose. Traditionally hypothesized "causes" for learning (and for not learning) do not have an existence independent from the human need to make sense. ● learning starts from the whole, moves to "parts," and back to the whole at a higher level of complexity, as exemplified, for instance, in whole-language understanding of literacy acquisition. ● relations are central: within oneself (emotional, intellectual, spiritual, artistic, physical), between self and other (individual, community, global, universal), between self and subject matter, and between subject matter and subject matter, fostering interdisciplinary knowledge. Peace, ecology, and a just world become central concerns for all educators. ● visible progress is not steady and linear, but "zigzags." Authentic learning only occurs when learning is connected by learners to their personal/social uses and purposes. What becomes new knowledge is regulated by existing knowledge, while the existing knowledge is deconstructed and transformed. ● learners express their new knowledge in many varied but equally valid ways, which include nonrational, novel, and unpredictable ways. Assessment consists of documenting these various expressions of authentic learning from multiple learning situations. ● learners are always learning. They always have a purpose for what they decide to learn according to the impulse to self-regulate and self-organize. "Errors" are ways of making meaning. There is no "one best way" to learn or to teach, and the process of learning can be fostered but not externally programmed, predicted, or controlled. ● learning occurs through and within social, cultural, and political systems of symbols and social exchanges. School organization and curriculum should be determined by those directly involved.
<p>Source: Lous Heshusius, "Education and What We Wish for Our Children: From Mechanistic to New Paradigm Thinking," in <i>The New Paradigm and Education</i>, edited by W. Rhodes (in press).</p>	

3. What is the nature of change (of progress, of movement)?

An interesting additional political question of course is: Who makes these decisions in the first place?³

I am convinced that my understanding of holism, to whatever degree I might grasp the concepts involved, is exactly reflective of the degree to which I understand mechanistic thought and its fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions. In other words, I have come to believe, from my studies, from my own experience, and from working with students in my classes, that one cannot understand the "new" without having become thoroughly aware of the implicit assumptions of the old, lest they continue to reign over the way that we construct the "new" reality. Transformation occurs only if the old ways of seeing are left behind deliberately, consciously, and critically.

I will here summarize only fundamental assumptions of mechanistic and new paradigm holistic thought and will note translations into day-to-day educational practices. I hope that the boxed summary on the previous page will be sufficient as a framework in which to note comments on the conference.⁴

I am sharing this "model" of holistic education, if one would call it that, neither as an exhaustive understanding, nor with claim to correctness in any absolute way. I am sharing this model rather as complementary to models of holistic education such as those provided by John Miller (the "Transmission, Transaction, and Transformation" model) and in the writings by Ron Miller and other contributors to *Holistic Education Review*.⁵

Although the models by John Miller and Ron Miller draw primarily from the human potential movements and spiritual movements in education, from Transcendental thought and from perennial philosophy, my own approach uses literature on the history and philosophy of science as a starting point and searches for the connection with the other sources. What is most inspiring for me is that this search is by no means incompatible with spiritual and transcendental movements. What is most hopeful is that contemporary spiritual traditions (both Eastern and Western) and Western science are understanding the na-

ture of reality in compatible and mutually enhancing ways.⁶ It seems to me, therefore, that our next major effort should lie in working toward a more explicit and integrated "model," or understanding of what holism means for educators, using the spiritually informed models as well as the philosophy of science informed views. In addition, we must find ways to be enriched by and to enrich the critical social thought movements in education.

Holism and the GATE conference

My comments on the GATE conference are certainly neither exhaustive, nor "correct" in any absolute way. It is my own commitment and involvement in the study of paradigms-

tuality), they do not address some of holism's other vital assumptions (e.g., nonlinear and dynamic structure of whole-part-whole relations, the concept of emergent properties or of organized complexity.) Holism deals directly with the structure of reality. We have holistic physics, for instance — but we do not have humanistic physics.

Humanistic education is wonderful and necessary. It broke through the view of children as little adults or robots. It helped to humanize the teacher-student relationship. It facilitated learning through these differences in attitude. But it did not necessarily address the nitty-gritty instructional and assessment decisions, which therefore were likely to

***H*olism is not merely an organizing principle of things that already exist. It is about a totally different understanding of whole-part-whole relations, relations that directly emerge from wholeness (and, when translated into education, from meaning and context).**

metaphors and what it can do for education that propels me to share my reflections.

Holistic education is by definition also humanistic, but humanistic education is not in itself holistic. Perhaps the most consistent feeling I had during the conference was that I was attending a conference on humanistic education or on alternative forms of education characteristic of 1960s social movements and the 1970s and 1980s mind-body movements. Not that there is anything wrong with these movements, but while they overlap with some holistic assumptions (e.g., the body-mind connection, the reverence for life, the understanding of a larger consciousness than individual consciousness, the emphasis on spiri-

stay the same. I have seen many a humanistic classroom where teachers and students relate to each other wonderfully, but where plenty of mechanistic activities continue, such as the use of basal texts, programmed materials, and worksheets. Holism delves into the very structure of the worldview behind these activities. It articulates this additive, fragmented, sequential, linear, static, and predictable worldview and replaces it with concepts of self-organization, participatory consciousness, emergent properties (the emergence of which cannot be predicted or externally controlled), and a nonlinear and dynamic whole-part-whole relationship. It may be that all humanistic educators would readily agree that these concepts are

important. In that case (and I believe it is true), humanistic educators have not yet looked carefully enough at what the holistic nature of reality implies for the details of educational practices.

The confusion about whole-part-whole relations. Related to my comment above is the problem of glossing over the complex nature of whole-part-whole relations. When I heard participants talk about a particular approach to reading that resembles Distar, and about learning styles (now so popular in special education), and heard them put forth these mechanistically informed practices as holistic, I had to conclude that I was witnessing the instant translation of the new *back* into the old before the old had been critically understood. When I investigated the reasons behind these views, the response was (as I have heard so often from the students in my course) that these approaches themselves indeed may be mechanistic but they can be holistic—it all depends on how you teach. To think in this manner is to engage in the illusion of separating form from content. It is saying that one can reshuffle the pieces in a nice way, so that the pieces now are more pleasant to work with. It is saying that meaning can be added. But holism is not about reshuffling pieces. Holism is not merely an organizing principle of things that already exist. It is about a *totally different understanding of whole-part-whole relations*, relations that directly emerge from wholeness (and, when translated into education, from meaning and context). And that is a totally different matter. We can't start with the pieces of a fragmented curriculum, with mechanistic definitions of reading (or any other learning activity), and think that we can add meaning or add holism to it. Learning styles and learning modalities do not exist outside of specific meanings and purposes, either. They are not stable; they differ across contexts and across a person's purposes for learning particular activities. Of course there are differences in learning styles, but they do not simplistically categorize people as educators today do. The same can be said for the related concepts of cognitive styles.

The idea that we can "add" meaning is a pervasive illusion — one of the

most persistent illusions engaged in by educators who say they are holistic.⁷

Are we all experts? At the introduction to the conference, it was stated that the steering committee had decided that the conference did not need keynote speakers because we were all

previous levels. Clearly, not all conference participants are equal when it comes to the kind of transformations that have occurred in their study of holism. This does not make anyone better than anyone else. Nor does it mean that those who have been involved in the study of holism for a longer time could not learn from those

One cannot understand the "new" without having become thoroughly aware of the implicit assumptions of the old, lest they continue to reign over the way that we construct the "new" reality.

experts. The implication was that no one was a "leader," or that no one knew more than another about holism in education. The intent was to model throughout the conference the processes of holism. My comment here is not to argue that we needed keynote speakers. It is to argue that we are not all experts. It is one thing to say that everyone's experiences, thoughts, and views are valuable, important, and should be carefully shared and listened to. It is quite another thing to suggest that we are all experts. I can't think of any other field of study (and holism is a field of study as well as a commitment to distinct values and a way of constructing reality) where everyone is an expert regardless of how long or how hard or how seriously one has studied the particular field.

The view that we are all experts confuses holism with sameness. It confuses holism with a structure that knows no differentiation, no hierarchies, no different levels of complexity, no different levels of evolution, no different levels of knowing or of information. On the contrary, the construct of holism — whether in physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, open systems theory, or evolution — clearly stresses different levels of complexity, of evolution, of hierarchy, of differentiation. The principle of emergent properties is important here: With every transformation, new properties emerge that are not characteristic of

who are new to it, nor that their insights are necessarily better. People make different "quantum leaps" in understanding, and these occur at different rates. But we are not all equal, or the same, in our knowledge of holism. Democratic processes can take care of equal input and opportunity for discussion. But none of that is to dismiss differences in understandings.

Lack of critical perspective. The conceptual inaccuracy that colors the "we are all experts" approach leads, paradoxically, to a lack of opportunity for genuine, critical thought and thus frustrates democratic processes. Once it is stated that everyone is an expert, it becomes difficult to voice critical questions or objections. That may have been at least one of the reasons, however unconsciously, why there was no public format to welcome or even make available the opportunity for critical responses to the various proposals that came out of the small group work. Every group's ideas were uncritically accepted and applauded, regardless of the range of implications — which stretched a broad spectrum from seemingly very simplistic, to clearly workable, to incredibly and unrealistically ambitious. As soon as everyone is presented as an expert, it follows that everyone's ideas, however stretched they may be, must be fine. One then feels obnoxious and arrogant to even think of questioning experts.

Personally I felt that it was even more difficult to have an inquiring mind within this environment, in which everyone is seen as an expert, than it would be in a situation where only one or two persons are presented as experts: I can take on one or two, but an entire group? Backstage, so to speak, at the level of individual conversation, there was certainly a good deal of disagreement with what certain small groups came up with. I wished there had been a public set of practices to welcome such questioning.

I personally found this lack of opportunity for free, critical reflection and discussion, and the uncritical acceptance of every group's ideas, a frustrating experience. "Holism" becomes a fuzzy entity, ignoring the rigorous concepts involved. Distinctions are erased, disequilibrium and tension are denied. Yet these are central to holism. We must not assume that there are no distinctions in holism, no parts, no differences. The *relation* between the whole and the distinctions, between the whole and the parts, between tension and transformation, is of a fundamentally different nature than the manner in which these relations are defined within mechanistic thought. I believe that the process of the conference, which was to model holism, reflected a *reaction against* authoritative, linearly hierarchical structures characteristic of mechanistic thought. That is not the same, however, as modeling holistic processes.

Holism is not easy. Had someone from another planet attended the conference, not knowing anything about education on this Earth, I would not be surprised if he or she walked away with the idea that within no time the conference participants would transform almost any aspect of education in this country, if not in this world. He or she would have the impression that holism is rather easy, and further, that the day-to-day reality of the social world is ready for it, if not asking for it. He or she would think that holism involves a clear, simple set of beliefs that the world is ready to receive. Except for the "minority report" questions that Ron Miller and Kathleen Kesson posed to us (questions I believe were among the more important

questions raised at the conference⁸), and the small group on "exclusion," which apparently gathered spontaneously the last evening and questioned the white, professional, middle-class make-up of the group with all of its trappings, the tone of the conference projected simplicity with regard to the construct of holism.

There is nothing easy about holism. Holism has an immediate attraction, particularly to those of us involved with the humanistic psychology and education movements of the past, but the attraction typically hides the rigors and complexity of the holism construct. The attraction also leads to mistaking one for the other.

It seems to me that the worst thing for members of a group such as GATE to do is delude themselves that the construct of holism is easily understood — or that the relationship between holism and those social views in education of a direct critical nature, such as critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy, can be glossed over. A lot of work needs to be done in understanding how holism can inform these critical movements without trivializing the very critical insights they set forth, and how these critical movements in turn can make holism more responsive to the world of day-to-day existence. We can't think we can transform education without giving these matters central and serious attention, the kind of attention that was not fostered at the conference.

The question of personal greatness. Several of the students in the classes I teach have been teachers at schools in Native American communities in northern Canada. They have told me that when they single out a Native American child for his or her unique contribution, for his or her special accomplishments, for his or her "greatness" if you wish — as we educate our teachers to do — these children are mortified. To be so singled out is against the identification of self in direct relation to the wholeness of the community. Likewise, Native American parents object to the emphasis on individual uniqueness in so much of our curriculum materials. The Native American belief system is surely holistic in many if not all of its fundamental assumptions. Personal uniqueness and personal greatness is foreign to it,

at least in the sense that we typically conceive of greatness.

One of the central new metaphors for new paradigm holistic thought is the web. It reflects our inextricable connectedness and interdependency with all of life. Nothing stands out as unique or great *in itself*. The most essential characteristic of every organism or system is that it is an inextricable part of a larger organism or system and could not exist outside of it. I must therefore question whether the quest for personal greatness that the conference set forth as one of its major beliefs is not mistaken, or at least misphrased. Personal *integrity*, yes. Personal integrity is crucial to the concept of holism, but personal greatness? Do we all need to be great? Without a clear explanation of what personal greatness means, and such definition was not provided (at least not to the larger group), the phrase can easily be misunderstood and translated back into (not rise above) the competitive and individualistic nature of what greatness typically means in this society. One can be sure that mainstream education will interpret the phrase in this manner. We need less emphasis on ego, less self-centeredness, not more. Less conception of individuality, not more.

It is my belief that, rather than promoting personal greatness, holism would direct us to play down the concept of individual greatness to make place for personal integrity, out of which comes social integrity. (As the wise of the ages — the Gandhis, Black-Elks, Buddhas, and Christs — have told us over and over again, and as modern science supports in its rediscovery of participating consciousness, the outer is the externalization of the inner. Personal integrity ultimately results in social integrity.) We and our students need to see ourselves first and foremost as an inextricable part of a larger whole, both social and spiritual. Unless the concept of personal greatness carries that meaning, in which case it may be better rephrased, it needs to be rethought, holistically speaking.

Conclusion

I deeply believe that there is too much promise in the construct of holism to run the risk of prematurely

simplifying it by not looking at it deeply enough. I personally hope that the delightful and enormous energy present at the conference may channel itself next time into a somewhat more critical, reflective, and intellectually rigorous direction. I also hope that the next conference will deliberately attempt to seek ways to merge the humanistic and spiritual traditions, so well represented at the conference, with the assumptions of holism as articulated in today's sciences of complexity. In doing so, we must not confuse today's science, grounded in the concept of participatory consciousness (which makes spirituality and morality central to the very concept of what it means to know scientifically), with the nonparticipating and material consciousness of the traditional, still-dominant understanding of science. Education could only benefit from such merging of spiritual and scientific approaches.

Notes

1. Lous Heshusius, "The Newtonian-Mechanistic Paradigm, Special Education, and Contours of Alternatives: An Overview," *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 22, no. 7 (1989), p. 413-415; also, Lous Heshusius "Curriculum-based Assessment and Direct Instruction: Critical Reflections on Fundamental Assumptions," *Exceptional Children*, in press.
2. Heshusius, "The Newtonian-Mechanistic Paradigm."
3. In fact, Thomas Kuhn uses the term *paradigm* in the metaphysical, metaphorical sense as well, but along with more than twenty other meanings: See M. Masterman, "The Nature of a Paradigm," *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by I. Lakatos and A. Mosgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
4. Tables from Lous Heshusius, "Education and What We Wish for Our Children: From Mechanistic to New Paradigm Thinking," *The New Paradigm and Education*, edited by W. Rhodes (in press).
5. John P. Miller, *The Holistic Curriculum* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1988); also Ron Miller, *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture* (Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1990).

6. For some clear discussions on the connection between understanding of reality by today's sciences of complexity and consciousness, spirituality, and even God, see Norman Cousins (ed.), *Nobel Prize Conversations with Sir John Eccles, Roger Sperry, Ilya Prigogine, and Brian Josephson* (San Francisco: Saybrook; 1985); also J. Krishnamurti and D. Bohm, *The Ending of Time* (London: Gollancz, 1985).

7. I have elaborated rather extensively on the nature of the illusion we engage in when we think that we can *add* meaning to existing practices. See Heshusius, "Curriculum-based Assessment and Direct Instruction."

8. How can holistic principles, which we believe to be universal, be expressed so that diverse communities and intellectual perspectives will find meaning in them? How can we address the possibility that our ideas, terms, and methods could be appropriated by dominant groups to maintain the inequalities and injustices of our society rather than fostering genuine transformation? What do holistic educators have to learn from other educators and theorists concerned with social reconstruction? How much can we modify our statements and principles, in order to reach a wider audience, without significantly compromising them?

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Letter to the Review

Dear Editor,

This is written in response to "Further Reflection on the 1990 Chicago Conference" (HER, Spring 91) — from someone who wasn't there, but is deeply involved and concerned.

I'm in basic agreement with Reenstjerna's advice [though we differ on a number of details] that a deliberately self-critical approach to holistic education theory is essential for its refinement and its eventual social impact.

What I consider to be a major strength of the holistic education vision is its fundamentally affirmative critical approach to education theory and practice, which Reenstjerna advocates much in the spirit of David Purpel's writing (reviewed in HER by Miller). HER has been unabashedly radical, taking on fundamental issues and beliefs, re-examining widely accepted and taken-for-granted notions about curriculum and instruction, and in the process often embracing methods of inquiry which also represent departures from standard practice. Nothing less than that will do if we are to fix what's wrong with education.

My disagreement with Lebensold stems largely from my embrace of holistic education as an educational movement toward an educational vision. That vision is one that I understand to be calling for a truly revolutionary approach to social goals, rather than the sort of political goals Lebensold is recommending.

The kind of revolution holistic education stands for, if it is to be sustained, requires a solid platform, either theoretical or mythological — preferably both. The sort of statement that passes these days as a political party platform will not suffice. In this educational revolution I would caution against the kind of political "urgency" that

Lebensold is calling for in urging that we become "players[s] in educational politics."

Lebensold's argument that

[T]he degree to which we should engage in philosophical debate remains, itself, debatable.... Fine tuning will follow. Now is the time to emphasize strategy, and let philosophy play a supporting role.

— is unsound. Revolutions, even as modest as Rock-and-Roll, require far more. And ours is seeking far, far more.

We are calling for no less than a change in our methods of thinking and learning — about ourselves and our place in nature and under/among the stars. Because of this, it will be all the more crucial that our revolutionary vision be as clearly and boldly drawn as possible. Recognizing that radical methods or ideas are invariably going to be met with suspicion, there's little chance of getting away with mixing it up politically with the "big boys" on their terms. If there is any hope at all of gaining a public hearing, the work of defining the vision must proceed thoughtfully and self-critically. There must be a sense of commitment and confidence in the rightness of what we are about if we are to persevere against the cultural tides and vested interests we're sure to be offending, no matter how respectfully and politely we go about our work.

As a "strategy" in this educational revolution, I would suggest that the sort of electoral or legislative political action that Lebensold is advocating is at odds with the goals of holistic education. The reasons for this are more complex than I can undertake in any detail here. In essence, I would argue that political action aiming toward enacting legislation is not only a draining enterprise, but also one that is fraught with indirection and compromise which can only dilute our efforts at forming a

vision of what we are about. In contrast with education, legislation is furthermore very much a top-down process, one which typically presumes authority over the beliefs of outsiders and minority constituencies. The grassroots values of such minorities who are affected by the rulings and regulations need not be heeded, unless there's a well connected lobbyist on the payroll. Just such a denial made possible that embarrassment known as the American "melting pot," to cite but one example of the sort of legislative rationale that historically gave rise to public schooling legislation. Moreover, we happen to be situated at the very bottom of the current political-economic barrel, alongside the homeschoolers.

The process of education I see as fundamentally at variance with acts of legislation which impose a set of beliefs and values on others who don't want to do those things because they don't believe in them. Such disregard for others is, to say the least, teaching as its very worst. Thoughtfulness and critical inquiry — on everyone's part — is what we are about. These are values which contemporary political action has little room for. Support for holistic education is grassroots, and has long-since unfortunately been submerged by public schooling policies. Operating as we are outside of the guidelines of the prevailing political "guidelines," there will be few public authorities receptive to what holistic education represents. Those on the inside who will even listen will at best only have a glimmer of understanding.

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Book Reviews

Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth-Century America

by Patrick Shannon

Published by Bergin & Garvey/Greenwood Press (88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881), 1989; 186 pages, \$15.95 paper.

The Struggle to Continue: Progressive Reading Instruction in the United States

by Patrick Shannon

Published by Heinemann Educational Books (361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801), 1990; 220 pages, \$17.50 paper.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

With these two books, Patrick Shannon has established himself, in my view, as one of the most important educational scholars in the United States. Unlike most advocates of reform and "restructuring," Shannon takes a very hard and sober look at the cultural roots of public education; unlike most critical theorists, he presents his critique in a readable, non-ideologically charged form that is meant to be accessible to classroom teachers and concerned citizens as much as to fellow scholars. *Broken Promises* and *The Struggle to Continue* tell us, in clear and powerful prose, why modern schooling is so inhumane and what we — teachers, parents, citizens, and scholars, working together — can do to transform it. Shannon invites us to empower ourselves.

Broken Promises describes the rise and almost total dominance of the commercially produced, "scientifically" designed reading-instruction approach, which consists of basal readers, workbooks, and scripted instructions for teachers. Its cultural

foundations, Shannon tells us, lie in Americans' fascination with industrial efficiency, scientific precision, and technological productivity, which peaked in the early years of the twentieth century. He argues that each of these elements entails an authoritarian model of school management that "deskills" teachers, turning them from *educators* who are responsive to the social and moral context of learning and the needs of individual students, into *technicians* who routinely administer commercially produced materials.

This scientific certainty leads to a hierarchy of authority and knowledge in which the science of the presenters is considered superior and more useful than the practice and interpretations of teachers.

Shannon argues against this hierarchical perspective with a ringing defense of the art and profession of teaching.

But in fact, teachers' heads aren't empty and their experiences differ across classrooms, schools and states, rendering scientific generalizations statistically significant but practically useless. Moreover, knowledge cannot be separated from the act of coming to know, in which teachers create new understandings from their analysis and discussion of their unique, but shared situations. (*Broken Promises*, p. 135)

Shannon portrays the stark contrast between technocratic and person-centered, meaning-centered approaches to reading instruction. He uses the concept of *reification* — "the treatment of an abstraction as a concrete object or immutable procedure" — to criticize the effects of "scientific," teacher-proof materials.

First, when they reify reading instruction, teachers and administrators lose sight of the fact that reading instruction is a human process. Second, their reification of the scientific study of the reading process as the commercial materials means that their knowledge of reading and instruction is frozen in a single technological form. Third, school personnel's reification of science requires that they define their work in terms of efficiency of delivery and maximization of students' gains in test scores. (*Broken Promises*, p. 55)

The technocratic mentality transforms literacy from a complex social and moral endeavor rich in personal meaning, into an obsession with testing and scores related to isolated, in-

trinsically meaningless skills. Shannon gives one example of a group of teachers who recognized that their district-mandated reading program was too advanced for their particular third graders; their request to modify the program was turned down by an administrator who asserted, "With proper instruction, any objective can be reached. It's not the objective's fault when students fail a test." (*Broken Promises*, p. 58) Here is the essence of reification: Neither the students' actual learning needs, nor the teachers' responsiveness to their students, is treated as seriously as the abstract, "scientifically" dictated, lockstep technology. The upshot of this story is that the publisher eventually revised the program because numerous teachers had complained — but the administrator in this case still insisted on using the faulty program until the new edition was available!

Shannon points out that technocratic education serves, not the needs of learners or their teachers, but the interests of profit-seeking publishing companies, an elite academic group of "reading experts" largely funded by these companies, and politicians who are accountable for school "success." He claims that the dominant reading-instruction establishment — schools of education, professional associations, research journals — has become attached to the basal reader/workbook technology because of the power of the cultural assumptions underlying it as well as the social forces that benefit from it. Shannon, who was also a co-author of the landmark study, *Report Card on Basal Readers*, makes it very clear in *Broken Promises* that the basal reader/workbook approach turns literacy into an arid, sanitized, mechanical exercise out of touch with children's lives and the society they will inherit. It devastates genuine human encounter and community, alienates and disempowers both teachers and learners, and perpetuates class stratification in American society by ruthlessly applying "objective" standards regardless of children's different backgrounds and educational needs. "During reading instruction, it

is clear that the rich get richer, while the poor get poorer" (*Broken Promises*, p. 109).

Standing in opposition to this technocratic model is what I call the holistic approach, known in its various forms over the years as the New Education, progressive education, whole language, and critical pedagogy. The aim of holistic reading instruction is to enable learners to "read the world," in Paulo Freire's words. Literacy is not mechanical skill but a source of personal and collective power; it is a tool for expanding the meanings of our experience, through reflection and critical inquiry. Shannon demonstrates that this is a radical alternative to the cultural norm, both historically and currently. For example, the early progressive educators (including, especially Francis W. Parker) were among the first to reject the Calvinist doctrine of innate human depravity, which prevailed in American culture throughout most of the nineteenth century and highly influenced educational thinking and practice (*Broken Promises*, p. 10). Today's whole language and critical pedagogy movements challenge the underlying political structure of American education. Those most intimately involved in the learning process need to claim power that has been tightly held by corporations, high level administrators, and scientific "experts." Teachers and students, says Shannon,

must realize that current organizations of reading programs are historical constructs — the results of past negotiations of rules and meanings among unequal participants in reading programs — and therefore, that these organizations can be changed. (*Broken Promises*, p. 132)

In *Broken Promises*, Shannon describes several attempts of classroom teachers working together to make such changes; in *The Struggle to Continue*, he tells the story of progressive education (including open and free schools, whole language, critical pedagogy and adult education experiments such as the Highlander Folk School) in much greater depth. Shannon asserts that educators joining together, and honoring their own experience and knowledge and that of their students, can make a profound difference in the course that American education and culture take.

However, he realizes that the obstacles are difficult. Given the dominant cultural forces of business, science, and a Calvinist or behaviorist understanding of human nature,

the philosophy and radical changes required to implement the New Education seemed inefficient, sentimental, and overly optimistic concerning both human nature and learning. (*The Struggle to Continue*, pp. 19–20)

Consequently, in the 1890s, when education came under intense criticism during a time of social transition and stress, and again in the 1980s and 1990s, during another such period, leading educational reformers simply *bypassed* the alternative of progressive/holistic education and sought instead to strengthen conventional approaches:

Superintendents and efficiency experts would promote a greater use of business practices, the application of scientific procedures to discover the laws of appropriate action, and the organization of learning within the maxims of behaviorist psychology. (*The Struggle to Continue*, p. 42)

Progressive/holistic educators, then, have their work cut out for them. One of Shannon's principal arguments is that child-centered educators need to come to grips with the historical and political forces that shape education, so that we may consciously and knowledgeably confront them, and effectively *reshape* education in a more humane, democratic form.

Where *Broken Promises* is Shannon's careful, methodical, sober analysis of the problem, *The Struggle to Continue* is his inspiring account of how things could be altogether different. Although I had already done extensive research on the history of progressive and alternative education, I was considerably enlightened by the wealth of insights and original source material that this book provides. Like my own study *What Are Schools For?* written about the same time, *The Struggle to Continue* traces the philosophical roots of progressive (holistic) education, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, and Friedrich Froebel (Shannon goes even further back to include Comenius), through Francis W. Parker and John Dewey, and into both the child-centered and social reconstructionist wings of the progressive education movement. Then he

deftly connects these social and educational principles to more recent developments, including the free school movement, psycholinguistics, whole language, and critical pedagogy. He proclaims:

Those who seek alternatives are not odd, or negative, or necessarily modern; often unconsciously, they continue a deep tradition within the history of education in the United States. Within this historical context, our hope becomes a dangerous memory of what is possible in schools in America. (*The Struggle to Continue*, p. x)

As in *Broken Promises*, Shannon emphasizes that such a revolution of decency and humaneness in education will require social critique and political effort as well as "child-centered" idealism. I said this in *What Are Schools For?* too, and my recent experiences in the holistic education movement have made it very clear to me that this movement *desperately* needs to incorporate a more critical perspective. Shannon's books should be read seriously by all educators who consider themselves holistic. His work calls for dialogue and cooperation among all educators and citizens who yearn for justice, democracy, and a society that might nurture the best in human beings. The concluding chapter of *The Struggle to Continue*, called "Together We Stand," is a powerful manifesto for a broad-based coalition of progressive/radical/humanistic/holistic educators, and it gives voice to the primary message that this journal has sought to convey: In order to transform education, we must find a way to rejuvenate our *culture*.

The social world differs from the physical world because human participants determine what is real and valid through negotiations in which they reciprocally define truth and the rules of acceptable behavior within a social context. More than a matter of atoms and energy, *the social world is a historically constructed and socially maintained phenomenon*. So conceived, the social world is full of unrealized possibilities because the current reality is always subject to change through variation in human intention and actions. We need not wait for evolution.... Accordingly, the progressive educational agenda may be set as the development of: (1) the individual and social knowledge necessary to construct a better world; and (2) the moral and political courage to act on that knowledge. (*The Struggle to Continue*, pp. 166–167, italics added.)

Shannon himself does not use the

term *holistic* in connection with the progressive tradition; he is not concerned with the explicitly global or spiritual orientation of most holistic educators, nor does he discuss the important contributions of Transcendentalist educators or the work of Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner. In one sense, this may be a strength; his work probably speaks more directly to the concerns of those who are presently struggling within the public school establishment. (Certainly, it is more di-

rectly concerned with what actually goes on in classrooms than my work has been.) But I would argue that what Shannon calls "progressive" education is an essential element of any truly holistic approach, and, as Shannon shows so well, it provides a rich moral and educational tradition to ground and sustain our contemporary vision. Holistic educators need to "stand together" with progressive, whole language, and critical educators, and Shannon provides a strong philosoph-

ical basis from which to start. The global, ecocentric, spiritual vision that inspires holistic educators *can* be integrated with this critical understanding, and I believe it needs to be.

Broken Promises and *The Struggle to Continue* are tremendously important and exciting books. Read them, share them with colleagues and parents. Let us stand together with our allies and truly transform education in the 1990s.

Education for Creative Living: Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

Translated by Alfred Birnbaum

Edited by Dayle M. Bethel

Published by Iowa State University Press (Ames, IA 50010), 1989; 220 pages, hardcover.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944) was a Japanese educator, writer, and founder of *Soka Gakkai*, a Buddhist-inspired social renewal movement that continues to be active today. Makiguchi's educational thinking was person centered and humanistic; his primary concern was the personal and social creation of humane, democratic values. His ideas challenged the increasingly regimented, materialistic, militaristic culture of his time (indeed, he was eventually imprisoned), and still speak to the cultural conditions facing educators and progressive thinkers today. This book is a philosophical reflection on values, personal integrity, and the nature of the good society, as well as on schooling. In his "afterword," philosopher David Norton places Makiguchi in the ethical tradition of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; to me, Makiguchi's concern for modern society and for developing a science of education seems most congruent with John Dewey's thinking, although somewhat less sophisticated.

A Life Worth Living: Selected Letters of John Holt

Edited by Susannah Sheffer

Published by Ohio State University Press (1070 Carmack Road, Columbus, OH 43210), 1990; 276 pages, paper.

John Holt (1923–1985) was not only an incisive critic of modern schooling, but also a warm, gifted person who touched the lives of many. He corresponded with many friends, with educators and homeschoolers who sought his advice, and with well-known authors and public figures, including A.S. Neill, Ivan Illich, and George McGovern. These letters provide a more intimate look into Holt's life and work, and into the development of his ideas. As the editor, Sheffer, notes, "Holt was always more influenced by his own experience, his own observations of children, than by anything else." The book includes photos from his life between the 1940s and 1980s.

My Life as a Traveling Home Schooler

by Jenifer Goldman

Published by Solomon Press (417 Roslyn Road, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577), 1991; 95 pages, paper.

Eleven-year-old Jenifer Goldman starts out by telling the reader, "Through most of my life school's been pretty miserable." Fortunately, Jenifer has an uncle, Jerry Mintz, who is probably the most knowledgeable and active advocate for alternative education in the United States, and he agrees to take her with him on his travels to educational conferences and meetings in Canada, Virginia, Montana, Texas, California, and points between. Jerry and Jenifer meet an assortment of people — ranchers, Baha'is, Native Americans, Europeans, teachers, and homeschoolers — and they visit museums and schools. The author concludes that her homeschooling experience enabled her to make more friends than she would have made in schools and she says, "Learning while traveling sure beats sitting in an old classroom any time, or sitting around the house.... You get to explore the world and what it really is." The book includes photos.